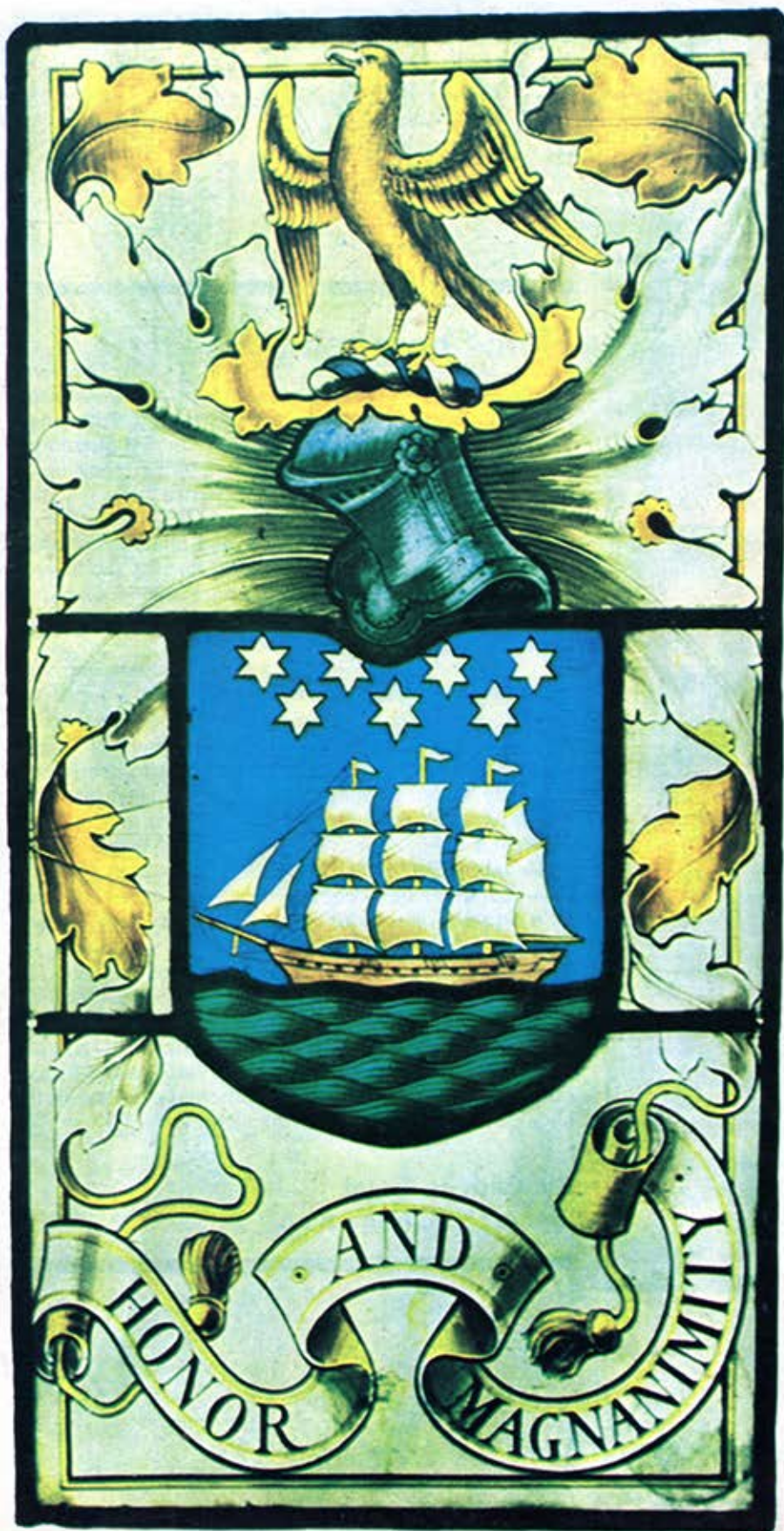


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Parsiana

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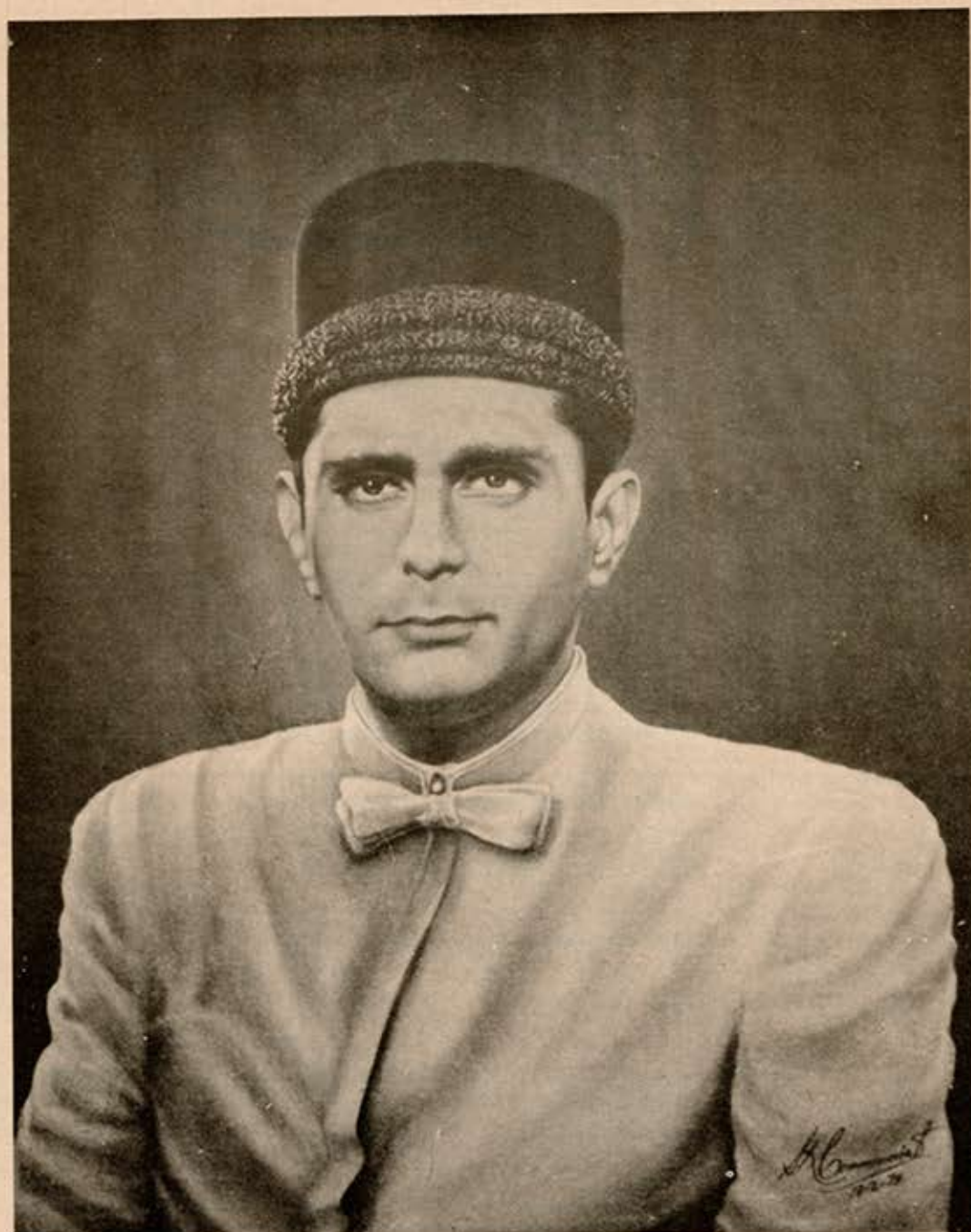
Cover: Stained Glass window from Lowji Castle showing the Wadia family crest and motto (Courtesy: J.B.H. Wadia and TAJ Magazine)

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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.

Ranina for Trusteeship

We, the undersigned, have read with interest the writings of Homi P. Ranina, advocate, Supreme Court of India. Like a truly intelligent commander of the orthodox army, Ranina has, with consummate skill, deployed his artillery of arguments and shattered to smithereens the case in favour of mixed marriages.

Ranina's lucid exposition of facts and figures based on genetics regarding inbreeding and cross-breeding is highly commendable and shows that he has done his homework well. He has hit the nail right on the head when he asserts that one of the major reasons why Parsis marry outside their fold is because they are utterly indifferent to their religion. Those who plead for some "formula" to be evolved to accept and assimilate the progeny of those Parsis who marry outside the community are, as Ranina says,

ignoring the reality of the situation and indulging in wishful thinking.

Here mention must be made of Parsi young men and women. They are not so unintelligent as to accept advice without thought or deliberation. They cannot be taken easily for a ride. Thus, there is no need to panic and be afraid that our Parsi youths will opt for mixed marriages. Those who do marry outside the community will do so without anybody's advice.

Ranina has proved himself a staunch orthodox. He must now devote himself to serving the community and what better way could be found than to serve as a trustee on the Board of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet? One thing is certain—Ranina is a "marked" man: Marked for greater and higher achievements.

JAMSETJEE JEJEEBHAY

Chairman, Sir J.J. Charities, Iran League, etc.,

COWASJEE NUSSERWANJI DINSHAW

President, The Bombay Zoroastrian Jashan Committee.

JEHANGIR FRAMROZ SHROFF

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Tithal Sanatorium

I have come to understand from reliable sources that "Dhan Wadi," the Dhanjibhai Patel Sanatorium situated in Tithal village (on 20 acres of land near the seashore in Bulsar district) has become so dilapidated over the last few years, that the Government of Gujarat has an acquisitive eye on it. The trustees of Bulsar and Bombay have already been approached for the acquisition of two acres of land, to start with, for the purpose of building small houses for the needy and poor of other castes and communities.

I hope the present trustees will think of entrusting the management of the sanatorium to the Parsi Punchayet of Bombay or Surat without delay. Alternately, I would not hesitate to suggest that at least one acre of land should be handed over to the needy Parsis of Bulsar, Surat, Bombay or elsewhere, who are actually interested in promoting the building of small cottages on the land and in reserving some areas for cultivation to enable them to earn their living.

If the latter scheme is agreed upon, the trustees of Tithal Sanatorium would do well to advertize in the local papers

without losing a single day. I am sure many Parsis will come forward to buy this land or take it on lease.

J.F. DRIVER

Forgo Such Features

I refer to two articles in your December issue. One was the article on Ms Zerbano Gifford and the other was about Ms Yasmin Nanavati. Both these women have married outside the Parsi or Zoroastrian community.

Sir, wouldn't it be better for the community if in future you forgo such features? Why glorify them?

What is so appealing about these women to you? What kind of example are you trying to set for the community? Ms Gifford was appalled by the sight of Parsi beggars. These people live in Western affluence criticising the Parsis of Bombay.

Wouldn't it be better if you print translations from the Gathas and the Avesta as regular articles in your esteemed magazine, instead of the above mentioned stuff?

R.H. KOTWAL

Jubilee Fund

The Calcutta Parsee Club is currently celebrating its Platinum Jubilee year. For a small club, representing a small community, to have not only survived 75 years, but to have flourished during this period, is no mean achievement. Founded on November 4, 1908 by five Parsi sporting enthusiasts, the Club has transformed itself from its humble beginnings into a great sporting institution of which any Parsi can be justly proud.

Out of a total strength of the community in Calcutta of around 1300, the club boasts of as many as 700 on its rolls. The club provides ample opportunities for members of the community—particularly the youth—to indulge in healthy sporting activities on its spacious lawns and playing fields situated in the heart of the Calcutta Maidan.

The club participates in the official Calcutta Leagues in football, hockey, cricket and basketball and also enters tournaments organized by representative table tennis and tennis bodies. It has produced outstanding sportsmen and women, quite a few of whom have

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represented West Bengal and some even India in their respective sports. A brief write-up on the club, which appeared in *Parsiana* a few years ago, describes in some detail its achievements over the past 75 years.

Perhaps the most unique feature of this club is that its monthly fees range from one rupee to five rupees per member, depending on the games played. For just five rupees any member of the club can play cricket, hockey, football, basketball, tennis, badminton, table tennis and other indoor games, with most of the gear provided free of cost. The fees are kept to this limit in order to enable every member of the community, no matter what his financial standing, to take part in healthy sporting activities. This excellent facility can be maintained only through the additional support which the club receives, from time to time, from its members and well-wishers in Calcutta and on occasions such as these, from charitable trusts all over India.

The total funds of the club today amount to Rs 1.45 lakhs, and the interest from the investment of these funds together with the subscription from members just about permit a break-even position as far as the running and maintenance of the club is concerned. However, whenever there is expenditure of a capital nature to be incurred, such as refurbishing of the club tent, the installation of a tubewell, re-wiring of the premises, etc., we appeal to our well-wishers to come forward with contributions. But even this is now proving to be beyond the capacity of the club and its members to manage, in view of the rapid inflation in costs. The club therefore feels that its Platinum Jubilee would be a good occasion for initiating an all-out drive to raise at least five lakh rupees, which would be added to the corpus of the club's funds, so that interest thereon could be utilized not only to meet growing day to day expenses, but also to further the cause of sport in the community in the following manner:

- to engage professional coaches for our various teams to improve the standard of players.
- to provide regular medical and health check-up facilities for the young members of our community.
- to permit participation in competitive sport of our teams outside Calcutta.
- to sponsor some of our outstanding players at international sports centres for further training.

It is with this background that we now address an appeal for contributions commensurate with our objectives, and it is our hope that we will receive generous support in this excellent cause that we are trying to promote. It is with modesty that we add that ours is a unique Parsi sporting institution in India, and our only endeavour is to perpetuate the good work started by five sportsmen of some enthusiasm and initiative 75 years ago.

BÉHRAM MERCHANT
Chairman, Fund Raising Committee,
The Calcutta Parsee Club.

Corrections

In your issue of October '83, R.N. Rustomji's letter refers to the Parsi population of Calcutta as numbering about 35,000. I would like to point out that at no stage have the Parsis of Calcutta exceeded 5,000 (and today they have dwindled to around 1,400). So a reference to 35,000 could only be a printing error.

I am not in a position to dispute his reference to Jamshedji Madan having worked as a mobed, but the general belief in the family is that the late Jamshedji Framji Madan started life as an actor at the early age of ten.

On page 27 of the same issue you mention that "the Calcutta Parsis have already completed construction of a community hall at Chowringhee...". But I have to point out that the Olpadwala Hall was roofless and incomplete at the date of publication of your October issue.

JAMSHED B. MADAN

Not Bigots

That the religion of Zarathushtra is universal, is an established fact, as was unanimously declared by eminent dasturs and scholars in India and abroad in the discussions of 1903. The same opinion was expressed by the Council of Zoroastrian mobeds in Tehran this year.

So much for the theology aspect. It is true that the Parsi community later rejected the idea of a person being recognized as a Parsi if he or she was not born in the community or whose father was not a Parsi. This view was legally established in the well-known judgement of justices Daver and Beaman.

It is a pity that we, who are advanced and progressive in other aspects of our lives, do not educate ourselves on this issue. Respecting the pros and cons of this topic, we have to adjust and ra-



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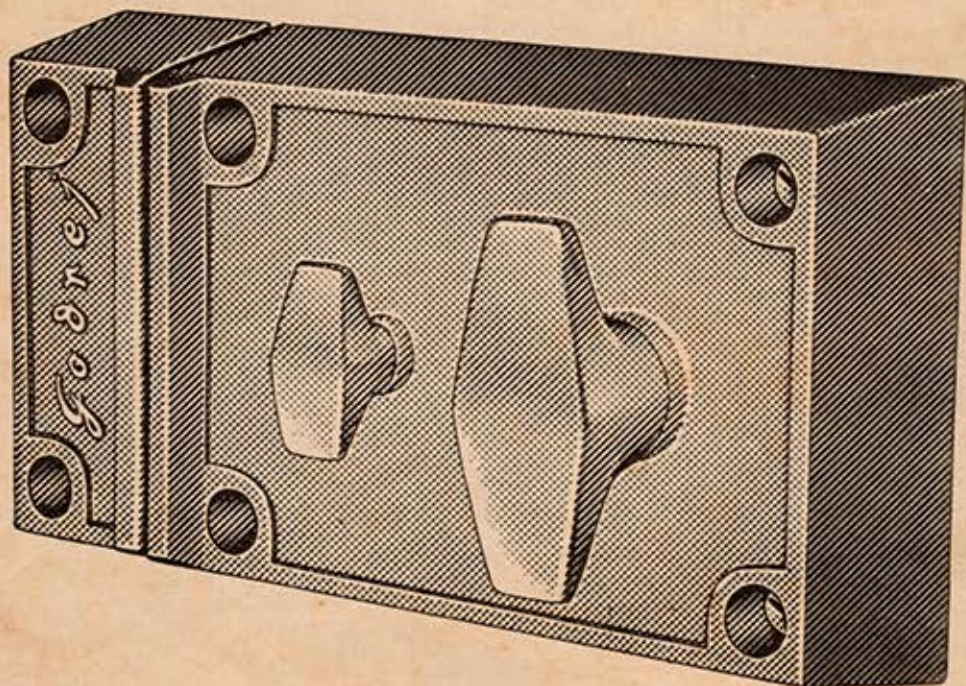
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tionalize our traditions, rituals and practices.

Living as dedicated Zoroastrians in a different social environment and trying to raise the new generation to be good Zoroastrians, we have to focus our efforts on adhering to the faith, rather than concentrating on the social traditions and customs of the by-gone past.

We North American Zoroastrians do not consider ourselves reformists, radicals or law-breakers, for the true teachings of our prophet is what we are striving to follow. We consider the heart of the teaching of Zarathushtra — *Humata, Hukhata and Havarashtra*—as something we would pass on to our youngsters, the main idea of "Righteousness" and of "Ashoii" realized through "Vahu", the good mind. We may not be following all the rituals and customs of the Parsis of India, because some of these cannot be observed here. But that does not mean we are not Zoroastrians. Thus, the attempt by some to create a split amongst the members of the Zoroastrian community is unwarranted and misguided.

The United States, the land in which we practise the faith of Zarathushtra freely, was founded on freedom of cons-

science. Our religious associations are open to those who profess the appropriate conviction and live the life demanded by the faith. I, and many others in USA, see no harm in accepting anyone who admires, appreciates and demonstrates to us that he or she not only understands the teaching of Zarathushtra but is dedicated to living in that way. It would be unreasonable to refuse to accept such a person as one of us—a co-religionist. Of course, we do not expect many to join us. We do not seek converts but we refuse to be bigots.

There may be different views and feelings about this matter. But we are united in following the teachings of Zarathushtra. So I urge all Parsis and Zoroastrians of the world to respect each others' views, no matter what effort it may take to do so. Let us strive towards unification and stop placing obstacles in our progress and realization of the truth.

IVY F. GANDHI
New Jersey, USA.

No Modernization

The decrease in number of the Zoroastrian community is not because in-breeding within the same ethnic group

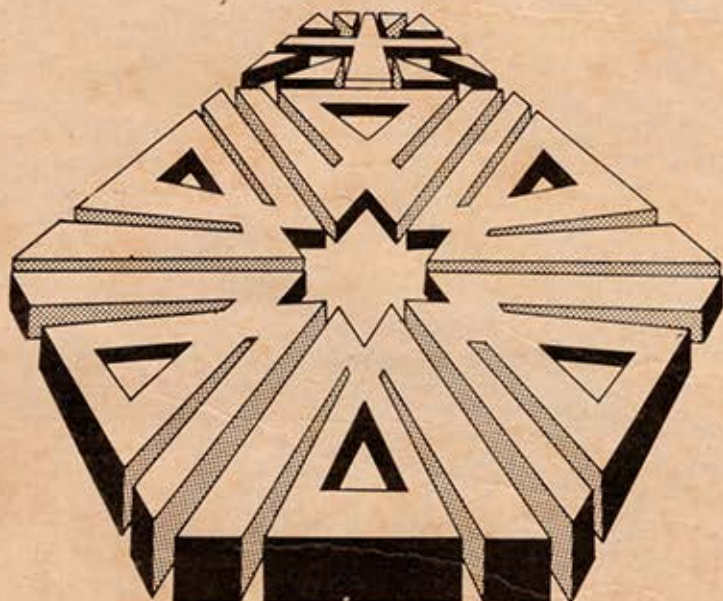
causes degeneration, as is claimed by certain leading members of our community, but because the young couples face various problems if they opt for early marriage. A couple marrying at the advance age of 30 to 35 finds it more difficult to produce an issue or two, hence many of our Parsi families are childless. The problems they face are housing and unemployment, inflation and little attention paid to religion.

Business houses like the Tatas, Godrej, Balsara, Palia and others should encourage employment among Parsi youth, help build more houses and provide accommodation at lower costs, and parents should guide their children to follow the principles and laws of Ahura Mazda as revealed to us by Zarathushtra. The priests should conduct classes and give frequent lectures, awakening the community to faith in our prayers and religion.

Zoroastrians should refrain from 'idol-worshipping' in mandirs, churches, darghas, and keeping fasts etc., which ultimately unsettle the mind. (Idol-worship in Avesta is equal to demon-worship.)

The present Zoroastrians should realize that our prayers are the most

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Dastur Jamshed Kukadaru was able to create gold from bricks for funds to complete the Anjuman Atash Behram of Bombay.

What need is there for us to visit churches, mandirs, babas and darghas? Our ancestors under Neryosang Dhawal came to India to preserve our race and religion and we are destroying them with our false modern notions on mixed marriages and juddin navjotes.

Navjote is the ceremony of putting on the sudreh and kusti on a child born of Mazdayasni Zarathushtri parents. The child before navjote is called a Mazdayasni child and after navjote he becomes a Mazdayasni Zarathushtri.

After navjote it is necessary that no one should discard the sacred girdle or kusti on any occasion. Because of this the Parsis or the Iranian Zarathushtrians are called *baste kustiyān*, the wearer of the kusti. The navjote can only be performed of a child born of Mazdayasni Zarathushtri parents i.e. both the mother and the father should be of *kayani tokham* (blood).

The leading members of the community have no right to mislead the community into juddin navjotes or inter-community marriages without the authority of and proper consultation with high priests and Avesta scholars. Nobody has any right to change the traditions and rituals of our religion except the high priests.

ERVAD BOMI DINSHAW VAJIFDAR

True Descendents

Many Parsis today are of the opinion that a Zoroastrian is a person who professes the Zoroastrian religion. A Zoroastrian need not necessarily be a Parsi. Anyone who professes the religion promulgated by Zarathushtra—be he an Englishman, Frenchman or American, becomes a Zoroastrian the moment he is converted to that faith. On the other hand the word Parsi has only racial significance and has nothing to do with his religion. The word Parsi can only mean "the people from Pars."

In order to throw some light on this subject it is necessary to emphasise that:

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(1) The people of ancient Iran before the advent of prophet Zarathushtra were the Mazdayasni group of worshippers.

(2) The prophet brought about certain reforms in the then existing system and the same Mazdayasnis came to be known as Mazdayasni Zoroastrians. These worshippers of Mazda carried in their seed the hallmark of *Airi* (righteousness).

(3) King Darius himself had proclaimed: "*Parso Parsahya Puthra Airyo Chitra*" meaning, "I am a Parsi, the son of a Parsi having the seed of an Airyan."

(4) Pars was the only province in Iran which remained unhellenized after Alexander's invasion. Up to 226 AD Pars was an independent state and only the people of Pars preserved and practised the religion of Zarathushtra without any outside influence.

(5) Before the fall of the Achaemenian empire and even after the beginning of the Sassanian dynasty, every ancient Iranian Zoroastrian was a Parsi first and last.

(6) Parsis of modern India today are the descendents of those Mazdayasni Zoroastrians who carried in their seed the hallmark of *Airi*, and have practised and preserved the highest form of purity, as exhorted by Zarathushtra. Hence, only one who is born of both Parsi parents can be a Parsi Zoroastrian. A Parsi has to be a Zoroastrian and only a Zoroastrian can be a Parsi.

It is also necessary to emphasise that Parsis did not flee from Iran nor did they arrive in India as ordinary refugees. It had been calculated and determined long ago during the Sassanian times that after Iran's downfall, India alone would be an ideal country for the Parsis to preserve their *Parsipanu* and *Parsi Tokham*.

It has been stated in the *Kisse-E-Sanjan* that there was among them a learned dastur who had found from old almanacs that our stay there (Iran) was to come to an end. He advised: "If we wish to leave this country we must at once move out of it, otherwise we shall all come to grief. It would therefore be better if leaving the demons and the infidels we should proceed (not flee or be expelled) to India."

It can be seen from this ancient historical record that the Parsis were aware of the events to come long before they actually occurred and that they came to India not to save their skins but to save their lofty religion, which they knew would remain secure only in India. If at all they wanted to save their skins they would have easily done so, by re-

maining in Iran and embracing Islam.

It is now necessary to emphasise once again that it was only this small group of Parsis who really preserved and practised, in toto, what has been called in Avesta *Dareghanaam Upayanaam* (long standing religious traditions and customs). These Parsis who came to India were the descendents of the Mazdayasni group of souls who alone practised the Zoroastrian religion in all its purity.

NOSHIR H. DADRAWALA

New Centres Abroad

I have been reading of the various Zoroastrian associations coming up in the USA and Canada and am happy that Zoroastrians living abroad are taking such a keen interest in our religion.

This is very creditable, especially the active role played by our priests and Zoroastrian families living in Hinsdale, Illinois. It is also gratifying that the Arbab Rustam Guiv Darbe-Mehr Trust is extending large funds to establish Zoroastrian centres in these countries.

I do hope the younger generation of Zoroastrians living abroad will continue the good work.

FRENI DESAI

Basics First

The Readers' Forum is filled with views of different characters who consider themselves great authorities on the Zoroastrian religion. But the Zoroastrian community is more or less non-existent, though some literary experts will disagree.

The modern Zoroastrian is more of a farce than anything else, and long quotations from various ancient scriptures are often included in the Readers' Forum just to impress the reader. Does today's Zoroastrian practise the basics of our religion, viz. good thoughts, good words and good deeds?

The answer could well be in the negative; then why the big fuss of trying to understand anything more of our scriptures? Only those Zoroastrians who follow the basics of our religion should proceed further. After all, a tall building is built on a firm foundation.

Forget the comparisons with other religions and the different norms and customs they follow. Look within and first think and feel like a Zoroastrian, then talk like one.

T.S. IRANI

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Events and Personalities

Indian Derby Winner

Accompanied by victory roars from the mammoth crowd gathered at the Mahalaxmi Racecourse, Enterprising, the Zoroastrian trained, Zoroastrian owned and Zoroastrian ridden colt won the Indian Derby on February 5.

In the absence of the 1,000 guineas winner Snow, the Gaston-Salvation colt, Enterprising, jointly owned by N M Irani, Ms Zeenia S Lawyer, Ms Bakhtawar B Chenoy and Major P K Mehra carried the hopes of the stable and also of trainer Bezan Chenoy and jockey Pesi Shroff, notes a report in *The Times of India*.

The chestnut, who was bred by Veena Mehra at the Usha Stud, fully justified the confidence his connections reposed in him, and Shroff rode an extremely confident and well-judged race with great panache.

All won the Derby for the first time, adds the report, except for Major Mehra who won with Nelson last year.

Hotel Federation Chief

Pesi M. Shaw has been elected president of the Federation of Hotel and Restaurant Associations of India for the ensuing year.

A chartered accountant, Shaw

specialized in hotel accounting and management at the American Hotel and Motel Association's Educational Institute in Michigan, U.S.A. He started the Fariyas Hotel Consultancy Division and in 1970 was appointed Technical Director of the Fariyas Hotels in Bombay and Lonavala.

He is president of the Hotel and Restaurant Association (Western India) and a member of the Board of Governors of the Institute of Hotel Management, Catering Technology and Applied Nutrition, Bombay.

Shaw is also an associate member of the Hotel and Catering Institute Management Association, U.K., and

Noshir Irani (extreme left) accompanied by daughter, Zeenia S Lawyer and wife, Mehroo walks proudly with Enterprising, winner of the Indian Derby. Leading the colt is daughter, Bakhtawar Chenoy (right) with jockey Pesi Shroff astride.



a member of the sub-committee on Hotel and Entertainment, Planning Commission, for the seventh five-year plan, notes *The Daily*.

Boga Memorial Award

A Russi Boga Memorial Award for Conservation has been constituted in memory of a man who devoted the last years of his life to conservation. This was announced by his wife, Mehroo Boga, president of the Save Mahabaleshwar-Panchgani Association.

The award will be in the form of a rotating shield as well as a cash prize to be presented annually, on February 10, to any individual for the best conservation efforts in Maharashtra.

Boga's dedicated efforts towards the preservation of Mahabaleshwar and Panchgani led to his appointment as one of the environmental representatives on the Mahabaleshwar-Panchgani Regional Planning Board.

Reprinted from Mid-Day, February 11, 1984.

Planned Parenthood Chief

Ms Avabai B Wadia, president, Family Planning Association of India, was elected president of the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) at Nairobi in November 1983.

The IPPF, founded in Bombay over three decades ago, is the world's second largest non-governmental organization, according to a press release from the Family Planning Association of India. Ms Wadia was a founding member of this association which supports welfare activities for women and children in 118 countries of the world.

An active voluntary worker from her student days, Ms Wadia has been associated with the All India Women's Conference, in which she has held several offices. She has introduced a number of innovative features for spreading the knowledge of family planning in the country. At her initiative, the Association has launched several projects demonstrating the ways in which family planning can be linked with developmental and environmental concerns.

Ms Wadia is also known for her pioneering work in population education in India. She is responsible for the formation of Parivar Pragati Mandals for raising the status of underprivileged urban and rural women through income-generating activities.



Shaw: new head of hotels.



The late Russi Boga. environmentalist.



Avabai Wadia: IPPF president.



Pudumjee: award winning puppeteer.

These skills are integrated with family planning maternal and child care.

At the national level, Ms Wadia serves on a number of key government committees connected with family planning and population policies. In the international sphere she has held various offices in the IPPF.

Best Young Artist '83

Dadi Pudumjee, the talented young puppeteer, has been given the Sanskriti Award, by the Sanskriti Pratishthan, for being the best young artist in 1983.

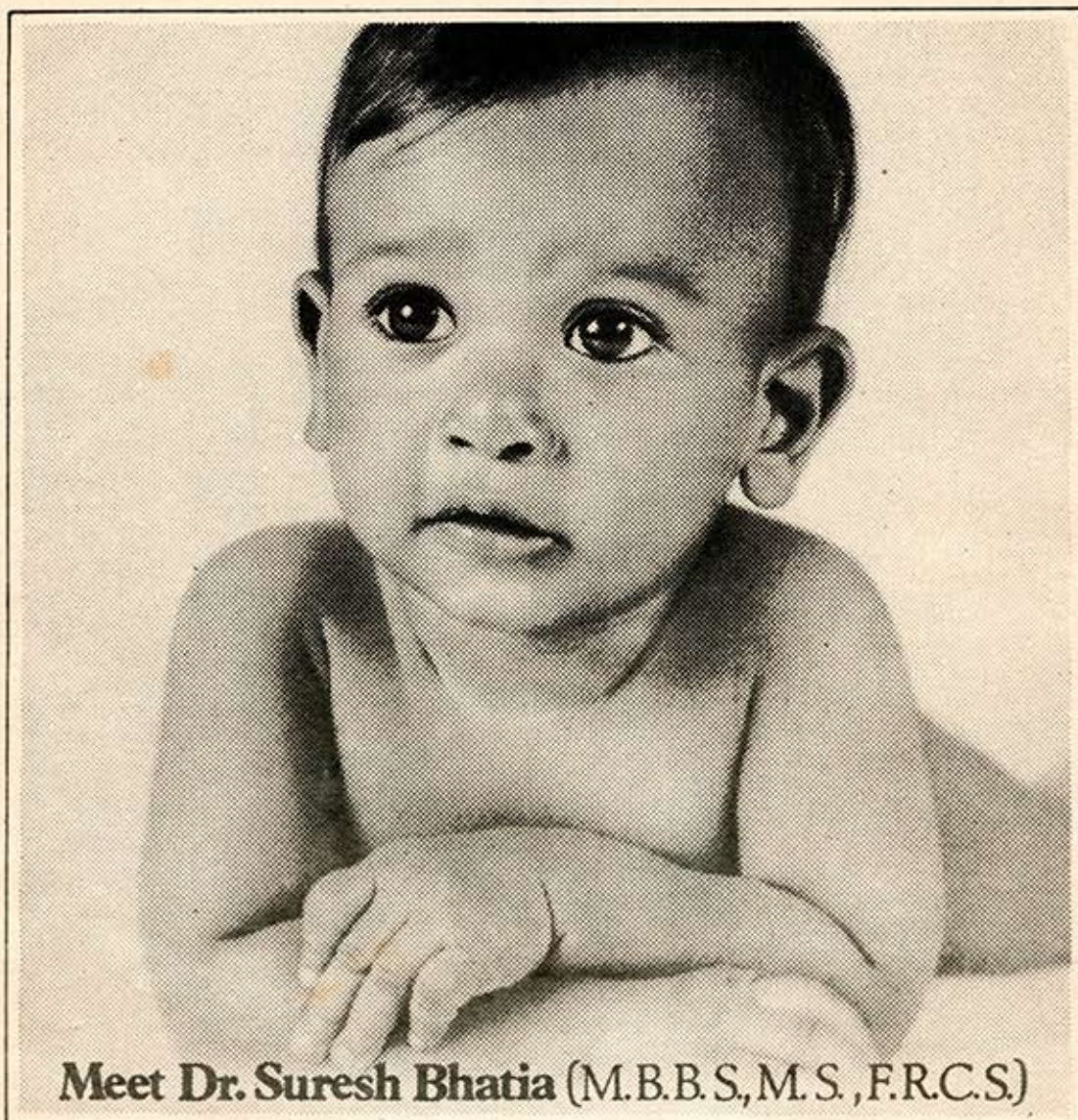
The purpose of the Sanskriti Awards is to discover, inspire and honour new young emerging talent, to make them aware of their own capacity and strength, and to express

appreciation for their creative contributions.

This award is given to artists between the age of 20 and 35 living within the territory of Delhi. Dadi will get a plaque and Rs. 5,000 for his work done in the field of puppetry.

From 1980 when the Sutradhar Puppet Repertory started, the first production was *Moti Ki Moonch*; in 1981 *Chhiyoram*, *Pakhendi Sher* and *The Ballad of Dhola Maru*; In 1982 *Ek Tha Joota* and *Rangila Rakshas* all done, executed and directed by Dadi Pudumjee. In 1983 *Utsav* was done also by Dadi followed by *The Little Mermaid* directed by Gunter Wetzel. (Puppets were made by Dadi and party).

With *Utsav* the Sutradhar Puppet Theatre experimented with Black



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Dadi has been selected by UNIMA — Union International de la Marionette (II World Committee) for a conference in Moscow. Dadi was the first Indian to get a UNIMA Scholarship to Stockholm. He got his diploma from Darpana Akademy in Ahmedabad, where he also worked for the ISRO space centre. He was invited to teach puppetry in East Berlin, Germany, and many other countries in Europe where his art and performances were much appreciated.

Godrej and Gorwala

The simplicity and humility of Soli Godrej, last year's sheriff, head of the Godrej industrial empire, environmentalist, is well-known. He dresses simply in cottons, drives a modest old Fiat, drinks only Indian liquor in India.

So, at a USIS reception recently, as is his practice, he told the hosts: "I don't like Indian whisky. So give me something else Indian, gin or rum."

Unfortunately, there was nothing Indian at the bar table, except beer. So, he demurred for a while, then allowed himself to be convinced that since the USIS was not exactly Indian territory, he could break his rule and have a foreign spirit. Then, as the host was about to pour him a Beefeater gin, he said: "Since I am breaking the rule, I may as well have Scotch."

Another gentleman with similar worthy principles is A D Gorwala, a distinguished former civil servant and editor of *Opinion*. Though brought up on the best of British traditions and used to a couple of "chottas" before dinner, during the dark days of prohibition, he

refused to drink in Bombay, because it was the law of the land and as an honourable civil servant he could not break it. However, when he went abroad, he drank.

These days, Gorwala does not go out much. But his friends and admirers call on him regularly and they go with a bottle. Gorwala shares the drink with them; then, the level of the remaining liquid is marked with a tag of paper stuck on the outside of the bottle along with the name of the person who brought it. The next time the donor of the bottle visits Gorwala, they continue to drink from the bottle and mark the next level on it.

So, in the house on Ridge Road, there is a table filled with bottles marked at different levels with the names of the bearers of the gifts inscribed on them.

Reprinted from Sunday Mid-day, March 4, 1984.

Girton School Building

When the old pupils of Bombay's Girton High School (established in 1888 by Ms B A Moos) realised that the rented premises on Grant Road were inadequate for the growing needs of the schools, they decided to raise the funds for a new school building. With this end in view they formed themselves into the Old Girtonians' Association.

A new building on Sleater Road, the Association's gift to their alma mater, was formally opened in February 1984. A prize distribution function, at which the eminent jurist Nani Palkhivala was the chief guest, was part of the inaugural celebrations. His wife Nergish, herself an old pupil of the school, distributed the prizes.

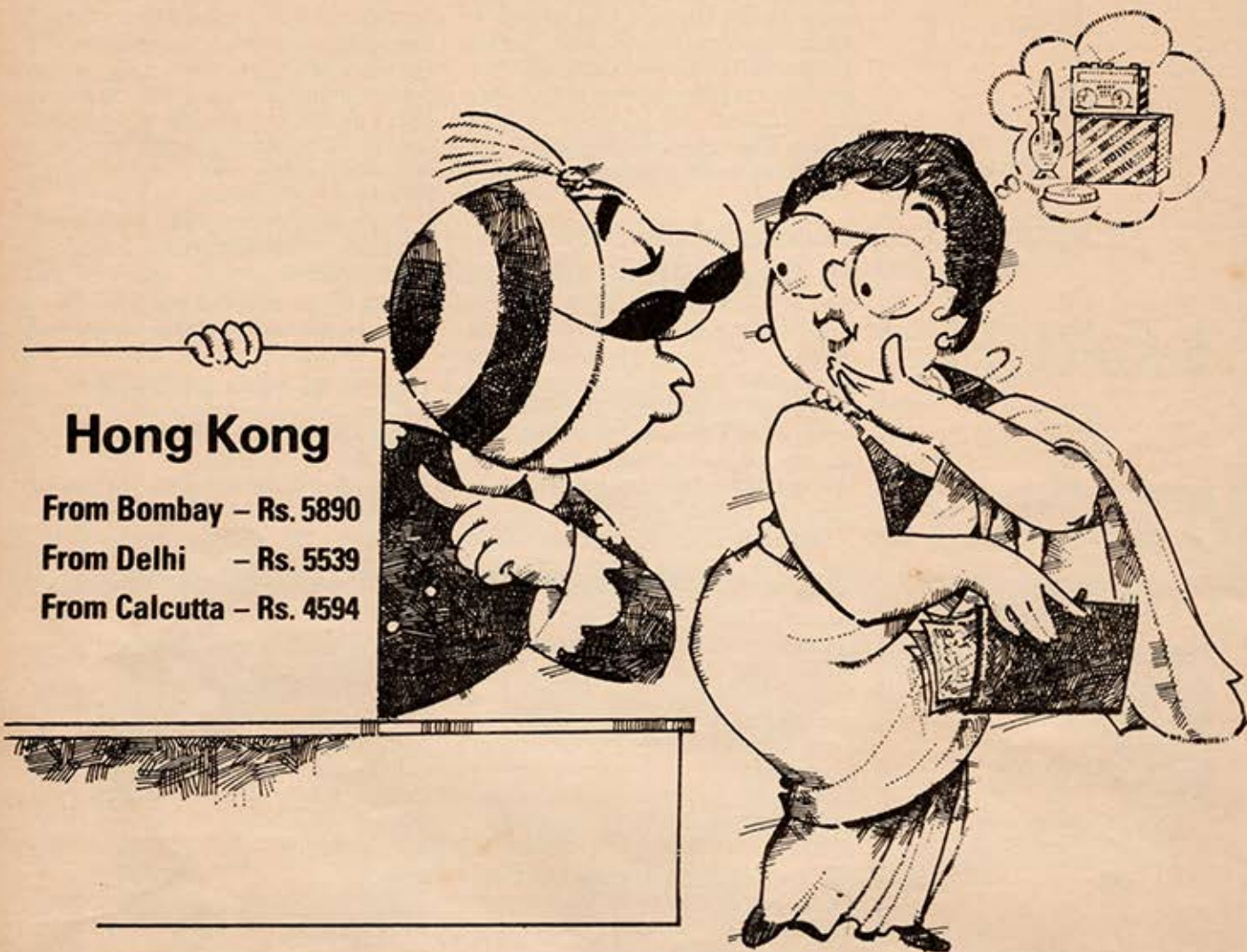
The Hon. Principal, Ms Silla Ardeshir and the Board of Trustees are happy with the new building, says a press

New Girton School building on Sleater Road.



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release from the Association. The building accommodates well-equipped laboratories for each of the science subjects taught in the school—chemistry, physics and biology. There are special rooms for geography and art, and also for audiovisual education, which enables the teacher to use films and slides as teaching aids.

Keki Takes Over

Former test cricketer Keki Tarapore has been appointed executive secretary of the Board of Control for Cricket in India in the place of Prof M V Chandgadkar.

Tarapore will have to implement BCCI policy decisions and maintain contacts with the customs, railways, passport department and travel agencies, which is necessary when sending out and receiving Indian and foreign teams.

Tarapore retired as the secretary of the Cricket Club of India (CCI) a year ago after serving it for over a decade. He was also the manager of India's most successful tour to England in 1971.

Reprinted from Mid-day, March 4, 1984.

Olympic Honour

Jal Pardiwala has been awarded the "Olympic Order," a bronze medal, by the International Olympic Committee. The award was decided at the IOC meeting at Sarajevo, where the Winter Olympic games were held. The President of IOC, Juan Antonio Samaranch, sent the 73-year-old physical educationist and athletics official a cable of congratulations.

The award is in recognition of Pardiwala's contribution to the cause of the olympic movement through his articles and books, notes *The Daily*.

The Finnish Government had honoured him with the 'Cruix de la Sport' in 1960 for the part he played during the 1952 Olympic Games in Helsinki. And then came the John Kennedy and Helms Foundation awards in 1967.

Pardiwala was the first Asian and the only Indian to sit on the technical committee of the International Amateur Athletic Federation. He was on the committee for nearly 24 years.

Pune Psychiatrist Honoured

Dr Roshen S Master has been appointed Professor Emeritus in Psychiatry at the B J Medical College and the Sassoon General Hospitals, Pune, for life. She is



the first individual to be so appointed in any government medical college in Maharashtra State, notes a press release.

An eminent senior psychiatrist of over 30 years' standing, Dr Master has been an examiner in psychology and psychiatry at many Indian universities. She has written the first textbook by an Indian on her subject and published 95 papers in scientific journals in India, the UK and the USA, quotes the press release.

Dr Master is the recipient of national and international honours. She is a corresponding fellow of the American Psychiatric Association, member of the World Psychiatric Association and associated with various Indian and British scientific and medical educational bodies. When the Royal College of Psychiatrists was chartered in 1972, Dr Master was invited to be a Foundation

Fellow—one of the two from our country.

Dr Master has been actively interested in the training and rehabilitation of mentally subnormal children, and is one of the moving spirits behind the Kamayani School for the Mentally Retarded, Pune.

Kirtankar Honoured

At a public function held under the auspices of Shri Kabirwadi Mandir Trust, Parvez Katrak, the well-known Parsi kirtankar, was honoured by the Kabirpanthi Trustees for his contribution to the propagation of Hindi devotional literature (particularly the teachings and philosophy of the saint poet Kabir). In the last eleven years, Katrak has given more than 400 free kirtan recitals, notes a press release.

Katrak is also the only Parsi kirtankar publicly honoured with a shawl and citation by the All India Hindi Kirtankars Conference, notes the report.



Top: Dr Master, Professor Emeritus in Psychiatry.

Above: Pardiwala, a bronze medal for him.

Left: Katrak receiving a volume of Sant Kabir from Swami Shri Satramdas Shastriji.



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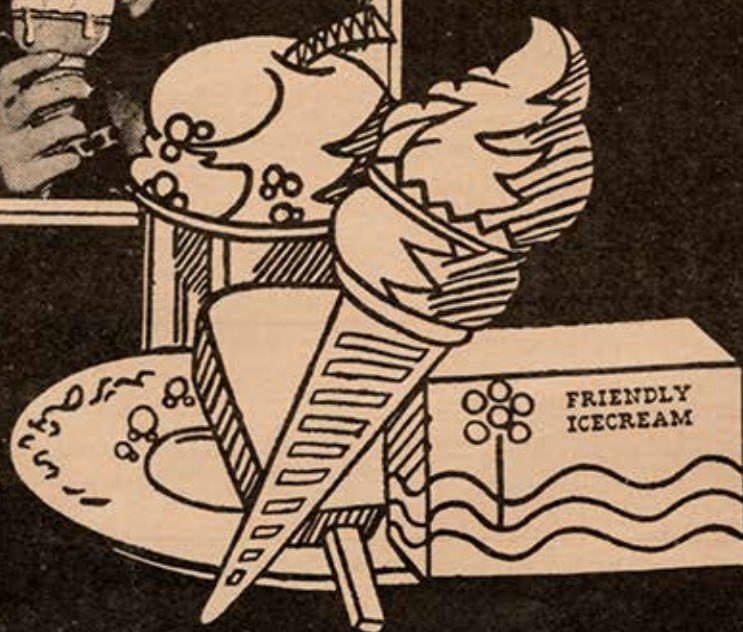


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The Federation: Tackling the Issues

The executive committee focuses on the WZO, defunct anjumans, jobs and the World Congress.

A decision to explore the possibility of finding a compromise solution between the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India and the London based World Zoroastrian Organization was one of the major features of the Federation's executive council meeting in Calcutta on February 11 and 12. Relations between the two apex bodies were strained and only deft handling through several hours of negotiations brought about a compromise for the moment.

The decision was all the more momentous with the approaching Fourth World Zoroastrian Congress tentatively slated for early January 1985 at which the workings of a world body are to be discussed. Plans for the Congress to be held in Bombay are under way and suggestions for topics to be discussed are being invited.

Among the other highlights, the Federation is to appoint a co-ordinator to assist in handling the assets of defunct anjumans, some of whose properties would fetch lakhs, if not crores, of rupees on the real estate market. A push for job opportunities and career guidance is also under way with the publication of a four page printed newsletter which is to be a regular feature of the Federation's Business and Career Opportunities Panel. Anjumans are being urged to form job and career committees to assist local job seekers and business persons. And the Bombay Parsi Punchayet is contemplating the establishment of a dharamshala in Bombay.

"Progress is measured in yards not miles," said Federation and Bombay Parsi Punchayet chairman Dr Aspi Golwalla while making his introductory remarks to the delegates at the Rut-Deen Hotel. "Progress is bound to be slow but sure. The roadblocks to our social and economic development will be removed."

The trustees of the Calcutta Zoroastrian Community's Religious and

Charity Funds, Dali R Bhesania, Ardeshir Batliwala and Dr Russi D Anklesaria had made meticulous arrangements from organizing a hectic two day program to preparing name tags and presenting the 30 or so delegates with wooden pencil holders with mounted asho farohars.

"I was wrong in thinking only Delhi could host the Federation meetings so successfully," said Federation vice-president and Delhi Parsi Anjuman and Trust president Shiavax D Nargolwala. "I have come to realize that there are more hospitable and generous people also," he said referring to the Calcutta community.

Where the anjuman had been defunct for 50 to 100 years, the Federation should base its decision purely on economic grounds.

In his welcome address Batliwala noted that Calcutta had been keen to host the Federation meeting for several years but, due to the split in the body caused by the abrupt departure of the BPP in January 1978, "we were sitting idle."

The meeting started with a procedural haggle over whether the Federation's honorary treasurer Pesi D Nargolwala was to be the Bombay Parsi Punchayet's 'focal member' liaising with the Federation or whether his services were to be used by the Federation's secretariat as and when required. Nargolwala also charged the BPP with "bureaucratic delay" in regard to a scheme for

amelioration of the priestly class. Both Golwalla and BPP Trustee Jamshed N Guzder denied the charge noting that as the scheme involved spending around Rs 50,000 in the first year, they had to await the minutes of the concerned meeting.

"There is no use going ahead when funds are not there," said Golwalla. In the meantime the BPP had given Rs 8,000 to a research student, Ms Huzan Kharas, to help defray expenses for a socio-economic survey of the Bombay priesthood to be conducted over a two-year period. Nargolwala was also peeved because he had not been given an opportunity to present his scheme for the priesthood to the Federation delegates. But when he began to outline the scheme Homi Bodhanwala of the Jamshedpur Parsee Association noted the matter "pertains to Bombay, not the Federation. We are wasting our time."

Shiavax Nargolwala suggested the formation of an all-India central fund to help the priesthood. "The Delhi Anjuman will make a contribution of Rs 10,000 if the others match it."

Batliwala noted the subject had been "discussed time and again... I and my co-trustees will try and give whatever we can."

Mani Clubwala of the Madras Parsi Zarhosti Anjuman noted Madras had "the highest paid mobed in the country: Rs 3,000 plus free housing for the mobed and an assistant. We have budgeted an annual loss of Rs 8,000 so we will not be able to contribute to this scheme."

"Nargolwala is lucky he can make such an offer without consulting his co-trustees," said Guzder. "We cannot state an amount without consulting our other trustees. If they say 'no', we'd have to fork it out of our own pockets."

Federation Honorary Secretary, Keki J Gandhi, suggested a rotation scheme whereby mobeds would have to go out of Bombay three months in a year to serve the mofussil and other anjumans.

"It's not feasible," cautioned Pesi

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Nargolwala. "The Bombay atash behrams and agiaris are hogging the mobeds. The priests are well paid. The favourable circumstances today are with them (the priests) not us. They will not leave their clientele and go."

"If they are so well off, the question of amelioration does not arise," countered Gandhi.

Golwalla ended the discussion noting that the scheme presented to the BPP would be considered by the trustees.

Jobs and Careers

A four-page printed circular on Job, Business and Career Opportunities listing job vacancies and vocational training opportunities was distributed to the delegates by Gandhi. The circular was an outcome of the Federation's Business and Career Opportunities Panel which met at Golwalla's residence on December 14. Gandhi stated there was a "communication gap" between the opportunities available and those seeking opportunities so the newsletter would narrow the gap.

Merwan Mehta of the Ahmednagar Parsi Anjuman noted he had all the necessary information on industrial opportunities in Ahmednagar and "anybody who wants to come to Ahmednagar should get in touch with me."

Bejan Dittia of the Parsi Zoroastrian Anjuman of Secunderabad and Hyderabad noted that according to a report prepared by the joint secretary in the Home Ministry, Government of India, 250 Parsis had appeared for the Indian Public Services Examinations for the Indian Administrative Service and other organizations but none were selected.

Noting the advantage to the community of having Parsis in the services, Golwalla said, "If you have clever boys and girls, the Bombay Parsi Punchayet will be willing to spend on them."

Jal Postwala, a naval officer who represented the Vishakapatnam Parsis as an invitee, noted, "there used to be a lot of Parsis joining the services in the 1950's and 60's. Many facilities are given but Parsi boys are not interested. Of course the salaries are not commensurate with the private sector "but it is a way of life. You have to choose between a salary and that. I would like to help any Parsi wanting to join." Postwala promised to send literature on the defence services to the Federation.

Nariman Balsara, an invitee from the Saronda Parsi Jarthoshti Anjuman,

stressed the need for Parsis to take up farming and offered to send a note on the proposal.

Defunct Anjumans

"What we are lacking is information," said Gandhi referring to the assets of defunct anjumans. Though all the anjumans had been requested to inform the Federation secretariat, none had done so. Even after the information was collected, the Federation would have to "employ someone to follow up" on the matter, said Gandhi. Once the particulars had been obtained, the executive council of the Federation could then take

"The Bombay atash
behrams and agiaris
are hogging the
mobeds. The priests
are well paid."

a decision on the disposal of the property. Gandhi felt where the anjuman had been defunct for 50 to 100 years, the Federation should base its decision purely on economic grounds, not "sentiment."

"Has the Federation got the funding to undertake such ventures?" asked Shiyav Nargolwala.

"We'll cross that bridge when we come to it," said Guzder. Nargolwala noted, "The problem of defunct anjumans was largely in Gujarat and Maharashtra. Neighbouring anjumans should be encouraged to take over responsibility," he suggested.

Gandhi noted that when mention was made of an aramgah at Surendranagar near Bhavnagar, the Surat Parsi Punchayet President Maneck Gheyara said he did not have the time to attend to the matter. This reinforced the need for a coordinator, said Gandhi.

Guzder stated that the Federation was best suited to deal with defunct anjumans and cited the example of how the Gujarat government was willing to hand over monetary compensation to the Federation because it was an all-India body, rather than to the Surat Punchayet.

B K Batliwala of Hyderabad-Secunderabad made mention of some property in Raichur on which he was requested to gather information.

Counselling

Gandhi informed the council that the BPP accepted the Federation's recommendation and sanctioned Rs 50,000 for a school counselling program in Bombay. "A committee is being formed," noted Gandhi.

Golwalla complimented the community intelligentsia noting that when you "write to Parsi experts, they all show willingness to help." He said a meeting of the counselling committee would be held in February.

Fourth Congress

Guzder informed the delegates that the Fourth World Zoroastrian Congress would be held in January in the first or second week. "It will be held on the same basis, same pattern," as the last Congress said Guzder. "Soon you will receive application forms. The venues being considered are the Birla or Shanmukhananda halls depending on the number of people attending. (Cusrow Baug is reportedly also being considered after the successful holding of its golden jubilee function on March 21 at the baug). Guzder invited the delegates to send their suggestions for subjects and speakers.

Golwalla noted at this juncture that he was keen to construct a dharamshala in Bombay before the end of his trusteeship. Noting the hospitality extended to the delegates by the Delhi, Calcutta and other anjumans, he felt there was a great need for a dharamshala in Bombay. A pitch for funds may be considered at the Congress.

Reservation for Parsis

Cushrow Irani, managing director of *The Statesman*, one of the leading English newspapers in the country, who was a guest speaker at the meeting said he was addressing the gathering as "a concerned Zoroastrian proud of his inheritance and tradition." He noted that the community had not asked for any concession from the government and should continue to refrain from doing so. He felt asking for concessions would cause "damage to our heritage and tradition."

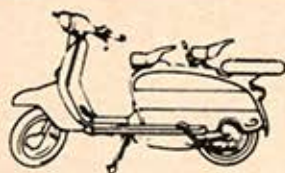
Irani spoke of the nassessalars and their lowly position in the community. "Can we not do something to improve their life?"

Referring to the bias against women in the community, especially in regard to the children of Parsi women married to non-Parsis not being accepted as Parsis,

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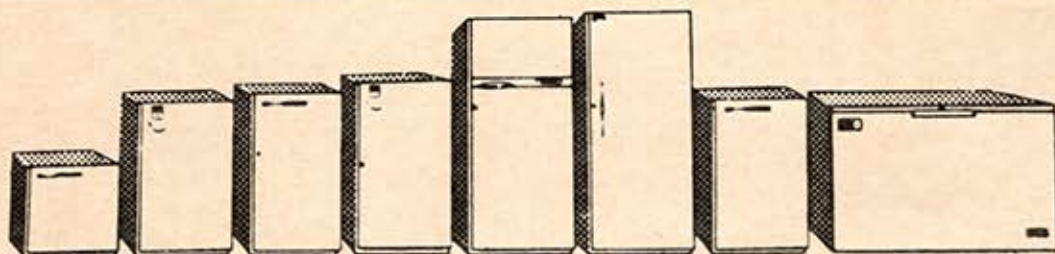
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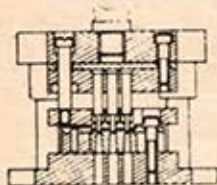
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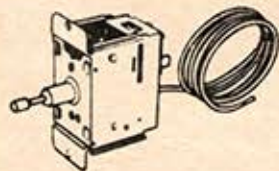
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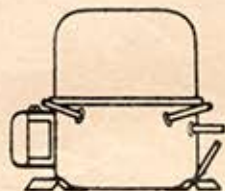
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Irani said, "Zoroaster was the first prophet to equate the sexes." Irani pleaded for a beginning to be made for removing the inequalities by accepting the children of those women who have married out of the community and are subsequently widowed, divorced or separated. He asked them to sympathetically consider the plight of the "one parent family" and the "effect on those young minds."

Bodhanwala concurred that "a great injustice is being done to Parsi ladies... we are doing something wrong to our womenfolk." As for the nassessalars, Bodhanwala noted, in Jamshedpur "We do everything ourselves no matter who is dead. Why have separate classes? We should all come forward and do the work."

On job reservations, Dittia agreed that reservations would be counter-productive and create resentment from the other communities.

"We should not lower ourselves to Harijan status," said Clubwala. She noted however, that in regard to education the community was at a distinct disadvantage as 33 per cent of the seats were in the reserved status. "Would it not be possible to reserve a few seats for

Parsis, in those educational institutions founded by Parsis?" asked Clubwala.

Pesi Nargolwala noted that an application along the lines suggested by Clubwala had been made by former Maharashtra Legislative Assembly member Ms Aloo Chhiber.

Shiavax Nargolwala noted that the community's greatest characteristic and strength has been adaptability. Parsis had risen by merit but "we have to think of the average person." Reservations would assist them. Nargolwala also reiterated that the Delhi Anjuman permits membership of non-Parsi spouses but without the right to enter the agiary. "No harm has been caused by membership of these spouses." Nargolwala also noted that the law pertaining to Parsi succession discriminates against women. When a person dies without leaving a will, he said "a daughter gets only half the share a son gets. A mother gets half of what a son gets. Our marriage and divorce act is the most outdated in India," said Nargolwala.

Merwan Mehta asked why the Zoroastrian prayers could not be recited in a language understood by the community. "We are conducting this

meeting in English—why not our prayers? Orthodox Parsis stress the vibratory effects of the prayers. It is time to (understand) the thoughts behind the words and the vibrations. The Christians have changed. The Tamils (Christians) recite their prayers in Tamil, the Goans in Konkani." Mehta said the inability to pray in a language they understood "is keeping Parsis from their religion."

B K Batliwala interjected that the "very incantation rules supreme. The incantation encompasses *humata, hukta, huvarshta*. Parents must continue to teach Parsi prayers."

Gandhi noted the fault lay not with the Avesta language "but with us for not learning Avesta. We should encourage our children to learn Avesta. We don't want to lose it... There is no reason why one cannot read the English or Gujarati version and also read the Avesta." Gandhi lamented that books authored by people like Piloo Jungalwalla were bought by anjumans and stored in godowns instead of being circulated. "These books have been written for children to read."

Nargolwala noted that the Iranians of old deliberately refused to translate the

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Koran into Persian so that the children would not know it and so maintain the Persian pre-Islamic heritage.

The World Zoroastrian Organization

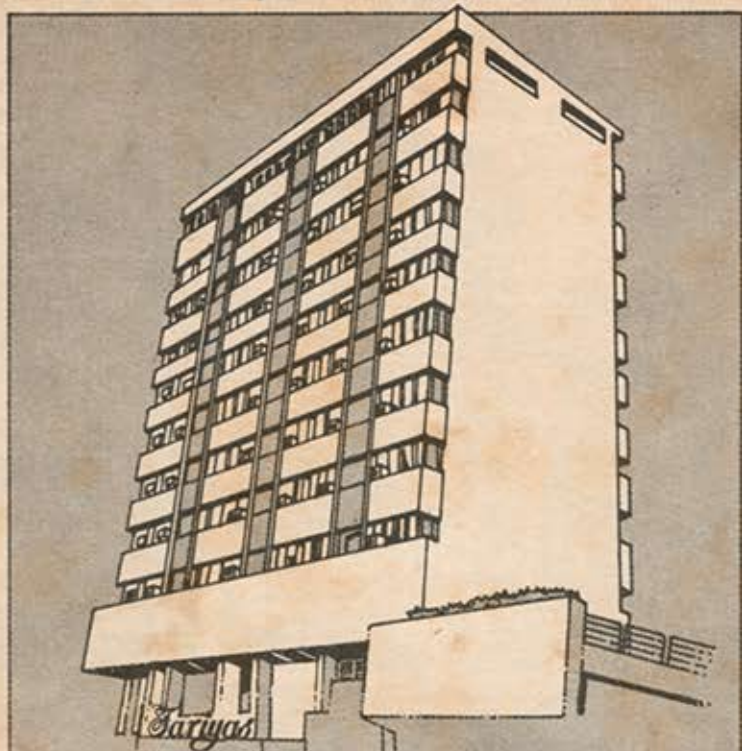
After lunch, the delegates prepared themselves for the major item on the agenda, the meeting with the World Zoroastrian Organization delegation which had especially come to Calcutta to put its case forward. Led by WZO vice-president Shahpur Captain, the delegation comprised Dinyar Mody from England and Dadi Mistry, a trustee of the Delhi Parsi Anjuman and a former honorary secretary of the Federation. Mistry's strained relations with Shiavax Nargolwala also contributed to the concern that there may be an unseemly squabble between the WZO delegation and the Federation. To minimize the chances of such an occurrence, Golwala had stated in the morning session that only clarificatory statements may be put to the WZO delegates. Subsequently the Federation representatives would discuss the matter amongst themselves.

Captain started his presentation by giving a bio-data of himself and a history of the London association which he said was 124 years old and had "a long and glorious history." He stated that 40 per cent of the Zoroastrians lived out of India and that some day the figure "may come to par or go further." This, he said, emphasized the need for a world body. In three world congresses, the formation of a world body had been discussed and unanimously favoured. But no one acted. "The Zoroastrians in London for years pressured the London association to form a world body. The London association was hesitant because the Bombay Parsi Punchayet was the premier body. The Bombay Punchayet was approached but nothing happened. In 1979 Dr Farhang Mehr (an influential member of the Iranian Zoroastrians who held a senior position in the late Shah's regime) said the London association should take the lead.

"We contacted numerous people around the world. We formed the WZO in 1980 just at the right time. The influx of Zarathostis from Iran had begun. You require a world body (to handle situations of this sort). It was decided that London, being central, should be the headquarters. It took 18 months to two years to finalize the constitution, one that would bear fruit for the community." He noted that Shiavax

continued on page 58

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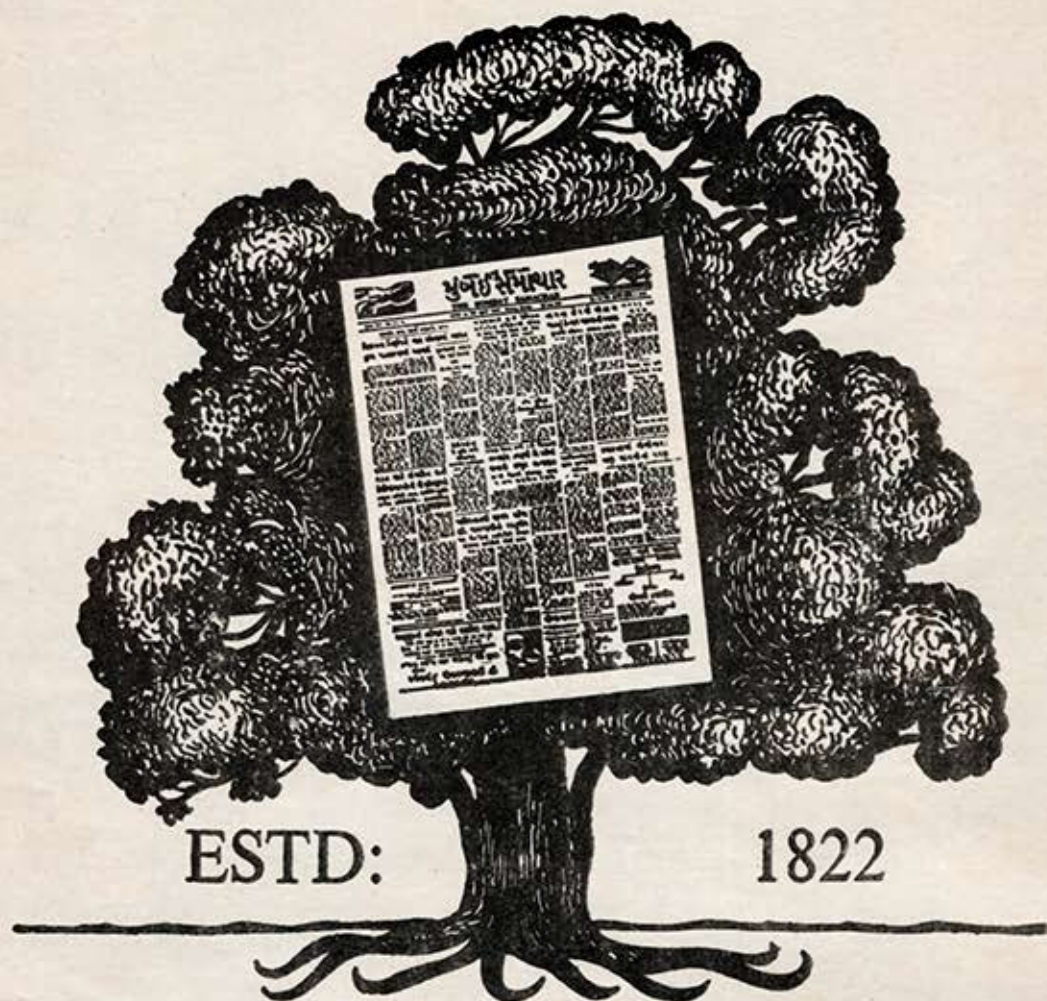
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Turning the Searchlight inwards

Cushrow Irani

After many years of apathy, there are unmistakable signs today of a revival of interest in community affairs, a search for our roots, a re-discovery of basic beliefs, and a certain pride in our achievements. This has led to healthy questioning of where we are going as a community and whether we are preparing our youngsters adequately for the tasks ahead and the role that we must play in the country's affairs. The past is important to an understanding of the future, but it does no good to bemoan our lot or to be unduly carping and critical of ourselves and keep thinking of the glories of the past. There is no point in decrying the fact that we do not produce Jamshedji Tatas today. The environment in which such entrepreneurs flourished no longer exists. The community has a great record of adaptability and we should bear this in mind and build upon it.

Over the last two days we have discussed in particular job opportunities for the community's youth and how the Federation can help to draw attention to the careers available to our young people, to prepare them for those careers and help with the necessary education and training. I would like to submit two points in this context for your consideration.

First, it is entirely right that we pay attention to these problems but I plead for a sense of proportion. There is much more to life than preparing and studying to pass examinations and getting jobs, although these are important. We have been told that we should concentrate on training people on how to conduct themselves during interviews, how to shake a hand, how to walk erect rather than with a stoop as you enter an office, how to dress in line with the person taking the interview and, generally, how to sell yourself. I must confess that I am a little impatient with some of these techniques. I think, above all, the person taking the interview will be impressed by somebody who is straightforward, sincere and frank in his answers. In these days of falling standards everywhere, the

integrity and sincerity for which the Parsi has been traditionally well-known must not be allowed to be compromised under a veneer of modern methods of how to sell yourself.

The other point is more fundamental. I have heard pleas for reservations of jobs for the Parsi community. I do not think anyone will quarrel with the view that what our country needs above all is an emphasis on merit rather than on privilege. Deteriorating standards of per-



Irani: confidence in community's future.

formance all round have a great deal to do with the evil of reservations based on every consideration other than merit. I am not denying the need to raise the level of the lower rungs of our society. It is a different matter altogether to create a vested interest, which is growing at an alarming rate, in belonging to particular castes and communities. The casualty can only be the pursuit of excellence—an important national priority in every country. To demand reservation of jobs or seats in educational institutions for the community suffers from two consequences in my view. One, it tends to suggest that two wrongs make a right. The other is to turn our back on the stand that the community has consistently taken ever since Independence, which is that unlike some other minority communities the Parsis do not want any special treatment and are prepared to take their chances on the same basis as

all other citizens. I would very strongly urge that we give up these ideas of reservations.

As Gandhiji used to say, let us turn the searchlight inwards. Our own young men and women are unwilling to break out of their narrow environment and the thought of a job away from Bombay or Calcutta or Delhi where they have been born and bred appears to strike some kind of near terror in their hearts. They show neither a spirit of adventure nor the will to succeed. They almost give the impression that the world owes them a living—not the best way to embark upon a career, reservations or no reservations.

Many parents, unconsciously perhaps, drive their children into one or the other profession that they have themselves fancied without the slightest regard for the aptitude of their offspring. This is a major reason why youngsters are unable to compete in the occupations into which they have been pre-directed under parental pressure. Vocational guidance at an earlier rather than at a later stage, is needed.

The Federation's energetic secretary, Keki Gandhi, has ambitious plans to fit the youngsters into proper jobs. I support his efforts, but I fear they will come to nothing unless our youngsters develop the right attitude to the challenges of life. I suspect that they have not been nurtured on the right spiritual and mental diet to equip them suitably. The will to succeed, the pleasure of overcoming obstacles, the sheer joy of achievement in the face of sometimes overwhelming odds have not been inculcated in the only way in which they can be effective—by setting an example.

I do not know if all of you have seen Nani Palkhivala's book recently published, *We, the People*. In a very moving Introduction and Personal Note, he recalls that as a child he suffered from a dreadful stammer and had as much chance of becoming an advocate or public speaker as a victim of multiple sclerosis has of becoming an Olympic athlete! That he is today one of the finest speakers that India has ever produced is not seriously in question. With characteristic modesty he ascribes his achievement to Providential Grace. I speak from personal knowledge when I say that the discipline he imposed on himself and the sheer exercise of the power of the will is an example that young people can emulate to great advantage.

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portant they must be fleshed out with the proper spirit and the right attitude to life. A firm spiritual foundation, by whatever name called, is important. Whether you call it God or whether you call it the Supreme Reality or the Harmony of the Universe, a recognition that we are part of a superior design of which we know very little is an essential element in the make-up of our youngsters.

I speak as a Zoroastrian who is proud of his ancestry, of his religion and of the traditions for which the community is well-known. I hope, therefore, that you will not misunderstand my motives. The first question I would like to raise is the quality of our religious teaching. I am often told that our prayers are in a language which is unintelligible today. I am not raising a religious issue here. I am raising the issue of attitudes. We seem to take the view that it is the business of our religion to make itself understood in a convenient form which will not tax us too much.

Calcutta has produced a man called Jatindra Mohan Chatterjee. He was not very well educated. He led the humdrum life of a clerk. Attracted towards the teachings of Zarathustra he taught himself Avesta and produced a very learned treatise trying to trace the relationship between our Gathas and the ancient scriptures of India. I am not suggesting that all of us devote our lifetime to scholarship as he did. I am stressing what can be done by will-power and hard work. The people who make these criticisms are also those who listen to operas in Italian or German without understanding one word of the text. Nothing prevents us from appreciating the beauty of our prayers by studying their meaning in translation. But this does not lead to the conclusion that we must abandon the original. When you say "Jashme Avange Mazda" and repeat it three times as we do, I, for one, experience a different sensation than if I were to say in English, "Come to our help, O Mazda" or "O God help us." Therefore, my conclusion is let us make the effort to understand what our prayers are all about rather than expect the prayers to come to us in predigested form. It is an issue that relates to the building of character.

The second question that I would like to raise is the state of our priesthood and its role in the community's affairs. I have heard stories of families who, for wedding and Navjote ceremonies, grudge the

payment of Rs.51 to the priest, but would cheerfully pay more than that to entertain each one of hundreds of guests invited for the occasion. Surely, there is lack of balance here and it is not simply a matter of money. We will not attract the right kind of human material into our priesthood until we treat them with respect and look after their creature comforts better than we seem to do today.

This leads me to the treatment that we accord to the Nasessars in particular, who render us the final service in our lives on earth. I find it obnoxious and repugnant to treat them as some kind of lower animal. The little that I know about our religion tells me that it was the earliest perhaps to preach equality and brotherhood, and to insist that there must be no discrimination between the sexes. Can we look at these problems, and if we recognise them as such I am sure, given goodwill and understanding, improvements can be effected.

I have left for the last the most controversial question of all—who is entitled to be regarded as a Parsi Zoroastrian. We follow the civil law on the subject. Children of Parsi fathers and a non-Parsi mother are accepted into the religion and are regarded as Parsis. We have a different approach when it comes to a Parsi mother and a non-Parsi father. I do not believe this is because of the fear that the community will be swamped by people with an eye on our Trust funds. Perhaps we are conscious of the social trauma of having Parsis with names and surnames which do not identify them as such. I know of children of broken families who live with their Parsi mother in a totally Parsi environment. If we recognise that there is a basic unfairness in our attitude and that there is a problem, then I think we will begin to approach a solution. In cases such as the one I have mentioned, would it be possible for the children to be admitted into the religion and the mother and children could take the simple civil remedy of reverting to their mother's maiden name so that the social trauma is avoided. We must bear in mind that these are social problems, not religious ones.

I would like to reiterate my faith and confidence in our community's future. When I was a little boy my parents used to read to me stories in Gujarati from Firdausi's Shahnameh. These 'kirtans' (for want of a better name) used to take place at the Bhika Behram Well in Bombay

and they were conducted by Behramsha Patel who was by all accounts a very forceful speaker. He used to preface his recitals by the following verse—

*Hamdin mahra sunjho pyara
Aa mahra kalaam chhe
Kayaniyo ni kahani thi
Pathar na dil malam chhe
Nam kari chali gaya
Zarthosti na niyagyan chhe
Muki gaya je kirti pachhal
Tethi tamune maan chhe.*

(Harken my dear co-religionists
These are my words
The history of the Kayanis
Would melt hearts of stone.

They became famous and departed
Our Zoroastrian ancestors
The glory that they left behind
Brings honour to you today.)

It is a useful and humbling reminder. Let us so conduct ourselves that generations to come after us will be able to recognise some of the foot-prints that we leave behind on the sands of time.

Edited text of a speech delivered at the Executive Council meeting of the Federation of P.Z.A. at Calcutta, February 11, 1984. The edited text of speeches by Dr Dara Antia and Jamshed Madan will be published in the subsequent issues.

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Looking Beyond Locks and Safes

The Godrej conglomerate was the brainchild of a lawyer who refused to perjure himself.

Bombay has never lacked men of ingenuity but the story of the Godrej brothers is a classic example of how imagination can be harnessed to create industrial history. The first major Godrej product was a lock. Its key remained for many years the symbol of the Godrej empire. Today, it is recognised as the symbol of a conglomerate that has moved beyond locks to include almost every consumer product from soaps to refrigerators.

The founder, Ardeshir Burjorji Godrej (1867-1936), was the eldest of three sons of a middle-class Parsi family in Bombay. All the three at first started training in different fields. Ardeshir trained as a lawyer and joined a solicitor's firm. Pirojsha joined the Victoria Jubilee Training Institute and got a degree in textile engineering. The youngest brother, Munchersha, joined the Tatas. He was asked to open a branch for them in Kobe, Japan. He did this so successfully that they asked him to open another branch in Paris. The Tatas later withdrew from Paris but Munchersha found the atmosphere there so congenial that he decided to remain in Paris and opened his own business as a merchant of precious stones.

Ardeshir, who promoted the Godrej and Boyce Manufacturing Co., finished his training and began to work. In the course of his work, he had to go to Zanzibar, East Africa. There he found that his client expected him to perjure himself in order to win the case. This Ardeshir felt he could not do. Moreover, he heard of Mahatma Gandhi in South Africa and was soon under the Mahatma's influence. The association was to have widespread repercussions. The Zanzibar incident disgusted Ardeshir so much that he returned to India and gave up being a practising

lawyer. He looked around for suitable employment and found it in repairing and manufacturing surgical instruments.

The new occupation was hardly a success. Ardeshir soon moved on to



Ardeshir Godrej: from law to lockmaking.

explore the possibilities of lock making. Here he was more successful. 1897 saw the promotion of the Godrej and Boyce Manufacturing Company Private Limited, with a factory at Parel. The manufacture of safes followed that of locks and soon Ardeshir became the first Indian manufacturer of any size and repute for locks and fire-proof safes.

One of Ardeshir Godrej's inventions was a fire-proof lining compound for safes which produced water vapour when the safe was subjected to the heat of a fire. He was also able to observe and record the effects of a tropical climate on the non-conducting composition with which safes are protected, and the corrosive effect of

some of these compositions upon the materials of the safes. These observations led him to improve upon his safes.

An American wrote of his company in 1917, "Among the firms who have gained a high reputation in this class of manufacture - the Messers Godrej and Boyce Mfg. Co. of Bombay are well known throughout India and the Far East." This encomium was justified many times over when various tests were conducted, both by the proprietors and independent agencies, to check the fireproof and burglar proof properties of the Godrej safe.

Amongst the most interesting of the various tests is one which took place in November 1904. John Wallace, editor of the *Indian Textile Journal*, who watched the experiment described it thus: "A safe-maker cannot afford to avoid a well-organised fire-test of his wares, and so for the satisfaction of certain prospective purchasers a test was made of a safe measuring 22 by 22 by 22 inches at the company's works in November 1904. The safe contained a strip of plywood, to which were attached pieces of linen, cotton, silk, and flannel. This was placed on the lower shelf against the wall of the safe. In addition, a coil of electric fuse wire, a ten rupee note, a sheet of foolscap paper and several news papers were placed in the drawers and on the shelves. A lacquered Indian box containing a piece of wax was also added. The fire of wood was lighted at 2 p.m. and was continued until the outer case was seen, through a long pipe placed against it, to be red hot. The heat was unpleasantly felt at a distance of 25 feet. Nearly three hours later the door of the safe was opened quite easily, and the referees reported that every one of the samples was found intact and without any sign

During the 1944 explosion, when a whole section of the city became a mass of burning rubble, Godrej safes were found with their contents uncharred, intact.

of deterioration. The wax had melted, but it solidified again on removal."

A true entrepreneur is never content to stay still. So it was with Ardeshir. He was constantly working on new products. A few of them became commercial successes. Amongst the products he dabbled with were biscuits, edible essences, papaya toffee, canned foods, printing inks and boot polish. Soaps and vegetable oils were commercially viable and soon Pirojsha was managing Godrej and Boyce full-time so that Ardeshir could concentrate on the new soap company.

The early half of 1918 saw the premises at Sankli street, Byculla, being specially fitted for the manufacture of high class toilet soap. Ardeshir was a shrewd businessman with a flair for advertising. He capitalised on the religious sensibilities of the masses by submitting his soaps to rigorous tests and obtaining several references proclaiming it to be a soap made of pure vegetable oils with no animal fats in its composition. This was made a plank for its promotion. The new soap even converted the Maharaja of Mysore, a devout Hindu who until then had used the famous sandalwood soap of his state.

The advertising campaign revealed a true showman. Ardeshir initially introduced Godrej soap No. 2. When the soap did well, he introduced soap No. 1 and advertised: "If soap No. 2 is so good, then soap No. 1 has to be even better." From soap to cosmetics was a small step and to acquiring plantations to grow the raw materials required, even smaller. But the company grew large and fast.

Ardeshir died in 1936. He had never married and had no heirs. It was fortunate that Pirojsha was interested in the companies. Ardeshir was the innovator, but Pirojsha was the consolidator. There were few new products until the second generation of Godrej's entered the organization. But experiments are often costly failures. Old lines needed to be strengthened and management streamlined. Without the steadying influence of Pirojsha, perhaps there would not have been a strong enough base with which to launch the typewriters, forklifts and refrigerators, with which we are so familiar today.

Ardeshir Godrej — the pioneer

Bombay 1897, where the sun-hatted horses pulled trams through steamy streets and gothic gargoyles looked out over frenzied bazaars and serene maidans to the sea. It was in this commercial, cosmopolitan city that the eldest son of a Parsi family decided to switch from law to lockmaking. His name was Ardeshir Burjorji Godrej. His dream: economic and political self-reliance for India.

These ideals Ardeshir Godrej shared with other men of the time — Tilak, Tagore, Gandhi. With them he actively supported the Swadeshi Movement.

With his little lock workshop grew Ardeshir Godrej's visions of large-scale industry. From locks, he went to safes and soaps — all without protection — selling his products in open competition with similar items which were imported. And to every product Ardeshir Godrej brought something special — an identity as a refinement, a dependability, a pioneering difference.

Vikhroli, the Godrej industrial garden township, today embodies Ardeshir Godrej's ideals of continuous growth, proving that a constantly searching spirit and a sense of humanity can create a new enlightened character for modern industry.

One of Ardeshir Godrej's inventions was a fire-proof lining compound for safes which produced water vapour when the safe was subjected to the heat of a fire. This invention went through its severest testing ground in Bombay during the 1944 explosion when a cargo of gold, cotton and ammunition blew up in the docks and a whole section of the city became a mass of burning rubble. When salvage operations were finally possible, only Godrej safes were found with their contents uncharred, intact. Ardeshir Godrej's fire-proofing compound is still being used on Godrej safes today.

Until 1921 the raw material for soap making was animal fat or tallow.

Ardeshir Godrej was convinced that vegetable oil could be used as a substitute. He decided to experiment and to his great joy found that it worked. This was the first time a wholly vegetable oil soap had been created ... starting a range that was soon to become a success in India and abroad. Another of Ardeshir Godrej's dreams thus became the beginning of a significant industry.

Courtesy : The Godrej Story

Pirojsha Godrej — the consolidator

The late Pirojsha Godrej had a dream long before independence, and we see it fulfilled at Pirojshanagar, the Godrej industrial garden township at Vikhroli, Bombay. He dreamt of a free people who could think for themselves, who could shed the shackles of dependence. In "Godrej" freedom was won before 1947, as self-reliance was considered indispensable to progress.

The profits have been ploughed back consistently into the business, and a Public Charity Trust was also created by Pirojsha Godrej. We see this fulfilment in the lives of 20,000 people — the Godrej workers and their families — in the diverse Godrej products: from security equipment, machine tools, forklift trucks and steel castings to steel furniture, typewriters and refrigerators — besides soaps, toiletries, chemicals and animal feeds. You also see fulfilment in the continuous research and development at Godrej, in the modern Design Centre, in housing and in education.

Yes, Pirojsha Godrej had a dream of flowers and gardens, and progress for his people which has been brought about also through health and family planning programmes, long before laws were made to protect the environment and interests of workers.

Pirojshanagar is today a symbol of enlightened Indian enterprise. It is also a vindication of the new spirit in modern industrial outlook.

Courtesy : The Godrej Story

GP

Reprinted from The Economic Times, February 18, 1984.

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The Yezdi range:

YEZDI motorcycles come in a range of models — each of which has become popular in its own right. The Roadking and Oiling models are being offered only against foreign exchange. The D-250 Classic is the current favourite. And the mini marvel YEZDI 60cc will soon be out.

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The Kayani Story

Pinkie Virani

Think of beautiful sprawling Poona. Then think of soft, light sponge cakes which lie so lightly on the stomach. Then, hot, crunchy Shrewsbury biscuits which melt in the mouth. What comes next to mind, almost instantaneously, is the name Kayani's, one of the oldest bakeries in Poona, known all over India.

Kayani's isn't just a bakery anymore. It's a symbol of a way of business, almost disappeared, where adulteration and unethical practices have absolutely no place. In fact Kayani symbolizes a way of life which, also, has almost disappeared even in Poona. But it is evident on East Street: in the high-ceilings of Kayani's where clean fans languidly whirl on burnished oak-wood furniture and among the staff who don spotlessly white, starched aprons every morning to serve the thousands of customers politely.

The man responsible for inculcating the finer values of life into a business that has become renowned for its honesty is a 74-year-old Khodayar Naushirwan Kayani. Kayani sits behind the main counter, fingers slowly but neatly packing golden cakes into brown, delicious-smelling bundles, his bright eyes under the black velvet skull cap surveying customers as they troop in and out of the portals.

To many in Poona, Kayani appears a



Kayani Bakery on East Street: symbolising a way of life.

formidable figure, almost unapproachable. But under the stern exterior lies a heart of gold. Apparent as it is when Kayani talks of how much things have changed, how prices have gone up

and how he is, then, forced to raise his own prices. "I cannot do anything," he says with regret, his eyes clouding. "Hum sachā dilse naraaj hota hain. The happiness I get in maintaining a low price is twice the sadness I feel when increasing it. But, what to do, there is no 'ilaaaj'."

Kayani speaks in an appealing combination of English and Irani-Hindi. The Hindi he picked up when he came to Bombay from Yezd, Iran, at the age of ten. That was in 1919. He then worked as a waiter in an Irani restaurant, serving special tea in glasses, wiping the watery brown marks left by them on marble-topped tables with a duster slung over his left shoulder.

He worked hard, very, very hard. He worked so industriously that he became the restaurant's partner within seven years. "I saved as partner for seven years," says Kayani, "then I sold the restaurant and came to Poona with my wife and children. In 1933, I became the partner of Royal Bakery here. In '54, I purchased this place from a very famous Italian confectioner, F. Muratore."

Kayani started with the assistance of seven people. "I have 30 people today,"

Khodayar Kayani's personal touch.



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he says. Sons, Noshir, Minoo and Jal, grandsons, Nauzar and Firdaus, and nephews, Parvez, Sohrab and Farokh, form an integral part of Kayani's today. Ms Homayun Khodayar Kayani ("we call her Homai") still provides the moral support from home.

Kayani talks about what upsets him most—the rise in prices. "In 1933, sponge cakes cost 50 paise per pound. Today they cost Rs. 9. Shrewsbury's per pound cost 14 annas, today Rs 24 per kilo. Raw materials like sugar cost Rs 500 a bag when they used to cost Rs 9. Maida was Rs 9 a bag, that's 90 kgs; today it's Rs 270. Butter was nine annas a pound, today it's Rs 34 per kilo. Bread cost one anna a loaf of eight ounces; today Rs 1.50 per kilo.

Outsiders may know of Kayani's solely for its cakes and biscuits but bread is what the bakery has built its solid reputation on. More than 2,000 loaves of bread, absolutely free of chemicals, leave Kayani's for local consumption every day. Every pale gold loaf is made by hand, the only time it reaches mechanization being when it's cut by a machine whose blades are meticulously cleaned twice a day.

"We clean the whole bakery everyday in the afternoon," says grandson Firdaus. "Grandfather insists on everything being spotless when we open again in the evening. He also insisted on fly-proofing the whole place. We aim at carrying on with whatever he has trained us. When he was sick, and away for two months, we ran the bakery. When he came back and inspected the place, he was very pleased with us."

There are traces of Kayani's personal touch all over the bakery, in the cake-mixing machine and in the ovens. Even in the godown which Kayani himself built. The motto that Kayani has enshrined, "honesty, cleanliness and quality," is evident throughout the premises.

"I have cancelled 16 items that we used to make," says Kayani, "because the ingredients like kaju, kismis, badaam, became too costly and I didn't want to use groundnuts. When there is no good quality ingredient available for an item, I stop the item for 8 to 10 days. But I will not cheat my customers."

Which is also why Kayani does not make more of any item than the specified amount. "We make by hand," he says. "Make more and the quality will spoil. The customer has to be given the right kind of quality for the amount he

pays. Then only can we have 'barkat' through their 'dua'. Which is why we do not encourage people buying from us and then selling in Bombay. Supposing there is adulteration, 'dagal baazi', what will people think of Kayani's?"

Asked about his special recipe for Shrewsbury biscuits, Kayani says, "What recipe? 'Hum recipe nahin dekha, na England gaya sikhne ko'. People like the Shrewsbury because it is made with best material. Best material produces best results." The results, Shrewsbury biscuits each stamped proudly with an entwined KB, travel the length and breadth of India when visitors pick them up in Poona.

Kayani does not advertise. "When people come to us for advertisements for souvenirs, we say, 'Take the money as donation.' Our advertising is when a customer takes home our cake and biscuits and thinks them good enough to feed his children with. Their 'dua' (good wishes) is our best advertisement."

Kayani's is open seven days a week from 7.30 a.m. to 7.30 p.m. except in the afternoons when "our salesman should also get rest." Situated on 6, Dr Coyani Covaji Road, (East Street), Poona—411 001.

Reprinted from Mid-day November 15, 1983. Photos courtesy Mid-day.

Tours Under Her Wing

Naazneen Karmali

As appearances go, people would label Gita Choksi, general manager, tours, Thomas Cook as "well turned out." There is more to her though, than just matching accessories and lipstick. Take this figure for instance: when Choksi joined Thomas Cook in 1980, the annual turnover of the tours department was Rs. 44 lakhs. Today it is almost a crore, she informs matter-of-factly, choosing to play down her contribution.

Long overdue

Her recent promotion to the general manager's post has come not a day too soon. In fact it was long overdue. As Choksi laughingly admits, "The responsibility came on long before the designation." The statement reveals an important facet of her working style—she has never feared taking on responsibility and being held accountable for her decisions. This attitude has been ingrained in her, she confesses, by her mentor, K. B. Sarwal, who recently retired from Thomas Cook and was formerly with Cox & Kings. In fact, it was Sarwal who was responsible for her entry into the travel industry.

At that time, the university-fresh

Gita Choksi: 'responsibility long before designation.'



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Choksi was working as "head cook and bottle washer" i.e. an account executive at International Advertising and Marketing, a subsidiary of L. P. Ayers (the advertising agency has since folded up.) As she recalls, "I just didn't enjoy being kicked around by clients. Maybe I was just a third-rate sales person." Before the year was over, she had made up her mind to move out of advertising but wasn't quite sure where to go.

A chance conversation with Sarwal of Cox & Kings, one of IAM's clients, resulted in a job offer for Choksi. "That was the beginning of nine wonderful years at Cox and Kings," she enthuses. "And while initially I was looking after publicity brochures and advertising, I found myself gradually getting more and more involved with the operational aspect of tours." Organising Indian tours of foreign groups is an important foreign exchange earner for a travel agency and for Choksi this involvement opened up a whole new world.

Thus, her joining the tours department in 1972 was natural and to a certain extent, expected. A year later, the functions had widened to include even planning and promotion of tours. "There was really no dividing line," Choksi recalls, "I had a direct link with Sarwal and was always reporting to him. And it was he who instilled a great deal of confidence in me."

Then came an experience that was more or less to seal her fate. Choksi was hurriedly despatched to Europe on a four-week promotional marathon, the object of which was to spread the word around about the company's tours, meet agents and of course, get some business. It was literally like groping in the dark for Choksi who had until then never stepped out of the Bombay-Pune-Panchgani circuit. "It was a frightening experience. I visited 17 cities in 28 days and met 72 travel agents. (These figures are stuck in my mind!) At the end of it, I had lost my voice."

Positive response

The jaunt however proved fruitful in one significant aspect: it succeeded in creating an awareness about the travel agency. The follow-up was a mailing campaign consisting of a series of personalised letters. This too worked out well and evoked a positive response.

It was successes such as these that found Choksi moving quite rapidly up the corporate ladder. When she left Cox and Kings in 1980 to join Thomas Cook

she was leaving one managerial position to take up another. The move meant more than just a higher post and salary. The family like atmosphere of Cox & Kings, "where we had a fantastic team of people who had grown with the organisation," was replaced by a much larger rules-conscious set up.

Building rapport was a problem that was made more difficult by the fact that "I was a rank outsider and a lady at that. I could distinctly feel the cold vibes," she recalls in amusement. Of course, matters have been smoothened out by now and the lines of authority clearly established.

Today Choksi finds that promotion of tours and planning new tours takes up a good chunk of her working hours. And though the nitty gritty of the operational function is looked after by the staff, she feels that it is important to keep in touch with it. The most crucially important task, according to her, is negotiating rates with hoteliers. Hotel charges form an important component of the costing and the kind of deal hoteliers would offer depends on the number of people in the group, the time of year and where the tour is originating from. "The competition is so intense that even a difference of \$2 counts," she says. Her job also covers maintaining good public relations with the airlines and hotels, dealing frequently with bureaucracy and travelling three to four times a year "mostly abroad".

Conscious choice

The orbit Choksi covers today includes not only organising tours within India but also neighbouring countries like Sri Lanka and Bhutan. At Thomas Cook, the travel and tours wing accounts for not more than a fourth of the total turnover. And this is by conscious choice rather than any operational constraint. As Choksi candidly admits, "As far as tours are concerned we are quite low down on the top 10 list; probably number eight or nine."

The agency occupies a somewhat similar position in the outbound tours market, preferring to adopt a low key approach rather than go in for aggressive marketing and advertising as even smaller agencies do. Where competition is so fierce, a certain amount of wheeling and dealing is indulged in especially by the smaller one-man outfits and bucket-shops. "But that's all part of business, isn't it?" says Choksi, her dark eyes flashing, as she reveals yet another unexpected facet to her personality.

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The Shipbuilders of Bombay

Charles Allen



Anchored in the roadsteads off the British Navy's dockyard at Portsmouth, a battered, ancient bulk swings with the tide. Compared with Nelson's flagship, *HMS Victory*, gleaming with spit and polish and fresh paint in her dry-dock close by, she seems a pathetic sight, with her masts cut short and her gun-ports battened down. Yet the history of Her Majesty's Training Ship *Foudroyant*, formerly named the *Trincomalee*, is just as remarkable in its own way as that of its more famous sister-ship of the line—not because of the men who sailed in her but for those who built her.

Victory and *Foudroyant* are the last survivors of the days when Britain's Navy really did rule the seas, but *Foudroyant* has the distinction of being the oldest vessel in the world that is still afloat and in active service, which these days means serving as a training ship for youngsters who come aboard for a few days to learn what it was like to live and work in an old man-o'-war. One reason why she has stayed afloat for well over a century and a half is that unlike the *Victory*—made from the 'hearts of oak' that English seamen

were so proud of—the *Foudroyant* is built of Malabar teak, cut from the forests of Western India. *Foudroyant*, in fact, is not a British ship at all but an Indian one, built for the Royal Navy in a Bombay shipyard in 1817.

The shipwrights who designed and constructed the *Foudroyant*—along with 15 other fine sailing ships for the Royal Navy and a great many more for the Indian Navy—were all

What was even more galling for British shipbuilders was that the Wadia ships were also far superior in handling to their own.

members of one extraordinary family who for nearly two hundred years dominated the dockyards of Bombay, and helped to turn what was a quiet backwater into the busiest seaport in Asia.

Their story begins in 1736 when a

young foreman carpenter from Surat, a Parsi named Lowji Nusserwanji, was invited by the British East India Company to come south to Bombay with his team of carpenters and modernise the shipyard. He arrived accompanied by a work force of 10 Parsi carpenters, five of them members of his own family. He put in 50 years of service, for small financial reward but earning an outstanding reputation as a master-craftsman, as well as the title of Wadia (shipbuilder), which his family adopted as its surname. On his retirement he was succeeded by his two sons, Manekji and Bomanji, who took over the running of the shipyard and dry-dock that their father had constructed (now the site of the Government Dockyard).

This was at a time when the shipbuilding industry in Britain was facing a crisis brought on by a shortage of mature oak timber. So many ships were being built for trade and to supply the 'wooden walls' of England in her wars against other maritime powers that the great oak forests of Southern England were becoming seriously depleted. However, there was strong



*Maneckji Lowji:
second Master Builder.*



*Jamsettji Bomanji:
third Master Builder.*

opposition in England to the idea of using Indian ships to make up the numbers. It was argued that Bombay-built ships would not be as well-made or as sea-worthy as British vessels, that Indian teak was too heavy and would rot in salt water. And when the first cargo-carrying Indian ships did arrive at the London docks they were 'blackened' by dockers and ship-owners alike on the grounds that they were taking away trade and jobs from British ships and British workmen—a cry that was to become all too familiar over the next two centuries!

These obstacles were overcome not by persuasion but by irrefutable evidence that Bombay ships built of Malabar teak by the Wadias for the East India Company's navy, not only cost far less, but could expect to last for 30 years as against an English vessel's average of 12 years. They were also stronger, as was demonstrated when only one ship, the Wadia frigate *Salsette*, came through undamaged after a British naval squadron was trapped in ice for nine weeks in the North Baltic Sea. What was even more galling for British ship-

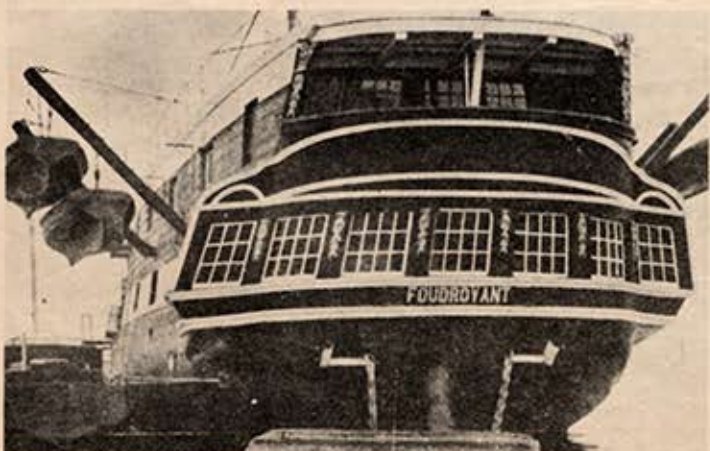
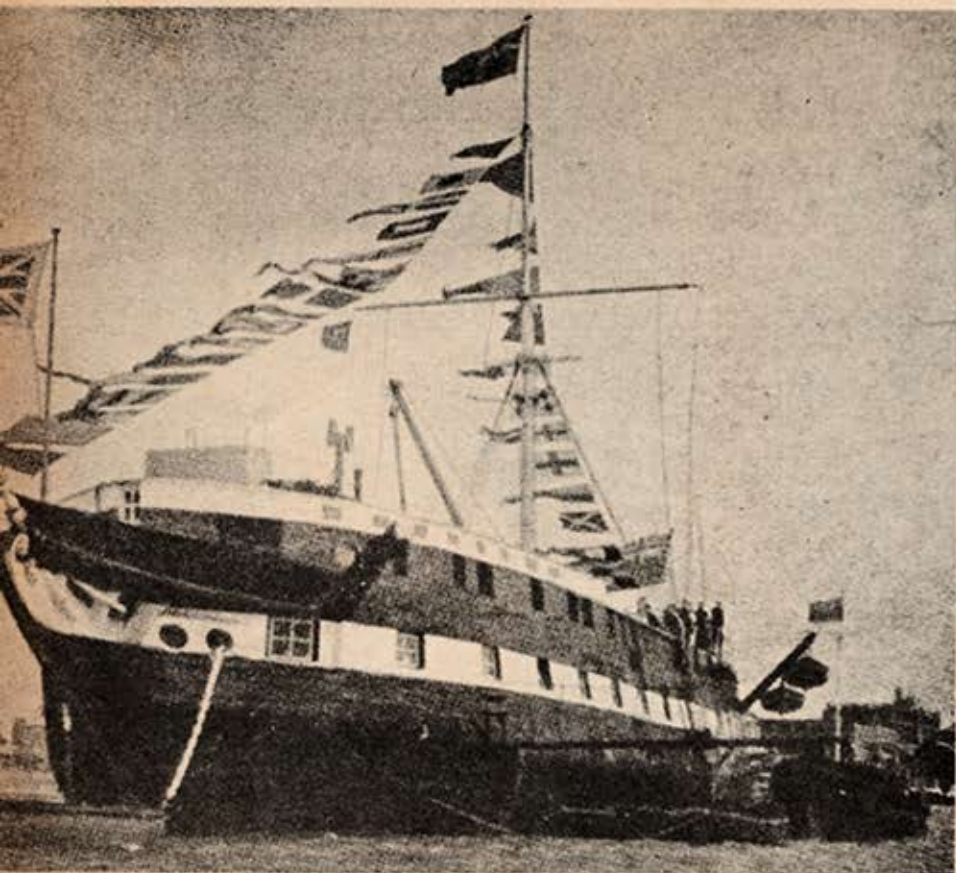
builders was the outcome of sea-trials which proved that the Wadia ships were also far superior in handling to their own. The consequence was that by the time a third generation of Wadias had taken up their rules and plumb-lines, the Admiralty in London was starting to buy Bombay-built ships off the Company's navy, a number of which joined the battle fleets then fighting the French. By 1810 the Admiralty was starting to commission ships for the Royal Navy direct from the Bombay dockyards and continued to do so until the advent of iron-clads more than half a century later.

To visitors arriving in Bombay at this period it must have seemed as if the Wadias were the town's first family. They owned land all over Bombay island as well as some of its finest houses and they mixed easily with Europeans, already providing that 'leavening material' that was to make the Parsis so useful as go-betweens among the British and the other Indian communities in Bombay. "I should never guess they were not Englishmen," wrote an English lady after meeting Jamshetji Wadia and his

brothers in 1809, "If I did not see their dark faces and foreign dress, or read their unusual names at the end of a letter." Another Englishwoman was equally impressed when she visited the home of Hormarji Bomanji Wadia in Parel, which he had named Lowji Castle, after his grandfather:

"We found ourselves ushered up a flight of broad and handsome stairs, which led to a magnificent drawing-room, decorated with the utmost richness. Luxurious couches and ottomans covered with damask silk were arranged with gilded fauteils of the most commodious form; good paintings, including full-length portraits of Lord Nelson and Sir Charles Forbes (a prominent British business figure in Bombay), ornamented the walls; and superb windows of painted glass, cast the brilliantly tinged rays of the departing sun on chandeliers of dazzling lustre. Princely in general effect, the whole combined well with the dignified and graceful deportment of its possessor."

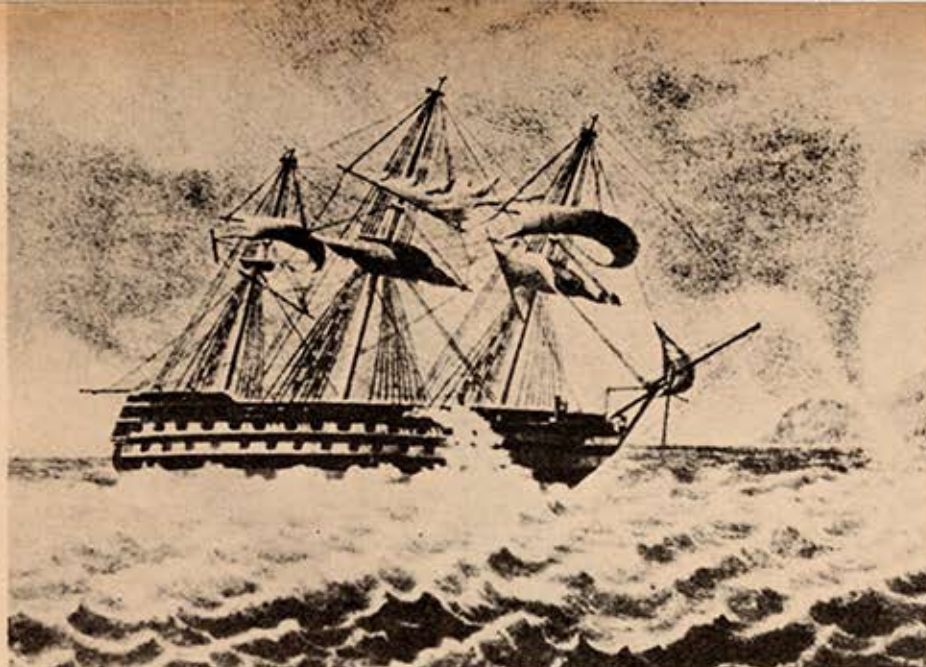
Even though the Wadias branched out into other occupations—notably and with great success into the textile



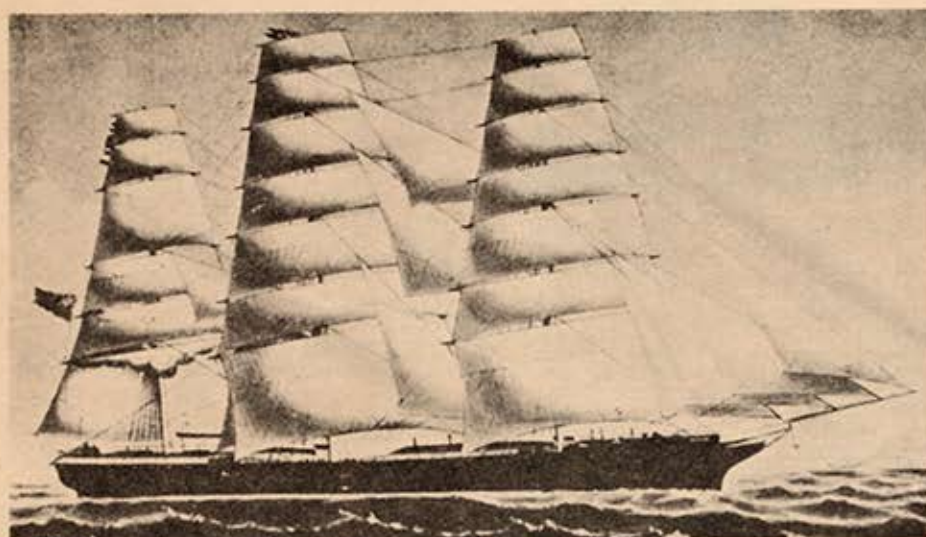
HMS Foudroyant: 'oldest ship in the world and still in active use,' its deck looking aft and stern gallery.

Right: Fifth generation of shipwrights drawn by Bandmaster Robert Temple (1801). Wadia family crest on stained glass, courtesy JBH Wadia.

Photos courtesy The Bombay Dockyard and the Wadia Master Builders by R.A. Wadia and TAJ Magazine.



HMS Asia: flagship of the British Navy.



HCS Tweed: unbeaten London/Melbourne passage in 83 days.

industry—shipbuilding remained very much the family profession throughout the nineteenth century. Their control of the shipyards was absolute—and remained so until 1885. "The master-builder has only people of his own persuasion working for him," wrote one observer in 1803. "The establishment of the dockyard is almost entirely composed of Parsis. It has been attempted to appoint a European master-builder, but the newcomer has seldom long survived his arrival."

It was upon this power base that Bombay's small community of Parsis built its future success, extending first into shipping, then into the opium and cotton trade with China and finally into textile manufacturing and banking. And in the process Bombay itself pro-

fited very greatly, because for many years it was only the success of its shipyards that persuaded the East India Company to keep open what was otherwise an unprofitable trading post on India's western seaboard. The British may have provided the stability that allowed Bombay to grow, but it was really the Parsi shipbuilders who opened up Bombay, transforming it into the most modern sea port in Asia. This meant that Bombay was primed and ready for the huge explosion in business that followed the lifting of the East India Company's trading monopoly in 1813, and which soon turned Bombay into the first city of India. So it would be no exaggeration to say that the Wadia master-builders were the real creators of modern Bombay.

"This ship was built
by a damned black fellow
AD 1800."



Famous Wadia Ships

Launched in 1800, the 74-gun *HMS Cornwallis* was the first Bombay ship of the line to be bought off the Indian Navy by the British Navy. She was still in fighting trim 26 years later when she fired the opening broadside of the brief Anglo-American war. Perhaps it was irritation at the slowness with which the British gave his ships the recognition they deserved that caused its builder, Jamsetji Bomanji Wadia, to carve a hidden inscription on the *Cornwallis* that read: "This ship was built by a damned black fellow AD 1800." More than 50 years after being launched, the *Cornwallis* was refitted with a steam-driven propeller and took part in the Baltic Campaign against Russia. Ten years later she took up a permanent mooring as an extension of the jetty at Sheerness in England. When she was finally broken up in 1957 she was found to be as seaworthy as she had been on the day of her launching.

The first ship to be commissioned directly and built for the Royal Navy was the *Minden*, which has a curious footnote in US history as the vessel on board which the American national anthem, *The Star Spangled Banner*, was apparently composed while she was shelling the town of Charleston, West Virginia! A more famous Wadia fighting vessel was *HMS Asia*, flagship of the British naval fleet at the sea-battle of Navarino in 1827.

Two Wadia ships hold records that remain unbeaten to this day: the grain-clipper *Tweed*, launched originally as the *Punjab*, once made the London to Melbourne passage in 83 days; and Her Majesty's Training Ship *Foudroyant*, formerly the *Trincomalee*, was launched in 1817 but is still serving as a training vessel in Portsmouth harbour—the oldest vessel, still afloat and in active service, in the world.

Courtesy TAJ Magazine, Taj Group of Hotels, India



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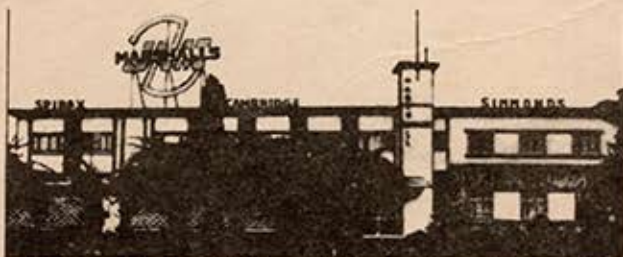
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The BPP's Five Year Housing Plan

Also schemes for counselling, education, health and repairs on the anvil

Arnavaz S Mama

A five year scheme of housing development during which the Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP) expects to construct over 1,000 new flats was announced at a press conference called by the BPP on February 24, at the Punchayet office. "The good news is that we have total Land Ceiling exemption for over 27,000 square metres at Godrej Baug (M & P plots) where the BPP expects to construct 400-450 flats at an estimated cost of Rs.3.5 crores," stated BPP Chairman, Dr Aspi Golwalla. The BPP civil engineering department also has been revamped to attend to the increasing repairs needed in the colonies.

Other news announcements included the proposal of a Trust Advisory Service that will guide and inform Zoroastrian trusts on legal and financial matters; the release of a three volume graded course on Zoroastrianism in English; and the institution of a public relations officer's post to ensure "better rapport with the community."

A pilot survey of neurological disorders, co-sponsored by the Bombay Hospital, has been undertaken by Dr Nadir Bharucha. Meanwhile the counselling service for school-going children, a project sponsored by the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India is under way with good response from the schools, the counselling committee having had its first meeting in early March.

Another sign of change at the BPP: the annual administration reports of the Punchayet which had been in arrears for the last few years have been brought up to date. Reports for the years 1975 to 1981 have been published, notes the BPP press release handed out on the occasion. The 1982 report is said to be under print and the 1983 report is expected within the next quarter.

The best news for out of town Zoroastrians is the BPP's plan to consider construction of a dharamshala in Bom-

bay, a project inspired by the BPP trustees' visits to various community centres to attend the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India meetings. The trustees, especially Dr Golwalla, felt the need to repay the hospitality extended by these communities to those from elsewhere. "If there is additional FSI in Godrej Baug or

The BPP is considering construction of a dharamshala in Bombay.

Kharegat colony, we may be able to interest the Godrej family in a Godrej dharamshala" he said.

Housing

"In the last 10 years the BPP has constructed just about 200 flats," noted BPP trustee Jamshed Guzder. "The previous policy was to await donation and then construct. We've decided we cannot wait any longer." Declaring the BPP trustees to be go-getters, Guzder continued, "We must take the initiative to evolve a self-generating scheme. We cannot wait cap in hand. We have surplus land equivalent to five lakh square feet of FSI (Floor Space Index) available. It is important for us to get going. We must cater for the lower, the lower-middle and upper-middle classes."

Referring to the funding of Godrej Baug, Golwalla explained that 90 of the 110 flats were constructed from the donation by the Pirojsha Godrej foundation and the remainder from donations collected by the Rayomond Committee.

"Forty tenements of one room each are ready for occupation while the remaining 70 two room flats will be ready by the end of the year," he said.

At the M and P plots, mentioned earlier, the major part (a little under three crores of rupees) of the required funds are expected to emerge from the Gibbs Road scheme "where we will build for the middle class or professionals. These flats will be sold at less than 60-70 percent of the ruling price in that area, yet they will generate the major part of the funds that are required to be ploughed into Godrej Baug where there can be no ownership. (The exemption under the ULC is for the weaker section of the community.) A flat at Rs.200 or Rs.300 rent is impossible to get in a good or central locality. We are definitely providing a help to the community," noted Guzder. For the balance amount the Punchayet is pinning its hopes on two donors, one of whom, says Golwalla, "is willing to donate for a whole building" the other being Shapoorji Pallonji Mistry who is interested in constructing there. "We hope with all his resources he will be able to help us. We are hoping to finish these flats in the next five years," adds Golwalla.

In Bharucha Baug, Andheri, 30 percent of the flats will be offered on ownership at about 40 percent of the price quoted at Gibbs Road. The surplus thus created is expected to be ploughed back for the 70 percent rental flats.

"All told we're planning on 1,000 flats of which 700 will be on nominal rent and the balance on ownership sold at approximately 60 percent of the ruling price," concluded Guzder.

To substantiate his claim that "we want to use up every inch of FSI available," Golwalla explained that it was possible to put up one or two floors over the BPP buildings in Dadar. In order to do this it is proposed to use the



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two floors set up over one building as a transit camp for the temporary occupation of the upper floor families who might be required to vacate during the period of construction. Each of these two-room-kitchen tenements is expected to cost Rs. 1.25 lakhs (the going cost of similar flats in Dadar being six to seven lakhs of rupees) and would be on the footing of advance compensation for 20 years and after that a nominal rent of Re.1 plus outgoings since advance rent cannot be taken under the rent act.

Seventy-two flats at Contractor Baug, Mahim, are in various stages of readiness while the BMC's (Bombay Municipal Corporation) approval is expected for 16 tenements for staff mobeds at Gibbs Road.

Repairs

On the question of repairs on BPP buildings, the trustees admitted that these should be financed from the sinking funds of the buildings, but they say that because of paucity of funds, 50 per cent must come from tenants. Just plastering and whitewashing at Wadia Baug cost six lakh rupees without any cost being borne by the tenants. "There are 225 cars parked at Rustom Baug alone. The community must be made conscious of its responsibility to share these costs with the Punchayet," note the trustees.

To expedite repairs, the BPP's civil engineering department has been revamped with delegation and decentralization of functions. The Gamadia and Captain Colony Welfare Committee, which has been working actively for many years, has been delegated financial authority on an experimental basis to carry out some minor work, notes the press release. Similarly, the two assistant engineers under the resident engineer have been given independent charge of certain colonies with financial power to attend to minor works. A job work charge schedule has been introduced to help tenants/occupants carry out internal plumbing work in their flats, adds the release.

On the matter of disposing off troublesome property Golwala related that in 1981 or so there was an offer from a gentleman who was an occupant, of Rs.50 lakhs for the property adjoining Ness Baug. The matter dragged on for eight to nine months so eventually "we told him that 50 lakhs was not enough and the deal was off. Another person offered Rs.72 lakhs subject to the Charity

Commissioner's approval. The matter dragged for a year. He finally came with a proposal of 90 lakhs (the additional Rs.18 lakhs being for encroached open space). The Charity Commissioner has agreed to give his consent," concluded Golwala. "Seven lakh rupees have been paid already and within the next three to four months the major portion of the amount should be forthcoming. An annual interest of eight percent has been stipulated on the unpaid amount."

Graft Allegations

Referring to the allegations that trustees or staff take consideration for the allotment of flats, Golwala related the incident about a lady who made the statement that there was no chance of getting a BPP flat without payment of a lakh of rupees. Enquiries revealed that her son-in-law needed accommodation. Golwala wrote inviting her to come and see him. When there was no response reminders were sent. He has now written to inform her that her son-in-law's name has been stricken off the register of applicants.

Laughing at the wild rumours he used to hear about trustees before he became one, Guzder explained the practical constraints created by 3,000 applicants for 2 flats! Now every single application has been serialized and tabulated says Guzder, given numbers and placed in categories according to the merit rating

The Parsis are prone to diabetes and high blood pressure and thus a high incidence of paralysis.

system with the help of a non-Punchayet official. Old applicants were written to, to ascertain their present needs and senior members of the staff sent out to verify the details before allotment. "No trustee can exert any influence in allotting," he notes.

Matrimonial Bureau

The BPP's matrimonial bureau which began functioning last September has successfully matched one couple, noted R.K. Anklesaria, the Punchayet's chief executive. Interested ladies and

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gentlemen can apply for the prescribed registration form through GPO Box No. 1850, Bombay 400 001, which has been opened by the trustees to keep the information confidential. The 59 men and 41 women who have applied to date range in age between 28 and 45 years, the women being better educated and looking for men earning Rs. 2,500 to 3,000. A record of what they are looking for together with background information regarding their housing, family circumstances, parents etc is now being maintained. Get-togethers were arranged at Golwalla's and Hector Mehta's (a socially-conscious businessman) place, said Anklesaria, with 15 to 20 more boys and girls scheduled to meet and mix in March and April. Most applicants were from Bombay and some from Ahmedabad and Calcutta and Guzder felt this activity deserved better publicity abroad.

The Priests

"Regarding the amelioration of the priests, there are several schemes but we have to have enough funds," says Golwalla. The project envisaged by Dr Jamshed Modi, director of the Community Development Institute, at a cost

of Rs.78,000 spread over three to four years, emphasizes the upgrading of the "quality of service offered by the priesthood to the community, making their profession more respectable than it is today and working on a project to en-

"Better to spend five lakhs now than 50 lakhs on housing later."

sure better emoluments," notes the BPP press release. The "project covers a proposal to train a handful of mobeds who already have suitable educational background and personal attributes for their further development and to transform them into priests who are not only fully knowledgeable in ecclesiastical functions, but who will also be capable of rendering some form of service needed by the community."

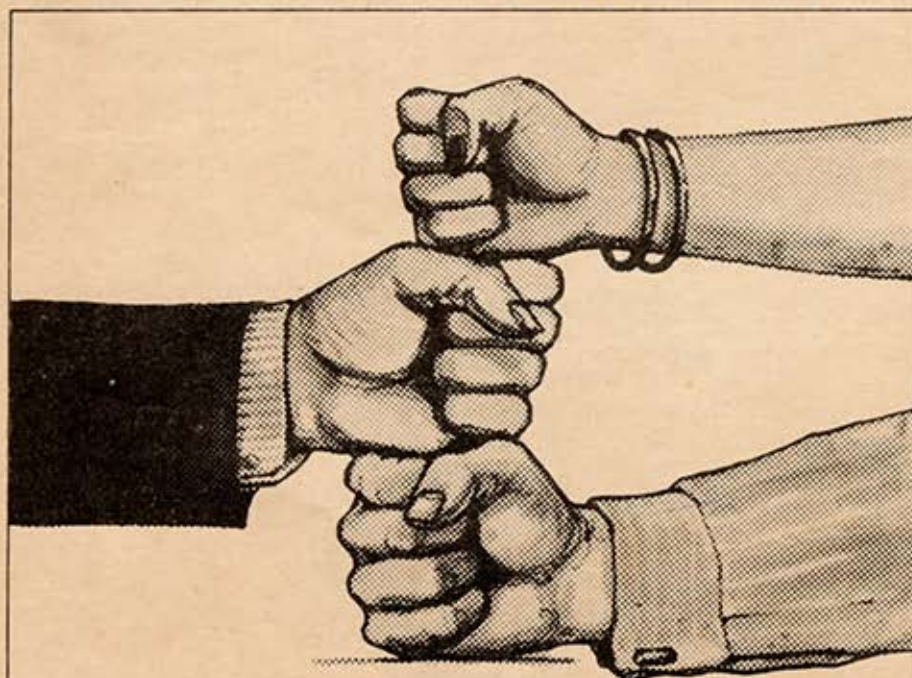
While the trustees have already decided on a five percent reservation of new flats for practising priests and the construction of 16 mobed staff quarters at

Doongerwadi at an approximate cost of Rs 27 lakhs (of which a first donation of Rs 23,750 has been received from a UK philanthropist, thanks to Anklesaria's good offices, as noted Golwalla), the above scheme by Modi together with others by Edal Bharucha and P D Nargolwalla are under the BPP's consideration.

On the subject of priests it was pointed out to the trustees by a Press representative that certain Head Priests were aggrieved that the BPP did not implement schemes submitted by them for the upliftment of the priesthood and that it was easier to publish their scholarly work abroad than in Bombay. However, the trustees present said they were not aware of the schemes or the proposals for publishing scholarly works. Golwalla also said that the Punchayet subsidizes the foreign trips of the dasturs and has contributed to religious institutions and religious scholarship (see box).

In the meanwhile Huzan Kharas, an MA student of the Bombay University working on the socio-economic survey of Zoroastrian priests has been extended Rs 4,000 towards the first year expenses of her project, with an agreement for Rs 4,000 more towards the second year's costs.

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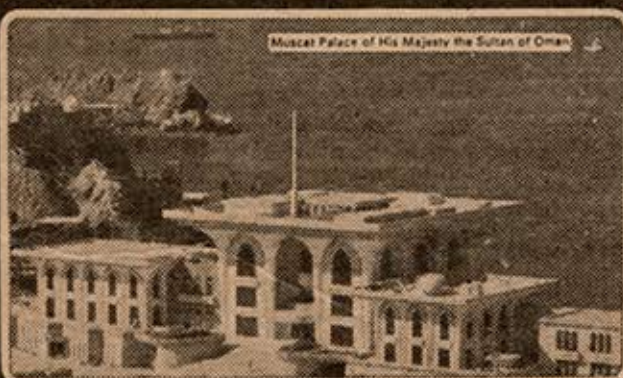
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Zoroastrian Trusts

Of the 1,200 trusts in Maharashtra about 40 trusts account for 80 percent of the total funds, notes the press release. One of the community welfare projects proposed by the BPP is the Trust Advisory Service. At a cost of Rs 63,600 per annum the service will disseminate guidance and information to Zoroastrian trusts, particularly in financial and legal matters viz investment, portfolio management, taxation and trust laws, notes the release. "Dr Jamshed Mody outlined the project at the instance of the BPP and has done excellent work," said Golwalla. Anklesaria estimates that the project will continue for a minimum two to three years. Once the data comes in "we'll know which trust is lagging behind in which area," says Golwalla.

"Most trustees have no interest in management of the trust," adds Guzder. "Even in the case of the BPP we've registered an improvement of seven to eight lakhs of rupees in the last two to three years."

The trustees had decided in the year 1982 to go in for higher interest yielding investments of their funds and have now invested the funds of the BPP and Seth P F Davar Trust in Unit Trust Schemes, the public sector companies and the Housing Development Finance Corporation to the tune of Rs 188.73 crores, Rs 20.6 lakhs and Rs 14 lakhs respectively, notes the press release.

Anklesaria mentioned that the income of the BPP for the year was Rs. 72 lakhs, although, as Golwalla added, "the Wadia baugs are now in deficit." Guzder recommends that Parsis wanting to go for ownership flats should apply to the HDFC where they will get a sympathetic consideration.

Health Services

The Seth Pestonji F Davar Charitable Trust, a cosmopolitan trust registered in January 1983 with the same trustees as the BPP, has hitherto disbursed Rs. 3.89 lakhs to individuals and institutions for education, medical relief, self-employment etc. "This trust emphasizes help to the blind," noted trustee Jal Vimadlal to explain the largest single expenditure of Rs 2.1 lakhs for education and training of the blind, handicapped, deaf-mute etc. The trust contemplates starting a cosmopolitan Low Vision Aid Clinic with a panel of ophthalmologists to advise the trustees, headed by Golwalla and consisting of Doctors K R Mehta, V M Bamboat, H H Vakil, R J Patel and R M

Mulji, together with M P Baliwala, which met at the end of November 1983. Captain H J M Desai, honorary general secretary of the National Association for the Blind also attended.

The Parsis are prone to diabetes and high blood pressure and thus a high in-

cidence of paralysis, explained Golwalla. Other neurological disorders like Parkinson's disease, mental disorders etc are also well spread in the community. Hence the BPP has contributed Rs 15,000 towards Dr Nadir Bharucha's pilot survey study of neurological

Donations of the BPP to Religious Institutions

<i>Name of the Institution</i>	<i>Amount</i>
1979	
R.N. Rustamframa Dar-e-Meher Golden Jubilee Fund, Dadar, Bombay.	Rs. 1,001
Igatpuri Parsi Anjuman Towards Kathi Fund.	Rs. 500
1980	
Madras Parsi Association towards celebration of Golden Jubilee and 70th year of Clubwalla Dar-e-Meher.	Rs. 20,000
1981	
Parsi Anjuman of Kalyan (towards the Centenary of the Anjuman Fire Temple).	Rs. 15,000
Anjuman Atashbehram (for repairs and renovation of the Atashbehram Bldg.)	Rs. 10,000.
1982	
Abu Road and Mount Abu Jarthosti Anjuman for the Diamond Jubilee of the Abu Road Agiary.	Rs. 3,000
Old Parsi Fire Temple, Secunderabad for repairs of Fire Temple.	Rs. 3,000
Sorabji Hormusji Ranji Agiary.	Rs. 3,000.
1983	
Late Ervad D.B. Mehta Zoroastrian Anjuman Atash Adran, Calcutta (Donation for Kathi and Maintenance of the Atash Adran).	Rs. 5,000
Seth Pirojshah Ardeshir Patel Daremeher (for renovation of the Daremeher on the occasion of the Platinum Jubilee year).	Rs. 5,000
Seth Nusserwanji Hirji Karani Agiary at Cusrow Baug (for repairs and maintenance).	Rs. 3,000
Vakil Anjuman Adaraan Golden Jubilee Committee (for renovation and repairs to the Adaran at Ahmedabad on the occasion of the Golden Jubilee year).	Rs. 15,000
Navsari Atash Behram and Vadi Dare Meher Trust, (for incorporating Bhagariya Mobed Amelioration Fund).	Rs. 3,000
Mobed Mincoher Homji Daremeher, Navsari. (for repairs, etc. to the Agiary).	Rs. 5,000

<i>Date</i>	<i>Name of Dasturs</i>	<i>Amount</i>
June 1977 to November 1979.	Prof Maneck F Kanga (for translation of Khordeh Avesta)	Rs. 18000 (at Rs. 600 per month)
June 12, 1979	Ervad Dr Peshotan F Peer (scholarship to be eligible for the degree of Ph.D.)	Rs. 3,000
August 31, 1979	Dastur Dr N D Minochehr-Homji (to attend World Conference on Religion & Peace at Princeton, U.S.A.)	Rs. 3,150
July 1980 to December 1981.	Prof Maneck F Kanga (for the work entrusted for translation and transliteration into English of the book Yasht-ba-Maeni)	Rs. 9,000 (at Rs. 500 per month)
Since January 1980	Ervad Dr Peshotan F Peer (for taking classes at B.J.P.C. Inst.)	Rs. 300 (per month)
August 1980	Khojeste Mistree (air fare to deliver lectures at Bangalore)	Rs. 1,000
December 19, 1980	Ervad Dr R P Peer (Scholarship to be eligible for the degree of Ph.D.)	Rs. 3,000
Since June 1981	Dastur Dr F M Kotwal (research grant for 5 years)	Rs. 300 (per month)
June 4, 1981	Dastur Dr N D Minochehr-Homji (to attend Vivekananda Vadanta Centre at Chicago)	Rs. 3,500
August 20, 1982	Dastur Dr F M Kotwal (travelling grant to Japan)	Rs. 3,000

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disorders in the community.

The project aims at identification of the existence and extent of neurological disorders, making the community conscious of the same and thereby encouraging the afflicted to seek treatment. It will also help to prevent such disorders

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amongst those who might have the risk factors but are not yet diseased, notes the BPP press release.

The Bombay Hospital (Research Committee) has contributed a further Rs 32,000 towards the survey which will initially cover 1,000 persons.

Implementing Federal Schemes

The counselling service for school-going children recommended by the Federation and prepared in broad outline by Professor Noshir Kaikobad comes with an annual price tag of Rs 48,000 and has been accepted by the BPP in principle. A counselling committee known as the Committee of Direction consisting of Dr Meheroo Bengali, Soli Pavri, Ms Veera Mehta, Prof Noshir Kaikobad, Ms Homai Billimoria, Dr Shera Dastoor and Prof Niranjana Gokarn has been constituted. An enthusiastic Golwala said, "There was not a single no from any one to help us. Experts in every line have been most willing to help... the response from schools has been very good... they have even written in the names of child-

ren needing counselling."

Regarding the working of the Job, Business and Career Opportunities Panel of the Federation, Anklesaria an ex-IAS man himself, lamented that there were hardly any Parsis in the military or administrative services now. These were "sectors which we had almost monopolized once... they comprised the strength of the community. If the Press comes across such potentials (in the Parsi community) we'd like to be introduced to them, so that we can help them," he said.

The BPP by a majority vote has agreed to sponsor the Fourth World Zoroastrian Congress under the Federation's auspices in January 1985. Guzder proposed to send information regarding the congress to all the Anjumans of the world inviting suggestions regarding subjects and speakers. "We'll need the help of the Press," he added.

Socio-Economic Survey

A study of the Parsi population in Greater Bombay co-sponsored by the BPP and the International Institute for Population Studies at a total cost of Rs 88,000 aims to obtain detail information regarding the size of Parsi households, their income, indebtedness and amenities structure and population characteristics as divided by age, sex, education, occupation, health condition, hobbies and other social activities. Marriage and fertility behaviour of the population together with reasons for non-marriage and future marriage plans for the never-married were other topics of enquiry.

Investigators, armed with letters of introduction from the Punchayet, visited the sample of 2,000 households and col-

lected the data on specially designed schedules, by personal interview. The project report is expected to throw interesting and useful light on some of the socio-economic aspects of the community notes the press release.

In response to the deteriorating conditions of Parsi farmers in Gujarat, the

Why was the Bombay Punchayet spending funds in Gujarat when the main anjumans there were well endowed and had to cater to a diminishing community?

Surat Parsi Punchayet and the BPP carried out the necessary investigations and jointly decided to extend Rs.1.46 lakhs as a gift to 35 persons and Rs.40,000 as a loan to eight persons to enable them to emerge from debt.

A press representative enquired why the Bombay Punchayet was spending funds in Gujarat when the main anjumans there were well endowed and had to cater to the needs of a diminishing community. Surat, for example, is said to have the highest per capita income. "That's a good question," remarked Guzder. *Bombay Samachar* Editor



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Jehan Daruwalla stated that the Broach Anjuman had a corpus of one crore rupees with about 200 Parsi families in the area.

Golwalla explained that "Surat has always stood by the BPP and if we improve their conditions in the villages, it would help us in Bombay by limiting the people here." "Better to spend five lakhs now than 50 lakhs (on housing) later," interposed Anklesaria.

Publications

A three-volume graded course on Zoroastrianism in English written by Ervad Ratanshah Rustomji Motafram has been published by the BPP at a total cost of Rs.28,000 to systematize available literature on the religion. With an initial print order of 1,000, the volumes—*Elements of Zoroastrianism*, *Light on Zoroastrianism* and *Salient Features of Zoroastrianism*—numbering 100 pages each are in the process of indexing and binding. As a part of the same scheme the BPP has contacted Sarosh Bhabha, an expert on taping, and Peshotan Peer to arrange for tape recordings of some of our daily prayers.

And to conclude, the role of the Parsis in the struggle for Indian independence is being compiled by B.K. Boman-Behram former chairman of the BPP. This being

"The previous policy was to await donation and then construct. We've decided we cannot wait any longer."

the centennial of the Indian National Congress, the Parsi contribution must be incorporated in the general publication as also published separately, noted Golwalla.

The Punchayet team comprised of the chairman Dr Aspi Golwalla and trustees Jamshed Guzder, Mr Justice Jal Vimadalai and Maneckji Hodiwala, chief executive R.K. Anklesaria, joint secretary Ms Gool Tata and Eruch Sethna, the BPP's first PRO. The Press was represented by *The Bombay Samachar*, *Jam-e-Jamshed*, *The Zoroastrian* and *Parsiana*.

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Encore, Nelly!

Sheila Vasunia

The mood was restive as the crowd relaxed after satiating appetites with *sali murghi*, *sas machhi* and *pulav dal*. The vibrant lady on the stage played a medley of magical waltzes on the organ, filling the air with strains of the *Blue Danube*, *Surrender* and other oldies. The crowd encored and cheered "Long Live Nelly," "Long Live Nelly."

And it has been like that at several Parsi weddings for the past three decades. Nelly Battiwalla and her boys have entertained people at weddings, socials, stage shows and dances especially at X'mas and New Year since 1953. To Nelly goes the credit of probably being the only woman bandleader in India.

Not that being a lady bandleader in showbiz was always easy. When Nelly started out, she had to incur the wrath of a few old disapproving Parsi ladies who'd say, "*Bandwalli aavi...nai joiye*." They were averse to a lady playing to the public. But she remained undaunted and succeeded.

Nelly actually trained in classical music and received her LTCL Diploma.

Her parents were interested in music, her father bought her a piano when she was eight. After getting her LTCL, Nelly gave piano tuitions. And all along she admired Goody Seervai who was the leading bandleader of those days; "I think he was the best then. I loved to watch him play the accordion. It so happened that one of my cousins was going to Italy and said she'd bring me an accordion if there was any money left with her. Bless her, she did bring me one. Then through some common family friends, I was introduced to Goody. He was good enough to give me hints and take me in his band for four months. When I think back now, I get cold feet. I still wonder how I had the guts to get on stage and play so boldly. I then formed another group and we played for the first time on January 3, 1953. That was the start. It was at a Parsi wedding."

There were early stumbling blocks. People were unused to the idea of a female leading the band. But they soon overcame their initial resentment. They began to like the idea of watching this woman with a red accordion and,



Music in her blood: Pearly at the mike.

moreover, "my husband provided all the encouragement."

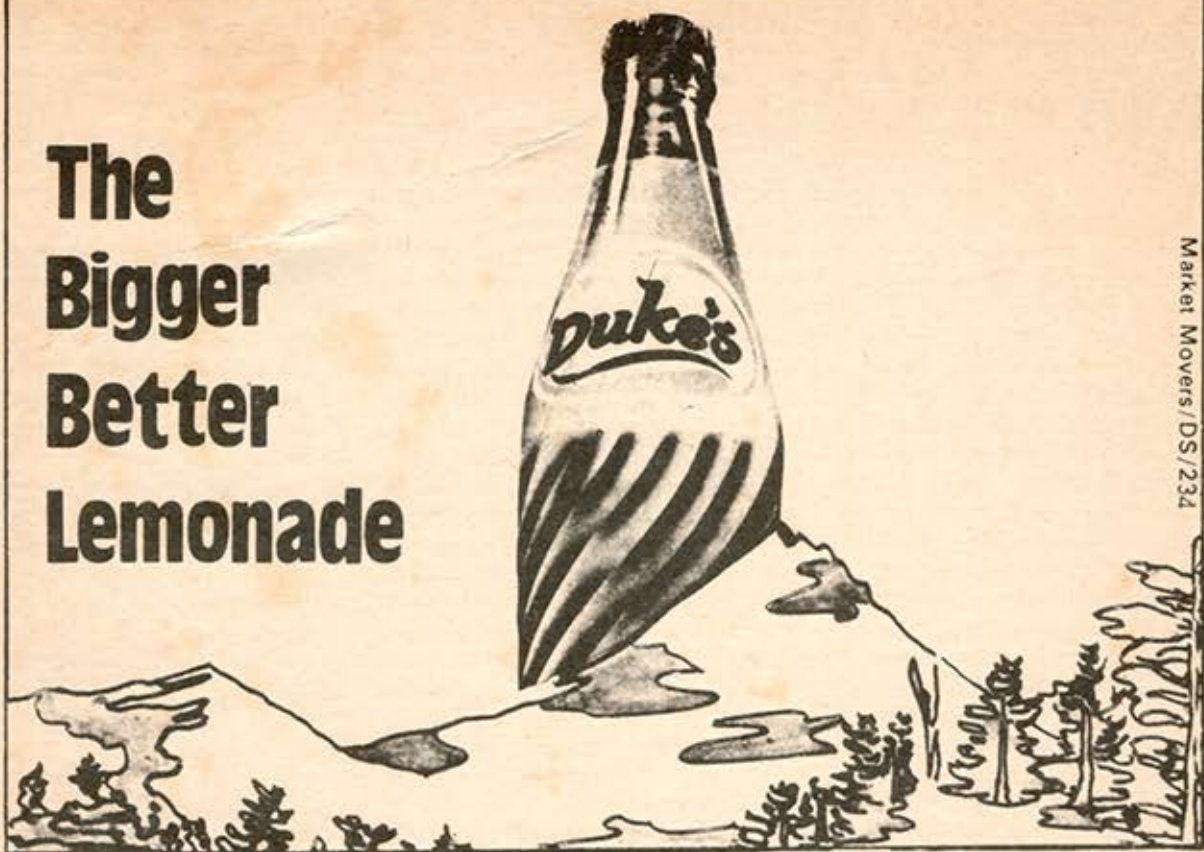
Though Nelly was trained in the classical, she nurtured a fondness for jazz. Duke Ellington, Artie Shaw, Benny Goodman, were her favourites. She never got to play jazz however. It was always popular music she chose for her shows. Of course, the accent was different then. The public was insistent upon waltzes and tangos—today it is disco. Nelly gives them whatever they like. More important, she likes doing so. "I enjoy playing everything, even the modern stuff. Music is food and water to me. So at a wedding, I normally start out with something lively, move on to the latest and then go over to the oldies.... *The Blue Danube Waltz*, *Fascination*, *Lara's Theme*. People still appreciate these numbers, but it all depends on the mood and taste of the audience. I am sometimes specifically asked not to play any 'dumdum dumdum,' but to play waltzes. At other times, people insist on lively stuff."

The lady has few complaints, no regrets. "I did not face many problems. The usual ones that most group leaders normally have—availability of good musicians, boys leaving you for better prospects. Today, so many boys move to the Gulf or other places. One has to train new boys, rehearsal takes a lot of time. In those days, my Sax Player stayed on with me for 17 years."

A part of the band: Nelly on the organ and synthesizer, Katolin on the saxophone and Jude on the rhythm guitar (Photo by Rashid Bamanbehram).



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The quality of musicians was better too. Then, they read music, I had a complete band, we had the books in front of us. Today, it is only a group and one only rehearses by ear from new tapes received from abroad.

"Besides, we always face the drinking curse in this profession. I lost two or three good singers because of their drinking. One of my old singers Allwyn was excellent, but he was addicted and died on the streets. Thank God, I have teetotallers in my present group. You can at least rely on them."

The standard of payments in Bombay, she feels, is very low as compared to what five-star hotels in Delhi are offering. And one has to invest in new equipment, continuously, to keep pace. Otherwise the going has been good. Was there professional jealousy? "I haven't experienced any. There were good people—Hal Green, Ken Mac, Mickey Correa and of course, Goody Goody was at the top. He was too good. I was just okay then. So the question of competition did not arise. But I was not much into the hotel scene. That's why, I owe a great deal to the Parsi community, also to the Christians who asked me to play at their weddings and X'mas shows.

Apart from weddings, the fact remained that there were in the bygone days, plenty more dances being organized all over town. The 'disco' phenomenon also had not started. Nelly agrees, "Those were great days in the 50s and early 60s. *The Times of India* office had dances regularly. There were dances being held at the Byculla Mechanics, the Laughton Institute of Matunga and at the Railway Maidan at Parel. The Railways were then different, probably because of the predominance of Anglo-Indians. They loved to live it up. All that has changed now. They don't waltz and tango. They hold cultural programmes instead."

Among Nelly's favourite memories is meeting Duke Ellington in Bombay in 1963. Duke is her favourite. So are the Beatles. She says, "I think the Beatles are among the greatest. Some of their compositions are just too much. Like *Something*, *Yesterday*, *Michelle*." She also admires Frank Sinatra, Nat King Cole, Dean Martin, Ella Fitzgerald. But topping her list is Ray Charles (the blind singer). "He is fabulous. I went recently to America and I heard him perform on the keyboard and sing. He sang *Mama* and *Unchain My Heart*. When he sang the

words 'Unchain my eyes,' my God, I broke down. And then he did *Georgia*; Ray Charles and *Georgia* are simply the best."

Nelly's family is also into music. Son Adil earlier played with the "Waterfront." He's now making music in the States. Daughter Pearly sings with Nelly's group. Not much now because she's had a baby. "My little grandsons too come on the stage. I guess music runs in our blood." She recalls the days when Adil was at Don Bosco's School. "I made him learn to sing only Italian songs like *Santa Lucia*." She winks. "The priests were all Italian. He won all the first prizes."

She admits she often thinks of retiring. "All the small little daily hassles. I always think, this'll be my last year. I won't continue any more. Then more contracts come in and the game continues."

With all her verve and confidence, Nelly puts many a youngster to shame. That's why, I didn't even ask her age. Watch her brim with life and enthuse about her music and you'll realise music has no barriers—certainly not age.

Reprinted from Sunday Mid-day January 15, 1984.

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Nargolwala had seen the constitution and then agreed to serve on the WZO managing committee.

The clauses pertaining to membership is one of the stumbling blocks to the Federation joining the WZO. According to the WZO constitution an individual member has an individual vote; similarly, a member anjuman has one vote also. Therefore, the BPP would have only one vote on any issue, the same as any individual.

"Legally we cannot do away with individual membership. Morally also it is impossible. The consensus of Zoroastrians worldwide is that they should have a right to vote... but as far as association membership is concerned we can arrive at a solution. We recognize

"Two people wish to come together," said Gandhi. "The motives are clear. Can we not sit down and thrash it out? Open the door to let us come in." Captain: "We haven't shut the door. It is not a matter that can be discussed in three or four hours."

He added that the WZO delegation was not authorized to make any binding commitments without consulting their managing committee. "We cannot sign, seal and deliver," said Captain.

Guzder enquired as to the WZO's total membership. Captain said that membership was not the relevant issue. "Let us talk on matters that concern us. Membership for anjumans, we would be delighted to discuss."

Nargolwala repeated Guzder's query: "What is the membership after four years of working? Which countries are members and how many members are there from each country? Which trusts from which countries are associate members?"

"How is the managing committee working in London?" Nargolwala said that he received almost no communications from the WZO or received them very late and without background papers even though he served on its managing committee.

At this stage both Bodhanwala and Clubwala intervened to note that Nargolwala was not seeking clarification but offering commentary.

Golwalla suggested the discussion could continue the next day at the meeting between the WZO delegates and the Federation subcommittee which would then submit a report to the executive council.

In reply to Nargolwala's charges, Captain stated, "We have not come to create a conflict and I will not enter into a controversy. It is not the way we operate in England."

In regard to membership, Captain noted it was hard to verify how many members each anjuman in each country had. Referring to the Delhi Parsi Anjuman, he said that Nargolwala claims a population of 1,500 "while actually it is around 500, of which 50 or so are members of the Anjuman."

Nargolwala was about to reply when Golwalla immediately intervened: "I will not permit this to continue."

The next day

At the subcommittee meeting, over which Guzder presided, he stated at the outset "neither side is committed... at

this meeting we will take no decisions. It is explorative."

Captain: "Neither I nor my colleagues have power to do anything other than explore."

Repeating that individual membership "cannot be taken away" but the clauses referring to anjuman membership could be changed, Captain said, "First let the Bombay Parsi Punchayet join and then the other ideas" or suggestions can be investigated. He emphasized, "We would be delighted if the Bombay Parsi Punchayet joins. Some of the trustees could come on the committee." Captain suggested the BPP could have 12 votes and any organization or area with a population over 5,000 could have an additional vote.

Gandhi: "Are you prepared to extend this to zones?"

Captain: "No. Only a particular area."

Captain said there would be 20 members on the main committee of whom one third would retire by rotation. As to who would select the representatives from India, Captain said safeguards could be provided.

"If the office bearers are elected by the committee," said Guzder "in an extreme case no BPP trustee or Federation representative could be office bearers..."

"It is imperative to have one world body. I don't see how such a small community can have two bodies."

think in terms of the future. Shahpur's (Captain's) assurances cannot be guaranteed... I must (also) correct you when you say BPP representative. The representation must be of the Federation, not the BPP." Captain concurred.

The discussion then turned to the WZO constitution which Captain charged the Federation representatives had not studied. Some of the delegates admitted they had not. Nargolwala, however, pointed out that "it took about seven years to frame the constitution of the Federation... the constitution of the WZO was framed in 18 months. Nobody in India was consulted... in May 1980 when I went to England, the constitution

"Would it not be possible to reserve a few seats for Parsis, in those educational institutions founded by Parsis?"

that the BPP has to have a say. (However) any constitutional changes require deep thought. We have shown in the past we can change the constitution."

Regarding the possibility of another world body being created at the forthcoming congress if an understanding could not be reached with the WZO, Captain stated, "it is imperative to have one world body... I don't see how such a small community can have two world bodies. We have never worked against the interests of the community. Please think carefully. Let us debate (the question of) membership of associations. Let us hasten slowly. Let us then change the constitution and then present a united working to the community."

Golwalla: "In your talk you used the word Zoroastrian. Do you mean Zoroastrian or Parsi?" Captain: "There is no question of conversion."

After a few questions, the executive council suggested the WZO delegates and the Federation's subcommittee discuss possible solutions.

"Decisions get postponed for months. Can we not discuss it now?" asked Golwalla.

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was shown to me. I was not consulted on it. In India (when the Federation constitution was being drawn up) there was also a heated debate whether the Federation should consist of individuals or anjumanas." Nargolwala felt that in the WZO setup, the BPP and others would be like "a leaf of a tree tossed in the wind."

He noted that in the executive council of the Federation, the BPP had five votes while on the general body it had one. Still the BPP could safeguard its interest. "Change is the order of the day. You cannot progress without change," said Nargolwala referring to the WZO constitution. He noted the objectives of the WZO, the Federation and the BPP constitutions were the same. But he added that the activities undertaken by the WZO could just as well have been done by the London association. He listed a few of the items such as the Iran refugee problem in which many individuals and organizations have helped, student exchange programs which even the CER (Committee for Electoral Rights, Bombay) was doing, assisting a boy touring the world on a cycle and so on. "Nothing you have done has raised your status as a world body. Any large organization could have done all this. What you should be doing is research in Iranian history... religion... genetic research...the world body must be a pyramidal structure."

Nargolwala suggested the WZO main committee meetings should not be held in England alone but alternated between various countries. "Sitting in London you cannot look after Bombay problems... even Federation people find it expensive to come to Calcutta."

Captain: "We are listening to a lecture."
Guzder: "You must be tolerant."

Gandhi, addressing Nargolwala, requested him to put his remarks "in a positive perspective. Better to state what should be done rather than what is wrong."

Nargolwala: "There is an inherent weakness in the constitution that needs to be corrected... the governing body should meet in different countries. The secretariat can be in England. Out of five meetings in a year, two can be held in India."

Dittia: "The U.K. delegates must try and get the sense of what we are saying... try to understand what is really worrisome... how best to safeguard the viewpoints."

Captain stated it was necessary "to keep discussing till we arrive at a solu-

tion. What I don't like is Nargolwala's threat that if we don't do this or that (India) will have another world body. It would be a shame for a small community to have two bodies. The essential thing is to have one forum."

Anklesaria: "Let us have something practical. A three-tier body...vote to elect zonal member...there should be four zones...India to be represented on the main committee by three members from the BPP and three members nominated by the Federation."

The conversation again veered back to the constitution when Clubwala remarked, "Why are we frightened (of joining the WZO)? Is it because they are more efficient and are doing something? We are (more) concerned with finding fault with the constitution."

Nargolwala: "It is they who are running after everybody."

Dadi Mistry: "No one is running after anyone."

Guzder: "We are not frightened... we are here to bridge the gap."

Bodhanwala: "We are not trying to bridge the gap. (Some are trying to) find some reason to form another body. We must bridge the gap, not form another body."

Nargolwala: "I did not say should or would be formed. I said it *may* be formed. It is my personal view."

Guzder noted that many people criticized the Federation saying it had "done zero. I feel they are 50 percent right. For three years I was a trustee (of the BPP) but I did not know there was a Federation." In the same vein, he inquired "what is the effectiveness of the world body today? How many U.S. associations and individuals have become members? Out of 85 associations in India, nine have become members of the WZO. Are you really a world body? If not, what are the reasons, the constraints? If you are a world body how many people (are members)? A majority?"

Captain: "Yes we are a representative body...we have members and anjumanas throughout the world. I do not have facts and figures here. The New York association called a general body meeting and took a unanimous decision to join. Others may not join...it is a matter of education, persistence. The WZO has functioned effectively in the eyes of many. I think our strength will go higher...our association is quite prepared to give weightage... the suggestion that individuals vote on zonal basis can be done."

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Nargolwala stated that the WZO had 700 individual members. Captain termed the discussion on numbers "a red herring."

Gandhi: "700 members should not drown the voting rights of the anjumans. If you are saying there are 700 members we are not going to say you are non-representative." Gandhi suggested the WZO send their proposals to the Federation by March 15. But Guzder said it would be better "to send them our proposals."

Nargolwala: "They must supply information and proposals before we write."

Captain: "We will exchange information."

Briefing the Executive Committee

In the afternoon session Guzder gave the gist of the subcommittee meeting with the WZO delegates. He said "the basic principle of a world body (is that it should) consist of the apex body of each country of the world." Guzder recalled that after the Iranian revolution it was felt that it was "not the right time to form a world body...one day I received a call from Shahpur Captain who told me it had already been formed. I asked him what was the hurry. He offered me the

vice-presidency. I said 'no.' " Guzder quoted Captain as saying the WZO was "not interested in the Federation but the BPP" joining the world body. "I said 'no, it must be the Federation.' They wrote one day saying they had formed an Indian chapter. They asked me to head

"In the WZO setup the BPP and others would be like 'a leaf of a tree tossed in the wind.'"

it. I said 'no'...They kept harping on the Parsi Punchayet" joining the WZO said Guzder. "They offered me the chairmanship. I told them, 'Do not tempt people with office.' The day we join, the membership will escalate. We cannot join a body that today is a question mark."

Referring to the morning meeting, Guzder said, "though there was disagreement at the beginning, we were able to find some common ground. It

was an explorative meeting in which nothing said is binding...We asked for the particulars of the WZO membership—individuals and anjumans. They were unable to give an answer. Perhaps they feel the number is too small." The WZO delegates said they would send the information after returning. "We respected their statement and asked them to send the particulars." Guzder said they were trying to find common ground in the constitution. "We must first lay the foundation on rock, not mud that can slip away in the future. There is a breakthrough to some extent."

Guzder said the Federation should "try to come to some agreement and avoid setting up another organization. If they listen to reason, we can come to some agreement."

The Executive Council gave the Federation subcommittee "the mandate to continue negotiations."

The Upbringing of Children

The first of the two guest speakers on the second day was the noted metallurgist Dr Dara Antia, a well-known industrial and management consultant, the main thrust of whose talk was about children. Concerned about the deteriorating level and

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quality of education of Parsi children, Antia said "We mollycoddle our children. We are not strong enough to discipline the child. This weakness causes problems in the future."

In light of the insufficient attention that children receive in schools Antia noted, "Guidance from home and (the) community in general is so important for the future of the child and the future of the community."

Antia suggested that talented Parsi children should be groomed for the National Talent Scholarship Examinations as the educational expenses of National Scholars are paid for by the state upto the PhD level. He also suggested a better study of languages as translators can earn a fortune sitting at home.

Commenting that "production is easy, marketing difficult," Antia pointed out that large and small scale industries have failed because of marketing. "It is a management art that must be taught," he said.

"Parsis have lost their faith, Parsis have lost their integrity...the young people cannot and will not listen to you unless you talk to them in the way they understand," Antia emphasized.

Guzder mentioned that the BPP will

select boys who have the potentiality for additional tuition so that they stand a better chance in the IAS, etc. "We would like to encourage the study of foreign languages," he added. Bodhanwala suggested that a Parsi Talent Scholarship be initiated.

Entrepreneurship Today

Addressing himself to the question, "Why is Parsi entrepreneurship dying?" the day's second guest speaker, Jamshed B Madan, chief executive of Modern Marketing Consultants, quipped, "Because our religion makes it impossible to fight black markets and black money."

Reverting to a more serious vein, Madan listed the factors that destroy the entrepreneurial spirit as years of security and affluence; lack of mobility so that "it is difficult to spot a single Parsi in satellite townships;" and the predatory whales in the market who work on the basis of "I'll buy you out or force you out."

Said Madan, "A small community like the Parsis cannot afford the luxury of a failure." To nurture entrepreneurship in the community Madan declared that "young elements should be able to

find a bearing. The mentor-protégé relationship is essential for success. Children should be allowed greater exposure to new technologies. Parents should encourage their children rather than inhibiting them from doing anything new. The Punchayet should plan a few areas of assistance for budding entrepreneurs viz. office space with telephone and secretarial facilities, maybe even factory space in an industrial area which the Punchayet may create."

Balsara commented that such lectures should be addressed to youngsters who could be brought together during vacations, even at some cost, while Mehta felt that each trustee should take on the onus of training a younger member as his successor.

Fourth World Congress

Guzder noted that the BPP trustees had "approved by a majority" to go ahead with the hosting of the Congress. The Federation was unanimous on the subject. The preparations had to begin in earnest. Guzder welcomed suggestions for discussion at the Congress.

Shiavax Nargolwala felt the subjects should be divided into broad groupings

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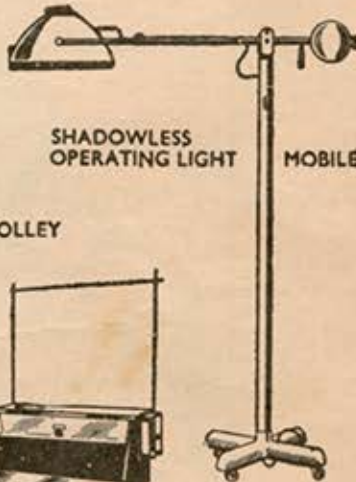
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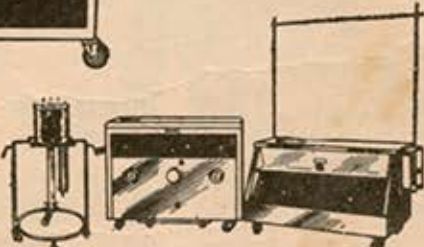
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such as religion and history, laws governing Zoroastrians all over the world, education and vocational training, shifts in Parsi demography, and so on.

Guzder felt there should be "no controversial subjects."

Nargolwala: "In the guise of controversy, free discussion should not be prohibited."

Guzder recalled how in October 1977, about three months prior to the hosting of the third World Zoroastrian Congress in Bombay, former BPP Chairman B K Boman-Behram rang him up and said to cancel the Congress. Boman-Behram was concerned by the opposition to the Congress, more so because the vice-president of India would be present.

Nargolwala: "Let there be voluntary restraint (by the speakers)".

Guzder: "No religious" matters.

Gandhi: "We must remember this is a world Congress, not a meeting of Indian anjumans. The Federation is merely hosting the Congress."

Problems of Individual Anjumans

Gandhi noted soon after the problems of individuals anjumans began that

"many people have asked me why there were 50 people present at the Delhi meeting of the executive council and only 30 in Calcutta. Is interest in the Federation declining?" He stated that there were "compelling reasons" for those who could not attend.

He noted that Jamshed Italia of Hyderabad-Secunderabad could not attend due to "unavoidable circumstances" and that Maneck Gheyara of Surat did not come because the Surat Punchayet's secretary, Soli Katpitia's mother was "seriously ill." *Nargolwala:* "Gheyara could have come."

Gandhi: "He has high regards for Katpitia. He stayed out of respect."

Pavri of Ahmedabad cited "unavoidable circumstances," Jamsheed Kanga, "other pressing engagements," Erach Desai "had to go to Europe over the weekend for arbitration."

Nargolwala: "All this is unconvincing. Persons cannot say they can't come."

Guzder noted that for some, the cost deterred them from coming.

Nargolwala: "They are well off. If they can't come they should send someone else...Italia has been absent from several meetings. He should

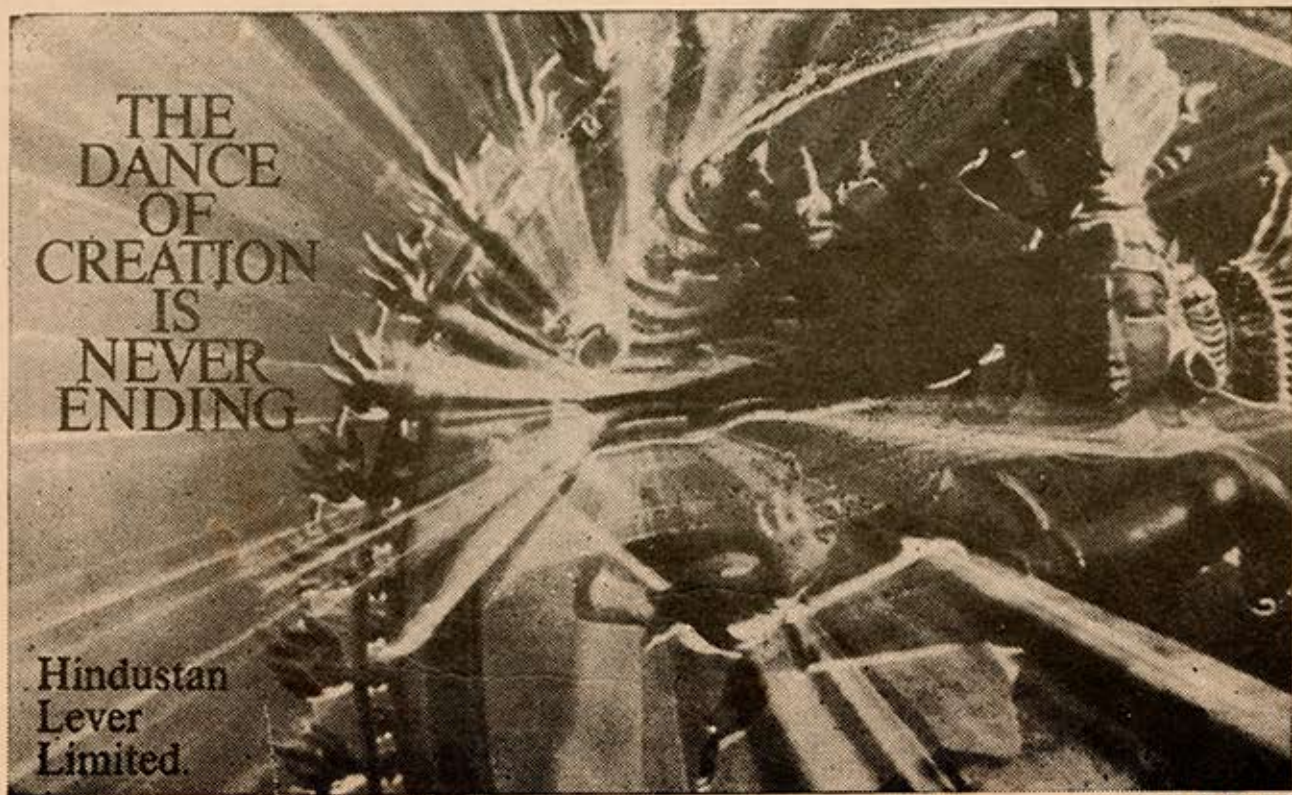
resign. He is an office bearer (vice-president South zone). Anjumans can be represented by others but an ex-officio vice-president cannot...Out of seven BPP trustees, three don't attend because they don't like it. Out of four if two don't come it is very bad."

B.K. Batliwala: "You are passing judgement."

Dr Ratan Sagar of the Allahabad Parsi Jarthosti Anjuman noted the dadgah there was without a mobed. The general job situation in Allahabad also "was not good." There were about 13 families in the town.

Merwan Mehta of the Ahmednagar Parsi Anjuman noted the area had "tremendous potential for business." Housing was also available. As regards the shortage of priests, he favoured para-mobeds and said local Parsis "may be interested" in training. "We must have a substitute for the time when there is no priest."

The Calcutta trustees spoke of their problem in regard to construction of the Olpadwala Hall and building. The trustees were attempting to raise money both through commercial rental or leasing of the premises as well as by loans.



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Homai Pudemjee of the Poona Parsi Punchayet spoke of the shortage of nassessalars in Poona and told the council "if you know of anybody who wants to be a nassessalar let me know."

Bodhanwala said Jamshedpur had "practically no problems...not a single quarrel in the community." But the anjuman is in need of a priest. "We have advertised but there's no response."

Aban Satarawala who represented the Jodhpur Parsi Anjuman said Jodhpur was "a developing city (but) the number of Parsis is diminishing. The number of Parsi graves is more than the number of Parsis." Eighty miles away from the town, the J.K. and Birla companies have started white cement manufacturing concerns. "If others see prospects (in Jodhpur) why

not Parsi entrepreneurs?" asked the delegate. She said housing was no problem. Rents were three to four hundred and no pugree was required; admission could be obtained in colleges. "We have no problem of education for our children." The Oberoi and Welcomgroup hotel chains were opening hotels in the area.

Nariman P Balsara of the Saronda Parsee Jarthoshti Anjuman, whose unwitting remarks and banter throughout the meeting enlivened the proceedings and earned him the dubious distinction of being labelled the 'Court Jester' by the acerbic Shiavax Nargolwala, said the Parsi population in the area was decreasing even though jobs and housing were available.

Several of the other representatives spoke of their anjumans' activities without specifying any particular problems. Some of the delegates merely repeated statistics and facts which had been submitted in the earlier meetings causing Golwala to state that the session devoted to the various anjumans was not serving its purpose. But while many of the anjumans, especially the smaller ones, may not be presenting

their case effectively, the Federation will have to devise an effective forum for them to participate meaningfully.

Those attending the meeting: Merwan B Mehta and Nozer Ichhaporia of Ahmednagar, Dr Ratan Sagar of Allahabad, Dr A F Golwala and J N Guzder of Bombay, Dali Bhesania, Ardeshir Batliwala, Dr R D Anklesaria and Ms Veera H Medhora of Calcutta, S D Nargolwala, Keki J Gandhi, R E Daroga and N B Captain of Delhi, B F Dittia, Naval B Vakeel and B K Batliwala of Hyderabad-Secunderabad, Dr and Ms Soli T Kamdin of Jabalpur, Homi P Bodhanwala of Jamshedpur, Ms Aban Satarawala of Jodhpur, Ms Mani J Clubwala of Madras, Keki R Bala of Nagpur, Ms Homai Pudemjee of Poona, Homi F Palsetia and Nariman P Balsara of Saronda, Jal S Postwala of Vishakapatnam and Peshotan Nargolwala, honorary treasurer of the Federation. The guest speakers were Cushrow R Irani, Jamshed B Madan and Dr Dara P Antia. The Press was represented by *Navroze* and *Parsiana*. Several Zoroastrians resident in Calcutta attended the meeting as observers.

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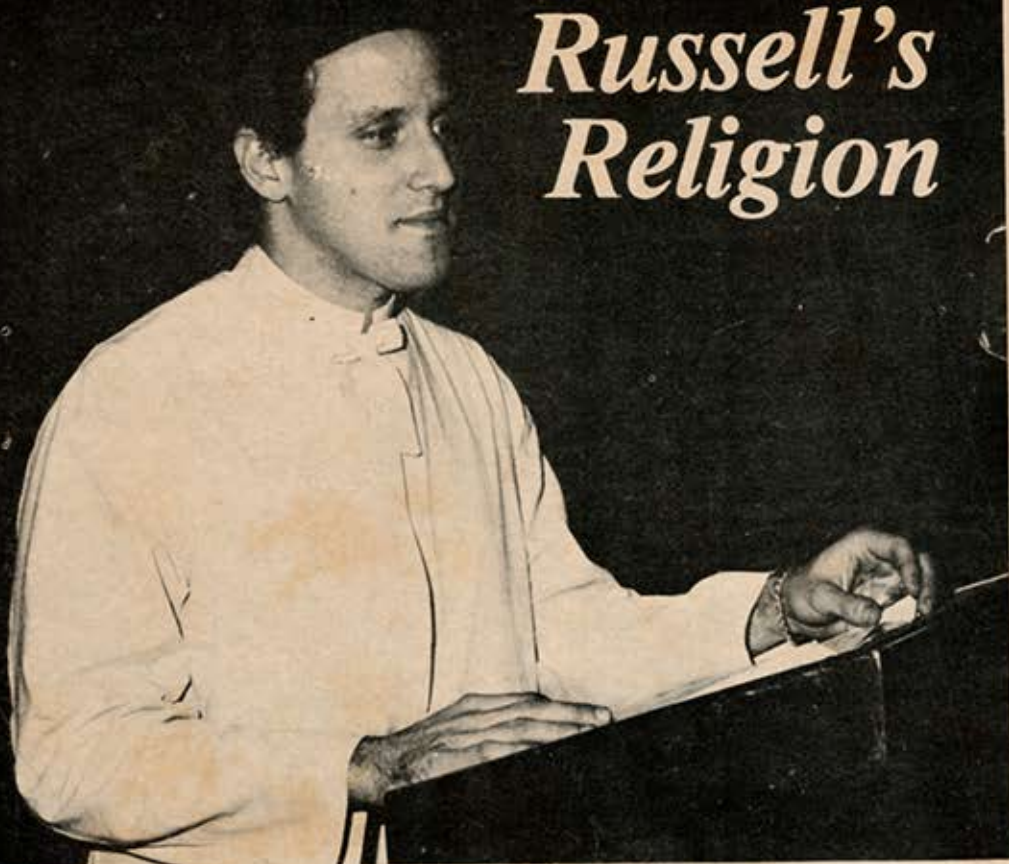
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Russell's Religion



James Russell of Colombia University believes, "Zoroastrians need a bit of consciousness-raising."

Arnavaz S Mama

"I don't think migration to the New World is a good thing—India is not a place from which one needs a refuge... this is going to be the place where Zoroastrianism survives or disappears. Iran and North America are not centres of Zoroastrianism." Dr James Russell, 30, professor of Ancient Iranian at Colombia University, New York, sat in Khojeste Mistree's study. He had already spent six to seven weeks in India and delivered nine lectures on various aspects of Zoroastrianism—the four Government Research Fellowship lectures under the auspices of the K.R. Cama Oriental Institute and five others under ZS (Zoroastrian Studies, the organization created and run by Khojeste Mistree) auspices. That very day he had spent some hours at the H.B. Wadia Atash Behram, meeting Dr Firoze Kotwal, the high priest there, and had gone through the Parsi Punchayet's F.D. Alpawalla Museum. Fair, hook nosed, his wide

sloping forehead crowned by a red *mukhmal topi*, Russell, thanks to his Jewish background and ancestry looks and sounds like an orthodox Parsi.

"As a non-Parsi" Russell says, "I approach Zoroastrianism as a discovered treasure than an ancestral inheritance to protect" and espouses a two-pronged strategy: that "Zoroastrianism become better known and that it be preserved with integrity."

Zoroastrianism as portrayed in the west is "primitive, very exotic and a bit scary," says Russell. Khojeste Mistree was the first Parsi he met as an undergraduate and that was his introduction to the Parsis as people. He "became fairly committed to the religion then, recited Zoroastrian prayers and has been doing so ever since."

Assessing the good that Zoroastrians have achieved in their adopted land and the harm they've inflicted upon themselves, Russell says. "It's been

Zoroastrians who've been responsible for material leaps in (modern) Indian civilization... but the Zoroastrian community does not encourage its priests as they encourage science. There are Tata fellowships for English literature, not for Zoroastrian studies! Prof. John Hin-nell's offer (of reserved seats at Manchester University for Zoroastrian studies) lies unexploited...the very wealthy in Bombay are deplorably stingy. They're well-intentioned, but have never heard of sending anyone to learn religion... only stupid sons are sent into the priesthood!

"Zoroastrianism is more than an elite club. The religion is not the property of anyone. The Parsis are its guardians. Its light should not be hid under a bushel. There is no cause for social exclusiveness: a person should be special for what he does. As it is, the Parsi community will survive but not in a form anyone will admire. The Parsis are doing *poojas* and novenas; they put up pictures of Ganesh... the religion is nothing more than a facade. The doctrine is vanishing—it's the doctrine that's unique!"

Noting that "I disagree with Khojeste," Russell adds, "the conversion issue must be faced... in the course of the next century or so when the educational structure and the community structure is strong enough to teach potential converts orthodox doctrine and practice, to examine them... The people at ZAGNY (Zoroastrian Association of Greater New York) don't know what the doctrines are, they're barely aware of the Zoroastrian doctrine. There is no basic consensus on basic doctrine, no community structure: some accept, some don't. This problem will take at least a generation to solve. All other problems must be solved first before the community is healthy enough to accept new members. Until then conversion would be merely disruptive."

"The pro-conversion lobby is using conversion as a tool to shake established institutions and change basic ideas," he deplored. Russell says he is "very much opposed to what they're doing. Joseph Peterson's (the American engineer whose navjote was performed in New York last March) commitment is honest but the navjote was the product of a crisis. The best way I can serve the religion is not to force myself into the community structure," he affirms stolidly.

According to Russell "Zoroastrian Studies is expanding—there's teacher training, involvement with the

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priesthood, books for different age levels—all of which need time, manpower and financial support. It hasn't had the financial support it needs; very few people make any contribution; people take tickets for free and then there are empty seats. There's a point at which if you don't do good, you do harm. Khojeste shouldn't have to live on family support." Having known Khojeste for 10 years Russell says he's "concerned for him professionally and personally..."

"Why is there no vitality in Zoroastrianism now? It's based on charity, learning and diligence. The community can (even) now become an intellectual leader. The younger ones are showing genuine interest; the middle aged generation is the lost one—the 'barren tree of the Bible.' "

Russell indignantly contrasts the aesthetic beauty of the Hindu religion, "their temples always located in ideal surroundings" with the selling of prime land of the agiary at Walkeshwar and questions, "Why has the Wadiaji Atash Bahram wall not been mended? (The Wadiaji Atash Behram wall was broken after a bus rammed into it.) What kind of kingdom keeps its king in a broken palace? Lots of money is spent on *lagans* but the priests have no form of transport except perhaps a cycle. These are solvable problems," he adds, "not problems which are the cause of despair because the resources are there..."

Russell visualizes a new set of goals for the community: "Zoroastrian resources could be used for founding Zoroastrian theological schools with emphasis on professional commitment. There should be more attention to religion and Iranian studies at the school level. Institutions like the Cama and the Madressas should be revitalized, with new curricula and modern techniques. Primary and secondary education is very backward: there's not enough encouragement for children to think. People have serious questions. They should be taught to look for answers. It needs massive investment in sending Zoroastrians abroad to study religious education and educational practices. Funds can be found if people are serious..."

"A Zoroastrian cultural centre in Bombay should sponsor programmes in different aspects of Zoroastrian culture eg. music. Books of Zoroastrian songs, for example *Atashnu geet* should be published and translated and people taught to sing. Zoroastrian figurative art should be encouraged. The great winged

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balls could inspire more art; build new firetemples; study the layout of firetemples; there's no book or work on Zoroastrian architecture, no manual on how to build an atash bahram or what should be in it. No two firetemples are alike—it's an example of evolving Zoroastrian culture. There's a lot of legend but very little hard evidence.

"The Zoroastrian museum should be supported much more. Ms Nivedita Mehta (curator of the Alpaiwalla

"The Zoroastrian community does not encourage its priests as they encourage science. There are Tata fellowships for English literature, not for Zoroastrian studies!"

Museum) is a very highly trained, competent archeologist but she needs financial support and volunteers to help with all the uncatalogued objects. At the Vedic Museum in Poona they have a whole case devoted to Zoroastrian implements. There's text and picture with each implement to show how it's used and read. The Alpaiwalla Museum should have floods of contributions. I heard the sad story of a priest who sold the agiary implements for scrap. Part of my job is to make noise about things like this. Zoroastrians need a bit of consciousness-raising!" says Russell.

With much of his family decimated in World War II, Russell says he visited all concentration camps in East Europe as a kid. Moral questions such as "Is God dead? Has his relationship with people changed?" had remained unanswered. The question of Evil plagued young Jewish minds. He needed to "justify an idea of god still being worthy of worship." Russell says he found the answers he needed in Zoroastrian dualism—the concept of "death as work of the adversary." The fatalistic eastern religions had left him with a feeling of emptiness, he says, but "the core of religious feeling is great joy. Zoroastrianism makes this clearer and states it better."

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Russell, who is fluent in a dozen languages including Avestan, Old Persian, Pahlavi, New Persian, Greek, Hebrew, Syriac, Russian, Armenian, Turkish, French and German as notes the ZS circular of December 14, 1983, read for a B. Litt in Armenian Studies at the University of Oxford and later gained his PhD in Religious Studies (Zoroastrianism) from the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London. He has a long list of academic publications to his credit in a variety of languages, notes the circular.

Retracing Zoroastrian involvement in India Russell says, "Under the Raj the Parsis were a privileged class. Parsis helped to develop large areas of the Indian economy. Nothing nefarious about it: they saw and used necessity in a productive way. The economic position of the community will stabilize again. The Indian mixed economy is a good mixture. It will not harm the Parsis. India has an ideal environment for religious commitment. It is not threatened by inter-racial friction. Zoroastrian rituals are still preserved intact in India and in Iranian villages.

"If Zoroastrianism survives in North America, its leadership will have to come from here. For much larger communities inter-marriage has been a great problem. In nine cases out of 10 you lose. Inter-marriage would work if the non-Zoroastrian became Zoroastrian. That's very different but that will take a lot of evolving. Zoroastrians (in North America) will have to keep their ties with India open...

"Settle here instead of America," advises Russell. Commenting on the "enormous affection" he finds a "lot of India to admire, a lot of problems to solve, many things in Indian culture, art and even personal relations which one can learn from." As an example he speaks of the traffic in Bombay and Poona where there are very few accidents despite the variety of vehicles and directions and outward appearance of chaos; it has a dignity that one does not see on television. "People lead precarious lives, but dignified. Somehow things work. We have to abandon the normal cause-and-effect relationship of physics." Russell speaks of acts of kindness, sudden and astonishing; as the world's ninth industrial power with its Sanskrit traditions and outward chaos, India has problems but they are worth solving. "It's the only other place than the US where I can think of living," he says.

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Sohrab Modi: the final exit

The passing of movie mogul Sohrab Modi evoked much nostalgia in the press. We reprint two articles, one from Mid-day (January 29, 1984) which gives a brief synopsis of his life and the other from The Daily (February 5, 1984) entitled "Man of many faces" by Siraj Sayed which focuses on his screen career



Sohrab Modi, one of the two Grand Moghuls of the Indian cinema (the other being Prithviraj Kapoor), passed away at his Cuffe Parade, Bombay, residence on Saturday, January 28, 1984. He was 87.

Modi had been ailing for some time, aware that cancer was cutting short his life, and as a final grand gesture to the cinema, launched his final film *Guru Dakshina* on his last birthday on November 2. He was in a hurry to complete it, when death interrupted.

Sohrab Modi will be remembered for his great historical films produced, directed and acted by himself. Between 1936 and 1950, he set his stamp on the Indian motion picture industry and created the era of the historical films.

Year after year they rolled out of Minerva Movietone: *Pukar*, the justice of Jehangir, *Sikandar*, when he played Porus to Prithviraj's Sikander, *Prithvi Vallabh*, *Sheesh Mahal*. There were

other films, all set on the grand scale: *Jailor*, script by Kamal Amrohi, *Kundan*, based on Victor Hugo's *Les Miserables*, *Mirza Ghalib*, with Bharat Bhosani, the film which won the President's Gold Medal, *Yahudi*, with Dilip Kumar and Meena Kumari.

His most ambitious film was *Jhansi Ki Rani*, his wife Mehtab playing the title role. It was India's first technicolour film. His last film, completed, was on Meena Kumari (*Meena Kumari Ki Amar Kahani*) which he directed in 1976.

Born on November 2, 1897, in Gujarat, where his father was employed in the services of the Royal Rampur state, gave him an early command of chaste Hindi which was to become Sohrab Modi's hallmark in his later stage and screen career.

He finished school in Bharda High School in Bombay and, shortly after leaving school, began a promising stage career, rendering Shakespeare plays in Urdu. (Recently, in an interview over Doordarshan, he recited lines from the Urdu Hamlet, his voice as firm and full of timbre as ever). Then, after a short stint as an exhibitor, he got himself fully involved into films, producing, directing, acting.

Left: ...in 'Jhansi Ki Rani.'

Below: ...in 'Aatish,' a family drama



Modi: literature and history formed a torrent...

Sohrab Modi was also one of the oldest members of the century-old Ripon Club of Bombay, founded by Sir Pherozeshah Mehta. The club celebrated the completion of its 100 years on Saturday. He was to be one of the chief guests at the function.

A Sohrab Modi Memorial Institute is to be established. An announcement on this was made at a condolence meeting to mourn the pioneer film-maker's death.

Reprinted from Mid-day, January 29, 1984.

Khoon Ka Khoon based on Shakespeare's *Hamlet* was the first film Sohrab Modi directed. Made in 1935 for the Modis' Stage Film Company, it was actually a 'filmed play'. Naseem (mother of Saira Banu) was the leading lady. Sohrab Modi had been arranging and managing stage shows from 1925. Theirs was a large family. From the theatre, the brothers graduated to films. Sohrab founded Minerva Movietone and the brothers, together, formed Central Studios. Both companies had their own studios.

The first film that was produced under the Minerva banner was *Saed-e-Havas*, in 1936. After two historic plays, Sohrab Modi directed his first social film, *Atma Tarang*, specially written for the screen. In one of the first shows, there were barely a dozen persons watching the film! Undaunted, Sohrab Modi went on. 1938 marked the first milestone in his illustrious career. That was the year *Jailor* was made.

This was the first version of *Jailor*, in

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which he starred opposite Leela Chitnis and Sheela. Twenty years later, he remade *Jailor*. His co-stars this time were Kamini Kaushal and Geeta Bali. Modi Sahab believed in perfect casting, an ideal he achieved time and again. Himself as the jailor and Geeta Bali as one of the leading ladies were casting coups.

Impeccable cast

Likewise, *Pukar* (1939) boasted of an impeccable cast—Chandramohan as Emperor Jehangir, Naseem as Noor Jahan and Sohrab Modi himself as the wronged Rajput warrior.

Historicals always fascinated Modi. *Pukar* became a trend-setter and a prototype of magnum opus historicals, finding echoes in *Mughal-e-Azam* and *Razia Sultan*. Modi himself followed it up with *Sikandar* (1941) and *Prithvi Vallabh* (1943). *Sikandar* was the story of Alexander's invasion of India. With Prithviraj as Sikandar and Sohrab Modi as Porus, it became a veritable clash of giants. Both are remembered today for their superb rendition of dialogue. Literature and history formed a torrent, flowing in confluence from the mouths of these masters of the epic.

Director Sohrab Modi and star Mehtab came together in *Parakh* (1944), which he directed for the Central Studios banner. The 46-year-old bachelor Sohrab fell in love with the 26-year-old divorcee, Mehtab Jhaveri. Two years later, they were married. The marriage became the talk of the town. He was an orthodox Parsi, a top film-maker. She was a Muslim, a divorcee-mother (with an eight-year-old son), also a top heroine. Mehtab divorced her husband to pursue a film career. Subsequently, a son was born to the couple. Ismail (now 46) and Mehelli (now 36) have never felt that they are step-brothers. Sohrab Modi saw to that.

Even as Mehboob Khan launched *Aan* (released in 1952), Sohrab Modi was producing *Jhansi Ki Rani*. The former was shot in 16 mm, technicolour and was blown up to 35 mm. The latter was the first Indian film to be shot in 35 mm, technicolour. Sohrab Modi used the same technicians who worked on *Gone with the Wind*. The film was processed in London, which meant a number of chartered flights to and fro for the Modi family!

A formidable cast—Mehtab, Mubarak, Ulhas, Sapru, Nayampally and Nandu Khote, besides Modi himself—

and all his directional acumen, could not save the film from disaster. Viewers found all kinds of faults with it. What was the songless *Jansi Ki Rani* doing in the era of musicals like *Aan*, *Baiju Bawra*, *Do Raha*, *Jaal*, *Parchhain*, *Sangdil*, *Aah*, *Anarkali*, *Laila Majnu* and *Patita*? Who did she think she was kidding when 33-year-old Mehtab was trying to pass off as a girl half her age? Nearly a crore of rupees went down the drain!

Sohrab Modi was down, but not out. *Waris*, *Ghar Ghar Men Diwali*, *Kundan*, *Rajhath*, *Nausherwan-e-Adil*, *Jailor* (re-make), *Do Gunde* and *Mera Ghar Mere Bachche* followed. But nothing could save Minerva. In paying off his debts, Modi lost most of his belongings, including the Minerva Studio. Brother Keki ran a chain of theatres in Bombay and elsewhere. Like all the other brothers and sisters, Keki too died before Sohrab.

A brilliant performance in the title-role of *Yahudi* (directed by Bimal Roy), with no less a thespian than Dilip Kumar to share stellar honours, was, probably, the last feather in Sohrab's cap. Gravely afflicted and now in his eighties, Sohrab Modi was last seen in Kamal Amrohi's *Razia Sultan*.

Failed attempts

Having successfully re-made *Jailor* Modi was toying with the idea of remaking *Pukar*. The proposal, like his other pet dream of making a film on Ashoka. The Great, never saw the light of day. He made an attempt to revive the Minerva banner with *Samay Bada Balwan* (1969), but 'Samay' (time) was not on his side. The 85-year-old Sohrab Modi did however, launch *Guru Dakshina* in November 1983, with Raaj Kumar and Padmini Kolhapure. He departed soon afterwards, leaving behind a truly generous *Dakshina*—a legacy of love and affection for his wife Mehtab and grown up sons Ismail and Mehelli. What he carried with him on his last journey was the boundless respect and admiration of his family and millions of admirers.

The President's Gold Medal for the best film in any language, plus the Silver Medal for the best film in Hindustani (*Mirza Ghalib*, 1955) and the Dadasaheb Phalke award for outstanding service to the cause of Indian cinema (1980) are but meagre rewards for Sohrab Modi. Isn't there an award for an outstanding human being?

'Friend, Philosopher, Guide'

Died: Nadirshah Rustamji Mulla, 81, noted lawyer and former chairman of the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjuman of India and the Bombay Parsi Punchayet Board of Trustees on March 26 in Bombay following a brief illness.

"On his death the Parsi community loses a true son, the Parsi Punchayet a true, friend, philosopher and guide and the city of Bombay a respected citizen," noted the resolution passed by the BPP on April 3.

A Samast Anjuman meeting was convened in Mulla's honour on April 30 by the BPP.

A partner in the reputed law firm of Mulla and Mulla and Craigie Blunt and Caroe which was founded by his father, Rustamji and uncle, Dinshah, Mulla



Mulla: 'warmth of companionship.'

"was a wizard in income tax laws and procedure," states the BPP release. "As such when the Income Tax Act was amended in 1961 with a step-motherly bias against communal trusts, it was he who devised ways and means to save substantial chunks of income being arrogated by the tax authorities from the existing trust funds as well as from fresh donations to charity..." stated the resolution.

After completing his studies at Bharda New High School and Elphinstone College, Mulla studied law at the Government Law College and enrolled as a solicitor in 1927. He joined the Punchayet in 1944 defeating the noted financier A.D. Shroff.

"During the period of 30 years that he

was a trustee of the Panchayet and during the 13 years that he was at the helm of its affairs he worked hard with dedication and devotion keeping the welfare of the Parsi community uppermost in his heart. During this period, the Panchayet and the community had to face many complex problems and Mulla's suggestions were extremely valuable to his colleagues in arriving at appropriate decisions. He also represented the Parsi Panchayet on the managing committees of the N.N. and R.N. Wadia Trust Buildings for Parsis," noted the resolution.

A keen sportsman since his school days, he captained the cricket and tennis teams while at college and in his later days developed a taste for golf, states a family life sketch.

Mulla will be remembered says his son Navel for the "warmth of his companionship....the swift insight of his conversation, the perpetual twinkle in his eyes and the delight of his wit, which never deserted him to the last."

He is survived by his wife, Meherbai, and sons, Fardun and Navel.

U.K. High Priest

Died: Dastur Dr Sohrab Hormasji Kutar, 71, High Priest of the Zoroastrians in the U.K. on April 20 in London following a brief illness.

In fulfilment of his wishes, Kutar's body was flown to Bombay and laid to rest in the Towers of Silence.

His "meritorious service...rendered to the community for the past 38 years," was extolled in a scroll presented to him and his wife Shirinbanoo by the Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe on December 3, 1983 at a public function in the London Zoroastrian House. On the occasion, president of ZTFE, Shahpur Captain stated, "Dasturji Saheb is a firm believer in the power and efficacy of prayers and he has taken every opportunity of bringing this to the fore in the affairs of the Association.... We had just to see and hear Sohrabji perform the Jashan, Afringan and other ceremonies to feel the tremendous spiritual uplift..."

"Kutar was appointed the High Priest of the Zoroastrians in the U.K. by the members of the Zoroastrian Association of Europe....in 1964" said Captain. Since he was only a navar at that time, he resolved to become a maratub, a qualification which he obtained at Navsari at the age of 57. Recently the Kutars had "donated a munificent sum of £5,000 to the Association, from the income of

which the Association (will) assist Athornan children from the West and the East in becoming navars and maratubs," informed Captain.

The seventh child in a family of seven sons and one daughter, Kutar completed his schooling from the J.J. School at Bombay. Unable to fulfil his ambition of joining the Navy due to his weak eyesight, Kutar launched his career as a medic. Both the Kutars were students of the Grant Medical College and after qualifying as doctors they worked at the J.J. Hospital in Bombay. In 1938, he



Kutar: 'tremendous spiritual uplift.'

went to the U.K. for further studies as a surgeon but with the outbreak of the Second World War he voluntarily joined the Royal Army Medical Corp. Kutar was awarded the Star of Africa by Field Marshal Montgomery for his "dedicated and sterling services rendered" to the armed forces of the U.K. and Commonwealth.

After getting married in 1943, the Kutars left India in 1946 and have settled down in the U.K. since then. In 1958 they established their own practice in U.K. Kutar was "keenly interested" in all kinds of sport and participated in swimming, hockey, riding, cricket and cycling. To recall Captain, "Sohrabji's other passion is music and drama."

The highlight of the felicitation function held on December 3 was the unveiling of the portrait of Kutar and Shirinbanoo in the Assembly Hall as a token of the community's appreciation. As stated of Kutar, "It is true to say that he has uplifted the Zoroastrian community in London spiritually."

Kutar is survived by his wife, Dr Shirinbanoo and daughters, Perin and Shernaz Patel.

The Mark of Marker

Died: Kekobad Ardeshir Marker, 88, one of the founders of Quetta city, pioneer of the pharmaceutical industry in Pakistan and ex-chairman of the Industrial Development Bank of Pakistan, on February 15 at London following a heart attack.

In his condolence telegram to Ms Marker, the President of Pakistan M. Zia-ul Haq stated, "His services to the cause of welfare of the people will long be remembered," while in another message to Marker's son Jamshed, Pakistan's Ambassador to France, Zia expressed his "heartfelt condolences." Condolence messages praising Marker's contributions were also received from Lieut. General Rahim Uddin Khan, Governor of Baluchistan and General Jilani, Governor of Punjab.

A resolution adopted at a Samast Anjuman meeting convened in his memory by the Karachi Parsi Anjuman Trust Fund (KPATF) noted, "In the death of Seth Kekobad Marker the Parsi community of Pakistan in particular, and the people of Pakistan as a whole, have lost a great Parsi, a noble citizen, a pioneering industrialist, a civic leader, a sportsman and a philanthropist."

The resolution signed by KPATF trustees, D. B. Avari, Burjor Anklesaria, Ardeshir Cowasjee, Jal H. P. Byramji and Byram D. Avari went on to note that the Pakistan Government had awarded the Sitara-e-Khidmat to Marker for his numerous services.

Born in Secunderabad in 1896, Marker joined the family business after studying at the Khan Bahadur Ardeshir D. Marker Anglo-Vernacular School founded by his father, the Sandeman High School in Quetta and at St. Xavier's College, Bombay. He became a member of the Quetta Municipality and during the earthquake of 1935 which killed around 56,000 people, he turned his home into a miniature refugee camp. The Bombay Parsi Panchayet which collected five lakh rupees for the earthquake relief, entrusted the sum to Marker for disposal.

In 1941 Marker introduced the pharmaceutical industry in Pakistan with the inauguration of his factory Marker Alkaloids. As the resolution notes "Today the products of Marker Alkaloids are known in the national as well as international markets as being of the highest quality and the firm has established an outstanding reputation. In

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1983, the company was awarded the President of Pakistan's Merit Certificate for being pioneers in the basic manufacture of drugs based on indigenous raw materials."

In 1957 Marker was nominated as a director of the Pakistan Industrial Finance Corporation and was made chairman of the Board two years later. As mentioned in the resolution, "He continued as chairman when the Corporation was transferred into the Industrial Development Bank of Pakistan, and remained in office for 14 years, despite the fact that the normal term is set for two years only." Leading a delegation of the IDBP to Japan in 1962, he negotiated for loans for the textile industry, said the resolution.

"He made extensive contributions to charity, mostly in an anonymous fashion," the resolution stated. He also donated rooms, wards and equipment to hospitals in Quetta and Karachi and built dharamsalas and flats for Parsis in Quetta, Sukur, Karachi and Secunderabad. Marker was known to have taken a keen interest in sports and "did much to encourage cricket, football, gliding, aviation and squash in Baluchistan."

He is survived by his wife, Meherbanoo, and sons, Jamshed, Khurshed and Minocher.

Choksi : 'Financial Wizard'

Died: Jehangir Dossabhoy Choksi, 83, former Director of Tata Sons Limited and legal adviser to the Tata Group of Companies, on January 29 in Bombay after a prolonged illness.

"The late Choksi played a leading role in the growth and development of a number of Tata companies with which he was actively associated... He took an active part in the doubling of the capacity of TISCO to two million tonnes in the late fifties. His advice was also sought with regard to financial matters of companies in the Tata group," noted the Bombay-based financial daily, *The Economic Times* of January 29.

In his distinguished career extending from 1938 to 1979, Choksi held top executive positions in the Tata Group of Companies, the largest private sector group in the country. He was the director-in-charge of Air India and Air India International, of Tata Chemicals and of the Tata Electric Companies which he later chaired. He was the founder chairman of Voltas Ltd. and vice-chairman of the Tata Iron and Steel

Company.

Prior to joining the Tata Sons Ltd. in 1938 as legal adviser to the Tata Group of Companies, Choksi was working with Messrs Wadia Ghandy & Co., Solicitors. On completion of his education in Bangalore and Bombay, Choksi joined Messrs Wadia Ghandy & Co. and "started practice at the Bombay High Court in 1926 and later became a partner



Choksi: leading role in companies' growth.

of that firm," says the press release.

He was on the local and central boards of the State Bank of India until 1968 and served as the Chairman of the New India Assurance Co. Ltd., from 1965 to 1972, states the handout.

Choksi was also a trustee of five Tata Trusts including the Sir Dorab Tata Trust until August 1983.

His body was cremated at the Sion electric crematorium.

Tarapore : 'Energetic and Helpful'

Died: Erach J Tarapore, 73, honorary secretary of the Parsi Zoroastrian Anjuman of Secunderabad and Hyderabad (PZASH) and former company executive, on March 8 after a brain hemorrhage.

"He did his job with dedication, devotion, sincerity (and) honesty for the welfare of the community," noted a life sketch of Tarapore sent by the twin city Anjuman. Tarapore joined the managing committee of PZASH in 1972 and was entrusted with the secretaryship. He was "instrumental in securing funds from outside and.... for constructing several flats for the poor and the needy,"

according to Naval Vakeel who worked with Tarapore on the managing committee of PZASH.

Tarapore's efforts enabled the mobeds to enjoy additional perquisites like revision of grades and food allowance, stated the anjuman bio-data. A utility van which was purchased to permit the carrying of dead bodies in a dignified way was also due to Tarapore's initiative.



Tarapore: concern for community welfare.

A Rotarian since 1956, Tarapore had served in the capacity of secretary, president and chairman of various committees. The Children's Park at Tank Bund is said to symbolize Tarapore's contribution as a Rotarian. He had also worked as the honorary secretary of the Zoroastrian Club for many years, states the bio-data, "during which period the club enriched itself by his services."

Born in Hanumkonda, Warangal, Tarapore completed his academic education at Bombay. From there he proceeded to Manchester in England to study for his B. Tech in textile engineering. On his return to India, he joined the Azamjahi Mills, Warangal in 1939 and worked with them for 30 years, retiring as service-cum-sales manager. In 1940 he married Ms Mani Davierwala.

Prior to his death, Tarapore was working on the construction of a double storey showroom, the ground floor of which was allotted to the Zoroastrian Stree Mandal for their project "Self Help". Tarapore will be remembered for being "very energetic and helpful", sums up Ms Z R Ranji, acting honorary secretary of PZASH.

He is survived by his son, Dr Farokh and daughter, Ms Armaity Nagarwala.

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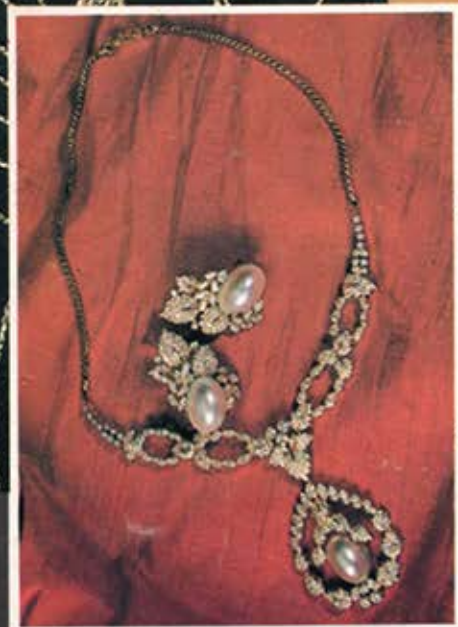
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