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MAY 1985 PRICE Rs 6



**Jamsheed
Kanga**

Bombay's
Municipal Commissioner



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Cover: Transparency of Jamsheed Kanga by Homyar Mistry

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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.

"A 'milestone' ..."

I refer to the controversy regarding extension of the Karani Agiary at Cusrow Baug (*Parsiana*, March 1985).

The argument is about extra space required for *muktad*, *uthamha* ceremonies and public lectures. The *ruvanni bungli*, provided by the trustees of the baug for religious ceremonies, could provide all the additional space required by the management of the agiary. Presently, the bungli is used as a provision store, but there is no reason why it should not be claimed back as a bungli for the purpose — and other allied purposes — for which it was intended.

The protagonists should jointly take up the matter with the trustees of the baug and get back the bungli for public

use rather than allow it for private business.

J.J. JUSSAWALLA

In your article "A 'milestone' round our necks" (*Parsiana*, March 1985) you have stated the exact developments that took place. The offer to expand the agiary was at a preliminary stage and plans and blueprint of the new structure were prepared to show that the original structure would not be disturbed and the impressive front would be maintained as is.

The adjoining ground was cleared of dried shrubs and plants, because of the golden jubilee function of the building. How could any alteration, addition or further construction ever take place without the sanction of the trustees of the N.M. Wadia Trust who have leased this plot to the trustees of the Karani Agiary? How could the present Guzder Hall be extended without the permission of the original Guzder family or their heirs? How could expansion take place without a No Objection Certificate (N.O.C.) from the Bombay Municipal Corporation and competent authorities?

You have beautifully described with excellent pictures in your article "The holy fire has brought prosperity..." our Dar-e-Meher's golden jubilee event. I was the first tenant to enter Cusrow Baug on March 21, 1934 and a

year later in February 1935 participated in bringing the holy fire from the Sodawaterwalla Agiary to its present site.

JEHANGIR F. SHROFF

With the appointment of learned Ervad Nadirshaw Aibara, there has been a larger flow of devotees to the Karani Agiary in Cusrow Baug all through the year and more during the *muktad* holidays.

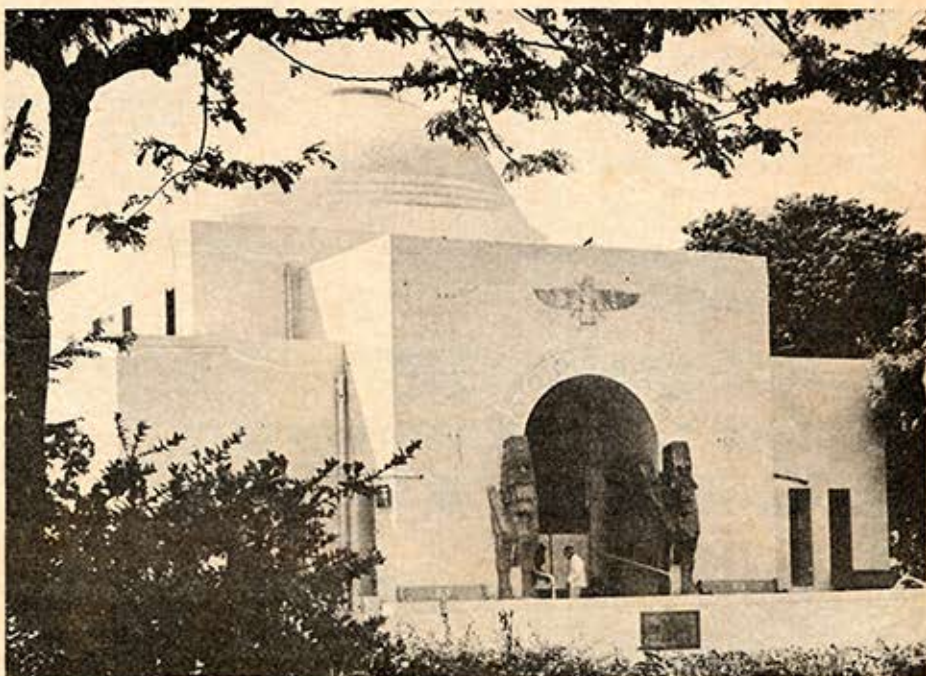
Ervad Aibara has been rendering yeoman service lecturing to the community and healing the sick and infirm by dispensation of *nirang*. Some of the women who seem to be ardent admirers of Ervad Aibara have personally told me in no uncertain terms that with the precise chanting of *nirang*, many of their worries are over. To brand Ervad Aibara with the use of filthy language is to do great injustice to such a holy person.

R.N. RUSTOMJI

'Stamp of approval'

A first day cover and stamp has been published (*Parsiana* January 1985, Events and Personalities column) with a note "Moos' 101 birth anniversary stamp and first day cover." This is not so.

The first day cover and stamp are of Dr D.N. Wadia, issued by the post and



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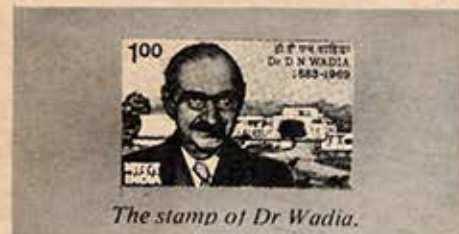
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telegraph department on October 23, 1984. To my knowledge, no stamp and first-day cover, commemorating Dr



Nanabhoy Ardeshir Moos' services to science and education has ever been issued by the post and telegraph department, which is very unfortunate.

Being a philatelist myself, I desire that this error be corrected in the near future.

J.B. MUSA
Member, Poona Philatelic Association

Second term

The only honourable course for any trustee who covets a second term is to leave braggadocio alone and face the electorate in an open election and take chances instead of cashing in on the goodwill of a colleague and reserving a safe berth through a pocket borough.

DINSHAW MERCHANT

Evading issues?

Why are our so called "elders" wasting precious time in having conferences with nothing really important being discussed? Why are we avoiding the urgent issues that are confronting the community?

I honestly feel that for the sake of the future, our orthodox and reformist groups should get together in the true spirit of Ham-Band Paivaste and come to some understanding.

I strongly feel that we must discuss with a clear and open mind:

- The acceptance of children of a non-Parsi father into the religion with the consent of both the parents, especially the father.

- Voluntary conversion of a man or a woman who has married a Parsi and wishes to join our religion or if there is a person who has studied our religion and wishes to be converted. We should have a panel consisting of learned Parsi men and women who may decide whether we can accept these persons or not.

- Adoption: bearing in mind that for a child to feel completely in tune with its adopted parents he or she should follow the same religion as his or her pa-

rents. Can one not see the reaction of an adopted child if he or she is denied the entrance to an agiary or an atash bahram while his parents can go to them? Does our religion teach us to be so cruel?

- Lastly and most important of all — to try and make our youth realize the importance of our religion, its rites and customs.

What shook me out of my apathy was when Zoroastrian scholar John Hinnells came to Delhi and said that he wanted to do research on the Parsis before it was too late and they died out! When will we ever learn?

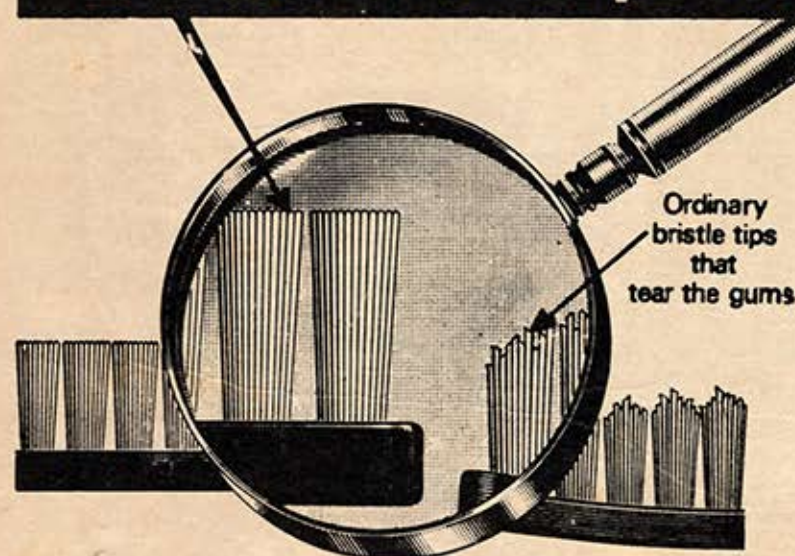
BHICOO J. MANEKSHAW
New Delhi

Peterson's 'deep study'

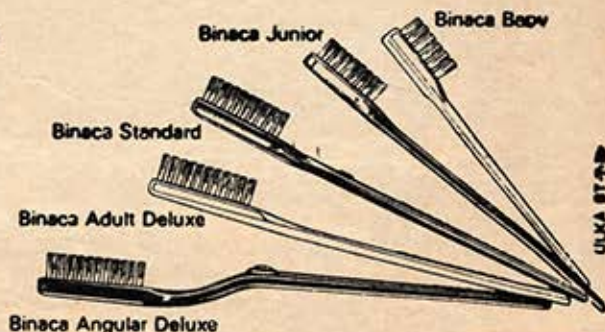
Joseph Peterson has put on computer, in English-Avesta, *afargan*, *kshnum*, *karda*, *afarin*, etc. He has now learnt Gujarati and Devanagari scripts and reads the *Khordeh Avesta* in these scripts. He has made such a deep study of the Zoroastrian religion without encouragement or guidance from any one; it is a revelation or natural guidance.

NOSHIR HORMAZDIYAR
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Bhikha Behram Kuvo

The Parsi well, more commonly referred to as the Bhikha Behram no Kuvo is being totally misused. I have personally witnessed lepers drawing water from the well with filthy buckets.

Much as the nuisance around the well is annoying to the sight, the hazards of infection, pollution and disease cannot altogether be ruled out.

The Municipal Corporation of Bombay has requested the trustees to barricade the area for the purpose of keeping undesirable elements at bay. In a letter dated January 10, 1984 addressed to the trustees, the Corporation had written: "The Municipal Corporation is taking steps to beautify the area of South Bombay. As part of the program the entire width of the footpath between the Parsi well and the Churchgate subway is proposed to be paved with chequered tiles... As you are aware, the Parsi well is being misused by unauthorized hawkers and vagrants in the locality. They bathe, wash and cook in the vicinity... We would therefore request you to barricade the well with ornamental grills."

The facility and arrangement to prevent further misuse of the well, has been offered to the trustees on a silver platter. It is indeed unfortunate they (for reasons best known to them) do not wish to avail of it.

The trust has several eminent ladies and gentlemen on its board, some of them include: Bejon Engineer, Ms M. J. Taraporewala, C.H. Bhabha, R.J. Taraporewala and Ms S.T. Taraporewala. It is hoped these people will work in the best interest of the city's environment and the pedestrians in particular.

NOSHIR HOMI DADRAWALA

Farm with a difference

There was a time not too long ago when members of the community had farms in Gujarat and were involved in agriculture. With the passage of time however, many of these farmers felt the urge to move to the concrete skyscraper jungle of Bombay. Today many of these farms are no more, and farming has few Parsi practitioners. There are a few stray cases of the reverse taking place, of Parsis buying land outside Bombay and cultivating it anew in the tradition of their forefathers. Near Sanjan, a piece of land,

scenically situated near the river, was donated to the Mazdayasnie Monastery by a philanthropic old gentleman. Part of the land is now being cultivated under the auspices of the All India Shah Behram Baug Society for scientific and educational research as an Agricultural Research Centre.

Here is a farm with a difference, cultivated according to the ancient Zoroastrian agricultural method contained in the *Vendidad* and other ancient books of the Zoroastrian religion as well as the biodynamic method of agriculture. According to the ancient religious method, the land was purified. This is the first experiment of its kind in India. The president of the society, Ms Meher Master-Moos, is putting in to practice the biodynamic method of agriculture, which was introduced by Dr Rudolf Steiner, an Austrian mystic-philosopher and scientist (1861-1925). Steiner's biodynamic method does away with artificial components and the soil is cultivated by purely organic means, thereby revitalizing and regenerating it. Biodynamic agriculture gives one an understanding of the nature of the soil, of the magnetic field and the effects of the various planets and star-constellations.

Master-Moos combines the ancient occult knowledge as shown by the late Ustad Saheb Behramshah Nowroji Shroff (1858-1927) contained in Zarathushtrian Il-me-Kshnoom with the methods of Steiner which has successfully yielded rich and regular harvest.

I had the opportunity to visit the Agricultural Research Centre at one of its tree planting ceremonies. Before the sapling was planted into the soil the *Sarosh Baj* was recited, then a *nirang* and then the *Doa Tandarosti* for blessings, in order that the young trees would give health-giving fruits.

ABAN BANA

Dokhmenashini unhygienic

Our dokhmas are *nassakhanas* (garbage-bins) and it is true that we keep no social contacts with the poor *nassakhanas* (khandias who enter the dokhmas). The mobeds discreetly do not enter the dokhmas.

The Parsi Punchayet vide their letter No. R 925 dated October 25, 1967 describe dokhmenashini thus: "After the birds have eaten the soft matter, the remaining is removed into the central pits (*astodans*) wherein it lies, decomposing

and putrefying. No acid or any solvent is used." How harrowing the inside conditions of the dokhmas are could be judged from what the Punchayet further writes, "It is not advisable for behdins to enter the Bombay dokhmas wherein on an average three dead bodies are consigned daily."

According to the late Dasturji Dabu, only after the *astodan* of a dokhma is filled up to the brim with the remains of the dead, the muck is brought out and is buried outside in the open ground. Dasturji Dabu further writes (*Jam-e-Jamshed*, July 17, 1967), "The emitting aura from our dokhmas is 'gandu, palid and rimoni' from which we are required to keep a distance of at least 30 paces and for this reason dokhmas are built on the outskirts of the town far away from our *agiaris*."

S.R. Vakil, ex-trustee of the Parsi Punchayet who inspected the inside conditions of our Bombay dokhmas and later gave a harrowing account of it in *Parsiana* said, "I am afraid that from within our dokhmas an epidemic may spread in the growing vicinity around."

DARA J.D. CAMA

'Devotee of art'

The one and only Parsi Zarathosti staying at Chalisgaon in Jalgaon District, is 72-year old "Mahapurush" Maharishi Keki M. Moos, who for the past 35 years or more has not stepped out of his bungalow. A lifelong devotee of art living in his "self imposed hermitage" he has produced masterpieces of painting and photography. He has not given or sold any piece of art.

In the quiet hall inside hang life-sized oil paintings done by Moos and the best and the greatest artists of the past and the present.

Moos who was born on October 2, 1912 in Bombay, was introduced to the renowned photographer Jehangir N. Unwala, who helped in guiding him and training him for his career in art. He has contributed lively articles on photographic art. Uptil now he has bagged innumerable gold and silver medals, brass plaques and countless certificates of merit and membership from many photographic associations in India and abroad and many cash prizes.

ADI PATEL
Poona

Freedom was won long before 1947. By people who could think for themselves and shed the shackles of dependence; by men of foresight and determination, like Ardeshir and Pirojsha Godrej, who had confidence in the country's capabilities and shared the same ideals with Tilak, Tagore, Gandhi, Nehru.

In Godrej, self-reliance has been considered indispensable to progress, the aim being not just self-sufficiency for the organisation but for the whole country. Progress can only be achieved in a *milieu* of progress.

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Self-Reliance: the Keynote of our Independence

Made to international standards, their products range from security equipment, machine tools and forklift trucks to steel furniture, typewriters and refrigerators—besides soaps, toiletries, chemicals and animal feeds. The Godrej industrial garden township at Vikhroli-Pirojshanagar, is a superb example of self-reliance and progress. For their workers Godrej have provided—in a unique environment—many social benefits: extensive housing schemes, schools and adult education, recreation, medical and family planning benefits.

Self-reliance is both a means and an end. For Godrej it is the essence of independence.



Events and Personalities

A role in history...

"The government has allowed the setting up of private medical colleges for the first time in history. If our community has a college under its control, the community can help 20-30 young Parsis get into medical college each year. The (B.D. Petit) Parsee General Hospital can be converted into a college."

Jamsheed Kanga, founder and ex-president of the Council for Economic Revival (CER) was speaking at the CER's third jashan and gahambar on April 20, 1985 where he was felicitated on becoming Bombay's first Parsi Municipal Administrator.

"Jamsheed is a man of rare breed. In honouring him the CER honours itself," noted Homi Sethna, ex-chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission of India who was the chief guest on the occasion. "The community was not going down as it was a few years ago," noted Sethna and added, "The CER's role in changing the electoral scheme will go down in history."

Kanga, who had been joint secretary in the department of atomic energy for 15 years, was handsome in his acknowledgements: "Getting a *manpatra* from him (Sethna) is like getting a good confidential report... Dastur Minochehr-Homji used to teach me the navar prayers. I've always looked to him for guidance and he has never failed me... Fali Poncha, Dadi Engineer, Minoo Shroff, Silloo Kavarana, whatever has been achieved by the CER has been due to your efforts. I'm getting some of the credit under false pretenses..."

Kanga was presented with the *manpatra* and a silver salver. Nor did the organizers forget "long-suffering Firoza who has to share her husband with the CER, the Parsi Punchayet and now the city of Bombay" as Fali Pon-

cha, chairman of CER's managing committee, noted with a smile.

A religious program comprising of a jashan, a humbandagi led by Dastur Firoze Kotwal and a talk on the significance of the gahambar by Dastur Minochehr-Homji preceded the felicitation.

Kanga claimed the "proud privilege to work with so many dedicated men and women in the task of helping the community." Referring to the community's growing awareness Kanga noted, it now had a "responsible and responsive leadership. Men of eminence were hankering to become trustees. Now people were expecting trustees to come forward and serve the community..." Noting that our "fame and glory were due to the efforts and foresight of our great visionary forefathers," Kanga implored the community to "create entrepreneurship among young Parsis. Take advantage of various opportunities made available by the government." The CER is organizing a seminar on Youth and Self Employment on June 2, 1985 under the chairmanship

of ex-BPP trustee Jamshed Guzder and Kanga informed the gathering that representatives of the Maharashtra government agencies were expected to participate.

At the end of the list of CER's scheduled speakers Poncha invited Khojeste Mistree, founder of Zoroastrian Studies, to speak about the Athravan Educational Trust which has been set up by BPP trustee Homi Ranina, Dastur Firoze Kotwal, high priest of the Wadia Atash Bahram and Mistree to train young boys to be full-time mobeds capable of community leadership. Mistree said the trust will be officially launched on Behram *roj* (May 11, 1985) at 5.15 p.m. at Cusrow Baug with a jashan ceremony and a gahambar to follow. Mistree noted he was "specially happy to announce this officially at the CER function to honour Kanga" which filled him with a "vision of Zoroastrianism being spearheaded into the twenty-first century. Rich, poor, radical, orthodox, let us join hands," Mistree concluded.

An audiovisual on the navjote was



CER's jashan: spearheading Zoroastrianism

viewed by a large audience that had gathered for the gahambar priced at Rs 30 per head where each ticket sold enabled one underprivileged Parsi to be fed free. The Godiwallas, along with Rogers cold drinks and Friendly Ice-cream deserve special mention for the fare they served to nearly 1000 diners.

Vizag hall

Dedicated to the Parsis of Vizag, the Bai Jerbai Hall, donated by Sohrab Kapadia, president of the Vizag Zoroastrian Association (VZA), was formally consecrated on February 17, 1985, notes the March 1985 newsletter of VZA. Ervad Bomanshaw Antia and his son, Kerfegar Antia performed the jashan ceremony.

At the post-lunch session, it was suggested that a directory of Parsi dhamshalas in India be compiled and distributed to the various anjumans, so that middle-class Parsis could plan a budgeted vacation.

A recommendation that the VZA should acquire land for residential accommodation for Parsis in Vizag was also made.

Regarding the hosting of a council meeting of the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India, the VZA unanimously agreed that 15 delegates could be accommodated and arrangements made for their food and transportation.

The discussion was followed by a discourse, on the birth of Zarathushtra and his religious preachings by Sohrab Kapadia.

Jamshedpur Agiary 25

Catering to the needs of about 650 Parsis residing in Jamshedpur, the Cursetjee Manockjee Shroff Agiary completed its silver jubilee on March 3, 1985, notes H.P. Bodhanwalla, chairman of the agiary in a letter.

Listed among the assets of the Jamshedpur Parsi Association which has a membership of 243, the agiary is managed by seven trustees — five appointed by the association and two by the C.M. Shroff family. There are two living quarters for the mobeds and one for the karigar.

"We seek the support of philanthropic Parsis in augmenting our resources to maintain the agiary and its garden in a befitting manner and also to make provisions for paying the (mobed) and



Members of the Vizag Anjuman at the inauguration of the Bai Jerbai Memorial Hall.

karigar, salary commensurate with the present day cost of living to enable them to live in dignity and grace. Contributions for the agiary may be addressed to the Chairman, C.M. Shroff Agiary, Jamshedpur, Silver Jubilee Account."

As part of the silver jubilee celebrations the Jamshedpur Parsi Association wishes to host a council meeting of the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India in October this year. The association also plans to arrange lectures, films and video screenings on Zoroastrian themes and to put up a Gujarati play.

Ahmednagar office-bearers

The new office-bearers of the Ahmednagar Parsi Anjuman are: president Godrej R. Kermani, vice-president Merwan B. Mehta, secretary Eruch K.

Gai and treasurer Ms Mani R. Damania, reports the anjuman's newsletter, *New Horizon* of November 1984. The election was held on October 13.

The other successful candidates are Ms Viloo S. Irani, Ms Nargis N. Hathidaru, Behram S. Nagarwala, Farrokh R. Master and Mehernosh B. Mehta, the report adds.

Is God all-powerful?

The Council of Vigilant Parsis (COVP) has joined battle with Zoroastrian Studies (ZS) on the issue of the omnipotence of Ahura Mazda and the source of evil. ZS — under the tutelage of Khojeste Mistree and like-minded scholars James Russell and Allen Williams who view Zoroastrianism as a dualistic religion — believes and preaches that Ahura Mazda is all-knowing and all-good but not all-powerful — hence the



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existence of the negative forces of evil under the domain of Ahriman. To counter this train of thought, the COVP and its spokesmen Adi Doctor and B.K. Mistry addressed the community on the subject, "Omnipotence of Ahura Mazda and the concept of evil in the Zoroastrian religion" on March 29 at the K.R. Cama Institute's Jivanji Mody Hall.

Mistry, in his introductory address, noting that "faith is being eroded by scholarship," described the two types of scholars of Zoroastrianism: "The self-taught scholar (who is) limited to the K.R. Cama library (and who is) usually harmless" and the second, who has had "the good fortune of being educated in a foreign country. (He is) the kind of commodity Parsis love — imported, foreign — therefore (he) must be vital, must be believed."

Noting that western scholars "cannot accept the esoteric side of religion because it is against the grain of life as cultivated in the west," Mistry cited as an example of superficial translation *Ha 44*, para 18 of the Gathas where Zarathushtra asks Ahura Mazda, "When will they be deserving of the reward of one camel and 10 pregnant mares?" "The philologist will speak of pastoral times when camels and mares were precious," noted Mistry and asked, "But why did Zarathushtra ask for only one camel? Why not a pair?... Why not five pairs of horses?"

"If Ahura Mazda is not powerful, our religion is not powerful; then our mantras and our ceremonies are not powerful... (thus) Parsis go to other religions where their gods are considered all-powerful... It will mislead, misguide our children," warned Mistry.

Doctor noted at the outset, "Were this discussion confined to workshops and academia, it wouldn't matter. But they (ZS) carry it into preaching the community... In the whole history of Parsis in India, no one has ever preached that Ahura Mazda had this one shortcoming until Mistree, Russell and Williams..."

"When you question the omnipotence of Ahura Mazda, you question his omniscience too... Can Ahura Mazda not allow evil to continue until such time as it suits him?" Referring to the frequent references to death as an evil in the lectures sponsored by ZS, Doctor noted, "Death has never been taken as destruction but as transformation. Yasna 55.2 says the death of man



(From l to r): Wadia, Ranina, Nariman, Vakil and Fali Master at Albless Baug.

is the separation of the spiritual elements from the human body."

Quoting freely from the *Khordeh Avesta* to support his line of thinking, Doctor concluded, "Applying logic to Ahura Mazda is like measuring nature with a six inch ruler!"

Prayers on cassette

"To inspire, attract and help young Zoroastrians to know the beauty of their Avestan prayers..." music director Vishtasp Balsara of Calcutta has prepared an audio cassette on the Zoroastrian daily prayers, notes a letter by Bejon Desai, principal of the Boys' Town Public School, Nashik.

The original prayer in Avesta recited by Ervad Bapuji Desai of Calcutta, is followed by a Gujarati translation from Kavi Phiroz Batliwalla's *Sarod-E-Avesta*, sung by Dhannavaz Indorewalla. English translations of the same with lyrics composed by Bejon Desai and music composed by Vishtasp Balsara are then sung by Ms Roshan Guzdar, adds the letter.

Balsara has prepared another cassette deleting the Gujarati songs "in case some ultra-modern Zoroastrian youngsters do not have the preference for, or the knowledge of Gujarati," states the letter.

Every cassette accompanied by a leaflet containing either Gujarati or English translations of the prayers, "will be sold at cost price to cover the cost of the blank cartridge only," the letter adds.

For further details write to Vishtasp A. Balsara, 16, Akur Dutta Lane,

(near Hind Cinema), Calcutta-700 012.

Orthodox lecture series

"It is high time we realized that we are the repositories of our ancient faith and that every mixed marriage is one step forward towards the road to extinction," said BPP trustee Homi Ranina, at the inaugural session of the lecture series organized by R.D.R. Enterprises, on February 17, 1985, at Albless Baug, notes a press release. Ranina said that one out of every five marriages is a mixed marriage, and when the existence of our religion is endangered, any talk about love and broad-mindedness is entirely out of place, the release adds.

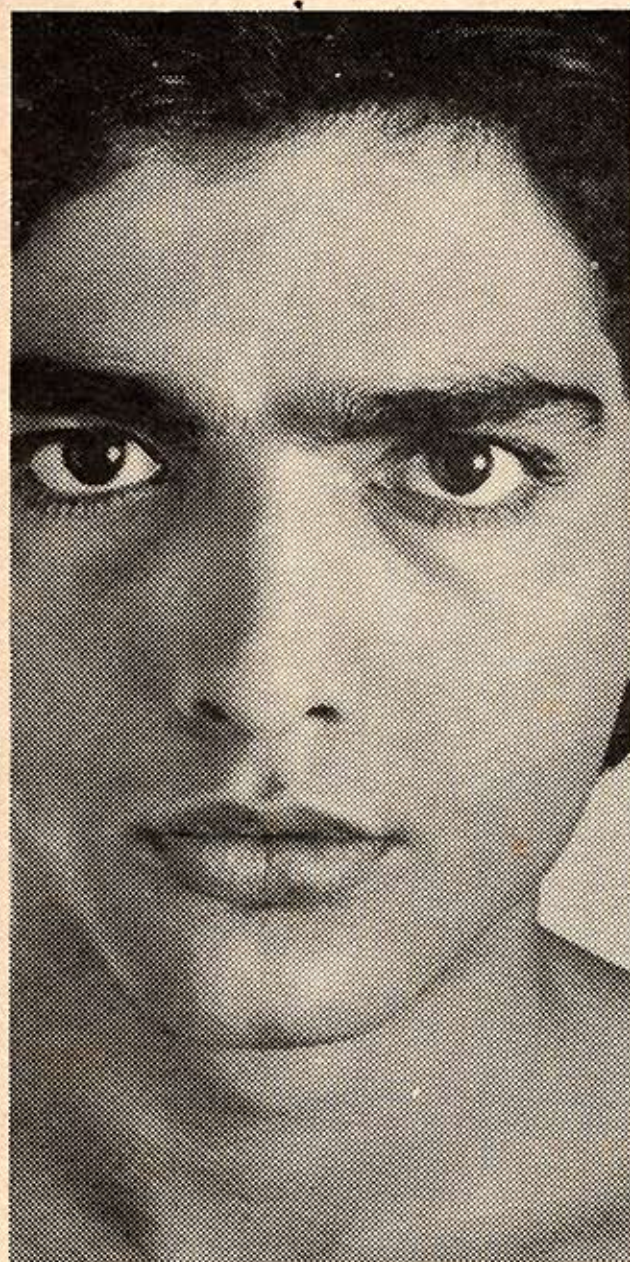
The function chaired by Zoroastrian scholar Fariburz Nariman, was preceded by a jashan led by Dastur Dr Firoze Kotwal, when principals, teachers and 300 students of various schools and colleges attended, adds the release.

In his opening address, Nariman pointed out that those who have love for Zarathushtra and Zoroastrian traditions, cannot possibly marry out of the community. States the press release:

"Nariman observed that a small group of five or seven millionaires often come out with baseless statements regarding certain burning issues, thereby confusing the latter or adding to the number of our problems. One or two such persons maintain that we are very narrow-minded because we are against intermarriages. Some of them aver that we must be ready to convert people belonging to other faiths into



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The one brighter spot in a man's morning.



our own, otherwise we would be regarded as narrow-minded. Again there are those who cannot understand or accept the importance our community gives to rites and rituals. Behind all such outbursts there is simply a question of personal likes or dislikes — such an attitude constitutes a grave danger for the community.

"Among Parsis living abroad, particularly in the U.S.A., every third marriage is an intermarriage and whenever such marriages take place, some people try to enlighten us about 'love'. Expressing his inability to understand this 'love' and 'lovers' abroad, Nariman emphasized that the question of 'love marriage' with alien spouses cannot arise for those who have love for Zarathushtra and Zoroastrian tradition," stated the release. Former magistrate Jal Vakil proposed a vote of thanks.

The purpose of the lecture series according to Russi Wadia, proprietor of R.D.R. Enterprises is "to acquaint the members of our community with the views of orthodox dasturs, scholars and knowledgeable laymen on important issues connected with our religion and community."

Ranina's views in Review

A lengthy article attacking inter-community marriages by Bombay Parsi Punchayet trustee Homi P. Ranina features in the *BPP Quarterly Review* of July-August-September 1984. Titled the 'Need for Encouraging the Bombay Parsi Punchayet Matrimonial Bureau,' the six-page article has about three paragraphs on the bureau while the rest is on Ranina's theories on the danger of mixed marriages and the threat they pose to the future of the community. Ranina in conclusion urges the community to support the Matrimonial Bureau so that Parsis marry within the fold.

In other news, of the 10 Bombay Parsi Punchayet board of trustees meetings between July and September 1984, five were attended by all seven trustees, four by six trustees and one by four, notes the *BPP Quarterly Review*, edited by R.K. Anklesaria and D.F. Bharucha, without mentioning the names of the trustees present or absent. There were 188 items on the agenda, an average of 19 items per meeting.

Two hundred and sixty-five deaths were recorded at the Doongerwadi between July 1, 1984 and September 1984.

The largest number of deaths, 88, were in the age group 71 to 80 years with the second largest number, 73, being in the 81 to 90 year bracket.

A letter of congratulations was given to Ms Veera Mehta on her prestigious appointment as secretary general of the International Association of Schools of Social Work in Vienna, Austria. "Your services in the field of social work and your special interest in the education of children are well-known and it is indeed your devoted and valuable services to these fields which has brought this coveted honour to you," states the letter.

Ms Mehta who is active in community organizations like the CER and Zoroastrian Studies will reside in Vienna.

Delhi update

"The multifarious activities of the Delhi Parsi Anjuman have been well-sustained, and the year 1983-84 has been one of progress in social, religious and other activities. The financial position of the anjuman continues to show progress and is very satisfactory," notes the 1983-84 annual report of the Delhi Parsi Anjuman, in *Dipanjali*, its half-yearly journal.

The anjuman, which has a total membership of 385, of which 31 are non-Parsi spouses, nets a subscription of Rs 6,910, the report states.

The anjuman runs many projects, chief among them being the Mengusi Parsi Dharamshala which provides a high standard of service to Parsi visitors to Delhi. Rs 89,514 were collected as service charges. However, excess of expenditure over income during the year has increased from Rs 9,604.17 to Rs 20,624.11, adds the report.

For the past 29 years, the anjuman has been running a social centre, which organizes functions on auspicious days like Jamshedi Navroze, Adar *roj* gahambar, the agiary anniversary, Pateti and Divali. Annual sports, film shows, picnics, puppet shows, cooking demonstrations, kirtans and lectures are also organized. All these major functions are held in the Bhiwandiwalla Hall, also run by the anjuman, the report adds. The hall houses a one-cup-board library, started in 1983, which has 200 books on the Zoroastrian religion and culture, both in English and Gujarati, notes the report.

The anjuman also prints and sells books on Zoroastrianism. The single largest order received was from the World Zoroastrian Organization, London, for 200 sets of illustrated books for children, notes the report. *Prayers for Parsi children*, a booklet by Noshir Vajifdar, *Zoroastrian Catechism* by Ms P.N. Jungalwalla, and an illustrated book on *Prayers to our dead* by Ms Mehroo Wadia are the forthcoming publications, adds the report.



Karate expert, Sensei Pervez Mistry, has been appointed official instructor to the Armed Forces to train selected commandos for hand-to-hand combat situations.

To encourage literary contributions, monetary incentives were announced, due to which *Dipanjali*, the half-yearly journal of the anjuman has increased in both quality and quantity, notes the report. The anjuman's other projects include giving scholarships to deserving students under the Ervad Darius Bagli Scholarship Scheme and running the Kaikhushru Pallonji Katrak Dar-e-Meher, which completed 22 years on December 26, 1983.

According to the report, there were seven burials in the aramgah during the year 1983-84.

Delhi Navroze celebrations

"You are a progressive, forward looking community, quite capable of looking after yourself and (getting) the better of all problems," said K.M. Wali, Lieutenant Governor of Delhi, presiding over the Delhi Parsi Anjuman, Navroze day celebrations on March 21, 1985.

Welcoming the chief guest and his wife, the president of the Delhi Parsi Anjuman, S.D. Nargolwala briefed the governor on the achievements and problems of the anjuman. He said, "But one problem in which I will require your help is our aramgah (on Prithviraj Road) which is now 60 years old; there the land is getting used up... I appeal to you... for a quick decision in this matter."

Nargolwala then described another problem faced by the community saying, "Because of reservations for the scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, etc. our own people are not getting proper admissions for higher education, particularly for medical and technical studies."

Replying to the welcome address, and the problems outlined by Nargolwala, Wali explained, "Some of the problems you have mentioned, like that of reservation, are beyond my competence; it needs to be forwarded to the national leaders, and I cannot visualize the results... There are certain other problems which I can consider as Lieutenant Governor of Delhi. As for the question of (the) cemetery... this is a field where I can help in

getting additional land... Please give me fuller details and I would like to know your requirements etc. I will then try to do something about this."

Pestonji captains Godavari

Described as "one of the most unique and sophisticated ships of her class... having radar, sonar and electronic counter-measures equipment (which) can match the latest amongst other navies," INS *Godavari*, commanded by Captain Keki Pestonji, visited Vizag for a week in February 1985, notes the March 1985 newsletter of the Vizag Zoroastrian Association.

Pestonji, who was previously a naval attache in Bonn, West Germany, said that INS *Godavari* was in Vizag "to participate in the amphibious exercises conducted in the Bay of Bengal." On March 3, 1985 the ship participated in the exercises in the presence of the Raksha Mantri and the Chief of the Naval Staff, which was later televised on Doordarshan.

The ship is the first of a series of frigates designed by the Indian Navy and constructed by Mazagaon Dock Ltd, Bombay. Besides an arsenal of surface-to-surface missiles, surface-to-air missiles and anti-aircraft high speed guns and torpedoes, the ship can operate with a pair of Seaking helicopters for anti-submarine operations.

Award for institute

The Society for the Care, Treatment and Training of Children in Need of Special Care, founded by Ms Jai H. Vakeel, was awarded the Indian Merchants' Chamber, Platinum Jubilee Endowment Trust Award of 1984, at the hands of the Chief Justice of India, Y.V. Chandrachud, notes a write-up in *The Daily* dated February 3, 1985.

The award, a plaque and one lakh rupees, was received on behalf of the society by Ms Tehmi Shroff, general secretary and administrator of the society, which has about 500 persons on its roll. The society was selected from among a total of 83 nominations received, informed the chairman of the trust, Pravinkumar Gandhi, as quoted in the write-up.

In his speech, Justice Chandrachud said, "The birth of a child with a mental handicap can cast a cloud over the happiness of the entire family, and it is... commendable that so many organizations are involved in tending to persons who are denied the pleasures of life," adds the report.

Contractor's ADC

Edited by noted columnist Behram (Busybee) Contractor, Bombay's fourth afternoon newspaper, *The Afternoon Despatch and Courier*, hit



Chief Justice Chandrachud presenting the IMC Award to Tehmi Shroff. Pranal Bhogilal (centre) president of the IMC, looks on. (Photo: The Daily)



Rana (left) presenting a photograph of his painting 'Love and Hate' to Sr. Cabrini, Superior of Asha Dhan.

the stands on March 25, 1985.

According to a report in *The Daily* of March 21, 1985, *The ADC* plans "to retain the seriousness of the morning papers without their stodginess and improve on the personalized writing and spontaneity of the evening papers."

Contractor, who recently wed Farzana Khan, an advertising colleague at *Mid-Day* is said to have received finance for the paper from Bakul Patel, first wife of the late Congress (I) member Rajni Patel and Kamal Morarka.

Well-known writers who will be contributing are Arun Shourie, Dom Moraes, Sunil Gavaskar, Michael Ferreira, Khushwant Singh, A.F.S. Tal-yarkhan, Devyani Chaudhary and others. "And the sev of this *bhel puri* will, of course, be Busybee with his 'Round and About,'" adds *The Daily*.

Rana's visual contrasts

"Can you imagine this world without contrasts?" asks Behram R. Rana in an invitation to his second one-man show of paintings at the Taj Art Gallery, Bombay, from April 9 to 15, 1985. Of the 15 paintings on display at the gallery, the centrepiece is a tribute to Mother Teresa, titled "Love and Hate." The proceeds of this verticle painting are earmarked to Asha Dhan, Mother Teresa's home for the old and the sick at Byculla, Bombay, notes the press release.

A senior visualizer in the advertising department of Larsen and Toubro

Limited, Rana, born in 1942, is a graduate in Applied Arts from the J.J. Institute of Art, notes his bio-data. For almost seven years after graduation, Rana was a free-lancer, specializing in window displays and print jobs, states the press release. His clients included Tata Services Ltd, Tata Consultancy Services, Max Factor and Garden Silk. He also visualized several full page foreign newspaper advertisements for the Tatas, notes his bio-data.

Rana's past experiences involve stints at two advertising agencies one of which was Inter Publicity run by Nergish Wadia.

Ahmednagar's pioneer

The first Parsi to settle in Ahmednagar, Kaikhushro Nusserwanjee, was an enterprising young man, notes the March 1985 issue of *New Horizon*, the newsletter of the Ahmednagar Parsi Anjuman. Residing in Surat, Kaikhushro invested in a soda-water machine, which he carried around on a mule, accompanying the British Army on their campaigns, supplying them aerated water. On one such campaign he came to Ahmednagar and decided to settle there. He married Avabai Mody of Surat, whose family had earlier helped his mother, Khorshed, sell a bag of pearls for a good price when she became a widow soon after reaching Bombay.

Khorshed, her husband, Nusserwanjee, and Kaikhushro, who was then five years old, had come to Bombay

from Kurasa (present-day Khurasan) in the Persian Gulf with the intention of starting a business and settling in India.

Kaikhushro and Avabai had five sons and one daughter. They started a business in the name of Cursetjee Nusserwanjee and Sons (the British called him Cursetjee instead of Kaikhushro), a firm which still exists today, concludes the report.

Promising cricketer

For those moaning the lack of star cricketers in the community, Khushroo Vasania offers hope. The youth who represented India against Australia in the four-day under 19 cricket test, helped draw the Madras match by scoring 50 runs without losing his wicket.

As stated in a report in *The Times of India*, March 22, 1985, "India, in their second venture, fared badly, sliding from 50 for one at lunch to 89 for seven. At this stage they had only a 130-run lead with 94 minutes of batting and 20 mandatory overs left.

"Australia went all out pressurizing India but Vasania thwarted all their attempts and pulled India out of trouble."

Apru Amul

Parsi Gujarati is a source of constant amusement to other communities as well as a useful marketing tool.

The Amul milk advertisement by daCunha Associates in the form of a cartoon, reads "Amul milk in 'Apru Amul Milk'" and has Ruby and Burjor Patel (as caricatures) enacting the following scene. The lady seems to be desperately trying to wake up her husband, "Arre oothni, the milkwalla will come soon." But husband, seemingly prepared for this daily disturbance, is ready and has already bought Amul milk the previous night. "But *apri* Roshan is coming with her *dikras*," says the wife. "So I'll buy more Amul milk from *pella baniya* shop, *varu*?" replies husband tiredly. Wife is shocked, "You've become *ghello* or what? What milk do *baniyas* keep?" And so we finally embark on Amul milk — "so fresh, creamy and *majenu*!"

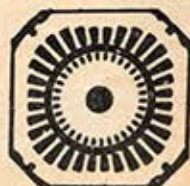
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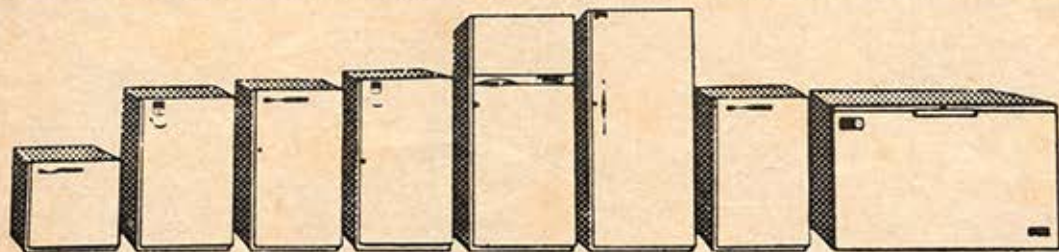
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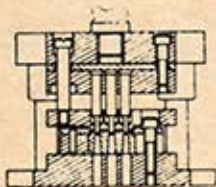
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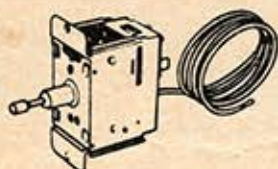
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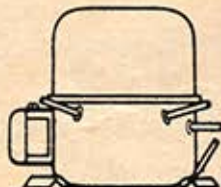
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North American Congress — V

The aim of the Fifth North American Zoroastrian Congress to be held from August 30 to September 2, 1985, is "to have a consensus towards solidarity, survival, improvement and progress" states an invitation to the congress by Ms Dhunmai P. Dalal, chairperson, ad-hoc committee, Fifth North American Zoroastrian Congress. The Congress, to be hosted by the Zoroastrian Center of California, is to be held at the Sheraton Universal Hotel, Los Angeles.

The guidelines for the agenda are:

- to consider the progress of the recommendations made at the Fourth North American Congress.
- to form a socio-religious planning committee to coordinate all common activities of North American organizations.
- to improve communications with Zoroastrians living all over the world.
- to hold a youth forum so as to understand their views on the future of Zoroastrians in North America.
- to promote research and scholarship in religion and its propagation and consider the setting up of a research center in North America to coordinate all scholarly works.

A letter by Dalal states, "... certain items which have already been discussed in the previous congresses... (if brought up again) may not yield the desired results... The committee has thought it practical to have special sessions... of officially delegated representatives of various Zoroastrian organizations in North America... who are familiar with the various topics" to review, discuss and resolve issues, however controversial.

The accent this time is on youth participation. States the invitation, "To encourage the attendance of our youth, we have chosen the school and college vacations... and we will attempt to house bonafide students not travelling with their families, free or at very nominal cost."

Persons interested in attending the congress may contact: Dhunmai P. Dalal, chairperson, ad-hoc committee, Fifth North American Congress, 1814 Bayless Street, Anaheim, California 92802.



Bharucha (extreme left) directing Zubin Mehta (centre) and Nari Avari (right) on the sets of *Quest*.

Quest deficit

The long awaited film *A Quest for Zarathushtra* is still facing a deficit of around \$500,000, reports the December 1984-January 1985 newsletter of the Zoroastrian Society of British Columbia.

With post-production editing still pending, the Persepolis Production Inc., who have developed and produced the film, have appealed to all the Zoroastrian anjumans to donate towards the cost of completion of the film, notes the report.

With its principal photography being completed, production costs of the film, shot in India, totalled approximately \$440,000 (including approximately \$110,000 of accrued and unpaid salaries) adds the report.

This film in which music maestro Zubin Mehta, makes his acting debut as a man in search of his roots, is directed by Cyrus Bharucha, producer and director of 30 shows for the Public Broadcasting Service in the USA, the report adds. In the meanwhile...

"We the undersigned, Parsi/Irani Zoroastrians residing in India and abroad... express our strong disapproval of, and lodge a vehement protest against the film (*A Quest For Zarathushtra*) in its present form," notes a campaign letter circulated by the Council of Vigilant Parsis (COVP).

Addressed to Bikram Singh, chairman, Central Board of Film Censors the letter states, "If this film is allowed to be exhibited, it will be a deliberate and malicious outrage on the Parsi Zoroastrian community whose religious feelings are sought to be violently hurt by insulting... its religion and/or its religious beliefs."

Notes the letter, "We are not opposed to the idea of a film as a medium of education. However, if a film has to be made, it must adhere strictly to our ancient scriptures, and must not... hurt the religious feelings."

The objections to the film listed in the letter are:

- Zarathushtra has been projected as being subject to all human frailties compared to the scriptures which describe him as a divine being.
- The film presents the dogma of freedom of choice when Zarathushtra clearly preached discarding of evil and reverting to good.
- Ahura Mazda is depicted as not being omnipotent when the tenets of the religion say He is.
- Death is shown as an evil which is against Zoroastrian teachings.

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Graphic A-181

DIRECTORY OF HONG KONG ZOROASTRIANS

•It is a breach of trust to shoot an entire scene in Bombay's Tower of Silence and break a sacred tradition.

Mombasa anjuman

"We have an Aramgah, residential flats for the community, and a guest house for any (person) wishing to utilize the facilities of the same. It is fully equipped and has all modern amenities," states a Mombasa Parsi Anjuman press release dated April 8, 1985 from Homi J. Bajina, chairman of the anjuman.

The anjuman has 70 members including a dastur who performs religious ceremonies, adds the release. Jashans are held on all Zoroastrian festivals, the release concludes.

The office-bearers of the Mombasa Parsi Anjuman for 1985-86 are: Bajina, Aspi Konkrawalla, vice-chairman, Cawas Dotiwalla, secretary, Bahadur Engineer, treasurer. The committee members are Eruch Avari, Dara Patel, Rusi Saher, Ms Jerbanoo Deboo and Ms Najoo Avari. The elections were held on March 23, 1985, adds the release.

Hong Kong directory

"Some young computer buffs in the community have put this information together and we hope to update it frequently," says Jimmy Master of Hong Kong in a letter dated March 20, 1985, while referring to the attractive *Directory of Hong Kong Zoroastrians*.

The directory, published by the

Zoroastrian Charity Funds of Hong Kong, Canton and Macau, has over 65 entries plus a section titled 'Overseas Relatives and Friends' listing presumably one time Hong Kong residents.

The office-bearers of the Fund are president Noshir Pheroz Pavri, and secretary Erach Mancherji Mehta. The other trustees are Keki Fakirji Jokhi, Viraf Keki Parekh and Jal Soli Shroff.

California's new complex

Out of a total of \$336,611 collected, \$226,000 have been spent on the construction of the new Rustam Guiv Darbe Mehr complex in Westminster City, California, notes *The Zoroastrian* of California. Construction was started in October 1984 with donations from Ms Morvarid Guiv and other philanthropists.

A sketch of the Rustam Guiv Darbe Mehr.



The Rustam Guiv Trust made an initial payment of \$260,000 with which the land was purchased, adds the report.

The complex which will occupy 7000 sq. feet of a total site area of 47,000 sq. feet will have a prayer room, a hall for 400 people, a library, an office, three classrooms that can be converted into an extension for the hall or into a dining hall, a kitchen, a one-bedroom apartment for scholar guests, and 71 parking spaces, notes the newsletter.

The construction committee for the Darbe Mehr includes Dr Ardeshir Anoushiravani, Dr Sohrab Sassani, Iraj Mavandadi, the architect, and Keki Amaria who prepared the blueprint for the facade, states the report.

Cooper conducts

"We Zoroastrians should encourage this young man in his endeavours by flocking to his performances in large numbers," notes the April newsletter of the Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Chicago, referring to Farobag Cooper, conductor of the Wind Ensemble of the University of Chicago. Presently he is conductor of the Chicago Philharmonia.

Medical regalia abroad

The Parsi Medical Amateurs, a Bombay-based dramatic association led by Homi Tavadia and Dr Jimmy N. Sidhwa are planning to regale Zoroastrians in the U.S.A. and Canada with a Parsi-Gujarati *natak* popular in Bombay, during the Pateti season, notes the ZAC newsletter received on January 2, 1985.

The proceeds of this *natak*, after

deduction of expenses, will be donated preferably to a North American Zoroastrian charity, the report adds.

Azargoshasb lectures

Dastur Firooz Azargoshasb, one of the Head Priests of Iran, on a visit to Chicago delivered a series of lectures at the Chicago Darbe Mehr on the age and date of Zarathushtra, the Gathas, and on topics of general interest to Zoroastrians, reports the ZAC newsletter of December, 1984.

Azargoshasb, who has written two books on the Gathas in Persian, believes the age of Zarathushtra to be about 3500 B.C., not 600 B.C. as suggested by western scholars nor 6000 B.C. as mentioned by the Greek writers, adds the report.

ZAGNY lectures

A conference on tradition and innovation in religion, was organized by the Zoroastrian Association of Greater New York (ZAGNY), notes the

ZAGNY newsletter of December 1984. The morning session consisted of talks by Professor Cyrus Pangborn, Dr Jehan Bagli and Professor Kaikhosrov D. Irani.

Pangborn discussed tradition and innovation in the historical development of religion, while Bagli traced the development of ideas in the history of Zoroastrianism. Professor Irani distinguished the core of Zoroastrian beliefs and ritual practices and discussed what was likely to be preserved in the West.

The lectures were followed by a panel discussion on related topics of interest, concludes the newsletter.

Lady Bomanji honoured

"It is the greatest day of my life" said Lady Frainy Bomanji when she was made Honorary Freeman of the Borough of Harrogate on March 29, 1984 at the Royal Hall, states a news item in the *Yorkshire Post Reporter*. The mayor of Harrogate, Sam Cryer, presented Bomanji with an illuminated

vellum scroll, a badge and with it the Freedom of Harrogate — the highest award of the council of Harrogate, notes the report.

The prestige of this award "is closely related to its relative scarcity," notes the *Harrogate Advertiser*. This honour, though not associated with any rights, privileges or tangible rewards, was bestowed on Lady Bomanji, the widow of a wealthy Indian shipping magnate (Sir Dhunjibhoy Bomanji) in recognition of "many years of eminent and conspicuous service to the people of Harrogate through her leadership and support in the causes of charity, welfare and the arts. It is a title which will link Lady Bomanji with an exclusive list of luminaries that extends to include national figures like Lord Halifax, Stanley Baldwin and the Princess Royal" states the *Advertiser*. "Until 30 years ago, only 12 people had seen their names inscribed on the roll of Honorary Freeman."

"Over the years, Lady Bomanji has been involved with various organizations including the Harrogate Inter-

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national Festival of which she is past president, Harrogate Concert Society, the Friends of Harrogate, the Save the Children Fund and the Distressed Gentlefolk's Aid Association," noted the paper.

Lady Bomanji who has had links with Harrogate for more than 60 years said that she had concentrated on dedication rather than reward but the council had seen fit to grant her its highest award. She added that she was proud to be a citizen and a freeman and that she owed Harrogate a debt of gratitude for what the town had done for her, noted the *Yorkshire Post Reporter*.

Highest student award

In recognition of outstanding academic achievement, Camellia Jehangir Vazifdar was awarded the 1984 Presidential Academic Fitness Award, the highest award given to any student in the U.S.A.

A letter of congratulations by Ronald Reagan, President of the U.S.A., read, "As the first recipients of these awards, you should be especially proud of what you have achieved through hard work and dedication to the pursuit of learning... Your parents and teachers and other members of your communities see you as the leaders of tomorrow. I encourage you to continue your studies to become active participants in all that America has to offer."

Superintendent of schools, Gary A. Burton, writes in his letter, "You have demonstrated not only great potential but a great ability. I am certain that both will stand you in good stead in whatever course of study you choose to follow and in whatever career you elect to pursue... I want to thank you for bringing credit not only to yourself but in also bringing credit to the Inter-Lakes Schools."

Vazifdar has previously won academic honours and special scholarship for her outstanding academic achievements and leadership abilities from the administration and faculty of the Inter-Lakes High School, notes a press release. She was admitted to the 1983 advanced studies program in biology at St. Paul's School with full scholarship, and was awarded the Bausch and Lomb honorary science award for achievements in the study of science. As a result of her achievements, Vazifdar was made a member of the National

Honours Society, adds the press release.

Proud navars, both

"It was a very proud time for me in the agiary, knowing that I am carrying on a tradition that is going on for many years," said 13-year-old Darayas Kanga, on returning to Toronto after completing his navar ceremony in Bombay. Thirteen-year-old Sorab Kotwal, who joined Kanga to become a navar, said, "I was proud to fulfil my father's lifelong wishes as well as to earn the title of Ervad," reports the January 1985 newsletter from the Zoroastrian Society of Ontario.

Describing his 28-day stay in the Bombay agiary, Kanga notes, "Sometimes I wished I could touch my mom and dad, but I knew that I could not. At other times in the night, when nobody was around, I wished I could be back home watching T.V.," notes the report. Adds Kotwal, "I was scared for two reasons: that I might forget some prayers; and my asthma might act up. After the ceremony I felt happy, and glad that it was all over," the newsletter concludes.

Show theme

The Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Chicago is continuing its dialogue with authorities at the Adler Planetarium, Chicago, to continue its references to the Magis and Zoroastrians in their regular shows, notes the ZAC newsletter received on January 2, 1985.

The references are always made in the special Wonder Star Show put up every Christmas at the planetarium, the report adds.

Clinic chief

Dr Dhun F. Noria has been appointed chief of clinical pathology, and director of the new Clinical Laboratory, to be set up by the Salvation Army which has received a handsome grant from the Atkinson Charitable Foundation, reports the January 1985 issue of the Z.S.O. newsletter.

To be located at Scarborough, the "302-bed hospital which will open next fall, will create 700 new jobs in the city of Scarborough," the report adds.

Noria is presently chief of pathology and director of laboratories at the Central Hospital, and is also associated with the University of Toronto, where

she teaches medical students, adds the newsletter.

Actively involved in the Academy of Medicine in Toronto, Noria has been recently elected the academy's secretary for 1985-86, the report concludes.

Science award

"Noshir Khori received an award for significant contribution in the area of 'Non-destructive testing and reliability enhancement of plastic large-scale integrated circuits' which has application in electronic systems where a high degree of reliability is required, such as the satellite and aerospace industry," notes the ZAC newsletter of December 1984.

Khori presented a technical paper on the subject at the International Testing Conference sponsored by the Computer Society of the Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, where he received the award, adds the newsletter.

Auspicious Occasion

Rohinton Mistry's short story, *Auspicious Occasion*, has been accepted by Leon Rooke, the 1984-85 Writer-in-Residence at the University of Toronto, for publication in an anthology of outstanding Canadian short stories to be published shortly, notes the January 1985, ZSO newsletter.

Auspicious Occasion had previously been awarded the first prize in the Hart House Library Committee's 1984 Literary Contest, adds the newsletter.

Mistry, who is a student at the University of Toronto's Woodsworth College, studying philosophy and English literature, has had other stories accepted by *The Fiddlehead*, *Toronto South Asian Review*, *Canadian Fiction Magazine* and *The Antigonish Review*. Mistry is currently carrying out research at the University of Toronto Libraries for his first novel, the report concludes.

Poster award

After winning the poster contest 'Health through Friendship,' Cyrus Rivetna of Chicago was invited to the Governor's mansion in Springfield for lunch, notes the ZAC newsletter. There were 900 entries received by the Illinois Department of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse, the organizers of the competition, the report adds.



"A wonder

Municipal Commissioner and
says the community's prob

it. I consider it a wonderful opportunity." Cool, spruce and relaxed in a checked bush shirt and chappals, Kanga described the Municipal Commissioner's job as "one of the most exposed in government... All my mistakes, whatever I do, gets a lot of publicity. Not only will citizens know, the corporators will make capital of them!" Comparing his present position to his earlier job as Secretary for Industries to the Government of Maharashtra, Kanga noted, "The normal secretarial job is from 10 to 5. Here you are on call all the time."

Explaining the peculiarities of his job Kanga noted that the Bombay Municipal Corporation Act, being the only municipal act of colonial vintage, allows the executive greater powers than the legislature: "The Municipal Commissioner has tremendous powers under the act. He is governed by decisions of the standing committee but the impact is very limited. He is not a silent servant (but) can refer matters back to them. The entire responsibility for the administration rests on the commissio-

Again and again the no-nonsense voice was polite but firm: "Mr Kanga is in a meeting. Please call at 2 p.m." At 2 p.m. "Mr Kanga is out for lunch. Please call at..." Thus stymied by Jamsheed Kanga's personal assistant who had never heard of *Parsiana*, we had to eventually nab Bombay's Municipal Administrator at his official Carmichael Road bungalow where the Marathi-speaking telephone operator, responding to the Parsi prefix to the name, put the line through to Jamsheed's wife Firoza. Thereafter, meeting Kanga was smooth sailing — almost. The earliest appointment, nearly a fortnight away, was given and taken on the understanding that the vagaries of civic life and the demands of protocol could undermine it at the eleventh hour. They did — marginally. The "4

p.m. at the office" had to be amended to "5.30 at home."

At the Municipal Commissioner's bungalow the orderly was flicking off the all-pervasive Bombay dust from the verandah furniture. The *chowk* on the steps proclaimed a Parsi residence. The living room was comfortable and quiet, offset by potted plants, a bit impersonal, discreet rather than grand.

The first Parsi Municipal Commissioner of Bombay since Independence (the only other having been Sir Ardesir Dalal in 1928), Kanga says he has "always been vitally interested in Bombay because Bombay has provided a tremendous harbour where the community has prospered. It should have a good administration... be among the better urban centres in India. Now I have the chance to do something about

"All my mistakes, whatever I do, gets a lot of publicity. Not only will citizens know, the corporators will make capital of them!"

ner... More than anything else (it requires) physical stamina..." The normal tenure in the position of municipal commissioner is three hectic years which, Kanga notes, is long enough.

derful opportunity..."

er and Panchayet trustee Jamsheed Kanga
problems are linked to the problems of Bombay city. Arnavaz S. Mama

With such free ranging power comes too the headache of eccentric citizens who think the Municipal Commissioner should answer every individual complaint and think nothing of phoning him at all hours or buttonholing him at public functions to complain about garbage near their home or a dislocation in water supply. "When you are dissatisfied with a dish at the Taj, do you ring up J.R.D. Tata to complain? Or do you speak to the manager in charge?" asks Kanga.

The 430 crore rupees budget of the municipality covers its myriad activities revolving round the provision of a clean living environment for the Bombayite, says Kanga. Thus provision of water supply, streets and street lighting, medical aid to the poor, primary education, open spaces and gardens, regulation of eating places from the health point of view, the licensing of commercial life, the provision of parks and theatres, the administration of slums and municipal properties including the two massive sports complexes which are abuilding at a cost of Rs 10 crores

each, regulation of new constructions and planning for the future growth of the city etc., fall within its purview. "It requires all the skills of a top manager," says Kanga "to manage the one lakh 25 thousand employees ranging from scavengers to top level engineers and architects, to get work from them and to satisfy the average citizen. The level of work is determined by the type of customer you have to satisfy — the sophisticated urban citizen." Nor has Bombay's alarming population growth made matters easier. "The Borivli population, expected to be nine lakhs in 2000 AC, is nine lakhs already, resulting in considerable shortage of water," notes Kanga, as an example. "The population of the city is already nine million plus and it is estimated that 150 new families come into the city every day," he added.

When the Municipal Council is in session, the Commissioner is expected to attend all its meetings "to guide and assist them. . . It's a very time consuming process; and though they have no executive authority, they can haul you

over the coals. . . The average corporator has the feeling that he must off and on flex his muscles. . . if what he wants is right for his area and falls within priorities and the resources are available, we would do it. But (the corporator's request) may not be within these parameters. Then we may not be able to carry out his wishes and a feeling of frustration develops. . . Corporators of old like Pherozeshah Mehta and S.K. Patil realized the larger interests of the city versus the petty immediate interests of the corporators. . .

"There is a need for peoples' representatives. However alert you may be, you will not know what is happening in every nook and corner of the city. The elected representatives keep the administration on its toes, guide them, correct mistakes because they are closer to the people. In the absence of elected councillors we've been using citizens' groups as sounding boards. In some wards the citizens' groups' performance has been really very good. It has helped in improving the administration and they provide valuable support when the administration does something right, though unpopular in some quarters," says Kanga.

Contrasting the present system with the western (notably American) institution of an elected mayor who sets up his own executive, Kanga explained, "Here the mayor is not as powerful. He only presides over meetings of the corporation, he has no executive authority" which vests with the permanent executive civil service on the British pattern.

Unfortunately, says Kanga, barely 30 percent of the city's elite participate in municipal elections resulting in alienation between them and the corpora-



Kanga with wife Firoza and daughters Farida and Shireen (seated on floor) (Photo: Homiyar Mistry)

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tion as the corporation receives no support from them, whereas the lower and middle class involvement is much more. In their own interest the city's intelligentsia should take more interest in their city's government. "At the time of election the candidate is the most vulnerable. Commit him to certain promises and extract those conditions by organizing yourselves. In local government, it's the fellow who will work for you who is important, not the national policies of the parties. 170 individuals will be your representatives for the next five years. Do they represent your interests or the interests that are a threat to the city?"

Kanga says he's "very proud of his unique community, the amount it has achieved. Every part of Bombay has benefited from the Parsis and there are visible monuments of the community's generosity. It's a wonderful feeling." The community, he says, is now passing through a difficult phase, but it's not degenerating. The community's problems are interlinked with those of Bombay city. "When commerce was carried out on decent lines, we were the principal beneficiaries because of our honesty and hard work. When the methods of commerce changed and dishonesty and sharp practices rose to a premium, we couldn't compete with the other communities. In commerce and trade which was our main forte, we are now slipping."

"Secondly, since the majority of Parsis live in Bombay, Bombay's acute housing problem has had an adverse effect on the size of the community."

"Thirdly, staying in Bombay in such large conglomerations has bred a ghetto mentality. Parsis now feel insecure unless surrounded by other members of the community and that is why, while earlier Parsis were most adventurous and ventured to the furthest corners of the country, now they shudder to leave Bombay. Now is the time when Parsis must be encouraged to go out of Bombay. The quality of life in the smaller towns is far better. I am a small town boy; I have experienced this."

The community politics

"The Punchayet has now entered into a new phase. When the community is doing well, the trustees are not required to initiate new programs. Now the Punchayet is necessary to provide leadership. (Former BPP trustee) Jimmy Guzder and I have been fairly success-

ful in persuading the BPP board to venture into new directions, for example in ownership housing. It's not only the tangible work as the direction in which the Punchayet is moving..."

Rebutting the charge that, in support-

"The same people who criticized us for putting up CER candidates are now criticizing us for not putting up CER candidates."

ing Guzder's reelection the Council for Economic Revival (CER) was renegeing on its earlier stand that the trusteeship period should span a maximum of two terms of five years each, Kanga noted, "It was a recommendation of the CER that a term of trusteeship should be for five years and that a trustee should not be there for more than two terms. The important part of this recommendation was that each trustee should be given the chance to serve for a second term if he is judged by the community and proves that he has served the community well — one long term does not give such an opportunity to the community." Then, in answer to BPP trustee Homi Ranina who had declared that if Kanga, a CER man, resigns, only another CER candidate of requisite standing would be acceptable (Guzder is not a CER man), Kanga charged, "The same people who criticized us for putting up CER candidates (at the time of Fali Poncha's candidature) are now criticizing us for not putting up CER candidates."

Referring to the Naoroji Godrej-Jamshed Guzder tussle for BPP trusteeship preceding the non-election in February, Kanga noted, "It shouldn't have taken place. Godrej's coming is a boon already... (but) there was enough place for both to work together. Guzder worked so well, in such dedicated fashion and gave the BPP its new direction. That he was deprived for extraneous reasons doesn't speak well of the community. Some people function as power brokers. It is the demonstration of power that they enjoy."

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Questioned about the rumours of his resigning to make room for Guzder, Kanga noted, "My decision would depend on my capability to be of service to the community. A person should not occupy any position if he cannot do justice to the job. The chair is not important. I did not want to be a trustee. If in my place Guzder could continue... a person I know, reflecting my viewpoint, I would be happy... to keep him out for totally extraneous reasons is vicious... an election brings out the worst in the community. Why submit it to such trauma? Any time I feel I cannot do a good job, I will resign. I will not stick to my 10 year term. To me it is not necessary to be a trustee to be of help to the community. You can be a trustee and not do an atom of work besides signing the papers..."

Kanga does not feel that Godrej's refusal to accept the Federation portfolio could have any material impact on the Federation. Would the BPP vote to withdraw from the Federation? "If they tried to do this there would be resistance from the community," says Kanga.

Referring to the amended electoral scheme now before the High Court,

Kanga is sanguine that constituency-wise voting, if incorporated, will eliminate the danger of any one group coming to power. But Kanga is unhappy that the donation limit has been raised to only Rs 7500. "In my note of

"Staying in Bombay has bred a ghetto mentality. Parsis now feel insecure unless surrounded by other members of the community."

dissent I have suggested that 20 percent of the seats should go to donors and 80 percent by direct election." He anticipates "more active participation from the young" in the next Anjuman Committee elections, and "greater dynamism."

The founder and ex-president of the CER says the organization is under "constant metamorphosis. It started as

an educational body; widened into a social welfare body. It has now stabilized as a welfare body with political overtones. Unless it has sufficient clout with the Punchayet it cannot deliver. The CER is acting as a ginger group. There is a lot still to be done on entrepreneurial development. We have planned a meeting in June. We are also working on schemes such as exploring the possibility of converting the Petit Parsee General Hospital into a medical college. I have found from the government that it is possible. Perhaps the CER can do that. There are any amount of directions in which we can go..."

Kanga, who enjoys reading, music, tennis, swimming, hardly has the time to indulge himself. Even his social welfare activities — he was chairman of the National Association for the Blind's Home for the Aging Blind in Lonavla — have succumbed to the intense demands of the job. His wife Firoza, an arts graduate originally hailing from Satara, now functions as his extension in the field of social welfare. Of their two daughters, Shireen (18) has just finished her first year B. Com. while Farida (12) is studying in school.



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The Parsi Priesthood in India: from a

Arnavaz Chubb

The athornan has lost his exalted status in Zoroastrian society. But the plight of the Parsi priests today is not a recent development. The graph began its descent more than 100 years ago, and much has been written and said about it since then. Attempts have been made to identify the causes and solutions have been offered, but the problem persists.

The early history of the Parsis in India presents a vague and unclear picture. The only sources of information for this early period are manuscript colophons (inscriptions at the end of a book or manuscript usually with facts relative to its production). Manuscripts were mainly copied by priests, and stray notes and references to events and people have been preserved in them. The *Qissa-i Sanjan*, the poetical record of the arrival of the Parsis in India, was composed about 650 years after their landing. But, even after making allowances for the long passage of time which elapsed and a certain amount of poetic licence, the basic sequence of the narrative seems factual. The subsequent history of the Parsi communities in India can be traced through numerous scattered references in the narratives of European travellers and the Gujarati literature of the Parsis during the last few centuries.

The sudden spurt of religious awareness amongst the Zoroastrian laity in recent years has once again led to the spotlight being focused on the condition of the priesthood.

This is the second in a series of three articles attempting to reconstruct briefly from these sources the history and nature of Parsi priests from their heyday down to the present. The first installment dealt with the three categories of Zoroastrian priests, the high social and spiritual codes of conduct to which they were required to adhere and the eminence they commanded in the social and political life of the community.

Without being unduly pessimistic, the situation of the Parsi priesthood today is grim. Figures speak for themselves. About 35 years ago, there were 16 Dasturs in India. Today there are only eight. Judging from present trends, the possibility of a Dastur of the stature of old emerging from the priestly community seems remote. Once upon a time, priests were prime ministers, the formulators of public opinion, the leaders of the community. Today, they have been pushed into the background, their advice rarely sought, even from those competent to give it.

But, this was not always so. In ancient Iran, priests formed the first of the four classes of society (*Yasna* 19.17). The priest was called *Athravan* and his function was tending the sacred fire. The high estimation in which he was held is evident from the fact that *Athravan* is one of the titles of Ahura Mazda himself. At the birth of Zarathushtra, nature rejoices and hails him as an *Athravan* (*Yasht* 13.94).

In the heyday of Zoroastrian Iran, priests were honoured and respected for their learning and wisdom and they achieved high offices in the royal government—the High Priest ranking only next to the king in the empire. They were regarded as the leaders of the community and some priests like Aturpat Mahraspand have become legendary as champions of the faith. Several erudite works on secular and religious subjects have been attributed to Zoroastrian priests of Sasanian Iran and their guidance in religious and secular matters was sought by king and commoner alike.

It is reasonable to suppose that in the flight of the Zoroastrians to India which commenced in the wake of the Arab conquest of Iran in the seventh century, priests must have accompanied the valiant band of pilgrims in their perilous journey across the seas. The *Qissa-i Sanjan*, the story of the arrival of the first Zoroastrian pilgrims to India, records that it was a venerable



K.R. Cama (seated in centre) with his students (from left) T.D. Anklesaria, S.D. Bharucha, J.D. Nadirshah, K. Kateli, K.E. Kanga and E.K. Antia.

old priest who approached the local king Jai Rana (Yadav Rana) of Sanjan for asylum and later also asked for a plot of land on which to enthrone the holy fire called *Iranshah*, the most revered in India today.

The history of the Parsi priests immediately after their arrival in India is lost in the mists of the past. We cannot say with certainty which mobeds (priests) were instrumental in explaining the religion to King Jai Rana through the 16 Sanskrit *shlokas* (verses) and in enthroneing the sacred fire at Sanjan. It is a popular Parsi belief that it was Neryosangh Dhaval, the famous Parsi

thravan to bringers of andharu



Sanskrit scholar in India, who was amongst the priests who took part in the installation of the first Atash Bahram. But it is difficult to identify this Neryosangh Dhaval, who enthroned the sacred fire, with the Neryosangh Dhaval who transcribed some of the Avestan and Pahlavi texts into Pazand and translated them into Sanskrit, and who lived in the twelfth century.

The priests tending the sacred fire at Sanjan came to be called Sanjanas, and they administered to the needs of the Zoroastrian laity settled in the vicinity. But with the spreading of the Parsis to nearby towns and villages on the west coast of India, it became difficult for the Sanjanas to tend to the religious needs of the Zoroastrian population outside Sanjan.

Navsari was among the first such set-

tlements which felt the need of a full-time resident priest. Accordingly, on Roz Din, Mah Farvardin, in the year Y.Z. 551 (A.C. 1182), Zartuxsht Mobed arrived in Navsari to become its first priest. Since the arrival of Zartuxsht in Navsari, a register called the *Fihrist* has been maintained in which the names of all the Navsari priests, from Zartuxsht to the present day, are mentioned.

As the Parsi population of Navsari increased, another priest, Hom Bahmanyar, and his son Fredun came from Sanjan to Navsari. Profits from the ceremonies performed by these priests were divided by them and shared among themselves. Thus, the Navsari priests came to be called Bhagarias, from the word *bhag*, meaning share, lot or portion.

Before Zartuxsht, the names of only

four priests recur: they are Shahryar, Shapur, Ramyar and Hormazdyar. Most Parsi priests in India today trace their lineage, rightly or wrongly, from Shapur Shahryar. Shapur had two sons—Ramyar and Dhaval, the latter being the father of Neryosangh. Ramyar's son was Hormazdyar and Hormazdyar's son was Mobed. Mobed had two sons—Zartuxsht and Bahram. Zartuxsht moved to Navsari and Bahram to Broach.

Thus came to be formed in time, the five main *panthaks* (dioceses) or groups of priests who later fixed the territorial boundaries for their ecclesiastical jurisdiction. The five *panthaks* are: the Sanjana priests of Sanjan (now of Udwada), the Bhagaria

Through the centuries, religious studies had remained the preserve of the Parsi priests.

priests of Navsari, the Godavra priests of Surat, the Bharucha priests of Broach and the Khambatta priests of Cambay.

After about 700 years of peaceful existence in Sanjan, the kingdom was invaded by the Muslims and the Zoroastrians fought bravely on the side of the Hindu Raja of Sanjan. But fearing for the safety of their holy fire, they removed it from Sanjan and carried it to the mountain of Bahrot nearby, where it was kept for 12 years. Thereafter it was taken to Bansda where it remained for 14 years. Through the good offices of Changa Asa, a *behain* of Navsari and a leading member of the community, the fire was carried from Bansda to Navsari by the Sanjana priests. As a well-known and influential man, Changa Asa was also instru-



The Vadi Dar-e Mihr at Navsari used for higher liturgical ceremonies, and for ordainment of navars and maratabs. (Photo: Ashwin Mehta)

mental in sending Parsi priests from India to their counterparts in Iran, in order to clarify matters pertaining to religion, rituals, scriptures, traditions and manners which have been recorded in what are called the *Revayats*.

The fire remained in Navsari for 320 years, except for three years between 1733 and 1736, when it was removed to Surat on account of harassment by the Pindharis, a warlike tribe. During its

travels, the sacred fire was always accompanied by the Sanjana priests. When it was finally decided to enthrone the fire at Navsari, which came under the jurisdiction of the Bhagaria priests, the Sanjana priests were still authorized to tend it. Consequently, it was arranged between the Sanjana and Bhagaria priests in Navsari that the income from all ceremonies performed went to the Bhagaria priests.

This arrangement continued for some time, until conflicts arose between the Sanjanas and Bhagarias. There were constant fights and a riot took place in 1686 in which a few priests and *behdins* were killed. The matter was dragged to court and the judgement was given in favour of the

Generally neglected, they were ridiculed by the laity and they came to be known as 'bringers of darkness (*andharu*).'

Bhagarias. The Sanjanas, disillusioned and dissatisfied with the outcome, finally decided that the fire be removed to Bulsar in 1740, and from thence in 1742 to Udwada. Since then, the fire has remained enthroned at Udwada, served exclusively by the Sanjanas.

Undoubtedly, nurturing their faith in an alien environment must have proved a considerable task for both priests and laymen in those uncertain times. Despite the trials and tribulations the Zoroastrian pilgrims in India had to face in settling down to daily life in a new homeland, men of distinction and repute arose from among the minuscule community. Since they had fled Iran in order to preserve their faith, naturally the custodians of that faith, the priests, played a vital role in both secular and religious aspects of society.

In the nineteenth century, with increasing urban migration, western educated Parsis were confronted with the problem of having to justify their time honoured traditions to foreigners and to reconcile them to Christian theology. Missionaries like Dr John Wilson were battering away at the tenets of Zoroastrianism and it was at this time that the Zoroastrians discovered the inadequacy of their knowledge of Zoroastrianism. The orthodox Parsi voice was heard in support of their religion and traditions, but a few of the younger generation were swayed by the fervour and zeal of the missionaries and converted to Christianity.

Through the centuries, religious studies had remained the preserve of the Parsi priests. Priests of dedicated

scholarship have translated the various scriptures into vernacular languages from the manuscripts in the possession of their families for generations. The preservation of the manuscripts that are available to us today is entirely due to the care that each priestly family took to copy the manuscript and jea-

The virtual halving in the number of Dasturs in India is a testimony to the fact that fewer priests are worthy of that office.

lously hand it down from father to son.

The status of the Zoroastrian priests was already deteriorating during the latter half of the nineteenth century. Generally neglected, they were ridiculed by the laity and they came to be known as 'bringers of darkness (*andharu*)' from the word *andhiaru* meaning a Zoroastrian teacher-priest.

Khurshedji Rustomji Cama, a layman educated in the west in the philological methods of studying the scriptural languages realized that the only cure for this malaise was educating the priestly class. He took it upon himself to educate the priests in these modern methods of scholarship and on returning home to India, painstakingly produced a band of devoted and highly educated priests who once again commanded the respect and admiration of all Zoroastrians and scholars.

Amongst Cama's first priestly pupils were Ervad Tehmurasp D. Anklesaria, Ervad Sheriarji D. Bharucha, Ervad K. Kateli, Ervad Kavasji E. Kanga, Ervad E. K. Antia, and J.D. Nadirshah. All of these students lived up to the high standards of scholarship set by their teacher and have left an enormous body of scholarly literature of inestimable value.

Sadly, today extremely few priests come forward to be educated and the good work initiated by Cama has not been kept up by successive generations of priests. In the last three decades, very few full-fledged priests (*yoz-dathregars*) have emerged to serve the community and tend the sacred fires. The Bombay Madressas (priestly seminaries) turn out only a few candidates,

of whom perhaps the odd candidate will take up the profession in which he has been trained. But, with the feeble encouragement that scholar-priests are doled out, it is hardly surprising that Parsi intelligence and energies are channelled elsewhere.

The virtual halving in the number of Dasturs in India is a testimony to the fact that fewer priests are worthy of that high office. The eight present Dasturs of India are spread over Udwada, Navsari, Bombay, Surat and Pune. Udwada, the home of the Iran-shah, has two Dasturs, Dastur Dr Hormazdyar Dastur Kayoji Mirza and Dastur Kaikobad Dastur Feroz Dastur. Navsari has Dastur Meherjirana Dastur Kaikobad Meherjirana, a scion of the ancient Meherjirana family. Bombay has the maximum number of Dasturs—three: Dastur Dr Kaikhusroo Dastur Minocher JamaspAsa, of the Anjuman Atash Bahram, Dastur Dr Firoze Meherji Kotwal of the Wadia Atash Bahram and Dastur Nowrooz Dinshah Minochehr-Homji of the Petit Fasli Atash Kadeh. Surat and Pune each have one Dastur, Dastur Noshirwan Dastur Munchersah Dastur of Surat and Dastur Hormazdyar Dastur Noshirwan JamaspAsa of Pune.

The Wadia Atash Bahram and the Petit Fasli Atash Kadeh in Bombay, are managed by private family trusts, and their Dasturs are appointed by the trustees. The Anjuman Atash Bahram was built from public subscriptions and its Dastur appointed by the *anjuman* (community) and the elected managing committee of the Atash Bahram. In Navsari and Udwada, Dasturs are appointed from among the Meherjirana and the Mirza and Dastur clans.

If there are no priests to perform the higher liturgical ceremonies, the spiritual core of the Zoroastrian religion will perish and the decline of the Zoroastrians spiritually, morally and as a community will be accelerated. The picture as it stands today does not seem to offer much hope, but then, the Zoroastrians have managed to ignite a spark and fan it ablaze in more trying circumstances.

The ever-burning fires of Zoroastrianism have survived Alexander and the Arabs, but let us hope that the Zoroastrians overcome their growing ignorance, indifference and apathy, which will otherwise, very soon, douse that ancient and glorious flame.

The third article will be carried in August

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BPP electoral reform hearing scheduled for July 15

Press conference updates community on state of various BPP projects.

Arnavaz S. Mama

The first hearing of the petition for change in the scheme for the election of Bombay Parsi Punchayet trustees is scheduled for July 15, 1985, in the court of Ms Justice Sujata Manohar of the Bombay High Court. This was stated at a BPP press conference held in the trustees' board room on April 13, 1985, after a lapse of eight months.

The elite Gibbs Road property, where 63 ownership flats for affluent Parsis were to generate funds for the BPP's housing scheme for lower and middle income groups, has registered a decline in demand. "Many of the 106 applicants dropped out when we increased the rates," noted BPP chairman Dr Aspi Golwalla. The original price of Rs 800 per square foot now stands revised, and ranges from Rs 1,100 per square foot on the ground floor to Rs 1,300 on the sixth. So far only 26 applicants have deposited Rs 5,000 earnest money as against the 63 flats envisaged in the scheme, Golwalla noted. While it appears that there are sufficient funds to proceed with plans at Gibbs Road, the anticipated surplus for construction for the economically weaker groups will materialize only after a time lag, thus registering a change of emphasis.

With the threat of government acquisition hanging over the dilapidated Patel Sanatorium at Tithal in Gujarat, Golwalla is seeking an appointment with the Chief Minister of Gujarat to discuss the issue. The sanatorium's dilapidated condition has been the subject of controversy in the community.

A protest has been lodged with the Minorities Commission by the Council for Economic Revival (CER) charging that the government generally acquires

and/or requisitions the properties of Parsis while the properties of larger communities like the Hindus and Muslims are left untouched stated Fali Poncha, chairman of the CER's managing committee who represented *The Zoroastrian* at the press conference. While the Parsis had asked for no special privileges in return for all that the com-

Each ownership flat of the 63 planned at Gibbs Road will yield sufficient surplus to create eight flats for the poor.

munity had done for the country, it would be in order that the community's properties be left out of the purview of requisition, noted Poncha. The Minorities Commission had made a sympathetic acknowledgement and had asked for specific details. Poncha now requested the BPP (and the Federation) to supply further case histories of acquisition/requisition of community properties in the country.

Golwalla has also written to the Ministry of Railways requesting that the platform at Udawada be lengthened to accommodate longer trains as there was recently a case of a lady sustaining a fracture while detraining. BPP trustee Homi Ranina suggested Golwalla and BPP chief executive Russi Anklesaria use their influence with the Gujarat government to ensure fresh water to Udawada as the wells there are turning

salty, resulting in intestinal damage to the residents.

While the BPP's mobed amelioration fund as proposed by trustee Jal Vimadlal is still in the process of discussion and stymied for lack of funds, a sub-committee has been formed with representatives from five independent Zoroastrian trusts and the BPP.

Another fund, unconnected to the BPP, for the amelioration of the priesthood has been formed by Ranina, Dastur Firoze Kotwal, high priest of the Wadia Atash Bahram, and Khojeste Mistree, founder of Zoroastrian Studies (Z S) among others. Called the Athravan Trust Fund, Ranina said that its aim is to educate young boys to be future priests and inculcate in them leadership qualities. The Athravan Trust, Ranina noted, had already received the 80G certificate which exempts donor and trust from income tax on the amount donated.

The 16 mobed quarters proposed at Doongerwadi will now be incorporated into Godrej Baug noted BPP trustee Naoroji Godrej. This shifting of the site across the boundary wall has been made in the interests of a more wholesome living environment for the mobeds' families.

On the property front, small positive changes could be noted: a separate architect has been appointed to oversee repairs in each baug; the Sikh family allegedly encroached on Panthaky Baug land seems ready to negotiate; the court has been moved to allow the Wadia trusts to receive donations; the BPP has filed charges for trespass against those who have illegally occupied Punchayet flats; indeed the trustees desired the Press to publish the

names of the trespassers in the hope that social ostracism may curtail this illegal practice.

An announcement made in passing by Ranina, that Naoroji Godrej had placed the Godrej Company's computers at the disposal of the Punchayet, may yet herald a momentous change in BPP functioning.

Anklesaria and BPP trustee Eruch Desai voiced concern at the maligning of trustees by the Press. Golwala requested the Press to phone him the moment any informant came with allegations against trustees. He promised to come immediately to face any charges that may be made.

Electoral reforms

Two trustees have submitted separate notes of dissent to the BPP electoral reform scheme placed before Ms Justice Sujata Manohar on March 13. The petition will come up for hearing on July 15, notes the BPP press release.

The reforms suggested by the BPP include constituency-wise voting, parity between the elected voters and the donors before a trustee election, a seven-year term for trustees instead of the present 10. It has been petitioned that the A, C, D, E and F registers be scrapped and replaced by a General Register and a Donors' Register. Ten percent of the seats from the general register will be reserved for graduates. For new entrants to the Donors' Register, the amount to be donated has been raised from Rs 5,000 to Rs 7,500.

The Anjuman Committee elections will be held every seven years as at present, but the last date for registration of voters prior to the election has been advanced from December 31 to November 30.

One hundred and twenty days before any election of a trustee, the General Register and the Donors' Register will be brought on par with each other. This will be done by including in the Anjuman Committee "those persons who stood next in the number of votes (received), to the last candidate declared elected at the immediately preceding general election."

The deposit for a person contesting as a trustee has been set at Rs 500 and if the candidate gets less than 50 votes, the deposit would be forfeited.

Trustee Jal Vimadlal questions the workability of the constituency-wise representation to the Anjuman Committee. Trustee Jamsheed Kanga feels

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that only those who have donated Rs 25,000 and more as against Rs 7,500 suggested in the draft scheme, should be enrolled on the Donors' Register.

Secondly, the donor representation on the Anjuman Committee, according to Kanga, should be limited to 20 per cent. Nor is Kanga in agreement with the mode of bringing the two registers into parity before each trusteeship election. The suggested scheme envisages the induction of the next highest vote gatherers in the preceding Anjuman Committee election — a method of making present losers into future winners.

Housing

Each ownership flat of the 63 planned at Gibbs Road will yield sufficient surplus to create eight flats for the poor, noted Ranina who along with Vimadallal recently finalized the terms of agreement. Affluent Parsis will be able to make this possible by merely shifting from their present flat to the Gibbs Road property (adjacent to Khareghat Colony and opposite the Doongerwadi grounds), he added, with "no donation, no liability."

While Golwalla noted that only 26 flats have been booked and seven lakhs of rupees have been advanced to the builder, Anklesaria announced, "We shall have enough to complete the project. It's the surplus for constructing other flats for middle and low income groups that is likely to come later." The estimated time of construction is 27 months according to the BPP press release, which notes that construction work began on March 15, 1985.

The trustees believe that many more Parsis will be forthcoming as construction proceeds, especially those who expect to sell their present accommoda-

tion to move to Gibbs Road. The snag lies in that unless a new flat is bought within one year of the sale of the old, the capital gains tax is payable. While Poncha berated the trustees for having delayed construction for over a year while costs rose, and Desai spoke of "slips between the cup and the lip... (and) if wishes were horses..." Godrej noted, "We are now asking a lower quotation (from the builder) for construction, so it's not likely to make much difference."

In the meanwhile 22 flats in Contrac-

"The Press must realize that the trustees' names are rightly or wrongly maligned. If that impression is cleared it would make a difference."

tor Baug, Mahim, have been occupied while another 32 are ready for occupation according to the press release. Twelve flats at Dadar Parsi Colony are also ready for use as transit accommodation. The plans for the 16 staff quarters for mobeds have been approved by the Municipality while 274 flats at Panthaky Baug, 160 ownership plus 16 rental flats at Bharucha Baug await the I.O.D. (Intimation of Disapproval which enumerates a few minor points for clarification by the architect. The I.O.D. is shortly followed by the commencement certificate.) Godrej noted

that he had met J.R. Patwardhan, director of the Municipality's engineering services, in this regard. The A, B, C and D blocks at Godrej Baug are now complete with the majority of the flats allotted as per the press release.

"Godrej visits Godrej Baug every Saturday and personally supervises the construction and sees that it's on schedule" informed Golwalla, who praised "the beauty and utility of the construction as well as the garden Godrej has laid out."

Jehan Daruwalla of *The Bombay Samachar* asked, "In view of the urgency of the matter can we expedite it?" Desai replied that the extra means that are available to the private sector cannot be utilized by a charity trust and was fearful that any publicity might prove detrimental.

It was stated that the four lakh 60 thousand rupee wall which has been sanctioned by the BPP to be built around Panthaky Baug is still awaiting municipal clearance. The BPP's feud with P.D. Jilla, who is alleged to have sold off a part of the Panthaky Baug land to a builder, can only be settled with municipal assistance. Golwalla noted, "The government officer gave an appointment for 10.30 a.m. and came at 1.30 p.m." But as Poncha noted, "The disputed property with Jilla lies on only one side. What is to prevent a wall on the undisputed area where there is tremendous trespass?"

A Sikh family that has illegally established itself in Panthaky Baug and was alleged to have terrorized the neighbourhood "wants a meeting with the trustees," reported BPP assistant secretary Hormusji Kapadia. Ranina added that he had met the Sardar "two Sundays ago... he wants proportionate accommodation (elsewhere) and is

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prepared to shift...also the Gujarati family in the heart of Panthaky Baug."

Poncha noted that "the need of the hour was for transit camps so that Parsi tenants even of non-BPP property could move for renovation/reconstruction of their buildings." To which Ranina added, "With the monsoon approaching, keep some accommodation for house collapses." Golwalla noted "We are trying to keep the ground floors of all new buildings for transit camps," in addition to 13 such flats in Mahim and 12 in Dadar.

On the question of the illegal occupation of Punchayet flats where the trustees are constrained by recourse to a slow legal process, a Press representative suggested the BPP legalize such illegal tenancies in exchange for a substantial donation to augment its scant repair funds. But the trustees were chary of any such arrangement.

Mobeds

Vimadlal reported that representatives of five trusts — the M.F. Cama Athornan Institute, the N.M. Wadia

Charities, the Iranian Zoroastrian Anjuman, the Zoroastrian Association, the C.M. Banaji Charity Trust — had met to discuss and provide financial assistance to the BPP's mobed amelioration scheme but "had not come with a mandate as to how much each trust would contribute. It was decided to form a subcommittee with one representative from each trust. In the first week of May we hope they'll come with a mandate of what they'll spare. Also suggestions of alterations to the scheme. I have confined myself to full-time ordinary (not yozdathregar) mobeds of the grade Rs 625-1250..."

Ranina interposed to announce the formation of the Athravan Trust — an organization independent of the BPP: "We want young boys to take to the priesthood...offer them at least Rs 2,000 per month... (make) provision for better educated mobeds (who can provide) guidance to the laity. After a boy graduates from the madressa give him requisite training in Indian and Iranian history. In ancient times priests were leaders. Today's mobeds do not have respect because they are not able

to speak. Our young people have nobody to go to.

"Seventy percent of mobeds are over 45 years old. In the last five years only seven boys became fulltime mobeds" noted Ranina and added, "We are requesting 100 rich Parsis to contribute Rs 10,000 each. I have picked out 500 (prospective donors) out of which 100 should respond."

Golwalla: "Wish you good luck!"

"I have myself donated Rs 21,000. Already there are one and a half lakhs in the kitty," responded Ranina who is aiming at a seed capital of Rs 10 lakhs before appealing to the community at large to donate small but regular sums each month.

A Press representative noted that about a week earlier there was such a shortage of mobeds at Doongerwadi that one pair of mobeds after performing two *geh sarnas* at the upper bunglis, came to the lower bungli at 5.15 p.m. and concluded the funeral ceremony within 40 to 45 minutes. Could nothing be done, he questioned the Punchayet representatives. This led to a discussion on the agency system that

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is currently functioning at Doongerwadi.

The system has sprung up in response to the behdins' habit of assigning all the ceremonial organization, required at the Doongerwadi, to their panthaky. The panthaky, for lack of time, assigns all Doongerwadi work to a mobed ('agent') of his choice who thus specializes in the four-day ceremonies there. Although there are supposedly several such 'agents' at Doongerwadi, Anklesaria noted that "80 percent of the business is with one agent. The agency system has developed by itself. The panthaky has developed the system of agent because he has no time. The BPP has no priest of its own. If the client has a panthaky, then the work is transferred to the agent most acceptable to that panthaky. The trustees had a meeting with Jehangir Shroff, Nadar Turel, Peshotan Peer — office-bearers of the Athornan Mandal and the Jashan Committee which claim to represent the mobeds. The panthakies said they were satisfied with the agent, noted Golwalla, adding "no doubt he is very efficient."

The Punchayet's housing scheme for mobeds at Doongerwadi (now transferred to Godrej Baug) has also made scant progress, the Punchayet having

14 percent of men
and 15 percent of
women remain
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as compared to the
general population.

collected a mere one lakh 69 thousand rupees against a targeted 21 lakhs. "Something is lacking somewhere" noted Anklesaria. Desai was more explicit: "The Press must realize that the trustees' name is rightly or wrongly maligned. If that impression is cleared

it would make a difference." Poncha noted that no letter of thanks signed by the trustees goes out to the donors. "This personal touch is needed," he observed.

Population study

A special census of Parsis in Greater Bombay commissioned by the BPP at a cost of Rs 45,000 and prepared by Dr Malini Karkal of the International Institute of Population Studies has been completed. Rs 19,000 have now been sanctioned towards the cost of printing 500 copies of the report, notes the press release. Among the pertinent data revealed: The age group 20-54 consists of 47 percent of the population, 36 percent of the population being aged 55 and over; 14 percent of men and 15 percent of women remain unmarried; childlessness and foetal waste is higher among Parsis as compared to the general population.

Advisory projects

The school counselling project, implemented by the BPP at the behest of the

continued on page 44

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“The Gold Seal of quality”

Ravishankar Sujir

Started in a 300 sq ft area at Bombay's Nana Chowk, Gold Seal today controls 85 to 90 percent of the auto beadings and window channels replacement market.

Gold Seal is one of the oldest companies to have started manufacturing auto ancillaries in India. When it was set up, door beadings and window channels were being imported by car manufacturers and the replacement trade. While neither Premier Automobiles Limited nor Hindustan Motors had at that time started the Indianization of their cars, Gold Seal was already one step ahead.

Humbly enough, Gold Seal started in 1958 in a small 300 sq ft area in Bombay's Nana Chowk, close to Opera House, the city's main market for automobile products. From seven manual workers and an investment of Rs 5,000, it now has a workforce of 150 in Bombay alone, and an annual turnover of Rs 3.2 crores in the Bombay factory; the total group turnover is Rs 5 crores.

Early moves

Born 1910, Hoshang Aga had a working life, mostly in sales, behind him when he opened a petrol pump in 1952. Within a year, though it was not on a prominent location, he had built the business up and even expanded to a garage. Looking for further expansion, he considered in turn cheese, hosiery, castor exports and, since he was already in contact with dealers and in the trade himself, auto parts. He settled on door beadings and window channels because he had contacts with dealers. Existing indigenous manufacturers were almost non-existent and limited to the replacement trade, and their quality was uneven, with no well-known brand names.

An international first

Thus started Gold Seal, the first company in the world to give a brand name to auto beadings and channels. Using tactics and manufacturing norms gained from experience as a sales professional, Aga was a success within four years. Perhaps people thought it was another foreign product, says Aga: "It was well organized, with emphasis on quality right from the start, and we paid great attention to packaging. We were careful with the market, too — we kept in close touch with dealers, and delivered promptly."

Aga built his own machinery, with the help of local engineers. This, he says, has been company policy — to be as fully indigenous as possible. At that time foreign machines were one-size tailor-made for each car fitting, but Aga built a variable-width machine suiting all cars; importing machines would, in fact, have proved costlier. Today he proudly states, "we are the only people to export channels and trimmings of different specifications and dimensions." Because of its rapidly acquired reputation, dealers and mechanics turned from foreign goods to Gold Seal products. The company moved its activities to larger premises but by 1963 these too proved insufficient, and Gold Seal shifted again to still bigger premises in the Bombay suburbs and by its silver jubilee in 1983 had 30,000 sq ft in Bombay alone.

Thirty thousand feet of channels are produced each day, on three lines; the figure for beadings is 45,000 feet per day. Of the total production, 25 to 30 percent is for original equipment sup-

plies, 10 percent for exports, and the remainder for the replacement market.

Gold Seal supplies original equipment to all auto manufacturers, and holds 85 to 90 percent of the replacement market. In 1961, when Hindustan Motors and Premier Automobiles Limited were casting about for a reliable supplier, Gold Seal was ready and waiting. Today Standard Motors, TELCO, M&M, Sipani Automobiles, Ford Simpson, and Maruti Udyog all use Gold Seal parts. In today's fast developing auto market, the first parts of vehicles to be Indianized have so far been made by them.

In 25 years, Gold Seal has become a multicore, multiproduct company with growth at an average of 25 percent per annum. Door beadings and channels are still the predominant products, but new items are continuously being developed for the replacement market, and today the Gold Seal name appears on over 100 products — including all types of sealing rubber profiles, cold rolled aluminium extrusions, engine and gear box mountings and special flocked channels for better sealing of doors and windows.

Gold Seal is the only manufacturer in India of self-gripping long-lasting PVC door seals. Door handles, bonnet rubbers, glazing rubbers, quality sponge rubber profiles, stainless steel trimmings, glass frames, suspension bushings and multipurpose lamps are also manufactured.

Unique range

1963 saw the first of Gold Seal's innovative achievements in India — the in-



roduction of flexible channels with moquette. Exports started in 1971, and up to the present the company is the only Indian exporter of door beadings and glass run window channels to the UK, US and many countries worldwide. Its product range covers any vehicle, and is not offered by a single manufacturer anywhere in the world. It was Aga's son Cyrus who concentrated first upon exports, and they are now growing (last year 20 lakhs).

Exports in 1973-74 were 3.6 lakhs, climbing to 15.5 lakhs in 1979-80 and 19.8 lakhs in 1981-82; and from April to November of this year, the figure was 14 lakhs. This year's total exports are expected to touch 24 lakhs, while with a unit in Baroda due to commence production shortly, Aga seems confident that exports will touch Rs 50 lakhs by 1986.

From 1972 onwards Gold Seal established a number of companies under the group's corporate banner, as part of an expansion plan. A changeover from Gold Seal Product Company to Gold Seal Engineering Products Pvt Ltd was followed by the incorporation of Lotus Auto Parts Industries, Ahura Auto Beadings Pvt Ltd and Mazda Auto Channels Pvt Ltd in Gujarat, Adhic Auto Ancillaries Pvt Ltd and Auto Channels Pvt Ltd in Madras, and Holdfast Rubber Industries Pvt Ltd in Calcutta. A modern rubber factory in a backward area near Baroda, Gujarat is now being set up. It will be the first company in India to set up a coldfeed extruder with a continuous vulcanizing plant.

The Baroda unit was set up in colla-

boration with Scheisser of Interplastic. The design is Scheisser's but the machinery was built in India. Trial production has already begun. The plant was to commence production in January 1985, and is expected to touch 80 percent of capacity by December 1985. It will be producing mainly windscreen and wiper-blade rubbers. Another innovation for Gold Seal, it will be the

Gold Seal has even conducted raids on some duplicators trafficking in their brand name — but imitation is the sincerest compliment in trade!

first time in India that windscreen rubber joined at four corners as one piece will be manufactured. The group is also diversifying into engine parts like gear box mountings, and is exploring gaskets and backings for carburetors.

Aga dismisses his competitors as pin-pricks, perhaps natural, given his stranglehold on the market. Competitors produce in small quantities, essentially settling small bulk orders for the replacement trade; Usha Pvt Ltd and KEL, both based in Calcutta, are the largest ones. Some competitors have tried to cash in by using brand names similar to Gold Seal — Gold Mohur,

Aga being presented a memento at the silver jubilee function as wife Daulat looks on

Gold Leaf and Good Luck are a few. Gold Seal has even conducted raids on some duplicators trafficking in their brand name — but imitation is the sincerest compliment in trade!

Direct contacts

Gold Seal does not have wholesale or marketing organizations. "We have," says Aga, "no belief in agencies." They supply directly to the dealers, with whom Gold Seal salesmen are in close contact. The company has a network of over 1,700 dealers, which may well be the largest direct dealership of any automobile ancillary unit in India. Companies approach Gold Seal directly to ask whether it can supply new products, and dealers constantly suggest modifications and new items that Gold Seal can produce.

"We also keep on thinking of time and labour-saving devices," Aga says. "As far as the mechanics' preference for us goes, I can offer one typical example where our products are suitable for easy fitment. Formerly the mechanic had to go to a shop and buy the loose channels, clips and rivets separately, whereas today he buys a set which is complete. This saves time, and today time is money. Also, our latest self-gripping door beadings have twice the life of ordinary ones. These can be removed and refitted any number of times without distortions. Once you wash and clean them, they are as good as new. In a poor country like India where raw materials are scarce, a way

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of conserving them is to make the raw material last longer — one more reason to produce the best quality product which has the longest life."

Evolving technology

In the past, there were some complaints of the color of the channel fur fading. A breakthrough has been achieved here, too. Gold Seal manufactures new fur with fast colours, and again the technology is Indian. "We have our own weaving unit," says Aga. "Currently, in our factory, we are trying out experiments on two new machines we have built, and within one or two years we will have different machines. We are constantly experimenting by adopting the latest technology with a stress on quality finished products."

Raw materials, in-process materials and finished products are tested for their tensile strengths, compression ratios, flexing and elongation properties. An in-house laboratory tests the rubber and PVC materials, though steel is at the moment tested by an outside laboratory; a shadowgraph machine indicates faults in rubber profiles. An aging oven helps in predicting long-term reactions of the products and random samples of finished products are routinely checked.

The entry of new cars into the Indian market meant immediate offers to supply them with original equipment. With the expected fantastic growth of the two-wheeler industry, Gold Seal is also manufacturing original equipment for them. Lohia Machines, Kinetic, Vespa, Bajaj are clients. "Most of these companies," says Aga, "have been with us from their beginning — some of them for 20 years."

It is only recently that Gold Seal has had to resort to importing some specialized raw material like EPDM, a type of synthetic rubber. Every new material that comes into the factory passes through a rigid quality control system. Gold Seal also has direct interest in the



Cyrus Aga (left) and wife Pilloo: "concentrating on exports."

making of major raw materials used by them; backward integration, says Aga. Materials for export and home consumption go through the same quality controls.

Says Aga, "There can't be a more eloquent testimonial for Gold Seal products than that they stand up to the natural test conditions of the Indian environment — climatic extremes, severe and various hazards of monsoon and heat, and of course, abjectly poor road conditions."

Aga claims excellent industrial relations; 40 percent of his staff has been there from the first few years of the company. Premises have been shifted four to five times, but the workers have remained loyal. One labour problem was that a few workers left the company and set themselves up as competitors; of these, only two of any consequence survived. Aga claims there is no discrimination in his company, as the women workers, who comprise the majority of his workforce, have always been paid the same wage as the men.

Workers are also offered financial and technological help to set up small

units supplying items like clips, rubbers and punched products directly (and only) to Gold Seal. Handicapped persons are also helped this way. The Japanese idea of home packaging, for workers and their families keen to earn some extra money, has also been followed.

Anticipating expansion

Gold Seal are gearing themselves for the coming expansion in all the automobile fields, and have for the first time negotiated with foreign manufacturers for technical collaboration, in order to reduce development time. These negotiations are almost finalized.

In September 1983, in the silver jubilee year of the company, Aga was presented the federation of small industries of India's A.R. Bhat Entrepreneurship Award for long and outstanding service and contribution to the auto industry.

We are, says Aga, "a forward-looking company. The future holds both opportunity and challenge, with new models coming onto the scene, and we have started equipping ourselves to meet these challenges. With nearly a million cars on the road, with the government no longer seeing cars as luxury items, and with the boom in the two wheeler trade, we are confident the future is bright for us. We are 25 years young, and hope for a big future, especially as —" states Aga disarmingly — "we have the Gold Seal of quality!"

Auto headings and channels: "suitable for easy fitment"



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Tata's new fields



Ratan Naval Tata told *The Economic Times* February 11, 1985 that the group has decided that Tata Industries should be the vanguard to spearhead Tatas into the new technology fields of the future. The high technology direction plan undertaken by the Tata Industries has identified business objectives and defined new business areas which Tatas should enter, as well as existing fields which Tatas may consider leaving.

Ratan Tata, who succeeded J.R.D. Tata as chairman of Tata Industries in 1981, said that the promoters' contribution to new ventures would be from the group's companies, including Tata Sons.

Ratan Tata has also been appointed deputy chairman of the Tata Iron and Steel Co. Ltd. and is slated to eventually become the head of the Tata group.

Tata said that he was not averse to takeover of companies. "I think we must also include acquisitions as part of the plan of our growth. We should be looking at acquisitions whenever they fit into our plans and whenever it is advantageous," he said.

The new government of Rajiv Gandhi is expected to initiate a more pragmatic and liberal industrial policy. Several new areas like telecommunications and contract oil drilling have been recently thrown open to the private sector.

"The ideologies, which plagued us for so long, are being given up and the whole industrial environment has been improved to take the country into a new era. The present government is placing a huge responsibility on the private sector to enable the country to stand on its own. The house of Tatas has recognized this and is gearing itself to play an important role in the industrial development of the country," Tata said.

The growth of the Tata house was

somewhat restricted in the past decade or so possibly because of the increased restrictions imposed by the government. But it now appears that the government approach has dramatically changed for the better and equal opportunities would be provided to all entrepreneurs. "In view of this, it appears that the era of stagnation for the group is now over," Tata said.

In the field of telecommunications, which has been recently opened to the private sector, Tata said, the group has already made considerable progress. Tata Industries has made an application for setting up an electronic PABX project in technical collaboration with a Canadian company. The project will be located in Gujarat.

Tata Industries has also proposed to set up a new project for the manufacture of large super computers with the latest technology in the field. Tatas are already participating in a computer manufacturing unit in Singapore, operated by Tata Elxsi.

Tata disclosed that he would like to make investments in 'artificial intelligence', a new field providing software application for computers. The group would develop linkages with some universities or institutions abroad which are involved in 'artificial intelligence.' "Our intention is to build up the project with the small nucleus already created by the Tata Consultancy Services at Pune," Tata said.

"Our intention is that we should be pioneers in those areas for which the market does not yet exist, but which may develop to a substantial degree in the future."

Tatas are also planning to enter the field of biochemistry with a view to improving plantation yields and introducing new crops. With proper biochemistry applications, it is possible to raise substantially the yields of traditional crops like tea, coffee and cocoa, and

introduce high protein fruits, and vegetables.

Additionally, Tatas have plans to enlarge their activities in housing. The group company, namely, Tata Housing Development Corporation, has already undertaken property development work at Parel, Bandra and other places in Bombay.

Tata feels that considering the government's liberal and pragmatic approach, it should be possible to start half a dozen new projects in new high technology areas in the next couple of years.

Excerpted from The Economic Times, February 11, 1985.

Stress management

"In all economies of the world it has been found that people, especially executives, die of disorders created by stress. Stress is therefore considered a major killer, and losing people due to ill-health is a costly proposition," said Dinyar Pestonjee, professor of organizational behavior at the Indian Institute of Management (IIM-A), which has been conducting regular programs for stress management since 1980, in an interview with *Business World*, December 3 to 16, 1984. Though organizations do look after the physical health of an executive they generally overlook the mental health component, he added.

"People should experience some level of stress to do a good job. But if the activation level goes beyond a certain threshold, it will lead to a lowering of performance. Therefore it is necessary to know how much stress is productive and how much becomes counter-productive," Pestonjee says.

To minimize stress, Pestonjee advises personal counselling, creative solutions to problems and the practice of yoga and meditation. But he cautions, "Excessive practice of these techniques can be counter-productive." While choosing techniques to deal with stress, the availability of resources and time should be considered. Pestonjee argues, "Organizations cannot have an effective mix of multimethod strategy unless programs are of a sufficiently long duration."

Commenting on the effectiveness of stress management programs, Pestonjee asserted, "The fact that companies have implemented these programs indicates that they are of considerable use."

'Self-taught scholar'

Died: Tehmurasp Rustomji Sethna, Avestan scholar and author of several books on Zoroastrianism, on February 2, 1985 in Karachi.

"Tehmurasp was a self-taught scholar of our religion, an author and a truly devoted Zoroastrian. The (World Zoroastrian Organization) committee will miss his sound judgment and wise counsel," noted a resolution passed by the committee of the WZO on February 10, 1985.

In recognition of his services to the community, the Karachi Zoroastrians held a meeting in his memory on March 4, and on March 26 his portrait was unveiled at the Karachi Anjuman's Bhedwar Library, notes Jamshed Katrak in the Parsi Prakash column of *The Bombay Samachar* of March 13, 1985.

To bring the Avesta within the reach of the modern, English-knowing Zoroastrian population, Sethna felt the need to have a standardized translation in clear and simple English, along the lines of the Christian scriptures, said Katrak. At personal cost and labour, Sethna translated the entire Avesta in English and printed the prayers with their translations in Roman script, the write-up notes. His five books were distributed to Avesta scholars and institutions all over the world.

'A helping hand'

Died: Homai Rusi Toddywalla, 61, prominent social worker and one of the leaders of the Theosophical Society in India on March 18, 1985 in Bombay following cancer.

"Toddywalla had genuine love for the poor and the needy and always gave a helping hand... most willingly, cheerfully and humbly" read the resolution passed at a commemoration meeting held at Bombay's Blavatsky Lodge on April 8, 1985, under the joint auspices of the Theosophical Order of Service, Bombay Theosophical Federation, Blavatsky Lodge, International Order of the Round Table, India, Blind Men's Association and Bombay Humanitarian League. Toddywalla was a sponsorship administrator of the Save the Children Fund (S.C.F.), London, president of Blavatsky Lodge, the premier lodge of the Theosophical Society in India and secretary of the Bom-

bay region of the Theosophical Order of Service, a social service activity of the Theosophical Society.

"Toddywalla was an ardent Theosophist, prominent social worker, a committed philanthropist and a true guide and pillar of strength for hundreds of



Toddywalla: 'diligent service'

people who worked with her," said Dr Rajendra Vyas, the Asian Director of the Royal Commonwealth Society for the Blind while presiding over the meeting, notes a report in *The Afternoon Despatch and Courier* of April 9, 1985. Those who paid tributes to Toddywalla included Dastur N. Minochehr-Homji, Ms Soonu Godrej, Babulal Todi, Dasrathbhai Thakkar and representatives of other organizations, stated the above report. Messages from eminent personalities of India including the then Governor of Maharashtra I.H. Latif were read on the occasion.

"All of us in the overseas and sponsorship departments of S.C.F. who were privileged to know and work with Ms Toddywalla and to have her friendship will miss her greatly, as will all the poor children and families for whom she worked so dedicatedly, but her high ideals which she served so selflessly will remain a constant source of inspiration," reminisced Ms Antonia Derry, sponsorship controller of S.C.F., London while summing up Toddywalla's commitment to the poor and needy.

After reviving the Theosophical Order of Service in Bombay in 1968, she "made it one of the strongest sections of the Society in the world, after 17 years of diligent service," noted *The Daily* of March 19, 1985.

Sympathetic to the cause of the blind, Toddywalla learnt braille herself and transcribed many books in braille, including one on Zoroastrianism. Ever willing to promote the cause of vegetarianism, as secretary of the Humane Education Committee she delivered many lectures in educational institutions of Bombay. When Surat and Broach were affected by floods, she personally visited the Parsi families in these areas, distributing clothes and foodgrains.

She was a Past Master of co-free-masonic lodges of Bombay; co-free-masonry being the equivalent of free-masonry, where males and females are admitted to the ceremonial movement based on "brotherly love, relief and truth."

Born and educated in Karachi, Toddywalla served as secretary to the Karachi branch of the British Overseas Airways Corporation for 13 years prior to immersing herself in social welfare activities.

She is survived by her husband, Rusi and daughter, Parinaz.

Stree Mandal's founder

Died: Jerbanoo Nadirsha Chenoy, founder member of the Zoroastrian Stree Mandal of Secunderabad and Hyderabad and an active social worker on March 11, 1985 in Secunderabad.

"A woman of charm, culture and compassion, Jerbanoo was loved and respected not only by her wide circle of friends and relatives but also by her associates on the various committees and advisory boards of which she was a member, and in the numerous offices she held in government and non-government institutions in her capacity as social worker," read the resolution passed at the annual general meeting of the Zoroastrian Stree Mandal on April 6, 1985.

As former president and vice-president of the Mandal, Chenoy "gave her valuable time and rendered unstinting service, and took a keen interest in (the) working" of the Mandal, noted the resolution.

Billimoria's enterprise

Died: Ardeshtir H. Billimoria, 94, former chairman of Calcutta's Great East-

tern Hotel on November 17, 1984.

"He donated generously to various charities, helping every deserving cause," noted the *Calcutta Gavashni* of October-December 1984. Described as an "orthodox Zoroastrian," he was a trustee of the B.D. Mehta Atash Adaran for 15 years.

Prior to becoming director and chairman of Calcutta's Great Eastern Hotel, Billimoria had a wine and auctioneering business with his brothers in Kharagpur, states the write-up. On retirement, Billimoria began another auctioneers' firm, handling goods of well-known companies, like the Tatas.

A condolence meeting was convened at the Agiary hall in memory of Billimoria "whose generosity touched almost every Parsi institution in Calcutta."

BPP ELECTORAL REFORMS

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Federation, has been extended by another two years noted Golwalla. The scheme provides free psychiatric help to Parsi school children whose social traumas interfere with academic accomplishment. By way of explanation Golwalla read out excerpts from a letter from the principal of the Bai A.F. Petit School which noted: "Our residential girls have greatly benefited. We would like to continue next year. ...Non-Parsi parents have appealed for it to be extended to (their wards)."

A project officer has since been appointed under the Zoroastrian Community Development Institute to implement the BPP's Trust Advisory Scheme, notes the press release. Anklesaria noted that they were considering how they "should jointly extend the activities of the trusts or wind up those which are almost defunct."

Government service

Lamenting that "the cream of our youth — 20 to 25 each year — go away abroad and are more or less lost," Golwalla noted there are "only two IAS (Indian Administrative Service) officers in India today." Ranina concurred, "Even if (the youth) stay in India, they take to the professions" and not government service. Referring to the large number of Parsi ICS (Indian Civil Service, as it was known in British times. The name was changed to In-

dian Administrative Service after Independence) officers in earlier times, Godrej noted, "In those days it was a paying proposition. Now it isn't. In those days they were like kings."

But Anklesaria, a former IAS officer, looking at the problem from the

"Seventy percent of mobeds are over 45 years old. In the last five years only seven boys became fulltime mobeds."

community angle and somewhat idealistically, noted, "It is the position, the placement which counts. Money is not everything for everybody...pick up youngsters...somebody who is emotionally involved." Anklesaria has been advocating that the community assist young Parsis who go into government service by providing low-cost dharamshala accommodation, etc. Added Ranina dryly: "I hope one day we don't have to set up a civil service amelioration fund."

Matrimonial bureau

There have been six marriages resulting from the bureau's functioning over the past 15 months. While Desai ribbed Golwalla as "the matchmaker," Anklesaria asked for Adi Marzban's contribution. At an earlier press conference Marzban had undertaken to work out a scheme to bring young Parsi boys and girls into regular social contact. Now he reported a lack of community enthusiasm. Ranina suggested the Parsi Gymkhana be induced to hold monthly meets for young people. Marzban said: "My services as litterateur are at your command; but who organizes it? ...A certain amount of follow-up is necessary to see if (the matchmaking) is successful or backfiring."

Ranina noted: "Godrej has set his computers at our disposal. Computerize the (personal individual) data. It will ensure greater secrecy."

Udwada

Noting that the saving of buildings and properties in Udwada was only a part of the 'Save Udwada' scheme, Anklesaria said "The idea is to give Udwada

a facelift, make it a Parsi Rome...preserve and beautify it... (but) the whole community must get together (to achieve this)," he said.

The matter arose for discussion in the context of a suggestion from social activist Ms Aban Bana who had proposed to the BPP to buy off Parsi homes in Udwada from those who are anxious to sell and rent them out to Parsis. Desai noted it wasn't a very practical suggestion: "At first they used to go for 25 to 50 thousand rupees. Not any more." Where would the BPP obtain the funds, he asked. It was alleged that some of these properties had been acquired by smugglers who operate in the area and are willing to pay well.

The Punchayet was represented at the Press conference by Golwalla, Desai, Vimadalal, Maneckji Hodiwalla, Ranina and Godrej, chief executive R.K. Anklesaria, joint secretary Ms Gool Tata and assistant secretary Hormusji Kapadia. The Press was represented by *The Bombay Samachar*, *Jam-e-Jamshed*, *The Zoroastrian* and *Parsiana*.

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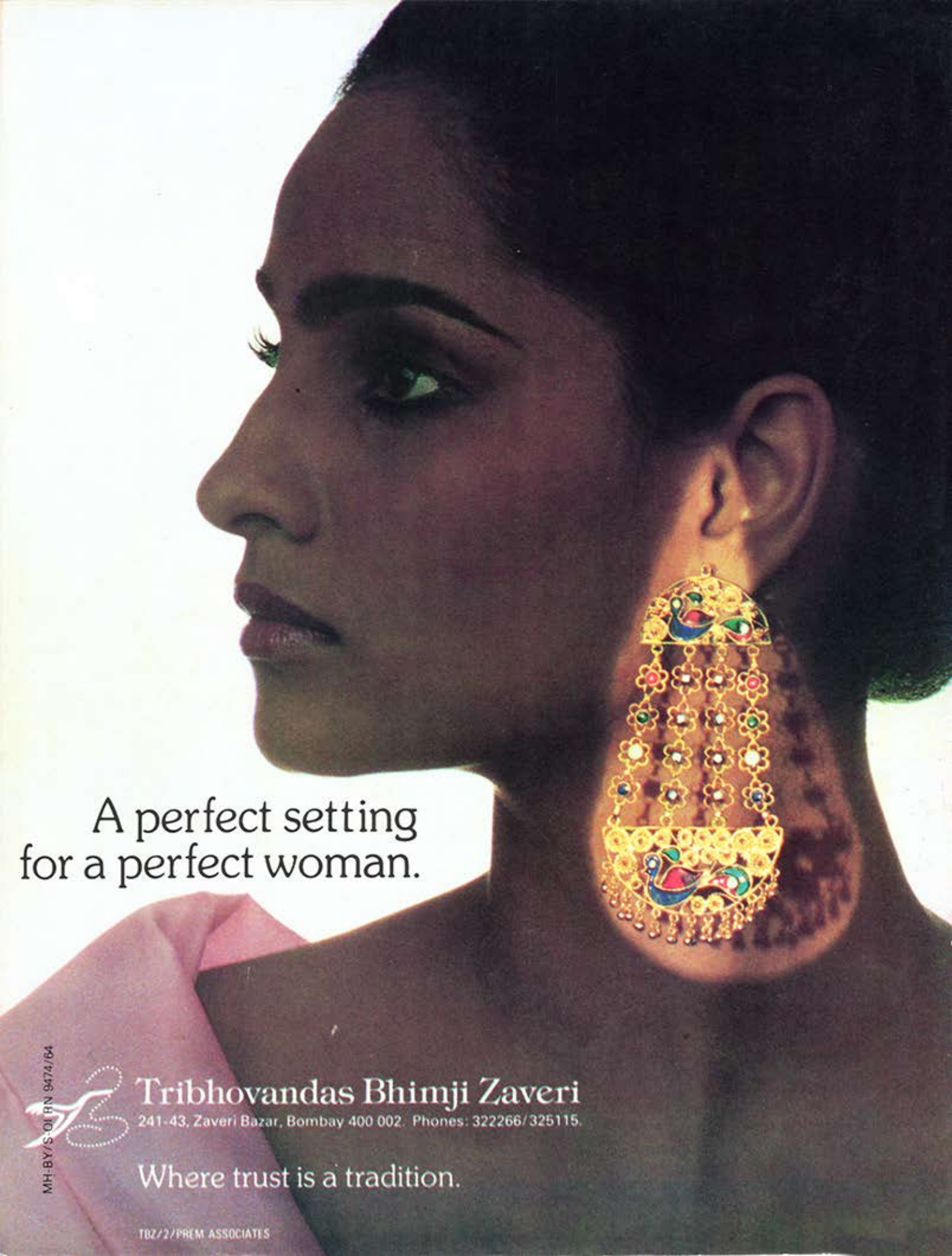
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