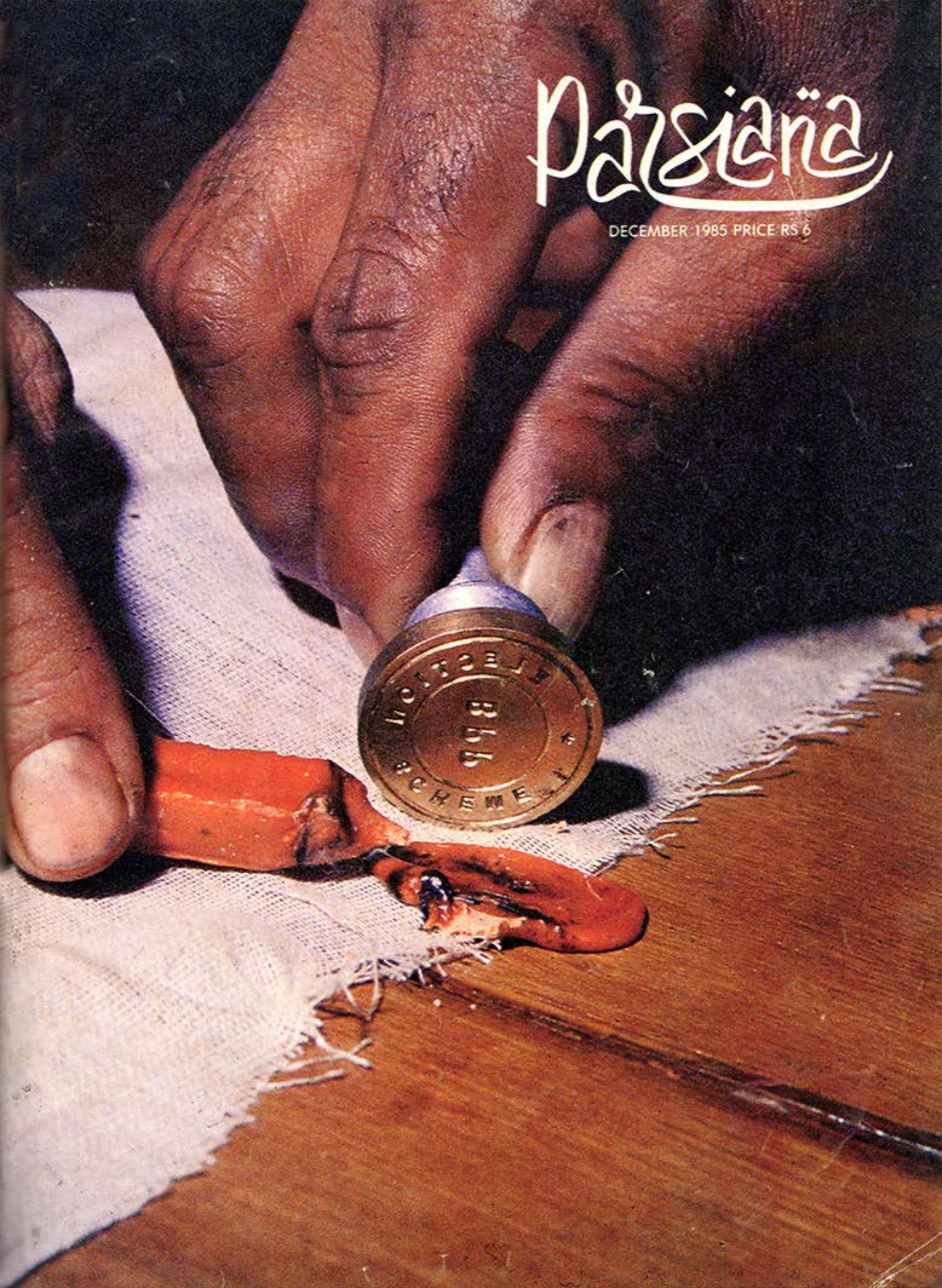


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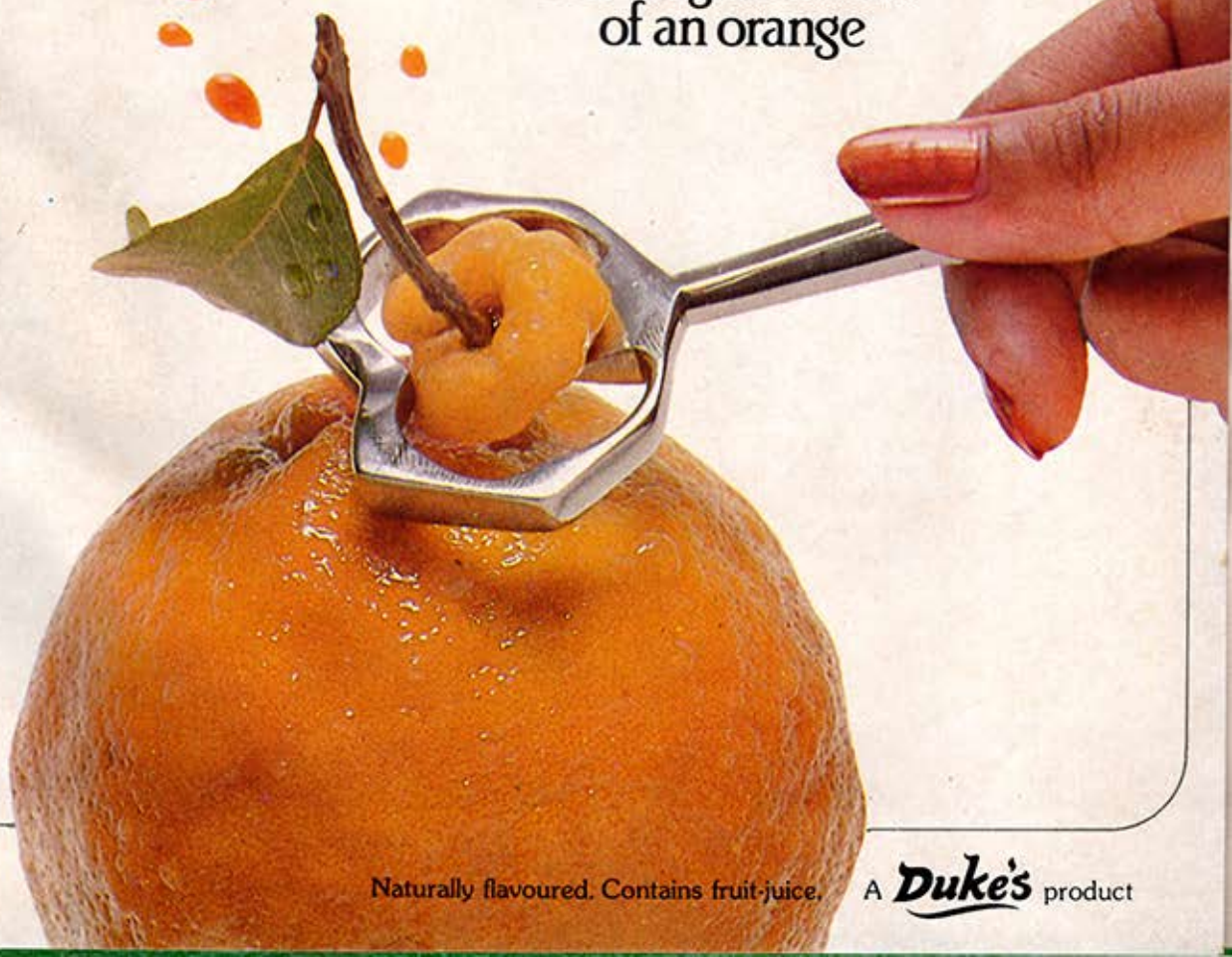
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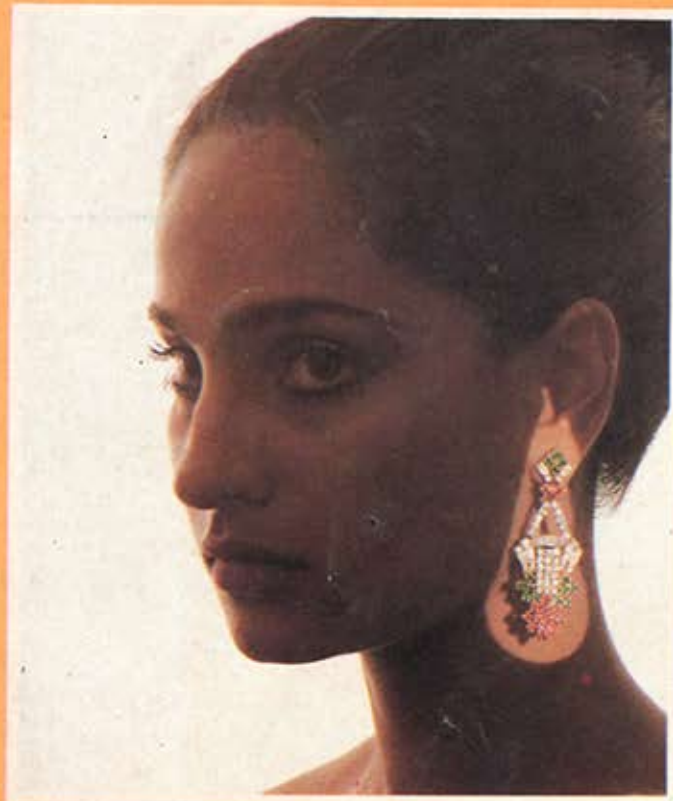
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Parsiana

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Volume 8 Number 6

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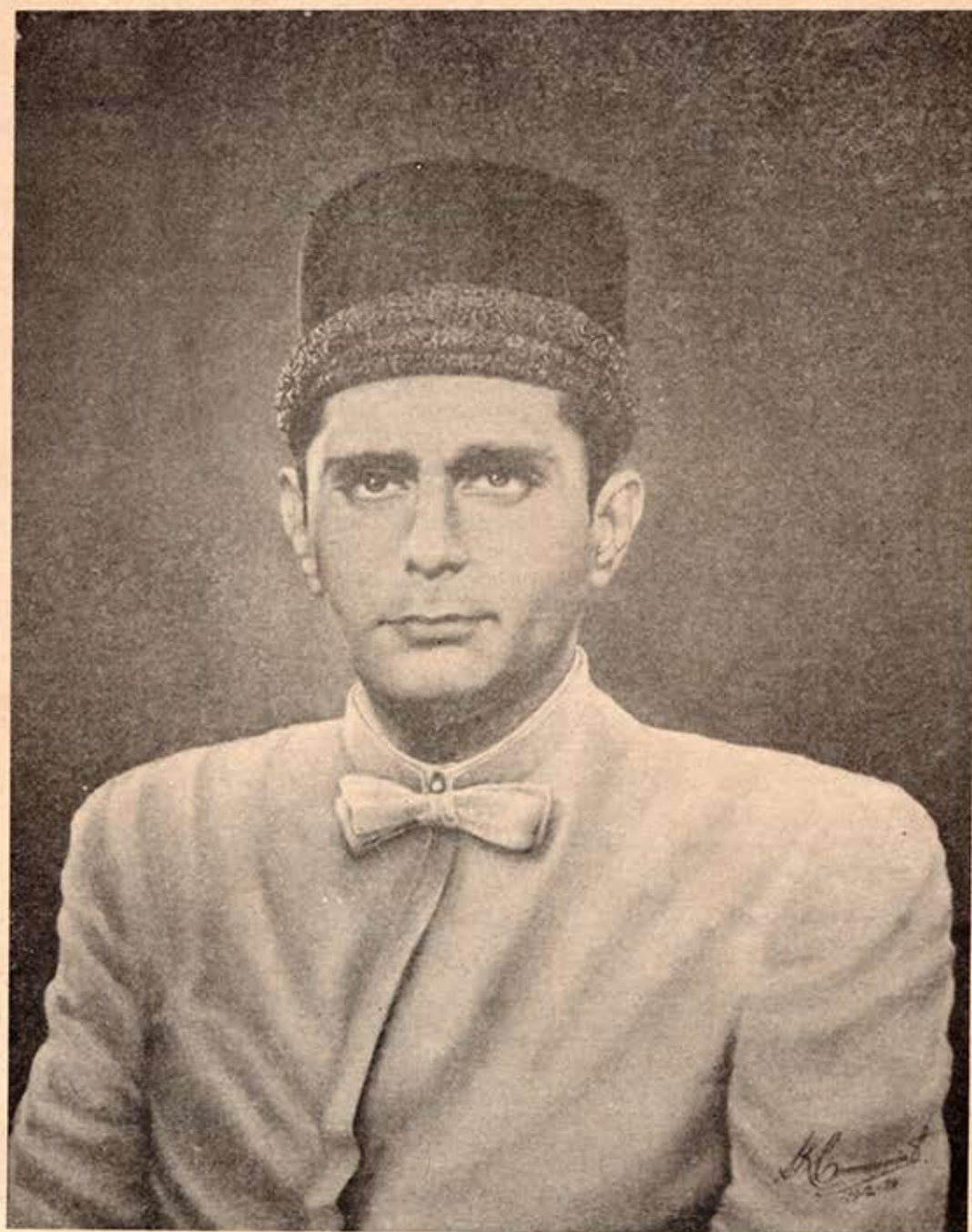
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In Memoriam

Mr. Fali Meherji Variava,

Director

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

Addressing the AET

Our attention has been drawn to your article, 'Addressing the AET' (*Parsiana*, November 1985), wherein the Editor's remark states, "According to reliable sources, the Athravan Educational Trust has decided to shift its office from the K.R. Cama Institute. *The Bombay Samachar* of October 27 states that the new office is to be located at Noble Chambers in Bombay's Fort area."

As several people now seem to be under the impression that the Athravan Educational Trust is no longer in the premises of the K.R. Cama Oriental Institute, and are making inquiries from us pertaining to the same, we would like you to note that so far we have received no intimation of their

removal from our building nor does it appear that they have done so, as there is still an Athravan Educational Trust board outside the premises of Zoroastrian Studies.

HOMAI N. MODI
CAPT H.J.M. DESAI

Jt. Hon. Secretaries, The K.R. Cama Oriental Institute

I was saddened by Arnavaz Mama's article 'Addressing the AET' (*Parsiana*, November 1985). It seems Arnavaz got all her information from the K.R. Cama Institute without even bothering to consult us, for our point of view. For instance, our letter dated February 29, 1980 clearly states the terms of agreement between us and the trustees of (the) K.R. Cama Oriental Institute, yet she has conveniently forgotten to quote clause six of the letter which states, "That we at Zoroastrian Studies will be allowed to operate our projects and fulfil our objectives with no interference in our work from the managing committee of the K.R. Cama Oriental Institute." Is this not significant to the very topic she is discussing, in view of the fact, that it is the K.R. Cama trustees who have interfered with a ZS inspired trust, like AET, whose first project is central to the aims and objects of ZS? There are many such discrepancies running right through her article. It is this sort of prejudiced and one-sided journalism that, in my opinion, reflects poorly upon the intellectual honesty of the writer.

KHOJESTE P. MISTREE
Founder, ZS and Founder-Trustee AET

Arnavaz Mama replies

Khojeste Mistree has faulted my article — and me — on two counts. Regarding the source material, it might be pertinent to state that the article was based entirely on the reports that appeared in *The Bombay Samachar* and *Jain-e-Jamshed*, and was meant to inform our readers in other parts of India and abroad of matters exercising Parsis here in Bombay; the K.R. Cama Institute was not directly approached and, therefore, neither was ZS.

Secondly, on examining the Athravan Educational Trust's (AET) trust deed, and the fund-raising brochure distributed at its inaugural, I could find no mention that the AET was set

up as a ZS project. Hence I considered your above mentioned clause six irrelevant to the argument.

I would have been happier if the "many such discrepancies running right through (the) article" had been spelt out. It might have enabled me to answer the charge of "prejudice" to our mutual satisfaction.

Argument for acceptance

In his review of Kersey Antia's *The argument for acceptance: a reply to the three high priests*, (*Parsiana*, August 1985) Homi J. Rogers attributes to Antia the assertion that:

"...at the court of Kublai Khan, Zoroastrianism was practiced, as can be borne out by the facts mentioned by Marco Polo in his diary...the Mongols then believed in the Supreme God of Heaven whom they knew by the name of Khormazda, and to whom they daily offered prayers with a fire before them on which they burnt incense."

The passage to which Rogers refers is quoted by Antia from S.J. Bulsara's "The religion of Zarathushtra among non-Iranian nations" (*JCOI*, 35, 1942):

"Marco Polo...has made several valuable references to the religious observances of the Mongols in China. He says that they believed in the Supreme God of Heaven whom they knew by the name of Khormazda and to whom they daily offered prayers with fire before them on which they burnt incense..."

Without giving an extensive account of the complex manuscript history of Marco Polo's book, suffice it to say that Marco Polo wrote no diary; Rustichello (or Rusticiano) of Pisa recorded Polo's reminiscences while both were in prison in Genoa, embroidering these with the stuff of chivalric romances. Both men apparently collaborated in some later revisions, and Polo may have continued to revise the text until his death. The passages relating to the worship of the Supreme God of Heaven do not occur in the best manuscripts (e.g., MS Fr. 1116 of the Bibliothèque Nationale) but only in Ramusio's version which was compiled from

various sources around the middle of the sixteenth century. The name Khor-mazda appears in no manuscript, but was perhaps taken by Bultsara from a note in Yule's translation of Polo's work:

"The Supreme Good Spirit appears to have been called by the Mongols Tengri (Heaven), and Khormuzda, and is identified by Schmidt with the Persian Hormuzd." (Sir Henry Yule, ed. and trans., *The Book of Ser Marco Polo*, third edition, revised by Henri Cordier, in two volumes, London: John Murray, 1903, vol. 1, pg. 257, n. 1).

The relevant passages from Marco Polo are given in Yule's translation with the material unique to Ramusio set in brackets:

"This is the fashion of their religion. (They say there is a Most High God of Heaven, whom they worship daily with thurible and incense, but they pray to Him only for health of mind and body. But) they have (also) a certain (other) god of theirs called Natigay, and they say he is the god of the earth, who watches over their children, cattle and crops. They show him great worship and honor, and every man hath a

figure of him in his house, made of felt and cloth; and they also make in the same manner images of his wife and children." (vol. 1, pp. 256-57).

"As we have said before, these people are Idolaters, and as regards their gods, each has a tablet fixed high up on the wall of his chamber, on which is inscribed a name which represents the Most High and Heavenly God; and before this they pay daily worship, offering incense from a thurible, raising their hands aloft, and gnashing their teeth three times, praying Him to grant them health of mind and body; but of Him they ask naught else. And below on the ground there is a figure which they call *Natigay*, which is the god of things terrestrial. To him they give a wife and children, and they worship him in the same manner, with incense, and gnashing of teeth, and lifting up of hands; and of him they ask seasonable weather, and the fruits of the earth, children, and so forth." (vol. 1, pg. 456).

Even if we accept that the bracketed passages represent the words of Marco Polo, they hardly support the assertion that Zoroastrianism was practiced at the court of Kublai Khan. Quotations

have a curious habit of both gaining in authority and altering in content, the further removed they become from their sources. It is a good idea for both authors and reviewers to do a little research before going to press.

H. MICHAEL SIMMONS
Director, Center for Zoroastrian Research
Indiana, U.S.A.

Homi Rogers replies

I am indeed thankful to Simmons for putting the record straight, and do whole-heartedly agree with him that quotations gain in authority and get altered in content with the passage of time. I am sorry for having given the impression (which I gather, I have) that Zoroastrianism was practiced in China, because Marco Polo says so. Antia has devoted well over two-and-a-half pages to establish his findings on the practice of Zoroastrianism in China, and I would refer Simmons to the study.

However, I would like to state that on the basis of the passage referred to by Simmons, we cannot totally disclaim the fact that Zoroastrianism was practiced at Kublai Khan's court. Idol worship is castigated by the Zoroastrian religion. Mention is made of, for

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example, the Peshdadian hero Kershasp's campaign to China to demolish idols. It does not say to conquer the land, and hence it can be assumed that it was a religious crusade, to bring the Chinese Zoroastrians back to the right path. However, bearing in mind the religious and social conditions in China, it is not improbable that later civilizations reverted to idol-worship, while continuing to profess the Zoroastrian faith, as manifested by the worship of Ahura Mazda with incense — a very Parsi custom.

As regards Natigay or Natigai, it could be a corruption of Vouru-Gao-yaoiti, the Lord of Wide Pastures, whom we worship while reciting the *Khorshed Nyaish*, and whom the idol-worshipping Chinese worshipped by giving a human form. However, even if Natigai has no connection with Zoroastrianism (though the faith is basically agrarian), and is a local demi-god worshipped by the people for their material needs, it is, I feel, improper to discard Antia's contention on this ground. Many Parsis in India today, for example, pray to Sai Baba of Shirdi and other Indian deities, but do not hence cease to believe in Ahura Mazda.

The paragraph submitted by Simons, in my view, does not demolish Antia's evidence. Paradoxically enough, it seems to strengthen it by providing some further parallels.

HOMI J. ROGERS

Twenty years and...

Not having kept in touch with Parsi demographic patterns in recent times I could not help but feel shocked and sad at the speed at which the community is shrinking ('Twenty years and thereafter,' *Parsiana*, August 1985). Is this the spin-off of secularism and democracy, I wonder, when everyone is ground into a common particle of inarticulate matter? In the circumstance I do not know which is better to admire, the resolute stand not to allow change exhibited by the die-hards in the community or the gallows humor of those who have accepted the decline of the Parsis as a fait accompli.

Reading Bhicoo Manekshaw's "Recipes for the New Year dinner" (*Parsiana*, August 1985), I could not help paraphrasing Eliot's famous line: "This is the way a community ends, not with a bang but a burp!"

GEETA DOCTOR
Madras

Is God all-powerful?

Over the last few years, Western scholars have been trying to feed us with ideas about Ahura Mazda not being almighty and Ahriman being his equal and opposite. James R. Russell is one of them.

Coming from a family of yoz-dathregars, I was sent to a madressa to be trained as one. My maternal grandfather was a teacher and hundreds of children must have learnt a lot about our religion and history from him.

Zoroastrian teachings and beliefs are based on one principle, i.e. Ahura Mazda is almighty and all-powerful. Ahriman or evil exists in every creation of God, side by side with good. There is no separate existence of Ahriman who is waiting to pounce on you or be mischievous like a naughty school boy. Good and evil are conceptual and have no separate existence and our religion, as I know it, teaches us only to differentiate between the two and to take the path of righteousness. Besides, who can say what is evil and what is good? The human race is divided into so many groups or castes that what is evil for one is not so for the other. If new scholars cannot understand so simple a doctrine, we can only pity them. They are confused and are trying to confuse others.

The most common evil in a human being, in fact in all God's creation, is anger. If we overcome anger, we have succeeded in destroying evil and achieving good.

Another theory being propagated recently is about death being the handiwork of the devil or that it is evil. Death and birth being so intrinsically interlinked, by the same logic, birth can also be the work of a devil especially to be born in such a bad world. If birth is the work of a devil, then death at any age is most welcome and can be the work of good forces only. Death is as inevitable for humans as it is for any creation of God. If none died, the world would not be worth inhabiting and then it could well be termed the act of a devil.

My own grandfather, who died at a ripe old age having achieved everything in his life, ordained that his death should be celebrated and not mourned and his *paidust* should be accompanied by a band playing music.

The western scholars have a typical western materialistic approach. Many of the works (interpretations) of the

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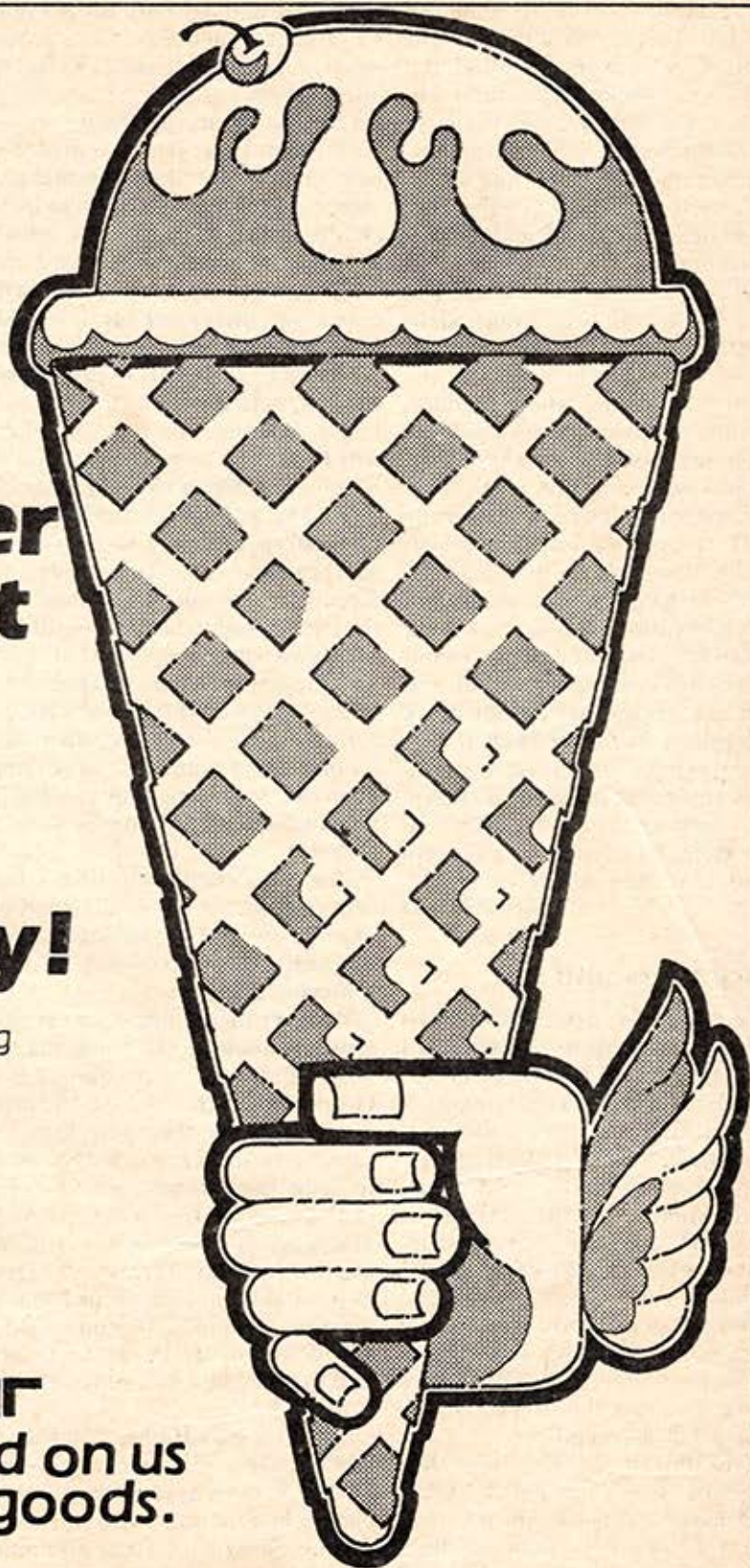
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past few centuries quoted by them are contradictory (may not even be authentic). A book written even 500 years ago by anyone who thought himself knowledgeable on religion does not become gospel or true in the sense that such a person wrote what he deemed was right at that point of time, in the same manner as western scholars are doing today.

CAPT. R.J. KATILA

In regard to Professor J.R. Russell's letter, 'Is God all-powerful?' (*Parsiana*, July 1985) allow me to say that I have not read anything so anomalous as when Russell says that though God (Ahura Mazda) is most powerful, He is not all-powerful.

Russell ought to know that Ahura Mazda, the creator, is the only reality of the Gatha, having no equals alongside, or lesser gods around Him, or a devil in opposition that His omnipotence could be challenged. Russell ought to also know that Zoroastrian duality is not devil versus God but evil (*ahri* or *angra*) versus good (*spenta*). A man is not a robot wedded to either good or evil. Man is granted freedom of thought and only lack or less of good is evil thus far. Vested interests have personified and described *ahri-man* and *angra mainyu* as demons, to scare the gullible community.

Man is responsible for all the troubles around him through his misbehavior, having drifted away from righteousness.

It needs also to be said that death is not evil but is evolutionary. Death of the physical body paves the way for the rebirth of the soul, for its further progress towards ultimate salvation — *frasho kereti*.

Russell must have heard Zoroaster say in the Gatha, "I only know Thee, all others I dismiss from my mind."

In *Kem na mazda* we pray to God, "May the evil (not devil) perish." We also pray in *Sarosh Baj*, "I declare myself to be the follower of Zarathushtra, opposed to evil (not devil), acting in accordance with the law of Ahura Mazda."

How Zoroastrianism regards the omnipotence of Ahura Mazda could be better assessed from some of the names attributed to him in the *Avesta*. By his second name he is known as *Harvesp-tavan* i.e. omnipotent. By his thirty-fifth name, he is known to be *Taronish* i.e. the enemy of evil (not devil). By his fiftieth name he is known to be *Aekh-*

tan i.e. the one who is managing his affairs single handedly. By his ninety-third name he is known to be *Ahu* i.e. existence itself, the only reality.

DARA. J. CAMA

A mosque in Udwarda?

There is a mosque coming up at the head of the main street leading to the Iranshah in Udwarda. Previously, while the Parsis used to occupy the houses lining the main streets of Udwarda, the other communities used to occupy the back lanes. These non-Parsis have now acquired huge fortunes from their Middle-East connections and are interested in buying off the houses from the Parsis. Whereas previously there was a large Parsi population in Udwarda, now there are hardly a few left, and all are aged. If something concrete is not done fast, these houses will be lost to other communities and the Iranshah will be surrounded by non-Parsis.

The big industrial houses should buy over large tracts of land at Udwarda and make Udwarda into a Parsi Vada.

Z.M. ZEND

Reform Zoroastrian bodies

I was one of the founder members and a life member of The World Zoroastrian Organization (WZO), formed in the U.K., from which I have now resigned. I strongly feel that this Organization does not truly represent the Zoroastrians all over the world. The WZO however, does play a very important part in trying to obtain political identity for the recently displaced Irani Zoroastrians, and also serves the needs of a very small minority of the 'reformist Zoroastrians' in the U.K. and per-

haps the West in general.

It is about time we define this very popular phrase 'reformist Zoroastrians' in the true context in which it is meant.

To me a 'reformist Zoroastrian' identifies with:

- The one who accepts inter-marriage, and therefore encourages, propagates, advocates and participates, directly or indirectly in the concept of mixed marriages.

- The one who demands as of right to perform the navjote ceremony of his 'half cast' children or grandchildren, and having found a suitable priest succeeds in doing so.

- The one who in his/her wisdom feels that there is no need for the sudreh kusti, and would rather pray in English as he/she does not understand Avesta.

- The one who would rather use orange squash in place of the sacred nirang during the *nahan* ceremonies.

- The one who feels that people of other religions should be converted/accepted to the Zoroastrian religion.

My request to these 'reformist Zoroastrians' is to declare their true objectives, and for the good of the Zoroastrian community, divorce themselves by forming a cult of their own, giving it a totally separate identity.

However, the formation of world bodies — anjumans, associations, organizations, federations, confederations — all will prove to be totally useless if we allow the degradation of our houses of worship and our priesthood as currently experienced.

History has proven, that if a race, community or religion has to be eliminated, the houses of worship and the priesthood are wiped out first, the rest just crumble.

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Events and Personalities

Dar-e-Meher's diamond

The diamond jubilee celebrations of the Bai Dhunmai and Cawasji Dadabhai Dar-e-Meher at Bangalore are scheduled from January 24 to 26, 1986, when the chief minister of Karnataka, Ramakrishna Hegde will be the guest of honor, notes a press release issued by Behram Sidhwa, president of The Bangalore Parsee Zoroastrian Anjuman. The three-day program will include speeches on religious subjects, an open forum (question-answer session on topics pertaining to the religion), cultural programs, an audiovisual presentation, and a thanksgiving jashan.

"Although our Dar-e-Meher is named after Bai Dhunmai and Seth Cawasji Dadabhai, there were other noble Zoroastrians of Bangalore who were associated with the establishment of this sacred building," noted a write-up by Bahdur Saher in the souvenir brought out on the golden jubilee occasion of the Dar-e-Meher. Credit has been given to Kaikhushroo Belgaumwalla whose idea of a Dar-e-Meher inspired Meherwanji Merchant to avail of the assistance of Fredoonji Dhala and Hormasji Marker in collecting nearly Rs 50,000 by 1924. Since the amount collected permitted a reserve of only Rs 15,000 in the coffers of the maintenance fund, the trustees delayed construction until Dinshaw Cawasji of Khandala donated Rs 15,000 towards the cost of construction in memory of his parents. On January 27, 1926 (*roj Ardibehesht, mah Sherevar*) the Dar-e-Meher was consecrated with Ervad Pestonji Unwalla of Udwarda as its first panthaki.

During the last 10 years, the Bangalore Anjuman has successfully developed 12 acres of land around the dokhma on Bellary Road by planting fruit trees and plants to yield income, wrote Sidhwa. Their second project of

constructing a housing complex by demolishing the old B.J. Entee Dharamshala at Benson Cross Road and rebuilding a three-storey structure, using the ground floor for a new dharamshala and the upper floors for ownership flats, did not materialize as many Parsis withdrew their deposits from this scheme, informs Sidhwa.

In addition to the Dar-e-Meher and the dharamshala, the other assets of the Bangalore Anjuman are the Lady Jehangir Kothari Memorial Hall and the Hall Annexe where the members congregate for auspicious occasions; the Tower of Silence on a 15-acre plot of land on Bellary Road; the Palia Block built in the agiary compound, which is now rented to a commercial establishment and the income utilized for the Agiary Maintenance Fund; and a block of flats rented to middle class Zoroastrians which were constructed in 1967 at the initiative of Sidhwa and the present panthaki of the Dar-e-Meher, Ervad Nadirshaw Pestonji Unwalla.

Ignorance: moral defect

"To be good and virtuous is not enough. One must make others good and virtuous." Dastur Dr Hormazdyar Mirza was emphasizing the activist ethic of Zoroastrianism in the course of his lecture, "Zoroastrian dualism—ethical and physical," on November 11, the one hundred and fifty-fifth birth anniversary of Khurshedji Rustomji Cama at the K.R. Cama Oriental Institute's library hall.

Referring to Zoroastrian duties in the context of the fight between "the better and the bad," Mirza said our

"spiritual powers are lying dormant... it is our duty to cultivate these spiritual powers for the benefit of mankind."

Mirza spoke of the two parts of the *Avesta*—the oldest part being the *Gathas* of Zarathushtra and the rest which is the composition of Zarathushtra's disciples and followers, and discussed Yasna 30 where Zarathushtra speaks of the twin spirits at the beginning of material creation and Yasna 45 where the two are distinguished in terms of expanding and contracting forces. Then again, Mirza noted how in the *Meher Yasht*, the word *Akar* (which is akin to *Angra*—dark, negative) is used in the sense of chastiser and the phrase that is there used, "Thou art *Akar* as well as *Vahishta*."

To the universal quest for an answer to the problem of evil, Mirza admitted with scholastic humility that there are theories but "no satisfactory solution... According to Zoroastrianism, life here is imperfect, intellect imperfect... will not be able to solve the pro-

Bangalore Dar-e-Meher

Far right: Nanabhoy Jejeebhoy inaugurating the Rayomand fete. (From left): Rustom Anklesaria, Modi, Gulestan Billimoria and Nergish Palkhivala



blem" and concluded, "live life with faith in God."

The evening's chairman, Dr Freddie A. Mehta of Tata Sons noted "the complete breakdown of the sense of confidence that our forefathers had in our religion," and referred with much chagrin to the community's "insurance policy" of placating other deities in their homes while proclaiming themselves Zoroastrians. It is "not the younger generation that has left the religion...the delinquents are the seniors," he qualified.

Labelling the conversion controversy "facile, inappropriate and false," Mehta asked, "If the fire has gone out of our life, who will convert whom?" and claimed that nine out of 10 non-Zoroastrian fathers he had met were firmly of the opinion that the child should follow the father's religion.

Complimenting Mirza's "vast command over Zoroastrian metaphysics," Mehta spoke of the need for a "spiritual renaissance" and said, "We want people like Dastur Mirza to educate us."

Mehta, in his concluding remarks paraphrasing Mirza, said, "Evil is here; it must be recognized. (Life can be) a meaningful essay in survival only if one sees evil and fights it." Mehta then quoted Tagore's version of Zoroastrian scripture: "In Zoroastrian theology, ignorance is not a mental defect, it's a moral defect because one's capacity to distinguish between good and evil (is) impaired...knowledge is central to the exercise of virtue, of morality."

Joint honorary secretary Capt H. J.M. Desai read the report of the Institute and Ms Homai Mody, the other joint honorary secretary, announced the prize winners of the Cama Institute's many competitions with Ms Ketu F. Mehta giving away the prizes. Ramyar Karanjia of the Dadar Athornan Madressa swept away the maximum number of prizes and the Cama Rotating Shield. The Rustom P. Masani Elocution Trophy was bagged by Wilson College, while the Cama Institute's librarian, Ms Arnavaz Chubb, was awarded the research scholarship for the Parsi student scoring the highest marks at the MA exams of Bombay University.

Vice-president of the Institute, Jehangir Shroff, presided over the function in the absence of president Adi Chinoy who was too ill to attend, with the speakers wishing him an early recovery.

Eat, drink...and build

As the Rayomand Committee ladies know, feed the Parsis well, and rake in the dough! Which is what they did at their 'Fund and food get-together' on November 29, 30 and December 1. The result is approximately over one lakh of rupees in the kitty and a few steps closer to their goal of a third building to house underprivileged Parsis at G-drej Baug.

The Byramji Jejeebhoy School opposite Charni Road Station, Bombay, was the venue. There were stalls of clothing, embroidery and games, but the sight and aroma of good food was

everywhere.

An hour of skits was the highlight of the first night. A fashion show and a musical evening comprised the agenda for the next two days.

That first evening the electricity load seemed more than the building's old wiring could bear and Homi Tavadia-Nader Nariman's series of little acts — presented sans props or footlights on an antiquated stage in the second floor hall — were drawing to an end, when the whole building was plunged into darkness. While candles and torches were whisked around in attempts to restore electric supply, the audience gamely chorused a few familiar refrains. Then, as a measure of brightness was restored on the ground floor, people slowly shuffled down the majestic stairway, with restraint, courtesy and discipline.

The fashion show the following night had no such problem and the disco night on December 1 drew a crowd of 150 noted Homai Modi, Rayomand's managing committee member.

Colony elections

The hundred and forty-second anniversary of Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy Daremeher, Pune, was celebrated on October 26, 1985, by the Tenants Welfare Association of Pune's Dr Mody Colony, notes a press release issued by Pervez Avari, president of the Association. The occasion was slated to be celebrated with a jashan and a religious lecture by Kaikhushroo Dastur, followed by a dinner and dance.



The year-old Tenants Welfare Association has 69 members on its roll, though the Colony itself has 84 tenements and 250 resident Zoroastrians, notes Avari. At its first annual general meeting held on July 11, 1985 "a new managing committee was elected for a period of three years... voter turnout being 70 percent," notes the release. The new committee members are: president Pervez K. Avari, vice-president Soli Daruwalla, treasurer Pesi Kaka, joint-secretaries Viraf Bhomisa and Savak Mistry and members Ms Hilla Avari and Romy Gandevia.

The first year of the Association was spent in carrying out urgent repairs to the Colony, as well as cleaning up its own and surrounding grounds, states the annual report of the Association. Apart from these amenities the Association also organized religious lectures and social gatherings, including a dance and a picnic, during the course of the year, adds the report.

PhD for Master-Moos

The UNO Pax Mundi Society of Alternative Medicine, based in Alma Ata, USSR, awarded an honorary doctorate to Meher K. Master-Moos on September 1, 1985, notes a press release. The venue was the International Medical Conference on Acupuncture and Alternative Medicine held in Copenhagen, where Master-Moos presented a paper, "The rainbow colors of light — you and your health" and gave a talk on Kirlian photography of the human aura as a diagnostic method for acupuncture, and on Ilm e Khshnoom (the esoteric interpretation of Zoroastrianism), adds the release.

"The only lady from the orient" to be thus honored, Master-Moos received the PhD in recognition of her English translations highlighting the scientific knowledge contained in the Zoroastrian religion as taught by the late Behramshah Nowroji Shroff, founder of Ilm e Khshnoom.

Master-Moos then proceeded on a three-month lecture tour of Europe, when, as an invitee of the World Zoroastrian Organization, London, she delivered a series of four lectures on the history of Iran, Zoroastrian religious ceremonies, present day social problems of the Parsis and the Zoroastrian College project in Sanjan. She was also invited to give several lectures in Germany, and to meet scholars of *Avesta* and oriental studies at Germany and



From left: Antia, Batlivala and Master-Moos

Austria.

In Copenhagen she was allowed, on special permission, to visit the Royal Copenhagen Library, where the 600-year-old *Vendidad* manuscript is preserved, states the write-up.

Batlivala honored

The directors of the fourth European Acupuncture and Alternative Medicine Symposium and World Symposium on Morotherapy and Laser Therapy, conferred on acupuncturist Dr Sam Edulji Batlivala the degree of Doctor of Medicine and Doctor of Philosophy, at its convocation ceremony held at Copenhagen on September 1, 1985, notes a press release.

"The world symposium deliberated on several new techniques to improve the art of healing and holistic medicine, to allay human pain and suffering, using natural and traditional medicine as alternatives," explains Batlivala. He further adds, "On the backdrop of the upsurge of today's health care costs, natural and traditional medicine appear to be safe, simple, effective and most of all an economical mode of therapy, no less an holistic exercise."

Batlivala, who at present has a private acupuncture practice, is also honorary acupuncturist to the B.D. Petit Parsee General Hospital, Masina Hospital, the Lady Hirabai Jehangir Health Unit and to the Inlaks Hospital, notes his bio-data. Apart from this, he is also consultant medical officer to Glaxo Laboratories (India) Ltd as also to the International Airports Authority of India and is a panel medical practitioner of Air India, Indian Airlines, General and Life Insurance, and authorised medical attendant to the Civil Defence Service of India, adds the write-up.

An MBBS (Bombay) and a Bachelor

of Acupuncture (London), Batlivala has received certificates and diplomas in hypnosis, executive stress and aviation medicine.

A member of various professional bodies, including a Fellow of the Royal Society of Health, London, and the Acupuncture Foundation of India, Batlivala has read papers on acupuncture and on stress management at conferences in India and abroad. Batlivala's articles have been published in newspapers, magazines and professional journals, notes his bio-data.

Tata Medal for Antia

For his outstanding contributions to the metallurgical profession — industry, education and research — Dr Dara P. Antia was awarded the Tata Gold Medal on November 14, at Jamshedpur, notes a press release issued by The Indian Institute of Metals. The Medal, established in 1980 in the name of J.R.D. Tata, honors a distinguished personality actively connected with metallurgical industries, adds the release.

Antia, presently an industrial and management consultant, was also awarded the first Syed Husain Zaheer Medal of The Indian National Science Academy in 1980 for his contribution to engineering and technology, and the Platinum Medal instituted by The Indian Institute of Metals, in 1967, for establishing and organizing The Indian Institute of Metals, notes the press release.

A graduate of the Banaras Hindu University, and doctor of science in metallurgy and metal physics from MIT Cambridge, USA, Antia served the Government of India (1945-50) on the Non-Ferrous Metals Panel. "Almost all recommendations made by Antia... have since been implemented by the Government," notes the release.

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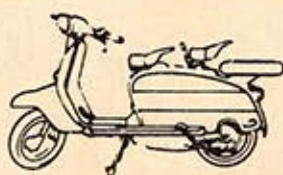


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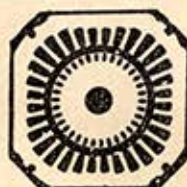
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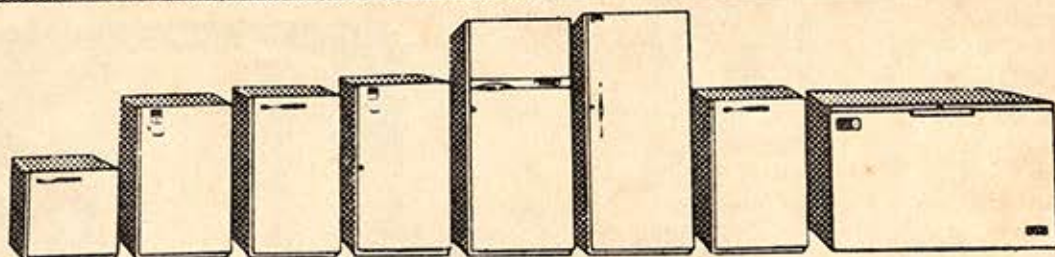
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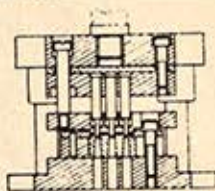
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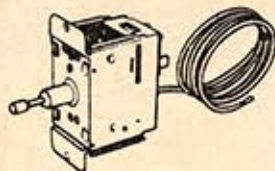
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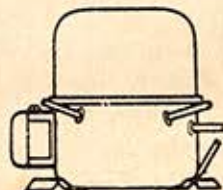
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From trust to foundation

The proposal to transfer the ownership of the Darbe Mehr property of the Zoroastrian Association of Greater New York (ZAGNY) from the Arbab Rustam Guiv Darbe Mehr Zoroastrian Temple to the Rustam Guiv Foundation of New York was to be put to vote on December 15, 1985 at the Darbe Mehr itself, announced ZAGNY's October newsletter.

The transfer can only take place if agreed to by the members of the Zoroastrian community of New York in whom the ownership presently vests, states the newsletter.

"It has been reported to us by Dr Rostam Sarfeh (retired physician and head of the Rustam Guiv Trust in California) and others, that the Guiv family is disturbed that the property is owned by the Trust and not by the Guiv family through their organization which is the Arbab Rustam Guiv Foundation of New York . . . It is claimed by Dr Rostam Sarfeh and others that the late Arbab Rustam Guiv intended that the property should remain with his charitable trust and that in the rush of events in 1976, when the property was purchased, it was by mistake titled in the name of the Trust. On the other hand, there are individuals involved in the purchase of the property who claim that for certain specific tax and other reasons, the property was, under legal advice, titled in the name of the Trust," adds the write-up.

The newsletter recommends six conditions subject to which the transfer be approved: ZAGNY get a new five-year lease on the Darbe Mehr property, with successive options to renew for five years at a time; all taxes levied on the property be paid by the Guiv Foundation (hitherto the property, being owned by a religious organization, had been tax exempt); a written agreement from the Guiv Foundation guaranteeing that \$5,000 per year will be paid to ZAGNY for maintenance and repair of the property; ZAGNY to have appropriate representation on the Trust which will own the property; the attorney general of the State of New York approves the transfer; and all the necessary documents are signed simultaneously.

A conference on the beliefs, traditions and language of ancient Zoroastrian Iran, was slated to be held on November 9, 1985 at ZAGNY's Darbe Mehr, notes the October newsletter.

Planned for the morning session was a talk by Professor K.D. Irani on 'The nature of Zarathushtra's thought, its background and impact,' and another by Professor Louis G. Heller on 'The language of ancient Iran — a branch of the Indo-European language family.'

The post-lunch session was scheduled to include a film and two lectures: Professor Jacob Stern to speak on 'The Greek and Roman view of the religion of Persia,' and Dastur N.D. Minochehr-Homji on 'The religious traditions of Zoroastrian Iran.'

B.C. Darbe Mehr

The Zoroastrian Association of British Columbia has purchased a small church, "which looks more like an agiary in India," writes Jamshed Pavri of Vancouver. Though November 15, 1985 was the anticipated date for possession of the property, which is to be called the Arbab Rustam Guiv Darbe Mehr — Zoroastrian House of British Columbia, the official inauguration may be in March 1986, "when Madam Morvarid Guiv is likely to come," adds Pavri.

Financing the Darbe-Mehr

Within three to four months "we will be the proud owners of a beautiful property that will put us on the map of Sydney, Australia," notes the October *Manashni*, the newsletter of the Australian Zoroastrian Association of New South Wales.

The five-acre plot at 196 Annangrove Road, Annangrove, is "level, with a good frontage of lawn and trees." The property, to be used as a community center, has a four-bedroom house in reasonably good condition. "The property is zoned Urban Development IC which means, we believe, that the (city) council will not be averse to our building on that land at a later stage," notes president Dr Boman Kalapesi, at a special general body meeting held on October 4.

The snag is that the price of this pro-

perty (\$143,000) is \$20,000 more than the available funds (\$124,000). *Manashni* notes that as the donation for the Darbe-Mehr from the Arbab Rustam Guiv Foundation in New York has not yet arrived, the foundation committee has requested community members, "to make a one-time donation of \$200 minimum . . . call it charity or call it duty, but please give something to show support and solidarity."

In the meanwhile, the Association itself is going into fund raising. A garage sale was slated to be held on December 1, the proceeds of which "will go for the purchase of our building," notes *Manashni*. A food stall at the Divali Mela, organized by the Indo-Australian Cultural Society was also held for the same purpose on November 24, where volunteers were to cook Parsi-Zoroastrian delicacies and mind the stalls, adds the newsletter.

The constitution of the Zoroastrian Association of New South Wales defines a Zoroastrian as "a person who is a believer or a follower of the religion as propounded by our prophet Zarathushtra, who has not only signified his willingness to be initiated into the Zoroastrian religion, but has been so initiated in accordance with the practice(s) followed by the Zoroastrians."

Honorary membership "shall be conferred on distinguished personages including non-Zoroastrians, who may or may not be residents of Australia, by a majority vote of the general body at an extraordinary general meeting or annual general meeting, for good and sufficient reason. Such members shall neither pay membership dues nor will they be entitled to vote at any of the meetings of the company but will be kept informed of the affairs of the company."

Associate membership, will be conferred on a person who may or may not be a Zoroastrian but who supports Zoroastrian principles and who has contributed to the welfare of the Zoroastrians of Australia. "Such members shall pay membership dues . . . but will not be entitled to vote at any of the meetings of the company. However, they will be kept informed of the affairs of the company..."

These definitions along with other clauses were printed in the June issue of the Association's newsletter, *Manashni*.

The ratio of the Zoroastrian population to that of the rest of the country is the same in Sydney as it is in India, notes the May 1985 issue of *Manashni*, the newsletter of The Australian Zoroastrian Association of New South Wales, edited by Kersi Meher-Homji.

"There are about 300 Zoroastrians in Sydney, that is, one Zoro among 10,000 Sydneysiders (Sydney population being 3 million). There are about 75,000 Zoroastrians in India (with a population of 750 million) an identical ratio of 1:10,000!" adds the newsletter.

"*Manashni* has aroused varied response among our readers; from very interesting" to "too long," from "too effusive" to "getting too serious" and "becoming more like a magazine than a newsletter," notes Editor Kersi Meher-Homji, in the July issue. But Meher-Homji was baffled by an Aussie girl's comments on it: "Pretty good, certainly different but sexist... Why *Manashni*? Why not *Woman-ashni* or *Person-ashni*?"

New California Association

The latest Zoroastrian Association in the USA is the Zarthoshti Anjuman of Northern California (ZANC), incorporated as a non profit corporation, and centered in Newark, California.

Committee members include president M. Bhujwala, vice-president D. Captain, secretary J. Makujina, treasurer R. Vasania, helped by two other committee members, notes the August issue of *ZANC News*.

The first issue of *ZANC News*, published and edited by Darius Captain, contains four pages of club announcements, information on individual members, new arrivals into the fold, and the celebration of auspicious occasions.

The newsletter also mentions another organization — the Persian Zoroastrian Organization (PZO), whose new office-bearers are Parviz Varjavand, president, Jamshid Soroosh and Ms Govhar Meherafshani, vice-presidents, Farshid Salamat, secretary and Rostam Farsi, treasurer. ZANC

"looks forward to working with them in establishing our Darbemeher... and also in other activities for the good of all Zoroastrians," adds the ZANC newsletter.

St Louis Zoroastrians

"There exists an active and growing group of Zoroastrians in the St Louis area... 15 family units, with 30 adults and about 20 children," notes the newsletter of the Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Chicago (ZAC) posted in August 1985.

The group "has been looking at ways to become more active and involved with Zoroastrian affairs (and has)... expressed interest to be put on the mailing list (of) newsletters (from) other organizations in the USA, Canada and abroad," notes the write-up.

Zoroastrian organizations are requested to put this group on their mailing list or provide them with other assistance. Those interested may contact Meheryar Rivetna, 16520 Forest Pine Drive, Ballwin MO 63011.

In the meanwhile, a further update in the September issue of the ZAC newsletter, includes two other associations, Detroit and Phoenix, which need children's education material and other general literature.

Mailings to Detroit may be sent to Dr Burjor Gandhi, 460 Saddle Lane, Grosse Point Woods, Michigan 48236.

Mailings to Phoenix may be addressed to Phiroze Rivetna, 5241 South Redfield Drive, Scottsdale, Arizona 85254.

ZSO muktad update

"The observance of the five holy days, and the muktad ceremonies went off, as usual, very smoothly... I would particularly want to... thank those non-Zoroastrian spouses and their children who have by their absence at the Darbe Mehr at this particular time, helped foster and maintain peace and harmony. Let us all applaud their generous understanding of the situation," notes president Dhun Bhaya in the October newsletter of the Zoroastrian Society of Ontario.

Faranaz Irani, a member of the ZSO who attended one of the evening *stums* and readings of verses from the *Gathas* writes from a different perspective: "The atash dadgah room was filled

with the fragrance of flowers, *sukhad* and *loban*. *Divas* glittered; the smoke from the *afargan* rose upward and the twilight, filtering through the stained glass windows, filled the room with a charisma and an aura of warmth that only one feels oneself and cannot share with others. However, through all this beautiful experience, I missed the presence of my mother. My brother and I are born of a Zoroastrian father and a non-Zoroastrian mother, but we owe her a tremendous sense of gratitude for helping to bring us up as good Zoroastrians. She taught us our daily prayers, and we have always turned to her with questions about the religion. As far as the ZSO community is concerned she has always volunteered her services and played an important part in community functions. For our family, and I speak especially for myself, not to have her share the experience of the muktad days and the *Gatha* readings, has been difficult to accept."

The ZSO's activities have been distributed among its sub-committees which are chaired by: Homi Homji, religion and long-term planning; Ms Naju Homavazir, telephone; Mehraban Hommaie, house and garden; Ms Katy Khambatta, membership; Darayus Divecha, investment; Ms Yasmin Bhaya, wintario grants activities; Ms Rati Mistry, entertainment; Yezdi Antia, library and lectures; and Kobad Zarolia, agiary. The seniors, and the wintario program and games sub-committees are still unmanned, notes the ZSO newsletter.

Professor Willard G. Oxtoby who will teach Zoroastrianism as a credit course at the University of Toronto, from January to April 1986, has "graciously" invited members of the Zoroastrian community to attend, free of cost, notes the ZSO newsletter.

Forty-nine certificates were presented by the ZSO to the students who completed various levels of the religion class syllabus, notes the ZSO's July newsletter. In all, 105 children participated in the classes with several opting for a two-year course for which they will be eligible for certificates next year.

Cyrus Irani, who along with his wife, runs a hairdressing and beauty salon in

Toronto is giving "troubled women a chance to live their lives with a new style," notes the August issue of the ZSO newsletter.

Every Tuesday morning, Irani gives his time to "Sistering" — a drop-in center for women who are homeless, lonely, alcoholic, mentally or physically ill — "(where)...with his usual good humour and friendly disposition and hair care advice, (he) makes them feel comfortable and at ease while he creates hair cuts and styles to suit them, and make them happy," adds the newsletter.

Latin to Farsi machine

A new instrument for converting Latin letters to Farsi (Persian) has been manufactured by the engineering unit of the Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA).

The instrument which is a good aid for organizations using the international telex network, is able to convert Latin texts to Farsi at a speed of 50 to 1200 bauds (characters per second) in the shortest possible time.

Reprinted from Mid-Day, September 4, 1985

A star's trek

Hollywood actress, Persis Khambatta is aspiring for the part of Ms Indira Gandhi, in a forthcoming US television serial to be made on the life of the late Prime Minister, note newspaper reports. According to Khambatta, "I had known Ms Gandhi since I was 15, and I believe in the role. I feel I have all the qualities of this woman."

After a first failed marriage, which lasted six months, Khambatta, who "shot to fame" as Ilia in the TV serial *Star Trek*, now says, "I believe in arranged marriages" and is looking out for a "nice Parsi boy."

Medal for Khursigara

A promising young Karachi artist Jimmy Engineer has been awarded the President's Pride of Performance Medal in Art, states the June issue of *Manashni*.

A book illustrating Engineer's talent has also been printed by the Iqbal Academy of Pakistan and his 16 by 12 inch mural, entitled "Cultural Aspects of Pakistan" hangs in the departure lounge at the Karachi Airport, adds the newsletter.



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The Federation's new lease of life

BPP trustee Naoroji Godrej's acceptance of the Federation portfolio, preempted another attempt to force the BPP to opt out.

Arnavaz S. Mama

A standing ovation greeted Bombay Parsi Punchayet trustee and eminent industrialist Naoroji Godrej as he agreed to serve on the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India, thus ensuring the BPP presence on the all-India body. Godrej, who had hitherto steered clear of the Federation, had initially stated that he would attend the meeting of the executive council of the Federation as an observer.

His decision came in the nick of time, as nine days later BPP trustee and arch-rival of the Federation, Jal Vimadlal put to vote a resolution for the BPP to withdraw from the Federation. The resolution was defeated by one vote with BPP chairman Dr Aspi Golwalla, Eruch Desai, Jamsheed Kanga and Godrej voting against the BPP withdrawing and Maneck Hodiwala, Vimadlal and Homi Ranina voting in favor of the resolution.

Despite his liberal views, Godrej is an individual who commands respect from every facet of community opinion. His assent to represent the BPP on the Federation because "there are enough safeguards," was the most gratifying event of the two-day meet held at the Sir Mancherji Khareghat Hall at Bombay's Khareghat Colony on November 9 and 10, 1985.

To prove its bonafides to the BPP, the Federation has unanimously decided to incorporate two new clauses in its constitution at the next annual general meeting. The autonomy of member anjumans, "a principle upheld and main-

tained (in practice) since the inception of the Federation," according to its joint honorary secretary Keki Gandhi, will now be explicitly stated in the Federation's rules and regulations. A se-

Navsari is not only
a champion of
orthodoxy but
one of the
few increasing
Parsi communities in
India.

cond clause will prevent the Federation from making any representation to the central government without the BPP's support. "If 80 percent of the Parsi population are not in favor, the representation would not carry weight," conceded Federation vice-president and president of the Delhi Parsi Anjuman, Shiavax Nargolwala.

The delegates were particularly happy to greet the Samast Anjuman of Navsari which joined the Federation at this meeting. Navsari is not only a champion of orthodoxy but one of the few Parsi communities in India with an increasing population. Thus, while the Bangalore Anjuman, whose representatives had attended the Madras meeting in July, had not yet made up its

mind to rejoin the Federation, and neither had the Ahmedabad Anjuman, Golwalla welcomed the two new member anjumans present — Navsari represented by noted businessman Dara Deboo and Kutch by well-known homoeopath Dr Sarosh Wadia.

BPP trustee Homi Ranina who had reportedly agreed to attend as an observer had written to the Federation regretting his inability to attend as he was called away out of town, informed Gandhi.

A data bank to study the problems of family life — specifically married women and children — is to be created with an initial grant of Rs 10,000 from the Federation's Women and Children's Fund. The establishment of professionally attested data would "help us to do correct planning," noted Prof Noshir Kaikobad, an ex United Nations consultant on social welfare and currently the convener of the BPP's school counselling project.

Social service programs — inspired by the Federation and undertaken by the BPP — now include a family counselling project for an initial period of two years at an annual cost of Rs 62,000. This is apart from the school counselling project which has been extended for two more years at an annual cost of Rs 50,000.

The BPP which has been examining different schemes and programs for countering drug addiction within the community, has decided to fall back on Seva Dhan, the institution set up and

managed by Russell Pinto, a reformed addict, because of its established facilities. Seva Dhan currently has one establishment in Colaba, one in Bandra and two in Goa. The Institute proposes to situate all its units at one plot in Kalvan for which the BPP may contribute one lakh rupees subject to certain conditions and safeguards.

Despite the Federation's unanimous decision in Madras to seek reservation for Parsi students in educational institutions funded by the community, no representation has yet been made to the Prime Minister or any institutional authority. Further discussion on the subject revealed also a sharp interest in favor of founding a Parsi medical college.

Plans for building a BPP dharamshala in Khareghat Colony have been dropped, as the new Panday Dharamshala at Charni Road — due to be inaugurated in December — is equipped to cater to 50 travellers, informed Golwala.

The battle lines, between the Federation and the London based World Zoroastrian Organization Ltd, acquired sharper focus as all attempts at rapprochement between the two bodies have now been abandoned. The council passed a resolution unanimously expressing the Federation's inability to become a member of the WZO "as things stand."

A report on the Fourth World Zoroastrian Congress which was held in Bombay last January, has been compiled as a record for posterity and is expected to be published around Christmas 1985. The cost of printing 1600 copies — for distribution to each delegate and anjuman — is estimated at Rs 50,000 and is expected to be recovered by a few prestigious advertisements, reported chairman of the Congress and Federation joint treasurer Jamshed Guzder.

The problem of salvaging community property raised the question of the Federation's legal rights vis-a-vis those of neighboring anjumans and led to a review of the possible methods of approach — via the charity commissioner, the administration or the law courts.

A delegation of high priests and archaeologists under the leadership of Dastur Dr Hormuzdyar Mirza is expected to go to Uzbekistan in the USSR to examine the recently unearthed fire-temple there, informed Nargolwala.

While the selection of the Indian delegation will be left to the Indian Council of Cultural Relations, others will be free to accompany the delegation at their own cost, noted Nargolwala.

The publishing cost of the history of the Delhi Parsi Anjuman, was a source of slight acrimony as none of the council members offered to subsidize its publication despite Delhi's request. The Delhi Anjuman had commissioned Noshir Dadrawala of the Zoroastrian Community Development Institute

"Today there are
qualified Parsis
without government
jobs. Tomorrow
there will be Parsis
without
qualifications. What
is the way out?"

(ZCDI) to compile its history as a part of the Federation's program to document, for posterity, an account of the various Parsi settlements in India.

The judgment of the Labour Tribunal in Gujarat, which categorized an agiary as an industry, will be appealed against by noted lawyer and former BPP trustee Shiavax Vakil who will fight the case at his own expense, informed Golwala.

According to the judgment, mobeds employed in an agiary will be governed by the same regulations and be eligible for the same benefits as employees in an industry.

Golwala apologized as the meeting began 15 minutes late: "It happens only in Bombay," he noted wryly. Before starting on its deliberations, the council observed a minute's silence in memory of two Federation stalwarts who had recently expired: Sq Ldr Jamshid Italia, southern vice-president since the Federation's inception, and Burjor Kavina, president of the Ankleshwar Anjuman.

Emphasizing the Federation's "two important goals...to encourage and promote increased contact between Parsi Zoroastrians and to study and solve (their) problems," Golwala set the mood of "oneness in a changing environment" and reminded the ga-

thering that "shadows can be seen only where there's light. Let us look at the future that is bright..."

Reservation

Having decided at Madras to work towards reserving seats for Parsis in educational institutions founded by the community, the Federation is once again facing a shortage of information. Gandhi told the delegates, that in the course of conversation with Dr M.S. Gore, vice chancellor of Bombay University, he was informed that the level of reservation in Maharashtra is only 20 percent versus 68 percent in Andhra Pradesh. These disparities in the percentage of seats available for open competition is further aggravated by differences in the statewide approach to capitation colleges. While in Maharashtra there are high fee technical colleges, there are no such colleges in Andhra Pradesh. Hyderabad-Secunderabad's Bejan Dittia, the co-opted member from the south zone, was perturbed by the delay in implementing the decision on reservation as Parsi boys from Andhra Pradesh are required to go to other states in search of higher education.

"When we make out our case for reservation we have to be careful of our facts. Let's not spoil our case by rushing," cautioned Gandhi and conveyed some ideas gleaned in his research: "If other communities can get higher percentage, why not the Parsis? If you want the child to go for medicine or engineering, have the child change from the Cambridge course to SSC," where it is easier to score high percentages. Gore also suggested to Gandhi that money normally given for foreign education be diverted for local education and industrialists be persuaded to sponsor students who could sign a service bond in return.

While Boman Khodaiji, president of the Lucknow Parsi Anjuman noted that the Uttar Pradesh Minorities Commission runs a 10-month tuition course at nominal fees for minority students, the BPP's chief executive, Rustom Anklesaria, noted that the BPP's offer to coach promising students for competitive government examinations is open to the all-India community. But Anklesaria suggested that Parsis should also consider giving financial help to students aiming at lower cadres of government service. BPP trustee and Federation joint secre-

tary Eruch Desai concurred with Anklesaria who stated that "the Parsi community stands on par with any educationally and financially prosperous community," even though the level of prosperity may have declined in the past 20 to 30 years, and strongly suggested that the Federation stick to the Madras decision on seeking limited reservation and seek the data required to implement it.

Why is the community's status declining? Member of the high-powered Minorities Panel Aloo Chibber said, "Parsis are a lazy lot, not to know their rights." Another reason was the community's withdrawal from the country's political life. As noted Anklesaria, "The democratic concept gives the upper hand to the political wing of government." That by ignoring politics, Parsis have opted for the backwoods, was a point repeatedly made by Anklesaria, Chibber, Jamsheed Kanga and others.

Noting deprecatingly that the "genius of Parsis for politics is confined to politics within the community," Dittia emerged a strong proponent of reservation. "To what extent have various public sector corporations implemented the recommendation of the Minorities Commission to have minorities on their selection boards?" questioned Dittia and noted, "The figures are poor and will be poorer. Today there are qualified Parsis without government jobs. Tomorrow there will be Parsis without qualifications. What is the way out?" Dittia demanded "justice for Parsi students with 60 to 70 percent marks," and urged "the chairman to address a letter to the Prime Minister pointing out what is happening to Parsis...inform the PM that Parsis are not on selection boards."

BPP trustee and Bombay's municipal commissioner Jamsheed Kanga, speaking with "personal knowledge of the trauma Parsi families undergo to get their kids into medical college," noted, "In the past we only gave and never asked, but that should not be a disqualification. The first two public hospitals in Bombay were started by Parsis. Today if we had 20 percent seats (in the affiliated colleges) for Parsi students with reasonably good marks," it would be enough. Arguing the case for the establishment of a Parsi medical college, Kanga noted that a private trust of another minority community is prepared to give two to three

crores of rupees towards the project.

The rule requires five free beds per student and the combination of Masina and Parsee General Hospitals, together with the other community's hospital, would provide 500 beds. The two Parsi hospitals have enough land and Maharashtra is one state which allows the establishment of private medical colleges. The climate in Delhi is favorable to Parsis and Dr R. Pai, of the Kasturba Medical College at Manipal has volunteered his help, noted Kanga as he

"Parsis are a lazy lot not to know their rights."

catalogued the advantages of the project. "When you convert a hospital into a medical college, your standards go up... Twenty Parsis in medical college every year would solve our problem," noted Kanga, especially in the context of the Supreme Court decision to throw 15 percent of seats in public medical colleges open to people from outside the state.

On being invited to give his opinion on the matter, Golwala noted that in Bombay there is no dearth of cadavers for dissection, which was one of the objections to the scheme. However, Golwala noted, the BPP are only the custodians of the Parsee General Hospital whose independent management board may not be amenable to the scheme. Besides, Golwala opined, "Parsi patients won't want to be examined by students." In Golwala's estimate the project would involve a crore of rupees as the setting up of the pharmacology, pathology and other departments would cost a lot of money.

While on the subject of hospitals, Kanga referred to the dismal condition of patients in the J.J. Hospital's Parsi Ward and said, "We must try to improve their lot before doing anything else." Kanga also informed the gathering that a separate ward was an anomaly as doctors did not have the time to visit patients there.

Women and Children's Fund

How to spend the Rs 34,000 collected in the Fund so far, provoked a lively debate. As the 80G tax exemption must be renewed this December, Gandhi was anxious to have a good answer for the

income tax authorities as to how the money was spent.

Mani Clubwala of Madras suggested that the money be used for the benefit of deprived Parsi children of Vesu village (near Surat, Gujarat) but Maneck Gheyara, Federation vice-president and president of the Surat Parsi Panchayat (SPP) intervened: "The SPP is running orphanages which are short of inmates. These children can go to these institutions."

"If we only use the interest, the money will be very little; so we should use the capital also," said Shrivastav Nargolwala and suggested that a part of the money be used for marriage counselling work.

Taking his cue from Nargolwala, Professor Noshir Kaikobad noted, "The community is always talking of lack of data...make a study of the specific problems of children or family life with the help of the Tata Institute (of Social Sciences) or Baroda University. (It would mean) no more than an investment of Rs 10,000."

Noting that "contributions had not been to the desired extent," Desai suggested that each delegate use his energies to collect funds. He then queried: "Should we have a project for the Fund or use it as each demand comes up?" and mooted a small committee to consider each case for spending the money. "If we wait for deliberations of this meeting to expend these funds, we will not be able to expend them."

Gandhi presented the case in a different light: "If we try to espouse individual cases, these would be under the aegis of individual anjuman."

Nargolwala, whose imagination was fired by the idea of the data bank, balked at Desai's suggestion of a committee and demanded a vote, but the situation was saved by Anklesaria who noted that Nargolwala's and Desai's concepts were not contradictory and cited the example of the BPP which can run projects as well as help individuals because it has funds: "A small data bank would help...a committee consisting of the chairman, vice presidents and secretaries can be left to make their own decisions, within a limited amount," and went on to suggest that each anjuman contribute a small annual amount to the fund, e.g. 20 percent of income.

Nargolwala countered, "The main objective is to collect from individuals, because individuals will get tax exemp-

tion." Nargolwala, however, promised a donation of Rs 5,000 on behalf of the Delhi Anjuman. Desai promised to get Rs 10,000 through his contacts before the next meeting and Gheyara donated Rs 5,000 on behalf of Surat.

Nargolwala also appealed to Godrej to donate and throughout the two-day meet, speakers persistently turned to Godrej for donations for various projects, causing Homi Palsetia of the Saronda Parsi Jarthosti Anjuman to comment *Bejee wakhat éven nahi avsé* (he won't come next time). Godrej met the requests with good humor.

Kaikobad's data bank was unanimously approved and a committee, comprising Golwala, Nargolwala, Guzder, Desai, Anklesaria, Kaikobad, Dr Sam Bhacca, Surat's president designate, and Dinshaw Anklesaria of Poona, set up to consider individual cases requiring less than Rs 5,000.

Counselling

"When family breakup becomes inevitable, it provides the raw material for human drama... little girls asking whether they should opt for the custody of the court... Mother's boy friend and father's girl friend bother

the children equally... undermine the sanctity of the family."

Kaikobad was describing an increasingly common problem in the community — one that has impelled the BPP to set up the marriage and family counselling project under noted psychiatrist and social worker Dr Shera Dastur.

The crippling impact of stressful family relationships became evident when the school counselling program got underway a year ago. Set up because of increasing scholastic backwardness among Parsi students, the program revealed that "school problems have their roots in the faulty attitude of the teacher, in the faulty method of teaching and the disturbing home environment," noted Kaikobad.

That family disharmony can lead to drug addiction was underlined by guest speaker Russell Pinto, the reformed addict who founded Seva Dhan. Pinto noted, "If you visit the families (of drug addicts) you'll find the reason why the boys and girls have reached where they have reached. Their mothers and fathers couldn't give them love," and again, "Drug addiction starts before you start taking drugs."

Group counselling and remedial

coaching have been progressing and camps have been held with trained volunteers coaching a limited number of students in maths, said Kaikobad. Tests are taken before and after the camp to note the change in the levels of proficiency.

Drugs

The report presented to the BPP by Dr Rooshikumar Pandya referred to at the executive council's Madras meeting in July, did not contain any cost estimate, noted the BPP's chief executive Rustom Anklesaria. Russell Pinto's Seva Dhan, on the other hand, has been established in the field for over five years with plans for a new campus. It is expected that the running cost of one lakh thirty-five thousand rupees will be met by an Indo-German agency and the BPP may give one lakh towards Seva Dhan's total capital requirements of six lakhs to buy the land, said Anklesaria. The arrangement remains to be confirmed. Underlining the most difficult aspect of treating addicts, Anklesaria noted, "The addict must be willing to participate; without cooperation, no one can do anything."

Noting that a large number of col-

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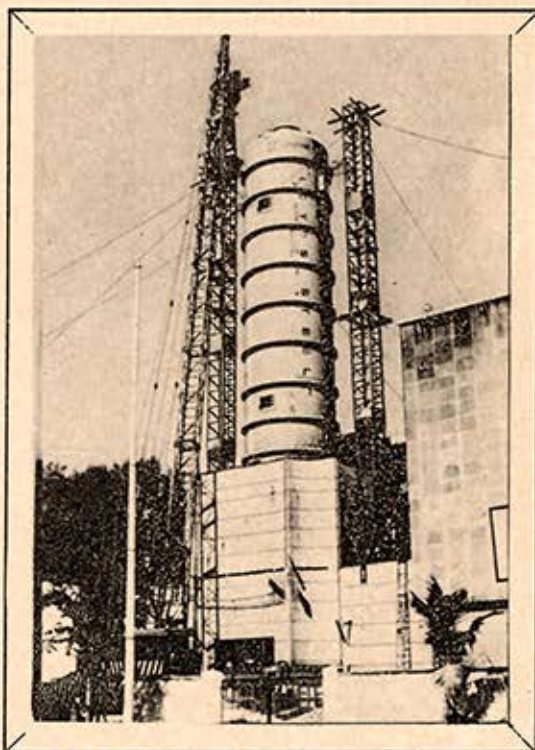
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lege students in Bombay are addicts, Golwalla referred to a special cell set up by Bombay University. Gandhi elaborated that each college would be represented by one or two students whose duty and responsibility is to prevent drug addiction and to create a voluntary force so that peddlers do not get a foothold in their territory. Gandhi suggested that Parsi students should get on to these committees to learn how they function.

Scholarships

Due to a misunderstanding, the Committee of Educational Trusts has not considered the Federation's recommendation made in Madras that applications for educational grants should incorporate a clause suggesting the recipient voluntarily contribute to the trusts. The committee was under the impression that the Federation wanted the recipients of scholarships to return the money once they were well settled.

The committee, consisting of representatives from several trusts giving loans and grants for higher education, which functions along with the BPP, had noted that its help covered only a small fraction of the total requirements for a student's education abroad. The rest of the money is borrowed by the student on interest, which must necessarily be returned first. It takes about 10 years for a person to establish himself and the community did not want to be harsh, noted Anklesaria.

Gandhi clarified that the Federation's recommendation only involved adding a line to the scholarship forms requesting the recipients to contribute to the funds. "If funds do not increase (to keep pace with increasing costs), you will be financing less and less people. Those who've benefited should be made aware of their duty to help posterity...invite contributions of their own volition."

Noshir Dadrawala of the Zoroastrian Community Development Institute (ZCDI) who attended the meeting as an invitee, informed the gathering that the ZCDI's trust advisory project had revealed over 200 educational trusts which were "underutilized, defunct or semidefunct." Dadrawala noted that there was a substantial communication gap between the trusts and the potential beneficiaries who were not aware of the existence of these trusts, and called upon the Federation to create such awareness.

Job opportunities

The discussion on job opportunities travelled along three routes — the results of the seminar on self employment sponsored by the Committee for Economic Revival (CER), farming and entrepreneurial opportunities in the hinterland.

Providing a synopsis of the CER seminar which he had chaired in June, Guzder noted that major interest was evinced in computers and electronics, resulting in the establishment of a com-

The director general of UNESCO has noted that the Federation could become a UNESCO member as it represents a large enough majority.

puter course with thrice weekly classes in theory in the Sir J.J. School building and practical demonstrations on the computers of the Associated Cement Companies (ACC). Guzder also noted that he had been receiving letters from technical and administrative professionals and was trying to marry their mutual interests. A small committee had also been formed to liaise with Ajay Duo, former managing director of the Maharashtra Small Scale Industrial Development Corporation.

The discussion on farming revealed a dichotomy between the romantic and realistic approach to the subject. Romantic memories of ancient grandeur prompted Shiavax Nargolwala: "We started as farmers and should not give up farming." Brother Peshotan suggested that Parsi lands in Vesu be given out to younger people to cultivate, and Mehernosh Mehta of Ahmednagar suggested poultry farming.

But Kanga, Gheyara and Anklesaria pointed to the pitfalls: Agriculture is a losing proposition if the land itself is not good enough; a back breaking job where city bred nine-to-fivers were at a discount; needing large resources to invest and to hold in reserve for climatic variations. Putting the subject in historical perspective, Gheyara noted how the economic base of rural Parsis in the

past had been the toddy shops, the land being largely maintained for the toddy palms with a little mixed farming for sustenance. Whatever agriculture was undertaken was based on the availability of cheap labor.

Referring to the "immense possibilities for (setting up) industry in the mofussil," Kanga related how Aspi Balsara of the Balsara group had advertised, wanting to farm out projects to small manufacturers, with all facilities provided. Those who volunteered now have big factories of their own, but unfortunately not a single Parsi volunteered.

Lucknow's Khodaiji informed the gathering of the working of the Uttar Pradesh Minorities Finance Development Corporation — set up with a corpus of five crore rupees — which not only provides the 15 percent margin money normally required to be met by the entrepreneur, but an interest subsidy "so that the burden of interest will not exceed 7.5 percent." He suggested that such an organization set up in Bombay would go a long way to help the community. But Kanga, while agreeing, noted that the general impression is that Parsis in Bombay are very affluent, and enquired, "Can you organize something there and invite Parsi boys? There's a tremendous communication gap between the facilities available and interested people."

While Kanga decried the Parsi dependence on soft, white collar jobs, Khodaiji spoke of the substantial concessions available in backward areas where people must be prepared initially to rough it out. Anklesaria noted that the BPP had decided to give Rs 5,000 to any youth wanting to start out in any small business like a snack cart for instance, but "uneducated and less educated boys feel shy to do this." However, the pressure of circumstance has broken the psychological barrier in Navsari, he noted, and Parsis are known to be plying rickshaws there.

Individual anjumans

Allahabad Parsi Zoroastrian Anjuman's president, Capt Homi Dandiwalla, reiterated the Anjuman's two enduring problems: no mobeds and encroachment on the aramgah land where buffaloes, owned by local farmers, are tethered to the wall and sheds built to cover them. Allahabad's third problem concerned the bazam fund lying in

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The independent voters

The election demonstrated that ultimately the BPP trusteeship voters could not be pulled by third party strings.

The Parsi electorate has announced once more that it will not willingly permit the creation of power groups on the Bombay Parsi Punchayet's board of trustees. Thus, it may be interpreted that Eruch Desai won the contest with Hector Mehta (356 votes to 246) on November 23, not because Mehta was in any way an inferior individual but because, in the community's perception, Mehta was stamped as a confederate of BPP trustee Homi Ranina. In June '84, Fali Poncha had suffered a similar fate, being the candidate of the Committee for Economic Revival (CER) whose president, Jamsheed Kanga, was already a BPP trustee—and Ranina had walked in with a substantial majority.

The margin of victory in both these elections could also be considered a gauge of the unpopularity of the sitting trustee involved and/or his organization. Ranina's triumph by 176 votes was a rebuff to the CER and its president, Jamsheed Kanga. Likewise, sitting trustee Desai's margin of 110 votes, at a time when the community seems to favor no more than two five-year terms per trustee, may be interpreted as an indictment of Ranina's political miscalculations vis-a-vis the Athravan Educational Trust (AET) of which he is a founder trustee.

Another similarity between the two elections is that the CER itself had split on Poncha's candidature, with many members supporting Ranina's campaign. This time, many of Ranina's supporters campaigned actively for Desai and not for Mehta. Many orthodox groups which had come together under Ranina's banner, this time preferred to vote for Desai (for example, BPP trustee Maneck Hodiwalla and ex trustee Nelie Noble, despite their policy differences with Desai on the issue of the BPP's membership of the Federa-

tion of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India), thus demonstrating their displeasure at some of Ranina's policies.

Few people had anticipated such a healthy margin of victory for Desai. Indeed, by 2.30 pm Desai's supporters seemed downcast and Dinshaw Mehta of the CER — the most vociferous of Hector Mehta's antagonists — was gloomily predicting Mehta's triumph. While the supporters of both candidates began the day by modestly sitting close to the side walls of the building's outer foyer, by 3 pm Mehta's camp had optimistically spread to the center and seemed well ensconced.

Thus an interval of a few silent seconds followed BPP chairman Dr Aspi Golwalla's announcement at 6.50 pm, "Mr Desai has won," ere the motley crowd, that had been hanging around since voting ceased at 5 pm, registered a response.

Calculations went awry because no one could really anticipate the extent of the community's disenchantment with Ranina. Mehta had endeared himself as an individual by his frank responses at voter meetings, while Desai's formal manner and tendency to speak in terms of principles and theories, rather than the concrete issues involved, could not provide the base for mass support. But Desai's explanation of his commitment to the majority decisions of the BPP board and to a need to maintain the confidentiality of the board's proceedings, contrasted favorably against recent criticism of fellow trustees by other members of the board.

While the drama of Ranina's 1984 election and the acute suspense preceding Jamshed Guzder's withdrawal from the 1985 election were lacking on this occasion, the dignity and decorum of both candidates registered strongly with the community. The public debate before Ranina's election had provided



A determined voter reaches the election scene.

the community with clear-cut profiles of both candidates. The Godrej election had been fought entirely backstage as sitting trustee Jamshed Guzder announced his withdrawal from the contest on the last day for candidates to file their nominations. While the community as a whole was happy that the liberal minded Naoroji Godrej had accepted BPP trusteeship, there was an undercurrent of regret at Guzder's discomfiture and a lurking suspicion that Godrej had been made to fight another's vendetta (Guzder's ex business colleagues were allegedly responsible for Godrej's insistence on contesting only Guzder's vacancy on the BPP board).

This time, the candidates displayed strong similarities. Both were independent, moderate, rational and considerate. It was the involvement of other



(Left): sealing of ballot box under the supervision of Kavarana, Bamji and Sheriyar

(Below): Desai (spectacled) listening to friendly counsel

(From left) Ranina and Mehta: welcoming voters (Photos: Homiyar Mistry)

sitting trustees which provided the action. While Desai noted that "the fight is not between me and Hector (Mehta); it's between me and Ranina," it was well-known that Ranina was not the only trustee involved. Kanga had been known to ring up people to solicit support for Desai. Nor is this the only occasion for such partisanship by members of the board. One spectacular example was of Dr Nelie Noble who reportedly tried her utmost to push Jimmy Shroff against Jamshed Guzder in 1974; Guzder and Kanga campaigned on behalf of Poncha against Ranina in 1984; Ranina was said to be the prime mover in the strategy that scotched Guzder's ambition for a second term in February '85. As noted *The Bombay Samachar* on December 1, 1985, a "code of conduct for the trustees has been long overdue. It is not as if canvassing by the sitting trustees has been done during this election only. It has been done earlier and the present tussle and differences on the board of trustees are mainly due to that."

In the event, the Panchayet administration emerged as the real star of the show. The smoothness and speed with which all formalities were accomplished contrasted refreshingly against the prolonged pandemonium that had reigned, for nearly two hours, on June 23, 1984. On that occasion, the election of Pesi Jagus as the day's president (The electoral scheme requires that a member of the anjuman committee be elected to function as president for the day. He is then the man in charge of the election of the trustee) had almost triggered a riot as electors struggled for air within small, noisy confines, where charges and counter charges from the supporters of the two contestants drowned the voice of reasonable peo-

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Graphic A-181

"A unifying force"

Desai says his ability to muster support from mutually antagonistic groups led to victory

Arnavaz S. Mama

"Without different groups with different schools of thought supporting me, it would have been difficult in today's world... I attribute my victory to their collective support. It was a matter of pride and pleasure to act as a unifying force, although it was a hell of a task to keep them all pleased during the campaign."

Eruch Desai looked older as he pondered on the factors leading to his reelection for a second term of trusteeship (against challenger Hector Mehta) at a time when the community seemed to favor new blood in the Bombay Parsi Punchayet. A week after the November 23 poll, the aftermath of tension was still evident, with Desai's original keenness overcast by fatigue, an impression accentuated by the patchy blue of a perfunctory shave. The desk in Desai's Mulla and Mulla and Craigie Blunt and Caroe office, at Bombay's Flora Fountain, witness to the hurly-burly of the campaign and the piled up professional work, was also proudly littered with letters of congratulations — some from individuals who had professed anti-Desai leanings earlier.

With pardonable pride Desai quoted from the letter before him as he sought to articulate his reasons for winning: "...modesty, magnanimity and the ability to judge and deal with each issue on merit, irrespective of who raised the issue, who favors or opposes it. It is these qualities that have served you in good stead and will get you the respect of all right thinking individuals." (Having read out the above portion, Desai evaluated the sentiment, then disclaimed 'magnanimity.' "I'm too small a person for that," he noted.)

Desai says his tendency to trust people has worked to his detriment: "I trust too many people, too soon, take them at their word. I should be more

on guard... and I've paid for it."

Although legend has it that the sitting trustee never loses, few people apart from Desai himself, were confident of his sailing through. Indeed, his supporters had lost hope by early afternoon on the election day — as voter after voter effusively greeted the Mehtas — and had even neglected to provide the floral tribute that would be necessary if their candidate emerged the winner. Flowers for Desai, in his hour of triumph, were gallantly provided by the opposition: "I took what was presented by the other side," acknowledged Desai gratefully, though he avers he had told his supporters "not to worry. (The voters) may talk to the others, but the vote will be mine."

Desai, who masterminded his own strategy, says, "I listened to different groups but the ultimate decision on what to speak was my own." He notes that his campaigning slackened after

wife Coomi sustained a bad fall on October 27. The concomitant trauma of hospitalization and surgery badly rattled the small family (their only child Hormuzdiar is but three years old). Until then Coomi had been the kingpin of Desai's electioneering strategy. One result of the accident, according to Desai, is that at subsequent meetings Desai consistently forgot to offer forms for duplicate certificates to voters who may have mislaid or lost their original voting certificate, despite carrying them with him. The impact of that neglect was felt on the day of the election when supporters who could not produce their certificates were debarred from voting. The BPP administration had stopped issuing duplicates 48 hours earlier, as per the decision of the BPP board.

Desai says he "never encouraged any particular group or individual to speak or not to speak," and admits, "things



Desai borne aloft by jubilant supporters
(Photo: Homyar Mistry)

did boomerang in some quarters," as for example, the CER's sustained campaign against the alleged packing of the F register which alienated certain people. Desai's uneasy equilibrium between independent and contentious groups resulted in "phone calls noting (that) someone or the other is withdrawing support... (It was) a hell of a job keeping the reins in control," said Desai who declared that even on the last day he received phone calls regarding one group antagonizing another. However, Desai was all praise for his campaigning staff: "My workers were dedicated, wonderful... I really valued their support. (Among them were) some seasoned people whose guidance was most welcome."

Even while claiming that his opponent, Hector Mehta, "had more time and was better equipped," Desai was all praise for Mehta: "Must give credit to Hector that he conducted the election campaign like a gentleman... He, his family, everybody was very gracious." Desai hopes that the cordiality of "this election will be a trend setter for future elections."

Mehta's supporters however did not receive the same accolade. Desai was particularly rueful about "the false canard" allegedly planted by the opposition, about Desai having received an assignment outside India and so would not be able to attend the Punchayet; about a pact between himself and the CER; and about not attending the Punchayet board meetings, which he termed "complete falsehood."

Desai was also emphatically "not in favor of (other) sitting trustees actively campaigning for or against a candidate," which he termed "the only dark cloud in the sunshine of the last election."

When questioned about his priorities on the Punchayet after the reelection, Desai retorted, "Priorities are for new trustees." As an old incumbent, Desai says he will continue as he has been doing.

Although Desai is the next senior-most trustee on the board after the chairman, Dr Aspi Golwala, Desai notes that the tradition of the chairmanship going to the seniormost trustee "can be broken. It depends on who the trustees are," and reveals, "At the time of Golwala's elevation to the chairmanship, feelers had been sent to me. I was offered the chairmanship but opposed it as a traditionalist." But Desai concedes, "The chairman has to devote much more time than the rest of his colleagues."

On the subject of the new election scheme, Desai favors Rs 15,000 as the minimum donation to qualify for voting rights (as against the present Rs 5,000 and the Rs 7,500 recommended by the trustees). Desai also feels that there should be no limit to the number of terms a trustee may serve. "If a man is good, he's good... leave it to the electorate," says Desai. Despite these personal views, Desai is prepared to "fall in with the majority."

A stickler for maintaining the confidential character of Punchayet delibe-

rations where the majority decision is binding on all the trustees, Desai says it is "an essential qualification of a trustee not to talk at random," and adds, "It is also essential not to disclose who said what, as that will deter some people from putting their best foot forward." As an example Desai cited the considerable personal embarrassment he experienced because every word and letter of his opposition to the builders of Adarbad (the building of ownership flats constructed by the BPP at Hughes Road) was leaked to the concerned party.

BPP trustee Maneck Hodiwalla who belongs to the BPP lobby campaigning against the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India, had quietly sat by Desai, a Federation stalwart, through the greater part of the election day. Questioned about Hodiwalla's support, Desai noted, "I never pressurize my views on anybody. It rebounds to the credit of Hodiwalla" to be able to extend such non-partisan support.

In the course of the interview, a middle-aged Parsi man burst in against the advice of Desai's peon. Apologising for thrusting himself in, the man noted how happy he was to hear of Desai's reelection and wanted to convey his congratulations personally! This prompted Desai to read out another letter which said, "I am aware of all the good work you're doing for us and all the precious time you keep available for hearing our problems," — as a kind of proof — and guarantee for future good behavior.

CORRECTIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

In the article "The Federation opts for reservation" (*Parsiana*, August 1985) Minoo Belgamvala has been erroneously described as president of the Madras Parsi Association instead of as president of the Madras Parsi Zarthosti Anjuman.

The Jal Phiroj Clubwala Dar-e-Meher was inadvertently referred to as the Clubwala family's agiary. The ownership vests with the Madras Parsi Zarthosti Anjuman. The late Phiroj Clubwala had donated the principal amount for the construction of the agiary, in memory of his son Jal.

Captions of two photographs (right) were inadvertently interchanged in the

"Events and Personalities" column (*Parsiana*, October '85, pg 13). HSC merit student Zahir Soonawalla is at left, and chairman of Universal Lugage, Jal Engineer is at right.



In para three of "Courting votes and courts," (*Parsiana*, October '85, pg 18) it is erroneously mentioned that the CER had unsuccessfully sought an injunction to postpone the June 21, 1984

election between Homi Ranina and Fali Pancha.

According to the CER, the Charity Commissioner had given permission to move the City Civil Court to postpone the election but the CER deliberately chose to drop that line of action in favor of getting the BPP trustees to move for amendment of the entire election scheme.

In "Addressing the AET" (*Parsiana*, November '85, pg 11) the Athravan Educational Trust-Zoroastrian Studies lawyer was mistakenly referred to as Burjor Antia. We are informed, the officiating lawyer at that point of time, was Jehangir Mistry.

"Laws were made to be followed..."

An examination of conversion from the traditional viewpoint.

Shirin J. Mistry

"If there be just one, lone crusader fighting for what is right, he then constitutes a majority of one."

It doesn't matter who said these words. As a practising Zoroastrian, following the path of *Asha* — I think that right would only be served by fighting what is 'not right.' Perhaps the whole question of conversion to our ancient faith, will bring forth that jolt that seems to be lacking in a community become indolent and self-satisfied, satiated and content.

We do not deny anybody the privilege of following the Zoroastrian path but if not conceived of Zoroastrian genes, do not ask us to accept him as such. In their own true hearts, Jews will forever remain Jews, true Christians will always follow Christ — and why not? It will not make better human beings of them to pray to God through another than their own.

Where, would you ask, is it written, in the holy *Avesta*, that you may *not* convert? Therefore, why not? I then ask you, following your own 'logical' concept — would you, while in Britain, break her laws with impunity, because it just so happens that the British Constitution is also an unwritten one?

Churchill foretold events to the young David Niven, simply, "Because, I study history." Follow his advice and learn from the past mistakes of those who have gone on before — you may not get time to learn from your own! Every faith that has believed itself to be the best in the world, and therefore taken upon itself the task of converting unbelievers to their own one true faith, has caused more heart-break and upheaval, more hurt and hatred than any god of love they've served.

All you pro-conversionists will say, you do not seek to 'force' anybody. You only speak for yourselves — not for what your actions can bring forth.

Today you seek to accept only those who 'wish' it — tomorrow, some zealots may go evangelical *Avesta* thumping. Foresight was granted to Jamasp only, but everyone of God's finest creation has been given Boman — the good mind — the ability to think and after much thought, the ability to act. Remember, there were more Jews and Christians killed by the Crusaders than any the Saracen could be held guilty of.

A non-Zoroastrian is no less important in the eyes of God than a Zoroastrian is. By not converting, you in no way deny anyone the right to worship God. If you say that to give up your God is wrong for you, isn't it equally true that to give up their God, would then be wrong for them? Do we then, in seeking to accept converts, encourage and aid them in their misdemeanor?

If a learned Ph.D. has put all our prayers on a computer, lots of typesetters at Karani's (publishers of the *Khordeh Avesta*) also have put all our holy scriptures on paper. Some may even over the years have picked up more of our prayers than many of our co-religionists. Some may even be wishing, nay wanting desperately, to be converted. Will you then stand in their way because in the racist climate that has always existed, our egos certainly wouldn't be flattered by the aspirations of a humble *hamal*? The Zoroastrians still retain their racial origins because the Hindus in India wouldn't accept them as Hindus of the same level (or else every Harijan would be a Brahmin today).

No matter how much one wishes to become someone else, one always remains what one is born. A million blood transfusions wouldn't hope to change my genes.

It's all very well to turn around and say that 'outsiders' married to Zoroas-

trians should be allowed to convert too, or else we'll lose their kids as well. Fine. Our laws were made to be followed and if you break them, why whine about paying up? Your kids suffer for your actions, more than you ever will.

If you think that the law is an ass and therefore seek to change it, realise that that particular expression was used about man's laws, not God's. Man often seeks to change God's laws — take homosexuality today — no religion condones it, though man's laws allow it and whole nations are thrown into a panic over AIDS. India allows its red light districts and in ancient times even extolled the virtues of Dev Dasis — yet, prostitution and the demeaning of womankind will forever remain a great wrong in everyone's eyes.

To those of us who are lucky enough to be born within the Zoroastrian fold, I should only like to ask: Have you ever suffered for it? Known any childhood traumas from not knowing where you belong or who you are? Have any of you taken the time to find out from the innocent victims of such mixed ancestry if they are really glad of it? Love might sustain an inter-religious marriage, but no amount of love will ever be shield enough against the stigma of a 'half-breed' slur. It's difficult enough for everyone born to go through life unhurt. Do you really advocate heaping greater burdens upon those innocent children? I have yet to come across anyone of mixed parentage, who has honestly claimed being glad of it. I have seen them suffering and I've heard them railing against their parents. They're either very beautiful or very intelligent or sometimes even both — perhaps they therefore suffer more acutely. If you love your kids would you want to start them off in life with so vast a handicap, when you can help otherwise?

Change for the sake of change, doesn't necessarily indicate progress. We haven't survived for so long in India (and a few pockets of Iran) and perished entirely elsewhere, by subscribing to the view that inter-racial (or more exactly, inter-religious) marriages should be actively allowed and practised. Rebellion, rust, corruption, decay, destruction are all frowned upon by the very religion you seek to change — so those of you who condone, by your very silence, also condemn your religion to extinction.

If ours is a religion of choice, be certain that it clearly means a choice between 'good' and 'evil.' It clearly shows that once you take that step it will lead on to justice. Once you go wrong, be prepared to accept punishment. But don't ask for the laws to be changed, in case you should one day find the going rough and therefore decide to follow another path.

How many of you, in expressing your views on this, do so thanks to the fear of diminishing numbers? And when has quantity ever preceded quality in a religion that preaches excellence — the best within yourselves? Do you seek, somehow, safety in numbers? Did the Jewish millions stop the horrors of their holocaust? Here I ask all those non-Zoroastrians, who would like to become one of us, because they love this religion so — if you really and truly care, don't set out to destroy us by changing us. Like the James Russells of this world, you would serve it best by *not* converting to it; like the Mary Boyces, study it and enhance your knowledge in a language the children of today can understand; like the John Hinnells, only wish us this: "May you grow strong in the religion of your forefathers."

How many of you advocate conversion on the grounds of some family bias — perhaps a brother married outside the fold, a daughter who one day may fall in love and marry the 'wrong' man and thus throw some shame on the family name and honor? Make not our religion a thing of selfish expediency.

If you expect your children will go 'wrong' in your eyes, don't try to change your religion; seek instead to show the child the right way. The chances of marrying a *parjaat* among those living abroad, away from the deeper religious influence of India's Zoroastrians, are statistically very great in-

deed. I do not set out to sit in judgment on anyone who decides to go his own way. Like a beggar stealing food to fill an empty belly — I can understand it; I could even forgive it; I could not condone and can never encourage it.

Do you recall a scene from *The Party*, where a bumbling Peter Sellers replies, with true Indian panache, "I do not think — I know!" and brings the whole cinema-house down with a clap of thunder, to the question, "Just who do you think you are?" It's imperative for all of us not just to know — but in that knowledge resides a sense of self-esteem, even pride. No, I do not say one should seek to be conceited, but a quiet pride is what a child, I once used to teach here, in the rougher western suburbs of Melbourne, had pathetically lacked as, like a jack-in-the-box, she'd jumped out of her chair, to declare unasked, unquestioned, "I'm half-German, half-Polish, I'm a nothing and a nobody!"

Is this what we advocate for our future generations — the inability to know who we are and take a genuine pride in being who we are? Or are you advocating that these children be torn between two races, two religions, never being sure of themselves? I recall a cousin's contempt for her parents: "They were too busy thinking of themselves to give us a thought. Whom will I marry now? Who will be able to understand my problems and relate to them?" Adult responsibility demands that the children be given a chance and be given every reason to hold their heads up wherever they go, and know always who they are.

Over the years it has been proved that there is nothing wrong with our religion. It is also glaringly noticeable that there is a great deal wrong with many who profess to practise it, and it is they who should then be corrected. Our faith has served us well through the centuries. Now is it not high time that we return that singular honor and serve our religion well? I do not advocate blind submission to anything, but being *kee-kaan*, *k-rufaan* (having eyes see not, having ears hear not) is being a sinner.

It's a good life we have been blessed with; we should learn to live it well.

Abridged and edited from an article by Shirin J. Mistry entitled "Think." Mistry has served the Zoroastrian Association of Victoria in several capacities.

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Shooting ahead

Niloofer J. Madon

Sensitive to the requirements of her clients, Armaity Bamanbehran talks of her adjustment to professional video photography.

"People haven't seen a lady video camera woman carrying such heavy equipment, running here and there... Carrying all this equipment is not easy, but I just enjoy it. If you have interest in anything, it makes things easier," remarked Armaity Bamanbehran, relaxing at her Kharegat Colony residence on the morning of October 30, 1985, because once the marriage season starts, every evening is spent working on video assignments.

Trying to express her views in a sometimes chaotic atmosphere created by small pattering feet, arguments, quarrels and umpteen questions — all achieved by her three small children who refer to their mother as Armaity and to their father as Rashid — Bamanbehran acknowledged that her technique is very simple. Realizing that video tapes are valued as "family treasures," she ensures that shooting is done "in such a way that it does not get boring. It is such a thing that it should be in the original (not calling forth any editing from the photographer). The party is much more happy when they hear themselves speak, and each and every detail (is captured)."

Bamanbehran's video assignments start early, at four o'clock in the evenings, when she first goes to the house of her client, before proceeding to the baug or hotel where the celebrations

are scheduled. Once at the baug, Bamanbehran, with the help of a JVC Bamanbehran (above left) with actress Poonam Dhillon and (below) with husband Rashid.



"The more natural the people are, the more lively a picture you get..."

N-70 video camera and two assistants carrying the lights and the wire-bags, goes around, unobtrusively recording the event. No lenses are used. To give a multiple image on the screen, three to five filters are attached: "children are happy when they see themselves like that."

During the long ashirwad ceremony of 40 to 45 minutes, Bamanbehran will take shots of the boy's family, the girl's family, the people on the stage and then, to break the monotony, a panorama of the audience, their expressions and mannerisms. "I tell the party to stand near the gate, (to welcome the guests) and I take their close-ups... The more natural the people are, the more lively a picture you get... (also), the more loudly a child prays," better will be the impact on the final film.

However, shooting is not always unobtrusive as when a hapless person is suddenly caught unawares, his leg tangled in stubborn wire, or as when an overly modest person hides his face, turning it away from the camera, or when there is a short circuit. Such things don't bother Bamanbehran for she always comes well equipped for just such an emergency.

Bamanbehran is inevitably the last to leave a function. This, she considers a necessary service to the client. Yet,

the evening for Bamanbehran does not end at the function itself, for as she puts it, "After every function, whether it is late or not, I must see the gist of my work." And then, there are the final touches: dubbing where necessary, titles to be incorporated (which she writes before a function takes place), music to be chosen... All this takes just a week during the marriage season while in the "off season it is the next day."

Bamanbehran's interest was sparked off in 1977 after her marriage to well-known 'disaster' photographer, the bearded Rashid Bamanbehran. Accompanying him on all his video shootings as an assistant, Bamanbehran quickly learnt all the techniques herself, and was soon able to take up video shooting as a professional. She now prides herself on her work, its clarity and quality. "My hand is very steady and I'm proud of myself. To have a steady hand is very important... (still) I never use a stand, only my shoulder... (and) I only need a break to change the battery, that's all."

Whatever time she goes to sleep,

Shooting is not always unobtrusive as when a hapless person is suddenly caught unawares, his leg tangled in stubborn wire.

Bamanbehran is awake at 6.30 am, for she has her children to look after and send off to school. Adil, Nazneen and Maneck are well aware of the fact that their parents are busy, and must go off to work in the evenings. But, "they never cry like other children do. We just say we are going to the office." This understanding comes from knowing that whatever time their mother has free, will be spent with them: guiding them in their homework, taking them out to play, buying them some games or toys.

There was a time when Bamanbehran

wanted to go in for catering ("She is the best cook on earth," notes her husband proudly) but has given up the idea, after her marriage.

A student of Bengalee Girls High School where she won many certificates and cups in badminton, tennis and cooking, Bamanbehran has done a secretarial course, but did not pursue that field.

Asked about public reaction to her shooting, Bamanbehran notes that "people give me much more respect, especially the old ones; they say, 'you are doing a great thing — a nice job.'"

The Bamanbehrans met actor and TV personality Jalal Aga who was "very happy" and "astonished" to see a lady shooting a video film at a function. He expressed the desire to use them for his TV serials which, if they materialize, could mean a big break to the Bamanbehrans.

Bamanbehran enjoys her professional success. She says, "I have come up very fast... Now I have such a tight schedule with my work and children that I don't find time (to do anything else)."



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Marshalling resources

A biography capitulating the rise of J.N. Marshall and his Company.

Homi J. Rogers

J.N. Marshall: a man of destiny by Bejon N. Desai. pp 125.

Parsi enterprises in the big bad world of industry are few and far between. Yet the handful that are, thrive in healthy conditions, and unfailingly incorporate the tenets of Zoroastrianism: diligence, honesty, and love for fellow humans.

Apart from the Tatas, Wadias and Godrejs who have built up a large empire from a conglomeration of companies and enjoy a very high reputation in India and the world, a few entrepreneurs have carved a niche for themselves on India's industrial map, with their factories in Pune, a city which is fast transforming itself from a pensioner's paradise into a cauldron of corporate activity.

One of the pioneers of industrialization in Pune is octogenarian Jeejibhoy Nanabhoy Marshall who heads the J.N. Marshall Group of Companies which commenced manufacturing activities on an 11-acre site at Kasarwadi, 12 kms outside Pune, some three decades ago. Today the Marshall Group employs over 1,000 people, and has an annual sales turnover of over Rs 200 million.

Bejon Desai, principal of Boys' Town Public School, Nasik, profiles this Grand Old Man of Pune, in a 125-page book (illustrated with seven color plates), with the hope that some of the many events may "inspire a few youngsters to be like JN (as Marshall is fondly called by his friends and family members)."

The book, is studded with events from Marshall's life: some nonsensical (JN querying his would-be daughter-

in-law whether she would prefer to stay with him, and then proceeding to show her his huge collection of crockery, cutlery, crystal and glassware), some trivial (the seating arrangement at the dining table at JN's parents' place), and quite a few, as desired, inspirational.

J.N. Marshall, a man of destiny, as Desai terms him in the book's sub-title, has sometimes had destiny playing cruel tricks on him. Much of the material that could inspire and instil a spirit for facing the odds, comes from the troughs in Marshall's life. In 1937, for example, Marshall took a beating at the share bazar, and was down by Rs 31,000, primarily because of a mistake

Starved of business
because of
Gandhiji's call to
boycott British
goods, Marshall
perforce gave up the
textile machine
agency.

by his sub-broker. In 1950, after negotiating a successful deal for generating sets in the severe cold (-18°C) of the USA, Marshall was left with six unsold generators (costing a total of around one lakh rupees), when his clients, who had not paid any advance against their order, backed out of the commitment as the power situation improved. The book details the tenacity and the pati-



ence displayed by Marshall in overcoming these setbacks, and stresses the power of prayer. "He prayed! As usual! His faith in prayer has even today remained most unshaken."

As unshaken, probably, as his will to innovate, to seek new pastures: another strong virtue which the younger generation could well emulate. The Marshall Group (now ably managed by his children, including his son-in-law, who heads the flagship) is currently committing resources to software development, and plans to export software systems. The roads from Kasarwadi are paved with gold. But the roads to it have been macadamized with the cliched blood, sweat and tears.

The story of J.N. Marshall is, however, no rags to riches saga. He was born in a fairly well-to-do family, originally hailing from Cambay (Khambhat). The family ran a prosperous trading firm, and after JN's birth, prospered even further by importing coal from Cardiff. Marshall held his first cheque for one lakh rupees by his judicious move of selling 1,000 tons of coal, when its prices had reached an all-time high, during the absence of his brother (and partner) Maneckjee, who was away recuperating in Dumas. Having tasted success in business, and moving out of the partnership with Maneckjee in 1924 when the coal market collapsed, Marshall took his first independent steps in the agency line by willingly accepting friend Russa Mehta's (the son of Sir Homi and Lady

Mehta) offer of selling textile machinery in Ahmedabad for a 2.5 percent commission. However, starved of business because of Gandhiji's call to boycott British goods, Marshall perforce gave up the agency. But he had learnt his lessons in selling and servicing — lessons which were to stand him in good stead throughout his life, as he took over the agencies of Skoda, AEG, Spirax Manufacturing Co., etc., whose products he pushed with enormous speed and tremendous success. Because of his virtues of hard work, sincerity, and perseverance, coupled with the determination to be a success, Marshall acquired agencies of various foreign companies over the years, including the prestigious Cambridge Instruments Limited, a company founded by the family of Charles Darwin. Today, in addition to its many agency lines, the Marshall Group of Companies is a leading manufacturer and supplier of engineering products, energy management systems and other high technology electronic instrumentation.

J.N. Marshall: a man of destiny is an attempt to chronicle the life and times of an industrial colossus who has strode over six decades of financial and technological activity. Marshall is no Godrej or Tata: his industrial empire did not rise from the suppressed fires of patriotism; nor is he a Pochkhana-wala, the financial genius, who founded the Central Bank because of his innate desire to be equal with his British masters. Marshall is, as Desai portrays him, an individual spurred with enthusiasm to succeed in the hustle-bustle of business, rising above political changes and economic fluctuations, opening windows when doors closed. Marshall's lobbying with the changing governments in India to preserve his business interests, is a more relevant lesson for today's generation than the idealism which ignited and built enterprises at the turn of the century.

For the biography of an individual who is thus more identifiable to today's youth than the other greats, Desai's style and tone leave much to be desired. The book does not ever capture the moods of the man, nor involves the reader to sympathize in his sorrows, or exultate at his triumphs. Errors in grammar and choice of words abound. For example, a chapter recapitulating Marshall's achievements is titled "Let us recuperate." Alack! All Johnsons cannot have Boswells.

The 'rite'ous path

A manual on religious ceremonies and customs to interest navars and behdins.

Discourses on Zoroastrianism by Ervad Godrej Dinshawji Sidhwa. Published by the author at Karachi, Pakistan. Second Edition: 1985. pp 135.

The importance of rites and rituals in understanding and appreciating religion have come to be sadly neglected in modern times. Many prominent individuals while writing paeans about the philosophy of a particular religion, have ignored — if not debunked — rituals, fomenting in the process, a surge towards theology without liturgy.

Of late, similar trends have made inroads in the psyche of writers and thinkers of the Zoroastrian faith. While reams are written on the concept of dualism-monotheism in the religion, or the cosmic principle of order, justice and righteousness (*Asha*), the ritual practices and the customs have been consigned to the tinderbox of amnesia. *Discourses on Zoroastrianism* by Ervad Godrej Sidhwa, honorary lecturer in Zoroastrian theology and ancient Iranian history (in Pakistan), aims to assist students of the religion in understanding a few Zoroastrian ceremonies and customs.

Sidhwa's book, however, is not written as an impassioned appeal to draw our thinkers out of their lofty ivory towers, and reveal to them some hitherto unknown philosophies of Zoroastrianism, as manifested through its religious practices. The book, for the main part, concerns itself with describing ceremonies and customs, so as to familiarize the layman with them. The ceremonies, delineated within the slender framework of 135 pages, include the funeral ceremonies (*geh-sarna*, *uthamna*, *chahrum*, and the prayers thereafter for the advancement of the soul), the inner liturgies (*yazishna*, *visparad*, *vendidad* and *baj*), the outer liturgies (*afrikan*, *farokhshi* and *satum*) and the *jashan*. The description of the ceremonies are fairly detailed, and the book could serve as an excellent manual to an initiate (navar), as well as a behdin who wishes to be aware and fully conscious of the prayers being recited by the mobed, and

their significance for the occasion.

The book also describes the navjote, and the navar-maratab ceremonies. Unfortunately, the latter is dealt with all too summarily, within just two pages. The Parsi marriage ceremony, however, is dealt with excellently as Sidhwa translates the admonitions ("Acquire wealth by good means. Do not cooperate with the ill-informed. In no way annoy your mother...") and benedictions ("May Ahura Mazda bestow upon you...purity through Aban...pure justice through Meher...constant delight through Ram...") conferred on the marital couple by the officiating priests.

Two other ceremonies, which could possibly be only of scholastic interest to today's Zoroastrian, namely, the consecration of fire temples and dokhmas, are also covered in the book. The 'discourses' (so captioned because the book is a collection of speeches delivered by the author) also include a chapter on ancient Iranian literature (which, incidentally, stretches down to present times, and makes a mention of religious literature produced in Bombay by Khojeste Mistree and Meher Master-Moos), and the three forgotten religions of Mithraism, Manichaeism and Mazdakism.

Though an excellent read for one uninitiated to customs and practices in Zoroastrianism, the book has little to commend on grounds of originality. Sidhwa offers no new insight, nor raises any unconventional viewpoint. The discourses are faithful to the customs of Zoroastrianism as written about by Sir Jivanji Modi, from whom the author has borrowed heavily, and other learned authors. The cut-and-dry text, never striking a single false note (a positive strength of the book), is highlighted by the occasional flashes of inspired writing (the marriage ceremony, Mazdakism) and the fetchingly-telling sketches, especially of the *jashan* and *yazishna* ceremony layout by Dadi Surti.

Homi J. Rogers

A high profile

Bapsi Sidhwa talks about the Parsi community in Pakistan.

Jyoti Punwani



Bapsi Sidhwa's first novel, *The Crow Eaters* (Orient Longman), a loving satire on Parsis, wasn't exactly welcomed by the Parsis themselves who accused her of having given out all the secrets of the community. Set in Lahore at the turn of the century, the novel traces the fortunes of Faredoon Junglewalla from the time he arrives in Lahore from a village in Punjab with all his belongings in a bullock-cart, till he dies, a leader of the community, 30 years later. "Not having lived so much among my own community, I have a great affection for it, and feel it has a lot of charming traits," says Sidhwa. "The book was written with a great deal of affection." The title refers to the Urdu/Punjabi phrase for those who talk too much — it has nothing to do with the Tower of Silence, as many Parsis misunderstood. "There have been no writers in the Parsi community, otherwise they'd have been used to some fun at their own expense. We have a tradition of laughing at ourselves—all our plays do so."

Born in Karachi, Sidhwa has lived in Lahore practically all her life, and migrated from there to Houston, Texas, just one-and-a-half years back, to teach creative writing at Rice University. How much has Lahore changed over the years?

"Well, from what I've heard, my parents had a lot of Hindu friends before Partition; of course there aren't any left now. Lahore used to be called the Paris of the East; now it's a pretty dull and conservative city. It is a Muslim society, you know, so there's segrega-

tion. There's no club life because of prohibition. No night life either. It has an almost Middle Eastern atmosphere, though much more sophisticated. But it has maintained its intellectual flavour — all the poets can be found there. And it has huge universities."

There are just 110 Parsis in Lahore, says Sidhwa, the bulk of them being in Karachi — about 4,000. But they have such a high profile ("the same five women on all the committees") that people find it difficult to believe that they're so few, and decreasing every year, because most of the men go abroad for education and settle there. Because of the migration, there is some inter-marriage with Muslim boys, but then the girl is no longer considered a Parsi, officially.

According to Sidhwa, the community has become even more conservative in these matters than it used to be. "There was a strong movement to take the community outwards during my mother's time, and there is one even now; but it's just started, and we find Bombay is the stumbling block." The Parsi Panchayat in Pakistan has to defer to that in Bombay.

Generally, Pakistani society has become more conservative over the last few years, says Sidhwa, and much more conservative than it was before Partition. "I remember cycling all over Lahore in 1957; today you hardly see any women doing that." Very few colleges are co-educational, and there is a move to set up a university entirely for women. Purdah is observed pretty strictly, and among the middle-class,

says Sidhwa, it has become a status symbol. "It's like young girls here craving to get into a sari; there they can't wait to start wearing a *burqah*." However, not all women wear it — many working women don't, and many educated women from the upper-class do so only when they go to their villages.

The middle-class also frowns upon its women working — teaching and writing are almost the only approved fields for women (journalism is dominated by women), secretarial jobs, nursing, air-hostesses — all of this is disapproved of. Most of the nurses therefore are Christians, the biggest minority in Pakistan.

Parsis, says Sidhwa, are largely unaffected by this conservatism — almost all the women work, even those who don't need to. They are influenced only as far as their dress is concerned — in Lahore, hardly any Parsi women wear dresses, though in Karachi they do. They celebrate Id, etc, but remain as distinct a community as they have always been. "Parsis are the same everywhere," says Sidhwa. They'll adapt to their environment, but keep their individuality. You meet them in Lahore or Bombay or the US — you find them cracking the same jokes, behaving in the same manner."

Sidhwa has been active in women's issues in Pakistan. She was on the board of the Dar-ul-Fala, a home for destitute women. She has also represented Punjab at a women's conference in the Soviet Union in 1975, the start of the International Decade for

Women, which saw a lot of committees and action groups come up in Pakistan. That was also the time Bhutto was in power, and he liberalized the atmosphere a lot. Right now, Pakistan has a strong women's movement, much of its activity being vigilante, says Sidhwa. "The groups see that untoward acts are not passed, that the mullahs don't get carried away in their Islamization zeal. In Ayub Khan's time, a lot of family laws were passed, which

"Parsis are the same everywhere. They'll adapt to their environment, but keep their individuality."

made it difficult for a man to marry again, to divorce, so we have to see that these safeguards aren't tampered with. We have been quite successful. For instance, there was a recent case where a blind maidservant had become pregnant, and the mullahs wanted her whipped. There were a lot of protests; the village women gheraoed the mullahs.

But despite the anti-woman trend in personal laws, Sidhwa feels that it is still much easier for a man in the West to divorce his wife than a Muslim in Pakistan, because of familial and social pressures, and the second wife doesn't get much sympathy. But like in India, women there are pretty helpless, she says.

Sidhwa's second book (actually written first) is about women in Pakistan, called *The Bride*, and has been received very well there. It's based on a true incident which she heard about in the Karakoram Mountains, which are practically ruled by the Pathan tribals, and where a woman is regarded as a "precious commodity." Hearing that incident is what made her start writing.

The image of Indian women in Pakistan, says Sidhwa, is considered strong thanks to Ms Gandhi! She, herself, feels that an Indian man expects more subservience from his wife than a Pakistani. The woman there exercises more power within the *zenana*, she says.

Text and photograph reprinted with permission from The Sunday Observer, January 13, 1985.

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Learning from that experience, the Punchayet had provided ample sitting space in its inner foyer for the election of Jai Hind College vice principal, Professor Khurshed Sheriyyar, as the president of the election and of Ms Silloo Kavarana and Jehangir Bamji as the two scrutineers, as provided by the electoral scheme, all unanimously and gracefully elected. The paraphernalia of the election — attendants with voting lists, etc — had been set up on the first floor foyer with the ballot boxes in an adjoining room, whence voters were led down a rear stairway to avoid bottlenecks.

Congratulated at the end of the day for the Punchayet's remarkable arrangements, Golwalla noted, "This time both contestants were so reasonable, they readily agreed to all our suggestions." But due credit must go to the administration.

The decision not to issue duplicate certificates to F register voters on election day was enforced by the board on November 23, although in recent times duplicate certificates have been provided to voters on election day without a fuss. Nor had the voters been effectively apprised of this decision. There were therefore cases of people who could not exercise their right to vote. Parsiana noticed one determined couple however who made a second trip, having unearthed their certificate, and Desai related how solicitor Jangoo Gagrut cast his vote two minutes before closing time because he came initially without his certificate and had to return to his office to hunt for it.

Only 215 of the E register's 295 members voted, as did 396 of the F register's 702 (nine votes were invalid),

Arrangements for smooth electioneering



causing some people to be dismayed at such "dereliction of duty," especially on the part of the elected E register members. They note that the principle of accountability should be applicable as much to the E register voters as to the trustees, and suggest that the names of all E register voters who failed to vote at the Ranina-Poncha and the Desai-Mehta elections should be published so that the voters on the A, C and D registers who elect the E register, may be able to elicit their explanations for defaulting as representatives of the anjuman committee.

The personal qualities of the contestants came to the fore when the results were announced. Desai, with wife Coomi ill at home, had maintained a low profile throughout the day. His supporters had come to the conclusion that there would be no jubilation. Thus no one from Desai's side had any flowers to offer. The Mehta camp was equipped for victory. Without hesitation, Mehta congratulated his erstwhile rival and presented to Desai the flowers meant for himself. Wife Daisy and their supporters did likewise. It was a worthy gesture; and it rang true. Perhaps sincerity and sportsmanship may once again become fashionable in Parsi politics...

Hector Mehta declined a post-election interview to Parsiana: Because of allegations made against him in a section of the community press, Mehta preferred to maintain silence. He was particularly disheartened by the tone of the attacks against the management of certain institutions where he is trustee, and felt responsible for maintaining the dignity of co-trustees on those boards.

A.S.M

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the custody of the BPP.

It was said that when the Gandhi family who founded the agiary in Allahabad offered it to the anjuman there, the anjuman asked the family for money to maintain it. Thus the bazam fund was founded, but a subsequent fall-out between the trustees of the anjuman and the Gandhi family led the Gandhis to entrust the fund to BPP custody.

While the Allahabad anjuman now wanted the fund returned to it, Desai, on behalf of the BPP, noted that it would not be prudent for the custodian to part with the money without a mandate which would only be forthcoming when the anjuman trustees established a rapprochement with the Gandhis. Dandiwalla requested chairman Golwalla to write to Dossu Gandhi and Desai noted that the BPP would be happy to mediate. Golwalla however feared it might be construed as interference.

Speaking on behalf of the Iranian Zoroastrian Anjuman, Peshotan Nargolwala noted that young people had been inducted on the Anjuman's managing committee. Seventy percent of the Anjuman's annual income of five lakh rupees is spent on relief applications from Parsis and 30 percent on Iranis, he noted.

Navsari's Parsi population is now 3,500 and is expected to reach 4,500 by 1986, said its representative Dara Deboo. Two thousand applications were received for Ava Baug's 250 flats slated for occupation in December '85. Many Parsis from Africa have resettled there, said Deboo. Including this new construction, flats in Ava Baug, a housing colony created by the philanthropy of Shapoorji Jokhi of Navsari and Hongkong, now total 500, said Deboo. Two cosmopolitan hospitals run by Parsis have Parsi wards which provide free food and bed to poor patients. As the hospitals were originally Parsi institutions subsequently converted to cosmopolitan use, the district courts had decreed that the interest from the original corpus be used to this end, noted Deboo. An infirmary caters to the community's destitutes. Education and employment were two problem areas identified by Deboo.

Surat is facing an acute labor pro-

blem especially as the Surat Parsi Punchayet feeds 350 persons daily. Maneck Gheyara noted that the SPP may be forced to close the Nariman Home for the aged which currently houses 80 inmates, if the SPP loses the pending case where the staff is demanding disproportionate benefits.

The Poona Parsee Punchayet has 40 acres of vacant land near doongerwadi which can be used for constructing homes for poor Parsis, informed Kersasp Irani and requested the BPP trustees for help and guidance in the program. Irani sought knowhow on matters of finance, taxation, etc.

Defunct anjumans

"The Federation is interested in seeing community assets recycled, not lost forever." The aim as stated by Kanga seemed clear and straight-forward. Yet the delegates were confounded by a maze of political, legal and technical difficulties.

Community properties are encroached upon — physically and/or legally — as at Diu, Nizamabad, Saranpur, Surat, Ghadak, Khadakvasla, Cambay, Mahableshwar, etc. In the majority of cases, title deeds are not available and community representatives must dig for data from various rural administrative authorities like tehsildars, patwaris etc who may prefer to suppress the desired information, especially when in Gheyara's words "multimillionaires and industrialists are the encroachers."

While two persons are said to have

The Federation should proceed as a counselling force rather than as a reformer

agreed to take on the task of unearthing data on a job work basis, it was Anklesaria's contention that physical encroachment be tackled across the board, ceding one-third to the encroacher and salvaging two-thirds for the community, instead of instituting legal proceedings. And Kanga noted, "People have lost all belief in the sanctity of law. Liquidate whatever can be sold."

Far more daunting for some delegates was the prospect of confrontations

within the community as in the case of the Tithal sanatorium property which is under a private trust whose chairman is ex-BPP chairman, B.K. Boman-Behram. The vast property, now in a state of decay, was in the process of being sold off to a Jain trust when the Gujarat Government requisitioned it. The Government order has been held at bay by a court injunction filed by the Surat Parsi Punchayet (SPP).

Another case, also reported by the SPP is of the unfrequented Hazira sanatorium. The community does not use it and thanks to orthodox ideas, does not permit it to be rented out, although an industrial organization has approached the punchayet with a handsome rent. In the meantime, social workers in the area are demanding that they be permitted to use the sanatorium as a school, as there is no school in Hazira. To retrieve the property once a school takes over, will be almost impossible, notes Gheyara.

Even the original documents pertaining to the Diu dokhma and agiary are proving elusive, although the Federation is trying to get both proclaimed, protected monuments under the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI). Despite the continued interest of two governors of Goa and much tenacity and leg work on the part of Minochaheer Bharucha of Bhavnagar, the matter is still pending. It is proposed that the Barot caves also be placed under ASI aegis so that a decent road may make for easier pilgrimage to the place where the Iranshah was sheltered during years of turmoil in Gujarat.

In Srinagar where only one Parsi family remains, the aged Behram Pestonji is "worried his son will be isolated," noted Guzder. The cantonment property, which had featured in earlier meetings of the executive council as a good place for a dharamshala for Parsis, has now been declared a security area by the army. Kanga suggested that the army be requested to exchange this property for some other property elsewhere. It was Guzder's opinion that Pestonji be advised to appoint two other trustees and Nargolwala suggested Rustom Daroga of Delhi and Guzder himself, "both being very mobile."

What then of mismanaged trusts — those where the trustees are old, infirm or just plain uninterested in the settlor's wishes? While Gandhi, the Federation's activist secretary, demanded fresh clauses in the charter to permit

the Federation "to ask for tightening of community trusts," joint secretary Desai attempted "to sound a warning (and suggest that the Federation) refrain from interfering in their management. Any application to the charity commissioner might result in the Federation losing ground." Desai advised the Federation to proceed as a counselling force rather than as a reformer or a chastiser. His point of view was supported by Clubwala who noted, "other trustees don't like interference. (They) get the idea that the Federation *jugao puchaavva maagech* (wants to appropriate the properties)." Anklesaria on the other hand, making a distinction between anjuman and trust, noted the "sacredness of an anjuman" which must be won over, as against the property of a trust which is not properly managed.

While the delegates worried about legalities and niceties, Nargolwala, counselled: "Don't go by law, don't go by complications. Take the bull by the horns and just do it."

Dharamshala

Golwalla, who had been keenly planning and working towards establishing a dharamshala in Bombay on the plot of a dilapidated building in Khareghat Colony, said he was informed by noted lawyer and ex BPP trustee Shiavax Vakil that the new Panday Dharamshala at Charni Road would be ready shortly. Due to shortage of land and money, the BPP agreed not to duplicate the facilities.

Referring to the Panday Dharamshala's construction and facilities, Golwalla noted that against an average expected demand from 30 guests, accommodation was available for 50 and kitchen and dining facilities had been incorporated. The plot at Khareghat Colony would now be used for building ownership flats.

While Nargolwala ruefully noted that "Golwalla has given up the ghost," Gandhi maintained that "a dharamshala in Bombay was more the concern of Parsis outside Bombay... funds should come from outside Bombay" and expressed a doubt that accommodation for 50 persons was adequate. Nargolwala asked for details: "Will it provide linen?..." and urged the BPP "not to drop the idea of a dharamshala... funds must come from all over India," recalling how Sir Cowasji Jehangir had donated Rs

25,000 towards the Delhi Dharamshala.

Mobeds

The BPP's mobed amelioration scheme covers only 40 mobeds from the lowest income bracket at present, with a corpus of 1.5 lakh rupees, 50 percent of which is donated by the BPP and the rest by other trusts. These figures were revealed in an answer to the Federation's fears that the BPP scheme may preempt mobeds going to mofussil agariaries.

While a mobed willing to serve the Allahabad Anjuman is yet to be found, Delhi has staked its claim to a third mobed, preferably a family man between 35 and 40 years of age. With the aim of securing the mobed's services for the Anjuman for the next 10 to 15 years, Nargolwala declared: "What-

"People have lost all
belief in the sanctity
of law. Liquidate
whatever can be
sold..."

ever money is wanted, we'll pay." Food, housing, leave, leave travel allowance and medical benefits are offered. With three priests on Delhi's payroll, it is expected that each mobed will be really working only three or four days a week.

In Kutch where the Parsi population totals 15, there is a daremeher and a dharamshala but no mobed, said Dr Sarosh Wadia. Paramobeds keep the fire burning, but no ceremonies are performed. A similar situation prevails in Kathiawar and Rajkot, said Wadia.

The Ahmednagar Anjuman with 60-80, mostly self-employed members, has now acquired a good priest with a school going son who is also a priest, noted Mehernosh Mehta.

Congress

Funding the publication of a report on the Fourth World Zoroastrian Congress through select prestigious advertisements (only one per industry) was questioned by some of the delegates at the council. The report, containing a description of the inaugural, a program of the conference, rapporteurs' conclusions and 17 color photographs, is expected to cost Rs 50,000 for 1,600

copies according to Congress chairman Jamshed Guzder. Guzder noted that his own companies had donated Rs 10,000 although the rates were Rs 3,500 for color and Rs 1,500 for black and white advertisements and invited Godrej, J.N. Marshall, etc to join.

"Can't the report be reduced so that it costs less? Rs 50,000 is a lot of money," noted Godrej. Anklesaria of Poona remonstrated, "It's going round the world. Why only one name (per industry)? The community should have the chance..." and was supported by Clubwala who asked, "*Ham-band paivaste* (Bound together unitedly forever) — aren't we going away from that motto?"

Gandhi, justifying Guzder's stand, declared, "We want the report to look like a report — not like a souvenir... a small number of prestigious advertisers, just to meet the cost of the report. It's a matter of discretion, no question of asking others to come to our aid." But Clubwala persisted, "The names could all be on one page" and was supported by Godrej.

Video tapes of the Congress are available for an outright Rs 450 noted Guzder, who also confirmed that the Congress had netted one and a half lakh rupees which had been "deposited with the BPP in the name of the Federation at best interest rates."

WZO

Although an international body of Zoroastrians is a subject close to the Federation, protracted negotiations with the London based World Zoroastrian Organization have not brought these two institutions any closer. The WZO's charter treats individual and anjuman members as equals, having one vote each. This means one person enjoys the same voting right as a body (such as the BPP which represents over 50,000 Parsis), a proposition staunchly opposed by the Federation.

The Federation's recurring complaint of letters and suggestions remaining unanswered by the WZO, was repeated once again by Guzder, chairman of the Federation's subcommittee negotiating with the WZO. Having attended the Pateti jashan in London on August 24, Guzder is said to have asked the WZO officials the reason for their silence. Their reply as reported by Guzder: "We don't think we should disclose it." Guzder noted that they are "not prepared to grasp our hand..."

(they have) something to hide." Guzder says he told them that "neither the Punchayet nor the Federation can lay down rules. All the associations of the world should have a say. You can't be the arbiter." Then, addressing the council, Guzder concluded that the "best we can offer is; we go our way, you go yours."

While Mani Clubwala pleaded, "Don't close the subject... matters can change," Nargolwala presented his findings on the subject: the WZO's annual returns were overdue by four to five years; the director general of the United Nations' Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has noted that the WZO does not fulfil all conditions required for UNESCO membership while the Federation could become a UNESCO member as it represents a large enough majority despite belonging to one country. Nargolwala, himself a committee member of WZO, alleged a split in the organization and complained that the WZO's minutes and reports were not forthcoming. "The managing committee meets with four to five members (of a total of 31). What they decide, how they decide, nothing is dis-

closed...

"I strongly feel that the chapter should now be closed," said Nargolwala and by way of emphasis added, "The Delhi Anjuman may opt out of the Federation if the Federation becomes a member of the WZO."

Gandhi suggested that the Federation "admit associate members from the rest of the world... function as a coalescing force. For all you know the WZO may want to join us!"

The quip failed to mollify either Nargolwala, or Clubwala who continued to espouse the opposing viewpoint. Gandhi noted, "Whether the Federation should open (its) doors to other anjumans or ask for UNESCO membership, will (be discussed) later. We've tried for more than two years (for an acceptable plank to join the WZO). We're not asking individual anjumans who are already WZO members to resign. But the Federation at this date cannot continue the negotiations." Desai suggested that no action be taken on the matter, but Nargolwala carried the resolution on a point of order: "The Federation, having examined the possibility and made all possible efforts, will not become a member

as things stand. If things change, we shall reconsider."

Iranian visas

Visa problems affect Irani students in India and Iranis wanting to migrate, as also Parsi Zoroastrians of Indian origin who had accepted Irani citizenship under the Shah and now wish to regain their original Indian nationality. While Nargolwala reported that one such Parsi Zoroastrian had been regranted Indian citizenship, Gandhi noted that no Irani student had contacted him in recent months. Their admission into capitation colleges is also not a problem, Gandhi noted, if the Home Ministry gives a no objection certificate. The Federation's joint treasurer Peshotan Nargolwala clarified that Irani students face no difficulty in Bombay's arts, science or commerce colleges if they've landed in Bombay and filed their papers through the Iranian Zoroastrian Anjuman. The problem arises only when they seek admission in central government administered technical institutions.

Jamshed Guzder related the instance of a Parsi Zoroastrian who married an Iranian girl while he was working there

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but the wife's passport was confiscated and she was not allowed to accompany him to Bombay. She escaped from Iran to Pakistan. Thanks to the Federation's liaison, the girl was granted refugee status by the UN. Thereafter the Indian Government issued the lady an entry visa into Bombay with the further proviso that she'd be allowed to stay if she furnished sufficient proof. The delegates were unanimous in tabling their gratitude to IAS officer Bomi Hirji who has helped fellow Zoroastrians through such crises.

Managing committee

What began as a debate on the establishment of a managing committee, ended as a mutual back patting session. The managing committee which would comprise the Federation's office-bearers and meet from time to time to implement and frame policy, subject to the council's ratification, was fiercely attacked in Madras, and effectively sidetracked in Bombay.

Nargolwala argued that the managing committee would be able to discuss and formalize propositions, but Anklesaria suggested, "If you mean business, have a full-time secretary... a full-time independent machinery is required for results." While Gandhi said that he had no objection to a full-time secretary if the Federation could afford it, Kanga noted, "(There's) greater need for each and every anjuman to strengthen its own secretariat." As the discussion heated up, Clubwala noted: "This Federation has given status, security to smaller anjumans... (There is) a lot of criticism of the BPP but now (we're) beginning to realize what you are doing... If Keki (Gandhi) did not belong to a company (Machine Tools India) that allows him to do this work, you'd have to close the Federation." The Council heartily endorsed Clubwala's sentiment and acknowledged Keki Gandhi's personal contribution to the Federation as also that of Gandhi's employer. The Federation's mailing address is that of Machine Tools India where Gandhi is company secretary.

Gandhi was quick to disclaim credit for a one-man Federation: "There's a lady sitting in Vizag translating the English newsletters into Gujarati... the new anjuman from Navsari has taken on the job of stencilling and distributing the Gujarati newsletters... (some of) the information on reserva-

tion came from Tehmi Grant of Poona. It's the duty of every man (to find) a successor. If there is anyone (who would like to take over) he should work with me..."

Nargolwala: "No, no..."

Kanga: "It's only fair that we should support Keki by taking over. Thank God..."

Nargolwala: "Not God. Delhi Parsi Anjuman."

Office-bearers

Bejan Dittia, the co-opted member from the south zone, was proposed to fill the south zone vice-presidency, vacant since the demise of Sq Leader Jamshid Italia. Gandhi however ob-

"The genius of
Parsis for politics is
confined to politics
within the
community."

served that it was up to the anjumans of the south zone to send nominations for the post. Grudgingly conceding the objection, Nargolwala agreed to allow the south zone anjumans to ratify the appointment and proceeded to appoint Mani Clubwala as co-opted member from the south zone in place of Dittia. When Gandhi suggested that "cooption (be effected) after the seat is vacated," Nargolwala snapped gingerly, "No need to teach your grandmother to suck her thumb!"

It was confirmed that the next meeting of the executive council will be hosted by the Poona Parsee Punchayet on February 22 and 23, 1986, although PPP president Marazban Kaikobad noted, "We'll welcome you anytime, in February or July."

While the second meeting of '86 may be hosted by the Surat Parsi Punchayet, its proposed venue at Devka has failed to enthuse the Federation's office-bearers who would prefer to congregate in Surat itself.

Noting that the Kaikhushru Pallonji Katrak Dar-e-Meher will be completing 25 years in December '86, Nargolwala informed the council of the Delhi Anjuman's plans to upgrade the fire into an adaran in fulfilment of a promise made to Ms Shirinbai Katrak, the major donor after whose husband the

Dar-e-Meher was named and invited those present — "whether you are a member of the Federation or not" — for the council meeting and festivities in Delhi from December 25 to 31. Nargolwala stated that all the high priests of India will be invited and hoped that the Prime Minister would attend a special function.

Those attending the meeting were: Mehernosh Mehta of Ahmednagar; Capt Homi Dandiwalla of Allahabad; Minochaer Bharucha of Bhavnagar; Aspi Golwala, Eruch Desai, Jamsheed Kanga, Naoroji Godrej Peshotan Nargolwala, Rustom Anklesaria, Gool Tata and Noshirwan Kaikobad of Bombay; Shiavax Nargolwala, Keki Gandhi, Rustom Daroga and Nergish Nargolwala of Delhi; Jamshed Guzder of Gandevi; Aspi Irani of Iranian Zoroastrian Anjuman; Phiroze Karanjia of Karanj; Dr Sarosh Wadia of Kutch; Boman Khodaiji of Lucknow; Mani Clubwala of Madras; Gp Capt Dhunjishaw Marker of Mhow; Keki Bala of Nagpur and Kamthi; Dara Deboo of Navsari; Marazban Kaikobad, K.M. Irani and Dinshaw Anklesaria of Poona; Homi Palsetia and Nariman Balsara of Saronda; Bejan Dittia, Noshir Nagarwala and Cyrus Irani of Secunderabad and Hyderabad; Maneck Gheyara, Dr Sam Bhacca, Davar Kavasji Modi, Dr Minocher Contractor, Soli Katpitia and Faram Lakdawalla of Surat; Soonu Vesuna of Vesu; Dr Bahadur Jokhi and Cawas Jokhi of Vyara; Homi Mehta of Zai Bordi and Noshir Dadrawala of Zoroastrian Community Development Institute. The guest speakers were Prof Cyrus Pangborn, Ms Aloo Chibber, Dr Shera Dastur and Russell Pinto. The press was represented by *The Bombay Samachar* and *Parsiana*.

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Irani: industrial accomplishments

Irani's Ideal

Died: Farrokh Khudamurad Irani, 64, founder of Ideal Jawa, the first automobile factory in Karnataka; at Bombay's Breach Candy Hospital on October 24, 1985 following liver and kidney complications.

In a condolence message sent by the Karnataka chief minister Ramakrishna Hegde, Irani's death was described as a great loss to the industrial fraternity since he was one of those responsible for the industrialization of Mysore.

Ideal Jawa, which employs nearly 2,500 workers and 160 distributors all over India, manufactures over five lakh Yezdi motorcycles every year.

"After the Second World War, Irani and his uncle R.S. Irani were representatives for leading English and Czechoslovak motorcycles in India at their concern Ideal Motors at Bombay and at Poona, and all along it had been the young Irani's dream to start in this country, with foreign collaboration, a motorcycle factory. The driving ambition of himself and his uncle in this regard eventually fructified when they founded Ideal Jawa (India) Pvt Ltd at Mysore in 1960, the first automobile factory in the State, and the first major industry in Mysore city (which was then scheduled as a backward industrial area). His co-directors were all



Jamshedji: leadership for paints

members of the family (two uncles and two brothers) while His Highness the Maharaja Sri Jayachamaraja Wodeyar also consented to be on the board of directors," states a write-up from the family.

Irani also founded Yezdi Distilleries in Mysore.

Chairman of the Mysore Chamber of Commerce for 21 years and a Rotarian, Irani's philanthropic activities included chairing the Holdsworth Memorial (Mission) Hospital, serving the Mysore City Improvement Trust Board and being appointed as senate member of the Mysore University for two terms. He was also president of the Company-managed Physically Handicapped Trust and the Ideal Jawa Rotary School Trust, mentions the write-up.

When public celebrations of the Dasera festival were discontinued by the Government of Mysore, a committee of citizens headed by Irani, continued the festival for three years in the late 1970s till its revival by the State, recalled his son Raian.

Irani's social accomplishments won him the distinction "of being inducted into the Order of Kentucky Colonels by the Governor of Kentucky State," noted the release. The late Maharaja of Mysore, Jayachamaraja Wodeyar conferred on Irani the titles of Rajasabhu-

shana and Sirdar for his "meritorious services to the community."

"An outstanding sportsman" since his college days, Irani was the president of the Mysore Sports Club for 26 years and revived the Mysore Race Club Ltd taking over as chairman and senior steward for 15 years.

The eldest child of Khudamurad and Motibai, Irani "called himself a fatalist, believing that an unseen hand shapes human destiny," wrote Raian. He studied at the Ferguson and Wadia Colleges at Pune and could converse in Gujarati, Marathi, English, Persian, Dari, Urdu and a little bit of Kannada, notes the release.

Irani's wife, Sheila, is a social worker who has been nominated for two terms as a member of the Mysore Legislative Council. She is presently on the senate of the University of Mysore. Irani also leaves behind his daughter Morvarid and sons Raian and Kairus.

Colorful life

Died: Jal Jamshedji, 74, founder of Noble Paints, "one of the first indigenous paint manufactories in India," on October 21, 1985 in Bombay following heart complications.

Jamshedji was credited with providing the leadership for introducing paints like Fyretard, Polycote and Universal Basic Stainer on the Indian scene, notes a write-up. After Independence when import of paints was banned, Noble Paints was appointed "suppliers of paints and distempers" to the first three Presidents of India.

"As a child, Jal Jamshedji was fascinated with nature's colors...and aspired to be a color chemist combining the aesthetics of color with science" noted a press release issued on the occasion of Noble's golden jubilee. He founded the Company in 1934 at Reay Road, with only 10 workers and three staff members, notes a press release. His stress on research and development helped the Company grow.

Presently Noble's have a work force of 90 employees and operate from their factory on a 10-acre plot of land at New Bombay.

He is survived by his wife Kati, son Dinyar and daughters Villy, Roshan, Meheroo and Dinoo.