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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 400001. Letters are subject to editing for reasons of space and clarity. Unsigned letters or those without an address will not be published.

"Resolution refrain"

Now that it has been shown

- that the six High Priests had not done their homework either in law or religion
 - that the diktat sought to make legally valid marriages invalid, and legitimate children illegitimate
 - that they had no locus standi in the first place, since they are not the Pope, and we are not Roman Catholics
 - that in their view it is more religious to 'live in' with a non-Parsi than marry him
 - that there are sufficient right thinking priests who are willing and able to follow the law and their conscience
- we should not give these persons any importance by writing any further on the subject. Their act of folly probably prompted by the realization that they are losing their hold on the laity has only resulted in their losing whatever respect they enjoyed. Their being allowed to fade into oblivion would be a fitter punishment than writing against their views.

ishment than writing against their views.
KHORSHED JAVERI

I am giving hereunder an extract from the *Vendidad* which throws some light on 'sins and punishment' and which has some relevance for accepting people of other faiths into our religion.

Extracts from the *Vendidad*—Translated by James Darmesteter from *The Sacred Books of the East*:

"36(122). O maker of the material world, thou Holy One! If a man shall bury in the earth either the corpse of a dog or the corpse of a man, and if he shall not disinter it within half a year, what is the penalty he shall pay?

"Ahura Mazda answered: '500 stripes with the *Aspahe-astra* (a thong), 500 stripes with the *Sraosho-karna*.'

"37(126). O Maker of the material world, thou Holy One! If a man shall bury in the earth either the corpse of a dog or the corpse of a man, and if he shall not disinter it within a year, what is the penalty that he shall pay?

"Ahura Mazda answered: '1,000 stripes of the *Aspahe-astra*, 1,000 stripes with the *Sraosho-karna*.'

"38(130). O maker of the material world, thou Holy One! If a man shall bury in the earth, either the corpse of a dog, or the corpse of a man, and if he shall not disinter it within the second year, what is the penalty for it? What is the atonement for it? What is the cleansing from it?

"39(135). Ahura Mazda answered: 'For that deed there is nothing that can pay, nothing that can atone, nothing that can cleanse from it; it is a trespass for which there is no atonement, for ever and for ever.'

"40(137). When is it so? 'It is so, if the sinner be a professor of the religion of Mazda, or one who has been taught in it. But if he be not a professor of the religion of Mazda, nor one who has been taught in it, then his sin is taken from him, if he makes confession of the religion of Mazda and resolves never to commit again such forbidden deeds.

"41(142). 'The Religion of Mazda indeed, O Spitama Zarathushtra takes away from him who makes confession of it the bonds of sin; it takes away (the sin of) breach of trust; it takes away (the sin of) murdering one of the faithful; it takes away (the sin of) burying a corpse; it

takes away (the sin of) deeds for which there is no atonement; it takes away the worst sin usury; it takes away any sin that may be sinned.'

Some simple questions which come to our mind are:

If we go by the above extract, does it not mean that a practice of 'accepting' people into our faith existed in those days?

If a person, who is a great sinner but of alien faith can be accepted in the religion of Mazda, why should the innocent children born out of inter-caste marriages (where one of the spouse is a Zoroastrian) be denied acceptance into our religion?

One more question, this is just by the way: If the scriptures prescribed the practice of consigning the corpse of a dog also to dakhma, why have we stopped it now? Are we not committing a great sin by burying our dogs, at least in towns where dakhmas are available?

KERSEE KABRAJI
Poona

People may say I am still inexperienced and that I know nothing since I am only 12 years old. But I do know. Sometimes children understand things in simple ways, while adults need to find complicated reasons and ways to achieve things. I know what it feels like to be left out of things such as secrets, friendships, those tiny things that matter. It makes you understand what it feels like to be left out of something you were rightfully born into and have every right to. Ban non-Parsis from entering our temples if you have to, but to ban a true pure blooded Zoroastrian from believing in his or her own God, is true ignorance on every side. Our community has rich customs; a heritage like ours should be preserved for a long time. We have always been known as a peace-loving community. By excommunicating us, you are not in any way stopping our minds from still believing in the same God or prophet we always believed in. You are stopping us from entering temples, the Towers of Silence, from openly practising what we believe in. And from this rule, we expect our community to stop dying out? Imagine the number of old people who are going to convert, and think of different ways to be buried or cremated because you have forbidden their loved ones



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from entering the Towers of Silence, from paying their last respects to people they have loved and shared their lives with. You will only have caused anger towards yourself.

Where, in our community, does it state that Parsis can be excommunicated? Even if they are married to people of different faiths, they do not have to suffer, because marriage and religion, are totally different things. Marriage is about finding your soul mate, someone you want to live with forever. Religion is about peace, unity, love, devotion and a person's belief in God. You do not need to be in a temple to pray. You can be anywhere, anytime, in need, or just praying as a tribute to the person who created everything that you enjoy today. Today, religion is just another way to gain attention, or power, whichever comes first. Let's not be like everyone. Let's be a different kind of religion, one that takes into consideration, thinks of what our own God would say.

What will eventually happen is our community will have different thoughts towards people we once respected. Zarathushtra will still love the people the High Priests may banish. You cannot tell him not to. Just as you cannot tell a

person not to celebrate Navroz, not to pray, not to wear the sudreh and kusti, not to believe in God.

Let's not allow our precious, special religion to fade away in such a state. Let it prosper, even if that means performing the navjote of a half Parsi.

RHEA CAWSI DHANBHOORA

The experience I have gained by being in Delhi and Bangalore is worth narrating. In Delhi no distinction is made between girls married to Zoroastrians or outsiders. The clergy/anjuman encourages the girls to visit places of worship, religious and social gatherings and to take part in the welfare development activities. These girls are an asset and pride of the community. On the other hand, in Bangalore, girls married to outsiders are treated shabbily. It is not known what good has come from the unwarranted attitude of the clergy/anjuman. Doesn't the community have any responsibility towards their sisters?

DALIJ. GUNDEVIA

We, the trustees of The Bangalore Parsee Zoroastrian Anjuman, are distraught to see the name of Dastur Nadirshah P. Unvalla in the recent articles published in the media with regard to the High

Priest status of our revered Dastur.

Way back in 1996, out of genuine respect, admiration and appreciation of not only his religious but also social leadership, the Parsi Zoroastrian community of Bangalore honored and elevated Ervad Unvalla to the position of a Dastur. Since then several institutions, anjumans, scholars, high priests and dignitaries have extended their felicitations to Unvalla, thereby recognizing his elevated status of a Dastur. Vada Dasturs of the eminence of the late Dastur Kaikobad Dastoor (Udvada), the late Sardar Dastur Hormazdiar Dastur (Poona), had extended their respective felicitations to Unvalla. Institutions like the Bombay Parsi Punchayet, Athornan Mandal, The Bombay Jashan Committee, Poona Parsee Panchayat, Dadar Jashan Trust, Iran League, the Madras Parsi Zarhosti Anjuman, Parsi Zoroastrian Anjuman of Secunderabad and Hyderabad and the World Zoroastrian Organisation had recognized the status of the Dastur conferred upon Unvalla by the ever appreciative and grateful Zoroastrian community of Bangalore.

Further, scholars and well wishers like the late Ervad (Dr) Peshotan F. Peer, Ervad (Dr) Rooyintan P. Peer, the late



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Roni Khan, Eruch B. Desai, Rustom S. Gae and Rusi A. Dhondy had acknowledged and felicitated the Dastur's status bestowed upon Unvalla. Even the *Jam-e-Jamshed* dated June 16, 1996 widely covered the stated felicitation held in Bangalore. In effect, the very fact that the other Dasturs have signed the recent resolutions with Unvalla, has unequivocally put a stamp of approval of the Dastur status.

We have no intentions to either enter into any kind of debate or even offer clarifications in the matter. As far as the Bangalore Anjuman is concerned Unvalla is our respected and revered High Priest and will continue to remain so for all time to come. ADIL J. GOVADIA

Honorary secretary, for and on behalf of the board of trustees of The Bangalore Parsee Zoroastrian Anjuman

"Fashion for the..."

In your article "Fashion for the filmstars" (*Parsiana*, March 2003) you have mentioned that Mani Rabadi is a spinster.

This tends to create an impression that she was never married. But the fact is that she was married to the undersigned on September 27, 1948 under the Special Marriage Act of 1872 and was divorced on August 29, 1963.

ERUCH D. BHARUCHA

Scholarships

Shree Parsi Panchayat, Vadodara invites applications from Parsi or Irani Zoroastrian students for the understated two scholarships for the academic year 2003-04:

Prof Sohrab Manchershaw Wadia Scholarship of Rs 8,500 would be awarded to a student pursuing undergraduate, postgraduate or research studies at any of the following institutions: any Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) or Indian Institute of Management (IIM), any all-India institute of repute like Tata School of Social Sciences, Indian Institute of Science, University Department of Chemical Technology (UDCT), etc, any national laboratory or institute under the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research, any foreign university or institute of repute. Only outstanding students with consistently excellent record will be considered.

Dr Rustom B. Cama Scholarship of Rs 5,000 would be awarded to a student studying for either first, second or third year MBBS course at any medical college in India.

Application forms may be obtained by sending a self-addressed envelope (4" x 9") to The Secretary, Shree Parsi Panchayat, Hira Baug, Post Office Road,

Fatehgunj, Vadodara 390002.

The last date for receipt of filled application forms is September 30, 2003.

BAMAN R. CAMA

Trustee and honorary secretary
Shree Parsi Panchayat, Vadodara

Light reflection

There is only one reason why we are on earth and that is to find our true "spiritual self," our true "inner being." To help us in this quest, prophets are sent to this earth from time to time according to the spiritual evolution of a certain race. A prophet's work is to plant the seeds, the growth of which will be useful to future generations. When his work is done, the prophet disappears, but his message remains for centuries in those souls which are sensitive enough to respond to it.

To establish the Zoroastrian religion, Prophet Zarathushtra was sent to earth by Ahura Mazda, the "Lord of Creation" (as he is referred to in the *Gathas*). As he grew up, Zarathushtra saw the "light" pulsating throughout nature in animals, plants, trees, pebbles, sands, hills and rivers. This light is the power of Ahura Mazda, permeating the Universe. This fact is now acknowledged by even the

most skeptical scientist, that light (along with life and love) is present in every atom of matter throughout the Universe, with God as its life-current. In its physical connotation, light is the most subtle, the most tangible of all things in nature which humans register physically through the sense of sight. Light is the most ethereal matter known to man. It is the most complex element that science can handle and even the various types of invisible rays, like ultra-violet and infra-red are but variations of light which vibrate beyond the power of our retina to grasp. In our religion, fire is referred to as "God's son" since it is the perfect symbol of that heavenly spark within our soul. When you pray to fire, yielding your heart and mind to God, you turn instinctively to your creator Ahura Mazda through the medium of light.

All matter is augmented out of light, whether it's your physical body or the chair you are sitting on, because matter itself is nothing but condensation of radiant energy of light. Therefore it is not wrong to say that God is present everywhere. This truth is impersonal and universal, accepted by the scientist as well as the mystic.

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The perception of this energy begins with a heightened sensitivity to Nature's beauty, when colors and shapes seem magnified and you can see the light (energy fields or aura) hovering about every tree, flower, even a blade of grass. The two periods of the day most conducive to feeling, seeing and experiencing this light (aura) are sunrise and sunset.

When you can see and feel this light around every living creature, your own energy field (aura) gets larger as you appreciate the beauty and uniqueness on earth, at which point, your energy field and that of the universe are the same. To "see" and "feel" light is a mystical experience, but you can't hold it for long. At times we get this mystical experience when praying to the holy fire inside an agiary or atash behram. A feeling that "I'm not this body, nor am I this mind. I'm pure light."

To experience this, empty your mind of all the mental conditioning (*kachra*) you have collected over the years. Make your mind silent, still and in this silence you will see the light. This is the light of "Garothman Behesht" which we leave behind at physical birth when we enter the physical plane and this is the light we merge into at the end of the tunnel at death. This is the light that is translated as "Asha" or "Purity for the sake of purity" in Zoroastrianism, brought to us by Zoroaster, the "Prophet of light."

RUBY LILAOWALA

Soldiers never die

Brig Farouk F. C. Bulsara, of the Parachute Regiment in the Indian Army, expired at the Military Hospital, Mhow on March 24, 2003, due to cardiac failure. For his distinguished service during a career spanning more than 30 years, Bulsara was awarded the Ati Vishisht Seva Mandal (AVSM). The Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India also recognized his services by awarding him the Lt Col A. B. Tarapore Medal for excellence in the military field. During the Federation meeting which was held in Mhow in 1999, he was the chief organizer and largely responsible for the success of the all-India conference.

As the adage in the Indian Army goes, "Soldiers never die, they just fade away," so too with Bulsara. His passion for soldiering knew no bounds, and he never hesitated to call a spade a spade.

Bulsara was born on November 4, 1940, and he was an alumnus of Brown's School, Dehra Dun. He was commis-



sioned into the Indian Army in June 1962, in the JAT Regiment, and later in 1966, into the Parachute Regiment. He saw active service during the wars of 1962, 1965 and 1971, and also in Nagaland. He held many important assignments, such as commissioner of the Para Brigade, commandant of the Special Frontier Force, commandant of the High Altitude Warfare School, Gulmarg, and commander of the YO Wing, The Infantry School, Mhow. In November 1988, Bulsara successfully led the Parachute Brigade in an international intervention operation in the Maldives.

He had varied interests, and he had many articles and publications to his credit. He was an active member of the Bombay Natural History Society and the Environmental Services Group for over two decades. He was one of the four Combat Free Fall

Parachutists of the Indian Army, a distinction he earned in 1973, when skydiving was first introduced in India.

A symbol of the goodness that Bulsara stood for was the donation of his eyes after his death. He shall be missed by his wife Persis, his family and friends.

BEHRAM MASANI

President, Parsi Zoroastrian Anjuman, Mhow

Nanavati's lost legacy

The first agiary-atash dadgah in Ahmedabad was established and declared open by Sheth Kharshedji Beramji Nanavati on August 6, 1846 with the cooperation of other leading

Nagpur Parsi cricket team of yore included Jiji Irani (center, standing tall), Jamshed (now Sir J. J.) Irani (seated center, with legs splayed), Jamshed Kanga (top row, left) and Minocher (standing extreme right)

Parsis of that time. This dadgah along with related buildings was handed over to the Parsi Panchayat on July 18, 1877. The original afriangan bearing an inscription in Gujarati reading "Khashrobhaini Naiyate — Kharshedji Behramji Nanavati," viz. "In sacred memory of Khashrobhai — Kharshedji Behramji Nanavati," is still maintained in the anteroom of the present agiary. However, no one in Ahmedabad is able to give any information about the said late Nanavati or his descendants. I am compiling notes on the Parsis of Ahmedabad from the time the first Parsi is said to have come here up to the present day and would be grateful if any of your readers could give me information in this regard. I can be contacted at 167 Sunrise Park, Bodakdev, Ahmedabad 380054; e-mail: medoraad1@sancharnet.in; tel: 6853114, 6855414. RASHIDS.MEDORA

Ahmedabad

Nagpur Cricketers

The history of Parsi cricket in Nagpur dates back to at least the mid '40s of the last century, if not earlier. I had the good fortune to live in Nagpur from 1951-1956 and to play cricket for "The Parsis" during those years.

Jiji Irani, after whom is named the Jiji Irani Challenge Cup Pentangular Cricket Tournament, though senior in years then, was still a player of merit, not an arm-

continued on page 52



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Events and Personalities

Sins of commission

Three days after the mortal remains of 72-year-old Adi Ardesheer Cursetjee were consigned to the Tower of Silence in the third week of May, his body had to be retrieved from the dakhma on the directions of the Gamdevi Police which had reason to believe that death was due to unnatural circumstances. After the postmortem, the body was once again taken to the dakhma.

The preliminary reports that appeared in the Press state the deceased's adopted daughter Geeta Soni, her husband Irshad Mullah and biological mother Sharada are in judicial custody as also the doctor, Baburaj Hegde who readied the death certificate and the priest, Behram Rustumji Dordi of the Edawala Agiary who performed the funeral rites so that the body could be carried to the dakhma at the earliest.

According to the news report which first appeared in the *Mid Day* of May 26, the police were investigating the complaint filed by a family friend Navroz Jilla which stated that the Cursetjees had struck an immediate rapport with Soni, an animal activist, nearly six years ago. She reportedly started staying with them at their flat at Dil Pazir Apartments on Breach Candy. Bonded by their mutual love for animals, the Cursetjees reportedly altered their will to make her the sole beneficiary of their property valued in crores. "Though my husband was fond of her, I never accepted her as my daughter," 70-year-old Mehru Adi Cursetjee was quoted in the *Mid Day* of June 3, 2003. Claiming that the flat was hers "and I had no share in it," on May 21 Soni "locked all the cupboards

(and) disconnected the telephone lines," conveyed Mehru. Soni's marriage this year to a driver Irshad was allegedly against the wishes of Cursetjee who sought to reword his will. On May 20, Cursetjee was reportedly taken to Kakad Estate, Worli (to a flat allegedly bought for Soni by Cursetjee), after which his whereabouts were not known.

On May 22, Geeta allegedly approached the building secretary of Dil Pazir Apartments with a copy of a death certificate which the police believe was manipulated. She was unable to explain why none of his close friends had been called for the last rites, maintained Jilla. According to a report in *The Times of India* of May 31, "The motive for the murder was allegedly to transfer Cursetjee's property to Geeta's name, the police said." Deputy police commissioner S. P. Yadav was quoted as stating that a police team had been sent to Uttar Pradesh to nab the "three watchmen from the area who were hired by Soni to strangle the senior citizen."

Upset that the Doongerwadi did not intimate *Jam-e-Jamshed* or *The Bombay Samachar* of this death, an editorial in the *Jam-e-Jamshed* of June 1 concedes, "The Doongerwadi staff and the BPP

(Bombay Parsi Punchayet) were faced with a dilemma they had never experienced before...An awkward situation was averted thanks to the high priest and the trustees being pragmatic, bold and forthright." Taking guidance from a high priest, the BPP trustees reportedly instructed the Doongerwadi staffers to shift the body away from the heat of the solar panels and subsequently bring it to the mortuary outside to prevent non-Parsi policemen from going up to the Towers. The body was taken for a postmortem and returned after four hours, state sources. "The BPP trustees have acted in good faith but the mobeds who performed the ceremony and the Doongerwadi staff must be asked to explain the reasons for the undue haste with which they acted...We hope the culprits of this heinous crime will be apprehended and punished by law," stated the *Jamé*.

Mhow dakhma cleaned

A six-member team from Bombay spent three days from January 3-6, 2003 to clean the dakhma in Mhow which had been last cleared nearly 20 years ago. The Mhow Anjuman president Behram Masani was grateful to Cyrus J. Siganporia, Zubin S. Mistry, Urmez R. Ghadiali, Sarosh H. Irani, Kersi B. Bavan and Kurus A. Bastani for doing "an excellent and laudable job...(taking) time off from their busy schedule to volunteer for such work." Siganporia works as a consultant at Doongerwadi, Bastani and Mistry are self-employed, Irani works as a technician with Godrej and Boyce, and

Volunteers encircle the Mhow dakhma with a dog prior to stepping in





Bavan with D. B. C. Sons. Ghadiali, the youngest, is a college student. Depending on their professional commitments, some, from their regular team of nearly 25 volunteers, offer to clean the dakhmas in keeping with prescribed religious requirements, convinced that they are "the chosen ones" and not doing any "dalindar (inauspicious) work," explains Sig-anporia. Over the years they have cleaned dakhmas at Bombay, Poona, Navsari, Bangalore, Indore and Mhow.

In the last six years, from April 15, 1997 to April 25, 2003, there were 15 bodies consigned to the Tower of Silence in Mhow, reports Masani. Located atop a hillock, about three miles away from the Cantonment limits and placed out of bounds for military personnel, the Mhow dakhma was constructed in 1840 on land granted free by the Holkar state. Behram Irani, a traveler from Iran, had taken the lead initially. Forty-one years later, more land was taken on lease. A bungli was ready in 1885.

A road to the top, cut through hilly rock, was constructed in 1931 in memory of Gustadji Cooverji Dotiwala. A public road from one-tree hill to the dakhma was constructed by Khan Bahadur Dhunjishaw Dotiwala at his own cost and entrusted to the Army authorities for maintenance. Used regularly by villagers and Army personnel, the road today remains neglected and dilapidated, mentions Masani.

Bonding in Madras

The Madras Parsi Association's (MPA) *Directory* for 2003-2004 contains useful information including the names, addresses, telephone numbers, e-mail contacts and blood groups of their community members. This 55-page *Directory*, includes the addresses and numbers of the Parsi dharamshalas in India, Parsi institutes in Madras as well as other



important local numbers.

Of the approximately 115 households listed in this *Directory*, almost one-fourth of the families show members with non-Parsi names. Zarin Mistry, honorary secretary of the Association observes that "in 10 years there may be one or two marriages within the community."

Published approximately every two years, it "is mainly for the Madras Parsis and financed by them," mentions Mistry. Formerly the *Directory* used to be "cyclostyled and was very functional," she explains but in recent years they have improved the "get-up (with a) color cover." Darayes Dalal, an executive committee member of the Association, was responsible for the layout whereas Mistry compiled and edited the information. Since the data of their 2000 *Directory* was already stored, bringing out the 2003-04 edition required three months of coordination, reports Mistry. Though the book has a clear, easy to read and find format, an introduction from the compilers and inclusion of some demographic data would have enhanced its value.

There are nearly 280 Zoroastrians in Madras, notes a clarification from

The Mhow dakhma before and after it was cleaned by the Bombay volunteers (above left)

Mistry. The MPA which is the cultural wing of the Madras Parsi Zarthosti Anjuman (MPZA), has 143 members on its rolls. "It would be correct to say that the *Directory*, though taken out by (the MPA), has the names of all members

of the MPZA," states Mistry. While the Association accepts non-Parsi spouses and children as dependents of Parsi members, non-Parsis cannot become members in their individual capacity.

The Association has also brought out a cassette, *Learning To Pray* recited by their mobed in Madras, Ervad Kaikhushroo Laskari. The cassette includes the kusti prayers, *Sarosh Baj*, *Din-no-Kalmo*, *Tandorosti*, 101 names of Ahura Mazda, Thanksgiving Nirang and *Dua Naam Setayishna*. After the recitation of each line of the prayer, a gap has been deliberately left so that the child may repeat what he/she has heard, phrase by phrase, "as if learning with a personal tutor," notes the cassette cover. Tehnaz and Darius Bahadurji (president of the

Association) have sponsored the cassettes. The cover depicting a sudreh-kusti has been designed by Dilkhush Dalal.

Both the *Directory* and cassette are priced at Rs 50 each and can be purchased from Mistry, 12/10 Sterling Road, I Cross Street, Nungambakkam, Madras 600034, e-mail: zarinmistry@hotmail.com. Orders are accepted for a minimum of 10 cassettes,

The Madras Parsi Association



**DIRECTORY
2003-2004**



On the Ahmedabad dais (from left): Medora, Noshir Daboo, Khambatta, Karanjia, Lakhia and Kanga; (Right): A scene from *The Life of Zarathushtra* and (alongside) children rendering the *Ushta-te* song

with the postage/courier charges to be borne by the recipient.

Simin J. Patel

Awareness in Ahmedabad

Ahmedabad's popular Ushta-te Foundation sought to expand its activities last year by introducing two new features: loan scholarships for higher education to local students and a study circle for adults interested in discussing religious issues. Prior to that it had been focussing on inculcating religious knowledge and communal zeal for the all round development of community children. To finance their different activities their annual day program on February 15, 2003 was a fund-raising event when they presented *The Life of Zarathushtra*.

This mix-media show was the collective effort of the children of the Zarathushti Awareness Group of Ahmedabad, the Parsee Youth League of Ahmedabad, along with the expertise of Viloo Mirza, director of the National Institute of Fashion Technology and Kumudini Lakhia of the Kadamb Dance Academy. "The combined effects of sound, light, slide projection, dance movements and a lucid commentary had a tremendous impact and the audience was charmed by this... impressive show," wrote Ushta-te trustee Shirin Kanga.

Rao, Burzin Unwala and Cyrus Mobedji, stated the write-up commending the histrionic talents of the star cast, particularly Yazad Anklesaria who played the role of Zarathushtra.

The other highlights of the evening were the special Ushta-te song, composed by Perin Unwala and rendered by the group of tiny tots, the singing of a monajat, the report of the year's activities read out by managing trustee Meher Medora, the presentation of the awards for excellence to a visually impaired achiever, a puppeteer and a social worker at the hands of the special guests, Areez Khambatta, president of the Ahmedabad Parsi Panchayat and Ervad (Dr) Ramiyar Karanjia, principal of Bombay's Athor-nan Boarding Madressa. Thanking the donors, helpers and artistes for their cooperation, Medora gave credit to Mithoo Jesia for scripting the show.

May Queen Ball

Nine participants between the ages of 15 and 20 walked the ramp confidently in sensational outfits when vying for the title of May Queen 2003 at the annual event organized by the Sir Ness Wadia Club (SNWC). Organized at the Club's lawn at Rustom Baug on April 30, 2003, 16-year-old Sherezad Shroff walked

away with the coveted crown.

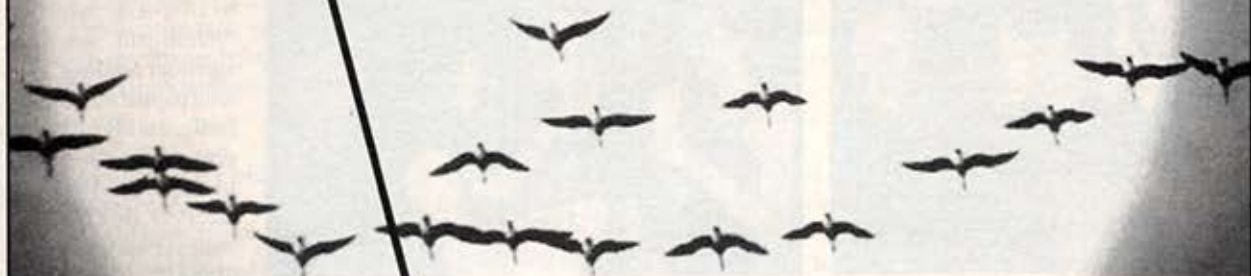
In the question-answer round, compere Berges Tarapore posed queries from SARS to the US-Iraq war. Shroff was asked, "If you had a choice in marriage between cricketer Virendra Sehwag, who is a mama's boy and filmstar Govinda whose costume color combinations defy imagination, who would you choose and why?" Shroff replied, "Being a sports enthusiast myself, I would choose Virendra. Doesn't matter even if he's a mama's boy. Things will change once I enter his life." It was this confident answer that set apart Shroff from the rest of the contestants and won her the crown.

Delna Kotwal and Karishma Birdy were adjudged the first and second runner-up respectively. Kotwal was also adjudged May Queen Miss Beautiful Hair, Jennifer Gandhi — Colgate May Queen Miss Beautiful Smile, and Natasha Mistry — May Queen Miss Vivacious. The May Queen 2003 trophy was donated by theater personality Dinyar Contractor with the winners additionally taking home fabulous prizes, gift hampers and vouchers. A special round of applause was reserved for Hutoxi Dudhwala who coordinates the May Queen Ball every year.

The judges comprised trustees of the Bombay Parsi Panchayet including chairman emeritus Jamshed Guzder, Dhan Gagrati, Khodadad Irani, Perizaad Zorabian, Sajid Khan, John Abraham



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Contestants line up for the May Queen title; (Below left) Zorabian crowning S. Shroff as Guzder (left) and Minoo Shroff look on; (right) Tamboly (center) honors Birdy as Contractor looks on



and Sashank Shekhar. SNWC president Dr Porus Turner who was the moving spirit behind the Ball thanked the dignitaries and sponsors viz Nusli Wadia, Guzder, Colgate Palmolive, Raymond and Pepsi. He attributed the success of the activities in Rustom Baug to the unity, peace and love among its residents.

The youngsters of Rustom Baug were in their element at the fashion show as the audience happily cheered them while relishing their cocktails and meals catered by Nozer Tantra. The first, wedding sequence, saw the charming girls walking down the ramp in glittering saris and boys in traditional Indian wear. The next, rugged cowboy sequence saw ladies in blue and black jeans, attractive denim skirts with tops and cowboy hats and boots while the hunks prowled the stage in fashionable jeans, hats and typical cowboy shirts and boots. The finale witnessed the girls in half sarongs and mini skirts while the smart boys were dressed in black pants, self-colored shirts and matching ties. The talented children of Rustom Baug performed a vigorous jazz dance (choreographed by Pearl Sukhadia) to the thumping music of popular hits *Ishq Kamina*



and *Mohabbat Hai Mirchi*.

The show was a brilliant display of confidence and poise, personality development being one of the aims of the event.

Rashna Ardesher

A quarterly Avaz

"We shall continue to follow the policy of the previous editor and shall use the forum of *Dini-Avaz* only for educating the interested readers with pure Kshnoom and the esoteric side of our Zarathushtrian religion," noted an editorial from Gushtasp Behramji Forbes in the January-March 2003 issue of *Dini-Avaz*. Following the demise of Cursetji Maneckji Patel in September 2002 "the difficult mantle has fallen to me to steer the affairs of this magazine venture," writes Forbes. Assisting him on the editorial committee are K. N. Dastoor, Rusi Patel, Adi Doctor and Viloo Engineer.

Through the bilingual (English-Gujarati) bi-monthly which has now been converted into a quarterly the editorial committee will put forth "an ocean of ideas to be

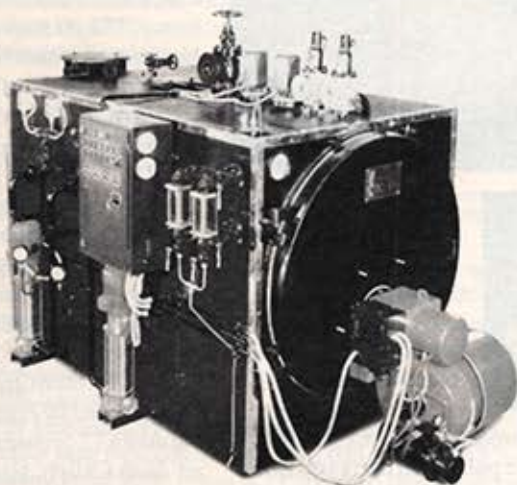
"Despite agonizing pain and his debilitating physical condition (being a cancer patient) he continued to write, edit and publish religious literature, almost to his dying breath," acknowledged a tribute to Patel from Noshir Dadrawala in the *Jam-e-Jamshed Weekly* of September 15, 2002. The "zealous, silent and tireless *kom-sevak*... was the first to light the lamp of religious fervor in my heart," Dadrawala recalled the first occasion when Patel presented him with a copy of *Dini-Avaz* which the erstwhile editor had nurtured for more than a quarter of a century.

Besides *Dini-Avaz*, Patel had also started the *Zarthushti Din Sahitya Mandal* which published books on Zoroastrianism. "He was not a scholar nor had he any pretensions of being one." Working for the State Bank of India, "he was happy being a simple 'channel' or 'medium' for disseminating religious knowledge," summed up Dadrawala.



Compiled by Parinaz M. Gandlii

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Zoroastrian astrology

Parsiana reader Ervad Burzin Atashband — an Iranian mobed currently on professional assignment in the Ukraine — had briefly attended a meeting of the international Zoroastrian leaders hosted by the Bombay Parsi Punchayet (see "A Zoroastrian Conclave" p 16). Atashband who has been holding Zoroastrian religious classes in Kiev has shared with us his interview with Pavel Pavlovich Globa whom he describes as leader of the Zoroastrian Astrological Society of the CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States) countries. The following account emerges from Atashband's interview:

Gleanings of Zoroastrianism are to be found in centers in Moscow and St Petersburg in Russia, in the Ukraine, Byelorussia, Tashkent and other places in the CIS countries. They celebrate Zoroastrian festivals like Navroz, Mehrgan, Tirgan, etc and follow the Fasli calendar. Globa says his great-grandfather Nikolie Gantamore was half Russian, half Iranian, as his mother was a Zoroastrian lady named Tehmina. Gantamore had preserved a secret text on Zurvanism and Zoroastrian astrology which he declared were a part of the mystic side of Zoroastrianism. According to Globa "they are from our sacred fifth Namdar Nask." He says that the *Bahman Yasht*, *Jamaspi*, *Behram Yasht*, *Khordad Yasht*, *Bundahishn* and other Zoroastrian scriptures are full of astrology. Hence their people are taught Zoroastrianism via astrology. "Persons who have learnt the religion and are ready for a higher spiritual life get their navjotes performed," says Globa.

These CIS Zoroastrians make their own kustis and have common prayers for the benefit of all, Globa told Atashband adding, "they are not complete Zoroastrians but with knowledge, dedication and love (they) will slowly evolve into true Zoroastrians. In the very near future we will have Zoroastrian centers that will... spread the true teachings of Lord Zarathushtra in all our countries."

Globa believes that Prophet Zarathushtra hailed from the Russian steppes — specifically from the Ural Mountains and the Arkaim region of Russia. "Our



Atashband (left) with Globa and (above) readying for a jashan in Kiev



ancestors were the ancient Aryans and we have the right and the

will to be Zoroastrians," he declares.

They have published books on Zoroastrian mythology, the Zoroastrian calendar, Mithraism, Zoroastrian astrology, etc and have translated the *Avesta* into Russian. A quarterly magazine *Mithra* in Russian is a regular feature and Globa's book *The Fire Alive* is going into a second print while a new book *Zarathushtra, the Aryan Prophet* is due for publication. However any books on Zoroastrianism are welcome as they "will add to our knowledge," says Globa though these would need to be translated into Russian. They also require sudreh, kustis, afargans, priestly clothes, copies of the *Avesta*, Avestan grammar books and pictures of Zarathushtra.

So far they have established contact with the Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America (FEZANA) and Dr Meher Master-Moos's Zoroastrian College and are grateful for her help and support. They would like to depute some of their leaders and priests for training to India. They would also welcome scholars and priests prepared to teach Zoroastrianism to their people.

"We are an open society and everyone is welcome to join us. We are against the *Gatha* alone cult and have complete faith in all the teachings of the holy

Avesta. We understand the importance of dakhmenashini and (are) proud of its scientific knowledge. Even in the remote past Zoroastrianism speaks about ecology and it's valid for all times to come," Globa told Atashband.

Zoroastrian stamp

The Creatingawareness Group of North America chose the 4,000-year Cypress tree Sarv (Sarv-e Abarkooh or Abarghooh) near Yazd, Iran to depict the Zoroastrian community on a Canadian stamp. The photograph by Arya Zartosht Iranpour of Vancouver was one of three interesting artworks/photographs received from the community, writes Dolly Dastoor, former president of FEZANA.

"The Sarv tree (is) symbolic of the strength, vibrancy and rich foliage of the Zarathushti religion. As the tree has stood firm through the vagaries of time, so also has our religion," says Dastoor. This tree is said to be very special to the Zarathushitis of Iran because it is akin to another tree in Northern Iran, believed to have been planted by Zarathushtra, which was cut down 12 centuries ago by the order of an Arab Caliph, she notes.

Canada Post provides its citizens a facility to create personalized photo stickers. Stickers of the desired picture produced by the postal authorities can be peeled off and affixed to empty stamp



Cypress from Yazd on Canadian stamp

frames to create a stamp of one's choice. To order additional Picture Postage Stamps, one merely quotes the reorder number located in the center of the stamp sheet.

Two other entries had also featured at the penultimate section.

Sheeraz Yazdi Wania of Dubai had submitted an original modernistic artwork on acrylic titled "*Kushti*." Wania had noted that her design portrays "the knot (of the kushti) which ties us together as one community, as one people."

The Patte (Suzandouzi), designed and made by a Zarathushti, depicting the glory, the simplicity and the variety of life was the third entry among the semi-



New Zoroastrian property in Chicago

finalists, as per Dastoor's email. The photograph was submitted by Manouchehr Iranpour, states Dastoor.

Chicago extension

Among outstanding developments at the Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Chicago (ZAC) in the course of the past year is its purchase of the house next door to the Darbe Mehr for \$ 301,000, as per its newsletter (July 2002). With an initial down payment of about \$ 80,000 from the funds contributed by ZAC members (and a mortgage for the balance \$ 220,000, as per this June 2002 newsletter), the property will enable the community to have a senior citizens home, a learning center or a youth center, as circumstances dictate in the coming years.

"Our religion teaches that everything starts from the thought and goes through the word to the deed... If we think like a growing community and act on it we will grow," then ZAC president Hosi Mehta had noted, drawing his inspiration from the way the Chicago Darbe Mehr, whose necessity had been questioned 20 years ago, has become "the center of our community."

Initially however the house is being rented out to help defray the mortgage. The ZAC board has instituted a special committee to manage the new acquired property, its renting, etc.

ZAC has also set up a hospitality committee to welcome new families moving into its zone and helping them to

settle down. This committee is also expected to provide assistance to families in crisis whether due to death, illness or any other reason.

It was an evening with the community for Nancy and maestro Zubin Mehta. So the Chicago Zarathushtis cooked up a superb Parsi meal and rustled up some entertainment including a Parsi *natak* (play) by Bachi Damkevala and Aban Daboo titled *ZAC gotpit sotpit!* The children's group presented a song and dance sequence from the movie *Lagaan*, and Tina Bamboat explained the significance of playing cards in the context of the Zoroastrian religion.

But when Carl Darukhanavala gave a

rendition of *Star Wars* on the saxophone, the virtuoso conductor climbed on stage to congratulate the 12-year-old musician and said a few words of inspiration prompting president Hosi Mehta to note in his column, "In that small ges-

ture you taught us how to handle greatness."

Earlier Zubin was welcomed with the *Tandarosti* prayer by ZAC High Priest Dr Kersey Antia and the traditional sagan by Roshan Rivetna and Dilshad Antia.

The well-known ZAC choir ended the evening to the strains of the *Sanjan March* and *Chaiyé Hami Zarhosti* when the maestro gamely joined the choir, as notes the newsletter.



Sweet memory: Mehta and Darukhanavala

Compiled by Arnavaz S. Mama

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Jt. Hon. Secretaries

A Zoroastrian conclave

Community leaders from around the world met to discuss the local implications of common issues

Arnavaz S. Mama

"We Zarathushtis are achievers. Our goal has always been to influence history, not to merely observe it being made," was Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP) trustee Dinshaw Tamboly's clarion call when Zoroastrian leaders from around the world gathered at an "international convention" organized by the BPP at Bombay's West End Hotel on January 22, 2003. At the end of the day it seemed that there were many more areas of concern than they had bargained for and those areas were growing.

The demographic gloom overshadowing the Indian community is not balanced by decisive growth in the western diaspora and Zoroastrian properties in Udvada continue to face the ingress of the sea with the growing salinity in its ground water likely to affect the Iranshah's foundation. Nonetheless, the growth of international networking could widen the educational and entrepreneurial horizons of priestly and lay Zarathushtis in time to come. Awareness of the dismal condition of Zoroastrian books and manuscripts could lead to more integrated effort to preserve them.

Glimpses of the diaspora

FEZANA (Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America) founder president Rohinton Rivetna urged the institution of an annual "Zarathushti pravasi (NRI) day" when the diaspora and home communities could come together. He read out a couple of messages from Soli Shapurji of South Africa and Toxy Cowasjee of Pakistan. Shapurji noted that their population had declined to less than 90 and comprised 62 adults, 14 teenagers and 11 children. Most youths were married out because of the earlier government's policy of apartheid that did not permit the immigration of Parsi girls. He hoped more Parsis would settle there so that the numbers of the community could become viable. The community there was looking for educa-

tional scholarships for its children.

Of the 2,289 Zarathushtis in Pakistan 50 percent were over the age of 60, noted Cowasjee's message. Lack of mabeds and problems of disposal of the dead in the absence of vultures were overriding concerns.

Rivetna spoke of North American (NA) efforts to resettle Iranian refugees in 1979-80. Also, the organizing of facilities for Iranian Zoroastrians to attend the Seventh World Zoroastrian Congress (7WZC) in 2000 was a "massive task" and a learning experience even though the US State Department was helpful. When FEZANA heard from a Jewish organization which resettles its refugees regarding some Zarathushtis stranded in Austria it felt the need for a similar agency. He recalled speaking to Zarathushti emigration attorneys who endorsed the idea of setting up such a body. (This is one of the functions ascribed to the much debated but yet to be formed world body.)

According to Rivetna there is constant immigration from India and Pakistan to North America in pursuit of higher education or for jobs. In the upshot services in Pakistan remain unused and the community there "don't know what to do with it," he said. Several hundred Zarathushtis from Iran also emigrate to the West every year, he noted.

Current FEZANA president Firdosh Mehta added that immigrants to North America fall into two categories—those who come in legally and the refugees who need legal help. All of them need to go through the physical hassles of resettlement when the families need local assistance. The Iranian Zoroastrian Association in New York and the Persian Zoroastrian Organization in California are the most active in the task. The immigrants also face the problem of finding jobs where difficulties are more pronounced among those who come with professional status.

In answer to the question on reverse migration Mehta noted that initially it is the wives who want to go back to the home country but 20-25 years later, the men want to return and the women don't. Now, with the Indian economy opening up, there is a feeling that opportunities are available and according to Mehta one family returned to Coimbatore "with their Edmonton home." Also, the lack of economic security is prompting many more students to return to India after their studies are completed.

The re-emerging Zoroastrians

Though the former Iranian province of Khorasan included the present areas of Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, etc after the disbanding of the USSR, Tajikistan is the only one to have opted for a secular state on the Indian model, noted Mazdayasnie Monasterie founder Meher Master-Moos. She was speaking about the Zoroastrian revival in Central Asia. The other countries in the region have all opted to be Islamic. Rooted in the Persian language and clinging to their Zoroastrian past the Tajiks celebrated the first Avesta World Conference in 1992. Since then four more have been organized, noted Master-Moos.

"In their quest to revive their ancestral religion and culture the Tajiks were in need of mabeds, funds for the construction of agiaries, books in the Cyrillic script, kustis, revival of the economy through trade and industrial development, preferably through Zoroastrian business persons." Master-Moos urged the gathering to provide a modern equivalent to the Society for the Amelioration of the Conditions of Zoroastrians in Persia which had been established by Parsi sethies in the mid 19th century to help their impoverished Iranian brethren. Their envoy Maneckji Limji Hataria had spent decades of his life in helping Iranian Zoroastrians. Master-Moos now felt

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the need for similar commitment towards the Tajiks.

Ervad Burzin Atashband, an Iranian mobed trained at Bombay's M. F. Cama Athornan Institute who is currently on a company posting in Kiev, Ukraine, said he had never expected to meet Zarathushtis there. He not only found them but realized that they "prayed better than us. Their knowledge of Zoroastrianism surprised me!" There is a demand there for prayer books, sudrehs, kustis. In five to 10 years there will be a group of people calling themselves Ukrainian Zoroastrians, Atashband predicted.

Women's network

Zareen Karani-Araoz spoke of an idea that took birth at the Seventh World Zoroastrian Congress in Houston — the Zarathushti Women's International Network (ZWIN). An electronically connected support group which any Zarathushti can join by e-mailing ZWIN3-subscribe@yahoo.com, the membership is committed to help immigrants and professionals, to publicize products, achievements and projects by giving them exposure to Zoroastrian women in 16 countries. One of their current projects is to bring at least three deserving Zoroastrian students with demonstrated potential and a track record of community involvement from India and Pakistan for a month's homestay in the US and to attend the North American Youth Congress in July in Toronto. The group is also planning to bring a youth group from North America for homestays in Bombay and Poona to better understand their roots. To get them involved in local community projects in Gujarat and build bridges with their counterparts here is the real aim, said Araoz. ZWIN's other objective is to ensure that a Zoroastrian student anywhere in the world is linked to a Zoroastrian family in the area.

Stressing that the group is strictly non-political and not a forum for the discussion of the usual religious controversies, former chairperson of the Zoroastrian Association of Greater Boston Area Prof Khorshed Jungalwala noted that what ZWIN is looking for is not donations but physical help to connect mature and younger women, "to assist, inspire and mentor."

Training priests and scholars

The need for a network of Zoroastrian priests was highlighted by Ervad (Dr) Ramiyar Karanjia, principal of the Athornan Boarding Madressa at Dadar.

Different regions have different needs, he declared, noting that Bombay, Surat and Navsari require boiwalas and yozdathregar mobeds whereas in Ceylon and Pakistan their role is ritual-oriented or administrative. In Iran, the priests look after the fire and perform only basic rituals and are now being replaced by mobedyars (paramobeds). The original priestly function of scholarship is being increasingly performed by lay scholars. In the western societies the priest needs to be a good communicator to work with interfaith organizations while providing basic outer rituals to the community.

The North American Mobed Council (NAMC), the Council of Iranian Mobeds of North America (CIMNA), the Athornan Mandal of Bombay are bodies whose rules and regulations depend on local needs, said Karanjia. The Dadar and Andheri Madressas are both ritual based with scant attention to other aspects of the religion. Apart from them "there is no authority to certify mobeds, no guidelines or curriculum except for the Athravan Educational Trust and the courses in Avesta/Pahlavi at Bombay University," noted Karanjia. That all "white pugrees" are treated alike, all are considered at the same level irrespective of educational qualifications, experience, etc "needs to be resolved." Basic religious knowledge, minimum qualifications, levels of rituals, books, etc need to be standardized and "India is the place where this can be done," he noted.

Emphasizing the need of the community for educated, intelligent, knowledgeable and articulate mobeds, not only in India but worldwide, Tamboly spoke of the World Zoroastrian Organisation-Athornan Mandal Scheme for the welfare of full-time mobeds established in 1996. He noted that currently 37 young athornans including seven in Surat, three in Navsari, and one each in Bangalore, Billimora, Dahanu, Gandevis and Neemuch take advantage of the scheme which disperses Rs 85,500 to them each month in amounts ranging between Rs 1,250 and Rs 4,000 depending on the level of higher liturgical ceremonies they perform under supervision.

To help these young athornans to widen their intellectual horizon the scheme is committed to provide adequate opportunities to receive knowledge, guidance, motivation and encouragement from scholars and senior priests by way of group discussions, etc. Tamboly, who is managing trustee of the WZO (World Zoroastrian Organisation) Trust Funds

which raised Rs 90,00,000 from two donors to finance the scheme, said, "It is quite possible that such training and encouragement could inspire a young mobed from within our own group to emerge as a leader capable of providing religious and spiritual guidance and leadership to the community."

Mehta clarified that neither of the two mobed councils in North America want to be under FEZANA control. Also, their "understanding of the faith and performance of rituals is very different. The Iranians will do the navjote if either parent or even one grandparent was a Zoroastrian." Both councils have a program for training paramobeds. CIMNA has no bar against female paramobeds, he added. While there is no shortage of mobeds in North America, there are geographical pockets where they are unavailable. However, airlines there give a 50 percent reduction in fares for the clergy, he noted.

Mehta informed the gathering that funding for a consecrated facility in Western Toronto was underway. Master-Moos suggested that cattle-rich Texas might successfully consecrate a varasaji but Mehta noted that the Zoroastrian Heritage and Cultural Center in Houston has no consecrated facility. He noted that the muktad prayers there were held in two rooms, one being for intermarried families because some mobeds are unwilling to perform in their presence. "We don't want you to change but you must understand the reality we are facing. If need be we shall have three or four rooms at muktad (instead of two) so that people continue to participate," he added.

ZTFE (Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe) president Dorab Mistry spoke of the strong liaison between their 18 mobeds (15 of whom are over the age of 60) and the ZTFE in the UK. "The ZTFE's background and backbone is religion," he noted. Despite their substantial number of mobeds — there is no mobed council in the UK — the demand outnumbers the supply. People now want to hold the *Sarosh nu patru* prayers, celebrate silver and gold anniversaries with jashans. The ZTFE has a fund for navar ceremonies but no facilities for teaching rituals which require the use of an urvisgah (inner area where higher liturgies are performed). However, these facilities may be available when their long-term desire for a consecrated atash dadgah materializes, noted Mistry. They also have a scheme for training paramobeds which is not underway yet, he

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L to R 1st row: Shroff, Tam-boly, Mehta, Mistry, Limath-walla and Tarapore. 2nd row: Kavarana, Karanjia, Karani-Araoz, Dastur, Mehli Colah, Master and Homi Mullan. 3rd row: Thrity Taleyarkhan, Meher-Homji, Savak Patel, Mistree and Dhalla



4th row: Jungalwala, Gandhi, Roshan Rivetna, Dalal, Karkaria, Rohinton Rivetna

added.

When Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India honorary secretary Keki Gandhi questioned, "Will you dip into our pool?" Mistry countered, "It will help your young mobeds, give them scholarly facilities in SOAS (School of Oriental and African Studies), give them a career path."

World Zarathushti Cultural Foundation (WZCF) president Dr Homi Dhalla noted that in the past 20 years the community acquired only four PhDs and then lost Darius Bajan to the professional field when he became a chartered

accountant. "Unless we have enough provision for scholars, scholarship will die out," he observed.

Mehta spoke of the scholarship fund instituted by the late Faridoon Zartoshty's family for higher education/research in the Zoroastrian religion for any Zoroastrian anywhere in the world. The total amount on offer is \$ 5,000 per annum.

Putting the costs of higher education into perspective Mistry noted that the course in Zoroastrianism at SOAS which has a chair because of the bridging finance provided by the Zartoshty Brothers, costs £7,500 p.a. for a foreign stu-



*5th row: Deboo, Master-Moos, Atashband, Palkhiwala and Bana
6th row: Murzban Giara and Dotiwala*



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dent. So far there have been two Zoroastrian students whom ZTFE has funded almost 100 percent plus part of one student's living expenses. Two Zoroastrians — Rusi Dalal and Shahrokh Shahrokh — are on the governing board of the Zartoshty Chair in Zoroastrian studies, though 80 percent of the cost of maintaining it is borne by SOAS and the University keeps reviewing the costs to see how long they can continue to fund it. "ZTFE has to keep funding, praying and (maintain) public relations. Hence the efforts to involve the royal family and invite the great and good of upper crust English society. It was a great moment for Zoroastrians when *Hello* magazine published a picture of Ramiyar (Karanjia) with the Queen. Because unless the funding comes from public institutions and government it will be very difficult to maintain full-time students," Mistry told the conclave.

The other part of the problem of religious scholarship is to find the right type of student. "And then what does the student do?" Questioning the career path of such a student Mistry noted that places of worship in the West where they could officiate, propagate the religion to a regular stream of visitors along with their pursuit of scholarship would provide them with a base and give our religion a higher profile. He noted that Mobed Keki Bhedwar, who had been well received by the Pope last year, has been invited to visit the Vatican again. Commenting on the ZTFE presence at various state events in the UK, Mistry noted that there is "not a single state occasion without a Zarathushti priest participating."

"For the first time in the history of philately" Zoroastrianism appeared on a stamp in Singapore, noted BPP public relations officer Godrej Dotivala. Mehta spoke of efforts in North America for instituting such stamps as part of the community's effort to spread awareness of its own religion and culture. The audience learnt that in Canada and the UK one can buy blank frames in which one can insert a picture of one's choice to create a personalized stamp.

Rivetna urged the BPP to coordinate interfaith work, participate in the Delhi meet of the Parliament of Religions, December 7-11, 2003 along with the Delhi Parsi Anjuman.

Unresolved issues

Mehta spoke of the need to fund gifted Zoroastrian children in non-academic

areas like games, sports, music, etc, adding that it costs upward of \$100,000 to create a tennis star. BPP senior executive Sheroo Master noted that the trust provides funds for swimming, sports and karate and had fully funded sports participants at the Houston Congress. But Gandhi countered, "The issue is whether we are doing enough... If the amount offered is not sufficient, they can't avail of it." BPP trustee and noted solicitor Burjor Antia felt that sports must be encouraged though the Punchayet should not be tapped all the time. "There are other philanthropists in Bombay who give money," he noted.

The BPP's chief executive officer Behram Dastur's note on unresolved issues brought to the fore questions of merging consecrated fires, unifying the calendars, adoption, seido by non-Parsis to demised Zoroastrians after the sachkar ceremony, intermarriages, high divorce rates and emigration at an average rate of one family each week from Bombay and one family each month from Calcutta. Master spoke about their difficulty in matching couples at the matrimonial bureau. Tamboly informed the gathering that the matrimonial meet in Baroda had succeeded in establishing seven unions even though the ratio of girls to boys at the meet was 1:10. People in the 40-45-60 year age group come to matrimonial meets, noted Tamboly. Zoroastrian social workers had organized a youth festival on the grounds of Rustom Baug and Tamboly hoped "nature takes its own course."

BPP chairman Minoo Shroff spoke of the need to empower youth rather than give them readymade solutions. "Why should a youth earning Rs 25 to 30 lakh p.a. come to the Punchayet?" He said he would like to prevail on his colleagues to shift Punchayet priorities from housing to other areas, regenerate the ethos of the community. "Parsis are the softest of the soft," said Shroff comparing the different psyches of India. "They are not prepared to upgrade their skills (while) other communities get into educational programs after work hours."

If the Kabisa ritual to right the wayward Shahenshahi calendar required the addition of one month every 120 years (which has not been done for centuries) why can't we perform six such ceremonies now and get it back in tune with the seasons? questioned Mehta. Karanjia said he was not aware of the ritual or ceremony of Kabisa but was aware of committees who had debated the issue:

"The outcome was to leave it be," he stated. He noted that there are people who follow the Fasli calendar. "They don't need the clergy to tell them." Mehta however was rooting for the community to embrace the change unitedly. Shroff said that the clerics have often contradicted themselves and noted that the youths are "not willing to accept anything that is not rational."

Udvada: erosion and salinity

Exploring the two problems at Udvada — beach erosion and the intrusion of salinity in the wells of the village — Dr Zal Tarapore, former director of the Central Water Power and Research Station who has been advising the Save Udvada Committee (SUC), noted that the Periyali Creek which provides drainage of water during the monsoon, goes right up to the Iranshah: "There is a respite from salinity when nature closes the mouth of the Periyali. Now a new mouth has opened." He noted that the building of dykes to stem the water stops the supply of sand to the beach. When this depleted sand is restored by augmenting it from elsewhere — a process known as beach nourishment — "salinity can't come near the village wells of Udvada." However, the funds required to prevent salinity will be substantial, he added.

Certain plants are said to provide a secondary line of defence against beach erosion. Horticulturist Dr Vispi Meher-Homji noted that the plants chosen earlier had been washed away. They were now planting 'pilu' which withstands salt as well as sweet water and has economic uses for its seeds and roots.

The community, still owes one lakh rupees to the Government of Gujarat (GOG) towards the cost of the original wall. The ongoing battle against nature will need Rs 1.5 crore apart from regular refurbishing, noted SUC member Homai Modi referring to the difficulty of collecting funds since SUC founder chairperson Homi Taleyarkhan passed away.

The Government of India ministry of tourism has sanctioned a grant of one crore rupees to which the GOG has added 21 lakhs but all this amount is strictly for the organizing of a museum at Udvada and the reconstruction of the road from the station to the village in light of Udvada being nominated Pavitra Yatra Dham, noted Tamboly adding, "The Government of Gujarat said the ministry of water resources is looking after the erosion."

continued on page 41

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The family spirit

Two Nagpur business houses — the Bapuna group and Dinshaw's Dairy Foods — join hands

Hilla P. Guzder

Their product portfolio is varied. A chilled glass of their Super Jet beer may slake your thirst on a midsummer morning, a quaff of Imperial Falcon Whisky, Pure Gold Rum, Lady Di Vodka or Marie Antoinette Brandy can be an invigorating accompaniment to a winter's tale. The elegant armchair, or intricately carved candlestand on your dining table may perchance be from Forms Life-styles and you may well round off your meal with a scoop, stick or sundae from Dinshaw's Ice cream!

For the Bapunas of Nagpur, the family spirit is the essence of their enterprise. Aspi Bapuna is the chairman of the group founded by his late father Dinshaw (see "A doyen of distilleries," *In Memoriam, Parsiana*, November 2001 and "In high spirits," *Parsiana*, December 1996). Aspi's two brothers, twins Abad and Adil, are group vice chairman and managing director respectively of what is one of central India's premier business houses.

With its headquarters in Nagpur and a turnover of Rs 700 crore, the group broadened its brand equity last September with the entry of Dinshaw's Ice cream. "We are into a 50-50 equity participation," explains Jimmy Rana, managing director of Dinshaw's Dairy Foods Limited. With Dinshaw's, a brand founded by his uncle Dinshaw Rana in the 1920s (see "The delights from Dinshaw's," *Parsiana*, September 1988 and "Dinshaw's delicacies," *Business, Parsiana* September 1999), a household name in Nagpur with an established presence in surrounding states as well, Jimmy had gone in for an "aggressive expansion," setting up a Rs 40 crore, fully automated ice cream manufacturing plant at the

Five Star Industrial Estate, Buti bori on the outskirts of Nagpur, only the second such plant in India where most manufac-



Firm commitment: (from left) Jimmy Rana, Aspi and Jamashp Bapuna

turers have semi-automated or manual ice cream processes. "It's always a tough call for an entrepreneur who has built up on his own," asserts Jimmy. "We were facing a severe cash crunch, equity participation was needed. People advised me that as part of the Bapuna group I wouldn't be trampled upon!"

"The transition has been smooth and hiccup-free," remarks Aspi. "The brand has become stronger, people have confidence. We have always had a soft spot for the ice cream as it is a Nagpur brand, as well as for the name Dinshaw. At a time and in an environment when many businesses are shutting down, it would have been sad if an old Parsi concern had closed or gone outside. In this way it has stayed in the city and in the community," he adds.

"I am very happy to be a part of the Bapuna group," Jimmy told *Parsiana*. "I feel more relaxed now, I can concentrate on my core strengths. The whole organi-

zation is back on the rails. In a year's time you'll see us going places!"

The young, third generation of Bapunas has already stepped on to the business platform. Aspi's son, 24-year-old Jamashp, is joint managing director of Dinshaw's with Jimmy Rana. Abad's daughter 20-year-old Sanayia is firming fledgling business feet in the lifestyles sphere. Gwalior-based Adil's son, 21-year-old Mazdiar, brews experience at their flagship company, Gwalior Distillers, travelling also to their new state of the art brewery, Tripti Alcobrew Limited, at Morena, about 30 km from Gwalior.

With the Bapunas providing flexibility to its financial structure, Dinshaw's is looking to increase its present turnover of Rs 70 crores. Bapuna group vice president Shiraz Gimi, with almost 40 years of experience in marketing and advertising, is "absolutely focussed," he says, on marketing Dinshaw's. The first overseas consignment of 6,500 liters of ice cream left Indian shores in April, bound for Dubai and its very first test in the international market, jostling for space in supermarkets, hypermarkets and ice cream stations which see stiff competition from ice cream brands from all over the world. "In India, ice cream is a very seasonal business," explains Jamashp. "The sale in summer is four times that in other seasons. In America, it may be -30°C outside, but they still eat ice cream," says the young man who savored a year in high school in Vermont, USA before returning to India.

Making ice cream is a tricky business, continues Jamashp. For their light, popular new flavor, Tender Coconut, the raw material has to be sourced all the way from Kerala. "They have to be soft malai coconuts to achieve the right taste and consistency," he notes. Luscious lichee, anjeer badam, mango malai kulfi, beaches (peaches!) and cream all involve the use of fragile fruit. Innovation is constantly on the anvil. For new flavors the idea starts with Jimmy and Jamashp working in tandem. Attractive names and presentation seek to touch the soft spot in the ice cream buff.

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From top, left column: Ice cream factory in Nagpur; the parlor at Sadar and at Dubai. Center column: The brewery's unitanks and bright beer tanks; bottle washer; the color and variety of Forms Lifestyles Photo: Hilla P. Guzder



The Bapuna family (from left): Jamashp, Mehru, Aspi, Kashmira; Ramin, Villoo, Abad and Sanayia; Daisy and Adil (seated), Mazdiar and Pervez. The Ranas: Dinaz, Jimmy, Zian and Zervin



Above: The spirits and the cool confections; Gimi (top) and Bhagwagar

factory, Gimi points out the milk vats, the spiral hardening tunnels, the tall freezing drums, the extrusion line churning out fancy shapes, the duets and triple treats; pre-packed sundaes and half to four liter tubs packed by the bulk line. "The entire production process is fully computerized. We feed the recipe into the computer, the nuts, fresh or dry fruits, sauces, etc get added at the right stages," elaborates production-in-charge Sheikh Khurshid Ahmed, adding that the fully automatic comet line for cones and cups can pack, pick up and place 18,000 pieces per hour. With an ISO 9001 certification, the plant has an installed capacity of 1,25,000 liters of ice cream per day. *Parsi-ana's* trip to the vast -25°C cold room (where the ice cream is stored pending despatch) was brief and teeth chattering — cold comfort from Nagpur's 40°+ outside temperature!

With around 9,000 large and small retail outlets in India, of which 900 are in Nagpur (including 90 parlors), Dinshaw's is the market leader in central India's city of oranges and in the Vidarbha district too. "Our cold chain is pretty long," says Jamashp. With a good market in nine states [Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh (MP), Chattisgarh, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Goa, Orissa and Uttar Pradesh (UP)] and a network of distributors and retailers, the company is looking to break into West Bengal as well, asserts Gimi. "We are aiming at a high end product, but we have to compete with the lowest and highest end of the spectrum. Amul, for example, plays on price. We are looking to create a niche, somewhere between Kwaliti Walls (the biggest player) and the local guy," he adds.

Dinshaw's prestigious parlor today in India is the newly renovated one in Nagpur at Residency Road, Sadar — also its oldest, started by Dinshaw Rana in the 1930s. "It is such an institution in Nagpur that if you say 'Dinshaw's *ke saamne milna*,' (meet me opposite Dinshaw's) Nagpurians will know exactly what you mean!" says Gimi laughingly. Computer touch screens display as well as describe the choices for the

customer — Snowman, Lovers' Nest, Orange Madness, Crouching Brownie, Hidden Flavor... ranging in price from five rupees for a cone or cup to Rs 90 for a delectable confection. Besides the factory-made ice creams, salesmen's nimble fingers put together toppings and garnishings in fat or fluted glasses, boat shaped containers or colored platters. "This concept is new to Nagpur," explains Aspi's wife Mehru who, along with Villoo (Abad's wife) and other ladies of the family, picked up a few tips from experts from Bombay's catering college and then trained the parlor's young staff to be speedy in service. Running the Sadar parlor as franchisee is Mehernosh Rana (the son of Dinshaw Rana's son Sam) and his wife Niloufer who have separated their share from Jimmy.

Roughly half of Dinshaw's turnover comes from Dinshaw's packaged milk with a substantial sale in Nagpur, Vidarbha and neighboring Chattisgarh and MP. Looking after the milk division at the Gittikhadan factory is Khushroo Buhariwalla, who is the brother of Jimmy's wife Dinaz. With a processing



At the ice cream factory: mix preparation (left) and automatic bulk filling line

and packing capacity touching one lakh liters per day, Dinshaw's Dairy Foods proposes to double this to two lakh liters per day, according to the company fact file.

Biggest single point distillery

The mainstay of the Bapuna group is Gwalior Distillers Limited and associate companies in the liquor business, engaged in the manufacture of rectified spirit, extra neutral alcohol (ENA) from molasses and grain, and branded alcoholic beverages. The group has an installed capacity of two lakh liters per day of rectified spirit and 75,000 liters per day of ENA at two of its major distilleries (Gwalior and Rairu Distillers) situated at Rairu Farm, Bombay-Agra Road. Looking after operations is



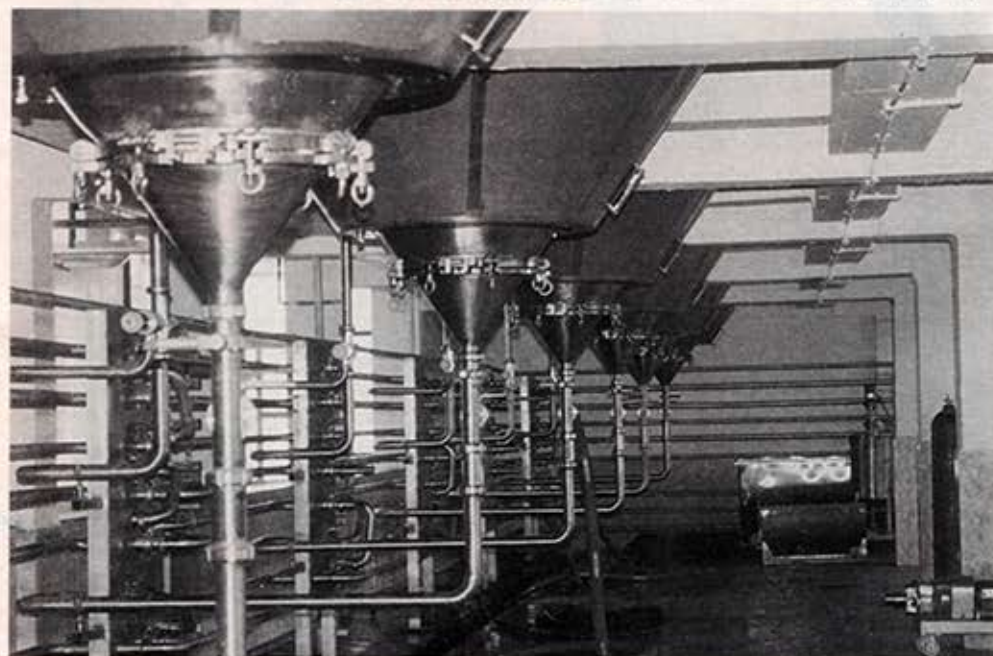
Adil who has been in Gwalior since 1981. "Ours is the biggest single point distillery in the country," he notes. "Our multi pressure plant for distilleries was also the first in India."

Apart from its own brands, the group bottles IMFL (Indian made foreign liquor) for leading liquor companies like United Breweries, Herbertsons, Seagrams, BDA, UDI, etc, states the company's website www.bapunagroup.com. Explains Aspi: "Seagrams, for example, is attracted by our quality, as well as reasonable pricing." People say 'oh, everybody makes money in liquor,' but that's not true, he emphasizes. There is stiff competition and liquor is a commodity just like any other. Adding to the tough task are the plethora of laws with regard to the manufacture and sale of liquor, excise duty, etc. "Selling in different states in India is like selling in different countries! Every state is more

strict than the other," he rues. Added to that is the poor power situation in MP. "Not only are there daily power cuts, but the quality of power is so bad that we have an in-house turbo generator and bio-gas generation for power," adds Adil. "With distillation technology constantly changing, if you don't upgrade you don't stand a chance to survive in this industry." With blending and bottling units in Nagpur as well, the group's bottling capacity for branded alcoholic beverages is 25,000 cases per day and 15,000 cases per day for Indian country liquor, according to company sources. Their IMFL, rectified spirit and ENA find a market in Europe, the Middle East and South East Asian countries, according to their website. "Our philosophy is to run a clean business in an environment difficult to function in," says Abad whose portfolio encompasses overseeing all the companies in the group.

Adding fizz to group sales is "new baby" Tripti Alcobrew, the brewery which is less than a year old. "Our Super Jet, which is a strong beer, is among the highest selling beers in MP and Chattisgarh. Rhino, also strong, has a good segment in North India while Falcon, which is light, is also moving well. From 1.75 lakh cases we

Making beer: case packer of the bottling line (alongside) and fermentation tanks (below)



have already gone up to three lakh cases a month," observes Adil whose younger son, 17-year-old Pervez, though hitherto in Gwalior is now in college in Nagpur. Aspi's daughter 23-year-old Kashmira is doing chartered accountancy in Bombay. Abad's son 19-year-old Ramin studies for his graduation in Nagpur, visiting the bottling plants there as time permits.

Forming lifestyles

Bringing diversity to the group is Forms which is a leading exporter of artefacts and fine furniture to catalog companies and prestigious stores in 21 countries, such as John Lewis in the UK, Pier 1 Imports and Pottery Barn in the USA, stores in Europe, etc. Forms was founded by Nagpur entrepreneur Rukhshad Bhagwagar with two craftsmen, in the back yard of his house in 1989. "That was the time neither the banks nor my

family could understand why I wanted to make handicrafts!" Bhagwagar gives an impish grin. "By the year 2000, Forms had grown into quite a large enterprise. When my partner wanted to quit, I asked the Bapunas, who were close friends anyway, if they would like to come in," Bhagwagar narrates the background. Amplifying his "excellent relations with the Bapunas," Bhagwagar says: "We leave each other to work on our own." "Forms has just taken off since we have come in in 2001," declares Aspi.

With factory units at Forms Village on the outskirts of Nagpur and one each in UP and Chattisgarh, as well as an office and showroom in Delhi, Bhagwagar relates: "I have allowed my craftsmen to grow with me. Penniless workers whom I employed earlier have since branched out and now engage people themselves to execute our orders which are generally very large — 10,000

to 15,000 pieces of the same item, for example, mirror frames." Post September 11 was a bad time. "We were hit by the Iraq war too, with some orders being cancelled. In case of any crisis, we (handicrafts) are the first to get knocked off!" but Bhagwagar's enthusiasm and love for his work seem irrepressible! Foreign buyers love the Bastar art, the dhokra (lost wax method of making brass artefacts using bees wax), artefacts in bell metal, ceramic, iron or wood, he notes. "We make what the customer wants — you want a Chinese design or a European design, you get it; you want a farohar we will make it for you!"

Looking after Forms Lifestyles, their exclusive retail showroom at Sadar, as well as sales in India is quietly confident Sanayia. "We (Forms) are very well-known in Nagpur and have done a number of interiors," she informs *Parsiana*. While keeping its colonial character in the shape of its red-hued British-built buildings, old churches, convents like the 100-year-old Francis de Sales, St Joseph's Convent, etc, Nagpur has donned the modern garb. Main roads



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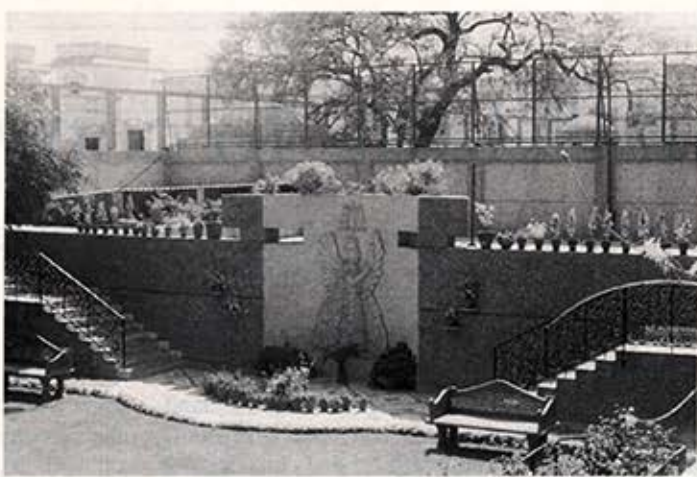
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have fortuitously metamorphosed into broader, tree-lined avenues, traffic flowing smoothly over flyovers reminiscent of senior state sibling Bombay. Dotted all over are the chain stores — Nike, Reebok, Allen Solly, McDonalds, Westside, etc — which give the earlier provincial town a contemporary look. On the threshold of completing her management studies, Sanayia says she enjoys working in Nagpur and interacting with buyers and prospective customers.

The encouragement of sports has long been a part of the Bapuna group's corporate philosophy. Annually sponsored tournaments in bridge, snooker, tennis and cricket provide a stepping stone for local talent to move on to a higher plane. The Parsi Pentangular Cricket Tournament and the Ranji Trophy Selection Tournament are among the main events. "My late mother Banu loved cricket," recalls Aspi, warmth in his tone. "She was a noble person, very religious too. Though she is no longer with us, I feel her spiritual presence is always here for us."

"My great-grandfather was a very rich man," continues Aspi, tracing the family tree. Somewhere down the line, fortunes got whittled away. Dinshaw Bapuna himself began life in a family of six brothers and sisters in Nargol, doing his matriculation from the Surat Parsi Orphanage. As Dinshaw's father Faramroze was a small farmer with a modest trade in liquor and toddy, Dinshaw soon took up a job in the Water Works Department of the Bombay Municipality. "Of his salary of Rs 35 per month, he would keep five rupees for himself and send Rs 30 for his parents and siblings in the village," narrates his eldest son. Maths tuitions supplemented his income.

When opportunity beckoned with a job opening in Nagpur as manager with Byramji Doongaji and Sons, Dinshaw shifted base to Nagpur. "He ultimately got himself into business — mining (manganese, chromite), stone quarrying, liquor shops," Aspi narrates. In 1971 Vidarbha Distillers was set up with a considerable investment, making country liquor from mahua flowers. Gwalior Distillers Limited was incorporated in 1987. "Prior to 1979, distilleries were owned by the government and leased out



Verdant and serene — the Bapuna residence garden Photo: Hilla Guzder

to private parties to run. As the distilleries became old and decrepit, the government wanted to privatize," Aspi draws a historical sketch. But the draught (changeover) was not smooth. "There was a big legal battle and we (all those who got licenses) won the case in the Supreme Court. That was in 1985."

Business prospered and the Bapunas involved themselves in espousing social causes like the Red Cross and Rotary International and the beautification of public places, especially in Gwalior. "Adil is an avid gardener — he loves working with his hands in the garden," says Abad of his twin. "I myself love good gardens though I may not work in them. We do resemble each other quite a lot, but we are not identical."

The brothers have long been partners in progress. The family live together (except for Adil, wife Daisy and Mazdiar who are in Gwalior) in a new palatial mansion which gives space and togetherness — a fountain and flowers at the front, a Japanese rock garden and tranquil expanse of lawn at the back, a swimming pool coming up alongside. Mehru calls out to their dogs — two Dachshunds and five huge German Shepherds whose resonating bark reverberates the small glass floor where the visitor stands, looking down at the ferocious-looking canines! "I am 'mummy' and Aspi is 'daddy' to them," smiles Mehru who loves animals.

"We (three brothers and two sisters Aban Magra and Pervin Avari) had the advantage of growing up together. One tends to drift apart emotionally if not brought up together. Our children too are more like brothers and sisters than

cousins. The closed fist is strong, the open one weak," explains Aspi, calm and resolute, measured yet quick in thought and speech. "I do not see myself as a patriarch. My brothers have a very important role... They are very much a part of me."

Patriarch Dinshaw himself was for 23 years the president of the Shree Nagpur and Kamthi Parsi Zarhosti Anjuman, during which time the corpus of the Anjuman reportedly rose from Rs 16 lakhs to over Rs 60 lakhs and the immovable property from eight to Rs 46 lakhs. It was during his tenure that Nagpur's Bai Hirabai N. M. Mulla Dar-e-Mehar was renovated during its centenary year in '95-'96. "My father had said that he would give not one rupee from Anjuman funds for repairs," recalls Aspi. "We collected funds to the tune of Rs 40 lakhs for the renovation and left a substantial sum as corpus for the maintenance. The Anjuman was so strong we believed nothing could destroy it for 10 years at least," says Aspi.

Strong on the subject of broad-mindedness, the man who has been Bapuna group chairman since 1990 firmly believes: "Parsis who are very religious or fanatically so should not impose their thoughts and wishes on others, or use religion as a weapon for their own gains." In Nagpur, for example, there is no khandia system, it has not existed for the last 25 years, Aspi notes. The purpose of disposal of the dead is that it should be as fast as possible, whether by burial, cremation or any other, he says. With Nagpur's hitherto considerable Parsi population depleted following the closure of the Empress Mills and the migration of many of its youth to what they perceived as greener pastures, the major part of the Zoroastrian population remaining (223 families comprising around 600 individuals, as listed in *A Directory of the Nagpur Parsis*, 2002 published by the Nagpur Parsi Gymkhana under the presidentship of Gimi) is around the age of 60 and above. Some families are doing well, some not so good, says Aspi. "Success is a combination of destiny, opportunity and hard work. Even if one of the ingredients is missing, you can't succeed," he philosophizes.

'No prohibition' to conversion

The committee formed in 1903 to study conversion observed Zoroaster's religion was for all the people of the world

Capt Hormazdiar J. M. Desai

This has reference to Jamsheed G. Kanga's article ("Priestly contradictions," *Parsiana*, April 2003) in which he refers to the committee appointed by the Anjuman to ascertain the correct position in our scriptures on whether conversion is permitted in the Zoroastrian religion.

Recently, I was privileged to read a Gujarati book, written for the information of the Parsi Zarathoshti Anjuman by Ervad Nader Shah Hormuzdji Sukhia and printed in 1905. Following the controversy on the "Parsi-French marriage," the trustees of the Parsi Punchayet had convened a meeting of the Anjuman at the Albless Baug on August 2, 1903. Over 1,000 Zarathushtris were present at the meeting. On July 13, 1903, several well-known gentlemen had sent a requisition to the trustees which was read out at the above meeting of the Anjuman. The meeting appointed a committee, consisting of some 145 members, to consider the matter. At the meeting on August 2, 1903, a smaller committee of some 38 scholars and experts was appointed to investigate on the points raised in the requisition and to report. This committee appointed yet another smaller subcommittee, consisting of some 11 eminent religious leaders and scholars to investigate the matter from the standpoint of religion and our scriptures and report, giving adequate proofs and evidence. K. R. Cama was a member of this subcommittee. This subcommittee reported on February 9, 1904. The eminent scholar in Avesta and Sanskrit, S. K. Hodiwala and others had indicated that the views expressed in this report were incorrect. On March 10, 1904, the subcommittee met and by 10 votes in favor and two against (the two included Dr Sukhia and Dr Daji), adopted the following resolutions:

"To take note of the report of the subcommittee appointed by the public meeting of the Anjuman held on August

2, 1903 to investigate, from the standpoint of religion, and report with proofs, and further resolved that consideration of that part at pages 8 to 13 be withheld. This meeting, after deleting consideration of what is stated on pages 8 to 13 of the report, agrees with the proofs advanced. After taking into consideration all the proofs produced, this meeting agrees that there is no prohibition in any of our Zarathushtrian scriptures to admit any juddins to the Zoroastrian religion and faith. On the contrary, it seems that it is enjoined to admit juddins to the Zoroastrian religion."

The above meeting had also further resolved to obtain, from some seven Dasturs mentioned therein, their opinions in writing, indicating by arguments and examples, whether it was proper to admit to the Zarathushtrian religion those following other religions. The secretary was authorized to write on similar lines to other Dasturs.

The subcommittee, at their meeting held on March 15, 1904, noted the opinions of the learned Dasturs and thanked them. Thereafter, the subcommittee, in eight meetings, considered from the standpoint of religion, the questions entrusted to them. On the question whether, in consideration of the then prevailing family conditions, it was proper to admit persons belonging to other religions in the Zoroastrian religion, the subcommittee did not come to any firm decision. With a view to arriving at some decision, the following motion was considered:

"On examining the question of admitting juddins to the Zoroastrian religion from the social and family standpoint, this meeting is of the opinion that if, after due investigation and care, and after following all reasonable restrictions and performing appropriate ceremonies, juddins desirous of following the Zoroastrian faith, with holy good aspirations, may be admitted to the faith,

there being nothing objectionable." At the meeting of the subcommittee held on April 20, 1904, eight votes were cast in favor and nine against. On a poll being demanded, an equal number of nine votes in favor and nine against were cast. The subcommittee could not come to any firm decision. Hence the chairman Hormusji Dadabhoy and the secretary Jivanji Jamshedji Modi, on April 25, 1904, reported that the subcommittee is, by and large, of the opinion that "from the point of view of religion, it is proper to admit followers of other religions to our religion. Even so, considering our present social and family conditions, the subcommittee is of the view that it cannot come to a firm opinion as to whether this is proper or not."

It is important to appreciate that the resolutions were passed by the Anjuman Committee (AC) or its subcommittees and not by the Parsi Punchayet. I have gone through the catalog of the K. R. Cama Oriental Institute and can, with confidence, say that the report of the AC or its subcommittee does not appear to have been printed. On completion of the task entrusted to it, the AC must have handed over all records to the Parsi Punchayet. Kanga may like to probe the records in the archives of the Parsi Punchayet.

Admit juddins

In an excellent Gujarati booklet, printed in 1882, i.e. some 21 years before the Anjuman meeting convened on August 2, 1903, the illustrious Avestan researcher and scholar Ervad Tehmuras Dinshawji Anklesaria had quoted several examples from our holy scriptures to convincingly indicate that it is permissible to admit juddins in the Zoroastrian religion. In his preface, the learned scholar emphasized that Ahura Mazda has revealed the Zarathushti *deen* (faith) for the benefit of all humanity. In his superb introduction, the author stated that:

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•Zarathusht was sent as a prophet for the benefit of all the seven continents of the earth (*haft Keshwar-e-Zamin*)

•in the *Avesta*, at several places, Zarathushtra has been referred to as the leader of all people — and of both the worlds

•anyone, anywhere in the world, has the full right of following the teachings of Zarathushtra if he wants to do so

•*Yazeshne* — *Ha* 1, 2 and 65 — clarifies that whatever Ahura Mazda has taught to Zarathushtra is for the benefit of the entire humanity and not for the benefit of any one country or group of people

•before the advent of Zarathushtra, the Devyasani religion — idol worshipping — was rampant and Zarathushtra convinced them and converted them to believe in one Supreme Creator

•*Yazeshne* — *Ha* 45 — indicates that when Zarathushtra gave his first main discourse, many people from all over Iran and several other countries came to listen to him

•from the *Gathas* we learn that Zarathushtra, on securing the acceptance of his religion by emperor Gushtaspa, Farshoshter, Jamasp and their families, made them spread the new religion all around

•as stated in the 19th pargard of the *Vendidad*, the idol worshippers viz Devyasani followers, had tempted the holy Zarathushtra, offering him a big kingdom but the holy prophet succeeded in convincing them in following the new religion

•in several *Yashts*, it is indicated that Gushtaspa, his wife Hutoshi and other followers had greatly assisted in converting the Darvands and the Devyasani from other countries, sometimes fighting battles. The *Shah Nameh* and other historical works also support this view.

•in para 87 of the *Farvardin Yasht*, the Fravashi of Zarathushtra has been invoked and he has been referred to as the first to think good, to speak good and to do good; the first athornan, the first to fully realize the excellence of Ahura Mazda, the first to explain God's and Nature's excellence, the first to convince the evil minded and the idol worshippers, the first to show them the true path and the first to detest idol worshippers

•from the astodan (i.e. grave or collection of bones) of Dariyush, it is clear that he conquered several countries and spread the good Zarathoshti religion there

•the *Dinkard* also makes it clear that the

Sasanian kings had deputed knowledgeable athornans to all parts of the world to spread the Zoroastrian religion

•former dasturs had also admitted children born of juddin mothers to our religion.

Anklesaria then proceeded to quote from our scriptures. He gave some 37 examples, giving extracts from the *Avesta* in Avestan, followed by correct Avestan pronunciations and the translation in Gujarati. Before these, he gives an introductory paragraph. He has quoted from *Yashts*, *Yajeshneh*, *Vendidad*, *Dinkard*, from the *Revayats* and from

“Juddins desirous of following the Zoroastrian faith, with holy good aspirations, may be admitted to the faith, there being nothing objectionable”

some books and magazines. I would quote some of the examples:

•in pargard 19 of the *Vendidad*, Zarathushtra questions Ahura Mazda, “May I admit to my religion those among the Darvands and Devyasani who ruin the lives of people?” Ahura Mazda replies, “Oh holy Zarathushtra, you admit them to your religion.”

•the *Farvardin Yasht*, paragraphs 93 and 94, in the end, mention that the good Mazdayasni *deen* would hereafter spread to all the seven continents (of the world)

•from the inscriptions on the astodan of Darayush Vishtasp, it is clear that all the people of all countries conquered by him, have been admitted to the good religion

•*Dinkard* — dafter five — enjoins that juddins and idol worshippers may be taught the tenets of our religion and their faith diverted to the good religion

My recommendation is that this excellent booklet be translated into English by any Avestan scholar for the benefit of the community and the oriental scholars.

When, during the reign of Yazdegard, the Arabs conquered Iran, the Zoroastrian population was estimated at approximately four crores. Would this have been possible if no conversion was permitted? Today, including Iran's Zoroastrian population of some 30,000, the global Zoroastrian population is about

2,00,000.

In yet another interesting book in Gujarati entitled *Proofs for admitting to the Zoroastrian Religion those following other religions, with arguments and collection of other writings* by one Mazdayasnan, printed in 1909, reference is made to the Anjuman Sabha held on August 2, 1903 and the reports of its subcommittees. The first part of the subcommittee's report deals with the question whether it is proper or not, in the light of the prevailing social and family conditions, to admit juddins to our religion.

Kanga is keen to know the views of Cama who was a member of the subcommittee and not its chairman. The portions of the subcommittee's report, which were deleted by a majority vote, are given at pages 9 to 16 of the book. The two main questions on which the subcommittee had reported, and which were withheld by the majority vote are: •whether for the propagation of the Zoroastrian religion, a limit on time or place had been fixed and

•detailed investigation giving relevant arguments and proofs be given. The subcommittee quotes Prof Jackson from *A Hymn of Zoroaster* — *Yasna* 31 stating “Zoroaster's religion was active and vigorous, seeking and gaining converts, as we see from many passages in the *Gathas*”... “By this, we win an admirable sense for the whole passage, which is thus in keeping with the proselyting spirit of Zoroaster's religion (ibid, pg 53). He quotes from the *Vendidad* of Ervad K. A. Kanga, third edition, pg 312, “Zarathushtra asked Hormazd, ‘Oh, all knowing Hormazd, I lead holy men on the right path, I lead holy women on the right path? I lead, from amongst the Darvands, those who worship idols and lead evil and sinful lives on the right path?’ Thus Hormazd answered, ‘Oh holy Zarthusht, you must lead them on the right path.’”

Jackson in his book *Promulgation of the Gospel — Early Religious Propaganda*, quotes from *Yajeshneh*, *Ha* 31, Zarathusht as saying, “May I make all men, true adherents of the faith.” Again, in his book *Zoroaster, the Prophet of Ancient Iran*, pg 92, Jackson states, “The story of the spread of the faith, so far as we can gather it from tradition, implies that missionary efforts carried the *Avesta* to foreign lands as well as throughout the territory of Iran. Tales are told of Hindu conversions, and even Greeks are fabled to have accepted the creed,

Zoroaster himself may possibly have engaged personally in the general movement of the propaganda."

The subcommittee gives various quotations from our sacred books, etc to substantiate that no limit on time or space had been fixed for the propagation of the Zoroastrian religion. The subcommittee had also obtained the opinions of several dasturs which were all favorable.

Evidence galore

There is adequate evidence in the *Avesta*, in our religious scriptures and other books, in the writings of oriental scholars of repute and the opinions expressed by our revered Dasturs of the last two centuries or so to convincingly prove that our religion is authorized to propagate and convert followers of other religions to Zoroastrianism. The matter has been studied in depth by outstanding oriental scholars.

If Zarathushtra and his followers, if the Zoroastrian Shehanshas, their reputed and wise ministers and administrators, if the maghavas, mobeds and athornans of ancient Iran can go to the conquered lands outside Iran and convert the Devyasanis, the Darvands and followers of other primitive faiths, what

is wrong in admitting to the faith a child of seven or nine, whose father belongs to another faith? Parsis often talk of our pure Kayanian blue blood. Forget it! In most families today — including families of athornans, some girls are married outside the community.

Jamsheed Kanga seemed to be keen on knowing the views of K. R. Cama on the subject of conversion. In his Gujarati letter of February 20, 1903 addressed to Seth Rustomji Dosabhai Sethna, the then trustee and vice chairman of the Anjuman Atash Behram, he writes, "In reply to your letter of 16th instant and the question asked therein, I take leave to briefly state that if any juddin, by his understanding, or by being convinced by a Zarathushti, gets to know the deficiencies of his own religion and simultaneously realizes the purity, truth and righteousness of the Zoroastrian religion and, by his own free will, admits this in the public and openly wants to become a Zarathushtrian and just for this gets his navjote done, and by his desire to be identified as one belonging to the Zoroastrian faith and, as a symbol thereof, longs to wear sudreh and kusti, there is no prohibition in admitting such a person to the Zoroastrian faith. Not only that but it is the duty of every true

Zoroastrian to accept such persons in the Zoroastrian faith and thus to spread the Zoroastrian religion. Such newly accepted Zarathushtis are eligible to enjoy all the rights and privileges as the original Zarathushtis.

"Those who, on their own, appeal to be allowed to be Zarathushtis, if in letting them be one, we cause delay or obstructions, then it amounts to knowingly committing the sin or mistake of obstructing a person going astray on endeavoring to come to the right path."

May our religion spread! May our tribe increase! Amen

Capt Hormazdiar Desai retired from the Indian Administrative Service as joint secretary, finance, Maharashtra state. Thereafter he served many charitable causes, working as honorary secretary of the National Association for the Blind and as founder member of the National Society for Equal Opportunities for the Handicapped. He was joint honorary secretary and trustee of the K. R. Cama Oriental Institute and has been associated with religious institutions like the Anjuman Atash Behram and Sorabji Ranji Agiary as governing council member/trustee.



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The Turners' touch

Dentistry is a family affair for the Turners with father, mother, daughter and son practising the profession

Rashna Ardesher

The 14-year-old girl always used to be an introvert with a sad look on her face. Her father approached the well-known dentist, Dr Porus Turner, who prescribed treatment for her irregular teeth. The father could not afford that. Turner took up her case, nevertheless, treated her mucosa (gums) and then went in for aesthetic dentistry, the art and science of giving people like her a beautiful and healthy smile. He not only changed the girl's looks, but also her attitude, turning her into a cheerful and confident person.

Turner's mission is "to help people eliminate their sufferings and make a big difference to their lives." And his vision is "to be among the best dentists in the world and ensure that my children, my son-in-law and my grandchildren follow the same mission and vision!"

The Turner family is indeed unique. It is a family of dentists with multi-specialties, with clinics in Bombay at the Gamadia Polyclinic, Tardeo, which also boasts of an in-house dental laboratory, and at Rustom Baug. Porus is the first dentist in the Turner family. He is married to Mehroo, a Master of Dental Surgery (MDS), specializing in academics. Their elder daughter Ferzin Vazifdar, also a dentist, specializes in orthodontics and is involved in aesthetic dentistry. Son-in-law, Danesh Vazifdar, though a BA in Economics, has taken his vocation seriously and runs the Turner family's dental laboratory. Porus' younger son, Ashdin, didn't have much choice since "every-

body in the family had completed their masters in dental surgery." Apart from helping his father at the Gamadia Polyclinic, he is associate professor at the College of Dental Sciences and Hospital, Indore. Ashdin's wife, Khushnaz helps her father in his courier business. Porus' younger brother, Yazdi, is a practising dentist in Montreal, Canada. Yazdi's wife, Mahnaz, although not a dentist, helps him in his practice. Their son, Zain is in his final year of dentistry, studying at the McGill University. Porus also has two elder sisters, Aloo and Katy who are not dentists.

With almost the whole family into dentistry, it can be anyone's guess what the grandchildren would become in future. Says Porus, rather sternly: "We cannot let our children decide their career for themselves. Children are too immature for that."

Dr Porus Turner's clinic boasts of

state-of-the-art equipment such as Light Curing Unit, Ultrasonic Scaler, X-Ray machine programed with electronic timer, motorized unit for root canal treatment and Intra-Oral Camera for patients to view their teeth before, during and after treatment on a monitor. Besides, all the instruments are placed in separate trays after scrubbing and ultrasonically cleaning them, and are then autoclaved. All other materials such as syringes, needles, glasses, suction tips... are disposable.



Apart from metal-free ceramics (porcelain laminate veneers), which are principally used for smile-designing, the Polyclinic specializes in porcelain fused to metal crowns and bridges (fixed dentures). The Turner family is also into dental implantology, "the science of surgically implanting 'titanium' root shaped implants into the bone, which is later attached to artificial teeth to replace the lost teeth."

Dentistry has advanced tremendously. To keep pace with the advancement is the key to the Turner family's success. They have to subscribe to the latest dental journals and books, try out different products, understand their drawbacks and advantages, enroll for short courses with leading international authorities on dentistry... But there is one more secret to Porus' success —

showing concern for patients, making them realize that he is there for them at any time, ready to give his best. His charges range from Rs 200 to Rs 6,000 depending on the amount of work to be done. But when it comes to serving poor Parsis, he is flexible about his fees. Besides, he is an expert in helping patients overcome the fear of pain, the fear of cost and the fear of time.

Porus is greatly inspired by Dr Gordon Christensen, founder and director of Practical Clinical Courses



(Alongside) Mehroo and Porus Turner surrounded by family (from left): Thea, Khushnaz, Ashdin, Danesh, Ferzin and Zane. (Above) Porus with a patient



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(PCC), an international continuing education organization for dental professionals. A researcher, academic and businessman based in Utah, USA, Christensen has presented over 40,000 hours of continuing education throughout the world and has published hundreds of articles and books. His family also has five dentists.

Born on October 5, 1942 in a middle-class Parsi family to Shirin (née Irani) a housewife, and Shawakshaw Turner, secretary at the Sun Life Insurance Company of Canada (now Life Insurance Corporation of India) Porus was greatly influenced by his uncle, Phiroze (fondly called Pila kaka), who dinned into him at a callow age the importance of a career in medicine. Porus reminisces: "Pila kaka always used to tell me how honorable, noble and lucrative the medical profession was, how much respect it would bring to me and my family..." Porus worked hard to enter the medical profession, but lost by a few marks. The next best thing was to enter the field of dentistry.

In 1964 Porus became a Bachelor of Dental Surgery (BDS) from the University of Bombay and in 1966 he became MDS from the same University. From 1966 to 1968 he worked on an oral cancer research project in India's remote villages, sponsored by the National Institute of Health (NIH), USA and conducted by the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research. In 1968 he started working as staff dental surgeon at the Bhabha



Atomic Research Centre (BARC) Hospital in Bombay. The nature of his work included clinical research, besides attending to the dental needs of BARC employees and their families. The urge of starting his private practice from his house at Rustom Baug was very strong. The dentistry profession had not fully developed and was not even considered lucrative. Porus could hardly af-

ford an expensive dental chair and therefore bought a foot-operated dental chair from Godiwalla and Company. Wife Mehroo would pedal it while Porus would attend to the patient in the drawing room for an hour every evening after returning from BARC.

Porus met Mehroo when they were studying for their MDS. Mehroo worked as professor and head of the Department of Prosthodontics at the Government Dental College and Hospital for 28 years till she opted for voluntary retirement (VRS) in 1982. Till some time ago Mehroo also helped Porus in his practice. Being inclined to academics, she still delivers lectures at the A. B. Shetty Institute of Dental Sciences (a private dental college in Mangalore). Ferzin remarks, jokingly: "Mummy is our manager. She manages our accounts, the stocks we buy, how and where we invest... She is the whole and sole. We call her 'the queen.'"

As Porus' practice grew, it was becoming increasingly difficult for him to

Clockwise from top left: Ferzin treating a patient; Danesh in his dental laboratory and Ashdin examining patient

sustain the BARC job. He opted for voluntary retirement in 1989 at the age of 48. Says Porus, proudly: "After taking VRS, I bought a new American dental unit, inclusive of patient's and doctor's chairs, assistant's stool, etc. Ferzin joined me in 1992. My practice grew further, and it was necessary to buy another dental unit."

It was time for Ashdin to start his practice. By sheer coincidence, the Parsi Punchayet came up with a proposal of constructing a polyclinic at Gamadia Colony, inviting Zoroastrians to apply for the same. Ashdin applied for the clinic and Ferzin for running a dental lab. Their applications passed, the Turner family set up two dental units in the Clinic along with an in-house laboratory in which Danesh plays a crucial role. Explains Danesh: "In the dental lab we fabricate the actual tooth from the cuttings provided by our clinics. We have four staff members. We've taught them everything from the basics. In the lab we take care of metal and porcelain restorations." Danesh has to understand the tooth thoroughly. He has to match the porcelain and/or metal restoration with the natural tooth in anatomy and in color. Sometimes he has to even mix and match porcelain powders to get the exact color of the tooth. The laboratory is now recommended by outside dentists as well.

Porus is one of the founder members and past president of the Indian Academy of Aesthetic and Cosmetic Dentistry. Presently, he is serving as its honorary general secretary. He is also affili-



Left: Porus being congratulated by Dr Tanaka on becoming a Fellow of the Academy of Dentistry International. Above: Mehroo and Porus flanked by P. Chidambaram, principal advisor to the Government of India, and his wife at the inauguration of the Tardeo clinic

ated to numerous other dental associations and is Fellow of the Academy of Dentistry International. Author of *Art and Science of Aesthetic Dentistry* he has contributed to two books on dentistry, and several national and international journals. He lectures extensively in India and abroad on restorative dentistry. He also teaches at the A. B. Shetty Institute of Dental Sciences as professor of postgraduate studies in the department of prosthodontics.

The March-April 2003 issue of *Bridal Guide* carries an article entitled "Kissing Calamity." It is stated that, according to a study published recently in the *Journal of American Dental Association*, smooching, sharing the same food, the same cups, utensils and toothbrush cause cavities. Porus dismisses these as there is "no 100 percent documented proof" of a partner passing on caries (cavities) to the other. Apart from checking the patient's teeth, Porus makes it a point to check the mucosa, the tongue, the cheeks and the jaws as "the Indian population has the unique distinction of having the highest incidence of oral cancer in the world. This happens mostly due to smoking and chewing tobacco. Infected teeth could also, in rare cases, cause oral cancer (see "Turner's tips," alongside)."

The Turner family is very religious. Zoroastrianism, according to Porus, is one of the most enlightened religions: "Even before anybody could discover the connection between smoking and ill-health, our religion taught us not to smoke."

The diminishing Parsi population, especially due to interfaith marriages, worries Porus: "We are barely a population of 70,000. That's why we cannot afford to be liberal. Our forefathers fled Iran to preserve their identity. If we dilute this by having inter-caste marriages, what's left? Would anybody even

remember that there was a Zoroastrian race once upon a time?" At the same time, he feels that in order to bring about gender equality, "children of Parsi mothers and non-Parsi fathers could be allowed to enter the Parsi fold." In the same breath he clarifies once again: "But I'd still not like to advocate and encourage inter-caste marriages."

His views on dakhmenashini: "If vultures are not available, we should find alternate means of disposing the dead without, of course, going against the religion. It is important to maintain our Towers in their pristine form."

Porus is involved in community welfare activities too. He has been president of the Sir Ness Wadia Club at Rustom Baug for the past decade, and is responsible for organizing several events such as gambhars and May Queen Balls. He also gets funds for other social and sports activities such as the Body Beautiful Contest, annual football tournament, maintaining a gymnasium with state-of-the-art equipment and maintaining the newly converted rough and uneven Rustom Baug grounds into a lush green lawn.

Porus is an active member of the Zoroastrian Dentists Organization (ZDO) which holds camps at all the Parsi colonies as well as at the Doongerwadi to teach oral hygiene, distribute toothbrushes, toothpastes, etc. He is also chairman of the Fifth World Zoroastrian Dental Congress, to be organized under the auspices of the ZDO, at the Oberoi Towers, Bombay from September 19 to 21, 2003. Says Porus: "I'm constantly trying to arrange for special concessions for Zoroastrians at the A. B. Shetty Institute of Dental Sciences. Approximately 10 Zoroastrians have so far benefited and have successfully completed their

BDS or MDS." The Turner family wants more and more Zoroastrians to join the dental profession.

Turner's tips

○The first step towards strong teeth is a healthy diet: "It is a fallacy that biscuits give energy to children. On the contrary, they stick into the pits and fissures of molars and do not wash off easily. Bacteria play upon these, creating acids which dissolve the teeth and form cavities," explains Dr Porus Turner. It should be noted that in order to have healthy teeth, it is the frequency rather than quantity of sugar intake that causes cavities. Turner has written to the Advertising Council of India to ban advertisements claiming that toothpaste can prevent cavities irrespective of the number of times children consume sweets, biscuits, etc.

○Brushing teeth correctly is more important than the frequency of brushing. Porus recommends Colgate Acti-Brush, an electronic toothbrush, which "is programmed to brush your teeth properly" or, a manual toothbrush with soft bristles like Colgate Sensitive Toothbrush.

○Use a toothpaste containing fluoride, along with antibacterial agent and copolymer to retain both the fluoride as also the antibacterial agent on the teeth. ○Cleaning the tongue with the same brush while brushing the teeth is equally important.

○Flossing once a day is good. "Learn to floss properly, else you'll injure your mucosa," warns Porus.

○After eating, make sure to drink a glass of water or swish some water round and swallow it.

A ZOROASTRIAN CONCLAVE *continued from page 22*

It was the WZO Youth Wing's (WZO-YW) correspondence with the GOG over four years that resulted in the declaration of Udvada as Pavitra Yatra Dham, stated its president Sarosh Bana. He rued the degeneration of the village with the crumbling walls and caving ceilings of its deserted houses. Availability of both electricity and water is erratic. The settled community there numbers about 50 and will further reduce as 70 and 80-year-olds pass away. Old houses are being torn down to make way for highrises, he noted. The WZO-YW runs the Ervad Ratansha Katilapilgrim lodge where guests can stay for Rs 20 per head per day for 48 hours and are provided clean sheets and hot water in a well-ventilated environment. Breakfast at Rs 25 is optional. A holiday home for school children, scouts, guides and the families of navarias is being planned in a house donated by the Bharda family, noted Bana.

World Zoroastrian Congresses

The Eighth World Zoroastrian Congress is due to be held in the summer of 2005 in the UK. The ZTFE is scouting for a conference hall to accommodate 1,200-1,500 people at Cambridge University, failing which they would have to hold the Congress in London, said Mistry. People are not yet ready to commit themselves to rates for 2005, he noted, adding that the ZTFE has decided not to go public with information just yet.

The Third World Zoroastrian Youth Congress is being cohosted by the Federation of Zoroastrian Youth Associations of India (FOZYA) and the Zoroastrian Youth Association of Poona. The venue of the main program in the first three days (December 27-29, 2003) will be The Taj Blue Diamond, Poona, noted FOZYA president Sarosh Palkhiwala. Sightseeing and day visits are scheduled for December 30-31. An optional pilgrimage to Udvada, Sanjan and Bahrot is planned for January 1-3, 2004.

Two categories of accommodation are available — single, double or triple occupancy in the 5-star Blue Diamond at Rs 20,000, Rs 15,000 and Rs 12,000 respectively for the five-day stay. There is no charge for basic accommodation offered at a school hostel. The delegates are also free to arrange their own accommodation. The Congress registration charge of Rs 3,500 per head covers three days' breakfast and lunch for everyone.

Dinner everyday will be at different community centers, clubs or restaurants. The BPP will subsidize Indian delegates upto Rs 1,500 (so that the effective charge for them is Rs 2,000), if they meet certain conditions. (All this was announced on June 7, 2003 and superseded the earlier arrangements.)

The program will include talks, slide shows, demos on sudreh kusti making as well as Parsi culinary delicacies, games, fashion show, etc. A night at a 5-star discotheque and a New Year's eve dinner dance is also being planned.

Rivetna suggested the inclusion of a presentation of the World Zoroastrian Chamber of Commerce by the convenor of the Bombay Chapter Kersi Limathwala; ZTFE joint-honorary secretary Malcolm Daboo pledged his association's support for the meet and spoke of encouraging some people like Palkhiwala to attend the North American Youth Congress in Toronto in July 2003.

Concepts, values and culture

"Some change is necessary to adapt to the changing world," conceded Zoroastrian Studies founder Khojeste Mistree, but in pursuit of some vague humanism "change should not be at the expense of Zoroastrian concepts and value system," he cautioned. Will the proposed change benefit the community at large? Will the community infrastructure be able to absorb the changes envisaged? Will the change be progressive or cause the community to break into antagonistic forces? were some of the questions he raised.

Mistree referred to the redistribution of the population, the unenlightened clergy, lack of identifiable Parsi leadership, inroads of other religions and cultures and outmarriages as some of the warts of our time.

"What's the point of building flats, saving Udvada, if we forget who we are?" challenged Mistree. He advocated greater youth involvement in community affairs, more transparency and accountability in our institutions, and a global think tank to consider what the community will need 20 years hence.

Dhalla spoke of the cementing bond of culture which has been neglected amid the religious and social controversies of the community: Revival of old Gujarati songs and the establishment of a choir at the A. F. Petit Girls' School which was invited to Bangalore to perform before the Dalai Lama and was featured on BBC Channel 4; Gujarati classes which

generated so much interest that Gujarati community parents requested permission for their children to attend; 51 girls learning to weave the kusti; the establishment of libraries at Poona and Baroda and the preservation of rare books and manuscripts on CD Rom; calligraphy in Avestan, Gujarati and English are some of the projects underway. Documentation of post 1965 Parsi history, in Bombay and Navsari, is being addressed by Hormuzdiar Dalal and the poems of Ardeshir Khabardar, Byramjee Malabari and others are being reprinted.

The most spectacular of WZCF projects however is the excavation proceeding in Sanjan in cooperation with the Indian Archeological Society which has created much excitement in the archaeological world because of the artifacts unearthed. No one had ever imagined that Sanjan was an important trade center. A mound at Sanjan is believed to be a dakhma buried under centuries of soil. A contour survey of the Bahrot Caves where the Iranshah was maintained for 12 years and representations to declare it a national monument with a proper road, due preservation and protection are being pursued, said Dhalla.

Dhalla is the man who persevered with the installation of solar concentrators over the dakhmas which have reduced the time required for a dead body to be reduced to skeleton to 2.5 days in summer as compared to the five months that it took earlier. "The *National Geographic* picked up the story and compared it to traditional cremation by Hindus, noting that the ecology of the country was being affected by the resulting deforestation," said Dhalla, thanking Shroff and Tamboly for encouraging him on the project despite opposition. Apart from Bombay, Poona, Navsari, Baroda and Bulsar have opted to install solar concentrators over their dakhmas, noted Dhalla.

Preserving intellectual heirlooms...

Deboo who is also the ZTFE's librarian, spoke of the need to conserve Zoroastrian manuscripts in Pahlavi and Persian, dating back to the 13th and 14th centuries, now in a deleterious condition because of white ants and climatic conditions. When Dastur (Dr) Firoze Kotwal came to Cambridge to work with Prof Almut Hintze bringing what is known as the E1 manuscript dating back to the 18th century, the scholars at the Ancient Iran India Trust were aghast to see the valuable heritage in a shoe box, noted

Deboo. Estimates revealed a cost of £ 6,000 to rescue the manuscript but what would happen to it when it came back to Navsari? Therefore the ZTFE gave only sufficient funds for it to be photographed. "Some pages were so delicate, they couldn't be photographed!... We're talking of the real Mona Lisa — not copies!" Deboo underlined the worth of the decaying treasure.

He noted that Navsari's Meherjirana Library with its wealth of valuable books is "caked with dust and insect eggs." Acknowledging that Dr Shernaz Cama of the UNESCO-Parzor Project is microfilming the manuscripts, Deboo urged the community to undertake a report on what the situation requires to protect the Library's contents against environmental damage. He also urged his listeners to be circumspect in their choice of restorative methods for the use of incompatible chemicals could make the situation worse: At the US Library of Congress the use of polyvinyl acetate had destroyed certain texts, obliterated the ink, said Deboo. He noted that books in the British Library are protected with funding from commercial firms.

Dhalla was more confident about the expertise available in India. Contents of the Tata archives in Poona and the national archives at Delhi were being properly preserved, he noted. But he argued that the *Parsi Prakash* and Kangaji's *Avesta Dictionary* were in tatters. He said he had written to the BPP that they should pioneer a project to put important books on CD Rom. He was ready to help with what he expected to be a 15 to 20-year project. He was also concerned about the precious personal papers of Dadabhai Naoroji, Jamsetji Jejeebhoy and Pherozeshah Mehta lying in the Bombay University Library.

On behalf of the Punchayet Dastur interposed, "(It is) not just Rs 60,000 worth of equipment. The project works out to Rs 15 to 16 lakhs." The project is not forgotten, he assured Dhalla, but they had not yet found a sponsor.

Would the technology work in our climate? wondered Master-Moos. CDs corrupt in six months, she said, adding, Oxfam/Christian Aid are aware that high technology only works in developing countries while their emissaries are there. She suggested that a "low key technical solution" would be more feasible in Indian conditions.

Former ZTFE president Rusi Dalal, one of 30 NRIs presented the Hind Ratan Award by former Indian president K. R.

Narayanan, spoke of complete volumes of the *Parsi Prakash* preserved and used in the ZTFE Library, adding, "There are so many references to manuscripts in Geldner's work which are not traceable any more."

...and adding to them

Nationally acclaimed journalist Bachi Karkaria is working on "the ultimate book on Parsis" commissioned by Penguin. With an accent on visual archives, Karkaria's account of Zoroastrian "survival, enterprise and identity" is to be all about the adventures of a people who came from Persia to Gujarat and fanned out to different parts of India and the British Empire — "not fiction, but faction," she called it. Noting that "the big Parsi story is post Independence and post diaspora" because the diaspora has "reinvented the community's uniqueness and sense of adventure" amidst a host of diverse cultures, Karkaria believes that the young "need to be talked to in a language which they understand, they need to come out of chauvinism and bigotry."

Woes on the homefront

Multiplying the figure of about 105 births registered each year at the B. D. Petit Parsee General Hospital by five or six, Tamboly placed approximate annual Zoroastrian births in Bombay at 400 or 600 vis-à-vis 1,100 deaths recorded each year at the Doongerwadi alone. Added to that dismal ratio of births and deaths, is the age profile of the community where children under 15 account for 10.4 percent of the population while those aged 60 plus account for 33 percent. The figure for the 60 plus segment is three percent in India, eight percent in Japan and 13 percent in the western democracies. Also 51 percent of our males and 37 percent of females are single. Last year there were 340 marriages and 40 divorces, noted Tamboly. The BPP has set up a committee of gynecologists and social workers to provide premarital and pre-divorce counseling.

There was also reference to older members of the family being brutalized in the home. In contrast there were large flats with single widows who were averse to share the accommodation with young couples, noted Shroff.

Tamboly said the situation "called for an objective analysis of the state of the Zoroastrian community. (What is) required is an approach that is in harmony with the elements of the changing

global scenario... We need to think and act as a united community, not as individuals or institutions with their own agendas."

However, the discussion that followed was bogged down in housing related issues. Addressing the usual bogey of lack of housing for young people who want to get married, Shroff referred to the ample job opportunities and housing in Jamshedpur despite which the population there was declining. Referring to the community's "allergy" to Bombay's northern suburbs, Shroff maintained, "Everyone wants to concentrate in middle and south Bombay." At the same time people don't want to live together any more, he noted.

Kobad Avari of London asked, "What's the hangup on South Bombay? What's wrong with Poona or Bangalore?" "If you can solve that problem we'll make you honorary trustee of the BPP," quipped Shroff.

Dastur noted that the trust bore an annual deficit of Rs 1.68 crores on housing alone, which did not include the Wadia baugs, while the affluent Zoroastrians who resided there refused to share the BPP's burden of maintenance. "We need Rs 1.4 crore per annum for repairs but we don't have the funds."

Tamboly unspooled a wealth of annual figures, each running into millions of rupees to attest to the array of the BPP's social service provisions — aid for day care, employment and matrimonial bureaus, 100-bed Parukh Dharamshalla, the F. D. Alpawalla Museum, the Memorial Column and Dharamshala at Sanjan, the Health Unit at Gamadia Colony among a host of other facilities not forgetting its 490 buildings, Doongerwadi, educational and medical aid... "Where we... have erred is possibly not having been proactive in creating awareness to the facets of these multifarious activities. The continuous criticism that we have been subjected to over the years in the area of housing has perhaps resulted in our having gone into a defensive mode."

"Over this conference we are realizing how many problems the community is facing," noted Shroff as he thanked "the many who have made us wiser." Grateful though Shroff was to Rivetna for germinating the idea of holding this convention, he firmly rejected Karani-Araoz's suggestion of the meet as an annual event, noting that the BPP administration rises to the occasion but is already "under a lot of pressure."

Gujarati Journalism - III

Starting the *Saanj*

The *Saanj Vartaman* was the first Gujarati afternoon newspaper in the country

Dr Ratan R. Marshall

The Parsi contribution to the Gujarati language, journalism and printing is legendary. The first Gujarati types were cut by a Parsi, the first Gujarati newspaper and the first Gujarati almanac were published by a Parsi.

Dr Ratan R. Marshall of Surat, a giant in the field of Gujarati literature, over 56 years ago submitted a dissertation on the "History of Gujarati Journalism." He notes this was the first dissertation accepted for a PhD in the Gujarati department of Bombay University.

Two years ago Marshall prepared a paper on the contribution of Parsis to Gujarati journalism for a seminar on Irani-Parsi culture. The paper was translated into English by Prof Ashok N. Desai, head of the English department, Z. F. Wadia Women's College and N. K. Jhota College of Commerce.

An edited and abridged version of Marshall's paper is being serialized in five parts in *Parsiana*.

The first part dealt with the establishment of the *Mumbai Samachar* and the second part with the *Jam-e-Jamshed* and the *Kaiser-E-Hind*.

...

In the course of the evolution of Gujarati journalism some eminent journals adopted a liberal policy towards politics but opted for a status quo in matters pertaining to social reforms. On the other hand, a few reform minded journals such as *Saanj Vartaman* remained conservative in politics. Serious differences of opinion took place between Ardesar Beramji Patel, the de facto editor of the *Jam-e-Jamshed*, and the new young editor Pirojsha Jehangir Marzban. Patel left the *Jamé* to publish a new journal. He did not have sufficient finance, but found a partner and plunged with courage into the new venture with the result that the *Saanj Vartaman* press and *Saanj Vartaman* journal were established on May 1, 1902. At that time no Gujarati newspaper was published in the evening.

The Advocate of India was the only newspaper published in the evening in the English language. Patel, with commendable foresight, decided to publish his newspaper in the evening. Within 20 days, the journal ran into a grave crisis as the partner, Nusserwanjee Beramji Jassawalla, withdrew from the partnership. But as luck would have it Rustam Nasarwanji Wachha Gandhi joined the partnership.

The objective of Patel was to give confirmed news at a reasonable price and be instrumental in spreading knowledge and information. Only two paise per copy was the price fixed for *Saanj* so that it could get popularity and be read by the wider cross-section of society. Half a paise was the commission offered to the news vendor. The attempt to sell a newspaper for just one-and-a-half paise per copy was hailed at, but *Saanj* continued to be sold at the same price for 15 long years. Within three months of the establishment of *Saanj*, Patel passed away and the entire responsibility came to the shoulders of Wachha Gandhi. He continued it for three decades and brought it in the limelight.

Obviously, *Saanj* had to face competition in the Parsi community from the *Jam-e-Jamshed*. It adopted the policy of the *Jamé* on community issues. Orthodoxy was in favor then. Like the *Jamé*, the *Saanj* also became the champion of orthodoxy. In controversies such as the acceptance of non-Parsis into the community, the preparation of the constitution of the board of trustees of the Parsi Punchayet, the issue pertaining to the final rites of the dead — whether to opt for dakhmenashini, cremation or burial — the journal sided with orthodoxy.

Slowly and surely, *Saanj Vartaman* progressed. Its competitive price and its advocacy for orthodoxy resulted in increased circulation. Its popularity was furthered by offering the latest news.

continued on page 52



With
best wishes
from

**Farah
&
Tanya**

A worldly view

Dr Jamsheed K. Choksy

Zoroastrian and Parsi Studies: Selected Works of John R. Hinnells. Published in 2000 by Ashgate Publishing Limited, Gower House, Croft Road, Aldershot, Hants GU11 3HR, England. Pp: 430. Price: £ 40.

John Hinnells has become a legend in his own time through his masterful, insightful studies on the Parsis in colonial and modern times. The volume under review brings together many of his most important published articles on the Parsis in India and around the world. As importantly, readers are treated to Hinnells' theories on the study of Zoroastrianism. The volume also provides readers with previously published papers on a much more ancient and vexed issue, namely, the influences that Zoroastrianism may have had on Judaism and Christianity. Collection of these essays into a volume within the Variorum reprint series is a fitting tribute to the work of a scholar whose analyses have transformed our understanding of Zoroastrians past and present.

The articles are organized into five sections, A through E, beginning with Theory and Method (pp 5-25), then Zoroastrian Influences on Biblical Imagery (pp 27-92), followed by Parsi History (pp 93-200), Zoroastrianism and the Parsis (pp 201-300), and finally the Parsi Diaspora (pp 301-430). Especially valuable are introductions to each section, where the author himself re-assesses the importance and impact for each work in terms of his scholarship, the academic fields involved, and on occasion the communities concerned. In addition, readers are treated to an hitherto unpublished paper investigating the relationship between injuring and healing by first examining the life and work of Dastur Sohrab Kutar in the context of other notable Parsis involved with medicine and military within India and then by setting those lives within the context of Zoroastrian dualistic theology. The format of Variorum collections does not allow for indices, an omis-

sion especially unfortunate in the case of this volume where such information would have facilitated access to Hinnells' very valuable data.

In the article on "Zoroastrian Saviour Imagery and its Influence on the New



Hinnells: scholarly interest

Testament," Hinnells delineates notions like a cosmic conflict between good and evil, and heaven and hell, that were assimilated into the Inter-Testament writings of Jews and then into the New Testament canon of early Christians. Hinnells then goes on to propose in "Zoroastrian Influence on Judaism and Christianity: Some Further Reflections" how and when the transmission of those and similar ideas may have occurred during Parthian times (ca. 247 BCE-224 CE). Indeed, then the Jewish community witnessed a remarkable flourish of religious thought and literature, ideas that influenced those persons who became the earliest Christians. Dissemination of those ideas would have been spurred by the memory of Alexander's rapid sweeping aside of the Achaemenian empire (550-331 BCE) (as deduced by S. K. Eddy, *The King is Dead: Studies in the Near Eastern Resistance to Hellenism* 334-31 BC, Lincoln, 1961). Hinnells' chronological suggestions are supported by evidence such as the biblical book of Esther with its sociopolitical basis for the Jewish festival of Purim, where events within the textual tradition are set back in time to the Achaemenian era. In championing the case for a Zoroastrian base for apocalyptic and eschatological details in other faiths (for after all, the ideas picked up by Jews and Christians also found transmission into other extant religions like Islam and Mandaeism), Hinnells stands with other Iranists such as Shaul Shaked, Mary Boyce, James

Russell and myself ("Hagiography and Monotheism: Doctrinal Encounters between Zoroastrianism, Judaism, and Christianity," *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations*, forthcoming), biblical scholars like Jacob Neusner and Yaakov Elman, and historians of religion like James Barr, Andres Hultgerd and Jeffrey Russell.

Ultimately, it is Hinnells' ongoing historical and statistical research on Zoroastrians worldwide that has carved out for him a unique niche in religious studies, garnered him a lofty scholarly reputation, and made him well known to the Parsis. That research has taken Hinnells to many Parsi communities, yielding not only a majority of the articles in the volume under review but also his magisterial study of Zoroastrians in Britain (Oxford, 1996) and a forthcoming book on the Parsi diaspora.

On the historical side, are three groundbreaking articles on the impact of colonialism: "Anglo-Parsi Commercial Relations," "Parsi and British Education," and "Social Change and Religious Transformation Among Bombay Parsis." The three pieces together provide remarkable insight into how, why and when the Parsis of India underwent fundamental changes that wrought the vibrant, successful and influential community of today. The economic and socioreligious foundation established through communal invigoration led to "The Flowering of Zoroastrian Benevolence" documented by Hinnells which has continued to the present, albeit with reduced vigor. Glimpses of Parsi religiosity at the inception of that period of flux is necessary for comprehending the magnitude of change, and it is provided by Hinnells in "British Accounts of Parsi Religion" — an area of investigation that could be augmented by studies on how Parsis of that time regarded their own beliefs and practices vis-à-vis those of Europeans. Parsi religiosity at present also captured Hinnells' scholarly inter-

est especially "Philosophy" which largely surveys trends within the community of Bombay and to a lesser extent elsewhere. Immigrant Parsi involvement in English politics is examined through the life of Muncherji Bhowanagare.

On the statistical side, three chapters "The Modern Zoroastrian Diaspora," "Parsi Experiences" and "A Comparative Study of Communities in Britain, Canada and the USA" probe themes of commonality and disparity between diaspora groups in different countries. Reams of survey and interview data served as the foundation for a full picture of the ways in which Parsi and Iranian Zoroastrians have adapted to new societies in recent years. Much planning, intensive travel and careful administration combined with established methodology from the social sciences laid the groundwork for extracting the information that gives us the clearest and most complete understanding to date of issues important to Zoroastrians. In many ways, Hinnells has built upon and expanded in multiple directions — geographically and topically — the works of Eckehard Kulke (*The Parsees in India: A Minority as Agent of Social Change*, Delhi, 1974, reprinted 1993), Paul Axelrod ("A Social and Demographic Comparison of Parsis, Saraswat Brahmins, and Jains in Bombay," PhD diss., Department of Anthropology, University of North Carolina, 1974; and "Myth and Identity in the Indian Zoroastrian Community," *Journal of Mithraic Studies*, Vol. 3, pts. 1-2, 1980, pp 150-165) and Hillary Langstaff (*Indian Parsis in the Twentieth Century*, Karachi, 1987). Methodology, not only Hinnells' but a survey, is addressed directly in the volume's opening essay "Postmodernism and the Study of Zoroastrianism" whose chronological framework extends from the 1880s to present. This reviewer wishes that essay, fine as it is, had been enlarged or supplemented by a critical in-depth analysis of trends in the study of Zoroastrianism.

This collection of articles is a book that both scholars and practitioners of Zoroastrianism must read. It concisely captures and reflects where Zoroastrianism and Zoroastrians have come from and where they are headed communally and theologically.

Avestan alphabets

"I do hope that this work will encourage the younger generation of our commu-

nity to learn more about their religion and culture through the study of the Avesta," writes Dr Homi Dhalla in the foreword to Bejon Desai's *A Compendium For Learning Avesta*. Dhalla elaborates that several ancient languages have been faced with the threat of extinction due to disuse. Despite Zoroastrians the world over reciting prayers in the Avestan language (transcribed in Gujarati or English), their meaning is not understood. Desai's book offers the student an easy method to learn the alphabet either in English or Gujarati.

In his 190-page book Desai has "taken great pains to explain the minutest detail and illustrate the writing of each Avesta letter," mentions Dastur (Dr) Kaikhusroo Jamasp-Asa. The formation of each of the 47 Avestan alphabets has been explained with the help of a small square block divided into the top, middle and base sections. Each Avestan letter and word is written from right to left. Desai notes that both the Devanagari and Avestan scripts have similar vertical and horizontal strokes, curves and circular patterns. These scripts were formerly inscribed on leather or leaves and then on papyrus. Distinguishing between the meanings of the words 'Veda' and 'Avesta,' he clarifies that the song "from the Divine" that was heard by the great Rishis "and kept in their memory," was called 'Veda,' whereas the song "brought by the Paigambar (message carrier) i.e. prophets was called 'Avesta.'"

At the launch of the book at the K. R. Cama Oriental Institute, Bombay on February 22, 2003, Desai spoke of the necessity of relearning the Avestan and

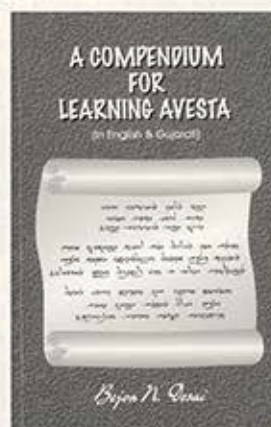
Gujarati languages, mentions a press release. In his last book *Learning Gujarati through English*, he intended to "awaken the Jains, Vaishnavas, Parsis and Bohris whose mother tongue was Gujarati; but for various reasons, had forgotten to read and write it." He admits that though *A Compendium For Learning Avesta* "would not prove very

successful monetarily" he must continue the efforts of his teachers who wished that their students teach Avesta and Pahlavi as they once did. He thanked his student and renowned architect Hafeez Contractor who bore a large part of the book's printing cost and Dinshaw Tamboly, chairman of the World Zoroastrian Organisation Trust Funds, for distributing the book gratis.

Chief guest, Arvind Inamdar, ex-director general of police (Maharashtra state) quoted from the Vedic and Avestan scriptures impressing on the Parsis to chant their scriptures daily, notes the release. A double graduate in Avesta-Pahlavi, Gujarati and English, Desai has 22 books and over 50 research papers to his credit. He acquired his MA in 1947 and his Bachelor of Education degree a year after his appointment as principal of the Boys' Town Public School, Nasik in 1956, states the release.

Though Desai's diagrammatic formation of each Avestan letter is clear and accurate, the explanation offered may prove a little difficult for a beginner. Priced at Rs 200, *A Compendium* is available at the P. N. Mehta Education Trust Office, Cook's Building, 324, Dadabhai Naoroji Road, Fort, Bombay 400001.

Dhalla quotes Samuel Johnson in his



From left: Desai, Dhalla, Inamdar and Contractor at the release of *A Compendium for Learning Avesta*

foreword, "With every language that dies, an image of mankind is wiped out." In the hope to encourage the community to study Avesta the Sir J. J. Zarhosti Madressa and the Bombay Parsi Punchayet offer classes free of cost. With six students acquiring their BA in 2002, the course has been upgraded to an MA degree. The Avesta classes are held once a week at the J. J. School premises, 2nd floor, Engineer Building, Princess Street. The new batch commenced on June 20, 2003.

SIMIN J. PATEL

Aiding our best friends

"There is a very special kind of love and meaning to be found in a friendship with any of God's creations — man or woman, black or white, Christian or Muslim, animal or human — if you go looking for it in the spirit of that creature rather than the body that hosts it," mentioned Lynn de Souza at the launch of her book, *A Dog's Life*, at Oxford Book Store, Churchgate, Bombay, on April 21, 2003. She explained that through the book she hopes to raise funds for a veterinary hospital in Goa, co-founded by her, where animals "who have no human owners or whose human friends are too poor to pay for their medicines" are treated.

At the launch sponsored by Animal Planet, the role of Maneck Davar and Spenta Multimedia in publishing the book was acknowledged. When Davar was asked what prompted him to publish the book gratis, he noted that it was "just a gesture," to support a "good cause." When de Souza had requested Davar for his comments on the book and asked him where she could get it published at the best price, he offered to publish it for her. Spenta Multimedia had earlier published a sketch book by Krishen Khanna along with Pundole Art Gallery and a book called *De Curating* by Bose Krishnamachari covering the work of 94 artists. As de Souza mentioned she knew of no publisher in India as large hearted as Davar.

A Dog's Life tells us of a friendship between three pariah (stray) dogs, Moti, Tiger and Rani and their human benefactor, the Pinto girl. The story is narrated by Moti a *gauti kutta* (village or

local dog) after his death. Moti recalls that though his first three months in this world were carefree and enjoyable, things changed when a car knocked him down while reversing. He wondered if the residents of the building where he was staying would send him away since he was now ugly, underfed and deformed. Written for both children and adults, the episodes in this 105-page heartwarming book hope to act as eye openers to animal lovers everywhere. When 10-year-old Tista Philip read the book she wrote, "Please tell me if I can help you on my own, without parent help. I usually don't read the introduction, prologue, acknowledgements, etc. Here I'm glad I did. Please let me help."

Introducing de Souza to the audience Prem Mehta, vice chairman and managing director of the Lintas Group recollected the day Lynn bashfully informed him she wished to resign after 19 years at Lintas to pursue her passion and become a full-time animal welfare worker. Armed with a veterinary degree from

Australia, "a plot of land and a dream," as Mehta remarked, de Souza set up the Socrates Oliver Veterinary Hospital in Goa in 2002. The GSPCA (Goa Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals) also founded by de Souza, not only runs the Hospital but also holds medical camps in Goa for the prevention of the spread of rabies, etc.

Priced at Rs 100, A

Dog's Life is distributed by India Book House and available at Oxford Book Store and certain veterinary clinics in Bombay.

S. J. P.

Healing oils

"May this basic handbook gently lead you and your loved ones to better health," writes Dr Gulrukh Bala in her book *Essential Oils — Your Key to Inner Fragrance*. Bala elaborates, "In our world there is so much stress that more and more people are now looking for



Bala: oils for curing ailments

peace and harmony through natural healing methods." Her 72-page handbook tells us of the benefits of essential oils — volatile liquids dis-

tilled from plants including roots, stems, leaves, seeds, etc. These oils give energy, insulate the nerves, are vital for the development of the brain and help maintain body temperature, she states. Bala not only mentions the different therapeutic plants but also lists the ailments they help cure or lessen. The common procedure of using these oils include applying two or three drops of the oil directly on the affected area of the body and massaging it gently nine times or by any multiple of nine.

Coriander is used by the Chinese for toothache, nausea, hernia, etc. "I recommend coriander as a herb in your daily cooking," Bala adds, it helps arthritis, colds, oily skin, migraines, etc. Indian monks are known to eat several black pepper corns daily to maintain their energy and stamina. Black pepper benefits sprains, chills and colds as well. In one of the eight chapters entitled "Oil Blends," Bala observes that addictions to drugs and cigarettes can be controlled by a combination of basil, nutmeg and sandalwood oils amongst others, whereas a dependency on alcohol and sugar benefits from lemongrass, rosemary and fennel, amongst others. Oils stay perfectly well for two years if stored in sealed, tinted glass bottles in a cool dark place, notes the author but they are not to be worn with any other perfume, she cautions.

A PhD from the Open University of Complementary Medicines, Calcutta, Bala lectures extensively on holistic healing. Kaika Clubwala, a meditation instructor at the Chopra Center for Well Being, New York, writes that Bala's "healing courses have had a profound impact on the quality of both my professional and personal life. Her humility, sincerity, wisdom and dedication are



Lynn de Souza

evident through all her teachings." Bala has also published a book called *Crytals — A Relationship*, written at the same time as *Essential Oils*, "a culmination of so many queries from my students in India and the US.... People have reached a point in their spiritual awakening and are more than ready to trust the magical healing properties that lie in crystals and oils."

"I do hope you have enjoyed reading this book and will be able to connect with your own inner fragrance," the author concludes. Anyone seeking guidance can contact Dr Bala between 7.30 to 9.30 a.m. or 9 to 10 p.m. at 23827812. Priced at an affordable Rs 40, the handbook makes easy and informative reading. The book is published by Suman Book Centre, 88, Princess Street, Bombay 400002. S. J. P.

A happy home

"The essays which comprise the book are full of earthy wisdom, written in a direct simple style. In a fast changing world where values are being eroded, there is much that can be gained by reading this book," wrote the late Nani Palkhivala in appreciation of the first edition of Marzban Giara's translation of the late Dastur Khurshed Dabu's *Keys to Happy Family Life*. The book, originally published in Gujarati in 1959, comprised of 53 articles written by Dabu in the Nari Jagat column of the *Jam-e-Jamshed*. Inspired by Dabu's "ideas of universal value," Giara translated the book in 1991, "for the benefit of English speaking people the world over." The second edition of the book has been printed in 2003.

Giara mentions that the 53 essays are keys to the "treasure house of worldly wisdom," based on Dabu's experience of a happy family life. A vegetarian since the age of 13, Dabu in an essay entitled "The Strength of Self Control" states that he who does not exercise restraint over his passions becomes weak of character. Since Dabu wanted to pursue higher education after his marriage, he did not converse with his wife for four years, he remarks. They corresponded and met as distant friends.

"Today even before the engagement, liberties are taken. Such vanity is dangerous. Passions need to be curbed suitably," he enforces.

Shakespeare's Shrew was made to utter by her husband that, "the sun rises at midnight." She did as she was told, but Dabu believes that to site this as an example of compatibility would be absurd. He is of the view that if both partners have an identical nature there is more likelihood of a clash. Each individual has his unique flavor and qualities. He writes that despite becoming a graduate, professor, principal and dastur he hasn't acquired the common sense or natural wisdom of his wife.

Noting the different ways to deal with rebellious children, Dabu suggests that a rule should be made — "free food at the dinner table should be offered to those who by good conduct obey their parents' orders. Those who do not do so will not get food." Similarly all wants should be dealt with firmly. "Within a few days the storm will subside," he assures.

Principal of the Surat Parsi Orphanage in 1919, despite his commitments Dabu would stitch or patch clothes and bedsheets for poor orphan students along with his wife on Sundays, mentions the book. In 1948 he was appointed principal of the M. F. Cama Athornan Institute and in 1946 became High Priest of the A. H. Wadia Atas Bahram.

Dabu's articles make easy reading but as best put by Palkhivala, "readers may not always agree with the views expressed, but that in no way detracts from the value of the book."

Priced at Rs 30 *Keys To Happy Family Life* can be purchased from Marzban Giara, Dhunmai Buliding, 667, Lady Jehangir Road, Parsi Colony, Dadar, Bombay 400014. Tel: 24166204.

S. J. P.

Basic questions

"This precious handy guide is of immense value not only to a child, but also to elders seeking re-

ligious knowledge. As most modern day Zoroastrian children do not know Gujarati, this book fulfills a long felt need for a book in English..." writes Ervad Rustom Panthaki, ex principal of the Athornan Boarding Madressa, Dadar, Bombay in his foreword to Marzban Giara's translation of the late Ervad Burjorji Bajan's *Navjot Shikshak*. Giara

hopes that the "practical wisdom" gained through this 127-page compact handbook will help the reader, "lead a happier, more purposeful life."

The *Navjote Shikshak* was first published in 1899, notes Panthaki. Twelve editions of the book were published in Gujarati, he adds, but Giara's is the first to be

published in English. Some of the topics discussed in a question-answer format include the meaning of God, fire, religion, heaven and hell, sudreh-kusti, etc. To prove the existence of God, Bajan declares, "a gardener sows seeds and supplies water, but who makes the seed germinate and grow into a tree?" It is the Creator's doing, he asserts. "Whatever Zarathushtra of Bactria had taught is Godly, righteous and pure," he quotes Lord Byron. Fire, Bajan informs us, was discovered by King Hoshang of the Peshdadian dynasty. Once while hunting he threw a stone at a snake. It missed the target but struck another stone, which created fire. Pleased with his finding, Hoshang carried the fire to his town, where he performed a jashan called Jashne Sadeh, as mentioned in the *Shah Nameh*.

Born in Surat, Bajan acquired his preliminary education in Avesta, Pahlavi and Farsi. He came to Bombay at the age of 21 where he was able to study the languages further. He served the J. N. Petit Orphanage, Parel, as a Bhanter teacher and religious instructor for 30 years after which he was asked to be the principal of the newly founded Madressa in Dadar in 1919.

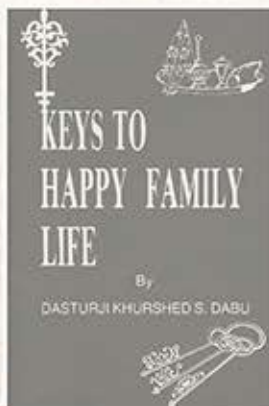
The simple question-answer format in the book makes it useful for children being initiated in the faith. Priced at Rs 30, the book is available from the author at Dhunmai Building, 667, Lady Jehangir Road, Parsi Colony, Dadar, Bombay 400014. Tel: 24166204. S. J. P.



THE NAVJOTE GUIDE

by

Ervad Burjorji Erachji Bajan



The age of Zoroastrian brides (as listed in this issue) ranged between 22 and 45 years, the arithmetic mean (the total number of individual ages divided by the total number of brides) being 28 years. The corresponding figures for the grooms were 25 and 54 years, averaging at 31 years.

There were eight babies born in May as versus the death figure of 72. Eleven of the 20 heart disease victims were in the 80+ age bracket. Twelve lives were lost to pneumonia and lung disease, whereas septicemia claimed nine Zoroastrians. Cancer took a toll of seven patients and brain disease, six. Kidney failure and old age/general debility felled three persons each and diabetes, two. Epilepsy, AIDS, hypoxia (diminished amount of oxygen in the tissues), cyanosis (a bluish tinge under the skin, nails and lips), liver disease, hypertension, hypothyroidism (a group of symptoms caused by the deficiency of thyroid secretion), cachexia (malnutrition), urinary tract infection, gangrene and hyperkalemia (excessive potassium in the blood) were the isolated cases registered in May. The community lost a 73-year-old male who was strangled to death. The age range fluctuated between 49 and 100 years. The Zoroastrian life expectancy at birth for May, in Bombay, was 76 years.

The data on births, marriages and deaths has been compiled from information supplied by various newsletters and anjuman in India and abroad, courts and hospitals. This information is not always complete or consistent: we are unable to carry data from areas where the anjuman do not furnish the particulars; the birth figures for Bombay are supplied by two hospitals — births in suburban hospitals and private nursing homes are not included unless individuals send us information together with a copy of the birth certificate. There may be an inadvertent repetition of names in the marriage list when a civil marriage precedes a religious ceremony. In the breakup of deaths according to illnesses, especially of the elderly, death is often due to a combination of

several diseases.

If readers have any births/marriages/deaths they would like published, some proof to ensure the veracity of the report would be required. We are sure our readers would appreciate this requirement and cooperate with us.

BANGALORE

DIED

Kali Dinshaw Cawasji (71), husband of Jasmine and father of Dinshaw and Kamal on May 19, 2003

BOMBAY

BORN

A girl, *Mazishta*, to Armin and Xercis Sumariwala; March 16
A girl, *Pahishta*, to Hotokshi and Mehernosh Zaveri, sister to Burjis; May 3
A boy to Urmila and Porus Peshotan; May 7
A boy to Shernaz and Kayomar Palkhiwalla; May 9
A girl to Kayan and Jamshid Pandole; May 11
A boy to Persis and Nozar Bharucha; May 12
A girl to Dinaz and Kayomars Kapadia; May 13
A boy to Varsha and Aareh Patel; May 29
A girl to Zarin and Hoshedar Pochara; May 29

MARRIED

Gulshan Soli Dalal and *Farhad Behram Pagdiwala* of Poona; March 21
Gordafreed Rohinton Balsara of New York, USA and *Daravus Jehangir Gardin* of Jamshedpur; April 18
Anahita Sam Amrolia and *Farzan Darius Marshall* of Calicut; April 19
Jennifer Phiroze Batliwalla and *Khushru Marazban Khandhadia*; April 20
Anahita Noshir Irani and *Kayzad Sirus Eghlim*; April 22
Dilshad Jehangir Umrigar and *Nozer Jal Bhatena*; April 27
Venita Keki Baam and *Mahiar Mancherji Daver*; April 28
Tanaz Jehanbux Mistry and *Khushru Hormazdiar Bharucha*; May 5
Manaz Shapur Delkhan and *Hanoze Aspiandiar Irani*; May 9

Vahbiz Kersi Jamadar and *Rushad Darius Shroff*; May 9
Dilnaz Khodad Kola and *Shahrukh Jamshedji Sanjana*; May 10
Jennifer Daravus Chothia and *Rayomand Rohinton Kasad*; May 11
Homai Sam Irani and *Khushroo Behramshaw Mogal*; May 12
Persis Lavji Mistry and *Tushad Percy Driver*; May 18
Shiraz Jal Unwalla and *Farhad Mohtoo Rustonji*; May 19
Franak Soli Bhatena and *Eric Jamshed Kotwal*; May 20
Zenobia Meherwan Colabawalla and *Farhad Adi Motafram*; May 25
Mahrukh Dhanjisha Mehta and *Sam Faramroze Patell*; May 27
Armaitry Nariman Adajania and *Sarosh Rusi Sherdiwala* of Toronto, Canada; May 27

DIED

Behroze Farokh Baria (50), residing at R/32, Nowroz Baug, Lalbaug, 400012; April 30
Jer Ardeshir Shroff (97), Eddie Hse, Peddar Rd, 400026; April 30
Nergish Ardeshir Dastoor (82), A/62/403, Meghdoot Co-op Hsg Soc, Anand Ngr, Dahisar (E), 400068; May 1
Piloo Gustadji Kaka (66), 19, Gadiwalla Hse, Gilder Lane, Off Lamington Rd, 400008; May 2
Amy Marzban Mehta (70), 8, Sethna Bhabha Bldg, B. Jaykar Marg, 400002; May 2
Fali Jehangir Lakdawalla (71), 1/7, Rustom Baug, Victoria Rd, Byculla, 400027; May 3
Daulat Ardeshir Irani (58), 12/A, Queens Croft Co-op Hsg Soc, Baptista Rd, Vile Parle (W), 400058; May 4
Shavak Behram Jehangir (100), 796, Jame Jamshed Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; May 4
Jaloo Bejonji Kanga (75), 3/2, Marine Chmbs, Near Gol Masjid, 400020; May 4
Ami Burjor Tantra (88), D, Petit Bldg, Dinbai Petit St, Grant Rd, 400007; May 4

Edulji Bomanji Desai (85), 26/2, Petit Sanatorium, A. K. Marg, 400026; May 5
Manek Pallonji Manekshaw (82), C/o P. H. Mirza, Nadirshaw Dinshaw Bldg, 4, Babulnath Rd, 400007; May 6
Homi Ardeshir Press (91), 631, Meher Villa, M. Joshi Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; May 6
Sheru Minoo Ichhaporia (73), B/1, 203, Sukhshital Hsg Soc, Ghorbunder Rd, Manpada, Thane (W), 421204; May 7
Dinoo Pestonji Sethna (84), 690, Dinshaw Master Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; May 7
Bapai Noshir Surti (97), 51, Valentina, Gamadia Rd, 400026; May 7
Amy Nadirsha Umrigar (83), 786, Khareghat Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; May 7
Keki Phirozsha Wadia (62), Amboli Phatak, Indra Ngr, Andheri (E), 400069; May 7
Burjor Jamshedji Billimoria (77), Railway View, Uranwala St, Grant Rd, 400007; May 8
Nariman Ratanshaw Cooper (74), 15/5, Rustom Baug, Victoria Rd, Byculla, 400027; May 8
Mehervanji Nusserwanji Dalal (92), 808, Khushnam, Dr Ambedkar Rd, Dadar, 400014; May 8
Nergis Rustom Sarkary (70), 17, Nayadaur Co-op Hsg Soc Ltd, Amboli Naka, Jogeshwari (W), 400102; May 8
Piroja Rashid Irani (83), E/5, Godrej Baug, Off Napean Sea Rd, 400036; May 9
Silloo Soli Mistry (75), Daruwala Bldg, French Bridge, Grant Rd, 400007; May 9
Zarin Keki Mody (78), 622, Lady Jehangir Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; May 9
Rustom Sorab Bilimoria (84), 17-D/32, Rustom Baug, Victoria Rd, Byculla, 400027; May 10
Jamshed Ruttonji Contractor (85), 111, Bennett Villa, 27, Wodehouse Rd, 400001; May 10
Freny Dara Govekar (76), 703, Sagar View, Malad (W), 400095; May 10
Morad Karamulla Rahmani (75), 11, Radha Bhavan, H. Adenwalla Rd, Matunga,

400019; May 10
Mehru Behram Taraporvala (80), 30, Krishna Apts, D. Burfiwala Rd, Andheri (W), 400058; May 10
Freny Rusi Bastawala (70), Gangadevi Bhavan, Uranwala St, Grant Rd, 400007; May 11
Sheru Dhunjishaw Mistry (88), 9, Radhe Niwas, 36th Rd, Bandra, 400050; May 11
Tehmi Dhunjisha Cooper (80), B/10, Rosary Hse, Gunpowder Lane, Dockyard Rd, Mazgaon, 400010; May 12
Roshan Jehangir Kermani (67), H/21, Nowroz Baug, Lalbaug, 400012; May 12
Mehraban Khodayar Zendi (58), 7/B, Old Wadia Bldg, J. S. S. Rd, Chandanwadi, 400002; May 12
Jal Jamshedji Karma (82), 22, Cama Bldg, Marzban Clny, Gilder Lane, 400008; May 13
Gool Rustomji Vajifdar (92), F. S. Parukh Dharamshala, Hughes Rd, 400007; May 13
Manijeh Homi Chinoy (90), 3/9, Rustom Baug, Victoria Rd, Byculla, 400027; May 14
Keki Rustom Irani (68), 101, Dinshaw Baug, Irani Wadi, Mazgaon, 400010; May 14
Hilla Dosabhai Joshi (75), 696/A, Dr Dinshaw Master Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; May 14
Darab Hormusji Masani (78), Malegaonwala Boyce Bldg, 669, Katrak Rd, Wadala, 400031; May 14
Nargish Jahangir Wankadia (85), 784/A, M. Joshi Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; May 14
Themina Manecksha Chergeman (89), P-22, Godrej Baug, Off Nepean Sea Rd, 400026; May 16
Sam Nariman Bajan (73), Najamai Mans, 761, M. Joshi Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; May 18
Kola Sammy Gheesta (83), 84/A, Nawab Bldg, N. Bharucha Marg, Grant Rd, 400007; May 18
Munchi Hormusji Khajotia (67), J-11, Cusrow Baug, S. B. Rd, 400039; May 18
Behli Eruchshaw Bhathena (77), B-17, Jer Baug, Dr Ambedkar Rd, Byculla, 400027; May 19
Minoo Dhunjishaw Divecha (65), B/3, Bai Navajbai Contractor Baug, Mori Rd, Mahim, 400014; May 19
Seyroos Khodayar Sotadian

FIGURES AT A GLANCE*									
	Bombay			India			World		
	This issue	2002*	2003	This issue	2002*	2003	This issue	2002*	2003
BIRTHS									
Boys	4	77	22	—	5	1	4	45	3
Girls	5	103	21	3	6	5	3	25	4
MARRIAGES									
Parsi	19	210	91	—	17	4	2	22	2
INTERCOMMUNAL									
Males married out	—	46	—	—	1	—	—	4	—
Females married out	—	49	—	—	2	—	2	8	2
DEATHS									
CONSIGNED									
Males	34	451	176	4	79	25	3	36	12
Females	40	441	169	9	80	28	1	32	6
CREMATED									
Males	—	9	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Females	—	17	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

*Running totals for 2002 (January 2002-June 2003 issues)

○Running totals for 2003 (March 2003-June 2003 issues)

Overseas deaths are listed in the consigned column as Parsiana does not have a breakup of those cremated.

*These figures pertain to information provided to or collected by Parsiana. They do not represent the total number of births, marriages and deaths in the Zoroastrian community in India and abroad.

*Running totals for 2002 (January 2002-June 2003 issues)

○Running totals for 2003 (March 2003-June 2003 issues)

Overseas deaths are listed in the consigned column as Parsiana does not have a breakup of those cremated.

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(52), 6/B-13, Dina Mans, Balaram St, Grant Rd, 400007; May 19
Adi (Ardeshir) Khurshed Cursetji (73), W-65/3, Dil-Prazir, B. Desai Rd, Warden Rd, 400036; May 20
Jamshed Sorab Irani (80), G/15, Munshiff Bldg, Captain Clny, 400034; May 20
Kaikhushru Rustamji Mistry (91), Taher Bldg, Jalbhoy St, Grant Rd, 400007; May 20
Najan Faramroze Pavri (90), C/o Mr K. F. Sirwalla, 5, Papa Bldg, Mori Rd, Mahim, 400016; May 20
Homi Dinshaw Irani (80), 16, Name Sing Chawl, Subash Ngr, Jogeshwari (E), 400060; May 21
Dinyar Cawasji Panthaky (83), Faredoon Ter, 676, Katrak Rd, Wadala, 400031; May 21
Sam Fakirsha Daruvala (73), E-501/162, Aribant Villa, 15th Rd, Chembur, 400071; May 23
Rustomji Dinshawji Wadia (84), 554/B, Kanaya Bhuvan, Chira Bazar, 400002; May 23
Rati Homi Bharucha (80), 635, Mistry Bldg, Dhobitalao, 400002; May 24
Faramroze Jivanji Lakadia (79), Jehangir Mans, 75, Hughes Rd, 400007; May 24
Snober Homi Mahava (88), 16-5, Rustom Baug, Victoria

Rd, Byculla, 400027; May 25
Maharukh Parvez Buhariwalla (54), B/14, Rosary Hse, Gunpowder Lane, Mazgaon, 400010; May 26
Sherry Nari Guzder (81), 11, Hampton Court, Wodehouse Rd, Colaba, 400005; May 26
Khorshed Ratan Karanjia (89), Tata Mills Co-op Hsg Soc, 3/20, Elphinstone Rd, Parel, 400012; May 26
Aspi Adi Damania (54), Gulshan Ter, 643, Rd no 9, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; May 27
Moti Phiroz Dastoor (82), Palia Mans, 622, Lady Jehangir Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; May 27
Behram Minocher Meherhomji (80), 63-B, Tahree Heights, Petit Hall Compd, 66, Nepean Sea Rd, 400006; May 27
Dolly Nariman Rana (78), Meherbanu Wadia Bldg, 764-D, Jame Jamshed Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; May 27
Ruby Hoshang Billimoria (54), 30, Sethna Bldg, Nowroji Seth St, Thakurdwar, 400002; May 28
Parvez Homi Mistry (49), S-10, Godrej Baug, Off Nepean Sea Rd, 400026; May 29
Phiroze Hormusji Patel (67), 3, Cama Bldg, N. M. Joshi

Marg, Lower Parel (E), 400012; May 29
Aspi Jaleger Driver (56), 16/7, Old Dubash Bldg, Gamadia Clny, Tardeo, 400007; May 30
Goolcher Yezdi Masalawala (54), B/404, Simla Hse, Nepean Sea Rd, 400036; May 30
Tehmi Rustom Press (76), 5/22, A. H. Wadia Baug, Parel Tank Rd, 400033; May 30
Tehmina Gev Surti (85), 7, Bhiwandiwalla Bldg, Parsi Charitable Block, Doodhnaka, Kalyan, 421301; May 30

CALCUTTA

DIED

Tehmina Hoshang Mehta (99), mother of Mini and Meher; March 21

HYDERABAD

BORN

A girl, *Freyana*, to *Khushnum* and *Riyaz Buhariwalla*, sister to *Sanaca*; April 18

MADRAS

DIED

Dilnavaz Jal Nalladaru (82); May 28

MHOW

DIED

Farouk F. Bulsara (62), husband of *Persis*; March 24

NASHIK

DIED

Hoshi Cawas Patel; May 1**SECUNDERABAD**

BORN

A girl, *Shenelle*, to *Susan* and *Sharukh Mody*; February 11

DIED

Soona Rusi Karai (84), mother of *Keki* and *Kali*; May 22*Jeany Shapoor Vatcha* (79), mother of *Feroze*, *Farhad* and *Noshir*; May 25*Hosi Hirjibhai Hormusji* (84), brother of *Fali* and *Amavaz*; May 30*Dolly Minoo Khambatta* (90), mother of *Sarosh*, *Khorshed*, *Nargish* and *Mehernosh*; May 31**SURAT**

DIED

Homay Bamansha Ilavia (70), Village *Valia*, Dist *Bharuch*, via *Ankleshwar*, 393135; May 2*Tehmina Hormajsha Patel* (92), 1/1033-34, *Choki St.*, *Nanpura*, 395001; May 3*Bhikhaji Hiraji Jabbar* (90), Old *Agiary Mohallo*, Village *Bhatha*, 394510; May 12
Banoobai Dosabhai Jabbar (92), *Khadi Mohallo*, *Borbhatha*, *Taluka Choryasi*, Dist *Surat*; May 28
Hillamai Manchershah Mehta (80), *Parsi Wad*, Near *Agiary*, *Dumas*, 394550; May 30**VAPI**

BORN

A girl, *Zenia*, to *Khushnaaz* and *Kaizad Jamshedji*; February 5**CANADA****Ontario**

MARRIED

Thrity Suderwalla, daughter of *Daisy* and *Rattan* and *Timothy Shane Campagna* in *Oakville*; August 25, 2002
Sameera Sohrab and *Jehangir Katrak* in *Toronto*; November 21**NEW ZEALAND**

BORN

A boy, *Xerxes*, to *Jafarshan* and *Tehmus Mistry*, brother to *Yazdy* in *Auckland*;

September 22

UK

DIED

Nariman Bejanji Shroff (95), father of *Dini*, *Freni* and *Rusi* in *York*; March 27, 2003**USA****California**

DIED

Keki Mody, husband of *Jolly* and father of *Marazban* and *Benaifer*; December 4, 2002**Missouri**

DIED

Perin Khurshid Anklesaria (88), mother of *Farokh* in *St Louis*; January 28, 2003**New Jersey**

MARRIED

Farzana Davar, daughter of *Niloufer* and *Edu*, and *Cyrus Cama*, son of *Mahrukh* and *Rohinton*; November 29, 2002**Pennsylvania**

DIED

Rohinton K. Bulsara (67), husband of *Gulnar* andfather of *Anahita*, *Keki* and *Zarinein Lafayette Hills*; December 29**Texas**

BORN

A boy, *Rayaan*, to *Sharmeen* and *Jehangir Irani* in *Houston*; August 9A boy, *Rohan*, to *Tushna* and *Nareh Srinivasan*, brother to *Malika*; October 23A girl, *Chloe*, to *Tenaz* and *Chesley Choudhury* in *Houston*; October 29A girl, *Nikki Lilly*, to *Mitra* and *Babak Soroushi*, sister to *Rustin*; November 19A boy, *Daravus*, to *Carole* and *Zal Parakh*, brother to *Zarine* in *Dallas*; January 2, 2003

MARRIED

Anamika Ghista and *Parul Patel* in *Houston*; April 20**Washington**

BORN

A girl, *Farida*, to *Dilnavaz* and *Adil Marciano* in *Vancouver*; January 16

Compiled by Roxana A. Driver



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Grant's grit

Parinaz M. Gandhi

Died: Tehmi Keki Grant, 75, former trustee of the Poona Parsee Panchayat (PPP) and erstwhile president of the National Council of Women in India on February 2, 2003 in Poona following lymphoma.

"A lady full of grit, determination, boundless energy and untiring stamina, every single department in the hospital benefited by her presence and mature advice," notes a communiqué from the Ruby Hall Clinic. Since the time her husband Dr Keki Grant started the Ruby Hall Clinic in 1959 as a three-bedded nursing home she had been assisting him. Today, the well equipped 500-bed Clinic is among the largest private hospitals in the country with Tehmi overseeing all the para-clinical departments. As Tehmi had happily reported (see "What the doctor ordered," *Parsiana* June 1999), "We do a lot of work for the poor and our general wards are always full."

"She was an outstanding person who spent her life in the service of the hospital and the many associations she was involved with," observed senior urologist Dr Fardoon Soonawalla. Her passing away "has left a void all over Poona and to us it is a personal loss," noted orthopedic surgeon Dr K. H. Sancheti of the Sancheti Institute for Orthopaedics and Rehabilitation.

President of the National Council of Women in India, Pushpa Hegde viewed Grant's demise as "an irreparable loss to the Women's Council." She had served the National Council for 15 years and had represented this organization at international fora in Nairobi, Tashkent, London and Moscow. For two years Grant had been president of the Pune Women's Council.

In the mid 1980s she was elected PPP trustee when she actively pursued social welfare causes like a housing project for the community. "With her good rapport

she was able to work in the interests of the community," remarked then trustee Dinshaw Anklesaria. "She was one of the most dynamic persons I have come across in my professional career and during my tenure as trustee of the PPP," commented the present PPP president Dara Irani. "She was always very encouraging and appreciated the good work being done by the trustees." Being an influential person she was frequently approached for financial assistance as also medical aid "when she would go out of her way to help the needy," remembered Irani.

As trustee of the PPP she would attend the executive council meetings of the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India when she voiced concerns of import to her: the plight of old people living singly in Poona, the Mahabeshwar gymkhana acquiring non-Parsi trustees with plans to sell the property, the futility of subsidizing the foreign education of students who do not plan to return to India and diverting the money instead as capitation fees for prestigious institutes within the country.

Other community institutions to have benefited from Grant's dedication were The Dastur Schools and The Ratanji Sorabji Fire Temple where she had served as trustee for many years, and the Poona Parsee Dramateurs' Association of which she had been president. A liberal Zoroastrian, she had great respect for her religion.

Born in Karachi, Grant had graduated in science from the Bombay University after which she worked as a lecturer in a college in Karachi. On one of her visits to India she was introduced to Keki at a wedding. After marriage she settled in Poona and worked in the laboratory at the Jehangir



Grant: boundless energy

Nursing Home.

Nurturing plants, trees and friendships were Grant's chief interests. A regular swimmer, she termed herself "a fixture" at the Poona Club swimming pool. As recall her friends Jayashree and Arun Fiordia, "She was a very warm and active person, always keeping herself busy and smiling..."

The social activist is survived by her husband Keki, son Dr Purvez and daughter Zarine.

From handicaps to honors

Died: Firoze Kaikhushru Sholapurwala, 82, an intrepid police officer and founder of the FKS Foundation, on April 12, 2003 in Bombay following brain hemorrhage.

"He will always serve as an example... on how to deal with life's blows with a smile and a head held high. Also, despite his inabilities, he continued to give back to society silently without expectations of garlands or applause," wrote dental surgeon Dr Rohinton Bilimoria in his tribute to Sholapurwala for whom he had "the highest regard."

"The Godhra public knew him as a very efficient officer — honest, incorrupt, fearless, strict yet very kindhearted. He had earned a place in the hearts of Godhra and this was revealed when he was assaulted," recalled then resident of Godhra and his schoolmate at the Telang High School, Vyomesh Desai. Throughout the day, prayers for his recovery were offered in temples and mosques.

When communal riots in Godhra in 1947 had destroyed the peace of the merchant community then home minister Morarji Desai deputed the promising Sholapurwala to take charge of the situation. In his attempts to control the hooligans, the police officer himself became a victim of their attack. They threw a sharp weapon at him which cracked his skull and left him with a deep gash. Fragments of the fractured skull had impacted his brain depriving him of his memory and speech which were regained after a series of operations. But there was no cure to the permanent paralysis of his right side. Sholapurwala's heroic deeds earned him the coveted meritorious service police medal from Lord Mountbatten, then governor general of India. He was also granted a lifetime pension of his salary. "His complete dedication to duty and intrepid spirit" had encouraged columnist Jehan Darwalla to relate Sholapurwala's life history in the *Jam-e-Jamshed Weekly* of June 3, 2001 when the fearless octogenarian was alive.

Although he could never resume police duties thereafter, to earn a living for his family he took up work as a



Sholapurwala (below, and above right) honored for his charitable work by Dr Goyal

salesman for a chemical firm and later established a small successful unit called Roc Pharmaceuticals which manufactured drugs like Rocplex, Rocvit and Rocfolin until it was sold in the early 1990s. "His painstaking efforts to market his products by visiting doctors and chemists in every street of Bombay" was recalled by Leena and Phiroze Wadia in their condolence letter. Respected in his profession, Sholapurwala had established the All India Small Drug Manufacturers' Association in 1978. He was subsequently made chairman emeritus of this organization.

"He did a lot for the Parsis in Dadar," reports Daruwalla, referring to Sholapurwala's nearly decade of service for the J.N. Petit Library in Dadar. He also took it upon himself to ensure that Khodadad Circle retained its name, that one of the small gardens in Dadar be named Khabardar Chowk to perpetuate the memory of the legendary poet Ardeshir Khabardar. "Particularly those in the Dadar Colony will miss his noble and affable presence and the warmth and cheer that he brought to several hearts through numerous kind acts, philanthropy and social work of the highest order," stated Roshni and Pervez Khambatta.

His most enduring contribution was the setting up of the FKS Foundation in 1980 with his hard earned savings of Rs 20,000. As people started approaching him for help and guidance he felt the

need for a charitable organization to assist the needy and the ailing. Impressed by the zeal, integrity and honesty of a handicapped person, financial aid from the affluent started trickling in. Today its corpus stands at nearly Rs 28 lakhs, with approximately five lakhs disbursed annually for educational and medical causes, notes Sholapurwala's second daughter Dr Farida Aspy Talati. The Foundation also runs a charitable homeopathic dispensary in Dadar.

"He was an extremely courageous man and a great inspiration to all who were fortunate enough to make his acquaintance," wrote Pashna Munshi, a third year medical student who has been receiving scholarships from the FKS Foundation.

Faced with health and occupational ordeals since his childhood days, Sholapurwala dared to overcome life's many challenges to emerge as a survivor. As recounted by Daruwalla, at the age of four he had a severe attack of meningitis which lasted for 72 days. Just as hopes were given up on his life he showed signs of recovery but the family soon realized that he had lost movement in both his legs. Shortly thereafter he had a small pox attack after which miraculously both his legs started functioning again.



Born in Dahod, Sholapurwala's early education was at Godhra after which he studied at the New Era High School in Baroda and the Baroda College before he joined the Indian Police in 1941. An ace badminton player, he had won the All Baroda Badminton Mixed Doubles Championship, remembered the Wadias. "He was very nationalistic...and would always hoist our national flag on Independence Day and Republic Day. His one great trait was his extreme frankness—he was frank with one and all alike — rich or poor, big or small, adult or child," stated Havovi Mirza adding, "He had an awe-inspiring personality; a straightness of approach and a no-nonsense attitude to life."

The upright benefactor is survived by his mother Tehmina, wife Roshan, daughters Zarin Manek Mistry, Dr Farida Aspy Talati and Rukshana, and brothers Pesi and Hector.

P. M. G.

STARTING THE SAANJ continued from page 43

Wachha Gandhi managed to obtain news from various parts of the country by telegrams. In the earlier days, *Jam-e-Jamshed* used to publish a pictorial supplementary on the occasion of the Parsi New Year. With the publication of the Pateti supplement of *Saanj Vartaman*, a new horizon of special supplements was opened in Gujarati journalism. The *Saanj* Pateti issue was without a parallel for its articles, photographs, layouts, etc. Writers from different communities and overseas contributed articles. The chief reason behind the prosperity and prestige of *Saanj Vartaman* was its political policy. It always favored the majority opinion. It continued to support the freedom movement. Its independent approach to politics made it considerably popular amongst the Hindus as well.

To be continued

READERS' FORUM

continued from page 6

chair benefactor. He was captain, coach, benefactor and motivator for the team.

I have a vintage photograph of the Parsi team of yore (see pg 6). Readers interested in copies of the photograph or sharing those happy times are welcome to contact me on e-mail: rmmminocher@hotmail.com

RASHID MINOCHER

Bangalore

Hope for a Parsi birth

I am a subscriber to your magazine *Parsiana* even though a non-Parsi. I am connected with the Parsi community in and around Poona being a tax consultant to many Parsis. My involvement with this great community is not only professional but being in close association with many Parsi stalwarts I am always awed by their philanthropic nature, industrial acumen, professional expertise and disciplined life.

I was worried when I read in the Marathi daily *Sakal* (April 17, 2003) that this great community may dwindle to about 23,000 by the year 2020. In the present world it is very difficult to find any other community which values honesty, truth and nationalism.

Maybe in my next birth I will be born a Parsi — pure, honest, true — a person who cares for the nation to which he belongs. I do believe in good thoughts, good words and good deeds.

A. H. JOSHI

Poona

Edited by Parinaz M. Gandhi



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