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Parsiana

March 1987
Volume 9 Number 9

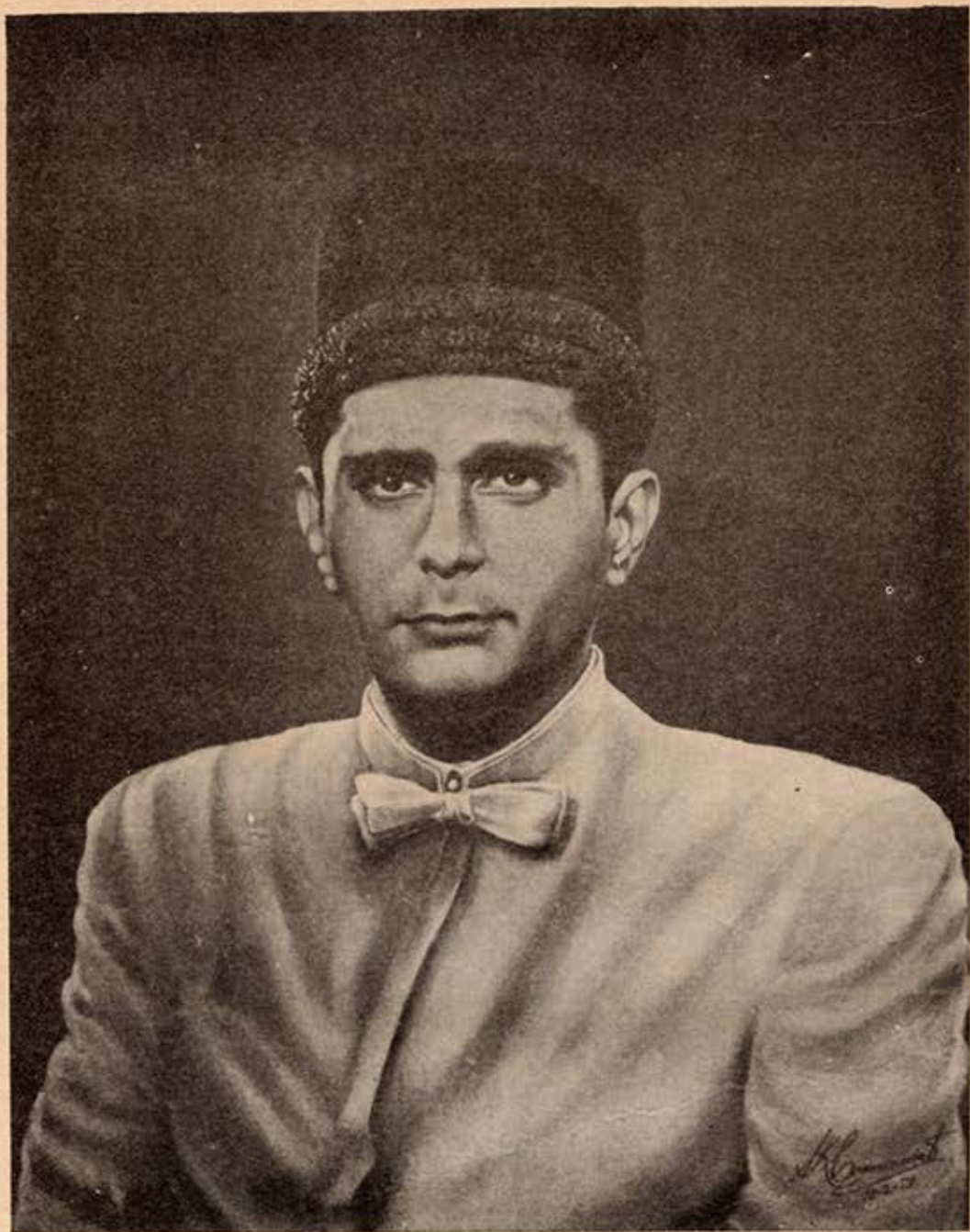
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-
- 3 Readers' Forum
-
- 10 Events and Personalities
-
- 15 Zoroastrians Abroad
-
- 19 Electoral scheme amended by Arnavaz Mama
-
- 23 The diamond of Rustom Baug
-
- 29 The flame of devotion
-
- 39 The difficult choice
-
- 44 An aging, dwindling community
-
- 53 A question of attitude
-
- 59 The Avaris are achievers by Mumtaz Currim
-
- 64 Kelvinator's cool edge by Parinaz Toddywalla
-
- 69 A rare treat by Bhicoo Manekshaw
-
- 77 Sapats: out of step with the times? by Jerroo Irani
-
- 81 Sports by Niloofer Madon
-
- 101 The Parsi hell by Keki Daruwalla
-
- 107 In Memoriam
-

Cover: Delhi Dar-e-Meher's silver jubilee jashan

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In Memoriam

Mr Fali Meherji Variava

Director

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

"Cons or icons of faith?"

One need not bemoan that the spirit of enterprise has deserted Parsis of this generation; it is alive and kicking, as exemplified by Gururani Nagkanya and Sri Jimmy Yogiraj ("Cons or icons of faith?" *Parsiana*, January '87).

Where an opportunity exists to exploit the gullibility of some of our co-religionists and others, this duo must be commended for filling a void. In these days of spiralling prices, after all, even gods need sustenance. For a people well-conditioned to the reality that no favors can be granted without bribing the 'sahebs,' it is not difficult to accept these entrepreneurs' dictum that 'unless you offer something to God, you cannot expect Him to help you.'

PHIROZE B. JAVERI

"A useful body"

It is necessary to set right a certain small but significant error of fact which appears to have inadvertently crept into the obituary on my late father, Dinshaw Vachha (*Parsiana*, January 1987). Contrary to your article, and general opinion, our Agiary's adjacent vacant plot has not been 'sold.' Instead, the vacant portion was set aside for development. The land was given on lease, and remains the property of our Trust.

CAPT BURJOR D. VACHHA

"The 11-days' controversy"

I have read Mr D.N.Sethna's comments in your May and November issues, and find them to be distasteful and un-Zoroastrian.

The Zoroastrians of UK would be delighted if Mr D.N.Sethna and his brother Zal and their sons (the five Sethnas as D.N.Sethna states in *Parsiana*) refrained from performing religious ceremonies at Zoroastrian House.

Some of our ervads refuse to sit and pray with (the Sethnas) and therefore do not come forward to serve the community. Some of the Parsis have refused to have them perform religious ceremonies such as funeral ceremonies due to their language and behavior.

Perhaps (those involved should) consider deeply the meaning of good thoughts, good words and good deeds – and have the courage to undo the harm they have done to the community, locally. The bulk of us in London hold Dr (Ms) Shirinbanu Kutar and Shahpur Captain in high esteem and would feel safe and happy if both these stalwarts would be back at the helm of affairs of our Association (the Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe).

K. VATCHA
Charlton, UK

I have read your interview with Mr D.N.Sethna of London interspersed with comments from Mr Noshirwan Cowasjee's letter. The whole episode smacks of hypocrisy, bad faith and bad behavior.

Six members of the committee of the local Association resigned, some of whom have served the community

selflessly for many years, notably Dr (Ms) Shirinbanu Kutar and Mr Shahpur Captain. It is obvious to the Parsis of London that the other six members of the committee created this situation, though they call themselves Zoroastrians.

A.P. IRANI
Kent, UK

The Federation's awards

The Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India has instituted yearly awards to Zoroastrians for outstanding achievements in different fields of human endeavor. The Federation invites nominations for the following nine awards for achievements during the year 1986.

Sports: The nominee should have achieved performance recognition at the national level in any particular sport, indoor or outdoor, and/or the nominee should have made special contribution towards promotion of a sport resulting in achievement of excellence in performance.

Adventure: Outstanding participation in adventure activities such as mountaineering, rallying, etc and/or for significant contribution towards the promotion of such activities.

Small scale entrepreneurship: The promotion of, or association in promoting, small scale industries preferably in underdeveloped areas, harnessing resources and providing gainful employment to supply quality products.

Education, research, science and technology: Dedicated service in the educational field preferably with reference to handicapped children.

In science and technology the nominee should have made pioneering contribution through research/application of the latest advances in these fields.

Professional competence: Engineers, doctors, professional managers, lawyers, architects, agriculturists, writers, journalists, sociologists and others who have achieved professional distinction on the state or national level. This could have been achieved either in their individual capacity or in association with others in their field.

Performing and fine arts: Achievements and talent in the performing and fine arts.

Social and community services: Dedi-

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cated, selfless service to our community and/or in the cause of humanity in general in such fields as relief work in areas affected by natural calamities, rural development and community work in bustees. The nominee may be involved in health improvement, income generation and population control programs. Uplift of the poor, leprosy eradication, establishing and running effectively vital public institutions like blood bank, eye bank, home for the aged, vocational training for destitutes, handicapped children and leprosy patients, and enlisting community support and involvement for the same, will also be recognized under this head.

Study of Zoroastrian history, culture and scriptures: Interpretation and propagation of these subjects so as to bring an awakening and awareness in young Zoroastrian minds.

Students: For excellence or extraordinary achievement in academics and/or co-curricular or extra-curricular activities.

Zoroastrian residents of India are eligible for the awards. A Zoroastrian resident of India at present studying or

having training abroad can also apply. There are no nomination forms. A letter may be addressed to the Honorary Secretary of the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India, Care Machine Tools (India) Ltd, D-24, South Extension Part II, New Delhi 110049, indicating name, address, telephone number if any and full details of career and achievements during 1986 in the particular field of award. Names may be proposed by an anjuman/association/any Zoroastrian/ by the Zoroastrian himself.

A high level panel of judges will scrutinize the applications. Selection will be made strictly on merit. Canvassing in any form will disqualify the candidate.

Last date for receipt of application is April 30, 1987.

KEKIJ. GANDHI
Joint Honorary Secretary

Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India

Holiday program

Parsi Punchayet, Bombay, is organizing a holiday program for youth for Parsi students of SSC and ICSE classes who will be appearing for these school leaving exams in March/April '87. The program aims to:

- identify leaders amongst the teenagers of our community;
- help all the participants in realizing their potential to the fullest;
- provide interaction among Parsi youth of various interests and abilities;
- kindle interest and enthusiasm in our young about our culture, customs and religious tenets;
- impart vocational choices open to various interests and levels of aptitude.

Dedicated men and women of our community and others will interact through question-answer sessions, symposia, picture and slide shows and informal talks on vocational guidance and counselling, leadership training, careers and religion.

Candidates will actively participate in debates, sports and creative arts, learn communication skills and grow into well-rounded, mature, intelligent human beings, capable of realizing their own true worth. Special sessions are also being planned for parents of the participants, and it is hoped that all concerned will take part with interest and enthusiasm.

Registration forms have been sent to many schools. Students may contact

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Ms Gool J. Tata, joint secretary or the undersigned at the Punchayet office for the same.

The program begins on Monday, April 6, 1987 at 9.00 am and concludes on Saturday, May 9, 1987 in the evening. A nominal fee of Rs 50 per student will be charged for the same.

DR (MS) KETAYUN R.A.J. MADON
Co-ordinator, Holiday Program for Youth

Swimming trusts

The thirty-fifth annual free swimming coaching program of the Cursetji Rustomji Mistry Memorial (CRMM) Fund will be held at the Mahatma Gandhi Memorial Swimming Pool, Shivaji Park, Bombay in May 1987 for one hour every day.

The CRMM Fund was established in April 1952 and has trained several hundred deserving Parsis in the art of swimming at the Back Bay Bath Ltd. Since the closure of the Backbay swimming pool we have been training beginners - children and adults - at various swimming pools in Bombay like that of the Young Men's Christian Association, the National Sports Club of India, the Cricket Club of India and the Mahatma Gandhi Memorial Swimming Pool during the summer vacation for two hours daily.

With a similar objective, the Dadiba and Framroz Golwala Memorial (DFGM) Fund was established in August 1957 to improve the efficiency and standard of swimming among Parsis. We have been promoting aquatic membership amongst individuals who cannot afford to pay pool fees and though we intend to hold annual swimming competitions and camps, we cannot do so due to paucity of funds.

The steep rise in overheads such as booking of the pool, appointment of well qualified instructors and other incidental expenses is making our goals difficult. We intend to increase the funds of both trusts and request a helping hand for the noble cause. Each trust is a registered public charity, the CRMM Fund being also registered with the Income tax Commissioner, Bombay, and member of the Bombay Sports Association. The trustees are H.N. Wania, chairman, M.D. Master, managing trustee, N.J. Kharas and R.A. Choksey.

Donations may be addressed to the Cursetji Rustomji Mistry Memorial Fund and/or the Dadiba and Framroz Golwala Memorial Fund, 8 Ram

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Religion is universal

A non-Parsi reader of *Parsiana* recently remarked that he was surprised to note the amount of dissent and disagreement in a small and advanced community such as ours. Are we keeping up with the Joneses? There is conflict in more than one sense of the word the world over: why should we be left out? We must have our own fun and games too!

A good many of our disagreements stem from matters of religion, which is expected to be a binding force and not a disruptive one. But when we look around, Muslims are fighting Muslims, Christians are against Christians, and in Sri Lanka, even Hindus are killing Hindus. Gandhian non-violence is in reverse.

We Parsis have our own pet subjects of quarrel - dokhma or burial, mixed marriages, their offspring, conversion, adoption, sezdo, defunct agiaries, priesthood, and a host of other matters, big or small. Throughout all the bickering and argument, we forget the salient fact that the Parsis in India are an endangered species - ie threatened with extinction. One cannot foresee the situation of the Parsis abroad but they are bound to be greatly influenced, as the years roll on, by the environment in which they live and their Parsi-ism is bound to be watered down.

When the day of judgment arrives (as is inevitable for all of us), you are not going to be asked what religion you belonged to or how many loads of sandalwood you offered at Udwarda. You will be asked what you did with the life God gave you and what you did to enhance the goodness and happiness of His beautiful world.

When we get engrossed in the petty details of religion, we forget that a man's religion is not a religion of his choice. It has been thrust upon him through an accident of birth. If you are born of Parsi parents you automatically drift into the Zoroastrian religion, and your brainwashing into your religion's traditions and ceremonies starts from the time you learn to take your first faltering steps. Therefore, to make so much fuss over your religion,

continued on page 90

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Events and Personalities

The Delhi presidency

Lieutenant General Ardesir Sethna was elected president of the Delhi Parsi Anjuman (DPA) in March '87. Being a consensus candidate there was no rival to contest the seat. Former vice-chief of army staff, and the man responsible for organizing the Asian Games in 1982, Sethna is at present chairman of the India Tourism Development Corporation.

Shiavax Nargolwala, the former DPA president, died in a car accident on August 6 last year, after heading the Anjuman for 26 years, resulting in a vacancy for the post. The acting president of the DPA Zal Nowsherwanji had declined to stand for presidency.

Seervai felicitated

"In our heart of hearts believing, Victory crowns the just."

Hormusji Maneckji Seervai's favorite lines of poetry enshrine the ideal by which the ex-Advocate General of the State of Bombay and later of Maharashtra, lives and works. Felicitated on his eightieth birthday by his

well-wishers, at a function at the St Xavier's College hall on December 6, 1986 the occasion triggered off an outburst of praise and devotion from within and without the legal fraternity.

"Apart from his unquestioned legal renown, what distinguishes Seervai from the rest is the great moral eminence he has brought to the profession of law for over 50 years," wrote Senior Counsel T.R. Andhyarujina in a tribute to Seervai in *Lex et Juris*, January 21, 1987. The concept of Seervai, the man, thus permeating and even transcending the lawyer was echoed by journalist Arun Shourie: "He has never been, I am sure, to any minister for a favor; there is no favor that a minister can do which will influence him in the least."

Arvind V. Savant, present Advocate General of Maharashtra, quoted M.C. Chagla, former Chief Justice of the Bombay High Court as having said: "Mr Seervai possesses intellectual integrity of a high order...He never argues a point in which he does not believe...Justices can always depend on him not to mislead them or lead them astray." P.B. Gajendragadkar,

former Chief Justice of the Supreme Court had called Seervai a jurist par excellence and praised his book *Constitutional Law of India* which is recognized throughout the Commonwealth as the best book on the subject: "It is a magnificent treatise...Seervai's precious gift to the legal world." Atul M. Setalvad, Senior Counsel of the Bombay High Court commended Seervai's refusal to stoop to dishonest methods such as the suppression and misrepresentation of facts.

Seervai held the post of Advocate General of Bombay and Maharashtra for 17 years till he resigned in 1974 in protest against the then law minister A. R. Antulay's move to undermine the office. R. J. Joshi, a senior colleague, recalled that Seervai's first landmark case was in 1941-42 on the question of the Bombay Telephones takeover. It proved to be the turning point of his career as an advocate, for though he lost the case challenging the takeover, he won plaudits for the way he had marshalled his arguments.

During Seervai's tenure as Advocate General, Maharashtra acquired a reputation for fairness in dealing with litigation in the High Court mainly on account of his policy of not contesting a citizen's claim if it was just. At the same time he vigorously defended the government's policies even when he did not agree with them because he believed that it was not for a law officer to question State policies except when legal impediments stood in the way.

About Seervai's methods Andhyarujina says, "He never took more than one assignment at a time. He would bend all his energies to it until the very end and refuse all other work. Despite being in great demand he never charged high fees." At the felicitation function D.R. Dhanuka, lawyer and former chairman of the Bar Council of Maharashtra, said that when

Sethna (wearing topi) chatting with invitees to the Delhi Dar-e-Meher celebrations



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he once expressed surprise that Seervai's fee was only Rs 45, the latter explained that he felt it unfair to charge his clients high fees. For the same reason he also attempted to keep expenses to a minimum.

Twice offered judgeship of the Supreme Court – which he twice refused – Seervai has been awarded the Padma Vibhushan for juristic work, and made a Fellow of the British Academy. Today, in addition to revising his book, Seervai also accepts briefs in important cases.

Setalvad described Seervai making his way across the Oval Maidan with his thermos flask containing home-made Lopchu tea, and poring over his law books clad in *sudreh* and trousers.

"A well-read man, Seervai loves to dip into the classics, wade through Conan Doyle and P.G. Wodehouse and regale his juniors with Bertie Wooster stories," concludes an in-depth report in *The Times of India* (December 6, 1986).

Branching into forestry

Mazda Properties' future plans include diversification into forestry and agriculture in order to avail of tax benefits and these advantages will be passed on to the shareholders, states their press release. Incorporated in October '86, the Company promoted by Mazda Estates and Finance Private Limited will soon enter the capital market with a public issue.

With an authorized capital of 10 crore rupees and a paidup capital of three crore rupees, Mazda Properties headed by Dara Deboo already has

projects worth 12 crore rupees in the pipeline.

The Company will initially develop commercial properties, according to the release, the thrust being towards selling space to banks, government corporations, insurance companies and public limited companies as privately built commercial complexes are rarely willing to do so.

The Company is about to start construction work on a commercial complex in Surat, Gujarat and expects it to be ready within a year, notes the write-up. Negotiations are also reportedly going on with trustees of various public charitable trusts in Bombay for the development of trust properties.

With an anticipated turnover of Rs 12 crore rupees, shareholders can expect a dividend of at least 18 percent in the first year, which may thereafter be sustained at the same rate by means of the substantial lease rent yielded from its projects.

Mazda Estates and Finance, the promoters of Mazda Properties, ear-

lier built a residential complex at Navsari. They have also promoted two thriving companies, Mazda Leasing and Vitta Mazda.

Britain honors Dinshaw

"Very embarrassed!" said Ms Jini Dinshaw, co-leader of the Bombay Chamber Orchestra when asked how she felt about her appointment as an Honorary Member of the Order of the British Empire. She has received this honor for "her services to Indo-British cooperation through music," states a news report in *Gentleman*, December '86.

Dinshaw has received this award for her indispensable contribution towards the success of the Sadler's Wells Royal Ballet Company's performance of *Giselle* in Bombay in 1985, states *The Daily* of November 26, 1986. "Giselle required a live orchestra," explained Ms Dinshaw, "and the Bombay Chamber Orchestra was chosen to accompany the ballet." Dinshaw worked indefatigably to ensure that

continued on page 93



(Alongside) Seervai: "unquestioned legal renown"
Photo courtesy: Lex et Juris

(Below left) Captains of the winning teams of the Sardar Dastur Girls' High School, Pune, exhibiting trophies for excellence in different sports events at the recent inter-school sports meet. The School was declared runner-up for the general championship for the second successive year.

(Below) Eleven-year-old Ervad Darayus Purvez Bajan (right) stood first in the boys' group at the Second Iran League organized Shahnama competition, and received his prize from Ms Khudaparast Cowasjee Dinshaw at the annual prize distribution at Albless Baug on October 19, 1986.



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Tehran elections

Out of 55 candidates who stood for election of the Anjuman Zartoshtian Tehran, 21 candidates and seven reserve candidates were elected, notes a press release dated December 28, 1986.

The elected representatives and their portfolios are: Rostam Abodian (first secretary), Colonel (retd) Dinyar Khosraviani (second secretary), Hormozdiyar Khorshidian (religion), Mehrabon Kushesh (national and international council), Goshtash Kermani (publication, research and investigation), Aflatoon Ziyafat (research review), Rostam Khodabaxshi Sharifabod (finance), Aflatoon Khodayari (culture), Khodayer Moavenat (public relations), Daryush Diyanat (administration), Dr Khosrow Dabestani (student council—college), Ms Azermidokht Hormozan (student council—school), Mehrabon Oshidari (organization), and members at large, Rostam Bostani, Kiumars Vafadari, Manoucher Mobarakai, Rostam Keyamanesh, Farshied Ezzati, Esfandiyar Khosravi, Ms Taj Goher Koochaki and Ardeshtir Khodadadi Sharifabod.

The seven reserve members are: Dinyar Khosraviani, Rashied Namiranian, Bahram Behkish, Rostam Faramarzian, Esfandiyar Tirandazian, Khodadad Shahriarzedeh Naser and Ms Farzana Mehr Khodavandi.

Knighthood for Kandawalla

"In appreciation and commendation for his unequalled, lengthy and meritorious services as honorary consul for Spain in Karachi for over 18 years,"

Hoshang Merwanjee Kandawalla was conferred the highest Spanish civil award, the Encomienda de Numero — the grand knight of the commander of the first order—by King Juan Carlos of Spain, notes the February newsletter of the Zoroastrian Society of Ontario (ZSO). Said to be equivalent to the British knighthood, the title enables the awardee enjoy high honor, distinction and privilege.

Decisions, a short story written by Ms Bapai Batliwalla of the ZSO, has recently been published in the *Toronto South Asian Review*, notes the February newsletter of the ZSO. The story describes the writer's life and family in Bombay and her decision to migrate to Canada.

The first issue of a two-page youth section *Ush Tana* (meaning a breath of life), attached to the January and February issues of the ZSO newsletter, has been released. Firdosh Balsara and "a group of youths on the move" have put together a sports corner, an advice column, a quiz on the jashan ceremony, an introduction to the *Shah Namah*, (episodes from which will henceforth be regularly featured), jokes and a review of the past year. In a cartoon feature entitled *Captain Zoro*, the Zoroastrian superman proclaims: "With my sudreh and kusti I protect the good and stop evil! If you need me, just give me a shout!"

Making crucial decisions

The Australian Zoroastrian Association (AZA) of New South Wales was formally incorporated as a company

with limited liability at an extraordinary general meeting held on December 7, 1986, notes the January issue of *Manashni*, the Association's newsletter.

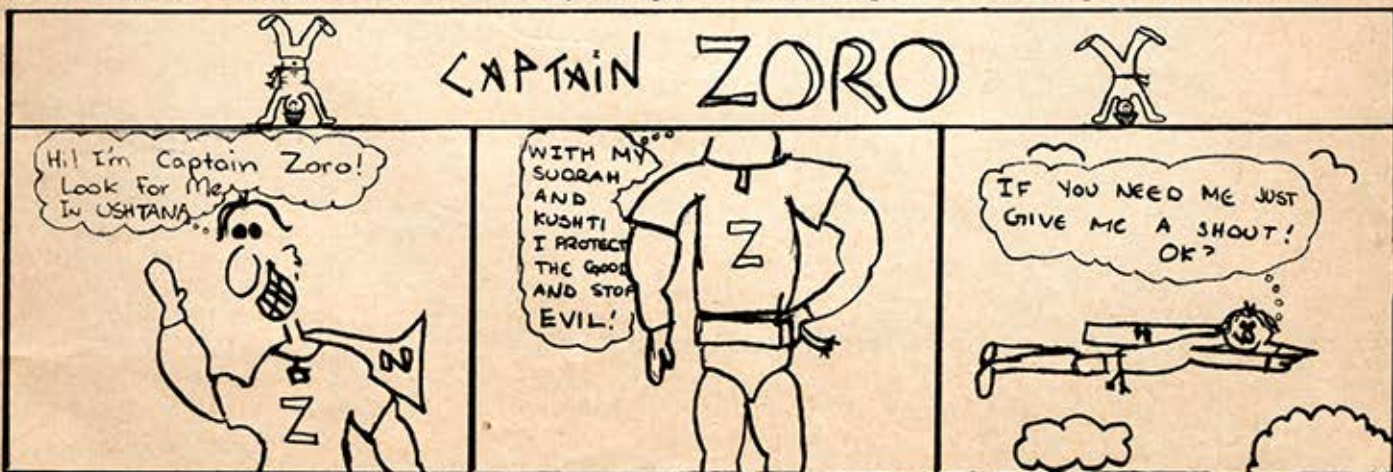
At the meeting, it was resolved that after obtaining the approval of 75 percent of AZA's financial members above the age of 18, the property based at 196 Annangrove Road, Annangrove, be sold, and the money so obtained used to purchase another more suitable property for similar use.

To look into this matter, it was decided that a foundation committee comprising seven members — three representatives of the donor members, two of the general body and one each of the life members and the board of directors — be elected. The foundation committee, it was further resolved, would have a term of one year with elections to be held at every annual general meeting.

The AZA further decided to transfer to the charity fund between five and 10 percent of the excess of its net annual income (excluding donations) over expenditure.

Whether to accept US \$60,000 from the Arbab Rustam Guiv (ARG) Trust for development of the AZA community property was also discussed at the extraordinary general meeting. The donation has three conditions attached: sharing the ownership of the current AZA property; having a supervisory committee of trustees to oversee the affairs of the Darbe Mehr; and naming rights on a part of the new building.

At the end of the discussion four options were put to a secret ballot:



- accept all conditions of the ARG Trust and receive US \$60,000 and accrued interest; or
- reject conditions of the ARG Trust and forgo the money; or
- accept the supervisory committee and naming rights, but reject the ownership condition and make a counter proposal to offer a legal document guaranteeing the ARG Trust's money; or
- offer ARG Trust naming rights to the new hall in proportion to their donation and prepare a legal document guaranteeing ARG Trust's money but reject all other conditions.

The last option was accepted, notes AZA president Purviz Kolsawalla in a letter dated December 23, 1986 to Dr Rostam Sarfeh, chairman of the ARG Trust, spelling out the Association's counter offer: The present AZA property may be named the Arbab Rustam and Morvarid Guiv Darbe Meher - AZA of NSW Community Center; a part of the new building may also be named after the donor couple but in proportion to the donation made (if the trust donates the full amount for the new building, it will be named solely after them); portraits of Lord Zarathushtra, Rustam and Morvarid

Guiv will be placed in the main hall; and a legal document drawn to guarantee the safety of the ARG Trust donation. The letter clarifies that sharing the ownership of the current property and having a supervisory committee were not acceptable to the Association.

In the meanwhile, the navjote of Jimmy and Nilaufer Seervai was held at AZA House on January 1, 1987 with typical navjote food provided by Viloo Daver, notes *Manashni*.

"Concern was raised for the future membership of children whose fathers were non-Zoroastrian (mothers being Zoroastrian). Such children automatically become members of AZA by virtue of one of their parents being Zoroastrian (as per the AZA membership rules, a member is defined as one who is a Zoroastrian, his or her spouse and their progeny). However, if such children, who could not have their navjotes done under the existing circumstances, eventually marry a non-Zoroastrian, their children do not qualify for full membership of AZA. They could become associate members, enjoying all the privileges of

membership but with no right to vote and make decisions," notes AZA president Purviz Kolsawalla in *Manashni*.

Some members have objected to this policy saying that it would reduce such members to second class citizens. "It was felt that our community's identity could be lost in two generations if our existing membership rules are not modified," continued Kolsawalla.

Counter to this viewpoint is the concept of Zoroastrian identity: "If our membership rules are modified, the very concept of Zoroastrianism would be lost and we might dwindle into a social entity where the grandparents belonged to a religion called Zoroastrianism." Either way, the preservation of Zoroastrian identity becomes difficult to ensure.

Nonetheless, the president, advising members to think deeply on this subject to be discussed at the forthcoming August annual general meeting, outlined the options available:

- "Open the membership to all who have Zoroastrian ancestry. If accepted, all Muslim, Christian, Bahai

continued on page 97

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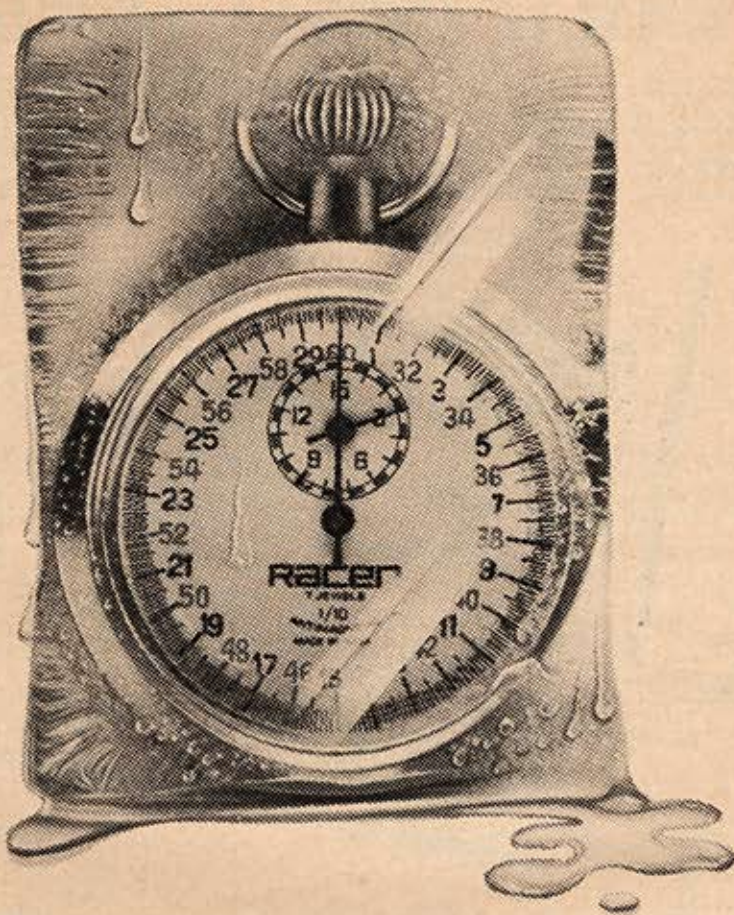
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ADVERTS

Electoral scheme amended

The Bombay High Court has reduced the importance of money in the election scheme

Arnavaz S. Mama

The Anjuman Committee which votes for trustees of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP), currently packed with more than 1,000 members, will be whittled down to a compact 200 in 1988. Comprising 100 members elected directly by the community, plus donors and their representatives together totalling 100, the new Committee will elect trustees to seven-year terms. Whether the Anjuman Committee will be elected constituency-wise or not has been left to the discretion of the trustees at the time of each seven-year general election.

The ruling of the Bombay High Court establishing the new procedure was given by Justice H.Suresh on February 6, 1987 ending decades of dissatisfaction and controversy regarding the composition of those voting for BPP trustees.

The new system eliminates two distinct disadvantages of the old. By the existing system, every seven years the number of elected representatives (E Register) was equated to the number of donors on the F Register who had contributed Rs 5,000 or more to the BPP. The system was an endless source of disaffection in the community as the E Register remained constant for seven years or was depleted if members died, while the F Register increased with each new donation. With each spurt in the donor register, often witnessed at the time of trusteeship elections, charges of "packing" the Anjuman Committee by the use of "money-power" fouled the atmosphere.

The second disadvantage was a purely administrative one - with 749 donors on the rolls, to elect 749 representatives was a mammoth task facing the community and the Punchayet. And a resulting body of nearly 1,500

people voting for trustees made the organization of trusteeship elections also complicated, time-consuming and expensive. Moreover, expansion was inbuilt in the system.

The original 1910 scheme stipulated four registers - A, B, C and D. A Register comprised those who had donated between Rs 500 and Rs 4,999 to the BPP; the B Register consisted of the Parsi peers (members of the British nobility) and stood annulled after India chose the republican form of government; the C Register was the graduates' register and the D Register comprised the rank and file of the community who registered with the Punchayet on payment of five rupees. Representatives from each of the four registers, in a set proportion, comprising the E Register of elected members,

"If the trustees are doing good work, there is no reason why we should prescribe any restrictions on the number of terms"

initially pegged at 100 but gradually increased by court orders to keep pace with the F Register of donors who had contributed Rs 5,000 or more to the Punchayet at any one time. At the last general election in 1981, 303 members had been elected onto the E Register to balance the 303 donors of the F, the Anjuman Committee thus comprising a total of 606 members. However, with inductions of subsequent donors, the

number increased to 985 by the time Minoo Shroff's election was held in July 1986.

Having heard the advocates of all those who had filed affidavits [K.S. Cooper and S.K. Cooper, instructed by solicitors Mulla and Mulla Craigie Blunt and Caroe's M.P. Bharucha on behalf of the seven BPP trustees, the main petitioners; Edul Bharucha instructed by Bhogilal Desai and Burgis for Ms Mani Dalal of the Committee for Economic Revival (CER); Rusi Sethna instructed by Roamer Dadachanji Sethna and Co for municipal corporator Russi Mehta; Kaikhushroo Dastoor for B.K. Mistry, the COVP (Council of Vigilant Parsis) stalwart; Mr Patil for the Advocate General and the Charity Commissioner; and Ms Reena Patel for BPP trustees Jamshed Guzder and Minoo Shroff], the court ruled that the Anjuman Committee shall consist of

- 100 members elected from among those whose names are borne on the General Register (which replaces A, C and D Registers) on the November 30, immediately preceding a general election and they shall constitute the Register of Elected Members (which replaces the E Register);
- those donating Rs 50,000 or more to the BPP and whose names are borne on the Donor Register (which replaces the F Register) on the November 30 immediately preceding a general election. These, together with the elected representatives of those who have donated Rs 5,000 before February 6, 1987 and Rs 7,500 thereafter, shall total the 100-member donor representation on the Anjuman Committee. The donors moreover must now exercise their right to registration on the Donor Register within 180 days of making a donation, and on choosing to do so,

the donor's name is simultaneously deleted from the General Register.

Elections for both registers will be held once in seven years, preferably in March.

The issue of the amount of donation qualifying for registration on the Donor Register was a hotly contested one, ranging in opinion from status

quo at Rs 5,000 to Rs 1,00,000 suggested by Rusi Sethna on behalf of Russi Mehta and Mani Dalal. Though the BPP's recommendation was Rs 7,500, BPP trustee Jamsheed Kanga dissented, opting for a floor of Rs 25,000. "I have before me a rough data of statistical figures of persons who have given various donations be-

tween the years 1968 and 1985," noted the Judge. "I find that there are 899 persons who have given donations between Rs 5,001 and Rs 10,000; there are 73 persons who have given donations between Rs 10,001 and Rs 25,000; there are 10 persons who have given donations between Rs 25,001 to Rs 50,000; there are three persons who have given donations between Rs 50,001 to Rs 75,000; there are 5 persons who have given donations between Rs 75,001 to Rs 1,00,000; and there are 9 persons who have given donations between Rs 1,00,001 and above."

At the other end of the spectrum K.N.Dastur, appearing on behalf of B.K.Mistry, suggested direct adult franchise for electing trustees. Opined Justice Suresh in his oral judgment of February 6: "In all matters of Trust ... the management ... ultimately depends upon the persons who take an active interest in the day-to-day management of the Trust. It is not a question of one's popularity amongst the community as a whole; it is essentially a question of having proper personnel, efficient and active, who ultimately desire to take the responsibility for managing the Trust."

The vexed problem of maintaining parity between the donors and the elected members of the Anjuman Committee had led the BPP draft scheme to suggest that, to match increases in the Donor Register during the term of the Anjuman Committee, those who contested the general election and lost would be progressively upgraded onto the Committee. Kanga, who felt that donor representation should be pegged at 20 percent of the Anjuman Committee, had dissented. But the Judge observed, "The principle of parity has been recognized in this institution for a long time and I think the principle of parity will have to be maintained. But the number has outgrown to such an extent...it is necessary that this (number) be reduced so as to make it a feasible proposition."

Regarding election by constituencies, originally postulated by the CER, the Judge has "left it to the discretion of the trustees to demarcate the constituencies or not in as much as they have to elect only 100 members...which can be done without demarcation." Clause 11 of the new scheme however stipu-

continued on page 100

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The 'diamond' of Rustom Baug

The sixtieth anniversary prompted the 1,500 residents to contribute towards the reconstruction of a hall for community activities

Parinaz Toddywalla

Where now stands Rustom Baug at Byculla, was years ago forest land which was converted into an ammunition godown and a stable. Intended to perpetuate community awareness and loyalty among the upper middle-class Parsis residing in this housing complex, Lady Jerbai Wadia, on the demise of her son Rustom in 1919, donated his entire estate towards the construction of a baug in his memory. Today, the Baug is considered a "haven from this modern hectic world," in the words of Neville Wadia, grandson of Jerbai by her other son, Sir Ness.

In a message written to the tenants of the Baug on the occasion of Rustom Baug's diamond jubilee which was celebrated on January 31, 1987, Neville Wadia stated, "If there is anything more valuable than a diamond in Bombay today, it is a home of your own. Its great importance to the family is that it is the base from which you come and go, radiate and return...Only you know how much it means to each one of you."

Top: Neville Wadia

Below: children at the new nursery

Right: a view of Rustom Baug

The celebrations were organized by the Rustom Baug Association which looks after the social interests and welfare activities of the Baug. On behalf of the tenants, a memento in the shape



of a diamond, with the Wadia crest engraved on it, was presented to Neville. The accompanying scroll, eulogizing the contribution of the Wadia family, further thanked Neville "for your personal interest in our comfort and well-being, your wise counsel, and for the immense benefits we have enjoyed throughout these 60 years...For your abiding interest in Rustom Baug, we wish to say thank you in concrete form. We gratefully dedicate the Neville Wadia Hall for social, religious, cultural and educational activities to you."

In the reconstructed hall hung portraits of Zarathushtra, Jerbai, her husband Nowrosjee, Rustom and Neville with candles burning below the frames. After the benediction by Ervad Rustom Panthaky, principal of the Dadar Madressa who, over the





At the diamond jubilee function (from left): Nusli Wadia, Daraius Bhappu, Neville Wadia, Aspi Golwala, and Maureen Wadia. Inset: Kumi Daroowala

Below (left) Sir Ness Wadia Pavilion and (right) Neville Wadia Hall at Rustom Baug
(Photographs of the Baug by Joy Fernandes)



years gave religious instruction to the children at the Baug, and Dastur Navrooz Minochehr-Homji who conducted religion classes for adults, the Hall was inaugurated by Dr Aspi Golwala, chairman of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet and Committee of Management, R.N. and N.N. Wadia Trusts, in the presence of the Wadia family.

On behalf of the Rustom Baug Association, president Daraius Bhappu welcomed the gathering; vice-president Cyrus Bagwadia projected

the Association's activities; committee member Nariman Daruwala reflected on the Baug's history and services rendered by its stalwarts; Kainaz Medora paid a youthful tribute to the Wadia family saying that they considered themselves "blessed with an atmosphere of togetherness and *Parsipanu* in *aapro* Baug;" and committee member Khurshed Katki proposed a vote of thanks.

In his brief address, Golwala explained that the appeal for funds can-

not be further considered by the Wadia Trust as "we have our priorities and difficulties. While (the Wadia donated baugs) Navroz Baug and Jer Baug are without even a hall, the Cusrow Baug wants to build a swimming pool. We have told them to raise their own funds...We must learn to help ourselves."

Neville pointed out that a celebration connected with Rustom Baug, means commemorating Jerbai's last gift to the community because soon after the completion of the Baug, she died in 1926. During her last illness, the buildings at Rustom Baug were completed but the roads had yet to be levelled out so she instructed her son Ness to press into service the steam rollers from their factory to expedite work on the roads. Soon thereafter she fell into a coma for nine days. On the tenth day after regaining consciousness she wanted to know the date and immediately enquired if the rollers had been transported to the Baug...

"As a permanent gesture to her, we should emulate her determination...In a community everyone has their own opinions and strong ideas. If we were to get together with the same spirit and determination it would help."

The Neville Wadia Hall was originally a ruvanni bungli built for the convenience of the Rustom Baug residents. Within a few years, however, the Hall stopped being utilized for the intended purpose and weekly religious classes were started there. When a portion of the roof caved in some years ago, they were advised to discontinue the use of the Hall. On the recommendation of their architects Behram

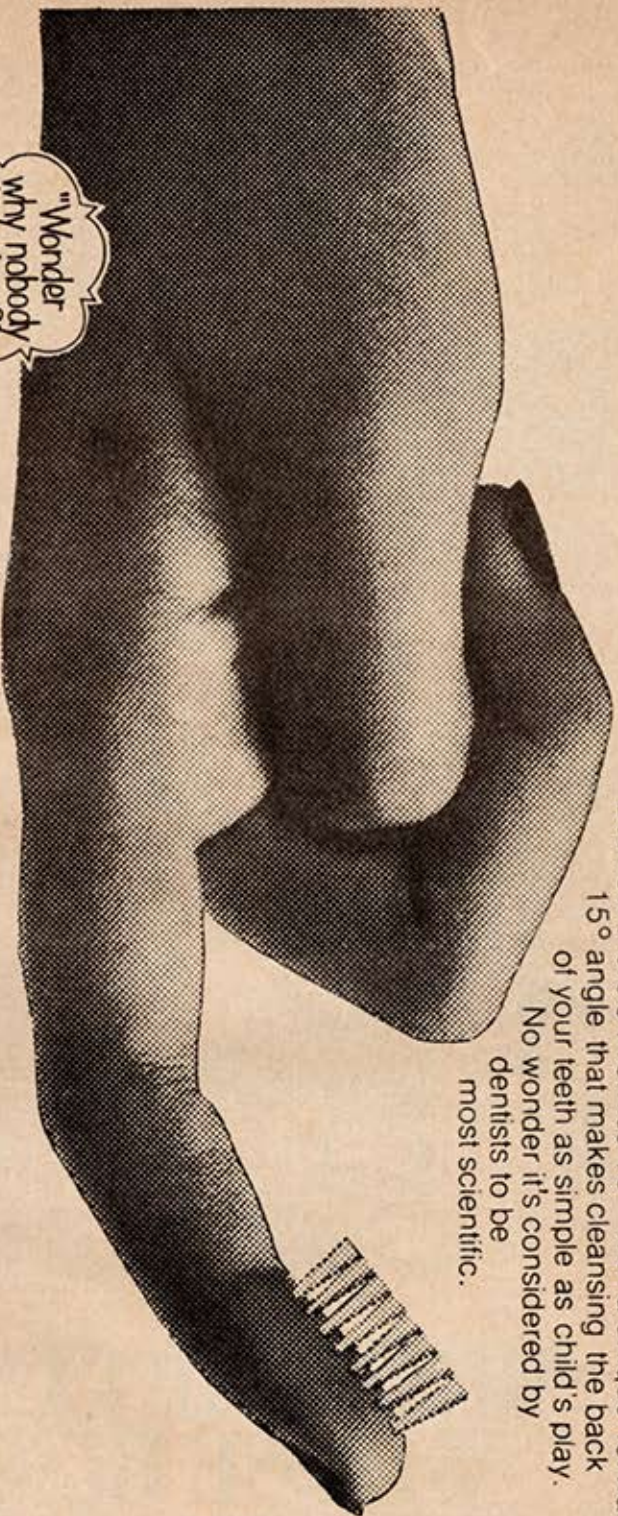
continued on page 102



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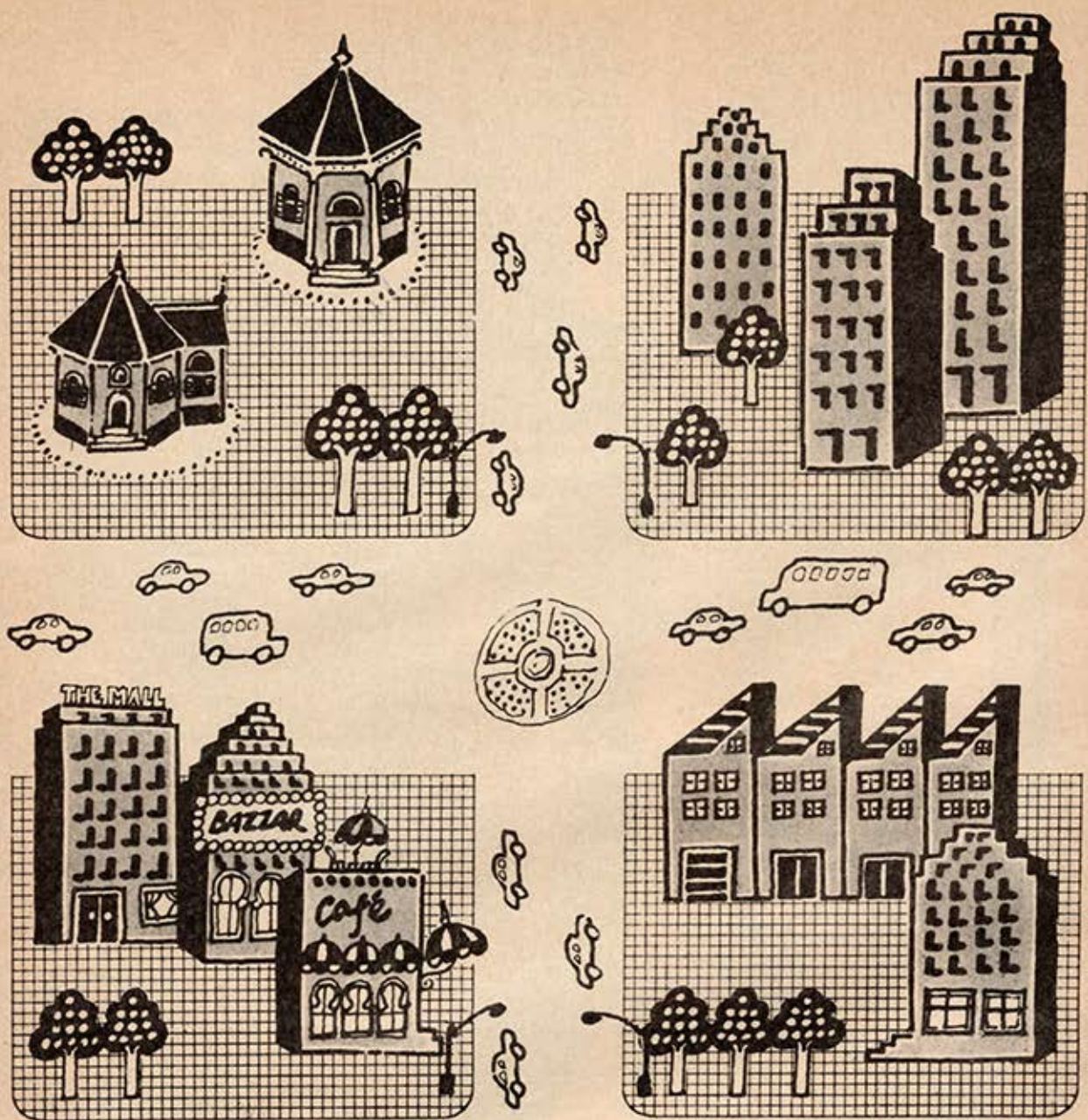


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The flame of devotion

A fund raising drive, construction of the priests' quarters, and a four-day program which included hosting of the Federation meeting, marked the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Kaikhushru Pallonji Katrak Dar-e-Meher

Parinaz Toddywalla

At the time of the Dar-e-Meher's construction, Delhi had received an unusually heavy monsoon. Yet, braving all hardships the structure was completed within six months. "The design, with beautiful white stone facing all around the building," notes an article by Shiavax Nargolwala, the Delhi Parsi Anjuman's (DPA's) then president, in a brochure released in

1961, "is indeed unique and I have no doubt that in the years to come, our new prayer house will be looked upon as an architectural landmark in the capital city of our country."

Congregating at the Kaikhushru Pallonji Katrak Dar-e-Meher 25 years later were Zoroastrians from all over India and the world who had come to participate in

the silver jubilee jashan on December 25, 1986. For the first time in Delhi's history, four High Priests from Bombay, Udawa, Navsari and Poona participated in the ceremony in the rectangular hall of the Dar-e-Meher which was packed to capacity with many visitors spilling onto the portico and courtyard.

Trooping out of the Dar-e-Meher after



At the foundation stone laying ceremony of priests' quarters: (from left) Dasturs Hormazdiar Dastur, Hormazdyar Mirza, Meherji Meherjirana, and Nowsherwanji (Inset) Dhun Bagli and Rusi Engineer reading the inscription on the plaque



the jashan, the gathering proceeded to witness the foundation stone laying ceremony at the site of the proposed priests' quarters and stood in an orderly manner on either side of the red carpet laid out in front of the marble slab. The assembly witnessed the cracking of a coconut after a short prayer and the unveiling of the inscription on the plaque, "By the grace of almighty Ahura Mazda, this foundation stone was laid by Zal Nowsherwanji, acting president of Delhi Parsi Anjuman on 25th December 1986."

The priests' quarters, planned as a perpendicular extension of the Mengusi Dharamshala with a connecting corridor, should be ready by end '87 on the Anjuman property on Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg where to the left of the main gate stands the Dharamshala, and to the right, the Bhiwandiwalla Hall and the Dar-e-Meher facing each other across a common courtyard. Hence the central open ground will now be surrounded by structures on three sides.

Since Shiavax Nargolwala, the DPA's president for 26 years until his untimely death in a car accident in August last, was very enthusiastic about the silver jubilee

celebrations, "the present board of trustees decided to proceed with the celebrations in a befitting manner," said Nowsherwanji. The acting president took obvious pride in the fact that the Government of India had recognized the agiary as a place of "Zoroastrian public worship of renown throughout Delhi and northern India."

Keeping in mind the differences in age, religiosity and definitions of entertainment, the evening programs provided a mixed fare. On the first evening, Kaikhosrov Irani, professor of philosophy at City College, New York, spoke on the evolution of religion and the impact of Zarathushtra's message on human consciousness. Two ways by which a religion is kept alive are internal conviction and external practice, mentioned Irani, emphasizing that the present choice before all Zoroastrians is either to do one's best and adapt with the true spirit of holiness and respect, or to do nothing.

The next evening, the Lieutenant Governor of Delhi, H. L. Kapur, was the chief guest at the children's entertainment program and distributed prizes to the DPA scholars. Presiding over the function, Dr Aspi Golwalla, chairman of the

Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP), made reference to the community's problems and described an average Parsi as "intelligent but erratic." Conversely, Kapur told the gathering, "To see sane people is like a breath of fresh air. We need people like you who can bring a method in our madness, who identify first with their nationality and next with their religion." Kapur later announced a donation of Rs 25,000 to the DPA. Gratefully acknowledging the gesture, DPA's Dadi Mistry, the evening's master of ceremonies, led the audience into giving Kapur a standing ovation. "The image of the Anjuman should be viewed favorably" by the visitors, was Mistry's motto whilst working for the success of the celebrations.

What the Delhi Parsis most enjoyed was the play *Behram ni saasoo* enacted by the Yazdi Karanjia troupe from Surat on the third evening. The humor, both subtle and obvious, and the ease with which the actors sailed through their well-rehearsed roles, brought back many nostalgic memories to the Delhi residents who recalled the days when they used to have regular plays performed by the Delhi Parsi Amateurs Society.

Describing the team spirit among the DPA's committee members as "wonderful," Rustom Daroga, secretary of the Association is disheartened at the tepid response from the DPA's rank and file which is understandably not interested in attending the annual general meetings (average attendance being only 40 to 45 members), but could be more supportive of the social functions like the play and Penaa Masani's program of ghazals organized last year. "There was no response to our questionnaires asking them their reasons for non-participation. It means that either they are just not interested, or that they feel everything is moving smoothly," he stated.

Farida Variawa, coopted lady trustee on the DPA's board was convinced that it is important for at least one person in every family to be community conscious. As per the DPA's rules, not more than one person from a family can be elected on the trust board.

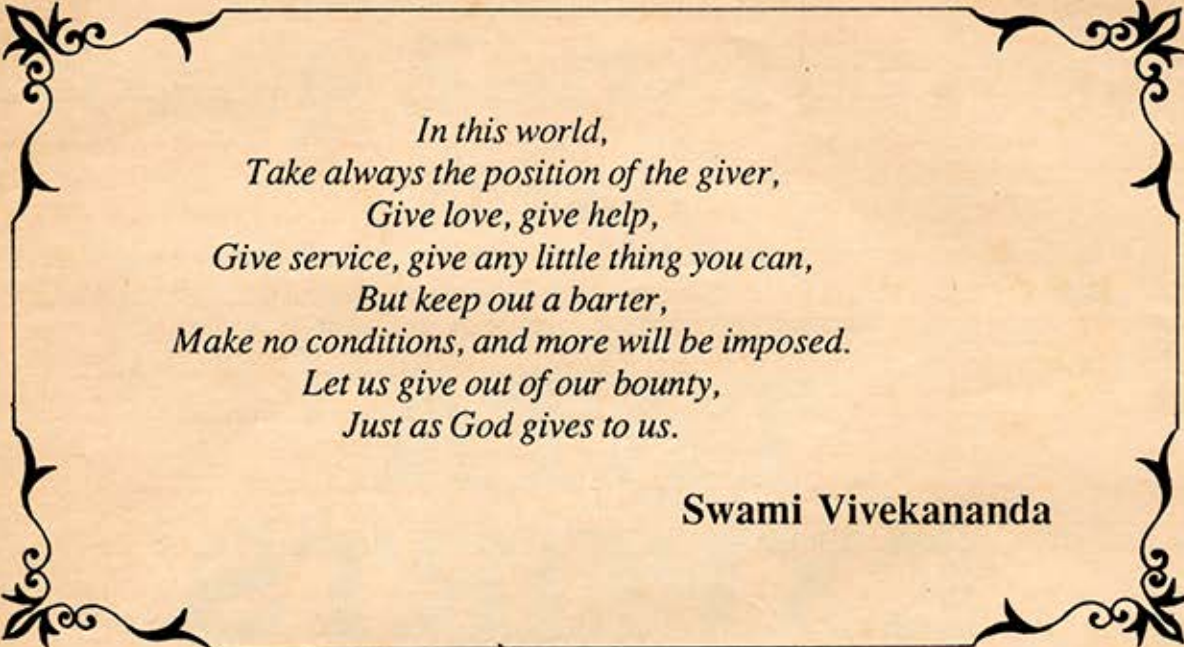
In the Variawa family, Farida's mother-in-law, Banoo Bai Variawa, the first lady trustee of Delhi, had actively served the Anjuman when funds had to be collected for the construction of the Dar-e-Meher and at the time of making applications to the Government in 1949, for the lease of land on which to build the community's permanent assets.

Dhun Bagli, manageress at the Dharamshala, and her band of workers

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were in charge of almost all the meals for the four days. They catered to the tastes of nearly 600 diners who, regardless of Delhi's passing cold wave, would dress in their most elegant outfits to enjoy the community feeling and partake of the typical Parsi favorites. With the exception of the first dinner hosted by Dadi and Nergish Mistry and the third dinner hosted by Rustom and Freny Daroga, the DPA members who wished to participate in the Anjuman subsidized feasts on the remaining days, had to pay a nominal contribution.

Among the fund raising drives launched by the DPA, the Penaaz Masani show netted Rs 20,000 and an additional Rs 40,000 were collected from the Anjuman members, each of whom was asked to donate Rs 100 towards the construction of the priests' quarters and the Dar-e-Meher



after Kaikhushru Pallonji Katrak whose widow offered to transfer property worth Rs 1,20,000 along with a cash donation of Rs 10,000 towards the construction of the Dar-e-Meher on the condition that the Dar-e-Meher be named after her late husband. Earlier, proposals had been received from the trustees of the Broach Agiary, the Tavdi Agiary, and the Soonawalla Agiary at Bombay who volunteered to shift their consecrated fires to Delhi. When none of these offers materialized, it was finally decided to instal a dadgah in the Dar-e-Meher instead of an adaran, out of fear of later being forced to downgrade the fire if there was no one to tend it.

Fortunately for the DPA, they have never been faced with the contingency of functioning without a mobed. Presently there are three priests: head priest Cawas Bagli (son of Dhun and Daraius), Ervad



Top: Kapur (at the mike) and Golwalla

Above (from left) Dhun Bagli, Farida Variawa and Daroga

Alongside (from left) Banoobai Variawa and Mistry

Far right: Ervads Gowadia, Bagli and Dhabhar

maintenance fund as per a decision taken by the trust board. In addition to the three major donors — the BPP, the Godrej Foundation and the World Zoroastrian Organisation — who had each contributed Rs 1,32,000, being the cost of construction of one flat for the priests — a sizable amount was also collected by bringing out a souvenir wherein was amassed a good collection of advertisements. Altogether the receipts during the silver jubilee year were in the vicinity of eight lakhs of rupees, mentioned Daroga.

The 150-page souvenir featured the Dar-e-Meher in an attractive frontispiece. The first few pages carried messages and greetings from important dignitaries like the President and the Prime Minister of India. Religious, historical and demo-

graphic articles comprised the remaining reading matter of the souvenir. Released on the morning of the fourth day, the brochure was distributed to all the delegates at the executive council meeting of the Federation of the Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India which was hosted by the DPA to coincide with the Dar-e-Meher's twenty-fifth jubilee.

The fire installed

The Dar-e-Meher was "like a Mecca to my husband (the late Ervad Daraius Bagli who served as its first priest for 18 years until his demise in 1979) and Shiavax Nargolwala. Both of them would know exactly how many bricks went up each day," reminisces Dhun Bagli.

In 1961 the Dar-e-Meher was named



Sohrab Gowadia and Ervad Jamshed Dhabhar. The DPA has always prided itself on providing the maximum possible benefits to their mobeds like good pay with free board and lodging, annual increment, medical and travel allowances, one month's leave with pay, gratuity and provident fund and warm clothes for the winter. Their mobeds cater to the religious needs of the Delhi population as well as the neighboring mofussil anjumans of Agra, Amritsar, Allahabad, Indore and Gwalior.

The three priests take turns in tending the sacred fire at the Dar-e-Meher and attending to outstation jobs. Ervad Cawas Bagli was always keen on following in his father's footsteps and becoming a priest. After qualifying from the Dadar

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Athorman Madressa under Ervad Rustom Panthaky, Bagli was absorbed by the Anjuman in 1984. According to his estimates, on an average, 15 to 20 afringans are prayed each month at the Agiary.

With 60 years of experience in the mobedi profession, Ervad Gowadia at the age of 73 is outspoken as he says in Gujarati, "The fire-temple functions chiefly because of the Dharamshala passengers. Parsis in Delhi are too greatly dispersed and the present generation can be described as 'indifferent' where religious customs are concerned. They have no idea of Hormuzd *roj* or Behram *roj*, but if they come to the Dar-e-Meher on auspicious occasions, they will offer everything — sandalwood, *batti* and money." Though earlier, in 1985, he had resigned from the DPA's services due to differences of opinion on the pay scale, after his return he feels that he can no longer face the extremities of the Delhi climate.

Unlike many other provinces, the mobeds in Delhi are neither entitled to the *boi* offerings nor do they have to incur any expenses on the management of the Dar-e-Meher. Adjusting to this variation and other differences in the mode of prayers at Delhi is Ervad Dhabhar. After serving in Bombay's H.B. Wadia Atas Bahram for five years, Dhabhar is happy to be exposed to the different experiences in Delhi where "the *tandurasti* prayers are longer and the *jashan* is performed differently."

An assistant at the Dar-e-Meher for nearly 15 years, Firoz Balsara is happier in Delhi than he was in Bombay where he was working as a compositor at the Tata Press till his eyesight failed him. His assorted duties even include performing of the *sachkar* for a Zoroastrian male body. But what impresses him about the Delhi Parsis is their generosity, their humility and their insistence on his joining them at their wedding and navjote functions.

"While expressing complete and whole-hearted devotion to our ancient religion, the Anjuman has always adapted itself to changing times in matters such as allowing *sezdo* by non-Parsi friends and relations at the time of burial, (and) recognizing navjotes of children, one of whose parents is a Parsi Zoroastrian (with the written consent of both parents)," Nargolwala had written in his foreword to the booklet *The Delhi Parsi Anjuman — a profile*. The DPA permits all the after-death ceremonies even if a body is to be cremated. "The greatest achievement of the Delhi Parsi Anjuman has been to maintain complete unity and

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harmony between its members and between the Anjuman and the Government authorities. This is most important in Delhi which is the capital city of India, because the image of the Parsi community in Delhi is taken by Government and the other communities as reflecting the image of the Parsi community all over India," Nargolwala had further expounded.

The relationships are cordial, says Nargolwala's wife Nergish, coopted lady trustee on the DPA board, whose memories of the recent car accident where she lost her husband are fresh, "because you can't afford to antagonize anyone. Finally it is only the Parsis who will come to your help in times of difficulty."

The Parsis of Delhi "represent the more enterprising and adventurous, who have chosen occupational opportunities outside their hometowns. This is in contrast to the known partiality of the average Parsi of Bombay (against) leaving that city in spite of better occupational and housing facilities available elsewhere," observed sociologist Ava Khullar when a survey of the Delhi Parsis revealed that only 21 percent of the households had been residing in Delhi since 1951.

Another finding of the survey showed that 33 percent of the households were of mixed marriage families. Thus among the "progressive measures initiated and supported by the community" was the welcoming of non-Parsi spouses and children of mixed marriages within the Anjuman, though the spouses cannot be the beneficiaries of the Delhi Parsi Anjuman Trust which has control over the assets of the Anjuman.

The active group of youngsters in Delhi meet regularly for religious sessions organized by authoress Piloo Jungolwala and social functions planned at the Darogas' residence, according to Farokh Rustomji, the coopted youth trustee on the DPA board.

The DPA was formed in 1925 on the initiative of Dr Nowroji Kapadia who served as its first president. When he was unable to continue, eye surgeon Dr S. P. Shroff succeeded him and expanded the work of the Anjuman. During Shroff's tenure until 1956, applications were made to the Government of India who finally in 1949 granted a perpetual lease to a plot of land on Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg for construction thereon of a fire-temple, priests' quarters, a hall and a dharamshala,

notes a write-up in the silver jubilee souvenir. The Mengusi Dharamshala, built in three wings, was constructed in 1951, the Bhiwandiwalla Hall in 1954 and the Dar-e-Meher in 1961 when Nargolwala took over as president.

Nargolwala had then said, "The flame of devotion...as symbolized by our new fire-temple burns bright and steady in the hearts of all Parsi Zoroastrians... May this flame of devotion and may the sacred fire which will be established in our new Agiary continue to remain alight for all time to come."

"Even I have tremendous faith in the agiary and, considering it to be an extension of my own house, I like it to look beautiful. When upstated Zoroastrians board at the Dharamshala during the pendency of their court case or for any other reason, I tell them '*Padshahji ne naman kari jao*' (make your obeisance to the fire) and everything will work out well," says Dhun Bagli.

Probably echoing the feeling of her compeers, Farida Variawa is "proud of the well-maintained Dar-e-Meher" and happy that "in Delhi there is a place where, if you want, you can be at peace with yourself."

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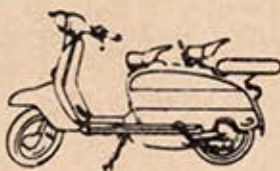
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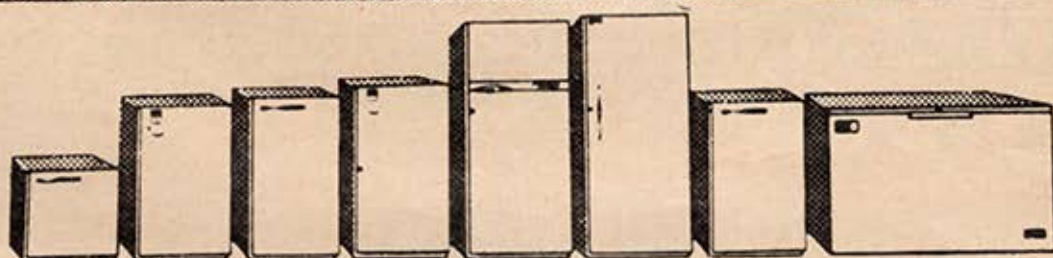
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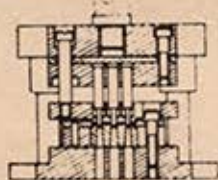
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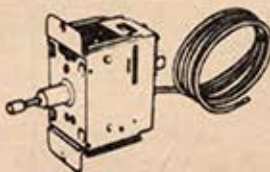
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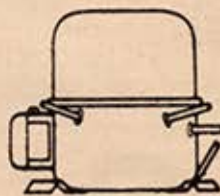
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The difficult choice

A worldwide poll to decide crucial community issues is recommended by French scholar Paul du Breuil

Arnavaz S. Mama

"The whole Zoroastrian community is on the Chinvat Bridge. On one side you will remain, but scattered. On the other side, you will fall into past obscurantism. You have been taught that you have a choice. Your choice is to remain or to disappear. It is a difficult choice in the history of Zoroastrianism."

Paul du Breuil's blue eyes are earnest, his expression grave, as he advocates a worldwide referendum within the community to determine a set of acceptable ideas and practices that would promote unity among Zoroastrianism's one lakh surviving adherents. The gaunt, lanky Frenchman whose two doctorates — in comparative philosophy and in the history of religion — focussed on the Zoroastrian contribution, arrived in New Delhi half way through the Delhi Parsi Anjuman's celebrations to commemorate their Dar-e-Meher's silver jubilee. He had to remain in Paris to receive a French government award on Xmas day. This was the Paris-based professor's fifth trip to India when *Parsiana* interviewed him at New Delhi's Mengusi Dharamshala.

"If the whole Zoroastrian community does not concentrate on a referendum to decide what to do, then, in this mingled world, you will not exist beyond one century." Du Breuil believes that the community's tendency to controversy will split it into "too many sects," like the Christian Protestants in the US. "Then who will incarnate the true religion?" he asks.

The representatives of the anjumans should formulate the rules for a referendum, which could be in two parts — one for the mobed class and one for the behdin, he suggests.

As "mathematically there will be no Zoroastrians left in (the space of) a century," du Breuil believes that the referendum could also establish two kinds of

behdins with two different statutes — Zoroastrians by birth and Zoroastrians by conversion, it being clearly understood that the latter would have no claims on the present community's religious and charitable institutions. (According to du Breuil, there are one million Iranians in the US wanting to become Zoroastrian whom Dastur Navrooz Minochehr-Homji considers unobjectionable, being the return of the ancient race to the original path.)

"I like Zoroastrianism. This religion still has something to say to me and to the world. But to live, it must organize... It is not only an inside problem of the community. It's a problem towards the world at large." Narrow-minded Christians and, Jews especially, don't like to refer to Zoroastrianism's Aryan traditions

upon your faith in your own *daenam* (religious consciousness in relation to Ahura Mazda). According to the *Avesta*, the salvation of each soul is realized according to the person's thoughts, words and deeds. The future of Zoroastrianism depends upon the deeds of the community now. Our mind is creative. It can change our destiny. (Until) the majority...believe in the necessity to become one solid body, it will not become a reality."

The subject of du Breuil's speech to the executive council of the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India at the Bhiwandiwalla Hall, New Delhi, on December 27, 1986 had been, "Is Zoroastrianism an embarrassing religion?" Tracing the history of religious thought from a western, Christian background (he



*"Zoroastrianism calls men
to renovate the world
instead of awaiting
everything from the Gods, from
karma or from fate"*

because of memories of Nazi propaganda (Hitler mistakenly equated the Germanic and Aryan races and considered all other people 'inferior,' especially the Jews), says du Breuil. But apart from that, the most acute external danger that Zoroastrianism faces is "to be cannibalized by western materialism."

"Your individual or community destiny depends upon your own faith. It's up to you to commit suicide or to live. It's a tremendous responsibility which depends

belongs to the Protestant Episcopal Church), the professor demonstrated how the direct simplicity of Zarathushtra's teachings had been a source of discomfort to the Catholic Church which demanded total obedience from its adherents in all matters of dogma while Zoroastrianism preached the virtues of the individual making his own decisions. He quoted from the early Greek scholars like Socrates and Xenophon who considered Zoroastrians in their heyday as "the most excellent, the

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wisest, the most just, the most temperate and the bravest men," and described the disdainful attitude of later generations of Greeks after Alexander had defeated the Persian empire. Du Breuil emphasized, "A very important fact is that history is always written by the victorious, whether in religion or in politics. Since the Greeks had won, over the Persian empire, history has forever been written to glorify the western winners."

Convinced that "no other religion could appear more permanently subversive than Zoroastrianism which calls men to renovate the world instead of awaiting everything from the Gods, from karma or from fate," du Breuil says, "No other philosopher in history proposed such a daring program as Zarathushtra who wanted both, the inner transformation of man as well as the social and political transfiguration of the world."

Speaking of twentieth century progress, du Breuil sounded a philosopher's warning: "The more man's power increases over technology, the more his conscience should proportionately increase... for a perfect world cannot be created by imperfect men." Unfortunately, "modern man sees all natural elements and creatures as things, as products that can be

utilized...The first victim of this divorce from nature is Man himself. No artificial world produced by men will ever be (as Zarathushtra envisaged it at the end of time) 'A world which never grows old, never dies, never decays, which will be ever living, ever growing...' For today's fever of scientific progress which justifies

"The Zoroastrian religion still has something to say to the world. But to live, it must organize..."

all means — the weapons race as well as biogenetic handling — (mean the end of) mankind or there may be mere surviving anthropoids, learned on physical matters but no more human beings, for they will have forgotten what Zarathushtra wanted them to be — co-workers of the divine plan — *saoshyants*."

Du Breuil drew an interesting parallel between the French nobility and the Parsis. The French aristocracy, once the pacesetter for Europe with all its moral

virtues of chivalry, is dwindling just like the Parsi community because the inheritance is only through the male line. Unlike them, the English nobility has survived, because for centuries it has accepted the transmission of the line through females when the male branch is extinguished. Besides, the English kings still create new noblemen from among their deserving subjects — including Parsis! And, emphasizes du Breuil, the French aristocracy is dying not only because of its decreasing number nor because of mixed marriage, but for the simple reason that the spirit of the old nobility is dead. Unchanging social and political rules could not resist the tidal wave of new ideologies, says du Breuil, hoping Parsis learn their lesson from the example.

In his interview with *Parsiana* the following day, du Breuil referred to other points of similarity between the Zoroastrians and the European communities: the dwindling populations, the increasing numbers of the aged as compared to the young, the increase in beggars. Recalling sadly that "traditionally Parsis didn't beg," du Breuil attributed it to the worldwide collapse of traditional religious feeling. Quoting the late French philosopher and onetime minister of culture, Andre

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Malreaux, who has predicted, "The twenty-first century will be religious or it will not be," du Breuil anticipated an increased thought content in religion and a corresponding decline in ritualism — a rationalism tempered by spirituality, not obscurantism but an opening of the mind.

Accepting the need of certain individuals to materialize their faith through the symbolism of religious rites, du Breuil considers ritualism important but not essential. He does not consider the death rites of the dokhma, for instance, as integral to the religion, "(The dokhmas) don't shock me. They are a part of your cultural heritage. But the day the administrative authorities object, they may have to go!"

Chef des missions (cultural advisor) for the French Government, du Breuil has studied Zoroastrianism for 25 years and is currently a lecturer at the Sorbonne University in Paris as well as the Columbia Pacific University, USA. His published works include *Zarathushtra and the Transformation of the World*, *Zoroastrianism and Religious History and Zoroastrian Philosophy*. In 1980 the professor had delivered the K.R. Cama Oriental Institute's (KRCOI) Government Fellowship lectures on Zarathushtra's conception of

law, published in abridgement in the *KRCOI Journal*.

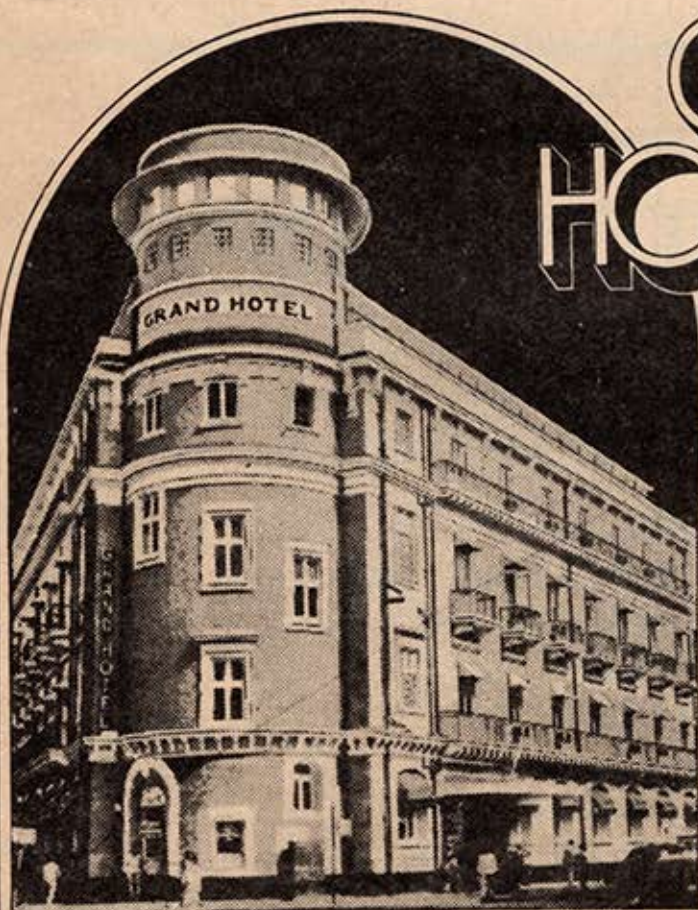
Two revealing though uncorroborated anecdotes about du Breuil made the

"The more man's power increases over technology, the more his conscience should proportionately increase...for a perfect world cannot be created by imperfect men."

rounds among the community gathered in Delhi: In the course of a question-answer session after a lecture held at Zoroastrian House, London, some time ago, someone had asked the prepossessing Frenchman if he "practiced" Zoroastrianism. Du Breuil responded with a bit of family history: Some years ago his young son and daughter-in-law had believed they were not financially secure enough to go ahead

with an unexpected pregnancy and contemplated an abortion. When they referred the matter to him, du Breuil quoted a relevant passage from the *Gathas*. Today the little grandchild is a source of happiness for the entire family! On another occasion, it is said, du Breuil, riled by a heckler, unbuttoned his shirt and pulled out a gold farohar that hung upon his chest, saying, "See I wear a farohar — I'm a better Zoroastrian than you!!"

"I personally stick to the idea that Zoroastrianism should be an example for today's world. I do not think that God has permitted the Zoroastrian community to last till today for nothing," says the optimistic Frenchman, adding, "More than 10 centuries after the collapse of the Persian empire, Zoroastrian society found enough intelligence, courage and honesty for a new economic and political life in India. No doubt, the community will not be kept back from progress by anachronistic and irrational matters covered by the easy label of cultural identity... There must not be confusion between the spiritual tradition and legal observances ruling society at any one time, and now considered obsolete. Don't forget that 'the letter kills but the spirit gives life.'"



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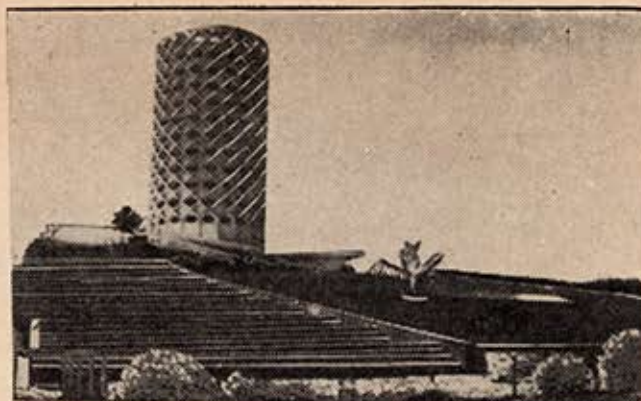
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Demographer Dr Ketayun Gould's research shows that Parsi birth rates have been declining over a hundred years and the chances of reversing that trend are remote

An aging, dwindling community

"People say that Parsis do not get married because they do not have houses, so let's provide them houses so that they will get married. I consider that a simple solution. Housing might get the people to marry a little earlier — only the ones that are postponing marriage for that reason. But I am not convinced that if you do something like providing houses tomorrow for everyone, somehow our number of single people will go down." Demographer Dr Ketayun Gould was commenting on the solution offered by the elders of the community to the problem of the Parsis' declining population.

A professor of social work and faculty member, program in South and West Asian Studies at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Gould's research on the demographic decline of the Parsi community embraces the period prior to the 1881 census as well as current times. In a series of trips to Gujarat between 1974-76 and a trip to Bombay during 1981-82 Gould acquired detailed firsthand information to enable her to establish whether urbanization has indeed led to significant changes in the community's population growth.

Gould notes three major aspects contributing to the community's fertility decline — 20 percent of the population never marries; those who do, marry at a very late age (about 27 years — one of the highest marriage ages in the world) and,

most significant of all, control the number of their offspring to an average of 2.2 per couple.

The phenomenon of a community thus phasing itself into extinction in a land where the overriding problem is an exploding population, prompted Gould to examine the differences closely. "Other communities here have lived in joint family systems; many people live in one room and are able to have many children. So it is not just housing by itself but the attitude that goes with that kind of urban situation that has played a part in affecting (Parsi) fertility," she says.

To establish whether it was urbanization that was responsible for the community's low rate of reproduction or the high incidence of cousin marriages (36 percent of rural women marry consanguineously versus 22 percent of urban women), Gould began her intensive study of the urban and rural Parsi population in Gujarat. In 1954 demographer Buddhis Chandra Shah had done a study in a few villages around Surat which are known as the Godavara villages. Gould chose those particular villages again to get some comparative view over a period of 20 years but studied a wider area than Shah, embracing villages on both sides of the river Tapi plus the Mandvi and Mangol talukas and villages around the town of Rajpipla. Her systematic random sample included data from 551 households — 164 from the city of Surat (urban) and

387 from the surrounding villages.

The findings of the survey contradicted many popular beliefs. For example it was found that rural folk married as late as city dwellers and sometimes later, as suitable mates are more difficult to find. Another surprising revelation was that the number of pregnancies among rural couples was lower than among urban couples and there was a longer interval between marriage and the first child. On the other hand there were more cousin marriages in rural society. Such collateral marriages (especially in the case of a man's son marrying his sister's daughter) also seemed to produce more dead infants. Gould however is still analyzing the data for economic correlations and levels of medical service in the villages and hence hesitates to accept this last conclusion without qualifications.

Gould believes that the seeds of the Parsis' present predicament were sown in the early 1800s. Her studies show that Parsi birthrates have been declining since over a century. Even in 1881 our fertility was 46 percent lower than that of the Hutterites in the USA (a community which never practised contraception) says Gould, quoting from an article by demographer Leela Vascera. "If our fertility was that low in 1881, then we must have started doing something at least as early as the 1850s. That would make us comparable to the developed populations of the world because that's when fertility





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started to go down in those populations," she says.

The prospect of a "good cross-cultural study, to see what a population did in this part of the world that was similar to what was happening in the developed areas of the world," set Gould off on research upon her own community. The difference between the Parsi experience and that of the western communities lies in the fact that the western populations began to decline because more people remained unmarried and those who married, did so at a relatively advanced age. There was no attempt, in the west, to curtail the number of children produced in marriage. Among the Parsis, the reverse was true: while the number of single people was less than one percent of the Parsi population and the age of marriage was low (it was 19 years), the number of offspring was small. "It was something they were doing once they were married and it had to be something like withdrawal. There were no other methods that were known to that population unless it was illegal abortion which you cannot prove in any way."

The similarities and differences set Gould enquiring into the cultural factors underlining our attitudes. "Were we really interested in controlling our fertility because we were so identified with the British as people claim? Or were our ideas about females, independent of British influence? Was education at all playing a part?"

Seeking these answers, Gould delved into biographies and historical accounts, into old controversies and volumes of the *Parsi Prakash* to provide demographic information in terms of the age of marriage,

Divorce reflects high expectations from marriage whereas dislike of marriage involves the feeling that people don't want to be subservient to somebody else.

number of children born, age at death, etc and indirect evidence as to what were the ideas, the influences, the thoughts and how these changed — did people really think that it was right to have so many children, did they think that it was right for women to get married or what was the woman's proper role in terms of education, public life, etc. "What was the total picture of what we thought about our community in relation to the British? What were our ideas about our own origin and status? So my study — I call it *Roots* — deals with these interrelated factors that might account for a change in fertility behavior," explains Gould.

Popular opinion has often blamed the current trend towards very small families as well as the growing number of single people to higher education, especially among women. But, says Gould, "if our fertility was low even in 1881, it meant that even before the modern methods were known, even before the spread of education, the control of fertility was going on and that really depends on the attitude of people towards the number of children they should

have, etc." Indeed, that was well before female emancipation, especially among Parsis. "My historical study of Parsis in the nineteenth century reveals that in the 1870s women were not even able to come out and sit in the drawing room with men, their proper place was very narrowly perceived as being restricted to private household matters, so that women seen out in public with men, or driving in open carriages were cause for comment," she adds.

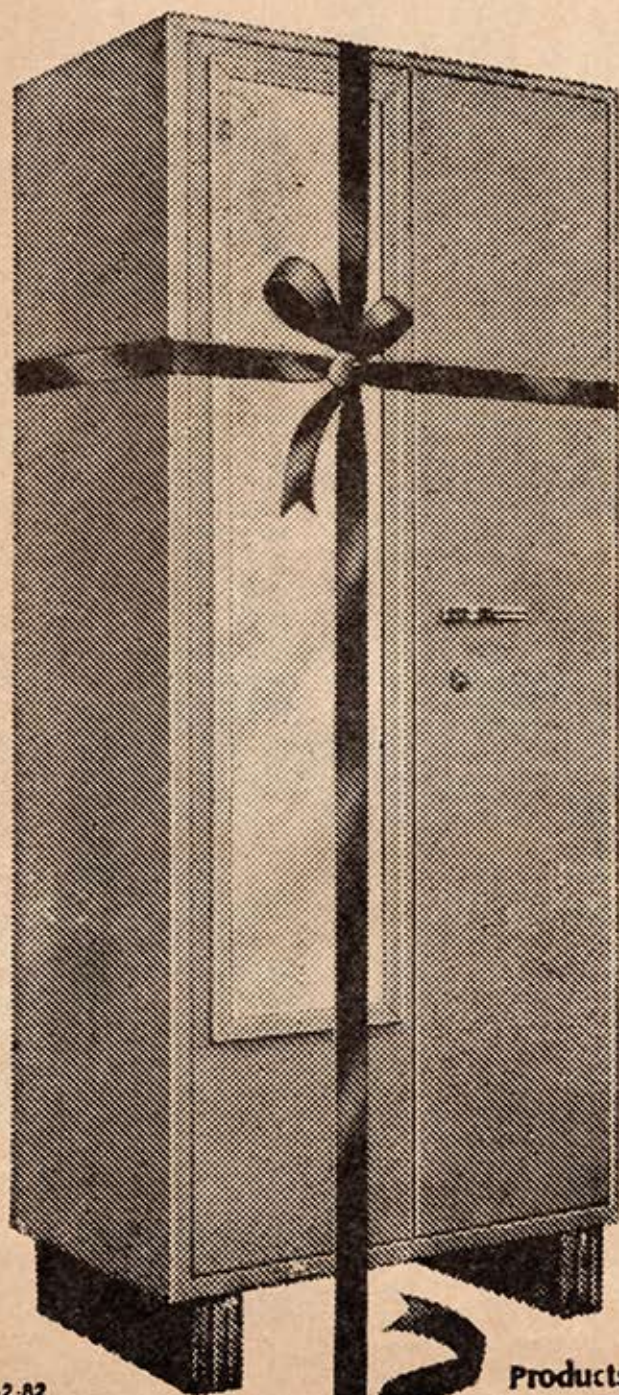
"If in fact fertility was low in 1881, then it wasn't education that was responsible. Ideas about females' roles were changing before that date and there was conscious control of fertility. Thus it is the attitude towards fertility that gradually changes amongst the population, and then they will control (fertility) despite the low level of education. That's what we are hoping for in India today, in terms of the general demographic growth situation in the country."

Significantly, among the unmarried women in Gould's sample population, those who consider themselves likely to marry are the highly educated ones, while it is the poorly educated women who seem to see themselves as unlikely to marry. Another popular notion undermined by Gould's research is the belief that Parsi women are more highly educated than the men. While the Parsi women's level of education has risen tremendously in a relatively short time, Gould's statistics reveal that the boys are more highly educated than the girls.

"As fertility declines, there will be more aged people who might not have any resources, any family to take care of them."



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The Parsi population has one of the highest numbers of single people in the world today — 20 percent as compared to the US' 10 percent. What Gould finds particularly interesting is that there are families where a number of siblings have remained unwed.

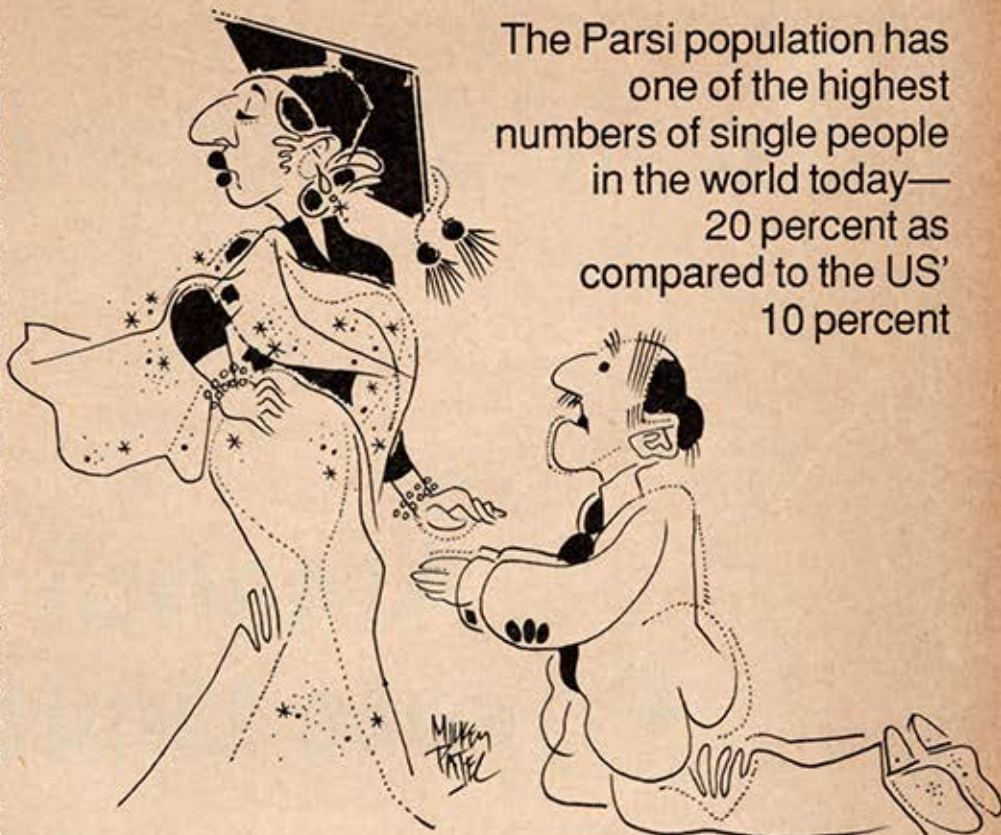
Bachelors and spinsters over the age of 45 from the rural areas stated "need of parents" as the most frequent reason for not getting married. "Now what is it that the parents inculcate in their children to make them feel that if they got married they would not be able to support their parents, that they need to stay unmarried in order to do so?" asks Gould. The group's urban counterpart most frequently quoted "dislike of marriage" as the reason for their single status, though men also cited low income as a reason.

This may well be a trend in which we are now leading the developed societies of the west. Women with education, an occupation and an income "don't feel the 'necessity' of getting married," as expressed by urban Parsi females and often heard abroad, says Gould.

Contrasting the Parsis' dislike of marriage with the high rate of divorce in the west, Gould says, "Some people feel that the high rate of divorce reflects a high expectation of satisfaction in marriage, while others see it as being reflective of a lack of commitment... Dislike of marriage is a different kind of phenomenon in the sense that it involves much more of the feeling that people don't want to be subservient to somebody else... They perceive marriage as perhaps being restrictive of their independence."

The response to Gould's questionnaire and her reception from the 551 sample families she visited, was cordial throughout, she says. Initially, a representative of the Surat Parsi Punchayet escorted her and introduced her to the local people. Bonafides thus established, with colloquial Gujarati at her command and a common Parsi heritage, Gould found that her easy, unhurried interviews netted her enormous information. Sometimes the roles changed and the interviewees became the questioners, which increased the rapport between them. Gould notes however that information regarding income was far more difficult to obtain than about marital and sexual behavior — a fact known worldwide to professional researchers, she says, but one which surprises lay people.

Parsis married outside the community do not fall within Gould's sample because you cannot include a woman and exclude her children without the results showing an unduly low fertility rate, she



The Parsi population has one of the highest numbers of single people in the world today — 20 percent as compared to the US' 10 percent

notes. Besides, "statistically speaking this number is small at this point of time although it is a very emotional issue within the community."

Although there is no information about the population growth rate among those who have emigrated, Gould feels "it would be a very interesting study to find out what's happening to Zoroastrians who go abroad because that's almost like a next step from urbanization." It would also provide information on the reasons for emigration and the numbers involved. "In order to do such a study you really have to see the families, follow them for a period of time to see what's happened after they have lived abroad a few years and the children are grown. You might have to divide the sample by generations, length of stay, socioeconomic status..."

Sketching the scenario in the years ahead, Gould says, "As the number of aging people in the community (20 percent in 1982) goes up, our total number will go down. We will have more consumers than producers. So we will have the same situation as in many developed countries in Europe and in the States. As fertility declines, there will be more aged people who might not have any resources, any family to take care of them. The community will need more resources for the aged than things like education for the children. I know we are raising some

funds to set up more chronic wards in hospitals. That's happened in the United States where many elementary schools closed down or were consolidated because fertility has fallen to such a level that there is no need to have so many schools. These things will happen in our community."

"We might want to offer incentives to increase fertility, induce more people to marry, hoping that these incentives are significant enough to bring about change. Demographically, I don't see any changes happening. We are going through, completing the cycle that started long ago."

"I see that trend continuing. Maybe, when the numbers reach a dangerously low level, people might be shocked into changing their fertility behavior and the community leaders might take a look at instituting a systems change (such as changing the definition of Parsi Zoroastrian). People say that sometimes when a community is in danger, as in Israel, they have been able to get people to increase their fertility, because they feel that they are 'under siege,' but we are not 'under siege' in the same way. Maybe, we will have to wait till that point seems imminent to make personal and systems change. Both are certainly necessary to help the community achieve a demographically healthy status."

Ketayun Gould's quotes overleaf

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In Gould's own words...

"There is no simple-minded solution to our problem that will work because we are going through a natural cycle like any population that has achieved a certain level of education, income, etc. For example, the countries of the developed world — England, the USA, the Scandinavian countries, the West European countries and Japan — started to control their fertility early in this century and some right after World War II, mostly through legalizing abortion. Therefore some of them are getting into the stage where pretty soon they will be approaching the zero growth situation. The Parsis reached that level in the 1960s. Countries like Germany and the Scandinavian countries are already experiencing a negative growth situation like the Parsis.

"If you try to tell Parsis to change their habits, values, attitudes, have more children because our community is diminishing, it does not have the effect that you hope for, because each individual family somehow has to make that change and then everybody will say, 'Let the other person do it, I cannot afford to have more children.'"

"None of the alternatives suggested thus far by the community, like providing housing to the engaged couples, is going to change the community's mores. If we



While the Parsi women's level of education has risen tremendously in a relatively short time, the boys are more highly educated

can really understand what we are doing — whether we are inculcating some ideas in the children about marriage or some dislike of that state, which results in a

negative growth rate for the community — it might be worth studying. On the other hand you have to recognize, that a trend which might not be productive for the community, might be a positive, self-affirming process for the women themselves. There may be some element which is not completely negative, some self-image which says, 'I can survive.' But from the community's point of view it becomes a problem, because our numbers are going down. So there is a positive and a negative element in it and your point of view determines how you see it."

"I found that actually there is discrimination in terms of females being provided the best education, being sent to the elitist schools, especially those where the medium of instruction is English. There's a lot of feeling that comes out in interviews about educated Parsi women. They are depicted as being aggressive — as somebody said, they are 'tiger women' — and so I think, despite all our claims about being a modern community, we have really traditional attitudes and ideas about male and female roles and about sex education. It might be changing, but it might play a part in terms of some fear of equalitarian relationships. There might be fear of educated women on the part of men — that women might be too assertive — and women might fear being accepted if they are assertive or they may fear assertiveness in themselves."

AUG, 1903

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Brother Bejoo—
Our aunt's daughter won't suit me. She may be pretty as you are, but pretty girls lack brains. I want a wife with brains.
Sister Bachal—
Why, haven't you got them yourself? (Brother B. buries himself behind his paper.)

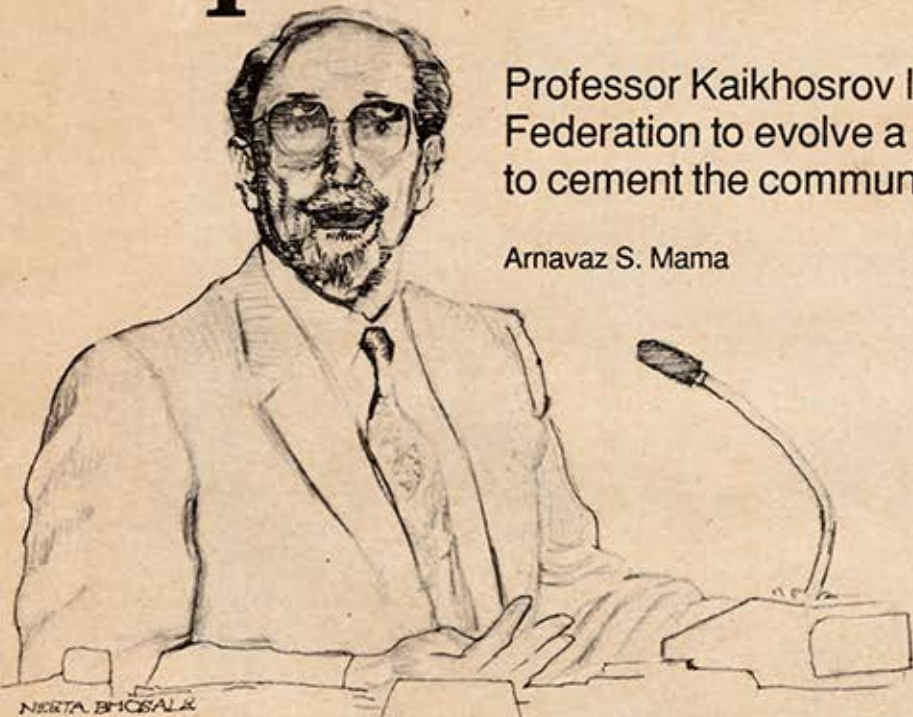
"Even data on the total number of Parsis is at times a conjecture, so that we don't really have reliable information on what was happening to the community during the earlier (pre 1881) period. That is part of the problem in putting together any kind of a composite picture. The studies that have been done in the west are based on parish records and church records but we do not have anything like that (in India). If we had some documents where we had recorded the number of children in the family, if we had family Bibles like people had in the west... But we do not have anything like that from which we could conduct a study."

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A question of attitudes



Professor Kaikhosrov Irani requests the Federation to evolve a common core of beliefs to cement the community together

Arnavaz S. Mama

"We Zoroastrians are far more united than people think; but elements of unity are not highlighted, only discord is highlighted."

Guest speaker Professor Kaikhosrov D. Irani of the department of philosophy, City College, New York, addressed the assembled executive council of the Federation of the Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India at Bhiwandiwalla Hall, New Delhi on December 28, 1986.

Zoroastrian settlements in North America have substantially antedated the formation of associations there, noted the suave, bespectacled philosopher. The first generation of Zoroastrian settlers, largely professionals, having established themselves and their families in reasonable material comfort, began to realize that concerted effort was needed if their children were to grow up as Zoroastrians and not be lost in the American melting pot. An answer to this need was the establishment of anjumans that sprang up in North America. For example, the Zoroastrian Association of Greater New York (ZAGNY) to which Irani belongs, is about 15 years old and serves about 320 members within a radius of 40 miles covering New Jersey, New York, Philadelphia and Connecticut.

Not all members of ZAGNY are equally interested in the problem of preserving community identity in North America's multicultural society. Irani differentiated between those who only attend functions and dinners — "the dhansak Parsis" — those who "participate intermittently in some kind of discussion," and the regular members who spend the first Sunday of each month at the Darbe Mehr. Their children attend the classes initiated by Lovji Cama, one-time president of ZAGNY, covering five grades according to age and maturity, and learn Zoroastrian history, culture, traditions, prayers and rituals. Simultaneously an adults' discussion group studies the scriptures including the various *has* (paragraphs) of the *Gathas*, the *Yashts*, passages of the *Vendidad*, etc. The idea is "to give our children (and adults) sufficient understanding so that they can have a rational discussion with children (of other faiths)," explained Irani and made a pitch for adequate educational material: "Ms Piloo Jungalwalla has written eminently valuable material. The American Zoroastrians would pay a reasonable price for it (if it could be made available to them). More valuably, the same material would be used across North America and

thus create a common core of understanding."

Recounting the problems the community faces in North America, Irani described how the Darbe Mehr property that ZAGNY acquired — a large villa, the home of a wealthy toy manufacturer — needed extensive repairs before it could be used by the community. People on the housing board objected to a temple in a residential locality. To the American mind the idea of an Indian temple was associated with the Hare Krishna cult and they wanted no such noisy rituals in their midst. Luckily, there were a couple of Jews on the housing board with some knowledge of Zoroastrianism, who interceded on behalf of the Darbe Mehr project, and the embargo was lifted. Subsequently at Darbe Mehr jashans they have sometimes "come to felicitate us. There were a few people who said that the presence of non-Zoroastrians invalidates a jashan. (But it is) not polite, proper or moral to ask people to leave," Irani added.

There are divorced Zoroastrian women who wish to bring up their intercommunity offspring as Zoroastrians. There are Zoroastrian women married into other communities where the non-Zoroastrian spouse is willing to allow the child to be raised as a Zoroastrian, noted Irani. However, in one case where the parents spoke to a visiting Zoroastrian lecturer from India, they were told that "the child would be cursed by the fire," noted an exasperated Irani.

The ratio of female Zoroastrian children to male is 2:1 in North America, said Irani, and "since in Canada and the US bigamy is not permitted, a large number of Zoroastrian women will perforce marry out of the community. What about their children?" he questioned.

"Iranian Zoroastrians know their prayers, know Zoroastrianism well. The practices in Iran are different from the

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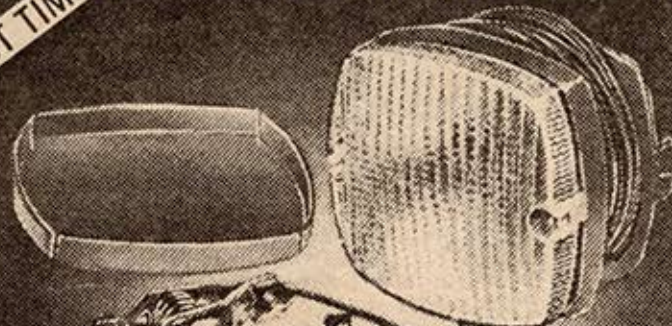
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practices in India. It is important that we maintain unity of the Zoroastrian tradition without maintaining uniformity," emphasized the gentle savant and urged the assembled delegates "to evolve a common core of beliefs and practices" to cement the international Zoroastrian brotherhood.

"It is not a problem of commitment but a problem of attitudes," said Irani, ventilating the North American grievance against "calumny across the seas... priests, preachers and lecturers who... come and tell us that we are not Zoroastrians or that we are makeshift Zoroastrians or neo-Zoroastrians. Names don't matter, but seeds of disunity are sown and every time this happens some people stop being members... Itinerant religious visitors must not speak as though they bear the imprimatur of the Zoroastrians of India," demanded Irani.

Reverting to his professorial role, Irani referred to archaeological research in Iran being completely at a standstill after the Shah's departure as there are mosques constructed over the remains of old fire-temples and in the present political climate, not even defunct mosques may be tampered with. However, in Tashkent, USSR, a fire-temple has been excavated but the New York Zoroastrians have not succeeded in striking a rapport with the Russian embassy there and Irani requested the Federation to use its good offices with the Russian embassy in India. He suggested a conference of scholars and archaeologists to consolidate the material which, when available, would throw light on the early history of the Zoroastrian people. "It may take some investment, but it would be an investment worth making," the scholar added.

In the discussion that followed, Bombay Parsi Punchayet trustee Jamsheed Kanga enquired if there was any historical parallel Zoroastrians could adopt to reconcile conflicting viewpoints and Bejan Dittia of Hyderabad and Secunderabad suggested the Christian ecumenical councils. But Irani responded, "An inviolate doctrine is not part of the Zoroastrian tradition." The Christians, like the Jews, have split into sects, said Irani but "the Zoroastrian community cannot afford to separate. It is so small that if it separates, it will disintegrate."

Conceding that "the Federation is not a kind of body which can generate attitudes," Irani nonetheless added optimistically, "But who knows, if you persevere, reasonableness may be reestablished in a religion where reasonableness was always a virtue."

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Mumtaz Currim

"It was the pre-partition era in 1947. I was midway through the construction of the Beach Luxury Hotel in Karachi when some contractors to whom I had entrusted large sums of money fled the city. I was adamant. I arranged for a loan of two lakhs from the manager of Grindlays Bank... People laughed at me for sinking money into a hotel when members of the minority community were leaving the country. But I set the hotel going even though I had to buy my first set of crockery, cutlery, serving counters and the dining room curtains from a closing down sale at the US Of-

ficers' Club with the last ten thousand rupees of the loan," confides Dinshaw Avari, Karachi's leading hotelier since the forties.

When completed, the Beach Luxury Hotel made social history. Rising above the other bungalows in the elite Queens Road area on the western waterfront of Karachi, its restaurant, bar, swimming pool and tennis courts became the focal point of high society. The embassies, ministries and business houses that were being set up in the provincial capital of Pakistan gave it full occupancy. And in time to come, it became just the right

spot to break journey to travel inland, or to Afghanistan and Iran.

Adverse circumstances have come up again and again in the lives of Dinshaw and his son Behram Avari. In 1977, Behram Avari became involved in a legal fray with the owners of Hilton Hotels over the naming and management of a joint venture in Karachi. The outcome was the inception of Avari Hotels Ltd which owns both Avari Towers, Karachi, and the Lahore Hilton, with perhaps one more hotel to come up in Islamabad.

Opened in April 1985, Avari Towers showed a profit before the year was out. "I was determined to succeed," says Behram Avari, managing director. "My team of professionals and I pushed hard. We curtailed expenses, made sure of facilities and broke even in five months."

Looking to elegance and function and not to ritzy plush, atop a concrete plinth that houses a shopping plaza, multinational offices and a gigantic car park,



*Avari Towers: prime location
Shangrila, the coffee shop at Avari Towers*

Avari Towers strikes a fine balance between customer satisfaction and profitability. "After all, a hotel is no longer just a place to lodge and board in," says Behram Avari, a graduate in commerce and law and a diploma holder in hotel management from Cornell University,

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USA. "It is an industry like any other. It has its own products, organization and marketing... it is a question of survival of the fittest," says Avari, onetime chairman of the Pakistan Hotels Association.

Plus Points

Avari Towers has several plus points. It occupies a prime spot in the heart of town. It is impossible to miss its imposing structure and bold name looming over its distinguished neighbors — the colonial Governor House, the Sind Club and Baug-e Jinnah built around old Frere Hall. Most guests find the hotel a convenient few minutes from the business and shopping districts. Nearby are the offices of the Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation and Pakistan International Airlines.

The flyover from Fatima Jinnah Road that leads to the hotel gives a sense of arrival. The marble-chrome interior and the gigantic brass *surai* (pitcher) dispel thoughts of the outside heat. We see a group of Japanese tourists talking excitedly near the banking counter in the foyer. One of them has just bought a cream and blue Afghan carpet—an Adarbi with a rich central motif, from the carpet shop in the Avari Shopping Plaza. Further down the road are more carpet shops, also travel agencies and airline offices.

We are introduced to Ms Vera Hansotia from Japan Airlines. She has come to the hotel to finalize arrangements for a Japanese team to go trekking in the northern glacial regions. "It is going to be quite an adventure for them. They first fly to Islamabad, then take a van and driver from Valji Travels to journey up the 500 mile winding Karakoram Highway to the Himalayan snowfields," she explains.

There is an impression of diverse people—perfumed Arabs, American executives, Nordic sun-bathers and, to add local color, ladies in *salwar kameez* having elevenses at the Samovar lounge. The hotel has room for all, and more—four restaurants, a large banquet hall, 21 floors with 230 rooms ranging from reasonable standard rooms (single Rs 1,000; double Rs 1,150) and deluxe rooms (Rs 1,050; Rs 1,200) to suites at Rs 1,800. For business top-brass, Arab potentates and dignitaries, are the heavily carpeted and noise-free upper floors, President (Rs 4,000) and Executive (Rs 3,000) suites and the pent-house (Rs 2,500) complete with visitors' rooms and kitchenettes.



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"I don't mind the extra tariff as long as they make my travel arrangements and give me priority check-in and check-out and certain other amenities... courier and concierge services, a selection of international newspapers over a complimentary breakfast," says Vijay Rana of San Diego, who is in town to meet a representative from Faisalabad, and occupies a Renaissance Club room (single Rs 1,300, double Rs 1,450). Avari Towers is a member of the worldwide Ramada-Renaissance hotel services.

"As 70 percent of our clients are businessmen, we concentrate on their comforts and requirements... an executive business center, conference rooms, recreational spots," says Tariq Saeed Khan, director, sales and marketing. "The hotel industry has made tremendous strides in the last five years, what with Karachi's escalating growth and the need for five-star hotels."

We travel to the rooftop Teppan Yaki, the only restaurant in town to serve Japanese specialties. The terrace outside opens to an encompassing view of Karachi—the wharfs to the right, far left the airport, in the foreground the chaste mausoleum of Qaid-e Azam, further north the old Sharafa bazaar area.

The menus at Avari Towers have an international touch. They read like a cookbook on the great dishes of the world, in color, with a limitless choice of seafood. The Tower Grill luncheon buffet features a dozen and more desserts—apple strudel, black forest and firni. The executive chef is an expert from Germany, while the Moghlai cook is from Lahore.

"And don't forget the people of Karachi are fond of good food and they love to eat out," reminds Khan. What we cannot forget is the gain in weight! Probably the only solution is to head for the health rooms, separate for men and women, to sit in the sauna after a pounding by the masseur. Or step past the cane canopies of Shangrila to swim a few lengths in the pool.

Shut off from the outside world by high walls, the poolside with its garden and rockeries offers a private place for a gathering. "This place holds a sit-down gathering of 1,500, and 2,000 standing," continues Khan. The venue for indoor functions is Khorshed Mahal, a multi-purpose banquet hall dedicated to the memory of Ms Khorshed Avari, the late wife of Dinshaw, whose humanitarian activities and in-



Dinshaw Avari (center) with Behram, daughter-in-law Goshpi and grandchildren (from left) Xerxes, Zeena and Dinshaw

spiration to her husband and other associates is acknowledged on a plaque at the entrance to Avari Towers.

Success Story

It has been no Jack and the beanstalk story for the Avaris. Dinshaw Avari recounts in his bungalow at Beach Luxury. Seated amidst delicate porcelain and Wedgwood that compliment the ice-blue silken furnishings and Persian carpets spreading gentle colors in the hall, we are taken aback by his story. "I was born in Navsari in 1902. I grew up at the Petit Orphanage in Parel, Bombay, giving tuitions to pay my way through college."

His genial manner and surroundings hardly betray the unsettled childhood, hard-worked youth and the risks that have led to success. "In 1928, I started my career at Rs 75 per month as a clerk in the Sunlife Insurance of Canada, Bombay. Sir Pheroze Sethna, general manager of the firm, raised my salary to Rs 150 in just three months and also made me an agent. In October 1929 I

brought in record business and received Rs 5,000 in commission."

Given a 48-hour option to become territorial manager for the province of Sind, he sailed for Karachi that year. Once again, he registered record business. But even as Karachi became a center for troops and a midway port, the Swaraj and Quit India movements adversely affected the business of foreign insurance companies.

"With an expanding family and lifestyle, I was beginning to make inroads into my capital and decided to enter a new field. I bought the Briston Hotel from the Weysemans with my entire savings of a lakh of rupees."

Just as he bought the hotel, the government requisitioned it. Fortunately Dinshaw Avari was able to prevail upon the home secretary, Samuel Ridley, to derequisition it. "As an Indian running a western-style hotel, I was made to reduce the tariff from Rs 14 to Rs 10." But with a twinkle in his eye he adds, "I lowered the lodging and boarding rate but doubled the rate of drinks from one or two rupees per peg to two or four rupees and survived to make a profit in the first year."

Behram Avari operates not only the empire of hotels and cuts a social figure as the Honorary Consul for Canada, but is also a member of parliament, the manager in Pakistan and Bangladesh for Canadian Pacific Airways and the founder vice-president of the International Hotel Association for Asia. Former Pakistan delegate to the United Nations General Assembly, Behram is also a trustee of the Karachi Parsi Anjuman Trust Funds and vice-president of the Dastur Dr Dhallal Memorial Institute.

His great love? "Rowing, of course," says close friend and teammate Russi Sethna. "Behram's individual list of triumphs is endless, but we were all thrilled to receive the gold medals for yachting at the 1978 and 1982 Asian Games in Thailand and India." Equally proud moments were the receiving of the President's Gold Medal, January 1979, and Pride of Performance Medal (Yachting) Independence Award 1982 and the 1984 Government Cultural Award for Minorities.

The Avaris are achievers. They sail equally through balmy breezes and rough weather. No wonder the crest for Avari Towers is a sailing boat, an unusual logo for any hotel.

Reprinted from Signature August 1986

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Kelvinator's cool edge

Parinaz Toddywalla



Capturing 50 percent of the refrigerator market, Kelvinator intends to continue diversifying under the guidance of managing director Jamshed Desai

A visit to the Kelvinator factory sounds an attractive proposition, driving past the Delhi-Haryana border and entering the township of Faridabad. But on reaching the Kelvinator complex, enquiries like "Would you like to see the refrigerator, deep freezer and compressor plants here or would you prefer some other divisions like the cash register, the lamination, and the controls division on our premises at Ballabgarh (about 10 kms from the Faridabad property)?" leaves one faltering for a reply. The decision to speak first to Kelvinator's managing director Jamshed Rustomji Desai appears to be the right beginning.

"We have had an uninterrupted growth rate of 25 percent compounded per annum with the exception of last year when there was a severe recession in consumer durables," says Desai.

Starting out with the production of refrigerators, deep freezers and compressors, "everything else grew after that." At their Ballabgarh premises are located the cash registers (the electronic with Japanese collaboration and electro-mechanical with English); the controls division having an Italian collaboration; the lamination division which had an English collaboration until the know-how was mastered; and in addition the stamping division and the centralized tool room division. On the Faridabad property are located the deep freeze, refrigerator and compressor plants; and at Alwar, are the moped and scooter divisions which have an Italian collaboration with

Agrati-Garelli but will be almost 100 percent indigenous by the middle of this year. "In the course of the next couple of years we want to go into washing machines and microwave ovens. The rest of the future plans are nebulous," informed Desai.

"We have a strong research and development bias and the Company is at all times modifying and upgrading the existing products and bringing out new ones as and when demand warrants," said the dapper managing director.

Manufacturing 1,500 refrigerators a day in the peak season, Kelvinator is the leader today commanding 50 percent of the market share, the balance 50 percent being divided among the other three or four manufacturers. When asked if the sales of Kelvinator products would have been greater if the Parsi association was made known to prospective buyers, Desai counter queried, "Would it not be conceited of us to think so? If the product is good, it will sell...However Kelvinator is identified as a Parsi concern in the North of India because we are pretty well-known here, but that is not the case in the east, south and west coasts of India.

"Certain products like refrigerators have a natural market (the region where the factory is located). Thus the largest single market for our refrigerators is Northern India," he imparted. They also manufacture refrigerators which are sold under the brand names Leonard, Gem and Tropicana. "For our cash registers and laminations, regionality is not the criteria. So also is the case with our mopeds where certain towns like Poona, Bhubaneswar and Bangalore, irrespective of the regions they are located in, account for higher sales," Desai noted.

Desai was happy that he had



selected the right site for his industrial empire, "Haryana is a very good place to have an industrial enterprise in."

Kelvinator is an Indian Company with an American name though there is only a small American shareholding, clarifies Desai who has been instrumental in the building up of this Company almost since the very beginning. A public limited company with 10,000 shareholders, their annual turnover is in the vicinity of Rs 150 crores.

Ranking among the larger industrial enterprises of India, on the Kelvinator's board of directors in addition to Desai are Shrivastav A. Lal (chairman), Fali P. Sarkari, Hasmukh T. Parekh, G.S. Davar, Rusi S. Vatcha, K.S. Bhatnagar and Prince Mir Karamat Ali Khan Muffakham Jah.

"Contrary to general belief, it is not impossible to do business in India while remaining fairly ethical in our dealings," said Desai who has a reputation of being very forthright in his affairs. "Although to some extent time frames for projects do get extended, one can operate with integrity if the

Facing page (clockwise from top left):

Range of Avanti Garelli mopeds

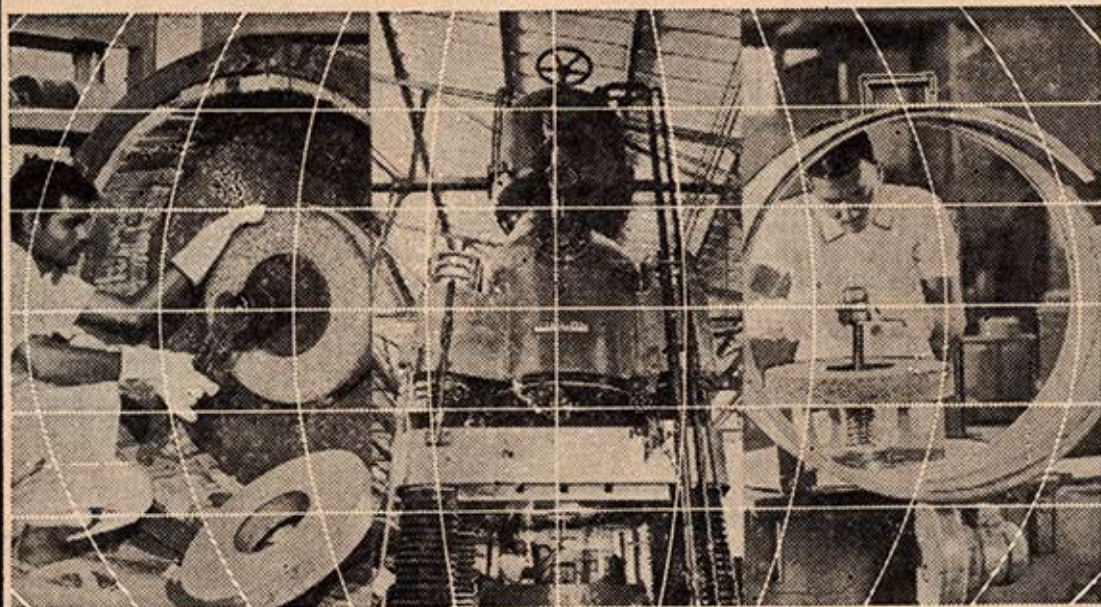
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Refrigerator on display

Interior of controls division

Scooter division plant at Alwar

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will is strong."

Recently export of refrigerators had dropped due to high costs of raw materials which "makes the product uncompetitive in the international market." When the quality of raw materials does not meet the required standards of Kelvinator, an incentive in the form of technical know-how is offered to genuine dealers willing to upgrade the quality of their supplies.

A look round some of their divisions provided an insight into the makings of a product. Raw materials and components are first received at the incoming inspection area where quality checks are conducted before forwarding the approved items to stores. After a number of more processes, the inputs are ready for the assembly area where the ultimate product is finally manufactured. The roaring of the huge machines housed in the expansive plants are in contrast to the silent manipulating of data by the computers at the Electronic Data Processing Establishment. In some rooms, deft fingers of women employees are busy at coil-winding and other operations. In other areas of the factory, entry is permitted only after getting specific sanction,

and that too after changing one's footwear, etc to ensure a near clinical degree of cleanliness in the air-conditioned rooms.

A score and more handicapped employees who are specially trained to work shoulder to shoulder with the other laborers reflect the management's policy of generating maximum employment and looking after the welfare of the workers, explains one of the managers at Faridabad. The belief that an average Indian worker is not hardworking and capable is a misconception, according to Desai. "Given the same tools, an Indian worker's productivity would equal that of his counterpart anywhere in the world. Fostering harmony between our workers and management has helped both the workers and the Company to prosper."

The well-groomed Desai, seated in his office at Faridabad had, after many thoughts and second thoughts, finally granted an interview to *Parsiana* on December 27, 1986. His penetrating eyes and gentle smile corroborate his convictions: "It is in the interest of the Company to keep a low profile. Ultimately it is only the grace of God

which matters. Individuals by themselves have no right either to feel smug or conceited. While some get the opportunity to do well, others don't... I thought it would give some encouragement to the Parsis, make them feel less despondent when they know that there are some Parsis who are doing well in business."

Desai was perturbed that the community's record "of integrity, hard-work and philanthropy seems to be on the slide. We used to be a community of businessmen and entrepreneurs but unfortunately that is on the decline. We should urge the younger generation to go into business, industry and the professions. Even in the services there are no Parsi names to be heard of. We should organize a conference to highlight these issues and debate on what could be done to rejuvenate the community and bring it back to its past glory." Desai's wife Navaz is also an entrepreneur with a factory in Faridabad manufacturing sterilised disposable plastic syringes under the brand name Steriware. A sister concern, Steriplate, specializes in various types of plating. They have two daughters

continued from page 108

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On the occasion of Jamshedi Navroze, noted culinary expert Bhicoo Manekshaw gives the recipes of a full-scale traditional Parsi wedding menu



A rare treat

Bhicoo J. Manekshaw

"*Chalo jumva aavojee* (Come, join us for dinner)." Just this cry, alas uttered no more, creates such nostalgic memories of my youth!

A lagan or a navjote invitation in the good old days was an exciting event. We would telephone our close friends and ask what each one was wearing, hoping certain of our friends (including boyfriends) would be there! Those were the days of exquisitely embroidered saris. The embroidery would be on thick georgettes or satins, in silver and gold *kusub* or *teelees* or *badlas* or in silk thread. Those were the days when we did not know what it was to wear an *oodhi sari* (sari worn with the pullav over the left shoulder) or to go to lagans and navjotes without covering our heads with a *saur* (part of the sari draped over the head).

Those were the days when every man wore a crisp white *dugli* with either a *phêto* or a *pugree* and never, but never, dressed in a suit. (If only our men realized that it gives them a certain charm that the best-cut suit does not, they would start wearing them at these functions.) There would always be a band in attendance and the one that comes to my mind easily was the top favorite Goody Seervai and the

tune *Neyer on a Sunday!* Other bands like Nellie's and the police and regimental groups were also regular entertainers.

There was no question of going late to these functions as is the practice now. Everybody invited had the courtesy to attend the ceremony, although it was understood that some working men could not help but be a little late.

After the ceremony was over, there was no mad rush to the laid-out dining tables. We would wish the navjoti (the child just initiated into the Zoroastrian faith) or the married couple, greet friends and wait until the call "*chalo jumva aavojee*" came; then we moved towards the tables. Toasts were drunk to the hosts, the bridal couple or the navjoti during the meal. Men dressed in white would come round, one carrying a large *thal* (serving platter) and another serving the food. The meal would start with *laganoo achar* (pickles) and *rotlies* (unleavened bread) made of rice or wheat. (Today, Parsis have forgotten the art of making *rice rotlies*.) Beautiful, thin, pale yellow wafers were nibbled with drinks. The first course was fish – either plain *tareli* (crisply fried pomfrets), *patrama macchi* or *saas ni macchi*. Next on the list

was chicken, either cooked *moghlay* style, *farcha*, *sali ma*, *kanda papeta ma* or *jerdaloo ma* (sauteed in dried apricots). Then came the meat, the most classical of all, *papeta ma kid*, or *sali boti* another classic of our cuisine. We may get a *vindaloo*, or a *bafat* or any other dish the hosts may fancy, just for variety.

Eggs were next on the menu. It was really surprising how we managed to come so far into the menu and yet eat the eggs, but who would not eat *aakhi dar na eeda* (fried eggs, sunny side up) gently cooked till they are just set in great big *thalis*. The secret is a well-greased *thali*, with a little water at the base, and the eggs broken over the water, covered and simmered till just set. Quite often we are served eggs *tarkari per* or *tamota per*, or *papeta per* (on vegetables, tomatoes or potatoes). *Custer* (custard) is next on the list. The thickened milk, nuts, eggs, rose water, sugar, and a grating of nutmeg are all mixed and baked. It has always intrigued me as to how we came to have *custer* served in the middle of our meal. In ancient Iran *sharbet* was served in the middle of a meal (which was copied by the Greeks and later by the Italians and French) to refresh

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one's palate, but can our beloved *custer* achieve this? Maybe it is put there to go with the piece de resistance, the famous Parsi pulav! (Yes, pulav is the next dish! We have sugar with dhan and dar, eat strawberry jam with *pura*, so maybe *custer* with pulav!)

Aleti Paleti would be served to the *ghernawallao* (hosts) in the last *paat* (sitting). *Paneer* (cottage cheese) was sometimes served as well as *mooram-bo* made out of marrow. To finish off the meal a *kulfi* was served together with *macroons*, *pan* and *sopari* (betel leaf and nut).

If it was a lagan or navjote lunch, *dhan dar ne patio* would be preceded by *meethu dahi* (sweet yogurt), *elchi keroo* (yellow-skinned banana) and sugar!

It's a very rare host, indeed, who can afford to serve this entire banquet today. The wedding feast, though still significant, has been whittled down by economic necessity. But let me give you the recipes for a few of the dishes...

WAFERS

Why am I giving you a recipe for a simple dish like wafers? Because I feel that it is one of the most difficult dishes to make perfectly.

Potatoes (uniform-sized and old)
Salted water
Oil

Take large uniform-sized old potatoes. Peel and wash. Slice them with a potato slicer so that all slices are evenly thick. Wash until all the starch is removed. Soak in cold, salted water for half an hour. Drain and dry them a few at a time, otherwise if you remove all from the water they will discolor. Heat oil till smoking in a large *karai* (round bottomed pan). Take a handful of dried potato slices and sprinkle them into the oil and lower the heat at once. With a fork or a skewer separate any that may cling together. Fry on slow fire till they are crisp but still yellow. Remove from oil and drain well. Allow the oil to heat again before the next lot of wafers go in and proceed in the same way.

Sali (potato straws) can be made in the same manner.

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One pomfret
Salt (to taste)
Chilli powder (1½ tsp adjusted to taste)
Turmeric powder (1½ tsp)
Cumin seed powder (½ tsp)
Lemon (1 large)
Til oil

Tomato and coriander leaves (for salad)

Wash and dry the pomfret. Cut off the head and clean out the stomach. Cut through the bone into slices. Wash and dry the pieces. Make the salt, chilli powder, turmeric powder and cumin powder into a paste with the juice of a large lemon. Rub mixture on fish and keep for half an hour.

Heat oil till smoking in a shallow frying pan. Lower fish pieces into the oil. Lower the heat at once and cook on one side till it is crisp and brown. Turn the fish and cook on the other side. Serve hot with the tomato and coriander leaf salad, and slices of lime. The secret is til oil, and slow cooking, once the oil is hot.

KID GOSHT

Young lamb (1¼ kg - cut into about 10 pieces)

Cloves (6)

Cinnamon (¾ - inch piece)

Red chillies (Goa or Kashmiri - 3)

Potatoes (old and large - 500 gms)

Onions (4 large - finely chopped)

Coconut milk (2 cups - extracted from one coconut)

Oil (100 ml)

Salt to taste

Ginger (¾ - inch piece)

Garlic (1 whole pod)

Cumin seeds (1 tsp)

White peppercorns (6)

Peel and parboil potatoes. Cut lengthwise and fry lightly in oil. Remove from oil and fry onions till soft. Grind white pepper, ginger, garlic and cumin. Add meat, ground masala, cinnamon, cloves and red chillies to the onions and brown lightly. Sauté for a few minutes and add 2 cups water. Cook gently till the meat is nearly done, add potatoes and coconut milk, and simmer till a thick gravy remains and the meat and potatoes are tender.

Note: Another way of cooking this dish is to boil the meat separately and add it to the mixture of masala and coconut milk, and simmer till the gravy is thick.

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MOGHLAI MURGHI

Chicken (1)
Potatoes (300 gms)
Onions (3 large)
Saffron (1 tsp)
Cinnamon (1-inch piece)
Cloves (4)
Black cardamoms (4)
Black peppercorns (6)
Ghee (100 gms)
Red chillies (Kashmiri or Goa - 5)
Milk (½ cup)
Cream (½ cup)
Curds (100 gms)
Oil (125 gms)
Salt to taste

Masala 1

Almonds (50 gms)
Pumpkin seeds (50 gms)

Masala 2

Garlic (6 cloves)
Ginger (1½ - inch piece)
Cumin seeds (1 tsp)
Red Goa chillies (5)

Joint the chicken. Peel and slit potatoes lengthwise in half and keep in water. Slice onions. Grind both the *masalas* separately. Rub *masala 2* into the chicken. Heat 100 gms oil and lightly brown onions along with the cinnamon, cloves, cardamom, peppercorns and salt. Add chicken and whole chillies. Sauté, adding water a little at a time until the chicken is half done. Lightly fry potatoes and add to the chicken. When the chicken is just done, mix *masala 1* with the saffron, cream, milk and curds and add to the chicken. Simmer till gravy is thick.

SALI BOTI

Lamb with bone (1 kg)
Onions (4 large)
Cloves (4)
Cardamoms (4)
Cinnamon (1-inch piece)
Oil (125 gms)
Salt to taste

Masala

Garlic (9 cloves)
Ginger (2-inch piece)
Green chillies (4)
Turmeric powder (1 tsp)
Cumin powder (2 tps)

Sali

Potatoes (1 kg)
Oil for deep frying
Cut meat with bone into pieces. Slice onions finely. Grind *masala*. Heat oil, add onions and fry till brown. Add *masala* and salt and continue frying for about two minutes, adding a little wa-

ter (about 2 to 3 tbsps) at a time. Add meat and brown well. Add ½ cup water, cover the pan and simmer on low heat. If you have the traditional concave lids, put a little water at a time on top of the lid before adding it to the meat till it is cooked tender. It should have a thick gravy.

Sali

Peel and julienne the potatoes very thinly. Wash in water until all the starch is removed. Keep in cold, salted water for half an hour. Heat oil in a *karai*. Dry the potatoes thoroughly, a little at a time. Sprinkle into very hot oil, lower temperature and fry gently until crisp but still yellow. Drain and keep aside till all the potatoes are fried. Place the meat on a platter and sprinkle the *sali* all over.

ALETI PALETI

Chicken liver (250 gms)
Chicken gizzard (250 gms)
Worcestershire sauce (1 tbsps)
Onions (3 large)
Garlic (6 cloves)
Ginger (1½ - inch piece)
Garam masala powder (¾ tsp)
Chilli powder (1 tsp)
Oil (125 to 150 gms)

Salt to taste

Wash chicken liver and gizzard well. Cut each gizzard and liver into four pieces. Slice onions. Grind ginger and garlic. Brown onions in oil. Add ginger and garlic paste, chilli and garam masala powder, and salt. Fry for a few minutes. Add gizzard and simmer till done. Add liver and Worcestershire sauce and cook till done. Add a little water if the mixture gets too dry. It should have a little thick gravy.

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Sapats: out of step with the times?

The supply of sapats in Bombay is on the decline, though for a select few Parsis it is still the most comfortable footwear

Jeroo Irani

In one of the backstreets of Bombay, a cobbler labors over a sapat, the relic of a bygone era. As he stitches the Parsi version of the bedroom slipper, little does he realize that his handiwork may soon "slip" into oblivion, to become a footnote in history.

Closed in front and open at the back, usually devoid of any ornamentation, the custom-tooled perfection of this handmade slip-on is a dying craft, according to Keki Behram Kerawalla who owns one of the two shops in the city which have become synonymous with sapats. Kerawalla and Company, the only shop to both manufacture and sell this Parsi footwear, and Darabsha N. Mulla who stock sapats, are beset by labor problems and spiralling costs.

"In my great-grandfather's time, we had 12 cobblers who made sapats alone and four workmen who made topis. Today, we have just two workmen who can make sapats," says Kerawalla as he rises from his great desk in his shop located on what was once known as Dukkar Gulli, now called Dr Cowasji Hormusji Street, next to the Anjuman Atas Bahram.

Lined with wood and glass cases, replete with sapats, shoes and chappals, the shop has the rich patina of age. Having pampered, for close to a century, slim feet, broad feet, damaged feet and even perfect ones, sapats continue to be manufactured today in the age-old way.

One mold is used as there is no distinction between the left and right foot, the difference arising only after use. The simplest tools are married to the skill of the cobbler, with only the border of the uppers being machine stitched. Sapat manufacture remains largely unaffected by

innovations in footwear machinery which have mechanized operations earlier done by hand, states Kerawalla.

However, there is a dearth of skilled workers, for today's cobblers prefer to make shoes where they reportedly make more than three to five times as much — Rs 40 to Rs 50 per day. "Most cobblers do not wish to hand stitch the items and prefer to paste the shoes. Moreover, the younger generation is reluctant to learn and the sons of cobblers are branching out into other professions," states Kerawalla. Fortunately, Kerawalla has lately discovered a cobbler in Ulhasnagar who has successfully made sapats from a copy.

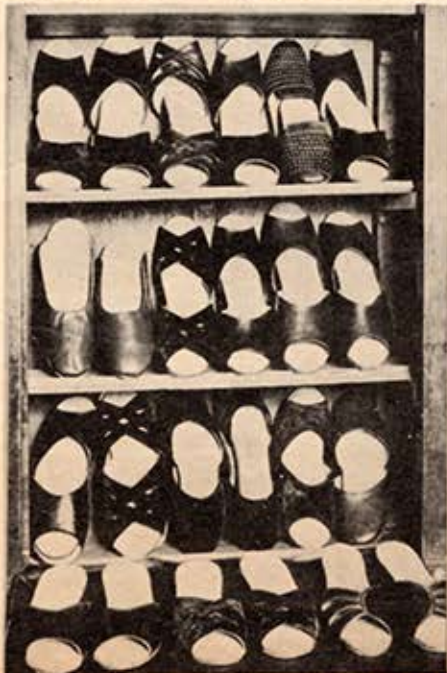
In an attic in the shop, we see two old men bent over the simple tools of their trade, their legs pulled in close to their soiled aprons. One gives us a toothless

smile and mentions that his colleague, who specialized in making sapats, is unwell and another who was versatile enough to make shoes, sapats and slippers died a few months ago, after putting in 50 years as a cobbler.

Kerawallas produce around 10 sapats a day and notch up a sale of around 300 per month. The handmade sapat, however, remains a narrow market which is the exclusive preserve of those who have traditionally worn them and can afford them. Worn at the time of the navjote, the sapat-shod Parsi occasionally gets addicted to the comfort the slipper offers. In the words of Roda Mistry, who wears sapats at home, "A sapat gives the sensation of walking barefoot on soft sand or on a thick-piled carpet." After a hard day's work, to slip the feet into a pair of old, worn sapats, is a great comfort, say users.

Offering warmth in the cold as the front portion is closed, sapats can accommodate the stockinged foot when necessary. Moreover, they reportedly ensure that a child does not get crooked feet. The person who routinely wears ill-fitting shoes, where heels and toes do not have the freedom to move, will get corns, calluses and ingrown toe nails, informs Kerawalla. The sapat with a sponge in-sole pampers abused feet while the one with luxurious velvet uppers (without a leather lining) cossets feet prone to skin infection.

Generally made of chrome leather or velvet, the uppers are also occasionally made of satin, cotton or canvas on order. Some people have the velvet embroidered and give it to the shop to be made into sapats. Made generally of burnished brown or jet black leather or with uppers made of maroon, black, blue or red vel-



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vet, the price varies, ranging from Rs 20 to Rs 55, the ones with a sponge in-sole costing more.

The Kohlapuri chappal (traditional footwear much appreciated in Maharashtra) is cheaper, priced as it is from Rs 25 to Rs 30. "Cheaper still are the plastic chappals typical of the Plastic Age," rues Noshir Mulla of the 93-year-old shop Darabsha N. Mulla, fragrant with the aroma of sandalwood and stocked with all the items required for navjotes and weddings—shawls, towels, net sudrehs, caps and sapats. The life expectancy of the sapat, however, can be as much as five years, depending on the wearer. "We have regular customers who walk into our shop and say, 'A pair of sapats for my mother, please!' And we know the old mother and her size," states Mulla.

Turning to his stern-faced father to verify a fact or two, Mulla reminisces how in the old days "we had three cobblers who supplied the sapats. Now we are down to one old man." Sapats, then, were measured in terms of fingers or *angals*. "I want a fourteen-and-a-half *angal ni sapat*," people would say, and we would know which size they meant. People from the villages still order them in this way and I translate the size in to-

day's inches." Sapat sizes range from six inches for a child to 12 inches for a man, the size changing for every half inch.

Once available in the villages of Gujarat, where freelance cobblers would peddle them from house to house, availability of sapats today is largely restricted to these two Bombay shops. "Unfortunately, in Udwada there isn't a single cobbler, and the mobeds and residents place their orders here," informs Kerawalla.

While sapats are generally worn by Parsis, Kerawalla often has the odd Kutchi customer who asks for canvas sapats while Mulla gets Jews from Cochín and Israel who buy his skullcaps in bulk.

The shape of a sapat can vary slightly. Closed at the front with a single leather piece as a heel, the 'patakri' sapat is different, being open in the front with a higher heel. Priests, however, tend to prefer sapats whose uppers have a earlike flap where the foot is slipped in. Sapats are worn by priests in the sanctum sanctorum where the fire is kept and also in the sacred precincts where other ceremonies like the baj, ijashni, etc are performed, informs Dastur (Dr) Firoze Kotwal, High Priest of the H. B. Wadia Atas Bahram.

Some priests like Dastur Kotwal prefer the 'chanchia jodas' or slip-ons which have a curved, beak-like tip in the front. "When one performs the boi or other cere-



(Right) Keki Kerawalla and (below) Cobblers working on sapats at his shop

Photos: Homiyar Mistry



Worn at the time of the navjote, the sapat-shod Parsi occasionally gets addicted to the comfort the slipper offers

monies the feet must be covered. For if the toes or the feet even graze the bare ground, the kusti is vitiated. Moreover, priests who perform high liturgies must wear either leather 'chanchia jodas' or sapats," says Kotwal. "Our dress has evolved basically to fulfil the requirements of ritual," he adds. "Even sculptures dating back 2,500 years show priests and warriors in Iran with some form of footwear."

For how much longer will sapats of quality and durability be available? The stooped old cobbler doesn't know. He shrugs and concentrates on cutting the leather. Shuffle, shuffle, shuffle... an era may soon make a reluctant exit.

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Winning volleys

Having won the national squash championship for the fourth time, Meherwan Daruvala plans to enter the world squash circuit this year

Niloofer J. Madon

When Meherwan Daruvala first won the men's national squash title in December 1983, the victory came to him as "a shock, because I didn't expect I could win it. People have won it (at the ages of) 26, 27, and at 20 I thought it was more of a fluke. But when I won the title for the third and fourth time, I think I convinced people I can do it!"

Tall and well-built, the 24-year-old sportsman, casually dressed in blue jeans and a pale yellow T-shirt, arrived for the interview with *Parsiana* (on February 28, 1987) in a blue Ambassador. Space in the office being a little cramped, the car, after much deliberation, was conveniently made the scene of the interview.

"It's tough to make the nine points (needed in a game)," notes Meherwan seriously. "One point can go on for a maximum of 10 minutes. A rally can go on and on and on and therefore a lot depends on physical fitness, stamina and speed."

A singles or doubles game played in a four-walled court, 32 feet by 18.5 feet, squash is played with a long racquet and a rubber ball which is caromed off any number of walls. The players must ensure they return the ball before it can hit the ground twice in a row. A five-game match, can be gruelling and practise therefore becomes an integral part of the sportsman's life. Morning practise involves running to keep fit, followed by courtwork where Meherwan practises alone in the court to perfect his technique, playing "every shot over and over again." He then goes to his office at Air-India where he works in the commercial department and the evenings

once again see him at the courts, only this time playing with competitors.

In squash, as in tennis, players are seeded or ranked according to their overall achievements in the sport. For a ranking, a player must take part in all major tournaments stipulated, which is called the circuit. National seeding would be given if a player has participated in all of the nine stipulated tournaments in India, and similarly having played in major international championships would qualify a player for a world seeding. Not having participated in all major international tournaments, Meherwan does not have a world ranking, although he is

Daruvala (foreground) and Manchanda: strenuous sport



seeded as India's number one player.

He intends to make amends, though: "At the moment I am doing pretty well on the Indian circuit so I'm going into the world circuit in June. If I can do something there, then I'll take up squash as a profession." Come June, Meherwan will proceed for training to England where he will play against more experienced players than himself and will later participate in the American Open Squash Championships. Assessing his success on the international circuit, Meherwan admits, "I've beaten some good players before, but I've also lost to some lousy ones!"

Noting that "squash can be an expensive sport to the average person - first you have to be a member of a club," Meherwan informs that a squash racquet costs Rs 1,000 and the balls cost Rs 30 each. "Financially, in



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the early days, squash put a lot of burden on my family, but I'm sure it is all coming back now!" notes Meherwan, giving one of his charming smiles. For, with the recent introduction of glass-back courts, wherein "many more people can see the game...two to three hundred can sit and watch," sponsors and advertisers are willing to come forward and provide attractive prize money. In fact, the Indian Masters Squash Championship, a major Indian tournament played in Bombay, offered a first prize of Rs 17,500, and the national championships are now being shown on TV.

Moreover, the public courts - squash courts situated within a huge stadium which can seat thousands of people - are now very popular in some foreign countries and Meherwan is confident that it will not be long before they make their appearance in India. These courts, according to him, will go a long way in reducing the price of the gate tickets which today cost Rs 50 to 100 per seat!

It all began for Meherwan in 1978 when, like his father Rustom, he began to play at the Otter's Club in Bandra, where he still practises. Soon he started playing club and inter-club

tournaments and in 1980 won six major Indian tournaments. In 1981, he represented Maharashtra in the men's team (while still a junior) for the Inter-State Squash Championship held in Calcutta and represented India at the British Under-19 Open Junior Championship. But what the champ remembers with most pleasure is winning the Junior National Championship in Bombay in 1981: "The victory was sweeter than when I won the men's title" because, eight months earlier "when I was all set to win it, I lost to Darius Pundole."

Later, after touring India and some Asian countries where he also won many a laurel, Meherwan finally became the Men's National Champion in December 1983, at the age of 20 when he defeated the six-year reigning champion, Lieutenant Colonel Raj Manchanda in the semi-finals, and Ananth Nayak in the finals - a feat he has repeated four times in a row.

His family is "of course...very proud," according to Meherwan, who adds gratefully, "I think I've had a lot of encouragement from my family. If you have a lot of encouragement only then can you win." Family includes father Rustom, who is to start an ex-

port business dealing in leather, and mom Freny who is a housewife. His sister Shernavaz, four years his junior, though playing a lot of badminton, is now "very into interior designing."

Meherwan himself, does not get much time for other things but has taken time off to do a spot of modelling for Proline shorts. "I wear Proline shorts and they wanted to do an ad on that, so I just did it. I've got many more offers but I'm not doing them... Now I can't even afford to think of another game. In school (he went to Don Bosco), I used to do athletics and swimming. Now these have to be kept aside... to concentrate on squash."

Listening to good jazz, though, is Meherwan's abiding passion, so much so, that he has started hiring out music for various functions as a side business with his partner Farhad Kuka. The name of their business - Fame!

Apart from this small detour, there is not much time for anything else. Notes Meherwan: "By the time I come home (from evening practise) I'm dead tired. I rarely go out for functions, though I try to make it to family gatherings. But whenever there is a family gathering, I'm always out of town! I think squash comes first."

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Two-wheeling to success

For national champion Neville Darukhanawala, motorcycle racing is a family interest

Niloofer J. Madon



"I was doing 120 to 125 kilometers an hour when my front wheel went into a sand-covered rut in the ground, and I went out of control. The scooter was very light and the whole bike started wobbling for 100 meters from there and I thought, 'Here goes an arm or a leg.' At that moment if I had braked, I would have been thrown off." Twenty-two-year-old Neville Jal Darukhanawala, who was recently de-

clared the 1986 all-India champion in motorcycle racing in the 110cc scooter category was recalling his near-fatal accident in Madras, while tuning his bike prior to a race.

"Before a race you have a bit of fear in you. Road racing is very fast and if you have a crash you're sure to break something," notes Neville, adding, "Because of this fear I used to go slow. So one day I said, 'To hell with fear.'

That is the type of attitude you have to develop for racing." Nonetheless, Neville is of the opinion that racing is "hundred times safer than being on the roads," and the clothing that the racer wears gives adequate protection. A special motocross (motorcycle race over specially designed, rough terrain) riding suit therefore consists of face masks, goggles and helmet, chest protection, padded T-shirt, padded trousers, full gloves and boots.

The thin, wiry, five-foot eight-inch Poona-based sportsman came to the interview with *Parsiana* in October last, along with his eldest brother, the bearded and bespectacled 29-year-old Adil. "Adil was the secretary of the Poona Automotive Racing Association and I used to go to help him on the sidelines. One day the bug bit me but... Adil did not let me ride for some time. I started racing last year only," noted Neville. He registered his first win at the First Baroda Moto Cross in December 1985 when he won in the moped class on his brother's TVS 50. Later, he was ranked sixth at the Indian International Moto Cross in Poona in January 1986 in the scooters/minibikes class; thereafter in the Madras and Calcutta Grand Prix, riding in the 110cc scooter class, he earned his all-India title, being ranked first overall with the fastest lap time at both meets. More recently, on February 1, 1987 he came first in the 110cc category and was placed sixth overall at the 30th All-India Motor Race at Sholavaram, Madras.

Motorcycling is a Darukhanawala family interest. The father, Jal, who is now in the home savings department of the Central Bank of India, used to own an English motorcycle - a Norton 500, whence his four sons developed an interest in the sport. Therefore, while Adil has started a group for professional racers called Racecrafters, Zareer, the next in line, who works for Buckau Wolf as a maintenance engineer, is an automotive artist. Zareer has either painted or drawn about 250

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sketches of automobiles, some of which have been published in eight to 10 publications including some foreign ones. He has also held exhibitions of his work. Aspi, the third in line, also races along with Neville and helps his eldest brother in the Racecrafters. He also gives accounts classes and deals in real estate.

Mother Perin, a primary teacher at the Sardar Dastur Schools, was not too happy with their involvement because motorcycle racing can be dangerous, but had to give in to her sons' overriding interests in the sport. In fact it is for this reason that Adil did not take up racing but involved himself in its administration wherein he has been most successful.

"Before a race you have a bit of fear in you. If you have a crash you're sure to break something"

Racecrafters, which Adil has started, is a club for motorcycle racers in Poona which recently had a tie-up with Bajaj Auto, the leading two-wheeler manufacturer in the country. Racing is very expensive as it involves not only the cost of the bike itself but, perforce, the participants have to bear the transport costs to wherever the race is organized. Accommodation and cost of motor mechanics also add to the financial burden of the racers, explains Neville. So, for an entrance fee of Rs 100, Racecrafters takes on itself all the administrative problems involved in racing which, according to Neville, "eases quite a lot of burden from the rider's head."

Standard bikes in the market are manufactured for regular use and for racing they need to be modified, inform the brothers. Modification involves extracting greater acceleration and greater power but in no way changing the engine capacity. One way of doing this, according to Adil, is to discard whatever is not useful to the rider, like the headlights and the horn, and adds, "Every one kilo weight reduced is two to three kilometers gained in speed." Unfortunately, however, though special motocross bikes are available for Rs 14,000 to Rs

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20,000 abroad, one is not allowed to import them into India, where with the imposition of customs duty, they would anyway cost a shocking one lakh! According to Adil, Bajaj is planning to rectify that by manufacturing such bikes within the country itself.

Noting that there are a lot of Parsi two-wheeler racers in India, Neville notes that in Poona there are Firdaus Chindhy, Raian Mazda, Porus Irani and Nozer Kayani while in Bombay there are the brothers Kersi and Fali Patel who now also take part in the Himalayan motorcar rally. The first

"The prize money is nothing. Taking up a career in racing is not just right in India"

person in the country to own a motorcycle, inform the brothers, was Poona's Ratan Mody, a doyen of the sport who founded three to four organizations devoted to motorcycle racing.

Schooled at the Sardar Dastur Schools, Poona, Neville is currently studying in the First Year BCom at the Ness Wadia College of Commerce, Poona, and later plans to post graduate in business administration, though he has not quite made up his mind on that. Neville does not think he can take up motorcycle racing as a profession: "The prize money is nothing and everybody would like to earn some money. Taking up a career in racing is not just right in India." Though in the past five years the sport has seen a "terrific spurt," and the Government has at last classified it as a sport, it has not yet arrived in India as a profession. Adil, however, is very optimistic about the future of motorcycle racing especially since the formation of the Federation of Motor Sports Clubs of India, the central body which looks into the administration of the sport in the country.

Though there is still time for the sport to take firm root in the country, Neville is nonetheless happy with things as they are. He notes, "I have done quite well in the one and a half years of racing...I am young and I can put in a lot of riding. As long as I've got my brother to help me I don't think I should have any problems!"

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continued from page 9

and especially over its rituals, is futile.

Another point to remember is that throughout the ages there have been many religions, pagan or non-pagan, and they have all been dominated by the priesthood. In the earlier times, the priesthood or clergy was the main learned class in society, and as such, it was able to wield considerable influence over those who were less learned or unlearned.

In our own Iranian history, throughout the ancient dynasties, the head priest occupied only second place to the king, and the priestly hegemony was in evidence even when we landed at Sanjan, and for several centuries afterwards. It is only recently that our priesthood's control and influence over the laity has waned, owing to its failure to move with the times, and due to the laity having surpassed it in learning, scientific knowledge and economic progress. Our priests therefore occupy a backseat today but they are being bolstered up every now and then by some so-called modern savants who continue to impose some kind of Zoroastrian fundamentalism on the community.

This leads to another debatable issue. Every written word in ancient scriptures or religious texts is not God's word, and has to be examined in the light of today's knowledge. Our limited human minds can never conceive or visualize the real "being" or makeup of God. If you believe in His existence and in the universe as His creation, then you realize how utterly impossible it is to conjecture what He is like or to define the limits of His power and abilities. It is enough if you have the faith that He is actually there, all around His creation, and even within you.

Religion, as practised, has two aspects: the exoteric one and the esoteric. The exoteric part of religion indulges in outward show and gives mental satisfaction that something has been done to please God. Whether it does please Him and add to one's score-sheet for entry into His Kingdom is another matter and none have come back from the other side to tell us if all this has had any effect.

The esoteric side of religion is where one is devoted to God spiritually, where one speaks to Him oftentimes every day with utmost sincerity, thanks

Him for His many blessings at every turn and at the same time carries on His worldly duties with diligence, sincerity, honesty and love, unmindful of the outward results. He loves God for His own sake, without any thought of reward or punishment.

Such an esoteric person thinks well of his fellowmen, sees their virtues instead of harping on their faults (of which all of us have plenty), serves people willingly, spontaneously and selflessly, and puts their interests before his own. God or Ahura Mazda (or whatever name you address Him by) sees no shadows in individual lives because every human being is a small reflection of Him and of His goodness and perfection. There is a spark of divinity in every one of us.

We Parsis must therefore shed all ideas of a superior or pure race and religion, treat all mankind as God's children, adopt humility, count our blessings and develop a wide sense of brotherhood and of service to others. God will not ask you to do more. A good life is the best form of prayer and the best offering you can make to Him.

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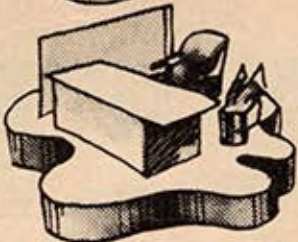
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continued from page 13

the Orchestra's efforts were worthy of the occasion. However, notes the news report, her receiving this honor could also be the outcome of her large and more general contribution to western classical music.

Born in 1930, Dinshaw left for England in 1948 where she studied music with the late Ms Gladys Noon, Ms Adels Facharri, George Stratton and Antonio Brosa, states her bio data. Her music teaching career began on her return in 1959 when she also co-founded the Bombay Chamber Orchestra, the society of which she has been trustee and joint honorary secretary since 1962.

When she went to Salzburg, Austria, on a Berlin Council of Music scholarship, Dinshaw studied the art of teaching children music through the

Oberoi Towers. Members of the Orchestra Del Maggio Musicale Fiorentino were given a traditional Indian welcome of *tikka* and *aarti*. They were also garlanded with sandalwood garlands specially designed for the occasion, according to the press release.

Rastomji's recital

"A dazzling performance of virtuosity and musicality that will be remembered as one of the season's musical highlights," wrote Priya Chaturvedi in the *Poona Digest* describing USA-based pianist Khurshed Rastomji's invitation concert on January 4, 1987, which was organized by the Poona Music Society. "Color, searing at times, brilliant, mellow, but always achingly vivid, is what Rastomji draws from the music of the great

at inculcating enthusiasm. That's the most important thing. Your pupils must learn to love music. Everything else follows," he says and he advises music teachers to "emphasize musicality rather than the technical aspect." In addition to teaching music which gives him "tremendous satisfaction" he gives lecture-recitals regularly, often under the sponsorship of the Connecticut Humanities Council as when he presented Brahms' later piano music for the Brahms Sesquicentennial.

Mozart and Debussy are his favorite composers: "Mozart - his music calls for a total lack of affectation. It must flow like oil...Debussy is one composer who's captured the sense of eastern time in western music. I bridge both cultures so I have a particular affinity for him."



concept of Orff-Schulwerk. This involves the learning of rhythm and music through games and special instruments, and Dinshaw currently conducts such classes for children. She also teaches the violin, viola and cello, notes her bio data.

Zubin welcomed

Zubin Mehta and his wife Nancy received a warm Parsi welcome from Ms Colleen Khan, guest relations executive, on their arrival at The Oberoi, Bombay on March 2, '87, notes the hotel's press release. His arrival was heralded by brass drums and musicians in colorful Indian costumes playing famous pieces of Indian classical music. A colorful flower screen with a welcome message composed of roses and marigolds stood in the foyer of

(Above) Zubin and Nancy Mehta get a traditional welcome at The Oberoi

(Above right) Dinshaw receiving her award from the British High Commissioner, Sir Robert Wade-Gery

(Right) Rastomji: "learn to love music"

masters...his mastery of Mozart's singing notes is as great as his interpretation of a fiery Liszt," notes Chaturvedi.

Pune-born Rastomji who says he "began banging away at the piano when I was four" and studied with Ms Violet Fonseca, Ms Marjorie Fonseca and Ms Olga Craen in India has masters degrees from the University of Connecticut in piano and music history, and a diploma from the Royal Schools of Music, London.

"Early training should basically aim





Bharat jodo

Travelling 18,000 kms on a Yezdi motorcycle to spread the message of Indian unity - *Bharat jodo* - Surat's Percy Godrej Anklesharia (Daruwala) and Ms Behroz Nadirsha Daruwala visited important places in all the 23 states, notes a press release.

Daruwala (34) and Anklesharia (26) left Surat in early November '86 after an enthusiastic send off. Throughout the two months they were warmly welcomed wherever they went, and people everywhere had shown interest in their mission, said Daruwala on their return in January '87. This experience of the love and affection of their compatriots had, she said, made the trip a very pleasing one, and they had encountered no major difficulties on the way.

Meeting Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, Chief Minister Laldenga of Mizoram, Chief Justice Desai of Himachal Pradesh and the then Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, Justice Bhagwati, were among the highlights of their travels, according to the press release.

A well-known swimmer and mountaineer from South Gujarat, Daruwala is quoted as saying that this experience

would encourage her to take up more strenuous feats in future.

Student chefs of '87

Looking for "ingenuity, presentation, organization and scheduling," and finding these qualities in the menus served up by Zubin Dara Aria, Ms Jyoti Anand and Ms Monica Pandey of Bangalore, the judges placed them first in the Student Chefs of 1987 contest which was held in Bangalore on January 29 and 30, states a news report in *The City Tab* of February 8, 1987. Organized by the Institute of Hotel Management, Catering Technology and Applied Nutrition, Bangalore, in cooperation with local five-star hotels and sponsored by the Governments of India and Karnataka, the contest attracted eight teams from catering colleges all over the country.

In addition to the Student Chefs of '87 trophy, Aria's team also won the highest points in Western cuisine with a menu that included cream of pumpkin soup, mackerels in mustard sauce and brussels sprouts stuffed with sausages. "The contest aimed to create an

tute of Management, Bangalore, who observed that a chef was not just a "super *bawarchi*" but a manager who, along with his team, contributes to 50 percent of a hotel's profits.

An appeal

"If my son Sorab fails to regain significant vision in his left eye, he will not be accepted" back into his marine engineering course at Mazagaon Docks "and three years of training will be wasted," notes Roshan Minu Daver in her letter of appeal for aid to help meet the expenses of the triple procedure operation Daver requires to recover his vision.

This loss of sight in his left eye is a result of a serious accident on October 12, 1986. Twenty-year-old Daver, riding a scooter, was hit and dragged along the road by a Fiat, whose driver, under the influence of alcohol, was speeding on the wrong side of the road, states Ms Daver in her letter. Apart from abrasions and lacerations of his face, eye and hand, dislocated foot and a fractured leg, consulting ophthalmic surgeon Dr Rustom Patel,



Left: Aria receiving certificate from Mufti Mohammed Sayeed, Union Minister for Tourism

Top: Daruwala and Anklesharia spreading the message of unity

Below: Daver awaits operation



awareness of excellence in catering. Chefs in hotels are more than just cooks. Earning up to Rs 12,000 a month, chefs today are managers who supervise 40 to 50 men under them, and sell the hotel to its guests by dish-ing out good taste," says Rajkumar Saxena of the Institute of Hotel Management, Bangalore.

Aria, who is a final-year student, received a certificate, an HMT wrist-watch and a cash award of Rs 400 from Prof J.Philip, director, Indian Insti-

who treated him at the Parsee General Hospital, noted a corneal laceration, prolapse of the iris and injury to the lens. As a result, Daver lost vision in the left eye.

The Davers have since consulted three other noted ophthalmologists of Bombay - Dr T.N.Ursekar, Dr Keiki R. Mehta, and Dr A.C.Shroff - who have all advised a triple procedure operation consisting of a corneal graft, cataract extraction and lens implant to

continued on page 99

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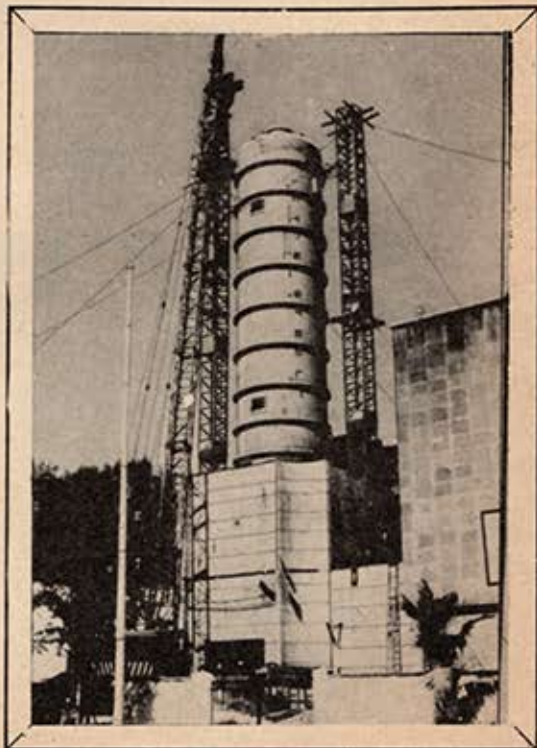
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continued from page 16

Iranians, Armenians, etc would qualify for membership, as their ancestors were Zoroastrian. To trace and substantiate such ancestry would be impossible and the concept of Zoroastrian identity would be lost;

- "Accept as full members all individuals whose one grandparent was a Zoroastrian. This could solve our problem for the next generation or two;

- "Permit the navjote ceremony of any child whose one parent is a Zoroastrian. Such a concept is very radical and would need an approval of a large majority of AZA members and general acceptance of Zoroastrians throughout the world. This could lead to serious dissent and disunity amongst our community;

- "Maintain the status quo. This is the path of least resistance as no action would be necessary. However, the major danger is by our apathy our future existence in Australia would be jeopardized." Kolsawalla quoted the example of Afghan camel drivers who came to Australia at the turn of the century and who no longer exist as a separate identity, to caution the com-

munity in its decision-making.

"To support and care for overseas Zoroastrian families whose financial status is so dismal that it deprives them even of the basic necessities of life," Noshir Irani of the Australian Zoroastrian Association has come up with the Support Zoroastrians Overseas Programme (SZOP).

The Programme is expected to coordinate between Australian donors and deserving Zoroastrian families overseas, furnishing such details as the name, address and other relevant data of the needy. Two honorary coordinators have been selected in India, who will personally see to it that each family receives the monthly assistance, returning a signed monthly receipt to the donors via Irani.

Initially dealing only with India, though deserving Zoroastrian cases from other countries may also be helped, Irani wishes to concentrate mainly on those families in Bombay and Udwada where, according to him, more than 64 percent of Zoroastrians live. "Twenty families, 12 in Bombay and eight in Udwada, have been selected to start up the Programme. The records of these 20 have been personally scrutinized and eight homes visited. As the SZOP gathers momentum, more families will be added on," notes Irani, in the January *Manashni*.

Notes Irani, "The advantages of this scheme are obvious. You are supporting an identified family whom you get to know. You are not just giving charity but caring for the family on a long term basis. SZOP will take care of all administrative work."

At the Indo-Australian Table Tennis Championship, "which attracts players of international standard," Khursheed Pestonji won both the singles and doubles tournaments held in February, according to Kersi Meher-Homji, editor of *Manashni*, the AZA newsletter.

"In table tennis she is unbeatable, having won all tournaments she has participated in in Sydney - AZA competitions, club tournaments, and Indo-Australian championships...twice in succession," notes Meher-Homji. Before she migrated to Australia with her family in 1982, Pestonji had won many trophies in Karachi, Pakistan.

Khursheed's husband, Cyrus, too is a "natural sportsman" according to the editor, "excelling at cricket (Cyrus' great-grandfather was Burjor Macchliwalla, the great Parsi cricketer of the 1920s), table tennis and tennis. For Western Suburbs in Sydney he plays grade cricket and is consistent with both bat and ball...In Pakistan (Lahore) he had played with Imran Khan and Wasim Raja (currently members of the national Pakistan

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cricket team)...In table tennis, Cyrus and Khurshed have combined to win many trophies - in Karachi, Lahore and now in Sydney," notes Meher-Homji.

Karachi statistics

Twenty-five marriages took place in Karachi in 1986, an increase of one over the previous year, according to a report compiled by Ervad Dinshaw Charna and the Karachi Parsi Anjuman Trust Funds, and reprinted in the January/February issue of the newsletter of the Informal Religious Meetings. Two of the couples have settled in Pakistan though outside Karachi, and six abroad. Of the 17 couples who have opted to remain in Karachi, eight have made use of accommodation offered in communal properties while nine have found their own accommodation elsewhere.

The birth figures for 1986 were not available. The number of deaths was 50 (28 males and 22 females), being three more than in 1985. The average age at death was 71.76 years.

The 24 navjotes performed in 1986 (12 male and 12 female), five being of children residing outside of Pakistan, marked a substantial decline. There were 17 more navjotes in Karachi in 1985 than in 1986, as per the report.

California's youth scroll

Into its fifth issue, *The ZAC Youth Scroll*, a five-page youth section attached to the newsletter of the Zoroastrian Association of California, includes a plea by its editor Sarosh Motivala for greater youth participation in the religious classes and the various activities of the Association. Letters to the editor, Zoroastrian news, a section on famous Parsis and an entertainment page which includes a cartoon entitled *The Puri Family* all form a part of the January-February issue of *The Scroll*.

EVENTS AND PERSONALITIES... continued from page 94

be carried out abroad. Dr Mehta wrote to Dr T.A. Casey in London, asking him to operate on Daver, and the date for the operation at the Old Court Hospital has been fixed for April 13, 1987 said Sorab's father.

The estimated cost of travel (for Sorab and his father), surgery, hospitalization, medicines and post-operative care is Rs 1,36,000, notes Ms Daver. She asks for aid to help them defray this expenditure, pointing out that her husband, a third engineer with the Shipping Corporation of India, is the only earning member of the family.

Contributions may be sent to Ms Roshan Minu Daver, Malabar Mansion, First floor, 37 Garden Road, Colaba, Bombay 400039. Foreign donors may send their contributions to Sorab Daver, C/o Old Court Hospital, 19 Montpelier Road, Ealing, London W5, UK.

Bedlam let loose

Ronnie Desai's rock album *Bedlam*, released by CBS, is the first Indian release by a major label and the first album of original songs in English by an Indian musician, reports Jeet Thayil in *Bombay* (January 7 to 21, '87). Desai's lyrics are accompanied by Leslie Lewis on the guitar and drum synthesizers, and Shiv Mathur on piano, bass and vocal harmonies.

One of India's first Western folk musicians, Desai later turned to rock music and put together one of India's premier rock bands - People. In the '70s, after a couple of years with such advertising agencies as Lintas, Chaitra and Enterprise as a copywriter, he started Musica, a radio and television jingle agency.

"The music (of *Bedlam*) owes much to the contemporary feel of Leslie Lewis' biting guitar work while the

lyrics, Desai's own, are full of a light-hearted whimsy, much like the man himself," writes Thayil.

Framna wins a Promise

In spite of calf cramps and a minor mishap, Maharashtra state cycling champion Kerman Framna of Pune won the eighth Promise Bombay-Pune open cycle race of the Maharashtra Cycling Association on February 1, 1987, according to an *Indian Express* report dated February 2, '87. Clocking four hours, 42 minutes 10.60 seconds, the Poona District Cycling Club rider crossed the finish line nearly five meters ahead of his nearest rivals, Subash Pawar and Rajasaheb Attar.

From the 86 riders who set out from Bombay only 25 completed the race, in spite of a record 35 climbing the difficult Western Ghats. Twenty-one-year-old Framna also won the King of the Ghats title with a record time of 21 minutes 40.04 seconds thus breaking the previous best of 23 minutes 41 seconds held by Pune's Homi Bhatthana since 1982. Framna received the Promise trophy, and the winner's prize of Rs 7,100 including the King of the Ghats prize of Rs 3,000 from the total prize money amounting to Rs 17,850 awarded by Balsara Hygiene Products, the sponsors of the race.

Framna, who represented India at the internationals in Egypt last year, has won a record 11 races this season, in addition to the state track and road championship.

SPOTLIGHT

Behram Rana will hold his fourth one-man show of paintings *The Sun* at Jehangir Art Gallery, from April 20 to 26, 1987 from noon to 7 pm. Sadruddin H. Daya, sheriff of Bombay, will inaugurate the exhibition on April 20.

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continued from page 20

lates general rules to be followed as and when constituency-wise voting is undertaken.

As to the C Register of graduates, sought to be reaccommodated by ensuring 10 percent representation, the Judge noted, "In the present context, it is not necessary to have any such distinction at all."

The trusteeship term is now officially abridged to seven years from the original 10, but contrary to general opinion, His Lordship argued that "if the trustees are doing good work, there is no reason why we should prescribe any restrictions on the number of terms."

Although the principle of accountability of trustees was much debated in the past year (it was one of the issues leading to the resignation of Jal Vimalal from the Panchayet's board of trustees), it has been given short shrift in the new scheme. Clause 54, the only one referring to the subject, merely states, "Trustees shall, as far as practicable, hold meetings of the Anjuman Committee annually." The right to recall a trustee has not been vested in the Anjuman Committee.

Prior to 1980 the complicated elec-

toral system was little known and the community's general ignorance and apathy enabled power seekers to control blocks of votes by steering their wards and stooges onto the Anjuman

The donors must now exercise their right to registration on the Donor Register within 180 days of making a donation.

Committee. Dependent people thus acquired the power to elect trustees.

This devaluation of the electoral college was publicly criticized, time and again. As late as 1980, such community stalwarts as industrialist Naoroji Godrej, hotelier Hosi Mistry, scientist Dr Homi Sethna and 27 others had published a letter in the *Jam-e-Jamshed*, demanding a change in the system. The awakening of the intel-

ligentsia led to the formation of the Committee for Electoral Rights (the CER was renamed Committee for Economic Revival in 1984 after its original purpose had been served). Civil servant Jamsheed Kanga, solicitor Dadi Engineer, management consultant Minoo Shroff, insurance expert Fali Poncha and others, gave freely of their time, energy and money to educate the community in the complexities of the system, rousing awareness and interest and fielding candidates for the 1981 Anjuman Committee elections. For the first time in the Committee's 70-year existence, 20,000 Parsis voted, and the CER acquired a thumping majority. When BPP chairman B. K. Boman - Behram's trusteeship term expired that year, the orthodox autocrat, who had battled the CER all the way, did not seek reelection and CER president Jamsheed Kanga replaced him unopposed on the Panchayet's board of trustees.

The period up to early 1984 was one of comparative tranquility. The Fali Poncha-Homi Ranina race for the seat to be vacated by Dr (Ms) Nelie Noble in July '84 was the curtain raiser to a

continued on page 108

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The Parsi Hell

Keki Daruwalla



*The Parsi hell is insubstantial; a long
stint in the house of falsehood, foul food
and speech turning base on a wailing tongue.*

*Even the Chinvat Bridge which turns its edge
towards the evil is not an Aztec knife
which cuts through fat, spliced tendon, cartilage.*

*It is allegorical, a bridge you cannot cross
in your quest for the region of endless lights.
In the Gathas there is nothing gross;*

*just one material reference—the darkness
is so thick you can cut it with a knife.
No other hells confront you in their rancor.*

*Our hell and heaven have no locus, the scriptures forego
all reference to the damned. The three-fold dark
is hinted at, and a passing mention of the states of woe.*

*Standing at the dark heart of my dreams,
the small change of guilt turning sweaty in my hands,
I watch my slow surrender at the seams,*

*the thread showing through frayed edges. Desires
fester in the body's abscessed tabernacles.
Like a fire-temple I hoard my inner fires,*

*hoard my semen, brown with inbreeding. Genetic rust?
I carry within me the city of faith
desiccated with the salts of lust.*

*Death hums over the wires: what afflicts the spawn
is rickets, polio, a drug gone rogue. Daughters
walk out on the tribe. The forepaws*

*of wilderness reach for the heart. Anxieties congregate
and claw at your dreams as they prospect for hell.
You will cross the hump and come to terms with fate*

*as you wind up naked at the dakhma well.
Burdens vary. Throughout life a man carries his death
even as a woman carries her child.*

A Parsi carries his hell.

From *The Keeper of the Dead* by Keki Daruwalla published by Oxford University Press New Delhi, 1982

continued from page 24

Unwalla and Hafiz Contractor, they decided to renovate the Hall as an "ambitious diamond jubilee project." In fact, the celebrations were postponed by several months because the delay in the generation of funds, hindered the renovation activities.

The targetted fund collection drive of three lakhs of rupees was nearly met but fell short by Rs 75,000 due to inflated costs, noted Bagwadia. The R.N.Wadia Trust's first donation of Rs 50,000 set the ball rolling. The other major donations were: Rs 40,000 from the Cowasji Sorabji Framji Titina Charity Trust and Rs 20,000 from the Ranina Trust for the equipment necessary to run the nursery class for children between two and four years old on the Hall's mezzanine floor. Almost Rs 2,00,000 were collected by way of personal follow-up measures by the Association's joint honorary secretary Ms Kumi Daroowala who says that 60 percent of the donations received were from the tenants, including proceeds from a special show of *The Wiz* and income from brochures published on December 28 and Janu-

ary 31. Giving the details, she explains that appeals were also sent to individuals and trusts in India and overseas, but from abroad, donations were only received from ex-students of the religion class. Donations in the form of

"We would like the youths to take over...many of our old stalwarts are retiring"

cupboards and a piano for the nursery, and chairs for the hall are still awaited.

Conducting classes in religion for juniors and adults, hobby courses like cookery, music, art and elocution; group study and coaching classes; Gujarati classes for those who never had the opportunity to learn the language, and weekly scouts meetings are the proposed plans to effectively utilize the new Hall once the equipment and personnel are available. In addition to providing a meeting place to the com-

mittee members of the Association, they even hope to hire out the Hall at nominal rentals. With a seating capacity of 150, it is hoped that "Instead of our Baug members going to the Sethna Agiary Hall and the Cama Baug *nallo otlo* (smaller wing) they can use our Hall. Even the residents of the nearby Baugs could avail of the Hall facilities," says Daroowala.

With Bhappu as president, the other office-bearers are vice-presidents Cyrus Bagwadia and Dorab Ghadiali, treasurers Rohinton Anklesaria and Ader Tarapore and joint honorary secretaries Daroowala and Ms Bapsy Chinoy.

To involve the children and the youths of Rustom Baug, competitions in elocution, on-the-spot painting, bonny baby and general knowledge quiz have been conducted. "But we find that there is an apathy - parents have their own priorities and the children refuse to participate for fear '*ke bijao maskeri karse* (of becoming the laughingstock)." Even if they win a prize, their spirits are dampened because of anticipated ridicule," explained Chinoy. Giving scholarships

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and prizes for outstanding performance in academics as well as in technical and commercial fields, and felicitating the community's newly ordained navars every year, are among the regular activities of the Association. This year prizes were given to 30 newly ordained boys.

"Our main objective is to make the youths aware of their responsibilities. In the organization of celebrations, in the management and planning of the various programs, we would like the youths to take over...many of our old stalwarts are retiring," said Daroowala. When the Association was founded

"In a community everyone has their own opinions and strong ideas...getting together with the same spirit and determination helps"

in 1954, its first president was Bejon Bhappu and secretary Kaikhushroo Fitter. Each of the past presidents (the late Hormus Kasad, Bejon Mistry, Sorab Postwafa and Jivan Jamadar) "contributed their best for the proper establishment, organization and functioning of the Association," noted a write-up in the diamond jubilee souvenir. The other "two pillars" of the Association retiring this year, were Maneckshaw Mistry who started the 48 East Bombay Sir Ness Wadia Scouts Group and Ervad Rustom Panthaky who conducted religious classes for children for over three decades.

While the Rustom Baug Association looks after the welfare and social aspects, the gymnasium, physical culture and sports activities come under the purview of the Sir Ness Wadia Club. It was reported that when the Ness Wadia Club approached Neville for permission to erect a statue of his father Sir Ness at Rustom Baug, it was declined and hence the proceeds collected were channelized into the construction of the Ness Wadia Pavilion. The office bearers of the Ness Wadia Club are president Homiar Shroff, vice-presidents Kersi Mun-

shi and Behram Unwalla, joint honorary general secretaries Rumie Gazdar and Burjis Taraporevala and honorary treasurer Adi Tavaria.

There are today 326 tenements in Rustom Baug, housing over 1,500 Parsis. After the construction of the first blocks in 1923, by 1950s the Baug, in its present shape, stood friendly and habitable. But since then some buildings have been repaired and others will be repaired by 1989.

Seeing the pressing need for better security after a spate of robberies and the murder of an old Parsi resident in May last, more watchmen have been employed, identity cards issued to domestic employees and better lighting installed on the roads and to the rear of the buildings. Raising of the wall separating the Baug from the Masina Hospital as well as construction of speed breakers was also undertaken.

A senior citizens' drive was conducted in the interests of the aging residents of Rustom Baug who comprise 30 percent of the total population, according to Kumi Daroowala's estimates. Under the joint auspices of the Rustom Baug Association and the Association of the Welfare Organisation of Road Safety and Prevention of Accidents, the elders have been induced to move about with accident carry cards detailing their blood group and contact number of next of kin. Most of the older generation residing in the Baug are "financially secure, pass their time in their own fixed ways and usually don't approve of interference in their style of living," informed Chinoy.

For their next "five-year plan" the Association has given priority to the repair of the Baug's roads and the surrounding boundary walls. Neville had another suggestion to offer along with a donation of Rs 25,000: "To commemorate this landmark...(transform) Rustom Baug into a lovely green park with flowers and trees as well as a playground. Of course it does cost money but just think how much it would enhance the value of your lives in Rustom Baug." Like the paralysis-afflicted resident of Rustom Baug, who had successfully given himself a deadline for becoming mobile to attend the Hall's inaugural function, perhaps the residents, collectively, could make the garden dream come true.

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Best influence within Tatas

Died: Rustum Dossabhoy Choksi, 84, former chairman of Tata Services and director of Tata Sons and Tata Industries who played "a formative role in the shaping of the leading Tata institutions," on December 17, 1986 in Bombay.

J.R.D. Tata, chairman of the Tata Group, viewed Choksi as "a source of strength and confidence born not only from the wisdom and maturity of his advice and actions but also from his devotion to the ideals and traditions which had motivated the Firm since the days of Jamsetji Tata. In matters of personnel and human relations in particular, Professor Choksi had been the best influence within itself that the Firm has ever had."

Directors, executives and employees of Tata companies and trusts, and some of his former colleagues and employees of the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research and the Tata Institute of Social Sciences - institutions which he nurtured - were amongst the large gathering who had come to pay their last respects at the Sion electric crematorium, noted an obituary in the December issue of *Tatasphere*.

A close associate of Choksi for almost 40 years, J.J. Bhabha, who succeeded him as managing trustee of the Sir Dorabji Tata Trust and as chairman of Tata Services, was impressed by

the "deep and beneficent influence Prof Choksi exercised in the Organization. It is difficult to think of any other person who was as universally respected and loved as Prof Rustum Choksi." He was also a trustee of other Tata endowments like the J.N. Tata Endowment, the Lady Tata Memorial Trust, the M.K. Tata Trust and the Leslie Sawhny Endowment. He also served as a council member of the Tata Memorial Centre.

Poona-born Choksi who enjoyed such hobbies as gardening, hiking and motoring, began his career as professor of English and Latin at Bombay's Wilson College after postgraduating in arts from that College. "Among the galaxy whom he taught were those who rose to be vice-chancellors, scholars and educationists and cabinet ministers," notes a press release issued by Tata Services. Former Union Minister of Education, Prof V.K.R.V. Rao said, "He was easily our hero, and I for one was greatly influenced by his charm, easy accessibility and friendly disposition..." Choksi was associated with the University of Bombay and the Bombay Adult Education Association.

"For a student of Indian management history, Choksi's outstanding and indelible achievement was the creation of the Tata Administrative Service (in 1955). It was the forerunner of every other management development scheme in our country ... intended to rival the Indian Administrative Service in style and in substance, and it did," wrote Arun Aguiar, one-time TAS member, in the *BusinessIndia* of January 12-25, 1987.

Top: Choksi, Below: Guiv (left) and Dotivala



He continued, "While others would deal with machines and materials and money, Choksi would deal with men."

Choksi is survived by his wife Bhiku, son Dr Jal and daughter Shirin Kudchedkar.

"Morvarid of the Halls"

Died: Morvarid Rustam Guiv, 81, known for continuing the philanthropic work started by her late husband in the establishment of Darbe Mehrs in North America and Australia, on January 11, 1987 in Los Angeles after a short illness.

Fondly called "Morvarid of the Halls" because the halls of several Zoroastrian-owned community centers in North America have been named after her, the December-January issue of *The Zoroastrian* from California notes, "Every person, young and old, had a special regard for her...A grey-haired, frail, stooping, meek and soft-spoken lady was always seen present in every religious and social gathering in Rustam Guiv Dar-e Mehr, Westminster."

"The Dar-e-Mehrs established all over North America will be lasting monuments of their generosity and concern for the preservation of the Zoroastrian religion and culture," it was recalled at a condolence meeting convened under the joint auspices of the two Zoroastrian organizations in California, Zarthoshti Anjuman of Northern California and Persian Zoroastrian Organization, on January 25, 1987.

Describing her as a "great benevolent lady," president of the board of the Rustam Guiv Foundation and



Trust, Dr Rostam Sarfeh wrote, "The Zoroastrian communities shall never forget the noble deeds of Arbab Rustam Guiv and Ms Morvarid Guiv."

"Her latest deeds were the purchase of the old premises of the California Zoroastrian Center to help release (funds for the) new premises then under construction; a donation of \$80,000 for the new Dar-e Mehr Hall, befittingly named the Morvarid Hall; and a substantial help toward the establishment of the Dar-e Mehr in San Francisco. And she has been providing the funds to print this bulletin (*The Zoroastrian*, copies of which are reprinted and distributed in India) since its initial stages," her philanthropic gestures were gratefully recorded in *The Zoroastrian*.

The members of the Australian Zoroastrian Association of New South Wales remembered her for granting scholarships and her contributions towards publication of Zoroastrian literature.

The Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Chicago conducted a prayer meeting in her memory on January 11 when president Kayomars Mehta noted in his eulogy, "Ms Guiv

lived a modest Zoroastrian life. She was intensely human...Like her husband, she gave away all she had for the benefit of the community. She supported her husband silently yet strongly while he was alive and upon Arbab's demise (in 1981) carried on the mission single-handedly."

Born in Yazd, Iran, Morvarid was married to the Arbab while still in her teens and settled in Tehran. "Since then the two were seen as almost Siamese twins together," noted *The Zoroastrian* write-up. For the last 12 days of her life Ms Guiv was in a coma. She was buried next to her husband in Rose Hills Memorial Gardens, Los Angeles County.

Battles fought and won

Died: Naval Maneckji Dotivala, 96, oldest recipient of the Military Cross and pioneer of drug control legislation and administration in India, on November 30, 1986 in Bombay.

For his "exceptional gallantry on the field of battle" during World War I, Dotivala was awarded the "Immediate Award" of the Military Cross. He had also fought for the nation in World War II and retired from the Indian

Army as a lieutenant colonel. He was the seniormost pensioner of the Indian Medical Service, notes a write-up in *The Times of India* of December 5, 1986.

As Drugs Controller of Bombay, Dotivala "played a leading role in framing the Government of India's Drugs Act and Rules," *The Times*' report continued.

Considered an authority on Persian carpets, Dotivala had at one time a priceless collection of silk and woolen carpets, including one gifted by the Shah of Iran, states a write-up in the *Mid-Day* of December 4. He was also a scholar of Iranian culture and civilization and founder president of the Parsi Zoroastrian Association at Lahore.

Dotivala is survived by his sons Godrej, Feroze and Meher.

Adi Marzban

An obituary on Adi Marzban, Editor of *Jam-e-Jamshed* who died on February 26, 1987 will be carried in the April issue of *Parsiana*.

KELVINATOR'S COOL EDGE...

continued from page 67

and one son.

Though initially claiming to have "no profound wisdom to pass on to the next generation," he subsequently suggested, "The youth of the community should have the courage to be honest, to uphold their and the community's good name. It is not impossible to work under these guidelines. In today's environment, any industry will face severe competition because the old days of protected markets are fast diminishing. If afraid of competition, there are very few fields where you can succeed."

As to Kelvinator's success in the market, Desai attributes it to "Divine grace...It would be easy but untrue to say that I provided any great leadership or sterling qualities or for that matter that our stringent standards of quality have been the main factors, but unless we can be sure of His grace (Desai gesticulated skyward) everything else would be zero. Either you believe in this totally, or not at all. There is no halfway..."

ELECTORAL SCHEME AMENDED... *continued from page 100*

change in the scheme itself. Confronted by an E Register dominated by his rival, Ranina ingeniously investigated the list of donors of over Rs 5,000 who had not hitherto exercised their right to be included on the F Register, persuaded them to register and vote, together with some new donors. In all, Ranina was accused of "packing" the F Register with 176 votes and the CER successfully petitioned the Charity Commissioner for a stay order on the scheduled election. On the BPP's appeal however, the High Court, vacated the stay.

Almost simultaneously, Mani Dalal and Minoo Shroff petitioned the High Court for a change in the scheme in the interests of justice and fair play. Though their request for an injunction against the scheduled election was disregarded, at a joint hearing along with the BPP after the election it was decided that new donors will not be allowed to vote at the next election in January '85 and the BPP was instructed by the Court to file its own amended scheme by March 15, 1985. By the time the case came up for hear-

ing in early 1987, four trusteeship elections had been conducted with similar strife fortunately restricted to only one - the Eruch Desai-Hector Mehta confrontation in October '85 (Naoroji Godrej and Jamshed Guzder had come in unopposed in February '85 and January '86 respectively and Minoo Shroff proved the all-out favorite in June '86).

With legal hurdles thus ironed out and a reasonable, stable body established in theory by Justice Suresh, the community's chore of finding 200 men of mettle within the next 12 months should not prove too difficult. Yet it must be performed with care, for though its legal duties continue to be limited to the choice of trustees, the caliber and composition of the Anjuman Committee may well determine whether the community will end the twentieth century with a realistic, judicious appraisal of its assets and liabilities or thunder to extinction like in Tennyson's *Charge of the Light Brigade* when 600 gallant but confused men charged to disaster because "Theirs was not to reason why."

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