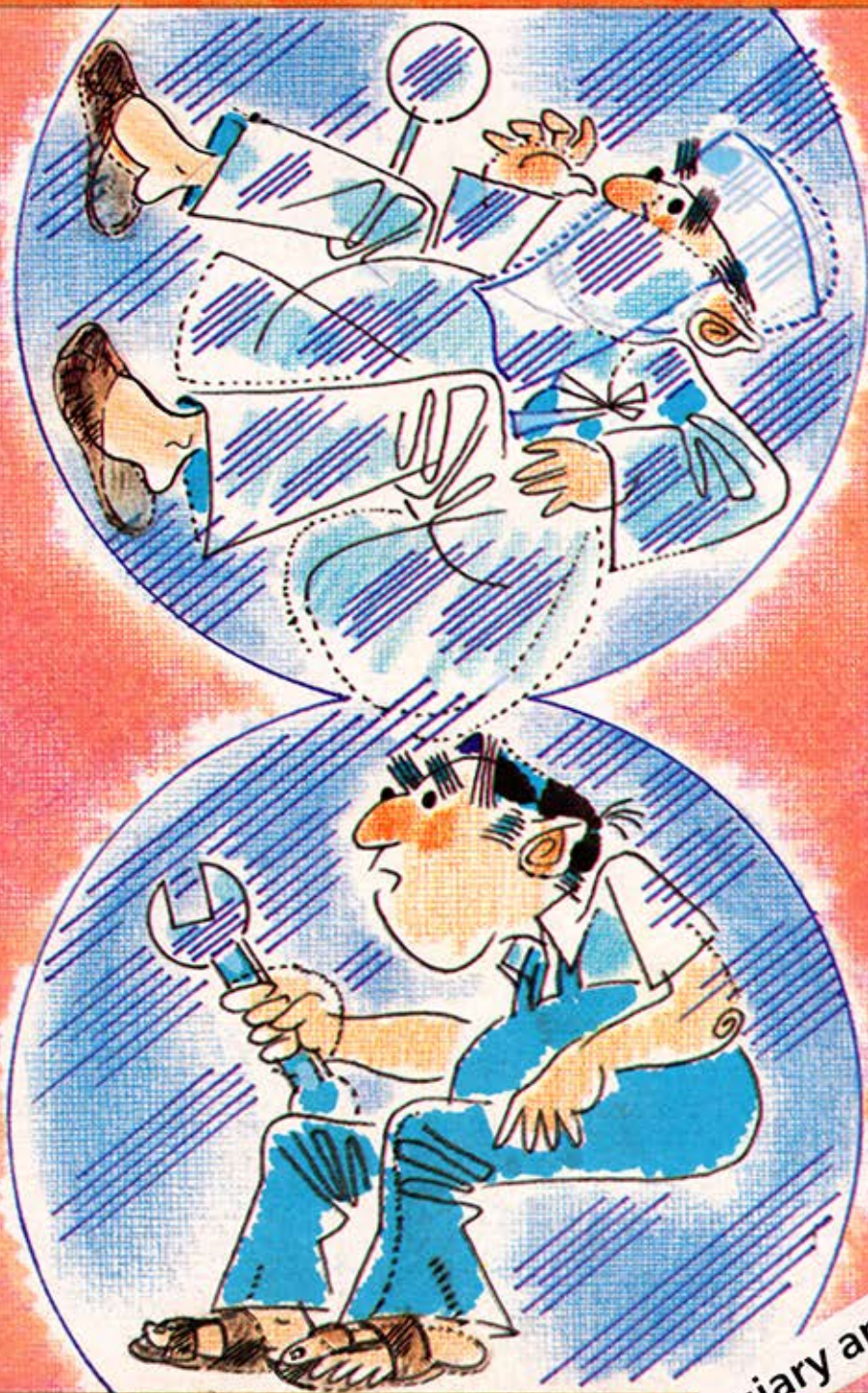
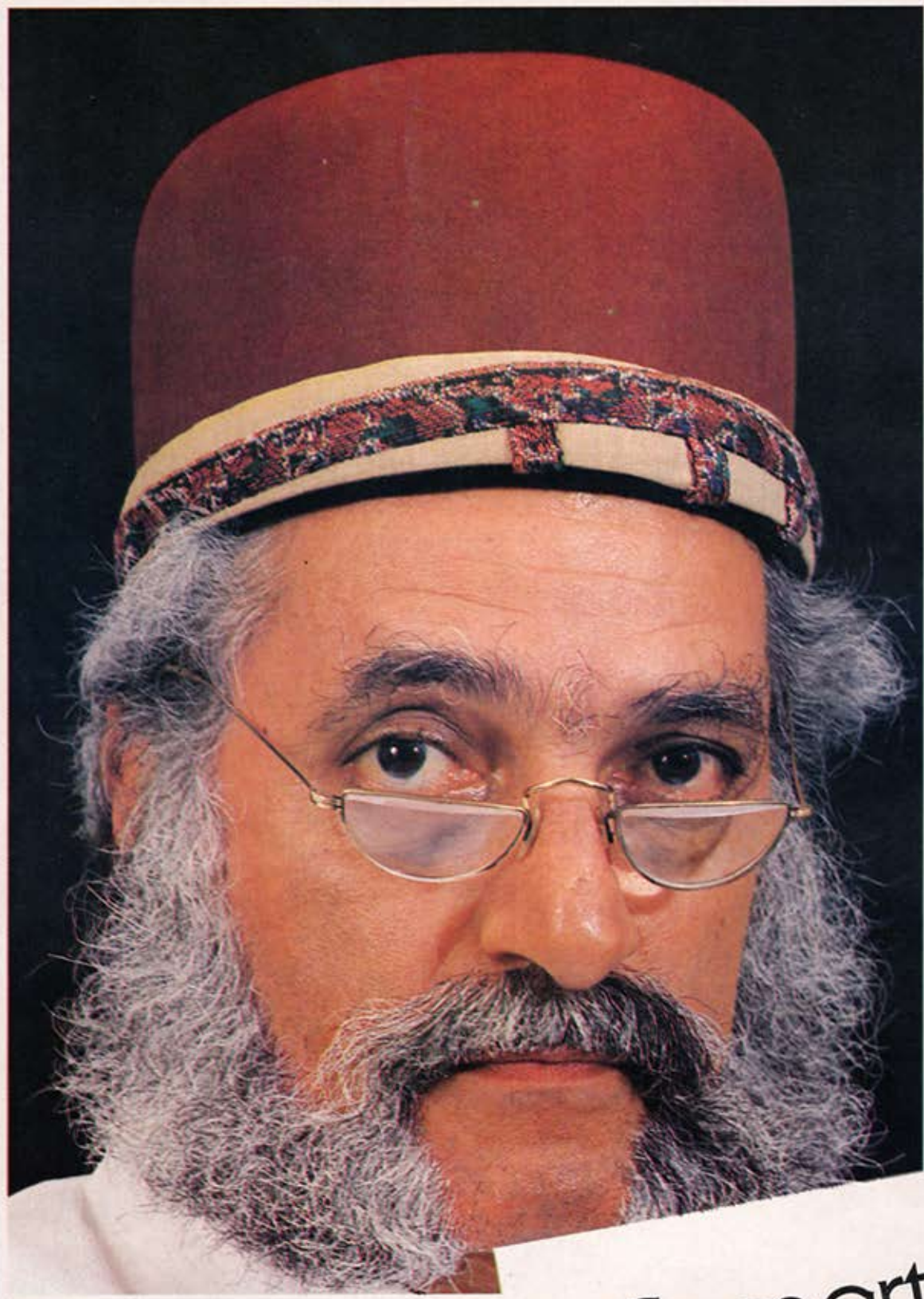


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Parsiana

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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.

"Trustees heed plea"

My attention has been drawn to the mention of my name as one of the trustees of the Zoroastrian Building Trust Fund in the article "Trustees heed plea" (*Parsiana*, July 1987). I am no longer a trustee of the Zoroastrian Building Trust Fund, nor was I a trustee when the notice for sale of properties at Dadar was given by the Fund; and, as such, I am not a party to the proposed sale of Parsi trust property.

VISPI S. DASTUR

"Changes always upset..."

I would like to clarify that in "Changes always upset people" (*Parsiana*, May 1987) where the cost of disposal is discussed ("burial works out to \$ 450-500 per burial"), there is a bug. The costs I

referred to were the costs solely of burial lots and not the entire operation. The economy with cremation stems from the fact that, at least in Quebec (these regulations may vary with the geography), one lot permits ashes of two individuals, so the lot price is cut right into half, as against burial, where the lot retains its full cost of \$ 450 to 500.

Dr JEHAN BAGLI
New Jersey, USA

"Unacceptable status"

The news item "Unacceptable status" (*Zoroastrians Abroad*, *Parsiana*, April 1987) quotes excerpts from my letter to members of the Zoroastrian Association of Pennsylvania (ZAPA) and has been brought to my attention. Although your title went to the crux of the matter with remarkable precision, your article gives the impression that I have given up on Zoroastrianism. Nothing could be further from the truth. I am, deeply and irrevocably, first, last, and always, a Zarathushtrian. For me, there simply is no other way.

Your article also gives the impression that I have given up the Good Fight. Here again you are incorrect. I have simply changed my weapons. I will no longer waste my energies on negative and destructive infighting.

The raging verbal controversies which we are so fond of indulging in (myself included, in times past) accomplish very little. They tear our communities apart, absorb our time and energies in negative activities, and pollute us with anger and hatred. If indeed *Angra Mainyu* is an entity (as distinguished from the product of bad choices), the way we tear at each other must provide him with an endless source of amusement and gratification. One has only to read the autobiography of Dasturji Maneckji Dhalala to realize how little (is the) progress we have made on the juddin question since his day.

I cannot presume to tell others how they should fight the Good Fight, but I intend to do it by concentrating my energies on the positive job of increasing knowledge about the beautiful, soul-refreshing precepts of my beloved faith — so relevant to contemporary life and thought.

The more we Zoroastrians become aware of these precepts, as taught by Zarathushtra in the *Gathas*, the less tenable will be the position of those who would elevate inconsistent later traditions and fossilized thinking over the dynamic and profound teachings of our prophet.

My conception of fighting the Good Fight does not entail a meek acceptance of the status quo which the orthodox few insist on imposing on us. For me, the time has come to graduate from words to deeds. As dearly as I love and respect almost all the individual members of ZAPA, I can no longer be a part of any endeavor that passively condones de facto racial discrimination.

Such a decision by one person standing alone is, I realize, insignificant. But if every Zoroastrian who professes to abhor bigotry were to make the transition from words to deeds, and take the same insignificant decision, the problem would be largely solved.

I look forward to the day when Zoroastrian organizations will be actively committed to the proposition so that truth/right (*Asha*) and good thinking (*Vohu Manangha*) take precedence over dogma and traditions. I look forward to the day when Zoroastrian organizations will put into action the premise that "all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights," that among these is the right and freedom to choose the Zoroastrian faith and be welcomed as full and equal members by the Zoroastrian community, regardless of race.

Ms DINA G. MCINTYRE
Pittsburgh, USA

"The 11 days' controversy"

I have read the letter written by Mr Zal Sethna "The 11 days' controversy" (*Parsiana*, June 1987). His platitudes can be proven to be at variance with truth.

Mr Zal Sethna is attempting to rewrite history and to whitewash it. Allow me to give just two instances:

- In his "State of the Union" message, Mr Sethna refers to "Captain's group" — something I was not even aware of till I read his letter. The very use of

1987

NOVEMBER

22

SUNDAY

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The date: Sunday,
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The event: The foundation stone
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Some enlightenment...

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* Gujarat Express	Bombay Central	6.15 a.m.
Ferozepur Janta	Bombay Central	7.15 a.m.
Shuttle	Virar	7.45 a.m.
Saurashtra Express	Bombay Central	7.45 a.m.

TRAINS FROM SANJAN TO BOMBAY

TRAIN	DESTINATION	LEAVES
Shuttle	Virar	SANJAN AT 2.10 p.m.
Saurashtra Express	Bombay Central	3.40 p.m.
Ferozepur Janta	Bombay Central	5.00 p.m.
Shuttle	Virar	7.00 p.m.

*The Gujarat Express (from Bombay) and the Flying Rancee (from Surat) are expected to make special stops at Sanjan on that day.

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this phrase, ipso facto, belies Zal Sethna's assertion of peace and harmony in the community. It is obvious that Mr Zal Sethna (and his colleagues) cannot see the wood for the trees.

• At the end of his letter, Mr Zal Sethna grandiosely states that "enthusiasm to render voluntary service to the Association and the community has once again sprung to life." How poetic, and yet in his committee's circular dated April 16, 1987 in paragraph 11, the committee begs people to come forward for voluntary service for "an hour or two." So far as I know, no such appeal has ever been made by any committee in the past.

SHAHPUR F. CAPTAIN
Herts. UK

During my tenure as committee member of the Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe (ZTFE), I chose to keep silent. Now that I have resigned, I feel it is my duty to inform your readers as to what actually happened.

Mr Zal Sethna's letter, "The 11 days' controversy" (*Parsiana*, June 1987), is incorrect. The Zoroastrians in London are not at all harmonious,

and in fact, the community has been split. Zal Sethna's comment that Shahpur Captain and five others stood for the committee elections in November 1986 is totally incorrect. I can assure you that I, together with another committee member, did not stand for this particular election. The seven vacancies were filled not on merit, but purely by persuading people to vote for the seven people, using religion as a tool. Their motto was, "If you want to lose your religion, vote for Captain." At no time during Mr Captain's presidency had he ever indicated that he wished to change any practices or customs relating to our religion. The second reason for Zal Sethna's friends having been elected was that decent people have stopped coming to the Association for fear of violence and abuse and four-lettered words being directed at elderly people during the meetings. It is therefore obvious that Zal Sethna's friends would gain election victories.

The trustees' election that took place on the same day showed similar results. Two unknown members of the community, who never took part in

the day-to-day running of the Association or came to the Association for any functions, were elected as trustees. If Zal Sethna feels that the majority of our people have elected the right committee and the right trustees, then I regret he is under a false impression.

I tried on several occasions to unite the committee after the resignation of Mr Captain. Each time I went with different proposals, Zal Sethna and his associates on the committee overruled the peace-making propositions made by me.

The reason their functions are attended in large numbers is because the new committee has now resolved to subsidize the functions. In fact, during Mr Captain's presidency, one function was attended by more than 750 people, but the then committee always tried to limit the attendance at functions to approximately 400 people because of fire regulations. By doing this, they also ensured that the function was managed in a proper manner.

The reason for the increase in membership is that whereas in the past, a member whose fees were in arrears was requested to pay his outstanding

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dues in order to become a fully paid-up member, the present committee, to encourage new members and more votes for itself has, in its wisdom, decided not to charge the members their past dues. In fact, one member told me that he had not been asked to pay the past nine years' subscription.

In order that your readers know the facts about what actually went on in the committee of which I was a member during the unhappy period, I would like to state the following:

It is well-known to all that the community in London had been united for the past 25 years or so. The Association's committee, under the chairmanship of the late Jehangirji Moos, Shirinbanoo Kutar and Shahpur Captain, contributed enormously to the happy state in which the community was. The advancement of the community and the management of the funds of the Association to its present very healthy state are due to the wise and able leadership of these three presidents. In all this, the late revered Dasturji Sohrabji Kutar played a vital and essential role.

The bitterness and divisions have

arisen over matters of so-called "religious custom and practice." Strange as it may seem, the religious custom and practice concerning muktad and Farvardian ceremonies were well established by none other than our revered Dasturji Sohrabji Kutar and followed by all the mobeds. It is a matter of shame that just a little over a year after the passing away of Dasturji Kutar, some of our new and old members should have instigated, at private parties, the signing of petitions for the committee to put the clock back — after 25 years of established local religious practice and custom.

I regret that I was one of the persons who took part at these parties. Had I known then what this would lead to, I would have strongly recommended the people not to sign these petitions. The petitions were signed by about 70 people. Some of the signatories to this petition were children who followed in their fathers' footsteps, and I am certain that my own two children signed this petition without really fully knowing what was involved.

Committee members of long service and standing in the community im-

mediately saw that this motion would divide the community and tried their utmost to cool the situation. However, the motion (barring non-Zoroastrian spouses from attending the muktad and Farvardian jashan prayers) was passed by the committee when Shahpur Captain was not in attendance. I recall that apart from Daraius and Zal Sethna, Bailey Irani, Ms Prochi Colabavala, Ms Beroze Mody, Mr Rusi Dalal and myself voted for the resolution. It should be stated at this point that Ms Shirinbanoo Kutar abstained from the voting and did not vote against the resolution as mentioned in *Parsiana* (November 1986).

During these meetings we were informed by the three trustees of the ZTFE — Mr Bahman Mobed, the late Dr Mino Mistry and Mr M. Dalal — that they wished Shahpur Captain to be appointed a trustee as Mr Bahman Mobed was resigning. At the committee meetings, lengthy discussions took place, and I too was in favor of Shahpur Captain not being a trustee if he was still a president. I am ashamed to say that all sorts of tricks were em-

Continued on page 40

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Events and Personalities

The Parsee General is 75

"Don't you realize you are wasting the scarce resources of the Parsee General Hospital by using some pretext or the other to get yourself admitted every month?" enquired a Parsi lady of a fellow Zoroastrian. Urging the hypochondriac to emulate her own example, she continued, "Even I come and stay at the Hospital but not more than twice a year." When the man insisted that he enjoyed a constitutional right to fall sick and to avail of the Hospital's amenities, the lady was visibly annoyed, "Aapre kai schedule caste-schedule tribe *chhaiye* (Are we a scheduled caste or tribe that we must demand rights and privileges)?"

The Parsi turnout at the Birla Matushri Hall on August 25 was enjoying the Gujarati farce included in the *Papeti-ni-Potpuri*, a fund-raising program in aid of the B.D. Petit Parsee General Hospital's Platinum Jubilee Fund.

Referring to the issue of the Hospital being over-burdened, the chief guest at the function, Justice Sam Bharucha recalled the "unfounded" criticisms made in the early days of the Hospital, when it was alleged that those concerned had made a serious error in over-building the Hospital. Said the Judge, "In 1912 the Hospital may have been overbuilt, but in 1987 the accommodation is sometimes inadequate and it is acutely necessary to provide for the future and to update its amenities..."

As president of the Hospital, Dinshaw Petit gave a brief insight into the founding of the Hospital and the spe-

cial initiative shown by Jehangir Petit who prevailed upon his father Bomanji to donate the land on which the Hospital now stands. By 1912 when the Hospital started functioning, a corpus of Rs 22 lakhs had been raised. Jehangir Petit continued to serve on the managing committee of the Hospital for 25 years and was succeeded by Cowasjee Jehangir, Dhunjibhoy Petit and Maneckji Petit. Dinshaw Petit also recited a little ditty about the Hospital, said to be a composition by the late Maneckji.

It is a home from a home, a host with the most

*Open at all seasons, for all reasons
With injections for all infections
And pills for all ills.*

If you have a sprain and don't want it again,

If you have an abscess and want it to be less,

If you are in a fix with your appendix,

If you have a stroke and are almost broke,

Then Parsee General is your home.

The then Governor of Maharashtra, S.D. Sharma, endorsed the Hospital's "excellent record of service to poor and suffering humanity" in his message carried in the fund-raising souvenir.

Referring to the Hospital's financial problems, Justice Bharucha said, "The days when individuals could make munificent donations are over. A large number of Parsis are capable of smaller, more regular charities. Donating for a cause like the Parsee General Hospital is a selfish as well as a charitable need."

The judge singled out Dr Homi Mehta for his 40-year contribution as the Hospital's joint honorary secretary, looking after the day-to-day functioning as well as the fund-raising propositions.

Mehta, in turn, credited Ms Homai Modi for her contribution as chairperson of the Platinum Jubilee Celebrations Working Committee, and wished her a long life, at least until the centenary celebrations of the Hospital on April 1, 2012!

The first function in the Hospital's platinum jubilee year, *Papeti-ni-Potpuri* was well patronized as was evinced by the number of advertisements in the souvenir and the packed auditorium. Co-sponsored by Airfreight, London Pilsner and businessman-philanthropist Dinshaw Merchant, the evening's fare included infectious music by Nelly and her band, daring dances by Karla Singh and her troupe, a mock fashion show, mimicry, and ventriloquy items interspersed with Homi Tavadia's short skits. Parsi New Year variety entertainment programs having been the late Adi Marzban's forte, a special item was devoted to his memory when one of his compositions, *Hoo maarooh mamavo thaoon* (I am my own grandpa), was sung.

The Hospital's next fund-raising venture is The Platinum Carnival slated for November 14 to 22, at the Parsi Gymkhana grounds.

Parinaz Toddywalla

Aid Tarapore Dharamshala

The Cawasji Mobed Dharamshala at Tarapore "is badly in need of repairs



Tarapore Dharamshala in need of funds

and with the negligible funds at the disposal of the trustees, the same cannot be carried out. Hence we appeal to all generous individuals as well as trustees of various Parsi/Irani trusts to donate generously towards the upkeep of the Dharamshala," notes an appeal sent by Dhanjisha K. Sethna, vice-president of the Tarapore Parsi Zoroastrian Welfare Association.

The Dharamshala was inaugurated on January 26, 1950 "to carry out welfare activities amongst needy Zoroastrians and to enable the residents of Tarapore to meet each other more often and thus cultivate a sense of

Tribute to Kutar

A booklet entitled *Words of Wisdom*, containing selected quotations, anecdotes and verses from the teachings of the late Dasturji Kaikhushroo Mahiyar Kutar, former high priest of the Wadiaji Atash Bahram, has been compiled and published as a tribute by Marzban J. Giara on behalf of the Dasturji's students.

"The booklet has a twin purpose, to spread the light of religious education in the form of simple, easy to read and understand quotes and anecdotes, and to pay a tribute to the memory of our revered teacher Dasturji Kutar," notes the introduction to the booklet.

Readers, be they students, parents, teachers or public speakers, "will be inspired to lead a rich, purposeful life by imbibing the essence of religious and moral subjects," adds a press release.

The 126-page booklet, priced at Rs 12, contains quotations in English and Gujarati on subjects like God, religion ("Religion is bread for daily use, not cakes for special occasions"), love ("To love someone is to see him as God intended him"), woman

Bombay University and secured a University Scholarship and the Darab Peshotan Sanjana Gold Medal from the Jamsetjee Jeejibhoy Madressa. He was the panthaki of the Rustom Framna Fire Temple at Parsi Colony, Dadar in 1929. In 1938 he became the high priest of the Wadiaji Atash Bahram, Bombay.

"An authority on religious and ethical subjects," for nearly six decades, Kutar held religious classes in schools and Parsi colonies... He was also a well-known writer on community issues," notes a life-sketch of the priest in the booklet.

The booklet is available from: Marzban J. Giara, Dhunmai Building, 667 Lady Jehangir Road, Dadar, Bombay 400014.

Religious calendar

"A religious calendar is important and necessary to sustain the beliefs and practices of any community," notes an introduction to the Zoroastrian calendar published by Gifts and Things, in the form of a booklet.

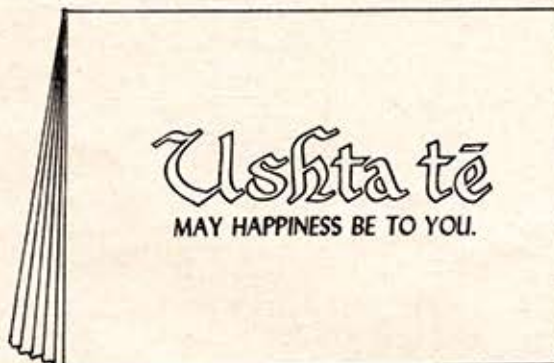
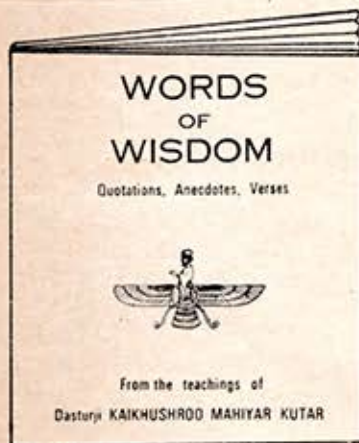
Compiled by Zoroastrian Studies' trustees Khojeste Mistree and Shehnaz Munshi, the 24-page pocket book priced at six rupees carries both the Kadmi and Shenshai calendars for 1987-88. In addition, it features the historical development and the religious content of the Zoroastrian calendar and lists some important thanksgiving days and the yearly cycle of festivals.

A short dedication taken from *Yasna* 16 tells the readers which divinity may be invoked and remembered on the appropriate day and also which *Amesha Spentas* (guardians and principal protectors of the seven creations) are assisted by which *Yazatas* (co-workers of the *Amesha Spentas*). A small note on the *Fravashi* (guardian spirit of man) is also included.

The calendar is available, at Gifts and Things, Bombay Swadeshi Stores Ltd, Sir P.M. Road, Bombay 400001 and at Zoroastrian Studies, K.R. Cama Oriental Institute Bldg, Ground Floor, 136 Bombay Samachar Marg, Bombay 400023.

Rama Rao's greetings

"It is the good fortune of India that the Parsis had completely identified themselves with the country of their adoption and mingled in the mainstream of its history and civilization."



Community publications: (left) a storehouse of quotes, (above) records changing seasons

brotherhood, friendship and a spirit of cooperation."

The accommodation consists of five rooms with attached baths. The per head lodging charges are four rupees a day.

Donations in kind - a new storage tank and electric light fittings - or cross and order cheques in the name of the Tarapore Parsi Zoroastrian Welfare Association may be forwarded to: Dhanjisha K. Sethna, 4 A-7, C.J. Colony, Tulsiwadi, Tardeo, Bombay 400034 or Palonji P. Dastur, Jeejeebhoy Dadabhoy Agiary, Pilot Bunder Road, Colaba, Bombay 400005.

("Woman is the Sunday of man, not only his repose but his joy"), death ("Death is a necessity for progress"), and many others.

"The quotations and anecdotes are not necessarily original but were collected by Dasturji Kutar from various sources over several decades and used by him in his religious classes. These have been compiled from the notes taken and preserved by some of his students," notes a clarification.

Dasturji Kutar was born in 1888 in a family of distinguished priests in Navsari. He did his MA in Avesta and Pahlavi from St Xavier's College,

Alongside (from left) Bisney, Dittia, Rama Rao, Irani, Bapooji, Nagarwala, Marzban

Bottom (left) Adajania and Mody



reads a special message sent by the chief minister of Andhra Pradesh, N.T. Rama Rao, to the Parsi Zoroastrian Anjuman of Secunderabad and Hyderabad on New Year's day, August 25.

The chief minister recalled the part played by the Parsi community in India's freedom struggle and in its nation building, and called it a "glorious one."

On the festive occasion, the Anjuman president Bejan Dittia, along with five trustees, Jehangir Bisney, Cyrus Irani, P. Bapooji, Noshir Nagarwala and J. Marzban, visited the chief minister to convey greetings on behalf of the local community.

World Cup observer

Aspi Adajania, recently appointed technical director and vice-chairman, press public relations, of the Amateur International Boxing Association (AIBA), has been selected as observer for the fifth World Cup scheduled to be held in Belgrade in November, notes *The Illustrated Weekly of India* of July 19, 1987.

The first Indian to be thus honored, Adajania left for Belgrade in July to inspect the facilities and prepare a report which was to be submitted in a month's time, adds the write-up.

Adajania had earlier been selected to a jury panel for World Cup Boxing in November 1985 and the Asian Championship held in Bangkok the same year.

Piano scholarship

Eighteen-year-old Pervez Mody, who left for Russia on September 5, has won a scholarship to study the piano-forte in Moscow, notes a press release.

A protege of veteran pianists Ms Feroza Dubash Labonne and her mother Ms Farida Dubash, Pervez has

been broadcast over All India Radio (AIR) and been a soloist with the B.P. Chamber Orchestra. His most recent performance in the city was held on August 16, 1987.

He started learning the piano at the age of four, and has won over 20 musical awards in various piano competitions, bagging his first gold medal at the age of nine.

Winner of five gold medals in the Sonapur Youth Movement and of one gold medal in the Konkan Association Music Competition, Mody was adjudged the best instrumentalist and in-



dividual performer at these meets, adds the release.

Having passed the seventh grade in the Trinity College and the Royal School of Music Examinations, Pervez has currently forsaken his education at Sydenham College where he was a first year commerce student to study the piano for seven years in Russia.

Besides his interest in music, Mody has won several prizes in elocution competitions and has been adjudged the best actor twice at inter-house competitions during his school days at St Mary's, adds the release.

Tata scholars

Of the 10 Parsi students awarded the J.N. Tata Endowment Scholarships this year to study abroad, six have

opted for engineering, notes a press release.

The trustees of the J.N. Tata Endowment for the Higher Education of Indians have, for the academic year 1987-88, selected 117 new Tata scholars including 30 women from all over the country, for postgraduate and doctoral studies abroad.

The Parsi students who have opted for mechanical engineering are Fersheed Engineer (Syracuse University), Merwan B. Mehta (University of Missouri) and Zal K. Parakh (Rose Hulman Institute of Technology). The others are: Burjor J. Mehta (industrial engineering, Ohio University), Khushrav Nariman (chemical engineering, University of Delaware), Sheriar Hormuzdi (agricultural engineering, Ohio State University), Phiroze R. Dungore (metallurgy, Stevens Institute of Technology), Ms Pheroza Surti (hotel management, USA), Ms Tinaz Pavri (political science, Ohio University), and Ms Havovy E. Cama (physics, Cambridge University, UK).

"The majority of the candidates undertake higher studies in technology and engineering," notes the release. "But the Tata Awards have a wider range and include this year subjects like agriculture, architecture, economics and statistics, life sciences, veterinary science, social sciences, and social communications...There is hardly a profession in this country which, among its elite, does not include a Tata scholar."

Established 95 years ago by Jamsetji Tata, every year the J.N. Tata Endowment assists 110 to 120 Indian graduates "with an academic record of conspicuous distinction" to go abroad for higher studies. This year 57 students came from lower income groups having a monthly income of less than Rs 3,000, 22 of them having a monthly income of less than Rs 1,000. Since its inception, the Endowment has awarded loan scholarships of over two crore 75 lakh rupees to 1,742 scholars, adds the release.

SPOTLIGHT

Limjee K. Panday, a leading stock broker, has been reelected president of the Stockbroker Underwriters' Association, notes the *Financial Express* of August 23, 1987.

Compiled by Roxana H. Kaka

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A center in the capital?

A community center, "proclaiming Zoroastrianism in the capital of the United States is an objective surely worthy of the support of the whole community," notes Kersi B. Shroff, Editor of *Zoroastrian News*, the publication of the Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Washington Incorporated (ZAMWI).

"We are now a community of nearly 300 persons comprising mainly Zoroastrians from India, Iran and Pakistan. We are a united and cohesive group striving to maintain our faith and culture in this new land," he adds.

"A proposal to raise funds for the establishment of a center for the service of the members of ZAMWI was presented at a general body meeting on January 18, 1987 by the then president Rohinton M. Tengra and received a generally enthusiastic response from those present," notes the March issue of *Zoroastrian News*.

However, "in this we are faced with the time-worn chicken or egg argument," notes president Goshtasb Ostad. "Do we need a center to get the community interested and stay together, or do we need to get people to become more interested before we can tackle the issue of the center? I strongly believe that we can attain both goals, by serving the needs of the community and building a place of our own where our community can prosper and grow," he adds.

A couple of years ago, encouraged by members who constantly impressed upon the board the necessity of having a permanent facility for ZAMWI, an initial committee was set up to examine the pros and cons of establishing a center. Despite several meetings the committee was unable to arrive at a consensus. Thereafter, in early 1986, the ZAMWI board decided to take upon itself the task of setting up the center, notes the newsletter.

As of March 1987, the Association had collected nearly \$ 10,000 by way of contributions made or pledged. Notes the report, "This impressive amount, raised within a month, is nearly one-half of the funds which have taken us several years to raise."

ZAMWI's new board of trustees was elected at the annual general meeting of the Association held on March 7, 1987. The office bearers are: president Goshtasb Ostad, vice-president Rusi Kevala, secretary Farida Mistry, joint-secretary Zarine Ranji, treasurer Kersy Dastur, joint-treasurer Farhad Shahryari, trustee-at-large Shehernaz Joshi, and co-opted trustees Khershed Cooper and Shahnaz Demehri.

To alleviate the burden of expenses involved in the performance of a navjote ceremony, ZAMWI has decided to hold a public navjote for two or three youngsters at a time. The Association will provide the hall and obtain the services of a priest, notes the June 1987 issue of *Zoroastrian News*.

Formula for survival

"We need some long-term planning or we won't get anywhere," notes Firoze Doctor, Editor of *Yatha*, the newsletter of the Zarthoshti Anjuman of Northern California (ZANC). "We Parsis are a 'grass roots' community. We have no official structure and no official leaders. Hence, the key ingredients in our survival and growth formula are: community love plus community spirit plus unity plus joy plus fun. These are the very essence of Zoroastrianism and if Parsis wish to survive anywhere, they should consider reviving this formula" before building dar-e-mehers, and forming associations and federations, he adds.

ZANC raised over \$ 1,700 at a charity dinner on July 25 to collect funds for The B.D. Petit Parsee General Hospital, Bombay, on the occasion of its platinum jubilee. The fund raising was possible due to the "dedication and efforts" of Dr Homai and Arvi Kasad, who hosted the dinner, notes the July-August issue of *Yatha*.

Australia's next board

Purviz Kolsawalla has been reelected president of the Australian Zoroastrian Association (AZA) of New South Wales at the annual general meeting held on August 16, 1987, notes Kersi Meher-Homji, Editor of the AZA newsletter, *Manashni*. The

other members elected to the board are: vice-president Vispy Mehta, secretary Daraius Battiwalla, treasurer Keyoumars Keyanian, and members-at-large Bijan Abadi, Akhtar Ostowari, and Arnavaz Minbatiwala.

Kersi Meher-Homji, Editor of *Manashni* and a regular columnist for *Sportsweek* (India) and *Cricketer* (Australia), has been appointed consultant editor and is in charge of the sports section of the newly brought out newspaper, *The Indian Down Under* (TIDU). The 16-page local newspaper, based in Thornleigh (New South Wales) and started in June this year, gives information on India and Indians in Australia, and includes news on Australian Zoroastrians in the section on Community News and the Community Calendar.

Zoroastrians abroad miss the strangest things from their homeland. An appeal in the August issue of *Manashni* notes: "One of our members requests, that when you visit India will it be possible to bring Saridon tablets for her?"

ZSO in new hands

The new executive committee of the Zoroastrian Society of Ontario (ZSO) comprises president Kobad Zarolia, past president Dhun Bhaya, executive vice-president Dinshaw Printer, vice-president Dhun Noria, treasurer Porus Patel, executive officer Dara Panthakee, and secretary Sabar Balsara, notes the July issue of the ZSO newsletter.

"It was a big day for a lot of people, but especially for our children, the torchbearers of our ancient yet modern Zoroastrian religion, because for once they were the focus of all our attention and the receivers of all our applause," notes Minoo Kotwal in his write-up on the Family Day organized by the Religious Instruction Group of the ZSO.

Held on May 31, 1987, the program which started with "the song of allegiance" *Chhaiye Hame Zarthosti*, was followed by "a little walk into history dating back to the times of King Hoshung," and an "insight" into the

Continued on page 29

Tapping youth resources



The Delhi Parsi Anjuman organizes its first all-India youth seminar

Arnavaz S. Mama

With the goal of bringing "together Zoroastrian youth in the age-group of 19 to 35 years to share ideas (and) develop understanding," the Delhi Parsi Anjuman (DPA) is organizing the "First All India Zoroastrian Youth Seminar" in New Delhi from October 22 to 24, 1987.

"We want to make Parsi youth feel wanted by the community," says (Lieutenant General) Ardeshir Sethna, who took over as DPA president in March 1987. The retired general is determined "to expose young Parsis to the mainstream of India, show them what services, what enormous resources are available to them to tap."

Those assisting the Anjuman's efforts include the Delhi Administration which has contributed Rs 25,000 towards the project. "Unfortunately, the Prime Minister may not be present in Delhi at that time," but the President of India may grant the delegates an audience, Sethna informs. And the panel of speakers include some top brass from government ranks—present and retired. Parsi enterprises like the

Travel Corporation of India and Mazda Leasing have also grasped the significance of the mission and will help with conveyance and stationery requirements respectively.

Intent that the "message goes home" to the community in all parts of India, the general, who is currently chairman of the India Tourism Development Corporation (ITDC), specially allotted time, while on a brief visit to Bombay on September 15, to acquaint *Parsiana* with the purpose and scope of the Seminar.

The DPA is prepared to host 60 young people sponsored by anjumans outside Delhi. "We can house 65," says Sethna and if more are forthcoming, they can be housed outside the DPA's Mengusi Dharamshala complex, he adds. To date, there has been a positive response from 40 but it is expected that the number will eventually rise to at least 50. For four nights and five days, the delegates will be the DPA's guests—they only have to reach the capital and carry light woollens as the weather will be cool,

informs Sethna.

The delegates will be divided into five or six syndicates. The syndicate leaders from the host anjuman will be in charge of 10 to 12 out-of-townners, guiding them socially, culturally and intellectually, prodding participation from all members of the subgroup. "More a participatory workshop than a seminar," describes Sethna, whose long experience as commandant of the various officer training colleges of the Indian Army is now being deployed to organize and awaken the community.

The program of the three-day Seminar is varied. The emphasis on the first day is on background information—maharaja—minister—historian—poet—philosopher, Dr Karan Singh, will present an overview on India and her youth; sociologist and coordinator of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet's counselling projects, Professor Noshir Kaikobad of the Tata Institute of Social Sciences will deliver the keynote address.

The same afternoon, Zoroastrian ethics will be the theme of Dastur Nav-

rooz Minochehr-Homji's speech, followed by family life education. The day will end with a visit to Delhi's famous *son et lumière* (sound and light) show followed by a barbecue dinner.

An "Employment Mart" has been planned for the next day with an eminent Parsi entrepreneur as chief guest. The panel of speakers will include Russi Billimoria, chairman of the public service enterprises board which selects people seeking employment in the public sector enterprises; the defence services representative Colonel Nayak who has prepared a computerized presentation, and the director of youth services from the ministry of human resources. The Union Public Services Commission, small-scale industries, tourism and other self-employment agencies will be represented.

"We hope we'll be able to give out (job application) forms, etc... Say this is the stuff that's available. Use it. And if not, why not?" Sethna wants to know.

The morning's emphasis on employment will be followed by a panel discussion on laws governing marriage, adoption and inheritance with eminent lawyer Fali Nariman heading the panel which will also include ex law secretary Rusi Gai. The delegates will visit the President of India at Rashtrapati Bhavan ("I hope he'll give us a cup of tea") and view a Japanese festival of kimonos and a fashion show, courtesy Japan Air Lines.

At the last day's session on Excellence and Expectations Professor Kaikobad, director of the BPP's defense-government services project Dr (Ms) Ketayun Madon, additional government secretary Rasgolkar, outstanding achiever Hoshidar Press and others are expected to provoke audience response from the delegates – a sort of brainstorming cum cathartic session to lay bare what young Parsis think and feel. The syndicate leaders will also provide a summation of the opinions and ideas that emerge from among discussions within the subgroups. The valedictory function will be followed by the DPA's diwali dinner ["normally called *fatakra* (fireworks) dinner"], with Delhi's Lieutenant Governor as chief guest, where the delegates will intermingle with the Parsi community of Delhi.

Somewhere into this formidable program, the DPA expects to weave in

shopping, sightseeing, perhaps a visit to Pragati Maidan, the site of international fairs.

A brochure for the Seminar is under preparation. The core papers for the delegates will include explanations on law, prayers and employment opportunities.

The Seminar, originally planned for

"When you give
respect, you are
prepared to
accept someone
saying 'no.'"

May, but rescheduled to late October when the Delhi climate is more comfortable, is in fulfilment of "a commitment from the DPA to the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India," Sethna told the executive council of the Federation at its meeting in Bombay on September 5.

Rustom Daroga, DPA secretary and Farokh Rustomji, youth trustee, have been busy organizing the show and liaising with the anjumans who have sponsored delegates. Indeed, Rustomji had urged the Federation members in Bombay, on September 6, to host such a youth congress in turn, so that Parsi youth all over the country could meet on an annual basis.

Background

Sethna's father, Meherji Sethna, who retired as a member of the Railway Board, was the DPA's vice-president when it started building the Mengusi Dharamshala. "I stayed with him from 1947 to 1950," reminisces Ardeshtir.

"Around 1947-48, I used to attend (committee) meetings. (The then) DPA president Dr S.P. Shroff was very ill and the construction of the Bhiwandiwalla Hall (in the Mengusi Parsi Dharamshala compound) was proceeding." When the general returned to Delhi in the late 50s, the atmosphere had deteriorated. He and his brother found themselves in opposing factions, recalls Sethna with a shudder. "With a great deal of perseverance, Khusro Rustomji (then briefly, the DPA president) held everyone together," he remembers. Things fell back into shape when the late

Shiavax Nargolwala took over as president in 1960. "He rode that place like a colossus for 25 years," says Sethna.

Perhaps the only anjuman in India where non-Zoroastrian spouses are accepted as members, Sethna says he is trying to rope more members into the DPA. He relates the satisfaction of a newcomer from Poona whose English wife and their children enjoyed their first ever Pateti dinner with the community this year. By an extraordinary general meeting on September 13, the DPA raised its annual subscription after many years, informs Sethna.

Delhi's Parsi population, currently about 500, will "increase without doubt," believes Sethna. "Every top lawyer wants to practise in the Supreme Court. The quality of life is far superior and it is not an aging population..."

"We are a democratic, voluble people. No Indian wants to be pushed around," says Sethna, according to whom the western concept of management does not really apply to the Indian ethos. Author of *Story of a regiment*, Sethna's theme is that the army was built upon tradition by the British who sagaciously incorporated Urdu words after the Mutiny and built upon the Indians' sense of fidelity – "*Sarkar ka namak khaya*." (The Indian does not sign a covenant – he eats salt.) The symbolism touches the simple man's heart. Loyalty, according to Sethna, is a more individualized concept.

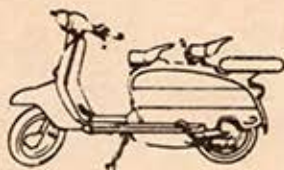
The traditional fidelity also inculcates "the courage of conviction, the ability to say 'no,' the ability to stake your right arm for what we, in our prayers, call *farvarane* – I believe," Sethna provides a peep into army philosophy. And it is based on *ijjat* (respect) – respect of the commander for his men and vice versa, "because the commander cannot do everything. When you give respect, you are prepared to accept someone saying 'no.'"

Reverting to community problems, Sethna says, "What we should be worrying about is, 'Can we help disappearing?' (But) the strategy for survival? I haven't got the answer." As for the problem of Parsi anjuman properties in places where a substantial community once dwelt but has now migrated elsewhere, Sethna offers no solution; but he is emphatic that it's only a peripheral problem: "We spend too much time on peripherals," he avers.

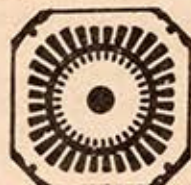
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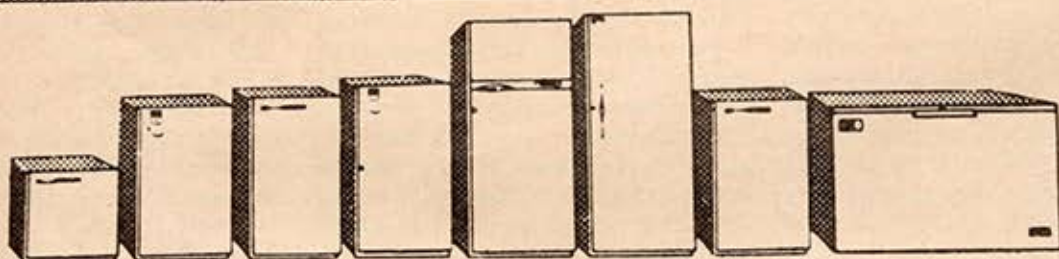
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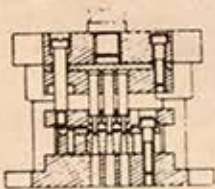
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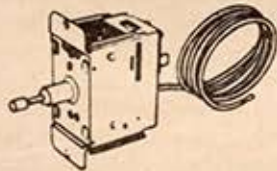
**LAMINATION
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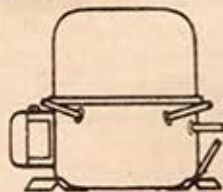
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Is the agiary an industry?

The Surat Labour Court's judgment, equating an agiary with an industry and a priest with a workman, has been challenged in the Gujarat High Court

Parinaz Toddywalla

For 18 years he served as a priest at a fire-temple in Surat, managed by the Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy Charity Fund. At the time of his resignation in 1968, Ervad Jahabux Faramroz Dastur was being paid a monthly emolument of Rs 180. Nearly 12 years later, in 1979, he approached the Surat Labour Court to seek justice in the form of overtime, leave encashment and gratuity compensation. The Court, in its decree of August 31, 1985 arrived at a decision which could have far-reaching repercussions on the entire Parsi community: Dastur, a priest, was equated with a workman, and the agiary, with an industry.

The order of L. J. Sayad, the presiding officer of the Labour Court, was challenged by the two defendants: the Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy Charity Fund, Surat Fire Temple and Alahibaug Fund; and Jhal Minochair Contractor, the secretary of the Surat Fire Temple and Alahibaug Fund. After nearly two years, the appeal case was admitted in the High Court of Gujarat at Ahmedabad on June 29, 1987, informed Soli Katpitia, chief executive of the Surat Parsi Punchayet.

Concerned about the implications of the Labour Court's judgment, the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjuman of India, at its executive committee meeting on September 6, 1987, unanimously resolved to adopt the proposal, put forward by its joint honorary secretary Keki Gandhi, that the

Federation "fight any attempt to classify an agiary as an industry," and assured its support till justice is sought in the highest court. At the same time, the Federation also recommended that if the appeal case is successful, the revised legal judgment, denouncing the agiary as an industry, should not be quoted by the agiaries to exploit the mobeds, but on moral grounds, "a decent salary should be awarded to all mobeds subject to availability of resources."

To oppose the Labour Court's verdict, Bombay's eminent lawyer and onetime Bombay Parsi Punchayet

"The function of a mobed in an agiary is strictly of a religious character...he acts as an intermediary between the divine and the mortal"

trustee Shrivax R. Vakil volunteered his services free of charge because he "wanted to preserve the species (of priests)." Though admitting that a priest deserved all benefits and could be considered an employee since he received a monthly wage, Vakil refused to follow Sayad's subsequent

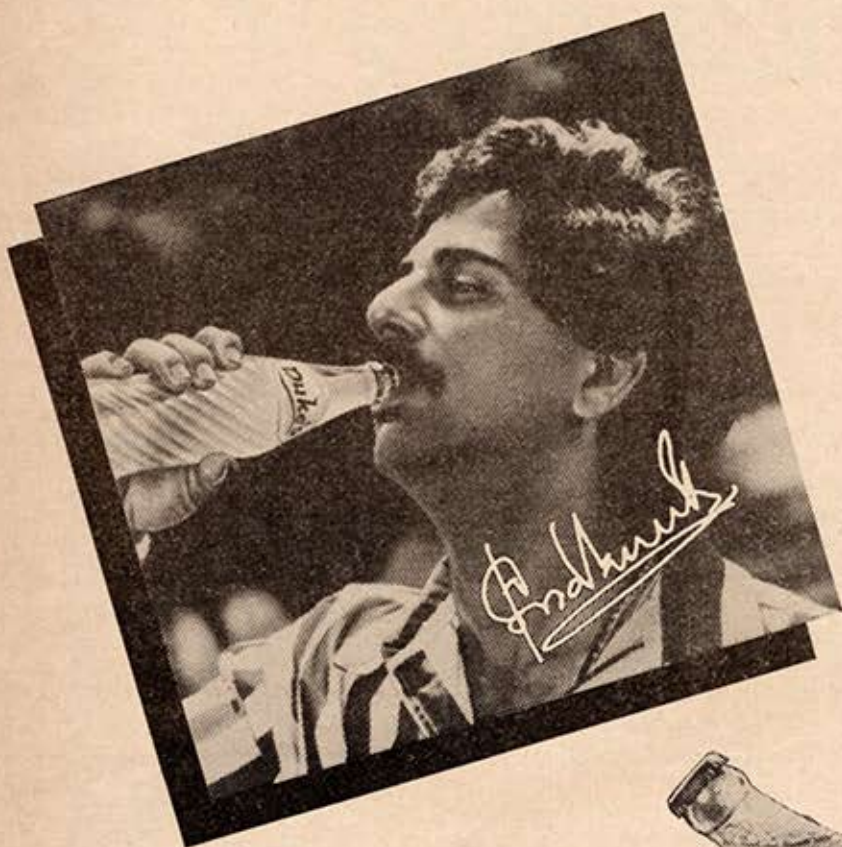
line of thinking that there must have existed a relationship of master and servant to classify him as a workman under the Industrial Disputes Act of 1947.

In his article *Is agiary an industry?* serialized in three installments in *The Bombay Samachar* issues of November 1985, Vakil had written, "The function of a mobed in an agiary is strictly of a religious character...It may involve incidental functions pertaining to management or administration of the affairs of the agiary...he normally supplements his earnings by offering prayers on behalf of his clients... Here the mobed does not act as an employee. His relationship with his clients is that of a spiritual guide - he acts as an intermediary between the divine and the mortal."

While acknowledging that as the lone priest in an agiary Dastur's duties would be too taxing, Dastur Kaikhusroo Jamasp Asa, of the Anjuman Atash Bahram, Bombay, is convinced that "our (priestly) profession doesn't demand taking recourse to law." The norm in most agiaries is to employ a minimum of two priests who could perform their duties alternately, giving respite to each other. Not inclined to look upon a priest as a workman, JamaspAsa stated that the average time taken to perform the *boi* ceremony each time varies from 30 to 45 minutes, and the remaining time could be utilized by the priest to earn addi-

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A difference of interpretation and opinion ...

To determine whether an activity could be considered an industry, a footnote to the definition of industry, as delineated in the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947, summarizes the general guidelines as: systematic efforts for the production of goods or material services, direct cooperation between capital and labor, and capability of being owned or transferred. Profit is not considered the main criterion.

To ascertain whether an employee would be covered under the definition of a workman, the Act is specific: any person employed in an industry, doing "skilled or unskilled, manual, supervisory, technical or clerical work on hire or reward," whether the terms of employment are spelt out or not. Even an employee whose services have been terminated could be considered a workman.

Quoting the Supreme Court decision in the Bangalore Water Works case, L.J. Sayad, the presiding officer of the Labour Court at Surat, held that the respondent Trust (Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy Charity Fund, Surat Fire Temple and Alahibaug Fund) is an industry because it has some assets – the Alahibaug property which was rented out and some fixed deposit investments drawing interest – from which income is derived by the Trust. Displeased with the reasoning, Shrivax Vakil, noted lawyer and former Bombay Parsi Punchayet trustee, had then commented, "It is totally outrageous where a Trust derives any income from any property settled under it

that the collection/derivation of income constitutes business. Every Trust (unless it is insolvent or bankrupt) will have some assets which would bear income and the same would be applied towards the object of the Trust."

Said Vakil, "If all the words used are given their widest meaning, all services and all callings would come within the purview of the definition." According to him, services rendered by a domestic in a personal manner, and, in the case of professionals, where the principal capital involved would be only the intellectual or educational expertise brought to the job, would not be identified as industries.

Referring to the Court's verdict, Vakil stressed that the Agiary could have come under the definition of an industry had there been five employees at the agiary engaged to prepare *darans* (a type of unleavened bread, an important component of ritual offerings) and sell them to neighboring agiaries, but not under the present circumstances.

On the same issue, the trustees of the Agiary quoted the Bangalore Water Works case to support their stand that the agiary cannot be considered an industry: "(It) is not because the employee does not make a contribution, nor because the profession is too high to be classified as a trade or industry with its commercial connotations but because there is nothing like organized labor in such employment. The image of industry or even quasi-industry is one of the plurality of workmen, not an

isolated or single little assistant or attendant."

Generally, socio-eco-charitable organizations can be classified under three broad divisions, emphasized Vakil. In the first instance, the profits of the organization are utilized for altruistic objects. In the second category, the organization does not make profits but the resultant goods and services are made available at low or no cost to meet the needs of the indigent who cannot afford to buy them at the prevalent market rates. The third class includes establishments oriented towards a humane mission which is fulfilled by men who work not because they are paid wages, but because they share the passion for the cause and derive job satisfaction from their contribution. "The first two are industries, but not the third," declared Vakil.

Citing the Bangalore Water Works judgment, Vakil continued to assert his point: "Not that the presence of charitable impulse extricates the institution from the definition (of industry) but that there is no economic relationship such as is found in trade or business between the head who employs and the others who emotively flock to render service. In one sense, there are no employers and employees but crusaders all. In another sense, there is no wage basis for the employment but voluntary participation in the production, inspired by lofty ideals, (irrespective) of remuneration, service conditions and the like."

tional money if necessary.

Refusing to excuse the materialistic spirit among the present-day clergy, JamaspAsa referred to the exploitation of the earlier generation of priests and stated, "But they were contented. They would supplement their income by undertaking other jobs like watch repairing, sudreh stitching, etc." Even in the case under dispute, JamaspAsa felt that the scales could turn drastically if it could be ascertained who was the recipient of the *ashodad* money (offered by the laity together with the

sandalwood to the officiating priest).

To assess whether a priest is underpaid or exploited, a comprehensive picture needs to be taken, opined Rustom Anklesaria, chief executive of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet. The location of the agiary, its clientele, the free time at the mobed's disposal, his side income, etc would make a substantial difference in arriving at a decision, Anklesaria elaborated.

Overtime

Dastur had contended that instead of

the normal eight hours of work that an employee is expected to contribute under the stipulations of the Shops and Establishments Act, he was made to work for 14 hours.

As the only priest serving the Agiary in his last two years of employment, Dastur counted his hours of service as extending from 6am to 7pm during which time he had to perform the *boi* for the four *gehs* plus the other regular work, and one hour of work during the midnight *boi* in the fifth *geh*. Claiming compensation for his overtime con-

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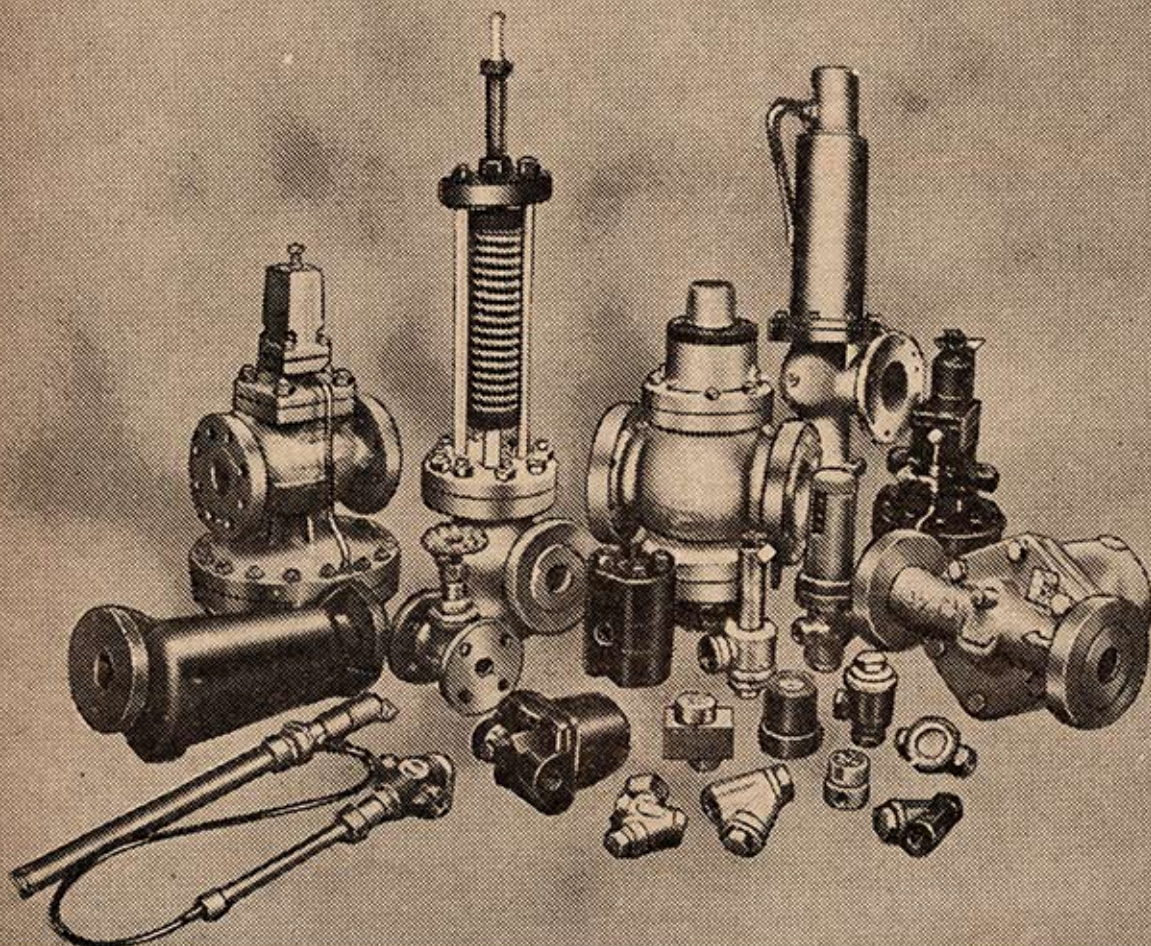
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tribution at twice the regular wage rate, he demanded Rs 28,266 in reparation, but the Labour Court awarded him Rs 18,990 at the rate of one and a half times the regular wage. Additionally, a sum of Rs 378 was granted as leave encashment due to him, plus Rs 100 as litigation costs. The applicant's plea for gratuity was refused because it did not fall within the purview of the Labour Court to make that decision.

The judge was generous with his decision on the grounds that the priest's monthly pay of Rs 180 was too meager, that he was not assured of any retirement benefits and that under these circumstances he could hardly be expected to sustain himself and his family.

Relying on the definition of industry as spelt out in the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947, and on the Supreme Court judgment given in the Bangalore Water Works case, considered an authoritative citation on this subject, Sayad held that an agiary could be equated with an industry. Under the Industrial Disputes Act, the comprehensive definition of industry applies to "any

business, undertaking, manufacture or calling of employers and includes any calling, service, employment, handicraft or industrial occupation, or vocation of workmen."

Taking into consideration the liberal approach of the courts which is usually

*"If the cost of **kathi** can go up, so can the cost of labor over which there is no control"*

pro employee, Homi Ranina, trustee of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet and a founder member of the controversial Athravan Educational Trust, was not surprised that the sympathies of the Labour Tribunal lay with the underpaid priest. According to him, if a hospital could be deemed an industry on the basis of a recent legal decision, so could an agiary, applying the same reasoning.

While Dastur's regular monthly sal-

ary confirmed the employer-employee relationship, his recitation of prayers on behalf of his individual clients, and the sale of sandalwood and *divas*, would suggest that it is a commercial establishment rendering religious service, said Ranina who parried, "You can't expect that just because a priest is in the service of God, he should not charge a commercial wage. Doctors too are in service of God but they charge a lot of money. You find any number of mobeds offering to serve fire-temples outside India because they are assured of better wages and a better life. No longer can one expect to find priests, like in the days of yore, who would willingly perform the *ijash-ne* ceremony for four annas."

In their appeal, the trustees of the Agiary - Sir Jamsetji Jeejeebhoy, Nanabhoy B. Jeejeebhoy, Kawasjee F. Vakeel, Jamsetjee J.R.B. Jeejeebhoy, Noshir R.N.S. Jamsetjee, Rustom J. Jeejeebhoy, Burjor H. Antia, Jamshed B. Aga, Fali P. Sarkari and Dr Homi N. Sethna - argued that Dastur, as a *boiwalla* priest, was responsible for prayers at only certain predetermined hours. To support their

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stand that during Dastur's alleged 14 hours of service he had free spells in between, they declared, "The respondent's residence was just opposite the Agiary and the respondent was running his flour mill."

The law for overtime should not apply to priests because their rendering of intermittent service does not warrant it, opined Vakil. Most Parsi priests are good cooks, asserted Vakil, and suggested that they use their spare time to market their home-made eats which would be a sellout in the fast growing field of catering, or else encourage their wives to spin kusti wool.

But Ranina believed that the Judge's contention was not entirely erroneous, "for even if the mobed was not performing ceremonies in the agiary all through the 13 hours, his presence in the agiary was necessary to accept sandalwood, etc from the devotees."

The judgment, if upheld by the High Court, could have a bearing on the other priests in the Zoroastrian fold, other employees working in an agiary, and ultimately the laity who would have to bear the financial burden of providing the priests with a higher standard of living. Explained Ranina, "In the case of most agiaries, the trustees may not be in a position to pay overtime benefits. Today, the largest expenditure is on the maintenance and

repairs of an agiary, and on *kathi* (logs of wood for the sacred fire)." Just as the laity supports the escalating cost of *kathi*, so also would the laity be forced to make a personal decision in the case of priests: either discontinue the priests' service or pay more. "Ultimately a harsher burden may be cast on the poorer section who are generally more religious minded."

According to JamaspAsa, it is the fault of the laity too, because "the more they keep giving, the more the priests want to take."

An agiary's present major expenditure - *kathi* - needs to be reviewed, Vakil asserted, quoting facts: "The price of wood today is the same as that of sandalwood 40 years ago. My appeal to Parsis to substitute sandalwood is going in vain. The custom of offering sandalwood was not an ancient Iranian tradition but was borrowed from Hinduism."

Vakil continued, "Just as human beings have luck, so also do agiaries." In the eyes of Vakil, priests are a rare, fast-dying species. "I have believed in the general law of nature: what can't adapt itself will have to be destroyed," added Vakil. If unable to afford the services of a priest, the trustees of an agiary should opt for amalgamation where three to four fires could be housed in different rooms of a single building.

As Ranina perceives the situation, "In the next five to 10 years, the demand and supply position vis-a-vis the priests will be critical." Being in greater demand, they will invariably command a higher wage. "This is an important law of nature which nobody can defeat. If the cost of *kathi* can go up, so can the cost of labor over which

"Even if a mobed does not perform ceremonies in the agiary all through the 13 hours, his presence in the agiary is necessary"

there is no control. Once the priests are paid higher wages, more athornans will take to the priestly calling voluntarily and there may be no further use for the paramobeds. So indirectly this would work out for the betterment of priests without any one feeling the need to approach the courts."

Reverting to the main topic, Vakil referred to the attitude of certain commercially minded individuals from among the community and enquired, "Do Christians-Muslims-Hindus have trade unionism? Have any of them ever gone to court to establish their rights? I may not be alive, but the plight at the Doongerwadi and the Parsee General Hospital, where trade unionism has crept in, will soon be noticeable."

Though Keki Gandhi was fearful of one man (Dastur) "affecting the views and the religious sentiments of the entire community," JamaspAsa was sanguine: "No good priest would be influenced by this priest's action." He then quoted the Pahlavi text *Dadestan-i-Denig* to summarize the qualities required of a good priest: "He should be a man of pure disposition and assured wisdom, a minder of the religion, one possessing pure and just thoughts and wise deeds, who possesses a clean body and a tongue worthy of good, who has learnt the scriptures by heart, who has performed ablutions and proper rites, and who has given undivided attention to the ceremonial and recites them faultlessly."

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Property disputes were the focus of the Anjuman Committee meeting called by the Bombay Parsi Punchayet trustees

Verbal duelling

Arnavaz S. Mama.

Verbal sparring bouts over the allocation of a dispensary in Jer Baug dominated the Anjuman Committee meeting called by the Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP) trustees at Sir Jivanji Modi Hall of the K.R. Cama Oriental Institute on July 2, 1987.

Prior to the meeting, letters and editorials in the Parsi Press raised queries on why there was no agenda for the meeting and even whether BPP chairman Dr Aspi Golwalla should preside or not in light of feisty advocate Ardeshtir Katrak's charges in a public meeting at the Sethna Agiary Hall on March 31.

Irate F Register (donor) members, who had lost their direct right to vote for trustees on account of Bombay High Court Judge H. Suresh's amendments to the election scheme, also came prepared to espouse their cause, while those in favor of the scheme were armed with replies.

Golwalla welcomed the Anjuman Committee members, noting that the new election scheme called upon the trustees to meet the Anjuman Committee members at least once a year. He informed the gathering that prior to the meeting, the BPP's solicitors, Mulla and Mulla and Cragie, Blunt and Caroe had received a legal notice from Payne and Company, solicitors for four F Register members who had filed a plea in the Bombay High Court to review Justice Suresh's revised election scheme. The notice stated that as the disputed election scheme was sub judice, no discussion on the merits or demerits of the scheme could be permitted.

The meeting began on a sour note when E (elected) Register member Burjor Paymaster brought up the topic of the Jer Baug dispensary of Dr (Ms) Dina Patel. A practising gynecologist, Patel has been a subtenant of Dr N.R. Zunwerkar since 1955. The Committee of Management for the

R.N. and N.N. Wadia Trusts, which looks after Jer Baug, transferred the tenancy from Dr Zunwerkar to Dr Rajan Bhonsale (son of former Maharashtra Chief Minister Babasaheb Bhonsale) in 1986. The BPP has been repeatedly criticized in the Press, mainly by office-bearers of the Committee for Economic Revival (CER), for having inducted another non-Parsi when Parsi doctors could have benefited from the use of the premises, and for not making Patel a legal tenant by subdividing the tenancy between her and Bhonsale.

Paymaster was interrupted by BPP trustee Eruch Desai on the basis that the matter had been thoroughly discussed in the Press and that "the cordiality in which we are meeting should not be vitiated. (The matter) might go to court. I am not trying to shut any discussions but there are many more important points that need to be discussed. (Let us) proceed with more healthy aspects." Immediately, CER's Fali Poncha was on his feet: "Mr Chairman, this is an attempt to shut the issue."

Poncha's insistence that the trustees admit that they had "blundered," and that they could have avoided the whole long rigmarole by "a little ordinary care," allowed the episode to

escalate. Poncha's questioning amounted to a cross-examination of Golwalla and Desai who, being the senior trustees, also officiate on the Wadia Baugs' Committee of Management.

Referring to a rumor that the Punchayet was the richer by a two lakh rupee donation from Dr Bhonsale, Poncha asked pointedly whether any trustee had visited the site. No one had. He claimed that the area, which Golwalla said was about 550 square feet was actually more than 1,000 square feet and therefore worth Rs 20 lakhs, reckoned at the rate of Rs 2,000 per square foot, of which the landlord's one-third share should have been seven lakh rupees. He further presented Golwalla with three photos which he averred showed that the premises were clearly subdivisible. (Subsequently Desai, in a letter to the Press, verified the area to be 580 square feet to which Poncha replied that he had been referring to the super built-up area.) "Dina Patel has received a notice of ejection from Bhonsale...How is the BPP going to protect her?" asked Poncha.

Golwalla: "Dina Patel can file a suit."

Poncha: "By successive Rent Act amendments, was she a legal tenant or not?"

Golwalla: "She never made an application."

Poncha: "You are not replying."

Desai: "This point has been discussed threadbare. At the time of the transfer, there was no application from Dina Patel. It's up to the trustees to make her a direct tenant. It might mean opening a Pandora's box...You know that eviction notice is not eviction...I don't see any threat to Dina Patel...The application wasn't there when the matter was considered. The trustees are not expected to think of it..."

(In a subsequent letter to the *Jam-e-*

Jamshed of August 16, Patel clarified that the BPP had not informed her that they were transferring Dr Zunker's portion of the premises to Dr Bhonsale. "If I am not aware that such a transfer is being planned, how can I make any application?" she queried.)

Paymaster, who had appealed for five minutes speaking time as against the allotted three, lamented, "My five minutes have been taken by the trustees!"

By then a restive Jal Ollia, a prolific writer of letters to the Parsi Press, complained, "No one has collected our written questions." Ollia reiterated a demand he had earlier made in the Press for an agenda for the meeting. He also questioned Golwalla's right to chair it. Asserted Golwalla, "The meeting has been called by the BPP. I am chairman of the BPP and I have every right to chair the meeting."

Ollia then referred to the Katrak meeting saying, "Many feel that the accusations may be correct." An uproarious protest from the house drowned Ollia, and Desai noted, "You may think we have called this meeting because of the events of the past few weeks," but added that such was not the case. "Why has Golwalla not filed a defamatory suit against Katrak?" demanded Ollia. Referring to the Katrak meeting as illegal, an indignant Golwalla replied, "We are not expected to reply to each and every question." Ollia, with increasing irritability, clamored, "My questions are there; you haven't collected them!" He was calmed somewhat by BPP trustee Jamshed Guzder quietly walking up to the edge of the stage to receive them.

Some members of the Anjuman Committee reminded Golwalla of their questions, sent in advance, and the topic of housing construction at Panthaki Baug came up. Poncha wanted to know how "one man was able to thwart the Bombay Parsi Punchayet." He was referring to P.D. Jilla whose claim to ownership of a part of Panthaki Baug had led to legal entanglements for the BPP and consequent delays in the building program. Poncha suggested taking a delegation of several hundred Parsis to pressurize the authorities but BPP trustee Jamshed Kanga, a member of the Indian Administrative Service who had just come in after a cabinet meeting of the Government of Maharashtra, noted;

"It is not an emotional issue...It has to be tackled on the basis of rules, regulations and procedures." The delays were "not for lack of effort on our part. We are trying our best," Kanga added. Golwalla informed the gathering that sufficient FSI (floor space index) would be available for a new building at Khareghat Colony after two Irani families shift to Godrej Baug.

"Dina Patel has received a notice of ejection from Bhonsale...How is the BPP going to protect her?"

Nariman Mehta raised the issue of BPP flats built in Dadar which were not occupied. Golwalla explained that these flats were built as transit accommodation to accommodate the top floor tenants of BPP buildings in Dadar which had FSI to spare. However, the trustees were having second thoughts about providing transit accommodation after a homeless family, provided such a facility on humanitarian grounds in Mahim for six months, was refusing to vacate unless the Punchayet provided permanent alternative accommodation, Golwalla said.

Despite Golwalla's earlier announcement, well-known lawyer and CER member Rusi Sethna then posed five questions to the trustees about the revised election scheme, requesting a 'yes' or 'no' reply. Sethna stated that the questions did not pertain to the merits or demerits of the scheme. "Keki Mehta (of Payne and Company) is quite welcome to haul me up for contempt of court," he added.

Sethna's five questions pertained to the internal division amongst trustees over Justice Suresh's scheme. He first wanted to know whether the majority of the trustees would accept the judgment, should the court revise its earlier decision, especially in regard to the F Register members' curtailed voting rights. "Yes," replied Golwalla, "by a four to three majority."

Continued Sethna, "Have the trustees consulted their solicitors - and by

that I do not mean Mr Eruch Desai - and their senior counsel Mr K.S. Cooper before taking a decision in this regard? If not, why not? If yes, what is the advice tendered?" Initially, Desai sought refuge in the confidentiality of board meetings, then admitted that the advice had not been sought because it was "not a legal issue."

Sethna asked why, if the majority of the trustees were not in favor of the court's decision, did they not approach the court themselves instead of throwing in their lot with the members of the F Register who had moved the court.

"We accepted the scheme in terms of the Judge's directions. We have the right to change our mind," countered Desai. "The respective counsels will make representations. Let the court decide," he added. But Sethna replied, "You are obliged to support the scheme because you have accepted what the Judge gave. Act morally, coherently, consistently and don't let collateral issues influence your judgment," he advised.

The CER had furnished the BPP a string of 20 questions earlier. BPP trustee Homi Ranina ventured to "answer all of them...as fast as I can." From his responses it emerged that the Gibbs Road project has yielded a surplus of six crore 75 lakh rupees. The cost of construction amounted to two crore 75 lakh rupees at the rate of Rs 275 per square foot. Since January 1987 the Punchayet had money in its coffers said Ranina and the surplus was being used for construction at Godrej Baug which is expected to be completed by 1990. The BPP is now considering appointing other contractors there (besides the Godrej Foundation) to speed up the work, he added.

Ranina blamed the delay in constructing cheaper housing at Panthaki Baug and Bharucha Baug on the generally slow pace of bureaucratic and legal proceedings. Godrej Baug rents are high because of the cost of development of virgin land as well as the high municipal rents in a generally affluent neighborhood. However, 20 well-off families from the older baugs have volunteered to shift to Godrej Baug and the older flats have been allotted to those on the waiting list.

The BPP's annual income from investments has now reached Rs 86 lakhs as against 57 lakhs in 1984 while the corpus has increased from six crore

Continued on page 29

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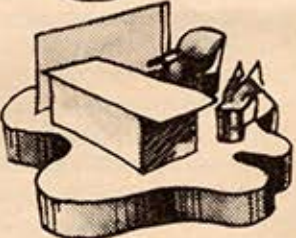
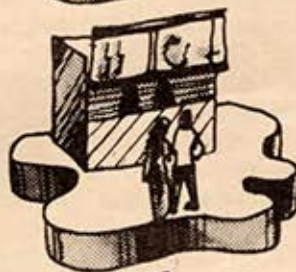
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The Tithal Sanatorium hearings – phase II

The Bulsar Anjuman offers to take over the administration of the Sanatorium even as legal representatives prepare to cross-examine witnesses

Arnavaz S. Mama

The acting Charity Commissioner has upheld opposing counsel Kaikhusroo Dastur's demand to call witnesses in the Tithal Sanatorium case despite the Sanatorium trustees' resistance.

In a parallel development, the Bulsar Parsi Anjuman Trust (BPAT) has filed an application to join the case as a third party and volunteered to take over the management of the Sanatorium Trust, construct two buildings and run the Sanatorium as per the requirements of its settlor.

The Committee for Economic Revival (CER) had also made a bid to intervene in the case but the Charity Commissioner ruled against it, suggesting that the socio-economic body instead join forces with the opponents, Merwan and Benafshay Irani. However, no CER representative has attended subsequent hearings.

The trustees had completed all formalities and were awaiting acting Charity Commissioner M.M. Tule's permission to lease the Sanatorium land when the Iranis intervened in the case last February. The Iranis are opposing the trustees' bid to lease 14 acres of the Tithal Sanatorium property to Jain builder Vipin Shah for 99 years at an annual rent of Rs 1,70,111. Shah expects to develop the property for the residential use of non-Parsis as per the application for permission to lease filed by the trustees. Eight Sanatorium blocks for Parsis would be provided on the remaining one acre of land.

Dastur had urged the Charity Commissioner to rule upon two basic issues, namely that the trust deed precludes non-Parsi occupation of the land and that the use of the land, other

than for a sanatorium, requires a *cy pres* application to the High Court. The Charity Commissioner however declared that he will decide on all the issues together, after the hearings are over.

The trustees – Jehangir Bamji in person and Ms Shirinbai Narielwala and Dr Rustom Patel represented by advocate M.V. Purandare – contend that the Trust has no money to maintain the Sanatorium and that "alienation" (lease) of the land is the only way out. Moreover, they claim that Shah has spent substantially to guard the property against encroachment (Rs 60,000 in the past six months alone, Shah told the Commissioner) and they refuse to consider any proposal regarding the property that does not reimburse Shah's expenses.

This was one of their reasons for turning down the proposal of Bulsar businessman Adi Contractor presented by Dastur in July. Contractor had offered the trust Rs 1,85,000 per annum to develop 13 acres of the property for residential use by Parsi Zoroastrians. The scheme envisaged two acres for the use of the rebuilt Sanatorium.

Bamji is worried that delays due to the litigation may result in the loss of the property, either due to encroachment or government acquisition. Shah has said he "will not protect the property for an indefinite period; I cannot bear the cost..."

The opponents are out to disprove the trustees' contention that the Trust is constrained to lease the property in a desperate bid to generate funds. They claim that by the will of the late Dhunjishaw Patel, a property in Dahanu

was specifically earmarked for the maintenance of this Sanatorium. Dastur says this property fetched Rs 80,000 in 1982 when it was sold, and that he wrote on June 5, 1987 to Shirinbai Narielwala, who was stated to have received the money, to confirm the report, but she has not replied. "Your Honor, if I am wrong in this allegation, she should deny it. She is one of the trustees before you. If the money is not there, I'll not press (the point) but this Honorable Court must know. (In the light of) Vipin Shah's money, expenses out of his pocket, I request Your Honor to ask these questions." Dastur also alleged that a group of persons had donated more than three lakh rupees to the trustees in 1984 or so. The trustees are said to have returned the money to the donors in 1986.

In the context of Shah's expenses, Dastur quoted the trustees' resolution of July 10, 1985: "It is further resolved that Vipin Shah (may develop and guard the property) at his own costs and expenses till the final lease document is entered into." Added Dastur, "This is a business risk because he will earn a lot," and questioned, "Should he have been permitted entry before the Charity Commissioner's permission was obtained?...Is it proper? Is the Charity Commissioner's permission only a rubber stamp?" An earlier resolution of May 6, 1985 had noted that there were structures on the property, which contradicted Bamji's written submission that there were no structures in 1985, said Dastur. "Since the buildings were pulled down in the course of Shah's development of the property, Dastur urged, "Cannot this

Honorable Authority ask what Shah has done with the debris? With iron girders, good wood, pumps on the wells, the furniture?...My point is, what has happened to it?"

The opponents' advocate also contends that apart from B.K. Boman-Behram who died in January 1986, there were two other trustees - Hormusji Charna and Firoz Darabsha - on the board of the Trust until some time in 1986, when the mamlatdar's record of rights notes the resignation of Darabsha. It is acknowledged that Charna is demised, although the exact date is unknown. No application regarding the appointment or the resignation of Darabsha has been filed before the Charity Commissioner - a serious violation according to Dastur. Whether Darabsha was indeed a trustee when the board unanimously resolved to lease the property to Shah, is the point Dastur is seeking to establish. The trustees' counsel however continues to maintain that there were no other trustees on the board of the Trust.

The trustees and Shah seek to dismiss Dastur's arguments as "wild allegations." They have been stonewalling any question of Shirinbai Narielwala appearing in the court, pleading her advanced age. Dastur, on his part, hints at issuing a summons.

The Bulsar Anjuman's initial ap-

Delays due to the litigation may result in the loss of the property

plication dated September 28, 1987, signed by its managing trustee Rusi Shroff, supporting the intervenors, was handed in by the Anjuman's secretary Percy Kajanwalla. Kajanwalla's letter of January 12, 1985 addressed to Hormazdyar Dalal of the Zoroastrian Community Development Institute is an important annexure to the intervenors' brief. The Bulsar Anjuman's current offer, submitted on October 8, 1987 proposes to cultivate orchards on the six acres of the Trust's agricultural holding, to generate funds. Moreover, the BPAT is willing to accept any other stipulations made by the Charity Commissioner.

VERBAL DUELLING...

Continued from page 26

64 lakh rupees to 12 crore three lakh rupees. The Punchayet is "flush with funds" for the first time in its history and looking for land, Ranina said, adding that 126 residential and four commercial flats are under litigation.

Ranina's list of figures led to a long, acrimonious debate with his erstwhile rival, Poncha, until Guzder played the peacemaker once more by recalling the antecedents of the Gibbs Road and Godrej Baug projects - the brainchildren of the Committee for the Economic Uplift of Parsi Zoroastrians. The Committee, established in 1978, had comprised professionals from various fields, Guzder said, and its idea had been accepted and implemented by the Punchayet.

Retired assistant commissioner of police Jal Contractor complimented Golwalla and the Punchayet for having settled out of court with Ms Vimla Sharma who is said to have occupied two flats in Ness Baug. Thereby the Punchayet had been able to retrieve one of the flats for the use of a Parsi family. Contractor professed to guarantee that no funds had been received by Golwalla or the Punchayet in this deal. Contractor suggested that the BPP settle with all the so-called trespassers in the 126 cases filed by them instead of pursuing the long and expensive process of litigation. "Bring about a settlement; finish the cases. The BPP funds will be higher - at least one crore rupees more!" he advised. The trustees however do not feel they can adopt the approach suggested by Contractor on a general basis and Kanga noted, "Such a scheme will encourage trespassing on a larger scale. One hundred and twenty six cases will go to 1,000," he said.

Although a few speakers did seek the floor, and it seemed that many questions remained unasked, Golwalla concluded the meeting at the 8.30 pm deadline he had earlier prescribed.

Sir Jivanji Modi Hall was nearly full with Anjuman Committee members and some non-members who had asked permission to attend. The BPP was represented by all seven trustees: Dr Aspi Golwalla, Eruch Desai, Jamshed Kanga, Homi Ranina, Jamshed Guzder, Minoo Shroff and Dr (Ms) Mehroo Bengalee. The Press was represented by *The Bombay Samachar*, *Jam-e-Jamshed* and *Parsiiana*.

ZOROASTRIANS ABROAD...

Continued from page 13

five Gahs and the 12 months of the calendar. An explanation of the "how and why" of prayer was followed by a recitation of the kusti and other prayers and a mock marriage ceremony. An exhibition organized on the occasion dealt with religion in art.

Putli Mirza, the chairperson of the Religious Instruction Group, and Jaloo Cooper, the producer and director of the show, were assisted by teachers Marook Sidhwa, Gustad Panthaky, Roshan Byramjee and Firdosh Bulsara.

Later, a poetry competition organized on the day had 21 children participating, noted Dina Austin reporting on that session. Divided into three age-groups between eight and 16 years, the "children were encouraged to use their own imagination and creative ideas in composing a poem based on their learning and understanding of Zoroastrianism," notes Austin. Winners and runners-up in each of the three categories - Xerxes Panthakee and Teenaz Patel (age eight to 10), Jimmy Nava and Carl Jafrabad (age 11 to 13) and Neville Panthaki and Armaity Homavazir (age 14 to 16) - were awarded trophies, and the other competitors were given a certificate of merit for their enthusiastic participation.

"We hope to have the poems available in a booklet for the North American Zoroastrian Congress of 1988 at Toronto," notes the report.

Gearing up for the forthcoming North American Zoroastrian Congress to be held in Toronto from April 1 to 3, 1988, the ZSO, in its newsletter, invites members to share their "homes and hospitality" with the delegates at the Congress.

Compiled by Niloofar J. Madon

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Recognition for his ragas

Whether singing for the Hindi films, giving stage performances or tutoring upcoming artistes, Pandit Firoz Dastur's speciality has always been vocal Hindustani classical music

Niloofer J. Madon



"Naturally, when you get recognition for work wherein you've put your whole life, you feel happy," says noted vocalist Pandit Firoz Dastur who was recently awarded the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award, 1986 for his contribution to Hindustani classical music. (Fully financed by the Government of India, the Sangeet Natak Akademi is a national body primarily concerned with the preservation and promotion of various forms of tribal, folk and classical performing arts. The annual awards carry a cash prize of Rs 10,000 and a citation, and are given to eminent artistes in various fields. The function, which usually lasts for three to four days to felicitate about 30 awardees, was held this year at Bhubaneswar in Orissa).

For all his 67 years, the kurta-pajama clad vocalist is spry and well kept. Of medium build, Dastur has a thin, expressive face which exudes an air of gentleness along with a certain firmness and aloofness – humorous at times, reserved at others. His austere living room betrayed no signs of an artiste's presence in its midst, except for an old-time gramophone which occupied one part of the room. A picture of the yoga expert Iyengar, in a seemingly tangled yogic position, hung on the wall, and a portrait of the singer, sketched by one of his admirers, adroitly introduced the

names of various ragas into every line of his face. The hushed serenity of the room remained unperturbed by the hustle and bustle of congested Charni Road below.

Dastur has sung in front of many an audience both in India and abroad, and regularly attends the all-India music conferences and seminars. Every year he makes it a point to be present at the mammoth Sangeet Sammelan in Pune, which marks the death anniversary of his guru, Sawai Gandharva.

"I usually like the minor scale, *komal swaras* – ragas that are more emotional, with more pathos," says Dastur. The jacket of one of Dastur's three cassettes produced notes: "The *gara thumri*, which has been immortalized by Ustad Abdul Karim Khan is fundamentally a romantic outpouring. Pandit Dastur fills the present rendering with an emotive quality that captures its very essence...His *gayaki* is nevertheless pure Kirana, strictly in keeping with the traditions set by its founder." [Various styles or schools of singing are termed *gharanas*. The Kirana *gharana* is characterized by *shanta* (serenity) and *bhakti* (religious-devotional renditions).]

Delving into the past, Dastur says that there were two occasions he remembers when he truly enjoyed singing on stage: in Pune, when he was

attending the annual gathering marking the death anniversary of his guru Sawai Gandharva, and in Miraj, at that of Ustad Abdul Karim Khan. "You can't explain," says Dastur of those experiences. "You are not conscious, you lose consciousness," becoming one with the music.

Dastur also remembers the time in Baroda, when he was "off color and off mood," resulting in a very disappointed audience. Dastur is still not quite able to fathom it. "Usually, the mood comes," he says. "When you accept a program, the responsibility is there. It is very rare that you do not get into the mood. That was only once."

Asked how he takes care of his all-important voice, Dastur, looking at the cigarette in his hand, notes with a grin, "I smoke!" but adds seriously, "Practice is the only thing. Yes, other artistes are very careful in their diet and things but it is my experience that a cold goes in its own good time. I've tried a few things but it's no use."

Today, Dastur divides his time between his public concerts, teaching singing at the Bombay University's music department, and giving private lessons at his home. Efficiently juggling these three activities "from eight o'clock in the morning till eight o'clock in the night," is for him "practice in itself."

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The seniormost teacher in the music department, Dastur joined the Bombay University in 1969. At present there are four gurus, each from different *gharanas*, teaching students their individual styles, though students are allowed to choose the *gharana* they wish. Started originally as a two-year diploma course, the University now offers a three-year degree. A teacher is allotted eight students, each of whom is taught for half an hour every day, and though the course includes both lectures and practicals, Dastur himself teaches just the practicals.

"Because of the several media, people *khas karine* (especially) Maharashtrians, are taking to classical music in great numbers. But the younger generation is more ambitious and wants to come up quicker onto the platform, not like in the older days," says Dastur.

Nevertheless, many of Dastur's pupils are now singers themselves and perform on stage, better known among them being Ms Sudha Divekar, A.K. Abhyankar, Ms Dhanashree Pundit and Ms Vrinda Munkad. Asked whether he had any Parsi students, Dastur recalled that two boys had approached him for lessons, but while one finally took up the sitar, the other "who really had talent and could have done it" took up his father's business, which left him no time to concentrate on singing. "That is the problem with the Parsi community," noted Dastur sadly.

He admits, however, "Taking up a career in music is, to my mind, taking a chance in these days, unless one is right into it from a tender age and has the aptitude and sound grounding. Just music as a career is rather risky."

Having been in the field of classical singing for 56 years, Dastur says it is all due to his father Bejonji Dastur, who was "extremely fond of classical music ... He saw talent in me and encouraged me. He was fond of singing *natya sangeet* (songs from dramas) though he had never learnt (that). Since the time I was seven to eight years old he used to teach me these songs and he saw I had the gift."

In 1932, J.B.H. Wadia, the doyen of Indian cinema, and founder of Wadia Movietone, wanted an actor who was able to sing just one song in his film *Lal-e-Yaman* ("because there were no playback singers in those days," explains Dastur) but after hearing Das-



Dastur (right) receiving the award from the then vice-president of India, R. Venkataraman

tur, he increased the role of the singer to incorporate new scenes and new songs. The movie was a success and for four years after that, Dastur worked as an actor in Wadia's company. [Born as Ferdoon Dastur on September 30, 1919 (nicknamed Freddy by his family and friends) Dastur acquired the Muslim name, Firoz, for the films. Firoz is also the name of one of Dastur's four brothers, who expired in 1983.]

"Soon I began to receive offers from many other producers even though I continued to work for Wadia Movietone...I used to love acting, but I was never interested in film music, only classical music. I only sang classical songs." During his 13-year career in films, Dastur acted in 17, the last of which, *Gul-e-Bakauli* was directed by Rustomji Mody, the elder brother of noted actor Sohrab Mody.

"After the (Second World) War, huge handsome-looking Punjabis invaded the film world and they found me physically..." Dastur shrugged, groping for the right word to explain why he left the world of films.

"My approach to music was just my love for it. I had no idea what career would come out of it...Though in my film days I was the highest paid artiste, after I was out of the film line I did have hard days also. But at that time my father was a billiard champion and used to run a billiard saloon, and my other brothers (Dastur is the youngest of five brothers) were earning."

Later, on the advice of Wadia, Dastur learnt from Sawai Gandharva, the celebrated pupil of Ustad Abdul Karim Khan, the doyen of the Kirana *gharana*. "For three-and-a-half years, from Monday to Friday, I used to

learn from guruji who would come to my house," noted Dastur, adding that the one hour daily session would extend to two or three hours, depending on Gandharva's mood!

The classes started somewhat unconventionally. When asked to sing, so as to enable the guru to assess his voice, the student sang a film song based on the Bhairavi raga. The tutor was obviously impressed, for he immediately started Dastur on that raga - one which is usually taught much later as the student progresses, and which is sung to mark the end of a recital.

Says Dastur of his guru, "For his presentation and rendering I couldn't compare anyone to Sawai Gandharva. Different ragas I learnt from my two other teachers." Dastur had his primary training from K.D. Jaokar and later from Pandit Balkrishnabuwa Kapi-lashwari.

If a radio concert can be regarded as a public recital, Dastur first performed for All India Radio in 1939. (Dastur has been a regular AIR artist for 28 years.) He also had the opportunity to sing before private audiences organized by Sawai Gandharva. However, Dastur's first major concert was at the All India Music Conference in Karachi, in 1939, where he got the opportunity to sing along with established artistes like Sawai Gandharva, Gangubai Hangal and Faiyaz Khan. Notes Dastur of his entry into the world of music, "I have always been well-accepted by audiences - maybe due to my sound training and ability - and I was always accepted as a good artiste by every top-notch (in the field)."

Dastur, a bachelor and a vegetarian, is also interested in chess and repairing mechanical objects, especially watches. He has read the works of philosopher J. Krishnamurti and acknowledges that his outlook on life has undergone a significant change as a result of Krishnamurti's influence.

Says noted critic Gurudev Sharan, in his mammoth three serial article on Dastur in *The Economic Times*, September 26, October 3 and 10, 1982: "Dastur is content with concentrating on the spirit of his chosen raga and does it with distinction. Sweetness is the keynote of his music and an uncanny, tranquil grace marks its unfolding. In his case we can truly say that his music reflects his personality."

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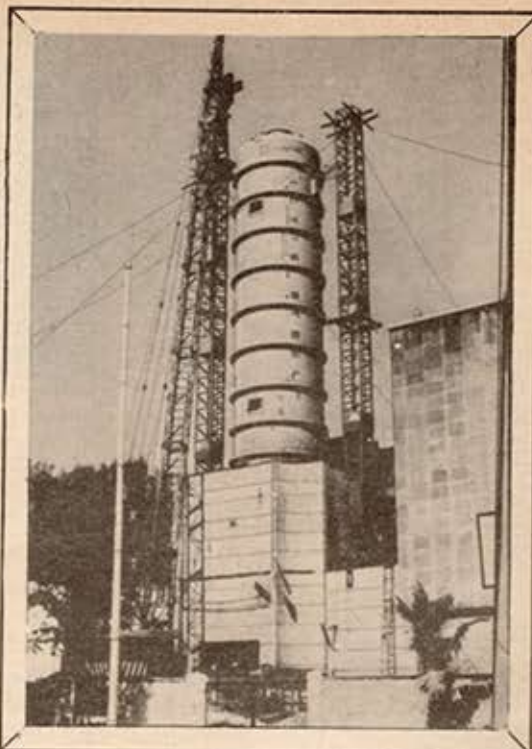
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"This damn tumor..."

Despite timely financial aid from the community, the outcome of Meher Jal's fight against illness is still not determined

Parinaz Toddywalla

The inconveniences of the journey on the return flight to Bombay on January 31, 1987 could not dim Meher Jal's eagerness. The 26-year-old Bombay resident, whose illness had necessitated a fund-raising drive in the community, was looking forward to being reunited with her family, and especially her one-and-a-half-year-old son Pashan. She had not seen her baby for the past five months while she was in the United States undergoing two operations for the removal of a tumor.

But the happiness was transient, for, a short while after her return to Bombay, Meher recognized the old symptoms again. "Though I was not exerting, pain in the lower back region had started again. I first tried to relieve it with hot water bags and pain-killers, but when it became *ekdam* (excessively) severe I would have to sit through the night instead of lying down. Our family physician advised that I should be re-examined by Dr Suresh Vengsarkar, who diagnosed the cause of the pain to be arising from compression of the nerves."

Since the fourth month of her pregnancy, Meher had suffered acute back pain due to an aneurysmal bone cyst. After the birth of her baby boy, unsuccessful attempts were made to operate on Meher in India, and to arrest the growth of the tumor with cobalt ray treatment. Consultations with eminent surgeons indicated that her condition was "getting critical and there are chances of getting paralyzed if foreign treatment is denied," Meher had written in her appeal of June '86 addressed to the readers of *Parsiana* and philanthropic community organizations, many of whom financially helped Meher's family.

The tumor, which had recurred on

the third vertebra for the third time in the course of 12 months, needed to be excised by the surgeon's knife at Bombay's Bhatia Hospital in April this year. In 1986 doctors in India had advised Meher to undergo surgery at the Sloane Kettering Memorial Hospital in New York. However, this year Dr Vengsarkar – rated among the best surgeons in India – felt the urgent need to remove the tumor in Bombay when Meher's legs started getting paralyzed and her bowel movements were restricted. A biopsy of the kidney-tray sized tumor showed it to be malignant, which was not the case in the two earlier operations in the States. It was noticed that the cancer cells were spreading to the second vertebra also. Meher revealed the incision marks on the left side of her frail skeletal body, and the memories made her add, "After the third operation I was very depressed because I did not regain any sensation in my legs." She had lost interest in reading, though earlier she was regarded as a bookworm.

Advised total bed rest for three months after the operation, Meher's despondency seems to be lifting as her physiotherapy sessions with Zenobia Katrak, also of Rustom Baug, show some progress in her right leg. The physiotherapy was started on the recommendation of oncologist Dr Darab Jussawala.

Meher now spends her hours in bed, reading light romantic stories to divert her attention from the realities of life, and listlessly watching national network and cable TV programs until exhaustion forces her to take a break. Meher's ears are constantly on the alert for the sound of the slamming of a car door, which could signify a home visit by Dr Vengsarkar, and a possible



change in his medical advice. Pain keeps her unwanted company for the greater part of the day until the daily bedtime pain relieving injections are given.

Indirectly keeping a vigil on the movements of her toddler son, Pashan – the name means 'bright and intelligent,' she informs – Meher would periodically enquire of her mother Silloo Aderbad, "Is he sleeping in the center of the bed?" or "Have you made him wear his shoes?"

Unable to understand why his mother is confined to the bed, little Pashan keeps aloof, maintaining a respectable distance from her hospital bed, except when he gets so carried away with his own activities that he does not realize where he is. When Parsiana visited Meher on July 7, Pashan was determined to wear his grandma's "tappals (chappals)" as she and the maidservant were helping Meher turn on the bed. In a rare moment of visible frustration, she cried out to her family members, "Will you all please go out of the room?" Then, with a wan smile which momentarily lit up her attractive, delicate features, she continued, "If I am not strict with the little one, he will grow up to be a spoilt child."

Meher's back complications started at the age of 24 when, as a mother-to-be, she started experiencing agonizing backaches. Initially dismissing it as a

possible correlative of pregnancy, or the after-effects of a bike accident, Meher tried to ignore the pain. Soon it started immobilizing her, compelling her absence from her office, Colour-Chem. Though she was not willing to be X-rayed during the period of her

Unable to
understand why
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aloof from Meher

pregnancy, the persistence of the pains after Pashan's birth forced her to seek medical advice. Orthopaedic surgeon Dr Parvez Hakim and neurosurgeon Dr Gajendra Singh considered the operation too complicated to be managed in India as the tumor was located in a very rare position. Dr K.V. Chaulal was the only one willing to operate in India, Meher remembers. So, taking the majority opinion, they decided to operate on Meher in the States, informed her mother.

Next came the hurdle of raising finance. A deposit of \$6,000 had to be paid in advance against the estimated cost of the operation.

In the first operation, performed by Dr Ralph Marcove, the diseased vertebra was reached by cutting open Meher from the front. The bone graft, wiring and cement had to be kept in place by wearing a fiber brace. After seven radiation sittings, the graft started crumbling, so Meher was asked to recontact the surgeon after a time lapse. When immediate regrowth "of this damn tumor" – the only time she used strong words – necessitated a second operation in the States, urgent messages were sent to her parents. Arrangements had to be made for more money to be credited to the Hospital, because without a deposit the Hospital is not expected to accept a surgical case, explained Meher.

Friends, community members and different trusts donated nearly seven

lakhs of rupees in response to the appeal soliciting funds to help defray Meher's medical costs. Meher feels beholden to her benefactors because without their help "I would not have been able to manage," she says. The family maintains a notebook, listing donors who generously contributed towards the medical expenses. Recalls her mother, "Some would come personally to our doorstep; many sent us financial help by post. We received a very good response from the residents of Rustom Baug."

Presently residing with her parents at Rustom Baug, Meher looks forward to her husband Hoshang's evening visits. He is able to spend full days with her only on holidays as he is employed in the inspectorate of central excise from where he had to absent himself for five months to accompany Meher to the States. Every night Hoshang returns to the paying guest accommodation where he and Meher used to reside until her condition necessitated dependence on another person. Meher's mother, who was formerly working in a Tata Textiles showroom, has now given up her job to look after Meher and her grandson. While the mother is constantly by her bedside in the daytime, at night Meher's father and Pashan sleep in the same bedroom.

Meher is grateful that her family members gently nurse her, even tolerating her occasional rudeness when the pain gets too unbearable. She needs help to change her position on the bed and to meet all her other physical needs. Once, when Meher's mother was holding on to her daughter's legs as she settled into a more comfortable position, the sound of the doorbell diverted her attention to the main door. With a feeling of inadequacy Meher got upset, "Look here first, then look at the door." In response, the mother only had a look of empathy on her face.

Seeing her family's kindness reminds Meher of her indebtedness to Yasmin and Jamshed Ghadially, who housed Meher and Hoshang at their Long Island residence for five months without expecting anything in return. "In fact, they bought a TV especially for the guest room, would have dinner in our room knowing I couldn't join them in the dining room; Yasmin, being a dentist, would change my dressings herself; and finally, on the eve of

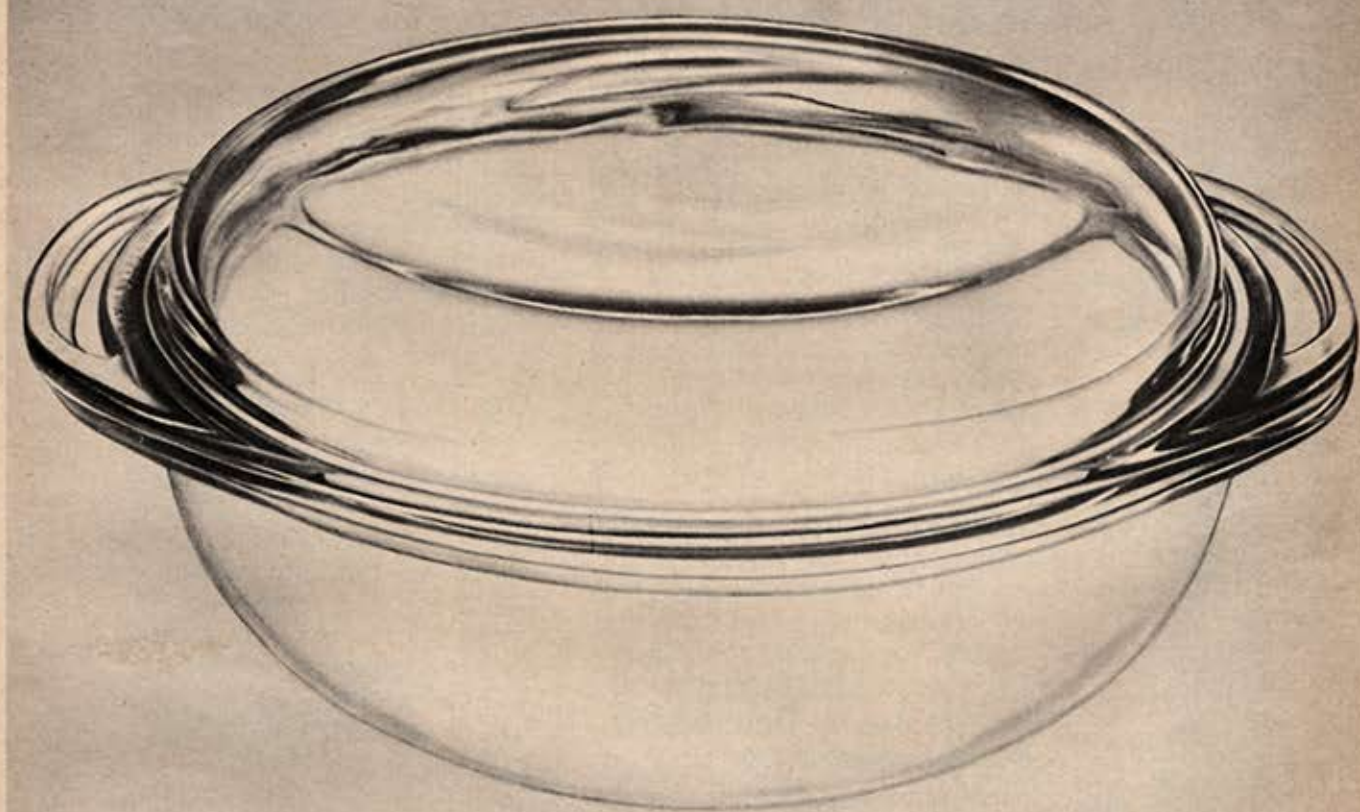
my departure, they had a *khushalini* (thanksgiving) jashan followed by a party in my honor...*ekdam gher ni kani joi* (made me feel totally at home)." After Meher's return, they have been enquiring regularly about her progress. The assistance of Faruk and Daisy Presswalla, donors abroad, and the community's interest in her welfare, are also fondly acknowledged.

Comparing the medical attention in the States with that received in India, Meher relives her visits to the various hospitals: At the Sloane, on the night prior to the operation, after all the routine tests, a doctor would come and explain the surgical procedure to her, showing her the dummy operation on the video to put her at ease. The post-operative care, where she was handled so gently and considerately in contrast to the occasional rough treatment meted out to patients in India, really impressed her.

Believing that the root of her problem had been eradicated, Meher is naturally disappointed with Dr Vengsarkar's verdict in Bombay. While she waits to see if the third operation and the prescribed bed rest will help improve her condition, Meher reminisces of her life as a teenager when she was dating Hoshang. Her vivacious, fun-loving, party-enjoying personality never expected that her frolicking dreams would be shattered so soon. In the early stages of her pregnancy Meher had

"Many sent us
financial help
by post and some
would personally
deliver it
at our doorstep"

planned to resume her job after her new born settled down with a live-in maid, "not expecting my mother to give up hers for my sake." But, for the present, Meher would be content if she could walk around with a stick. "I feel I am so young...and dependent on others for everything."



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The unwanted woman?

Despite the Bombay Parsi Punchayet's efforts to locate her family, Nergish still remains unidentified

Roxana H. Kaka

"It's a mystery; we don't know (who she is and where she's from)," said Ms Gool Tata, joint secretary of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP). She was referring to the unidentified woman, assumed dumb, found wandering the streets of the Mancherji Joshi Colony at Dadar on the night of June 15.

The woman, who is in her early twenties and who responds to the name 'Nergish,' is lodged at the Parukh Dharamshalla for the elderly at Khareghat Colony. The home is run by the BPP.

Living in a dormitory with the other Dharamshalla inmates, Nergish "is like a small child; she has temper tantrums," said Tata, while talking to *Parsiana* on August 20, 1987. "When she came, she had no sense of personal hygiene." If anyone tried to correct her, she would fly into a rage and tear up her clothes and the bedsheets. Now, however, she has "calmed down and has adjusted well. She knows she is being loved and she is really happy there," noted Tata with a smile. Having become more hygienic, Nergish has learnt to take care of the clothes given to her by the BPP.

Once Nergish settled down in the Dharamshalla, she was examined by an ENT specialist, a psychiatrist, and the Dharamshalla's doctor, Minoo N. Tata. The BPP also plans to have Nergish take an IQ test, says Gool Tata.

A voracious eater, Nergish demands food by banging her plate on the table at any hour of the day and, when reprimanded by the kitchen staff for this behavior, is satisfied with a biscuit or two from one of the inmates, explained Tata, giving a picture of Nergish's adjustments to Dharamshalla life.

The girl might have been speaking normally at one time and may have lost the power of speech due to shock, says Tata. Nergish communicates

through sign language with a few unintelligible words thrown in. When asked in Gujarati, the only language she seems to understand, "*Mummy kah che?*" (where is your mother?), Nergish puts both her palms under her ear and tilts her head to one side, as if to say that her mother is sleeping or is presumably dead. And when asked about her father, Nergish hits herself on her hand. One gets the message that he hits her, notes Tata.

After Nergish's arrival at the Dharamshalla, Tata's next step was to inform the police. She wrote to the Assistant Commissioner of Police, but the police could gather no information about either Nergish's home or her family. Thereafter the BPP contacted all the Irani bakeries on Lamington Road because, according to Tata, the girl looks like an Irani. However, nobody identified young Nergish.

When *Parsiana* sought permission to meet Nergish at the Parukh Dharamshalla, the BPP declined it on the grounds that no purpose would be served since the woman was dumb and in no condition to grant an interview.

According to Ms Mithoo Jesia, a social worker who resides in the Dadar colony, Nergish was first spotted by a group of boys sitting on the railings of the garden at Khareghat Road. On asking her who she was looking for, and from where she had come or wanted to go, they discovered that she was unable to speak intelligibly. Since it was around 11 pm, they felt that it wasn't safe for her to be out on the road alone. So, Sarosh Ichchaporia and Kaikobad Irani took the girl to the R.N. Rustom Framna Agiary which is just a stone's throw away. The doors of the Agiary being closed at that hour, the boys left her on the verandah, where she spent the night.

The following morning, the panthaky of the Agiary, Ervad Ratanshaw Panthaky, phoned Mithoo Jesia and sought her help. Hurrying over to the Agiary, Jesia first tried to question the girl. On failing to elicit any answer, Jesia handed her a pen and paper, hoping that she would convey her antecedents or some other information in that manner. But all the girl produced were illegible scribbles, and they gave up their attempts as futile.

When Panthaky and Jesia took the girl inside the Agiary, she seemed to recognize the photograph of the prophet, for "she rushed over to it and bowed," recounts Jesia. This seemed to indicate that she was a Parsi.

Nergish was found in a bad physical condition. Her legs, reported Jesia, were swollen and festering, so Dr Behram Bunshaw, a Dadar colony doctor, was summoned to examine her. He reportedly found her undernourished.

As they weren't sure what to do next, Jesia phoned the BPP who, she says, was very helpful. After receiving BPP chairman Dr Aspi Golwalla's permission to take charge of the case, Nergish was lodged at the Parukh Dharamshalla on Hughes Road, where she has been ever since.

When asked what was in store for Nergish, Tata said that they planned to put her in another institution, because "the Dharamshalla, being reserved for the old and destitute, she would not be allowed to stay there for a long time." This would probably mean a shift to Asha Daan, Mother Teresa's Home for sick destitutes and handicapped children, at Byculla. And what about the people who have developed a fondness for her? Says Tata with a sigh of resignation, "The sisters of mercy (Missionaries of Charity) are always there to look after her."

The data on births, marriages and deaths has been compiled from information provided by various anjumans in India and abroad, courts and hospitals. The list of marriages from the Bombay High Court may only be received in October.

The information gathered is not always uniform. For example, the list of Bombay deaths pertains overwhelmingly to those who were consigned to the dokhmas (in this issue we have the first listing of a Bombay case where the body was cremated), and there too, though the addresses were known, the names of the family members were not. From other anjumans we have gathered names of family members but no addresses. The information largely pertains to the preceding month, yet in the case of outstation anjumans we have incorporated news of happenings which may be considered dated.

Marriages of inter-community couples as well as children born of such unions, are listed.

The data is being presented city-wise, the events being listed in the city where they occurred, in chronological and alphabetical order.

Heart disease claimed 31 of

the 94 Parsis who died in Bombay. The next most important killers were pneumonia (claiming 15), diseases of the brain and nerves (10), hypertension (eight), and old age and debility (eight). Others succumbed to cancer, kidney failure, gastroenteritis and jaundice. Diabetes, arthritis and an accident claimed one victim each. A 33-day-old baby girl and two persons in their 30s were also lost to the community.

This breakdown of the causes of death is limited to Bombay as Parsiana has received no information on the subject from other anjumans.

In order to ensure the authenticity of the data, Parsiana only accepts information for publication if it is received from an anjuman, renowned Parsi institution, court or government authority.

When a deceased is cremated, Parsiana would appreciate if the family members could approach us directly with the information.

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

Sheriyar Dehmiri; August 28
A girl to *Dilnavaz and Farokh Raisi*; August 31

Married

Ayesha Bilimoria, daughter of *Zarine and Jehangir Bilimoria*, and *Tarique Ansari*, son of *Rukya and Khalid Ansari*, August 7

Died

Sorabji Rustomji Engineer (80), residing at *Rawalpindiwalla Bldg, B Block, 4th Fl, 400004*; on August 1
Server Mehwan Irani (71), *Devidas Bldg, Balaram St, Grant Rd, 400007*; August 1
Sorabji Dorabji Balsara (72), 15, *Wadia Bldg, Old Khareghat Colony, Hughes Rd, 400007*; August 2
Khorshed Rustomji Battivalla (80), 618, *Jam-e-Jamshed Rd, Parsi Colony, Dadar, 400014*; August 2
Meherwanji Gustadji Siganporia (73), 15/17, *Patel Hse, Nawab Tank Rd, Mazagaon, 400010*; August 2
Piroja Minocher Antia (82), No 15, *Wadia Bldg, Khareghat Colony, Hughes Rd, 400007*; August 3
Jehangir Meherwan Aryana (79), *Khorshed Villa, Murbad Rd, Kalyan*; August 3
Goolbanu Kekee Balsara (83), *Fariyas, C-1-143, Cumballa Hill, A. Kranti Marg, 400036*; August 3

Cooverji Cawasji Damania (68), 275, *Batliwala Bldg, Zoroastrian Colony, Tardeo Rd, 400007*; August 3
Roshan Kaiki Medhora (65), 14, *Station Terrace, Sleater Rd, 400007*; August 3
Jal Nusserwanji Billimoria (78), *Ripon Bldg, 2nd Fl, Balaram St, Grant Rd, 400007*; August 4
Freny Burjor Dhalla (73), 83, *Goolruk, Worli Sea Face, 400025*; August 4
Kolamai Darabshaw Elavia (78), *F.D. Petit Sanatorium, Room No 8, Warden Rd, 400036*; August 4
Jahangir Byramji Master (70), *M/7, Nowroze Baug, Lalbaug,*

400012; August 4
Coomi Rustomji Mody (80), *Evergreen, Dadiseth Rd, Chowpatty, 400007*; August 4
Dina Hormusji Shaw (83), *Kwality Hse, Kemps Corner, Cumballa Hill, 400036*; August 4
Aderji Pallonji Taraporewalla (86), *Cozy Bldg, Gowalia Tank Rd, 400036*; August 4
Khorshed Homi Dalal (66), 266, *Patel Bldg, Girgaum, 400004*; August 5
Shirin Manekji Engineer (80), *A-1, Jamshed Mansion, Tardeo Rd, 400007*; August 5
Homai Kaikhushru Irani (75), *A-7, Vanashri, L.T. Rd, Borivli (W), 400092*; August 5
Khorshed Adeshir Makhania (77), 703, *Menka, J.P. Rd, Andheri (W), 400058*; August 5
Homai Cawashaw Billimoria (86), 601 *Cumballa Crest, 42 Pedder Rd, 400026*; August 6
Soli Maneckshaw Dotiwalla (58), *Block A, Shanti Mahal, S.V. Rd, Borivli (W), 400092*; August 6
Soli Jamshedji Marfatia (74), *Dosibai Home, Behind Masina Hospital, Byculla, 400027*; August 6
Mani Framroze Mody (84), *Keval Mahal, Flat No A/9, 64 Marine Drive, 400020*; August 6
Jal Kaikhushru Press (70), *Kama Hse, 36 Mangalore St, 400038*; August 6
Jamshedji Furdoonji Billimoria (71), *Sainara, Flat No 42, 17 Cuffe Parade, 400005*; August 7
Banu Nusserwanji Elavia (75), *A-5 Rustom Baug, Byculla, 400027*; August 7
Perin Rustomji Kapadia (72), *Shalimar, Marine Drive, 400020*; August 7
Piroja Cawasji Khambatta (85), *Tardeo Terrace, 239 Tardeo Rd, 400007*; August 7
Hoshi Pestonji Thanewalla (49), 19 *Jam-e-Jamshed Bldg, Parsi Colony, Dadar, 400014*; August 7
Meherjee Savaksha Daruwalla (67), 33/P, *Nowroze Baug, Lalbaug, 400012*; August 8
Dadi Jamshedji Karanjia (71),

BOMBAY

Born

A girl, *Tahmineh*, to *Zinnia and Mehernoosh Khajotia* on May 21, 1987, sister to *Taronish and Arish*
A boy to *Khurshid and Bomi Mistry*; August 4
A girl to *Bakhtavar and Parvez Mistry*; August 9
A girl to *Benaz and Cyrus Bajina*; August 10
A boy to *Nursha and Phiroze Dadachanji*; August 10
A girl to *Zarin and Khushroo Pithavala*; August 10
A boy to *Behroze and Jimmy Khot*; August 13
A girl to *Daisy and Pavan Kumar Tiwari*; August 15

A girl to *Delna and Persis Banaji*; August 17
A boy to *Meher and Noshervan Jehangir*; August 19
A girl to *Betsy and Kersi Kutar*; August 20
A girl to *Lilly and Yezdi Motiwala*; August 20
A girl to *Goolruk and Vispi Buhariwala*; August 21
A girl to *Shiraz and Marzban Italia*; August 25
A boy to *Nargis and Gave Palkiwala*; August 26
A boy to *Hutoksi and Farokh Patel*; August 27
A boy, *Jim*, to *Lalérookh and Jimmy Sarbh*; August 27
A boy to *Dilnavaz and*

Unwalla Bldg, Marzban Colony, 10 Gilder Lane, 400008; August 8
Cyrus Jal Daver (33), 91-A Miramar, Napean Sea Rd, 400036; August 9
Bachan Kaikhushroo
Jassawalla (76), 613, Dinshaw Bldg, Parsi Colony, Dadar, 400014; August 9
 Unidentified person (around 50); August 9
Pirojshaw Edulji Kolah (83), 168 Pardiwalla Bldg, Bora Bazar St, Fort, 400001; August 10
Tehmina Minocher Lalkaka (90), Concorde Apts, Bandra, 400050; August 10
Sam Dadabhoy Mehta (49), Wassiamall Bldg, D Block, Grant Rd, 400007; August 10
Nargez Boman Printer (76); Magnum Bungalow, Unit No 3, Andheri, 400058; August 10
Ardeshtir Hormusji Palkhiwalla (86), Rock View, Raghavji Rd, Gowalia Tank, 400036; August 11
Goolbanoo Sorab Azarmi (70), Ruby Terrace, Room 8, 37 Colaba Rd, 400005; August 12
Dinshawji Jamshedji Bahdurji (95), 32/B, Sterling Apts, Pedder Rd, 400026; August 12
Banoo Bapuji Lalkaka (90), Sea-gull, 601 Sherly Rajan Rd, Bandra, 400050; August 12
Aban Behram Engineer (38), Kings Bldg, Dr Ambedkar Rd, Parel, 400012; August 14
Dilshad Boman Mahva (61), Aziz Bldg, 135 Tardeo Rd, 400034; August 14
Perin Rusi Master (51), Crystal Colony, Soonawalla Agiary Marg, Mahim 400016; August 14
Mamai Hirjibhoy Dubash (83), C-4, Cusrow Baug, S.B.Rd, Colaba, 400039; August 15
Ratanbai Dinshawji Surveyor (92), Nazir Hse, Kemps Corner, 400026; August 15
Homi Jehangir Saklatwala (56), C/o Nicholson Bldg, Wadia St, Tardeo Rd, 400034; August 16
Jehangir Framji Charno (88), Wadia Bldg, 254 Princess St, 400002; August 17

Hormasji Dossabhoy Vesuna (73), 676, Faredun Terrace, Wadala, 400031; August 17
Aloo Burjorji Antia (71), Silver Oaks, 45-A, Bhulabhai Desai Rd, 400026; August 18
Rusi Edulji Garda (80); August 18
Bhikhamai Peshotan Sanjana (89), B/3, New Khareghat Colony, Babulnath Rd, 400007; August 18
Rohinton Kaikhushroo Vakil (65), No 15, Khareghat Colony, Hughes Rd, 400007; August 18
Mehra Rustam Joshi (86), 762 Parsi Colony, Dadar, 400014; August 19
Motamai Rustomji Bangali (81), Cama Bldg, Marzban Colony, Gilder Lane, 400008; August 20
Sorab Rustom Dilawarnijad (Irani) (65), 4/10, Tata Mills Co-op Hsg Soc, Parel, 400012; August 21
Rustomji Burjorji Fitter (68), Sir Ratan Tata Colony, No 1/11, Tardeo, 400034; August 21
Sheramai Burjorjee Patel (80), 695 Dinshaw Master Rd, Parsi Colony, Dadar, 400014; August 21
Dina Meherji Mistry (87), Vijay Kusum Bldg, Old Modi St, Fort, 400001; August 22
Kaikhushroo Dhunjibhoy Mody (96), 18, Abbas Bldg, Jalbhoy St, Raja Ram Mohan Roy Rd, 400004; August 22
Jal Framroz Bamji (84), 14, Wadia St, Bhandari Bldg, Tardeo, 400034; August 23
Phiroz Rustom Moghal (64), Mota Mans, Room 6, Tardeo, 400007; August 23
Koomi Homee Nowrojee (60), 781, M.J.Rd, Parsi Colony, Dadar, 400014; August 23
Rustomji Edulji Patel (85), 41/47, Copper Smith Rd, Dockyard Rd, Mazagaon, 400010; August 23
Dossabhai Bhikhaji Sarkari (70), G-7, Nowroze Baug, Lalbaug, 400012; August 23
Meher Pestonji Dhondy (83), Dastoor Bungalow, Naigaum, Cross Rd, Dadar, 400014; August 24
Sorabji Darasha Bharucha (67), Spencer Lodge, New

Kantwadi Rd, Bandra, 400050; August 25
Shavakshaw Cawasji Italia (80), B/31, Pipewalla Bldg, 4th Pasta Lane, Colaba, 400005; August 25
Jer Kaikhushroo Major (79), P-17, Cusrow Baug, Colaba, 400039; August 25
Adal Bomanji Parakh (72), Sanghi Hse, 94 Napean Sea Rd, 400006; August 25 (cremated)
Ratamai Ratanshaw Doctor (83), N-5 Nowroze Baug, Lalbaug, 400012; August 26
Burjor Shavakshaw Toorkey (79), 44 Perry Rd, Bandra, 400050; August 26
Tehmina Kaikhushroo Ghodawala (91), D-3/5 Khira Nagar, S.V.Rd, Santacruz, 400054; August 27
Bomanji Viraf Pavri (80), 102 Dadiseth Agiary Lane, 400002; August 27
Hirabai Kaikhushroo Sarkari (71), Readymoney Bldg, Parsi Colony, Dadar 400014; August 27
Dadi Jehangir Vacha (70), Cuffe Castle, Cuffe Parade, 400005; August 27
Banoo Rustomji Vesuna (87), Readymoney Bldg, Parsi Colony, Dadar, 400014; August 27
Dinabai Kaiyoji Bhesadia (86), C/o Mr Panthaky, Presswala Bldg, Grant Rd 400007; August 28
Aspandiar K. Irani (95), Irani Bldg, 2/F Dhuswadi, Dhobitalao, 400002; August 28
Sapurji Marvan Irani (85), 30, Todiwalla Bldg, Sun Mill Rd, Lower Parel, 400013; August 28
Fali Hormasji Sumariwalla (58), Jam-e-Jamshed Bldg, Flat 11, Dadar, 400014; August 28
Minocher Manekji Cooper (75), Parsi Punchayet Staff Quarters, Doongerwadi, 400006; August 29
Rustomji Cawasji Framji (69), 39, Shivlal Motilal Bldg, Lamington Rd, 400008; August 29
Faredoon Hormusji Irani (74), Dev Chaya, H.K. Marg,

Dahanu Rd; August 29
 Female baby of Farida Kersi Daruwalla (33 days), 301 Krishna, 167 Sher-e-Punjab Co-op Hsg Soc, Mahakali Rd, Andheri (E), 400093; August 30
Adi Dosabhai Karani (55), 185 Firdos Bldg, Lamington Rd, 400007; August 30
Vispee Framroze Spencer (54), Irani Bldg, 36 Balam St, Grant Rd, 400007; August 30
Coomi Dorabji Vesuna (66), Sir Ratan Tata Colony, 1/7, Tardeo Rd, 400034; August 30
Sam Byramji Tukina (85), D/3, Dalal Estate, Lamington Rd, 400008; August 31

CALCUTTA Died

Adi Mancherji Khursigara (59), brother of Homi, Hosi, Dina Katrak and the late Mehroo Bhooori and Jehangir; August 17

CHICAGO Born

A boy, *Cyrus*, to *Khorshed* and *Marazban Vandrewala*; July 19

IPSWICH Born

A boy, *Farhad*, to *Indira* and *Darius Anklesaria*; August 3

KARACHI Died

Jamshed D. Taraporewala (64); July 9
Dosabhoy N. Cooper (88); July 18
Zal S.D. Contractor (76); July 29

POONA Died

Dinbai Dinshaw Bharucha (84); August 3
Perin Keki Nicholasaon (73); August 16
Shirin Sorab Irani (73); August 29
Pilamai Tehmurasp Cooper (85); August 28
Dinbai Dhanjisha Meherji (77); August 30

Compiled by Arnavaz S. Mama

Continued from page 6

ployed to make it impossible for Shahpur Captain to remain in the chair. In sheer disgust, Mr Captain resigned as president and, later on, as committee member. His resignation was followed by the resignations of Dr (Ms) Shirinbanoo Kutar, Dr Godaf-reed Irani, Ms Prochi Colabavala and myself.

I was witness to the animosity shown by three committee members towards Shahpur Captain and feel that the community should be ashamed for allowing the committee to let the affairs of our Association reach this sorry state.

I did my utmost to repair the damage caused by the behavior of some members of the committee, but every effort of mine was thwarted. I too then resigned from the committee.

When 150 odd members asked for a special general meeting to pass a vote of no confidence in the then committee (of which I was a member), the committee decided to save its skin by legal means, at the expense of the hard-earned cash of the Association, rather than meet the members openly. The committee's circular dated September 5, 1986 stating that Shahpur Captain had overruled the committee and dictated that it appoint him as a trustee, can only be described as shameful and disgraceful. The statements contained in that circular are totally untrue. Many who attended the special general meetings held on September 14, 1986 and January 18, 1987, and the annual general meeting held on November 30, 1986 went home in sheer disgust at the behavior of those on the stage and many of the members.

The Association in the UK is a socio-religious body, and the main aim of the committee has been, and always should be, to hold the community together, despite differences of views. This can only be achieved through tolerance. Until recently, the community in the UK was united, happy and prosperous. By injecting the politics of religion, the peace and harmony of the community in London has been destroyed. There are no good thoughts, good words and good deeds in this. If this is what is carried out in the name of religion, then I am ashamed to be a Zoroastrian.

If unity, as prevailed previously, has to be reestablished, then we must rees-

tablish truth, honesty and integrity, and place at the helm of affairs those who possess these qualities and who have served us faithfully with love, devotion and intelligence for years on end.

RUMI SETHNA
Surrey, UK

"A compromise film"

On reading "A compromise film" (*Parsiana*, August 1986) by Arnavaz Mama, here are a few points of observation on the film:

It is a poor piece – no acting, no photography. It is neither a film nor a documentary; just a poor tableau vivant injuring the pious feelings of the entire Zarathustri community.

The correct depiction, according to me, is that Zarathrust was invested with a sudreh-kusti by his parents when he was around 10 years old, with clear instructions that he should never take them off.

He grew up wearing a knee-length sudreh, a badyan (short shirt) as worn by our mobeds, and a pugree-like cap.

Much constrained by false religious practices, and dissatisfied with the elders who could not answer his queries, he set forth to find Truth in Mount Rae Vant – not a scraggy hill-ock as depicted in the film. He meditated in all solemnity – not like a lunatic swinging his head to and fro as filmed.

King Vishtaspa's court should have been shown in all the grandeur and splendor befitting the dignity and prosperity of ancient Iran.

Zarathrust never called for fire (physical) or did any tricks as depicted in the film. The real fire Zarathrust carried was the fire of his divine wisdom. After gruelling tests, Zarathrust was proclaimed *pyghamber*, the messenger of Ahura Mazda.

There arises no question of some bones being discovered from his abode or of him being shamed and imprisoned and eating like one demented.

When Zarathrust is shown curing a lame horse, it reveals ignorance. Our pristine prophet had vehemently decried any such hocus pocus miracles. How then could he himself perform such magic? All these were fabrications to impress the ignorant laity. There never was a lame horse and no such incident actually happened. Zarathrust told King Vishtaspa, "Behold oh King! You are riding a lame horse, you are going away from the

right path ordained by Ahura Mazda – the path of righteousness. As a King, liberate your people from ignorance, superstitions, deity worship and sacrifice of blood, and uplift them for the cause of humanity." This was the lame horse that prophet Zarathrust cured and not a lame animal.

PHIROZ D. DOTIWALA
Houston, USA

All India Piano Festival

In celebration of 40 years of service to Poona's music lovers, The Poona Music Society has announced an All India Piano Festival/Competition to be held in Poona from October 14 to 17, 1987.

The concept of a music festival as opposed to a competition is a new one in India. Festival entrants are rated as individuals rather than as competitors. Thus average students who seriously apply themselves to their music, as well as those who are exceptionally talented, have the opportunity to participate. The five basic advantages of participation are:

- Motivation to work towards a finished performance, and to be evaluated by a qualified individual other than one's teacher.
- Goals established and measured on individual merit as opposed to competitive eliminations. Prizes at the festival in the three categories – seniors, intermediates, juniors – signify progress of students. The first prize for the seniors entails a free ticket (Bombay-London-Bombay) donated by Air-India.
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Those interested in further details may write to: The Honorary Secretary, The Poona Music Society, 372A/1-2 North Main Road, Koregaon Park, Poona 411001.

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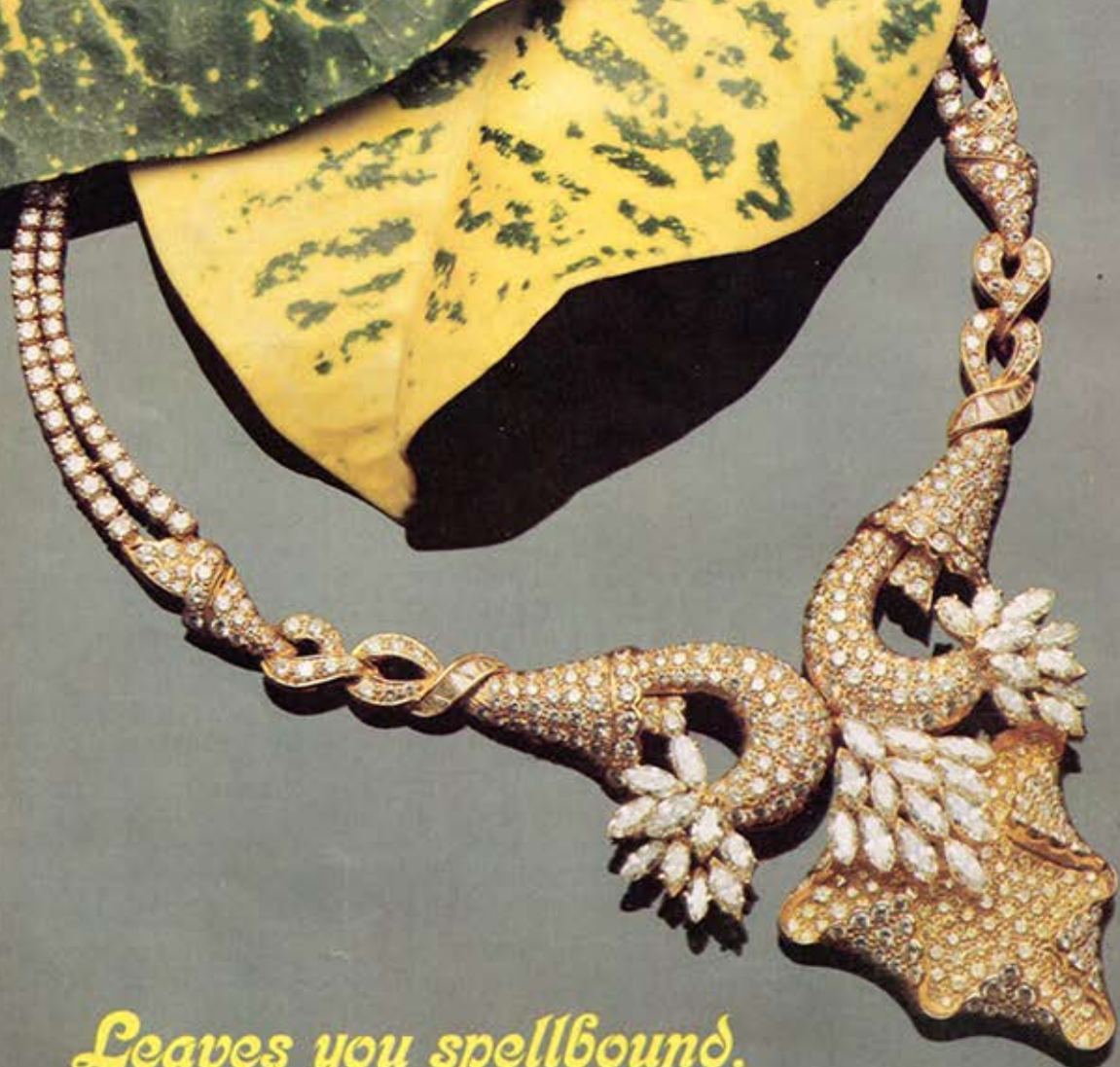
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