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Parsiana

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EDITOR Jehangir Patel
MANAGING EDITOR Arnavaz Mama
EXECUTIVE EDITOR Parinaz Toddywalla
DESIGN CONSULTANT Mini Boatwala
DESIGN ASSISTANTS Kranti Shilotri,
Varghese Fernandez, Deborah Fernandes
MARKETING DIRECTOR Veera Patel
ADVERTISING MANAGER Zarin Mistry
ADVERTISING EXECUTIVE
Cheryl D'Penha
CHIEF EXECUTIVE Rustom Thanavala
FINANCE B.L. Arora
CIRCULATION Behram Umrigar
MANAGEMENT Minoo Patel,
Jasmine Driver, Khurshid Daruwalla,
Rohinton Daroga
OFFICE Rajendra Nayak,
Khurshid Panthaki, Patricia Lewis,
Rajalakshmi Iyer, Bakhtavar Batliwalla

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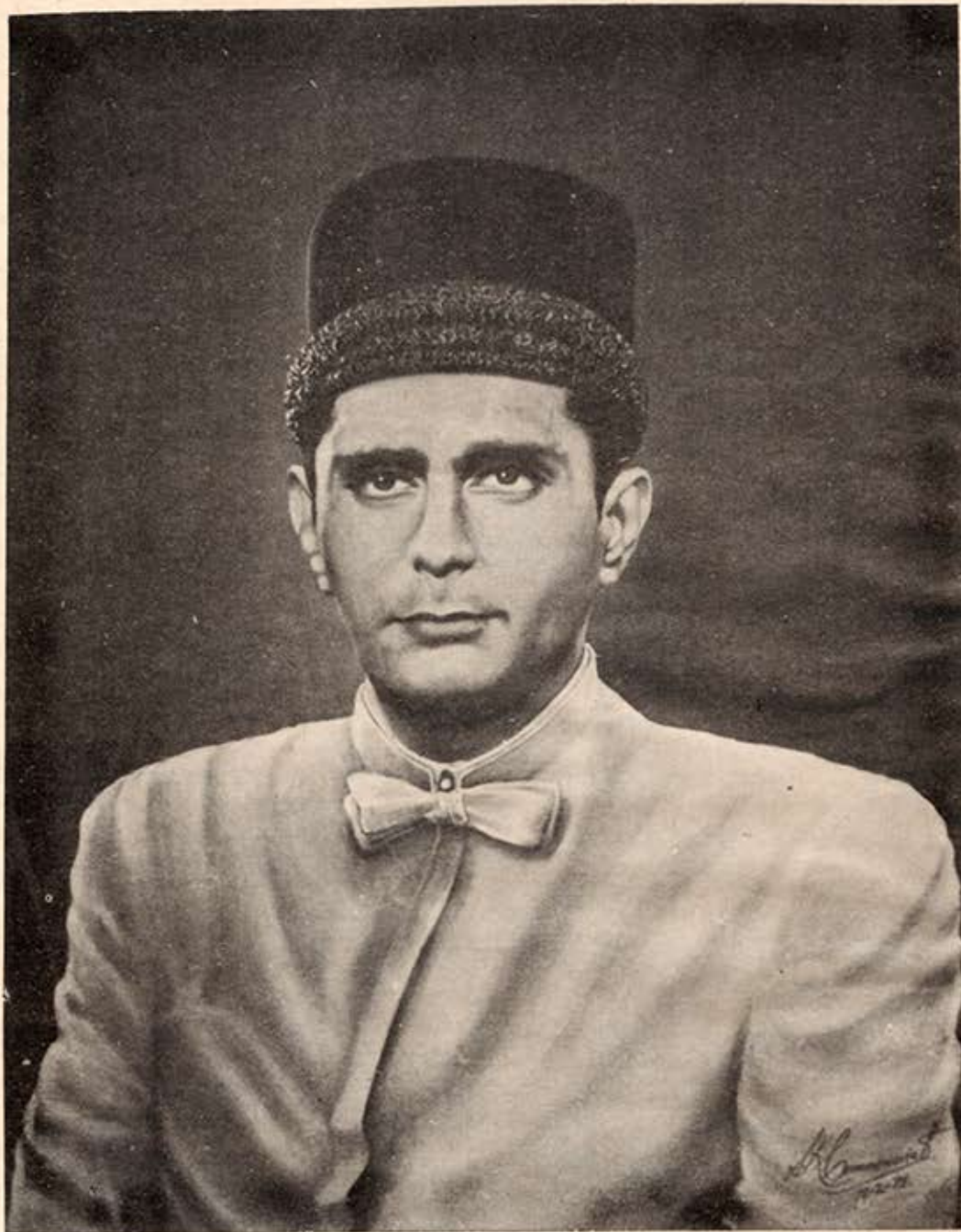
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In Memoriam

Mr Fali Meherji Variava

Director

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

"A 'Colour'ful man"

In "Shades of a 'Colour'ful man" (*Parsiana*, October 1987) you have given a write-up on my late husband, Adal Parakh.

It would be a good thing if you would have your reporters trained to understand the English language so that they are careful about what they say. They should report what is said to them, correctly, and not what they think is said to them. Your reporter arrived, a charming soft-spoken young girl, barely a month after my husband's death when we were all still not quite recovered from the shock of his sudden death. That is why we gave the interview, otherwise I would have refused it or given a write-up myself.

All that has been mentioned from *Rang Vishwa* (the house journal of Colour-Chem) is mostly correct, but that which was spoken by myself and

my daughter Mary Behlihomji is not, and leaves much to be desired, because your reporter just did not understand what was said. She has given, therefore, a version that is quite incorrect.

Ms RHODA A. PARAKH

Parinaz Toddywalla replies

In light of no specific instances of "incorrect" reportage being referred to, I cannot clarify any misunderstandings.

"Need of the hour"

One of the biggest problems faced by the Parsi community today is that of the rapidly decreasing population. Until now, the only solution seemed to be: 'Parsis of the world unite and reproduce.' But matters have got so bad that someone asked us to duplicate the rabbits' habits ("Need of the hour," *Parsiana*, October 1987). Have we reached our level of culture and civilization to copy the habits and learn from inferior, non-thinking animals? Have we become so very desperate, or should I say chauvinistic?

The unquestioned rule of our community is that a Parsi boy who marries a non-Parsi girl can bring up his children as Zoroastrians. However this is not so in the case of girls. Though Parsi girls are brought up to be independent, smart, always taught the equality and fairness of our religion, as soon as one marries a non-Parsi, she is virtually excommunicated. Her children are not allowed to enter a fire-temple, wear the sudreh and kusti, or enter a *bungli* at the doongerwadi. A true and pious Zoroastrian woman may even teach her children a few of our prayers, but she knows – and the children know – that their prayers can only be said in the privacy of their homes. Is our religion being true to itself when a Parsi boy's children (from a non-Parsi mother) are accepted as Zoroastrians but a Parsi girl's children (from a non-Parsi father) are shunned and rejected, and treated as *parjat* (alien)? Is this fair?

Isn't it time to start broadening our outlook? Instead of stooping so low as to imitate rabbit habits, why can't Parsi women bring up their children as Zoroastrians if their husbands have no objection? I'm sure the *Avesta* or our religion is not against the idea.

I don't know about the others, but I am a devout follower of our religion and find deep solace in the beauty and meaning of our prayers. But if tomorrow I were to fall in love with a non-Parsi and marry him, I would always feel my life incomplete and start resenting our religion if my own flesh and blood were not permitted to share my customs, prayers, traditions and upbringing.

DINA MEHTA

Better leadership

Community problems can never be solved till we have a wise political leadership and a distinct religious leadership.

We must organize a conclave for the solution to our socio-religious-economic problems which are neither so many nor so serious. We prospered during the *Raj* because of British political patronage. In 40 years of independence our community has been falling behind and falling apart because of political indifference on the part of our youth, and the language problem. More and more of our Parsi youths (male and female) must seek elections to the central parliament and to the state legislatures.

We were forward during the *Raj* because our womenfolk were pioneers in all fields of life. Today our womenfolk have receded into the background and are not prepared to come forward in Indian society.

Our punchayet must be governed by a board of trustees who may be advised and assisted in their duties by a professionally managed board of managers composed of equal number of men and women from all walks of life. Unless our funds are productively utilised, the community will not benefit.

Intermarriage and emigration are no solution to our community problems. We are here to stay and do business in India.

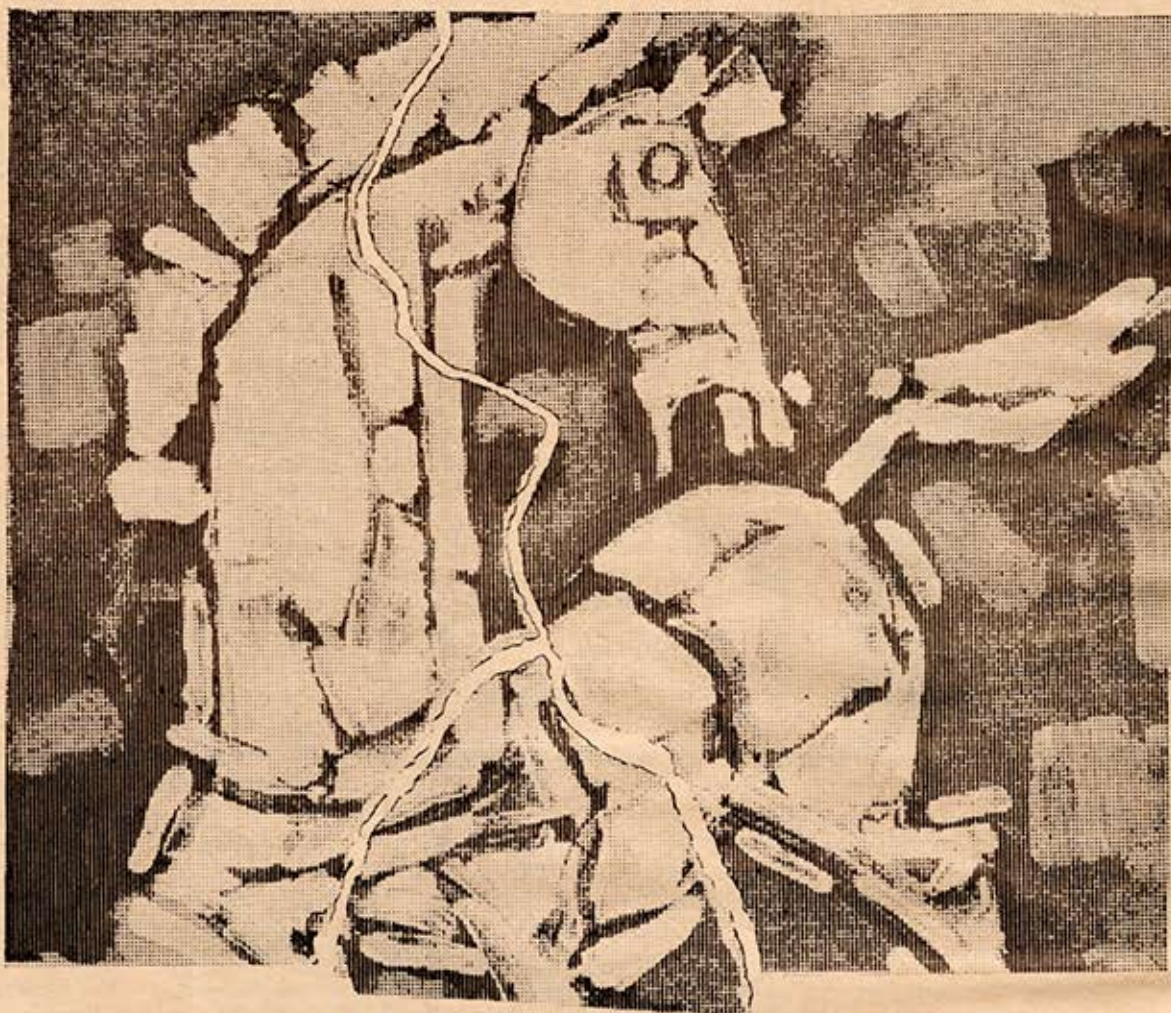
We may be losing our community wealth each time our institutions are nationalized, but we must once again learn to take care of each other.

DINSHAW P. BILPODIWALA

Maintain purity

Why do our Parsi ladies go to atash bahrams, atash adarians and agaries

continued on page 38



In appreciation of art.

In the realm of art, fakes abound. Fakes that make a mockery of the masters and their masterpieces. Of genuine talent and potential.

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Events and Personalities

BPP helps drought victims

As a reflection of "our community's grave concern and desire to be helpful" to the drought-stricken people and animals of Maharashtra and Gujarat, the trustees of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP) donated Rs 50,000 each to the Maharashtra and Gujarat Chief Ministers' Relief Funds, notes a press release.

Chief Minister of Maharashtra S.B. Chavan received the donation from BPP chairman Dr Aspi Golwalla, trustees Jamsheed Kanga, Jamshed Guzder and chief executive Rustom Anklesaria. The donation to the Chief Minister of Gujarat Amarsinh Chaudhari was handed over by Anklesaria at Gandhinagar, adds the release.

Marital statistics

On an average 364 Parsi marriages were solemnized annually between 1982 and 1986, with a high of 388 in 1983 and a low of 350 in 1985, according to information from the Chief Matrimonial Court, Bombay High Court published by the Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP) *Quarterly Review* (July -

September 1987) received in December.

During the same period, an average 27 Parsi girls and 29 Parsi boys contracted intercommunity marriages under the Special Marriage Act each year. In percentage terms, intercommunity marriages among Parsis in Bombay which registered 15 in 1982 and fell to 12 the following year, have been rising again to clock 22 in 1986.

During the period 1982 to 1985 an average 31 marriages resulted in divorce each year - marginally less than 10 percent of the weddings.

Not one of the six meetings of the BPP board of trustees held during the three-month period was attended by all seven trustees, notes the BPP *Quarterly*. Six trustees participated in four meetings while attendance at two meetings was down to five.

Poona youths' new board

The new managing committee of the Zoroastrian Youth Association (ZYA) of Poona consists of Percy Jijina, president; Viraf Deboo, vice-president; Ms Maharukh Minocherhomji, joint vice-president; Ms Farida Mehta, secretary; Zubin Gagrath, joint secretary; Ms Binaifer Gagrath,

treasurer; Ms Perin Nanavatty, joint treasurer; Rustom Anklesaria, public relations officer; Yazdi Marker, library-in-charge; and Ms Sanobar Surty, coordinator. The announcement was made in a circular of November 14, 1987, signed by Jijina.

The ZYA planned to stage an English play, *Three's a Crowd*, on February 6 and 7, 1988, at the Nehru Memorial Hall. The play will be directed by ZYA's ex vice-president, Yazdi Talati. They are also working on a souvenir to be released on this occasion, adds the circular.

In his father's seat

There was no surprise when Noshir Mehta stepped into his late father Rusi Mehta's seat (ward 23) in the Bombay Municipal Corporation, trouncing his nearest rival, Sharafat Khan Munne of the Dalit Muslim Suraksha Mahasangh, by a 7023-vote margin, stated

Anklesaria (left) presenting cheque to Chaudhari

(Below) Golwalla (wearing specs) presenting cheque to Chavan while from left Guzder, Anklesaria and Kanga look on



The Times of India of January 18, 1988. The civic by-elections had been held on January 17.

The Muslim-dominated Byculla-Kamathipura constituency has been the Mehtas' domain since 1968, when Rusi Mehta was initially elected. The seat was open for reelection when the popular Rusi was felled by an assassin's bullet on June 12, 1987 precipitating a spontaneous *bandh* by the area's commercial establishments.

Congress candidate Noshir had "an army of his father's followers working for him," as noted *The Daily*, January 14. "Even if the Congress image does not help him win the election, his father's image will," the report added.

The civic goals Noshir is pursuing for his ward include new water and sewage connections up to the main line. "The existing lines are narrow and get choked soon after they are cleaned," *The Daily* quoted him as saying. Also, dilapidated buildings in the area constitute 70 percent of the total and Noshir wants them to be repaired, the newspaper said.

"Thefts of posters and banners are small issues," Noshir told *The Daily* which reported that a Congress Party booth on Foras Road had been set ablaze by one of the opponents.

There were 26 polling booths set up for the electorate of 27,359 of whom 13,202 (48.23 percent) participated. Six of the 10 candidates who had filed nominations lost their deposits, noted *The Daily*, January 18. An electioneering highlight was a huge rally by the Congress, in the Foras Road area, in Noshir's support.

Bombay's new sheriff

A leading cotton merchant Jehangir Nicholson was sworn in as the sheriff of Bombay by the acting governor and chief justice of the Bombay High Court Chittatosh Mookerjee on December 19, 1987. His new appointment is not considered "an onerous job in the political sense, but it does carry a fair amount of responsibility," said Nicholson to the *Free Press Journal* reporter, a day prior to assuming office.

A member of the managing committee of the Indian Merchants Chamber, Nicholson has also been associated with the Bombay Chamber of Commerce for many years serving on the latter's taxation subcommittee. The



(Above) Nicholson: responsible appointment

(Right) Dhalla: inter-faith cooperation

press release also makes mention of his affiliation with the Central Government's Cotton Advisory Board and chairmanship of the Cotton Certification Committee. After serving as vice-president and president of the Bombay Cotton Merchants and Muccadums Association for 26 years, he has now been made an honorary president for life.

Starting his career as a chartered accountant with S.B. Billimoria and Company, Nicholson later joined his family firm, Breul and Company, trading in raw cotton.

A collector of modern and contemporary art, Nicholson gifted some of the works in his possession to the National Centre for the Performing Arts to create there the Jehangir Nicholson Museum of Modern Art, adds the write-up.

"Nicholson is one of the oldest rallyists and motorcar racers," notes *The Daily* of December 19. At the age of 72, he had participated in the recent Himalayan Car Rally and was presented an award by the President of India. "Actually Nicholson made his debut in the Himalayan Rally (in 1986) but apparently that experience, when his car rolled over thrice before resting on its side to put him out of the event, has not deterred him," wrote *The Afternoon Despatch and Courier* of October 19, '87.

Prayers for world peace

Among the various delegates present to celebrate the first anniversary of the

Day of Prayer for Peace was Dr Homi Dhalla representing Zoroastrianism, notes a press release. Hosted by the *Comunita di S. Egidio* in collaboration with the Vatican, the program on "Prayer as a source of Peace" was held at Assisi, 200 kms from Rome, on October 28, 1987.

Dr Dhalla recited a few prayers from the *Gathas* and the *Avesta* along with their English translations. Churches were earmarked for the recitation of prayers of different faiths. The Indian community representing Zoroastrianism, Hinduism, Jainism and Sikhism gathered in one church.

The delegates, each with a lighted candle, began a Peace March through



the streets of Rome. At Piazza St Maria in Trastevere Square, where the march ended, a message of peace was read out. All the representatives then lighted a Lamp of Peace to symbolize their efforts to usher peace and unity.

The following day, the delegates propounded the message of peace as enunciated in their respective religious scriptures. A lecture on "The Concept of Peace in the Zoroastrian Tradition" by Dhalla was attended by many university students and laymen. On the penultimate day of their stay in Rome, the delegates visited the Vatican and



Adenwalla: recovering from assault

Above (right): Mistry (on wheelchair) with Lionesses of Cuffe Parade

Below Writer: caught thief unawares

were given an audience by Pope John Paul II, adds the release.

Earlier in August, Dhalla presented a paper on "The Social Dimensions of the Zoroastrian Jashan Ceremony," at an interfaith conference held at Harrison Hot Springs Resort, Vancouver, Canada. Organized by the Council for the World's Religions, about 100 religious scholars attended this five-day conference on "Ritual, Symbol and Participation in the Quest for Interfaith Cooperation." Scheduled at the conference was a prayer meeting when Dhalla recited Zoroastrian prayers along with their translations.

Racing steward attacked

"One of the most dedicated and committed turf officials of this country," Dady N. Adenwalla, was attacked by three unidentified men on December 31, 1987, notes *The Afternoon Despatch and Courier* of January 2, 1988.

A senior stipendiary steward of the Royal Western India Turf Club, Adenwalla was on his way to the race course, driving along Napean Sea Road, when a trailing car dashed against his, forcing him to stop. While he was checking the damage, the assailants who were armed with hockey sticks began to hit him and one even challenged him with a knife. Adenwalla had the presence of mind to give a blow to the man wielding the knife, thus saving his own life. Left bleeding on the road with multiple injuries, he

was rushed to the B.D. Petit Parsee General Hospital by the general public, notes the report.

"While the police have registered a case of assault, they do not subscribe to the theory of a racing mafia having launched this attack (as widely suspected). So far no arrests have been made," notes the *Indian Express* of January 3, 1988.

Dedicated to the field of racing, Adenwalla was considered "a thorn in the path" of many who tried to manipulate a race. He would always be there before a race, at the paddock, talking to the trainers, warning the jockeys, inspecting the horses. If he was not satisfied with anyone's performance, he would confront that person later, notes the *Afternoon* report.

Known for his "honesty, integrity and firmness," Adenwalla told the *Express* correspondent, "such cowardice will not deter me from discharging my duties and obligations. I will continue to work vigorously and recommend all necessary action needed for fair and clean racing."



Robbery foiled at Dadar

Brandishing a knife, his face masked, he forcefully entered the Writers' residence at the Mancherji Joshi Parsi Colony, Dadar, on the morning of Monday, January 11, with the intention of stealing. Twenty-two-year-old

Lailu and her mother were the only people at home.

Taken unawares, Lailu says, "As soon as I opened the door, he pushed me in and locked it. He had an eight to 10-inch long knife." A shocked Lailu was forced to sit on the sofa while he prodded her for information. Mani, her mother, came out from her bedroom to see her daughter being threatened. She tried to intervene, and in the tussle that followed she slapped him and pulled off his mask. They recognized the man as being the peon who was formerly working at the office of their third floor neighbor.

Undeterred, the man proceeded towards their bedroom. When Lailu cautioned him about the likelihood of his being bitten by the dog there, he hesitated. "Seeing him falter," Lailu seized the opportunity and "bit him on the left forearm till he let go of the knife." Unlocking the door, she cried out for help. While the neighbors held him captive, she reported the crime to the Matunga police station.

The man, who admitted to the name Manish, confessed at the police station that being unemployed for the last four to five months, he was forced to steal, reported Lailu.

Fighting arthritis

Twenty-five-year-old Behroze Mistry, a victim of acute rheumatoid arthritis for the past eight years, was completely bedridden. She could "neither move any of her limbs nor even turn from side to side without outside help," notes an appeal signed by Ms Jaloo R. Mobedji, immediate past president of the Lioness Club of Cuffe Parade.

Since then, Mistry has undergone

six operations. Thanks initially to the assistance of Dr Jimmy Vajifdar and the trustees of the Masina Hospital, and thereafter to orthopaedic surgeons Dr Shahrukh Vatcha and Dr Prasama Shah at Dr Bacha's Belle View Nursing Home, her handicap has been lightened to some extent. Having achieved the restricted mobility of a wheelchair, Mistry is currently undergoing physiotherapy treatment on her operated hands, says Mobedji.

Although she requires external assistance for all her needs, Mistry has no family member to help her. She lost her mother at the age of 20 and a brother who died of cancer. Her father retired prematurely because of ill-health. The family, having no source of income other than Rs 400 as retirement benefit, has appealed to charitable institutions and individuals for funds and donations, notes the appeal.

Donations may be sent to the Lioness Club of Cuffe Parade, Mehr-Dad, third floor, Cuffe Parade, Bombay 400005 (Telephone 217198).

Infertility work rewarded

"In appreciation of the work done in infertility for a World Health Organization (WHO) project, Dr Ruzva Keki Bhathena was awarded a fellowship by the University of Nottingham, notes a press release.

Consulting obstetrician and gynecologist, 42-year-old Bhathena, has recently been made member of the British Fertility Society and the Society for the Study of Fertility (UK) since January 1988.

Bhathena has contributed papers dealing with the subject of family planning and infertility to *The British Journal of Family Planning* and has also co-authored a book, *Outcome of pregnancy after infertility*. Since 1982 he is the honorary assistant professor of obstetrics and gynecology at the N. Wadia Maternity Hospital, Postgraduate Institute and Sir Ness Wadia Research Centre, and since 1983, the honorary visiting obstetrician and gynecologist at the B.D. Petit Parsee General Hospital and the Masina Hospital, adds the release.

Mehta's integrating music

"Poles enthusiastically welcomed the Israeli Philharmonic Orchestra last night, applauding for nearly 10 minutes at the end of the concert and



calling conductor Zubin Mehta back on the stage 11 times," notes *The Indian Post* of November 11, 1987.

Performing in Poland for the first time, the group wanted to serve the cause of reconciliation between Poles and Jews, and Mehta hoped his orchestra would contribute to improving Israel's relations with Soviet bloc countries. Israel and Poland restored low-level diplomatic contacts a year ago after a 19-year break in relations.

The concert, held at Warsaw's Grand Theatre, began with *Mazurka Dabrowski*, the Polish national anthem, followed by *Hatikva*, the Israeli anthem.

Speaking to reporters at the Grand Theatre, Mehta stressed the Orchestra's close ties to Poland, noting that many of the musicians are children of Polish Jews. "As musicians, we know we cannot alter boundaries but we are capable of making people smile to each other," he said.

"Although we do not forget and we do not forgive, we are here to play our hearts out. This is 1987," he said. "There is no family of yours and no family of ours which has not suffered in the horrendous war. Maybe with our visit this time we will have some kind of spiritual victory." Mehta's statement was greeted by the Polish reporters with applause.

Montessori training

After a lapse of three decades, a course imparting the Montessori method of educating children will be re-introduced in Bombay for the benefit of teachers and parents, informs Ms Zarin Malva, who has been appointed director of the course. Affiliated to the Association Montessori Internationale (AMI), the course will be conducted under the aegis of Shri Jain Mahila Samaj in Bombay to help teachers and parents in their work



with children, notes Malva's letter dated December 26, 1987.

The course includes theory and practicals in the Montessori method of educating children between two and a half to six years of age. The nine-month diploma course will be conducted from July to April, the lectures being from 1.30 to 4.30 p.m. The qualifications required for admission are a high school certificate (though graduates are preferred), completion of 18 years by July 15, 1988, and the ability to follow lectures in English. The cost of the program is around Rs 1,000.

Having its base in Holland, the AMI was established in 1929 by Dr Maria Montessori. The main aim of this program is to assist the child to become independent and to help him develop coordination of movements so that he can adapt to the society he lives in, notes a prospectus on this course.

The classroom in a Montessori school consists of apparatus, household utensils, plants and animals that are looked after by the children them-

Top (left) Bhathena: research on reproduction

Top (right) Mehta with wife Nancy Malva (below, right): innovative teaching methods



selves. The school stresses the importance of physical exercise because physical abilities "should be developed along with the sensory and intellectual capacities," adds a report in the *Indian Express* of January 13, 1988.

For further information write to, Shri Jain Mahila Samaj Montessori Training Course, Kapadia Bhavan, H Cross Road, Marine Drive, Bombay 400002.

Ophthalmological meet

To spread the message that "patients with cataracts in their eyes can regain

spreading the latest clinical techniques all over the country, Dr Maskati proposed the setting up of a video-cassette library so that "the surgeons in rural areas could be exposed to live implant surgery through video production," noted *The Afternoon* of the following day.

Philatelist's contribution

The largest contributor to a week-long exhibition on stamps, displayed at Hornbill House, was Darabshaw R. Mistry, president of the Empire of India Philatelic Society, who contributed

monthly magazine of the Empire of India Philatelic Society.

Mistry, who is also the president of the BNHS since 1984, says that he would like to teach youngsters how to go about collecting stamps and mounting them on paper, but "no school is ready to spare the time. The students are burdened with today's education and for such a thing one needs a lot of time."

Mistry's other interests include photography and Indian and Western classical music.

Avesta in Hindi

"This book will be useful to Parsi children who cannot read Gujarati and to whom pronunciation in the Roman script will be difficult," reads the preface to the fourth edition of the *Khordeh Avesta* in Hindi (Devnagri script), published by Arjasp F. Taraporewala. The first edition was published in 1970.

The booklet starts with the 101 names of Ahura Mazda followed by the daily prayers and four *Yashts*. The 237-page book, priced at five rupees, includes the English interpretation of the prayers.

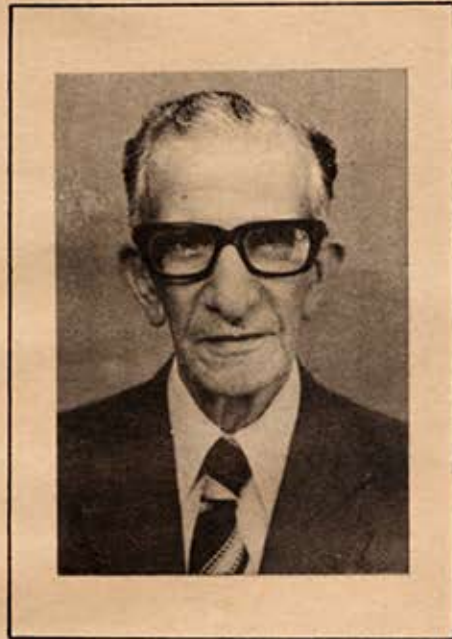
Those interested in purchasing the book may write to Arjasp F. Taraporewala, 8 West Mada Church Street, Royapuram, Madras 600013.

Mind over matter

"It is very difficult to live off magic these days. In the old days there was an aura of respect for the secrets of the trade and for the magicians," says Ratan Bharucha, president of the Society of Indian Magicians (SIM), which held a two-day convention on October 10 and 11, 1987 at the Birla Kreedha Kendra, Chowpatty, notes *Bombay* (October 22 - November 6, 1987).

According to Bharucha who has been practising magic for the last 45 years, today's mediocre magicians claim to be the 'world's greatest' after a few shows.

The members of the Society got together after nearly 37 years (the earlier all-India meeting was held in 1950), "exchanged notes on the art of deception, demonstrated their talent at newly acquired tricks and studied the latest magic apparatus in the market," notes *The Indian Post* of October 12, 1987. Magicians from all over



Mistry with his stamp collection of birds

1,150 stamps, notes *The Indian Post* of November 21, 1987.

Organized by the Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS), the exhibition was held to mark the ninety-second birth anniversary of the late Dr Salim Ali and featured 11,650 stamps of birds of different countries, compiled from the collections of the BNHS members.

Devoting 40 years of his life to stamp collecting, Mistry started this hobby when he was an insurance inspector in a Swiss firm, Volkart Bros. Mistry's stamps on prehistoric animals were displayed at Eros Cinema when the film, *One Million Years B.C.* was released in 1967. He has won several awards for his collections and his one-man show of stamps in February '88 is scheduled to coincide with the golden jubilee of *India Stamp Journal*, the

almost complete vision due to a technique known as intra-ocular implantation," was the objective of the two-day sixth annual conference of the Indian Intra-ocular Implant Society. This statement was made by the Society's organizing secretary Dr Keiki Mehta at a press conference prior to the meet, notes *The Afternoon Despatch and Courier* of January 6, 1988.

The meet was inaugurated by a leading city ophthalmologist Dr B.T. Maskati at Bombay's Hotel President on January 6 when about 500 surgeons from all over the world participated. The conference included symposia on different topics plus a video workshop. On a six-foot video projection screen were demonstrated the different techniques used by surgeons performing the intra-ocular implant.

Emphasizing the necessity of

the country performed for 10 minutes each before an audience of fellow magicians and the general public.

Among the 60-odd members, most of whom are amateurs or semi-professionals, was 52-year-old Eruch Surty whose stage name is 'Mustafa the Mystic.'

Performing daredevil feats like jumping on a heap of sharp-edged glass pieces, bearing the brunt of a bunch of knives and putting a fire torch to his kerosene-rubbed body, Surty's magic has no deceptions. "There is no sleight of hand, it just requires skill in controlling body muscles and of course a lot of courage," says Surty. Janardhan Dass, a former body builder has been his only help on stage for the last 32 years.

High in English

The highest marks in English at the Bombay University's Bachelor of Arts examination of 1987 were secured by Ms Simonil Sarosh Forbes. Her performance was rewarded with The Hughlings Prize (consisting of books worth Rs 100) and The Smt Saraswati T. Advani Prize (Rs 100 in cash), notes a communique issued by the registrar of Bombay University.

At the graduation level Forbes had opted for English and psychology as her majors. She is presently studying for a master's degree in social work at the Washington University in St Louis.

(Above) Karkaria: Representing Indian scouts

Forbes (below): Best in English at B.A.

(Right) Activity High School's juniors enacting playlet on Zarathushtra



Missouri, USA, informs her mother Shanoor. While presently Forbes is gaining work experience in the treatment of alcoholism and drug addiction, in the next semester she will learn how to handle family and marital problems, notes her mother.

Squash and karate are Forbes' other interests.

"Up-on myscout's honor..."

Representing India at the XVI World Scout Jamboree at Cataract Park in Sydney, Australia, troop leader Rayomand Karkaria was the only scout selected from Bombay, notes a press release sent by Shahrokh Bulsara, scout master of the Talati's 8th East Bombay Bharat Scout Group.

Being an active member of the Group for the past 11 years, Karkaria has "earned" 26 Proficiency Badges and is a Red and White Cord holder. A first year junior college student at the Jai Hind College, he has been conferred the highest award in scouting - The President's Scout Badge. He is also qualified for the Jungle Goph Cord, adds the release.

Recipients of the President's Guide Badge, Sophia College students Binaifer Kersi Dubash and Dilshad Jehanbux Cooper, of the 99th West Bombay Group, attended the President's Scout/Guide Rally. They were the invitees of the President of India at the Rashtrapati Bhavan, notes the *Jam-e-Jamshed* of January 16, 1988.

"Mobike odyssey"

Having toured Europe and the Scandinavian countries on mobikes, Tata Electric Companies' employees, Darayus Anklesaria and Satish Ganapathy, returned in mid November, af-



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ter covering a distance of over 13,700 kms in 45 days, notes the *Mid-Day* of November 23, 1987.

Their 'Mobike odyssey' included places like Jungfrau (Switzerland), Chamonix (France), the Rhine (West Germany) and Waliby (Holland). "The most outstanding feature was that they were the only riders on two-wheelers found on the Scandinavian national roads because of biting winds and temperature close to freezing point," adds the report.

Sponsored by Tata Electric Companies, Air-India and Raj Travels, Anklesaria and Ganapathy had left India on September 30 on 100 cc Bajaj Kawasaki and Ind Suzuki mobikes.

Activity's philanthropy

A playlet on the life of Zarathushtra was presented by the junior students of the Activity High School on December 10, 11 and 12, 1987, at the Tejpal Auditorium, notes a press release. *The Teahouse of the August Moon* was performed by the seniors.

The proceeds of the show went to The Rayomand Committee for Hous-

ing, St John's Ambulance Brigade and The Helen Keller Institute for the Deaf-Blind.

Written by the school's principal Ms Dolat Doongaji and Ms Amy Lavangia, and directed by Ms Freny Bharucha the playlet depicted how Zarathushtra established the first monotheistic religion in ancient Iran despite many difficulties.

A comedy, *The Teahouse of the August Moon*, directed by Ratan Batliwala, portrayed the "eventual triumph of the values cherished by the gentle and simple islanders (the Japanese) over their sophisticated and ultrafast (American) conquerors."

Studying 'pays' off

"To award prizes to Parsi students from the Dadar/Matunga area," who had excelled in the school leaving SSC and ICSE examinations, Young Rathestars organized a function on November 8, 1987, notes a press release sent by Marzban Giara, joint honorary secretary of the organization.

The winners of the first, second and

third prizes of Rs 151, 101 and 75 for the year 1985 were Hormuzd Hoshang Madan, Meher Cassad and Sarfaraz Pastakia. The 1986 winners were Khursheed Hoshang Buchia, Pareaad Nanu Daruwala and Nekzaan Noshir Wadia, while Farrokh Pheroze Tarapore, Vispi Noshir Driver and Rosy Pervez Kakalia were last year's winners. Among the winners, all the girls were students of J.B. Vachha School, adds the release.

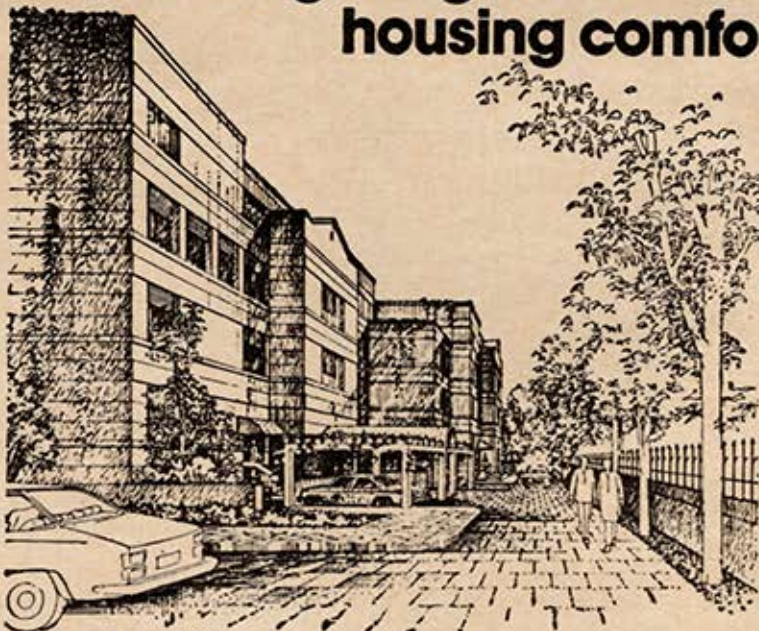
The prize winners also received a multi-color picture of Firdaosi and selected scenes from the *Shah Namah* at the hands of Ms Roshan Sholapurwalla. Firoze Sholapurwalla was the chief guest at the function.

SPOTLIGHT

Opening batsman **Zubin Bharucha** was to lead the under-19 Bombay cricket team in the West Zone Cooch Behar Trophy Cricket Tournament in Pune slated for November, notes *The Times of India* of November 6, 1987.

Compiled by Roxana H. Kaka

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UK death remembrance ceremonies: The bitterness lingers

Arnavaz S. Mama

Two years after the controversial resolution adopted by the managing committee of the Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe (ZTFE) requesting non-Zoroastrian spouses to refrain from attending the muktad prayers and the Farvardian jashan, Zoroastrian emotions in London continue to churn. These ceremonies had been attended by non-Zoroastrian spouses since they were initiated over 30 years ago. The political repercussions of the new religious stance has been to strip the old liberals like Shahpur Captain and Dr (Ms) Shirinbanoo Kutar of the power and prestige they had enjoyed over decades as officebearers and members of the ZTFE managing committee. The bitterness of the conflict has spilt into the beleaguered World Zoroastrian Organisation (WZO) created in London by Captain, Kutar and others – whose official address since its inception was ZTFE's Zoroastrian House, London. That tenancy has now been terminated by the ZTFE.

Two non-Zoroastrian spouses are said to be involved – Ms Maritje Moos, elderly European widow of the late Jehangir Moos, president and trustee of the ZTFE and Dr Mahendra Sodhi – as admits Ervad Zal Sethna who, with his brother Ervad Darius, is said to have spearheaded the resolution which some interpret as a clever political wedge to maneuver Captain and the others out of power.

To philanthropist and liberal octogenarian Noshirwan Cowasjee, however, it has become a cause

célèbre. In his effort to regain for the non-Zoroastrian spouses what he calls the "right of worship," Cowasjee has been urging the managing committee to hold a referendum of all the Zoroastrians in the UK, to decide what the community really wants.

Cowasjee claims that the idea of a referendum was first mooted by ZTFE president Bailey Irani who thereafter supposedly disowned it. Under a covering letter dated September 16, '87 Cowasjee despatched his own questionnaire seeking 'yes' or 'no' re-

The liberal group participating in Farvardian jashan before Moos' grave



sponses to 11 questions from 907 Zoroastrians. On November 19 Cowasjee declared that he had received 243 responses, of which 222 and 220 approved of the presence of non-Zoroastrians spouses at the muktad and Farvardian jashan respectively.

Before the 1987 muktads, Cowasjee had requested the managing committee to allow non-Zoroastrian spouses to attend the ceremony as before with the proviso that they do not occupy front row seats. The committee responded with a counter suggestion: Let the non-Zoroastrians sit in an adjoining room with the interconnecting door ajar so that they may hear the prayers without witnessing the ceremony. Cowasjee dismissed the suggestion as an insult to non-Zoroastrian spouses. Moreover, Cowasjee states that on the eve of the muktad a special managing committee meeting was called wherein it was unanimously resolved, "No ervads should pray at the muktad if non-Zoroastrians married to Zoroastrians entered the prayer room and if any ervad prayed, the committee would take action against him." Cowasjee states that the president would not say what measures the committee would adopt if an ervad strayed from the prescribed path.

A similar suggestion was made by the committee for the Farvardian jashan scheduled to be held at the Brookwood cemetery chapel on September 12 at 4 p.m. Cowasjee responded by seeking permission to hold a separate jashan at noon that day.

The aftermath of the 11 days' controversy resulted in two Farvardian jashans being held at the Brookwood cemetery

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Brookwood cemetery chapel

The permission was denied. The alternatives offered were to hold it after 7 p.m. or on another day – both indignantly rejected by Cowasjee. In the event the liberal group had an open air jashan before Jehangir Moos' grave at noon the same day.

"The committee refused to lend us religious utensils for our prayers and also refused to sell, or give on loan, sandalwood and *loban* (incense) for our prayers," records Cowasjee. In a letter dated September 19 to the ZTFE president, Cowasjee notes that despite the poor weather forecast, 31 association members, 21 Zoroastrian non-members and five non-Zoroastrian spouses attended the prayers conducted by erstwhile ZTFE president Shahpur Captain with the assistance of three gentlemen and three ladies. The rest of the congregation prayed along with them. "Our ervads stayed away, presumably at the behest of the managing committee," adds Cowasjee who enclosed a letter co-signed by 26 mourners severely castigating the managing committee for its stand on this issue.

Cowasjee declares that when he entered the Brookwood chapel by a side door after the open air prayers were over, he found that nothing was arranged for the 4 o'clock jashan except a sheet laid on the floor – "the *afarganya* (fire receptacle) wasn't even in the main hall."

Eighty mourners attended the official jashan, according to Cowasjee who has invited all Zoroastrians in the UK, as also all non-Zoroastrian spouses, to join the liberal group "in our muktad (August 14 to 23) and Farvardian (September 11) prayers in 1988," promising intimation two months in advance.

In the words of the ZTFE report for April '86 – March '87, "Our community has suffered a deeply wounding disension...What was (however) tragic to witness was the personalization of the debate, and the consequent personality clashes that tarnished the atmosphere within our community."

The report further states, "The managing committee that was democratically elected at the 1986 annual general meeting thereafter feels that this particular controversy over the non-Zoroastrians is merely a distract-



ing issue from the real issues of the community... Being a small community we already face a number of problems concerning our identity in a western culture, our children's spiritual education in a highly materialistic society and other social and economic difficulties that our members may face in a harsh economic climate... suffice to say that between April 1986 and March 1987 events of watershed proportions have engulfed us." Despite which the report notes, "It is in fact a fervently held wish of your committee that one day history shall be made in the western hemisphere when this London-based Association shall be the first one to lay the foundation stone on English soil of an agiary to be established here."

At the annual general meeting on November 29, 1987 Cowasjee requested the president to be allowed to address the gathering immediately after the welcome address. The request was granted only after the results of the managing committee election had been declared. Nevertheless Cowasjee accepted, "to clear the mind of the members that I was not anti-Zoroastrian," as well as other misconceptions: for example, it has been repeatedly alleged that he was married to a non-Zoroastrian and that he was seeking the acceptance of non-Zoroastrians into the community. Both allegations were countered by Cowasjee who noted, "The day the ruling committee decides not to use religion for their personal ulterior motives, our community will reunite

again."

The issue seems to have been festering for a long time. According to a xerox copy supplied by Darius Sethna of the minutes of a ZTFE managing committee meeting signed by president and chairman Shirinbanoo Kutar on August 8, 1976, "(Ervad Darius) Sethna reported that on Zar-thost *no diso* (Zarathushtra's death anniversary) he was appalled to see a non-Zoroastrian in the front row witnessing the religious ceremony. He thought that such permissiveness destroyed the sanctity of our ceremonies and in future this practice should be forbidden. The president suggested that because of the sensitivity of our priests in this connection, care would be taken in future to see that non-Zoroastrians sit at reasonable distance."

There were two challenges from the non-Zoroastrians at the muktad and Farvardian prayers in 1985, alleged Zal Sethna at an interview with *Parsiana* on January 7, 1988. When the concerned individuals refused to move from their seats when requested to do so by other members of the anjuman, his brother Darius became involved in the argument, avers Zal Sethna. According to the liberals, Ms Moos was rudely ordered out.

Zal says he "advised Shahpur Captain to nip (the controversy) in the bud and lie low. It will be forgotten... Request these two to refrain from coming (to the muktad and Farvardian jashan). But Captain said 'no.' *Jeed per cheryo* (became stubborn). When

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the resolution (non-Zoroastrians be requested to refrain from attending the mukhtad and Farvardian jashan) was introduced in the committee meetings, he wouldn't let us put it to the vote." Captain stalled the issue for some months, Sethna alleged, until Shahrokh Shahrokh, then ZTFE vice-president, took the chair on October 13, 1985 when Captain had been surgically operated. Shahrokh put the resolution to the vote. It was carried although Shirinbanoo Kutar, Shahrokh and Dr Godafreed Irani abstained, says Sethna.

Thereafter six members of the managing committee resigned in quick succession, leading to a schism within the community. Sethna refers to the ensuing bitterness with regret: "Shahpur Captain has also given us service and deserves (respect)," he notes.

Informing that Rumi Sethna (one of the committee members who voted for the resolution but resigned thereafter) and three others also wrote to members saying they were in favor of a referendum, Sethna says, "They have the legal ability to hold one." The ZTFE managing committee can only poll its members as it has no mandate to include non-members, says Sethna, adding, "We are going to hold a referendum. But it will need a 75 percent vote to kill the resolution."

In early August, Dastur Dr Firoze Kotwal, high priest of the H.B. Wadia Atash Bahram had spent a couple of hours answering members' questions at Zoroastrian House. Prior to his departure from Bombay, he had received a letter from Cowasjee enclosing the correspondence with the ZTFE on the issue of the non-Zoroastrian spouses' right of worship. But Kotwal said that Cowasjee made no attempt to introduce himself though he was told that Cowasjee was among those who greeted him at the end of the question-answer session at Zoroastrian House.

At the meeting Kotwal was reported to have said, "Follow the tradition," when the topic was raised. It was interpreted by Cowasjee to refer to the 30-year tradition prevailing in the UK where non-Zoroastrian spouses have attended Zoroastrian ceremonies. The ZTFE committee interpreted the statement in terms of the orthodox Zoroastrian tradition of India.

Contacted by *Parsiana*, Kotwal clarified that though he personally never performs a Zoroastrian ceremony in

the presence of non-Zoroastrians, each anjuman had to decide for itself. The old liberal tradition in the UK no longer held good, perhaps, he hazarded because the membership of the anjuman was now weighted in favor of orthodoxy.

With the reelection of Bailey Irani, Rusi Dalal and Ervad Zal Sethna, the three members of the managing committee of the Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe (ZTFE) who had sought a fresh mandate on the expiry of their tenure, at the annual general meeting held on November 29, 1987, the orthodox camp appears to be well established.

The fourth member of the team to retire - Ervad Darius Sethna who has relocated in Goa, India due to the exigencies of business - has been replaced by Viraf Gandhi, a chartered accountant by profession.

Dr Ms Shirinbanoo Kutar is the only member of the old liberal group to continue on the managing committee.

* * *

Kudos for Avari

On completing "85 years of pioneering, philanthropic, useful life," Karachi Parsi Anjuman Trust Funds (KPATF) chairman Dinshaw Avari was presented an address of honor on November 5, 1987, writes noted educationist Behram Rustomji from Karachi. The venue of the function was Avari's own five star creation, Hotel Beach Luxury.

Speaking on the occasion, KPATF trustee Dhun Ghadialy recounted how Avari, trustee of the Anjuman for 30 years and chairman for the last three, has helped to build 33 flats at Panchayat Bagh and is planning for 24 more, totalling an expenditure of 10 million rupees. Ghadialy also referred to the Doongerwadi Housing Scheme where 60 plots for individual owners and 12 sites for a total of 96 flats have been undertaken for development, all within a short two-year spell. "With your long-sighted views, you have established a new office of the Anjuman where its precious records, which were lying scattered at the residences of the secretaries for the last 60 years, have been consolidated and kept systematically in a separate record room, for the immediate use of the present trustees and guidance of future generations."



Avari: "no substitute for hard work"

The humble boy from Navsari who was educated in the Petit Orphanage in Bombay, worked his way up as businessman, hotelier (Avari Towers introduced the first Japanese restaurant to the subcontinent, notes the address), insurance magnate and social worker. Starting life on a meager 75 rupees per month at the Sun Life Assurance Company of Canada, Avari rendered yeoman service to the community by collecting and donating lakhs of rupees to various Parsi charities, recounts the address presented on behalf of the KPATF, the Young Men's Zoroastrian Association and the Dastur Dr Dhallal Memorial Institute. Apart from community charities, Avari has been involved with the Rotary Club, the Pakistan Sea Scouts, The Deaf and Dumb Centre, the Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals and the Red Cross along with many professional organizations.

"There are few people in Pakistan who do not know of your going at 4 a.m. every morning to the market for your Bristol Hotel (an earlier venture)," recalled the address. "You have shown to all of us that there is no substitute for hard work and your success today can be attributed to the foundations laid by you through your sweat and blood."

Seeking justice

"Please write to Honorable Edwin Meese, Attorney General, US Department of Justice, 1010 Constitution Ave, Washington D.C. 20530, asking that the Justice Department initiate a Grand Jury investigation leading to the arrest and indictment of the four juvenile murderers of Navroze Mody's

civil rights," request Khorshed and Jamshid Mody, parents of the young victim. Their appeal for public support from fellow Zoroastrians was published in the January newsletter of the Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Chicago (ZAC).

The Modys' petition to Meese reads, "Our most dear and precious son Navroze (four days before his thirty-first birthday) was mugged in Hoboken, New Jersey, on September 27 and he passed away on October 1, 1987. The murder was not only brutal and vicious but torture was carried out by a racist gang known as Dotbusters. Navroze's skull was fractured, his eyeballs were detached, his hearing gone and spinal cord severed. Navroze's civil rights have been violated."

Public support to the parental appeal reads, "We the people of the United States, join Mr and Mrs Jamshid R. Mody in their appeal for justice. We respectfully request you to bring these juvenile murderers of an innocent person for trial as adults. We ask for justice."

The attached copy of the Modys' letter notes in anguish, "We do not understand how could human beings be so cruel?"

"What hurts us most is, four men 15, 16, 16 and 17 years old were arrested, charged for murder and were released on October 20, '87 on their own recognizance, in 'house arrest,' pending a pre-trial hearing, currently scheduled for December 15, '87.

"We are afraid that the murderers of our son will be freed or minimally charged as minors under some plea bargaining agreement. We are also afraid that our son's death will be as meaningless as the racial violence perpetrated against him and justice will again protect the aggressor and mock the victim."

The ZANC survey

The Zoroastrian population in Northern California has increased gradually, especially in the San Francisco Bay area, notes the preface to the 1987 directory of the Zoroastrians of Northern California, published by the Zarthoshti Anjuman of Northern California (ZANC). This well-presented, offset, second edition lists approximately 150 families plus 50 individuals. Fifteen medical practitioners feature on the yellow pages along with

the names and addresses of the six dar-e-mehers and 21 Zoroastrian associations in North America and the eight atash bahrams in India.

A ZANC questionnaire evoked a response rate of just over 50 percent, giving information on 110 adults and 45 children, notes retiring president Darius Captain in the directory. The survey reveals that 55 percent of the adult population is under 40 years of age, 36 percent between 41 and 65 years and nine percent over 65. A quarter of the children are less than five years old and 22 percent are adolescents, the rest being between five and 12 years of age. While most of the adults migrated to the US, over 80 percent of the children were born there. Only 25 percent of those initiated into the faith had their navjote in the US; the rest had their navjote in India. Eight percent of the marriages occurred in the States, of which, 75 percent chose non-Zoroastrian spouses. Nearly 10 percent of those surveyed have non-Zoroastrian spouses.

The survey also revealed 22 engineers, 12 masters in business administration (MBA), eight chartered accountants and one lawyer. "The numbers can be doubled to approximate the total number of Parsi Zoroastrians in the professions," notes Captain.

This first attempt at gathering data was restricted to Zoroastrian immigrants from the Indian subcontinent, notes Captain. "Hopefully, the next survey will be more informative and expanded to include all Zoroastrians in the Bay area...As the written response was about 50 percent, we had to contact the rest by phone. This makes our work extra and increases the possibility of errors."

Twenty-four pages of advertisements from Zoroastrian and Indian businesses lend the directory a professional touch.

Jimmy Makujina is the president of ZANC's new executive committee, elected for the next two years, which includes vice-president Shazad Contractor, secretary Amy Makujina, treasurer Mahyar Irani and members Zarir Bhatena, Tina Patell and Viloo Surty.

In its valedictory newsletter, the

ZANC executive committee for 1986-87 notes that 70 adults responded to "a preliminary poll to survey the feelings of our community on the Dar-e-Meher property which was purchased in San Jose by the Arbab Guiv Trust and leased to the PZO (the California based Persian Zoroastrian Organisation).

The survey revealed that substantially less than half of those who had visited the Dar-e-Meher (49 percent of the total respondents) liked the property and the location; 56 percent of the respondents want ZANC to look for an alternate location and 46 percent are willing to pay their share. About 73 percent suggested however that ZANC should "participate awhile before opting for their own facility." Nearly 80 percent want ZANC to have a general body vote before committing the funds to the PZO.

WZO relocated

The first meeting of the World Zoroastrian Organisation (after the annual general meeting on October 25) was held at a new address - 10 Woodcote Lane, Purley, Surrey - on November 8, 1987 notes the October-December 1987 issue of *Hamazor*, the newsletter of the WZO. It lists the new officebearers as Dr (Ms) Shirinbanoo Kutar, chairman, Ms Ruby Contractor, president, Dadi Mistry, vice-president, Shahpur Captain and Ms Mani Bhungara, joint honorary secretaries, and Dinyar Modi, honorary treasurer.

Though *Hamazor* makes no mention of a change in the WZO's official address, *Parsiana* learnt from Ervad Zal Sethna, treasurer of the Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe (ZTFE), that its tenancy at Zoroastrian House has been terminated.

WZO was said to have been created in 1980 to help Iranian Zoroastrian immigrants fleeing the Khomeini regime. Captain, Kutar and others of the group were prominent officebearers in both organizations. With the split in the parent body (see above) and the absence of Captain and fellow thinkers from the ZTFE managing committee, the two organizations have diverged. Sethna alleged that the WZO was in arrears by £ 3,000 and moreover had not listed the ZTFE as its creditor in the annual accounts.

Compiled by Arnavaz S. Mama

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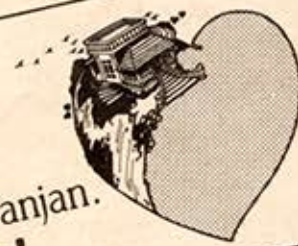
Soon, construction will start on an exclusive complex of row houses, Mazda Bahrot, (also going very fast) close to the heart of Sanjan. Another dream project on the anvil is the beautiful, sprawling condominium of villas — Mazda Varoli — on the Sanjan-Umbergaon road.

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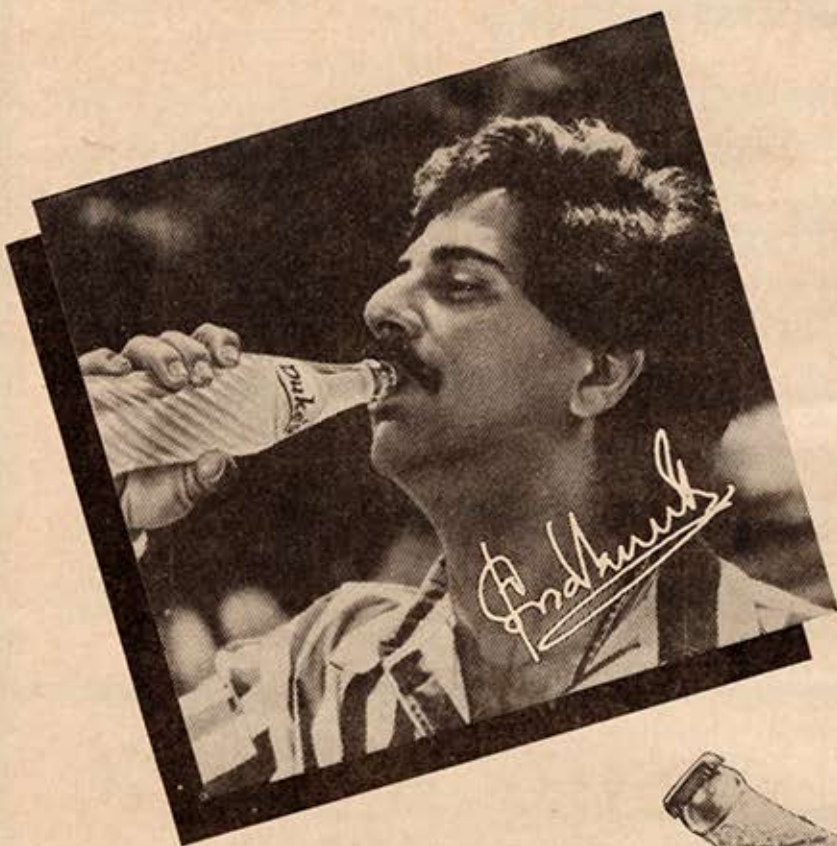


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Meeting of minds

At the First All-India Zoroastrian Youth Seminar at Delhi, 105 participants were provided with an insight into the community's approach to different problems

Arnavaz S. Mama

"The Delhi youth have taken it upon themselves to run this seminar and chair the sessions. The delegates have the fullest opportunity to discuss matters threadbare. Except for the panelists and the delegates, all others in the hall will have the status of observers." Delhi Parsi Anjuman (DPA) president Lt Gen Adi Sethna's guideline for the First All India Zoroastrian Youth Seminar organized in Delhi, October 22 to 24, 1987, effectively preempted the stage for enthusiastic participation from the 105 youth delegates gathered at the Bhiwandiwala Hall of the Mengusi Parsi Dharamshala complex.

The panelists, many of advanced age with liberal leanings, were generally heard with respect. However, the young chairpeople acquitted themselves with remarkable aplomb, helping the speaker to adhere to time limits, enabling the tautly structured program to proceed on schedule. On the agenda were two and a half days of panel discussions, a *son et lumière* presentation at the Red Fort, a dinner-dance at the Taj Palace Hotel, an afternoon's sightseeing and high tea with President R. Venkataraman at Rashtrapati Bhavan.

The conflict between social justice and traditions, and economic and career problems in an increasingly competitive environment preoccupied the delegates who found the allotted discussion time too meager. Spontaneously settling down to after dinner sessions in ever widening circles on the carpeted shamiana floor, they exchanged notes and sought information from young-at-heart community stalwarts like sociologist Prof Noshir

Kaikobad, Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP) chief executive Rustom Anklesaria and Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India's joint honorary secretary Keki Gandhi into the wee hours of the morning.

All the 79 out-of-towners had been accommodated in the seemingly elastic dharamshala, sleeping three, four and more per room. They had come from nearby Agra, Jhansi, Lucknow and Ajmer, Mhow and Nagpur, far away Bombay and Thana, Poona and Ahmednagar, Ahmedabad, Baroda and Surat, Jamshedpur, Calcutta and Secunderabad. Helping the youngsters cope with the stress of late nights and early mornings, dharamshala manageress Dhun Bagli saw to it that they

started the day with a good breakfast and the delegates responded with a standing ovation at the end of the Seminar.

The youth committee representatives had been at the railway station at all conceivable hours to receive the delegates while the DPA elders made it a point to convey news of safe arrivals to anxious parents who had requested it. Each one was presented with a folder containing letters of welcome from Sethna and youth trustee Farrokh Rustomji, copies of some of the papers to be presented and a polished brass memento of the occasion (courtesy DPA trustee Dadi Mistry).

The organising committee - DPA trustees Rustom Daroga and Nogi

Running the Seminar (from left): Hirjee, Sethna, Dumasia (backing photographer) and Yohan Aria



Kapadia plus Yohan Aria, Arnaaz Dumasia, Trista Heerjee, Shirin Sethna and Beroze (Bella) Shroff under the chairmanship of Rustomji – had set its own menu and the food served up by Shroff with Bagli's able assistance was thoroughly appreciated, especially the tandoori and Chinese meals.

Chief guest Dr Karan Singh, the philosopher-prince, had spared the Parsi community time that Diwali morning despite the engagement in his family that day, arriving punctually at 9 a.m. After a short prayer by Dastur Navrooz Minochehr-Homji, high priest of Bombay's Fasli Agiary and Sethna's welcome – "What better way of celebrating Diwali than by holding the first such seminar" – Karan Singh in his "Overview" responded to Minochehr-Homji's recitation from the *Gathas* by chanting a verse from the *Vedas*. The prayer was an example of the closeness of thought and structure between the *Gathas* and the *Vedas*, said Singh: "The great Zoroastrian religion has integral links with Hindu texts. I feel the Hindu-Parsi relationship goes back many thousands of years." Tracing the Zoroastrian contribution in trade, industry, profes-

Top (from left):

Noshir Dadrawala, Kaikobad, Sethna, Kapur and Madon

Below (from left):

Dhabar, Bagli, Minochehr-Homji and Gowadia

Below (right):

Dhun Bagli's ceremonial welcome for Karan Singh

sions and politics, Singh said, "Parsis have indeed greatly sweetened and enriched national life... (but) unless you restate religion in the idiom of today and keep an open mind, your best minds will reject religion and leave it to the fundamentalists and faddists," warned Singh, describing such drift into fanaticism as disastrous. "You are worshippers of light... The fire is a witness, a symbol, a divine splendor behind manifestation. Try to understand what is behind the symbols," he urged.

The Parsi or Kashmiri is also an Indian and also a citizen of the world, he said implying that there need be no psychological conflict within the individual who can thus have more than one identity. Today there are "oppor-

tunities unlimited for young people, especially Parsis. Continue to make the sort of major contribution Parsis have made ever since they've come here... Let people say 100 years later that Parsi sugar is still dissolving in Indian milk."

Adding to "Karan Singh's gospel of love," Minorities Commission member Homi Taleyarkhan preached "integrity, intrepidity, the spirit of integration." Listing faith in God as a prerequisite, he urged Parsis to be ready to do any job for the welfare of society. Decrying the popular conception of Parsis being well-off as "a figment of opulence," Taleyarkhan urged that the poor of the community, be looked after and that the commun-





Clockwise from left: Kaikobad, BPP's Anklesaria, Taleyarkhan, Mistry, Rustomji, Khullar and Anklesaria from Poona

ity participate in national activities on a larger scale.

In his keynote address on the "concept of a strategy for community development," Kaikobad, convener of the BPP's school and family counselling programs, noted, "The real concept of development is that you grow according to your own light." The philosophy of development is to awaken social consciousness among all sections of society, improve the quality of life at all levels.

"How can we translate the principle of *huvarashta* (good deeds) but by coming together and evolving a social service program?" The spin-off from "forgetting yourself and working for something larger is the development of personality... Guided by optimism, in every problem lies an answer," Kaikobad concluded.

The working sessions which followed, became specific applications of the ideas and policies outlined at the inaugural. Minochehr-Homji, authoress Piloo Jungalwalla and gold medalist in Avesta-Pahlavi at the B.A. and M.A. levels, Ervad Ramiyar Karanjia of the Dadar Madressa, were the panelists for the session entitled 'Zoroastrian Ethics and Identity' with philosophy student Shernaz Italia in the chair.

Defining morality as religion in practice, religion as morality in principle, Minochehr-Homji lamented that people are "so busy with the traditions of man that they neglect the commandments of God." Quoting freely from the *Gatha*, *Niyash* and *Yasht*, Minochehr-Homji

stressed the religious credo to help others. "In Zoroastrianism there is no personal salvation. If my neighbour is happy, I am happy."

"We are all seekers after truth and the texts are there to help us," Jungalwalla told the young people. Jungalwalla was disturbed by the devaluation of the navjote ceremony where social overtones have pushed religion into the background and, by way of information, noted that homa juice, not nirang, was used for the ceremony in Iran and even in India as in the case of her own navjote.

Italia bewailed her lack of awareness: "Everytime Karan Singh's daughter (who attends college with Italia) quotes the *Vedas*, I can't retort from the *Gathas*. I'm totally humiliated after Dastur Minochehr-Homji quoted lines from the *Gathas* I could have known. But the religion has not been handed down to us, the nuances have not been explained. The navjote is a social farce. I remember it, at the age of six or seven, for the pink frock or lace and wristwatch but not as an entry point into religion. One wishes one could find time to absorb, and find ways to enrich our children, with our awareness."

During the group discussion which followed, someone asked for a definition of a Zoroastrian and Jungalwalla said a "Zoroastrian is one who has studied the practices and the precepts of Zoroastrianism." Minochehr-Homji referred to American engineer Joseph Peterson (whose navjote in 1983 had triggered off acrimonious debate be-

tween the pro and anti conversion lobbies), and noted that he had received 150 pages of the *Afringan* in Roman script and its translation by Peterson. "I was all praise. He is a Zoroastrian."

Asked about the problem of entry into fire-temples by non-Zoroastrians, Minochehr-Homji referred to the desecration of fire-temples by the Moslems in the eighth and ninth centuries and added that the practice has been preserved here "thanks to the tolerance of Indians."

Elucidating the problem of evil, the Dastur spoke of *dush man*, translating it as 'bad mind': "My mind is my liberator or the agent of my doom."

"Who do I rely on?" questioned a delegate. "Everyone claims to know what is right. Yet differences of opinion persist." "It is a Parsi weakness," responded the respected priest. "The less I know, the greater the advice I give!"

The problems of drug addiction saw Delhi University vice-chancellor Prof Moonis Raza, ex-addicts Eddy Mull and Rajiv Shaw from Sharan, an organization for the rehabilitation of drug addicts, with Veraf Khambatta in the chair. Raza noted that he was substituting for Bombay University vice-chancellor and BPP trustee Dr Mehroo Bengalee. He gave a historical perspective to the incidence of drug addiction, its geographical and political causes, the similarities and contrasts with the western experience. Referring to the drug and gunrunning that he alleged is rife on the Indo-Pak border, Raza noted, "The only groups that do not fight on the basis of religion are the drug traffickers, both Hindu and Moslem!"

Mull and Shaw related their personal experiences. Mull, a hotel management student who felt emotionally insecure by the hotel's "superficial life and lavish living," described himself as "an outcome of hippie culture." Shaw said he didn't really know why he started, whether due to a broken love affair, a failed exam, loneliness and problems with parents or by imitating western culture. The audience was impressed when Anklesaria spoke about the BPP's drug addiction program with 12 boys under treatment - many delegates were not aware of the Pun-chayet's commitment on this front.

Dr Ketayun Madon the co-ordinator of the BPP's defence and civil service program, Col R.G. Nair of the Indian Army, and C.L. Nangia, secretary

The youth respond...

The youth delegates' concern about socio-religious attitudes prompted *Parsiana* to formulate a quick questionnaire which evoked 72 responses. The questionnaire dealt only with the topics under discussion. Other traditional aspects were not polled.

- Sixty delegates felt that Parsi women married to non-Parsi should be allowed to enter agiaries, 59 approved of their presence at the doongerwadi, 68 were in favor of their attending social community functions.

- Fifty-five delegates approved of the idea that the children of Parsi women married to non-Parsi be accepted into the faith.

- Fifty-six were in favor of non-Parsi spouses attending navjotes, jashans and after death ceremonies.

- Fifty individuals opined that an adopted non-Parsi child should be initiated into the Zoroastrian faith.

- Fifty thought that these issues should be put to vote by each anju-

man and 48 agreed to abide by the majority decision.

- An overwhelming 68 people believe there is a substantial gap in the community's understanding of the Zoroastrian religion.

- Twenty-nine felt that compulsory religious classes would help; twenty-two were in favor of the Federation or the BPP preparing audiovisual or video cassettes which could be circulated to all the anjuman in India; only 10 were interested in setting up centrally located libraries and only one respondent was interested in buying books from a centralized bookstall.

- Fifty-six of the respondents said they will discuss these issues with their senior anjuman members.

Seventeen of 21 respondents to a questionnaire on employment said they held salaried jobs; two were self-employed; one had a family business and one combined job and self-employment. Eleven people were satisfied with their jobs.

general of the National Small Scale Industries Corporation, with Taleyarkhan in the chair, discussed employment opportunities. Taleyarkhan defined the problem in terms of the population explosion, natural calamities, unemployment and underemployment. Madon spoke about the facilities offered by the national civil and defence services and challenged, "Do we want only *dhansak*, *sudreh-kusti* and beer? It's a gruelling, taxing, time-consuming grind of one and a half years. But thereafter there is only one way to go - up!"

Nair extolled the benefits of a career in the armed forces. "There is a need for high quality resources - but that quality is in you," he said. Nangia detailed the facilities provided by the government for self-employment.

The youth was divided in its response. Some felt that the nitty-gritty of competition and corruption was being glossed over. Others reflected the viewpoint of the speakers - you can take a horse to water, but you can't make him drink. A large number displayed ignorance of the BPP's and the Federation's efforts in vocational guidance, coaching class subsidies for those seeking entry into professional

colleges, special coaching facilities for civil and defence services, etc. Sanobar Surti, a live wire from Poona sporting a T-shirt message "Youth can conquer the world," criticized the armed forces for discriminating against women volunteers. Roxanne Kavara of Baroda even suggested the introduction of a one year compulsory national service after school.

Welfare activities and family life education saw Trista Heerjee in the chair, modulating the discussion between Rustom Anklesaria, Delhi sociologist Ava Khullar and Prof Kaikobad. Tracing most of the community's ills to outdated or misguided attitudes, they appealed to the more enterprising youth to start discussion groups to change the attitudes of their less ambitious peers.

Arnaaz Dumasia chaired the discussion between former law secretary Rustom Gae, Keki Gandhi and legal counsel R.B. Hathikhanawala on the subject of Parsi laws of succession and marriage and the need for a law on adoption. "Does religion permit divorce?" asked Adil Master from Calcutta and Minochehr-Homji translated the question put to the bride's witness, the groom's witness and the couple

themselves in the *ashirwad* ceremony: "Do you approve of the religious covenant that we shall be together until death do us part?" Further, "Ram Yasht, para 40 notes, 'Till life subsists,'" he added. Questions with legal, sociological and psychological implications followed.

A substantial part of the discussion was devoted to the history and concept of the Adoption Bill. As currently acceptable to the community, the Bill requires that the adopted child may inherit everything from the parents except the right to be a Zoroastrian. To those who questioned such dilution Gandhi advised, "Adopt a non-Parsi child and migrate to a society where it is accepted." On the other hand Master asked, "Why don't Parsi couples have extra children and give them for adoption?"

On the last day Sethna, Madon, Kaikobad and educationist Meher Nanavatty discussed 'Excellence and Expectation.' Hoshedar Press in the chair enunciated the problems of declining levels of achievement, the loss of momentum, low self-esteem and the general belief that overachievers are born, not made, plaguing the community. Too much sheltering, fear of conflict, insufficient nurturing, psychological stress and the stifling security of the baugs were some of the causes pinpointed. "History shows that those who've struggled, have made the grade." He urged stronger religious value orientation. To counter the declining birth rate Nanavatty asked, "Why can't we allow selective admission into the community for children of Parsi women and non-Parsi fathers? I'm surprised public spirited women are not making a test case."

Col Nair who had been sitting in the audience added, "Excellence is a question of identifying what is hidden in you. There is always a tendency to succumb to laziness. The ability to fight this tendency to rest will give you a headstart. Resist the line of least resistance. Like a judo fighter, take a blow to go farther," he counselled.

"Sooner or later, the man who wins, is the one who thinks he can," added Press. "Most of you have said that what happens at Federation meetings is not circulated. Will you be guilty of the same?" challenged Gandhi. "Hold your own seminar, keep in touch, on the level of achievement and socially.

continued on page 44

The main forum for the delegates to exchange views was the unscheduled after dinner discussions

Niloofer J. Madon



Seminar sidelights

Why aren't girls who have married out of the community allowed to enter our fire-temples? Why don't our elders help out youngsters who want to be self-employed? Why don't Bombay girls want to marry persons in the mofusil areas? How can we individually prevent drug addiction in the community? How are we to know what is right or wrong in religion if the scholars themselves are not agreeable to a single viewpoint? Why is the Parsi son-in-law discriminated against under the Parsi law of inheritance?

There were so many questions, so many answers needed. Everyone was vying for the mike; everyone wanted to air their views. The Bhiwandiwalla Hall at Delhi reverberated with questions, answers, suggestions, demands and often with animated talk and laughter throughout the three days of the First All-India Zoroastrian Youth Seminar at Delhi in October, made possible by a generous (Rs 25,000) grant from the Lieutenant Governor of Delhi, H.L. Kapur in December 1986.

"I must give credit to the Delhi Parsi Anjuman. The Youth Seminar was excellent, and it has given me that feeling of security that even though we are a small community we have a good

strong hold in the country's functioning," said Eruch Irani of Poona, one of the 105 delegates at the Seminar. He was marvelling at the "casual manner" in which the delegates were taken to the Rashtrapati Bhavan to visit the President of India R. Venkataraman, the very inspirational speech given by former cabinet minister Dr Karan Singh in his opening address and the presence of member of the minorities commission Homi Taleyarkhan, throughout the three days of the Seminar.

"It was good," noted Mehernosh Mehta of Ahmednagar. "We learnt a whole lot of things. Till now the youth thought that nothing was done for them, but (with this Seminar) they have realized...If this momentum goes on there is hope for the community," he added.

For anyone who was interested, there was a very wide variety of topics discussed at the Seminar to learn from. Starting off with Zoroastrian religion and ethics, the debate focused on the problems of drug addiction, employment opportunities, welfare activities and family life education, and simplification of Parsi laws of succession, marriage and divorce.

Every session was followed by a

question and answer session. The questions were not so much a response to what had been said but were rather pre-decided queries and airing of problems and solutions, sometimes bordering on complaints. But, it was the very nature of this free-for-all that generated interest and encouraged participation. To cite an example, the gist of an argument at the session on religion went thus:

Question: Why can't non-Parsis enter our fire-temples?

Ervad Ramiyar Karanjia: Because it is essential to do the kusti before standing in front of the holy fire. Non-Parsis do not have a kusti.

Question: Nor do Zoroastrian children (whose navjote is not done), then why are they allowed to enter?

Karanjia: That is different; they are born Zoroastrian (pandemonium).

Keki Gandhi (joint honorary secretary of the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India): Agiaries are controlled by trusts and it is the trustees' prerogative to decide whether non-Zoroastrians should be allowed to enter.

Prof Noshir Kaikobad (convener of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet's family welfare and school counselling programs): An agiary does not have to be

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Karanjia greeting President Venkataraman while (from left) Rustomji and Minochehr-Homji look on

elaborate. Have a room and a fire and allow all to come and pray there.

Dastur Navrooz Minochehr-Homji of Bombay's Fasli Atash Kadeh however reiterated that the youth should not spend their time in determining the whys and why nots of rituals and traditions but must read translations of the beautiful *Gathas*, to help them in life.

A female participant decried the sexual discrimination in the army where girls can only be enlisted as nurses. One boy was disappointed that the community did not offer adequate assistance to the self-employed, while another was disgusted at the preference given to the scheduled castes and tribes in organizations. Speakers advised them not to give up hope and to fight for what they wanted, if they



Embarrassed stiffness soon turned to heartiness and bonhomie as the Seminar's three days gave ample occasion for socializing

wanted it badly enough.

Though each session was chaired by a youth of Delhi, most of the speakers were elderly and well established in their various fields. This became the thrust of complaint for most participants. A Bombay delegate thought it should have been just the opposite: "The chairpersons should have been elderly and the speakers, younger." "What I expected was more participation from the youth who would talk about their own anjumans," said Eruch Irani.

"Most delegates thought that the youth would be participating but there were hardly any youth in the panels though many wanted to speak up," says Karanjia, who himself was one of the few youngsters on the panel for Zoroastrian Ethics.

This need translated itself into after-

dinner discussions with delegates dividing themselves into groups and squatting on the lush carpets under the colorful canopy of the shamiana. Though not slated by the organizers, these discussions were the natural outcome of not having any way in which the delegates themselves could exchange viewpoints. As a delegate from Bombay said: "There are no workshops - no way to share views, no interaction between delegates except socially."

Sanobar Surty of Poona, said however: "The sessions were very informative. Speakers were very knowledgeable and they spoke very well. They threw a lot of light on a lot of things." This view was echoed by the youth organizers of the Seminar who wanted this first meeting to be a kind of an overview to familiarize the youth with all the aspects and problems faced by the community.

"The social objective was fulfilled to a very large extent," said Mehernosh Mehta according to whom the social advantages of the Seminar were considerable. For most delegates from the smaller towns, it must have been the first time they had encountered so many Zoroastrian peers in the same place, at the same time, and this opportunity was exploited to the fullest. Embarrassed stiffness soon

turned to heartiness and bonhomie as the Seminar's three days gave ample occasion for socializing.

The evening of the first day was reserved for the *Son et Lumiere* (sound and light) show at the Red Fort, where the saga of the downfall of Delhi seemed to come to life amidst the lush gardens and palaces of the ancient kings.

But by far the most memorable experience was when the delegates were taken to the beautiful Rashtrapati Bhavan for an audience and tea with the President of India and his wife, the security checks and the generous turn-out of body guards, adding to the grandeur and the mystery of the estate.

Ten minutes before the President was to arrive, the delegates were made to form a line along the periphery of the lawn. Official cameramen took their places so as to get the best possible picture of each delegate shaking hands with the leader. A television team was also present and the compere asked Dastur Minochehr-Homji to say a few words on the Seminar. According to friends and relatives the item featured on the T.V. news the same day.

A ripple of excitement went through the line as the familiar President and his wife walked towards the lawn and were greeted by Lt Gen Adi Sethna,

president of the Delhi Parsi Anjuman. Then started the long task of shaking hands, each delegate solemnly introducing himself/herself, basically quite awed by the whole event.

Numerous handshakes and introductions later, the delegates were invited to tea and snacks, graciously laid out by the liveried waiters. While the delegates partook of the feast, the President and his wife had tea with Sethna, Minochehr-Homji, Homi Taleyarkhan and Farrokh Rustomji, DPA's youth trustee while delegates took the opportunity to stand behind the seated President to pose for photographs.

After the President retired to his residence, the delegates were taken on a tour of the gardens, and of the awe inspiring audience halls and long dining rooms. But the evening had not yet ended.

From the Bhavan, the group was shepherded by the tireless and devoted organizers to the Taj Palace Hotel for a dinner hosted by the Delhi Parsi Anjuman trustee Dadi Mistry. The delegates took it upon themselves to liven the sedate atmosphere of the eatery, gyrating to the beautiful music of the live band on what was a handkerchief-sized apology for a dance floor. The evening continued,

well into the night, back at the Mengu-si Dharamshala.

The afternoon and evening of the third day were reserved for sightseeing and a valedictory cum farewell dinner where the delegates were joined by the Delhi Parsis. Not one to miss a ready opportunity, the youngsters converted the porch of the Bhiwandiwalla Hall into a dance floor, while the elders sat under the shamiana catching up on community news.

Everyone agreed the Seminar was a good beginning and that the organization was "terrific" but they also had ideas for improving the sessions at future seminars. Suggestions included fewer topics, fewer speakers and more group discussions.

Said Ramiyar Karanjia: "The last day should be reserved for the follow-up session, otherwise the entire effort (of the Seminar) will be lost. Nothing will be done later on and should be done while the mood to do things is there." Noted Navil Marker of Mhow: "I would make it compulsory for the delegates to prepare papers and each person should get an opportunity to speak. Group discussions are very, very necessary. There should be more group discussions than lectures."

A Federation of All-India Zoroastrian Youth Associations of India was

mooted by Porus Karanjawalla of Ahmedabad. No sooner had the suggestion been given, than Farrokh Rustomji asked for the names of the delegates who would like to represent their areas. Names were readily given and the new representatives decided to meet for their first session after dinner, which they did. Unfortunately, no feedback was available as to what happened at the meeting.

Observed Mehta, "Here the youth, as everywhere, were full of revolutionary ideas. The youth, has to be patient and use evolutionary ideas instead ... The Seminar will be successful if the youth who have gathered here go back and let all the youth in their areas know what has happened here, so that awareness is created."

Many delegates showed an interest in holding a youth seminar in their area, but were uncertain if they would get the cooperation of their anjuman trustees. Dilmeher Bharucha of Hyderabad and Secunderabad, while agreeing in principle that it would be possible for a youth seminar to be held in her city, said apologetically, "But we cannot do it on such a grand scale." Eruch Irani said his youth association could not afford to accommodate 150 youth delegates and he was not sure if the Poona Parsee Panchayat would help out with funds, while Ahmednagar's Mehta said that holding a youth seminar in Ahmednagar was not feasible. He added jokingly, "We would love to if we had such a generous lieutenant governor or anyone. We would definitely like to organize it with other anjumans like Poona."

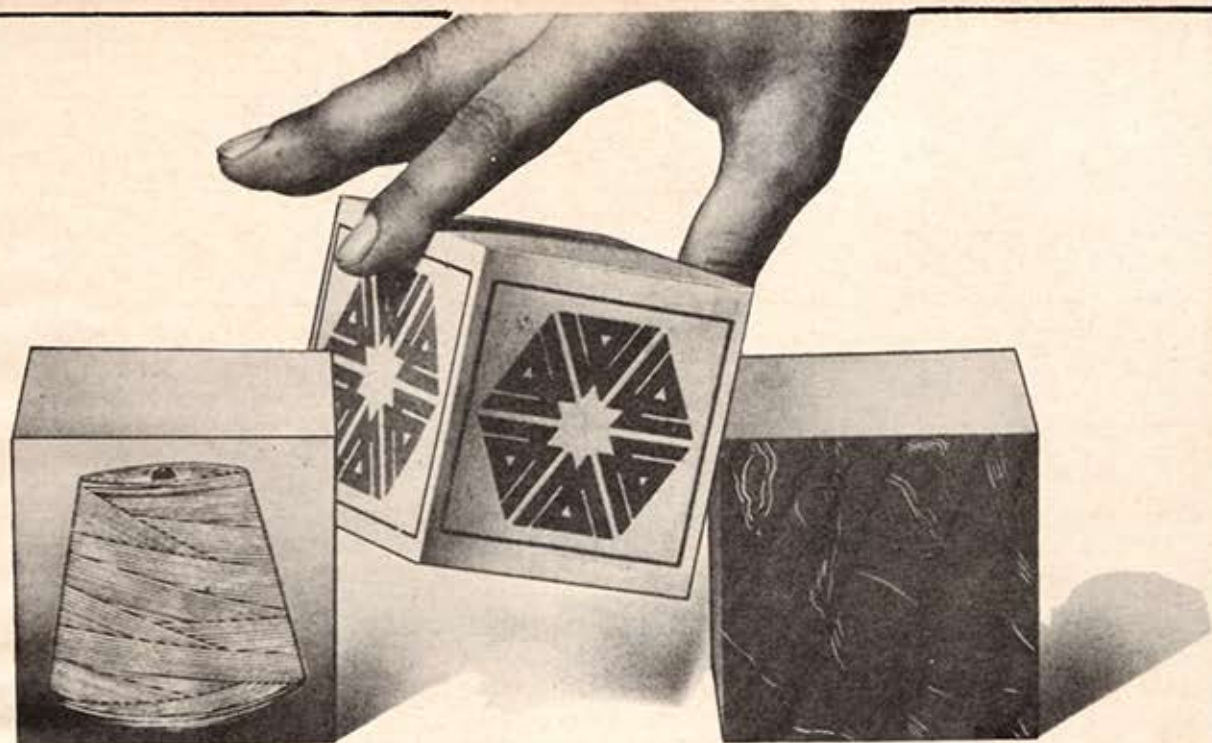
Nonetheless, the Youth Wing of the World Zoroastrian Organisation announced a one-day youth seminar in Bombay on December 6 and invited all the delegates to attend it. Shiraj Bharucha of Jamshedpur invited the youth delegates to attend the forthcoming Federation meeting at Jamshedpur over the Christmas weekend, while Gandhi promised to urge Federation representatives to bring along with them at least one youth delegate. Such tangible outcome of the Seminar threw a ray of hope for youth involvement in community affairs. As noted Prof Kaikobad in his keynote address: "Coming together is a beginning, keeping together is progress and working together is success." A beginning has been made; will it progress?

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Parinaz Toddywalla

"It was a question of survival. We had two options: to increase our business or merge with some other bank," chairman Noshir Pochkhanawala cited the reasons why The Zoroastrian Co-operative Bank has opened its doors to members of all communities.

The clearance from the Registrar of Co-operative Societies was received in 1987 after a delay of two years. Hence, it is in the Bank's diamond jubilee year that it has become "secular in effect, thereby removing some of the fetters to its expansion," Pochkhanawala noted in his chairman's speech at the last annual general meeting on October 20, 1987.

"As an enlightened community we can't afford to be sectarian in a secular state," declared the Bank's managing director Limji Mistry. While formerly, the Bank could accept only deposits from non-Zoroastrians, in future, shareholdings, membership on the board of directors and the facility of loans and advances too will be offered to all communities. Altogether the Bank has, under the revised by-laws, been permitted to offer to the public two lakh shares of Rs 25 each as its capital has been raised to Rs 50,00,000.

"The Bank did not grow all these years because it was communal," stated Rustam Gagrati who has been associated with the Bank as director for the last 37 years, serving as chairman for 14 years prior to Pochkhanawala. Rather than see it "stagnate," Gagrati had visions of improving the

Bank so that it would be rated the second best among the cooperative banks in India, the Bombay Mercantile Co-operative Bank ranking at the top.

A regular dividend of 12 percent is being paid to the shareholders and, in its diamond jubilee year, permission for an additional two percent dividend has been sought. Since it is a cooperative bank it pays one percent more as interest on deposits compared to nationalized banks. "Although there is the temptation to expand fast, we shall

expand only after taking all precautions for the safety of the depositors' money," Pochkhanawala sought to allay the shareholders' fears. "Service to our customers and to society must keep in step with expansion and so we have plans for training our staff accordingly," he said.

Applications have been made to open branches at Colaba, Dadar, Bandra, Andheri, Wadala and Sion. One such branch was opened at Gamadia Colony, Tardeo, in early 1987, to cater to the needs of the residents of Parsi colonies in that area, notes a press release issued by the Bank. "If similar premises are available in other colonies or bays, we will certainly consider opening our branches there to serve their residents," an offer was issued on behalf of the Bank.

"As we open more branches, business is bound to go up," Mistry was confident. "Mostly people select a bank which is within the vicinity of their office or residence. Besides, our publicity is very poor," admits Mistry. "In 1981 when I joined here as director (Mistry was formerly the general manager of Union Bank and had even officiated as its chief executive in the absence of the chairman and managing director) it looked more like a charity office." With the assistance of Bombay Parsi Punchayet chairman Dr Aspi Golwalla and other trustees, they were given additional space at the Zoroastrian Association Building at Horniman Circle where their head office is presently located, he informs.

Bank's head office at Zoroastrian Association Building



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Graphic A-181

The scene of operation has changed to some extent today. Along the stairway to the Bank's first floor premises, prominently positioned slogans and posters denigrate the management of the Bank. But in contrast, at the venue of the bank transactions, there is an uninhibited display of cordiality among the staff. Everyone seems to have an easy access to the other.

In India, the main offices of a bank are more pressured, Pochkhanawala remarked. "Maybe because people here have the idea that a head office is safer than a branch," unlike in England where the customer load is divided among the branches. "Consequently, there the relations are more personal," he explained. "That is how banks grew, because of relationships with people who trusted them for help. Today bankers have no time for customers. Apart from the frauds, I think the whole structure of banking is basically in a turmoil," notes Pochkhanawala, an industrial consultant whose father Sorabji, the founder of the Central Bank of India, was reportedly the first to permit Gujarati signatures in bank transactions.

"The remedial action requires change of outlook and starts at a much earlier stage. You can't make a man sit and be polite unless he's trained to adopt a civil approach," added Pochkhanawala. Nonavailability of "competent staff is a problem with all cooperative banks," Mistry regretted. "Everyone thinks of future prospects. Even retired people are reluctant to join," he lamented. Mistry's own reason for joining The Zoroastrian Co-operative Bank, serving first as



Gagrati (above) and Mistry and Pochkhanawala (alongside from left): keen to expand the Bank's business



director, then as chief executive and now as managing director, was "to serve the community," after being with the Union Bank for 43 years. "This was one Parsi institution which had the potentiality for growth and had not fared so well," Mistry commented.

Former chairman Gagrati attributes this slow pace of growth to "a conservative management, but prudent management." To substantiate his statement, Gagrati, the founder of the reputed solicitors' firm of Gagrati and Company, elaborated, "Instead of spending thousands on taxes, we would rather pay more to our labor as wages."

Thus, the management was very upset when the employees' union at the instance of some of the staff members tried to delay the opening of the Tardeo Branch by almost a year on the

grounds that "the Bank should not recruit any new personnel," in Mistry's words. The dispute went in favor of the management at the Labour Court and the Industrial Court. Since negotiations are in progress, neither Gagrati nor Mistry wished to amplify on this subject, considering this to be an episode of the past which needs to be forgotten. But Gagrati wanted to get one point across, "Parsis don't like discipline."

The Bank's high standard has earned itself an 'A' class certificate among cooperative banks in India for over 50 years, a matter reported with great pride by board colleagues Pochkhanawala, Gagrati and Mistry. Such recognition is bestowed on a bank which has a fraud-free record and an ability to maintain the required cash and reserve ratios. The Bank's other directors include vice-chairman Jehanbux Gandevia, Nanabhoy Jeejeebhoy, Cowasjee Dinshaw, Jehangir Shroff, Homa Petit, Tehmtan Andhyarujina, Homi Ranina, Bomi Bulsara, Soli Engineer and Ms Bacha Keeka. "In the sphere of banking, success cannot be attributed to any one individual's contribution. The members of the board, the staff, even the peon's role is important in the working of the bank," Mistry gave credit to all.

"The only impact we may have made to the general society is by our integrity and honesty," opined Pochkhanawala when asked to evaluate the Bank's contribution to society. Added Mistry, "Since we financed our own



Bank's directors in favor of Pochkhanawala's (standing) proposition

community and managed by ourselves, we did not make ourselves a burden on the state."

Small-time entrepreneurs who wished to start a sewing business, plying a taxi, sending *gher betha bhona* (home tiffins) have approached Zoroastrian Bank for advances of Rs 5,000, without security, but with two sureties, which is permissible. In times of sickness, on occasions like weddings and navjotes, the Zoroastrian Bank has come to their aid. "But surprisingly there are not enough coming forward (for loans)," to Pochkhanawala's dismay. He attributes this inertia to reasons like ignorance and fright. "Different vocations have had a certain amount of awe. A banker was supposed to be some sort of a mystic. People were afraid to go to bankers. Unlike other communities, most Parsi housewives think that overdraft *levanu*

do feel that extra service should be meted out to them." "Ours is a passive community," noted Pochkhanawala but then clarified, "We can be pretty agitative." He then cited the example of the annual general meetings of the Zoroastrian Bank which, with the exception of the last three years, would not extend beyond 15 minutes. "Never mind the jokes about *Parsi ni khopri* (temperament), we are basically not

"Unlike other communities, most Parsi housewives think that overdraft *levanu* is something bad"

cantankerous. The general belief is that we are reasonable and honest... There is hardly any problem of defaulters though there may be an occasional delay in repayment."

When the Bank was registered on June 17, 1927, the "intention was to help Parsis in need of money and draw them away from indigenous moneylenders who were charging high rates of interest," informed Gagrati. The main objectives of the Bank as formulated by its first managing committee - Sir Hormusji Cowasji Dinshaw (Adenwalla), Kaikhushroo R. P. Shroff, B. F. Madon, Cawasji Mahalaxmivalla, Hormusji Engineer, Rustomji Mistry, Eruchshaw Heerjibehedin, Kaikhushroo

Dadachanji, Ardeshir Godrej and Merwanji Jassawalla - were the encouragement of cooperation, thrift and self-help among its members.

"With self-employment goes the willingness to work for 24 hours, only then is success possible," Pochkhanawala pointed out, referring to the present inclination to work for fixed hours at specified salaries. "Today's youth is willing to settle for a table job for a pay of Rs 1,500 per month rather than earn Rs 100 a day even if he is moderately efficient at jobs like that of a carpenter, plumber, electrician," Pochkhanawala continued. "The present generation has started taking life easy. Those with talent and qualifications are going abroad..." Mistry trailed off.

"Parsis today are less enterprising," reiterated Pochkhanawala. "A person who has less to lose is usually more adventurous. Once the status, the standard of living, the family has stabilized, there is fear of losing what is already obtained. I get many non-Parsis here who are on the lookout for Parsi partners, but Parsi partners are not to be found. This is the confidence Parsis enjoy. But a Parsi, in his turn, doesn't trust others," Pochkhanawala stated matter-of-factly. The Zoroastrian Co-operative Bank has offered to finance those who approach it for help "if the proposition is sound, not just because they are Parsis."

"As many Parsis as possible should have an account with this Bank," pursued Pochkhanawala, "because the more money we have in our accounts, the more we can give..."



Above and right:
servicing the Bank's customers

(being indebted) is something bad."

As a "small man's bank," the needs of Parsi Zoroastrians for various purposes like "business, self-employment, industry, trade, religious ceremonies, consumer articles, education, acquisition of residential premises or their repair and other domestic needs," have been met, Gagrati had said in his chairman's speech in 1984.

The relationship between the management and the shareholders is a "very happy one" beamed a satisfied Mistry: "Parsis are excellent in their dealings, very cooperative and (there is) no problem of bad debts. Generally they are not demanding though some



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Few presentations – either on celluloid or in literature – have tried to scratch beneath the surface, and discover the real mental makeup or the inner consciousness of the community. The image of a bumbling, genial soul, fuelled by the way the Parsi has projected himself through Adi Marzban kind of comedies, has persisted. This season, we have, however, witnessed a rash of “know-thy-neighborhood-friendly-Parsi-better” syndrome: David Hardiman has demolished the image of a benevolent Parsi in his work, *The Coming of the Devi* (Oxford University

Press, 1987), where, researching through history, he avers that Parsi landowners in the twenties were the most rapacious and lascivious of the lot; Gieve Patel has returned after a five-year sabbatical since *Savaksha* with yet another scathing play, *Mister Behram*, that explores the interrelationship between a Parsi landlord and his adopted Warli son, and the British overlords; while an expatriate, Rohinton Mistry, has recounted from Canadian shores, *Tales from Ferozeshah Baag*, lending an enchantment caused by his distance from the community.

Even the film medium, which has so

far, probably because of the great financial risks involved, stuck to the stereotype image, has finally broken away. Vijaya Mehta has completed her film, *Pestonjee* (whose making we had carried in *Parsiana* August 1987), and brought to the screen a bitter-sweet ‘comedy’ – if one can call it so – on Parsis, reflecting the ethos of the community, its lifestyle, its morals and manners, and its myriad moods.

Pestonjee is a tour de force – it explores convincingly the way in which a Parsi reacts to life – and B.K. Karanjia’s tender story, and total involvement in screenplay and dialogue bear

Pestonjee is presentable

Setting aside the Parsi stereotypes, Vijaya Mehta’s *Pestonjee* brings to the screen the ethos and mood of the community

Homi J. Rogers

*Pestonjee and Jeroo played by
Anupam Kher and Shabana Azmi*





Alongside (from left)
Karanjia, Mehta and Naseeruddin
Shah on the sets of Pestonjee.

upon this entirely true-to-type creation. The actors too have lent tremendous support. Naseeruddin Shah as Pirojsha, from whose point of view the story unfolds, has imbibed all the mannerisms of a Parsi – the center parting of hair, the ticks and twitches, the gentle and constant stoop, the nervous blinking of eyes – to get under the skin of the character he portrays. Pirojsha is a moralistic, old-world Parsi, a chronic grumbler, who considers himself the conscience-keeper of the neighborhood and especially, of his dear friend, Pestonjee (played by Anupam Kher, yet another talented star in the firmament). He manages Pestonjee's accounts, files clippings of serialized fiction from *Jam-e-Jamshed* for his friend, and continues to advise him (Pesi) on his marital conduct and the adjustments he would have to make for the sake of Jeroo (Shabana Azmi), a hoity-toity girl from Aden, who loves Ronald Colman movies, and is ensnared in her own romantic memories and dreams of becoming a concert pianist. Piroj has fallen in love with Jeroo from the time the *kajwali* (matchmaker, played by Mehra Vakil) has showed her to him, but has lost her to his best friend, Pesi, due to hesitation on his part ("Such a beautiful girl for me?... The piano will come with her; where shall I keep it?") Piroj, however, does not let this affect the friendship. He even chaperones the couple as they court among statues and picture-frames at the Ripon Club (no, there is no singing and dancing around the venerable elders), and drives them down to the Fasli Agiary,

whose imposing facade is lovingly photographed, while the *boi ghantas* (bell rings at the time of changing of *gahs* – five parts into which a day is divided) waft through on the sound track.

The loss of Jeroo, and the appearance of a new boss who asks Piroj to doctor the company's accounts (the Parsi trait of honesty at its fore) prompt him to seek a transfer to his branch office at Bhusaval. From here, he writes long letters to his two most favorite people on earth – Pesi and Jeroo – and prays regularly for their health and happiness. He even comes down to Bombay to play with their little child, which, from Pesi's letter to him should have been born by then, but which Jeroo had miscarried due to her fear of childbirth and her distaste for children. Piroj sees a completely different Jeroo from the one he had loved. A cantankerous, crabby, much harried and harrying Jeroo has transplanted the "*ketli meethi che* (sweet and mild-mannered)" Jeroo, who pouted with oomph and affection, who played the piano with innate ease and charm, and who, with her movie-and-dance every fortnightly Saturday ritual, breathed an air of *joie de vivre*.

Despite being summarily rebuffed by Jeroo in a truly heart-rending scene, Piroj maintains his love for her, and attributes the change in her to his friend's dalliance with the brassy, party-hopping Soona, vivaciously played by Kiran Thakursingh Kher. But Soona, as Piroj is to discover in the denouement, is not the embodiment of evil. It is Jeroo's nature ("She

is happiest when she is unhappy") that is responsible for Pesi's straying away. The truth changes Piroj: he realizes that life is not as straight as he is, and that people have a right to live life their own way. As he hobbles away into the sunset, he spares a smile for a beachside waif, whom he earlier would shoo away. The metamorphosis is complete.

Woven into this simplistic story (more a chain of incidents in the lives of two friends) is the ambience of the Parsi world of the late fifties and early

He realizes that life is
not as straight as he
is, and that people
have a right to live
life their own way

sixties: the man Friday, Chhagan (played with just the right touch by Chandu Parkhi), the old-world values and moralistic stands, the decadent yet ostentatious grandeur of Parsi homes, complete with statues and chandeliers and the ubiquitous piano. The dialogues match the mood and are a happy blend of sing-song Parsi-Gujarati and Hindi: a *dhanshak* of sorts which does not detract from the flow of the story by being smartly clever and drawing uninvited attention to itself. Shah is consistent in his dialogue delivery, while Kher, occasionally lapses on his dialect diction, probably the only weak note in an otherwise competent performance. Azmi, as Jeroo, passes muster: she is excellent as the not-so-young girl from Aden being courted by Pesi, and silently worshipped by Piroj; but a trifle unconvincing as the hysterical widow. Shah dominates the film head-over-shoulders above the rest, as he goes through his role with studied ease, simulating deftly the pains and pangs of an aging cynical bachelor.

The Parsi cast too lend excellent support. Veera Sorabjee, a theater

veteran, contributes to the lighter moments as a deaf old *fui* (aunt), while Farrokh Mehta, Vijaya's husband, puts in an utterly charming cameo appearance as Keikobad, the family retainer, with a penchant for saying the most unwanted things on an occasion. Together with Dadi Sarkari, playing Jeroo's father, the famous caterer Badshah, Sorabjee and Mehta render a medley of Parsi popular songs, including *Mara pappani chhé ghoda-gadi* (my father owns a carriage) which should have Parsi audiences joining in, wreathed in smiles of nostalgia and cheer. Dastur Navrooz Minochehr-Homji too puts in a fine appearance, playing himself, and reciting in his mellifluous voice the Avestan prayers.

Pestonjee recreates the world of Parsis with all their fun and foibles. Meticulous in its details, the director's verisimilitude is apparent in every frame. Probably, it would seem like nit-picking, but the only flaws one could detect in this transcreation of the late '50s, were of Piroj reading *The Economic Times*, which was not around then, and clipping from a tabloid-size *Jam-e-Jamshed* which, till recently,

was published as a broadsheet newspaper. And, since when, did good Parsi girls go to the agiary on every Bahman *roj*? We thought that the angel Behram held this honor all along.

Pestonjee is Mehta's valentine to the community. Made as a telefilm, it may be aired on the National Network in February, according to some sources. Karanjia was away at the Filmotsav '88 at the time of writing this piece, but *Screen*, the film trade weekly he edits, informs us that the film would first be sent to Cannes as the national entry before it is screened locally. A foreign award or two would raise its box office value, and even help in finding a distributor. It is a film that deserves a vast viewing.

Postscript

At the time of going to press, we learn that *Pestonjee* may be released commercially in Bombay by May 1988. Maneck Sidhwa of Globe Theatres (the owners of a chain of theaters in India) is suggesting a morning-show release, and the National Film Development Corporation (NFDC) would simultaneously screen *Pestonjee* at the state-run theater in Bombay.

READERS' FORUM

continued from page 3

with their hair open? Can they not tie them into a knot or put on a scarf so as not to allow the hair to fall in the sacred house of Dadar Ahura Mazda? Nails and hair are *naso* (impure); we must cut them and destroy them.

Do we go to the fire-temple to pray or do we go to see our atash with faces painted like dolls? Can we not go without lipstick, powder and paint for one hour? I, for one, make use of all these, but there is a time and right moment for it.

Now, after the death of a loved one, the face is shown to non-Parsis. Is this fair to our departed? Those who come, do so not out of respect for the dead person but because the surviving son or relative is a big shot.

Our noble ancestors left Iran to preserve our religion. Do you think they were moral cowards to leave their womenfolk behind and then intermarry with others? Never!

Ms SHIRIN COOPER
Secunderabad

Edited by Arnavaz S. Mama



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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 Parsi marriages was made available to us by the Bombay High Court. The list of inter-community marriages will be made available to us from the Registrar of Marriages only in February, courtesy Ms Silloo Kavarana.

The information gathered is not always uniform. For example, the list of Bombay deaths pertains overwhelmingly to those who were consigned to the *dokhmas*, 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 case of outstation anjumans we have incorporated news of happenings which may be considered dated.

Marriages of intercommunity 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 26 of the 78 Parsis who died in Bombay. The next most important killers were debility and old age (claiming 11), cancer and pneumonia (six each), lung disease (four), paralytic stroke and accidents (three each). Kidney failure, septicemia, diabetes, and asthma claimed isolated victims.

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.

BOMBAY Born

A boy to *Khurshid* and *Parvez Katrak* on December 2, 1987
A girl to *Lilly* and *Dosu Patel*; December 2
A boy to *Nilofer* and *Kayomerz Fataki*; December 6
A girl to *Jasmine* and *Jehangir Dastoor*; December 7
A boy to *Shirin* and *Dinyar Lala*; December 7
A girl to *Maharukh* and *Maneck Katpatia*; December 10
A boy to *Nergish* and *Robert Weissberg*; December 10
A girl to *Nilofer* and *Kersi Desai*; December 12

A girl, *Mahtab*, to *Khurshid* and *Mahiar Panthaki*; December 13
A girl to *Anahita* and *Sam Lentin*; December 17
A boy to *Farida* and *Rusi Patel*; December 17
A boy to *Arnavaz* and *Ariez Kharas*; December 18
A boy to *Mannaz* and *Iranpur Demehri*; December 20
A girl to *Ayesha* and *Adi Madan*; December 23
A boy to *Marukh* and *Nevil Bhagat*; December 24
A girl to *Zeenobia* and *Vestas Kaikobad*; December 26
A boy to *Pervin* and *Behram Mistry*; December 26

Married

Benifer Rustomji Disawalla and *Porus Homi Irani*; October 9
Farida Firoze Vakil and *Noshir Dosabhai Karbhari*; November 5
Kashmira Keki Elavia and *Hirji Burjorji Elavia*; November 16
Persis Behram Tarapore and *Sarosh Keki Mistry*; November 17
Dinaz Jehangir Gazder and *Adil Faramroz Sethna*; November 26
Kashmira Faredoon Madon and *Jimmy Pervaz Mehta*; November 27
Feroza Phiroze Bativala and *Maneck Behram Unwala*; November 27
Armaity Hormasji Santoke and *Rohinton Jehangir Dumasia*; December 1
Shenaz Parvez Mistry and *Cyrus Homi Bhote*; December 3
Nazneen Phiroze Bhatena and *Percy Minocher Bilimoria*; December 3
Rukshana Dorab Dhabhar and *Mehernosh Noshirvan Bharucha*; December 4
Shernaz Beheramsha Sadri of *Navsari* and *Cyrus Ramyar Sukheswala*; December 4
Mani Phiroze Daruwalla and *Khushroo Burjor Bandrawalla*; December 5
Ketayun Shapur Sethna and *Farhad Dhun Irani*; December 5
Homa Kekhushru Kaviani Jopari and *Eruch Mervan Jadidi* of *Secunderabad*; December 5
Benaifer Dadi Dadrewalla and *Phiroze Noshir Karanjia*; December 6
Roshni Homi Marker and *Jamshed Jal Sadri* of *Kanpur*; December 7
Bakhtaver Khurshed Desai and *Kerman Dhunjishaw Wadia* of *Secunderabad*; December 7
Dinaz Noshir Pardivala of *London* and *Darayush Kaikhusrow Zaq*; December 7
Benaifer Lavji Porbunderwalla and *Limji Phiroze Elavia*; December 8

Homai Faredoon Yazdan and *Sorab Gustad Irani* (*Hamavand*); December 8
Anaita Parvez Thanevala and *Meher Noshir Sethna*; December 8
Zenobia Homi Maneckji and *Darayas Firoze Patel*; December 10
Zarine Jal Vandrewala and *Phiroze Rustom Taraporewala*; December 10
Niloufer Aspandiar Shokrehkuda and *Jamshed Merwan Irani* of *Poona*; December 11
Maharukh Firoze Dubash of *Navsari* and *Khurshed Darabsha Avari*; December 12
Kashmira Shiwak Mistry and *Rustom Melhi Kambata* of *Poona*; December 12
Rashna Tehmurasp Asli and *Gev Eruch Mistry*; December 12
Freny Mancheshah Bharucha and *Freddy Keki Bhadha*; December 13
Feroza Noshir Kavarana and *Percy Bomi Dubash*; December 13
Havovi Nadar Karva and *Phiroze Jehangir Sethna*; December 13
Roshan Minoo Udwadia and *Kaizad Keki Bhatena*; December 14
Purveen Noshir Jesia and *Jehangir Homi Canteenwalla*; December 14
Maharukh Godrej Dadina and *Darayas Firoze Pajnigar*; December 14
Zarin Bhikhoo Gandevis and *Feroze Homi Sukhia*; December 14
Delna Ratan Surveyor and *Tushad Khurshed Cooper*; December 15
Khurshed Padam Palia and *Jamshed Jehangir Mehta*; December 15
Mahatab Dinshaw Sarooshi and *Bomi Jamshed Irani*; December 16
Sherry Bomy Ghaswala and *Mehernosh Keki Dumasia*; December 17
Aban Kersasp Jilla and *Hoshedar Nari Contractor*; December 18
Arnavaz Dadiba Fataki and

Khushroo Manek Jivaasha; December 18
Dilshad Tehmurasp Patel and Hoshidar Tehmurasp Tamboli; December 18
Neelam Bomi Darukhanawalla of Bangalore and *Darius Dinshaw Daruwalla* of New York; December 19
Zarine Kaikhushroo Kotwal and Feroz Framroze Katrak; December 22
Parizad Ardeshtir Nadodvala and Khushroo Firoze Pardiwalla; December 22
Jeroo Soli Daboo and Ness Dara Buhariwala; December 24
Leena Manek Charna and Dinshaw Faquirji Contractor of Poona; December 25
Bakhtawar Pherozesha Chinoy and Rustom Kekiobad Sethna; December 25
Shaeroo Viraf Dehnugara and Kersi Bahadur Wadia; December 25
Shiraz Bhimji Bhagat and Yezdi Kaiky Maravala; December 27
Shiraz Kersi Bhagat and Rohinton Minocher Behramsha; December 28
Daisy Minoo Wadia of Nargol and *Hormaz Rustom Nargolwala*; December 28
Dinaz Jal Dumasia and Nozer Edul Kanga; December 29

Died

Jal Burjorji Khambata (71), residing at 32/33, Bhaveshwar Niketan, August Kranti Marg, 400036; November 30
Savak Nadirshaw Mithaiwala (68), 6, Avon Hse, Nanabhai Lane, Fort, 400001; November 30
Mani Minoo Fraser (67), T-4, Cusrow Baug, Colaba, 400039; December 1
Rustom Ardeshtir Lentin (70), 7, Kotwal Mans, Proctor Rd, Grant Rd, 400007; December 1
Motamai Rustomji Balsara (75), 10/A, Maydock Apts, 7 Bungalows, Andheri 400058, December 2
Cooma Noshirwan Dalal (85), United Chambers, Grant Rd, 400007; December 2

Mani Faredoon Motafram (71), 22-A, Peridot, Perry Cross Rd, Bandra, 400050; December 2
Framroz Behramji Panthaki (78), Mota Mans, Opp Bhatia Hosp, Tardeo, 400007; December 2
Burjorji Limjibhai Pagdiwalla (85), G-53, Cusrow Baug, Colaba, 400039; December 3
Aloo Adi Wadia (79), La-Palmas, Little Gibbs Rd, 400006; December 3
Adi Merwanji Ghadially (55), 2, Petit Chawl, Balaram St, Grant Rd, 400007; December 4
Avanbai Darashaw Kapadia (99), F-10, Cusrow Baug, Colaba; 400039; December 5
Manek Rustomji Kavasmanek (76), C/o Jal Thanawalla, 24 Hughes Rd, 400007; December 5
Hormasji Ardeshtir Khandhadia (82), Tarachand Bldg, Chikalwadi, Tardeo, 400007; December 5
Khodamurad Merwan Akkham (80), Macavee Mans, Rustom Sidhwa Marg, Fort, 400001; December 6
Homi Dhunjibhoy Contractor (86), Victoria Bldg, Bombay Samachar Marg, Fort, 400001; December 6
Dinbai Jalejar Daruwalla (87), Makavi Mans, Gunbow St, Fort, 400001; December 6
Adil Dadi Mistry (20), 4, Panthaky Baug, Andheri 400069; December 6
Kuvarbai Framroz Patel (77), 31 Petit Widows' Chawl, Mody Street, Fort, 400001; December 6
Noshirwan Jehangir Virji (82), Indira Niwas, 44 Forjett St, Gowalia Tank Rd, 400036; December 6
Humayun Behram Afrinameh (59), C-2, Jer Baug, Byculla, 400027; December 8
Burjorji Pirojshah Bharucha (90), New Moti Mhl Soc, Mahim, 400016; December 8
Dr Rustom Jamshedji Katrak (87), Edena, 97, M. Karve Rd, 400020; December 8
Banoo M. Adenwalla (78), 3, Petit Bldg, J. Petit St, Grant

Rd, 400007; December 10
Nergesh Bahadur Todiwalla (67), 801, Coover Villa, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; December 10
Mahiar Cawasji Panthaky (78), 614, Jam-e-Jamshed Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; December 11
Jaloo Dhunjishaw Garda (70), 614, Jam-e-Jamshed Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; December 12
Najamai Pestonjee Jerfoo (86), 4, Petit Blocks, Balaram St, Grant Rd, 400007; December 12
Darabshaw Hormusji Mistry (94), 13/3, Old Khareghat Clny, Hughes Rd, 400007; December 12
Hormusji Nanabhai Scrivalla (86), Kahanaya Kunj, 6, Worli Sea Face, 400025; December 12
Kersi Feredun Bharda (43), 18 Madhav Apts, Kastur Park, Borivli, 400092; December 13
Dali Jalejar Marolia (55), 7, Adenwalla Bldg, Old Wadia Chawl, Chandanwadi, 400002; December 13
Nariman Edulji Malesra (72), 784, Patel Home, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; December 14
Jal Naoroji Vazifdar (73), 12, Gamadia Clny, Tardeo, 400007; December 14
Pirojsha Dinsha Avasia (68), B-19, Keval Mhl, 64 Marine Drive, 400020; December 15
Bachubai H. Daruwalla (86), D/4, Bhiwandiwalla Ter, Dhobi Talao, 400002; December 15
Dhun Darab Mirza (75), B/9, Indra Darshan, 4 Bungalows, Andheri 400058; December 15
Dina Phiroze Billimoria (69), E/18, Rustom Baug, Byculla, 400027; December 16
Nargis Manchershaw Sabawalla (67), Soonawalla Bldg, Proctor Rd, Grant Rd, 400007; December 16
Shirin Dhanjishaw Surty (83), 4 Dinbai Petit Chawl, Balaram St, Grant Rd, 400007; December 16
Homai Eruchshaw Bharucha (83), Tardeo Chmbs, B Block, Kasinath St, 400034;

December 17
Eruchshaw Byramshaw Patel (90), 35 Hirabai Petit Bldg, Grant Rd, 400007; December 18
Jaijee Darabshaw Batliwala (87), 4 Patel Chmbs, Gunbow St, Fort, 400001; December 19
Fardoon Jalbhoy Gazdar (82), 25, Meherzin, Colaba, 400005; December 19
Noshir Rustom Irani (47), Room 52, 9-B, Wadia Hse, Fort, 400001; December 19
Nariman Khodadad Kasmabadi (40), C-4, Hari-Om Apts, Borivli 400092; December 19
Tehmina Meherjibhai Mistry (80), 13 Kaka Bldg, 649, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; December 19
Jehangir Rustomji Bagli (58), 3 Colaba Chmbs, Wodehouse Rd, Colaba, 400005; December 20
Sam Eruch Dadabhoy (66), 102, Coronation Mans, Dadar, 4000014; December 20
Dinyar Jehanbax Khandadia (31), X 87/5, Godrej Staff Qrs, Vikhroli, 400079; December 20
Phiroze Bhikhaji Daruwalla (82), Dina Lodge, Garden Rd, Colaba, 400039; December 21
Noshir Kaikhushroo Irani (65), Jehangir Mans, 1st Marine St, 400020; December 21
Freny Shavak Patel (62), Swasheraya Co-op Hsg Soc, 47, Juhu Cross Lane, 400058; December 21
Faramroz Cawasji Pithawalla (65), 730, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; December 21
Jerbai Navroji Readymoney (94), 66-E, Next to Parsi Agiary, August Kranti Marg, 400036; December 21
Adi Gustadji Subawalla (55), E-10, Captain Clny, Tardeo, 400034; December 21
Minocher Kaikobad Batliwala (88), 30, Sleater Rd, 400007; December 23
Khorshed Padam Daruwalla (69), 4, Shelly's Est, Ramchandra Marg, December 24
Dinshaw Sorabji Gai (65), 635, Mistry Bldg, Dhobi

Talao, 400002; December 24
Hillamai Noshirwan Sidhwa
 (82), Sidhwa Bldg, Balaram
 St, 400007; December 24
Najamai M. Tantra (90),
 Ramesh Bldg, Powalla St,
 Grant Rd, 400007;
 December 24
Dara Jamshedji Bilal (53),
 401, Namdar Hse, Hill Rd,
 Bandra, 400050; December 25
Khorshed E. Mistry (76), Lady
 Sakarbai Block, Gilder Lane,
 Tardeo, 400008; December 25
Freny Dosabhoj Patel (77), 6,
 Sir Ratan Tata Clny, Tardeo,
 400034; December 25
Bamanshaw Kaikhashroo
Vakil (75), Vatcha Gandhi
 Bldg, Block 3, B. Jaykar
 Marg, 400002; December 25
Sapal Kawasji Billimoria (70),
 604/B, Laxmi Sadan, Dadar,
 400014; December 26
Banoo Homi Engineer (66), 4,
 Petit Block, Balaram St,
 Grant Rd, 400007;
 December 26
Alamai Kaikashroo Bhesania

(78), N-2, Nowroze Baug,
 Lalbaug, 400012;
 December 27
Hira Byramji (79), Putla
 Mans, 11, Darabshaw Rd, Off
 Napean Sea Rd, 400036;
 December 27
Banoobai Nariman Elavia
 (63), Burjor Bldg, Wadia St,
 Tardeo, 400034; December 27
Kobad Kekashru Panthaki
 (75), Parukh Dharamshalla,
 34, Hughes Rd, 400007;
 December 27
Pesi Khurshedji Bala (62),
 Fatima Villa, 2nd Pandya
 Lane, Santa Cruz 400054;
 December 28
Dr Burjor Edulji Daruwalla
 (87), Karai Est, Flat A,
 Tardeo Rd, 400007;
 December 28
Nariman Framji Ghista (89),
 44, Jubilee Darshan, Yari Rd,
 Versova, 400061;
 December 28
Soonabai Jehangirji Dadyseth
 (95), Belle View, 15, Warden
 Rd, 400026; December 30

Tehmina Cooverji Mistry (79),
 C/o D.C. Press, Singapur
 Bldg, 609, Girgaum, 400002;
 December 30
Nadir Cawasji Sethna (83),
 Rabro Hse, 57 Colaba
 Causeway, 400039;
 December 30
Sheroo K. Kias (55), Lotlikar
 Bldg, Chira Bazar, 400002;
 December 31

CALCUTTA

Married

Kashmira Choksey, daughter
 of Mehru and Adi and *Rumi*
Patel, son of Gool and
Jehangir; December 27

HOBOKEN, NEW JERSEY

Died

Navroze Mody (30), son of
Khorshed and *Jamshid*, and
 brother of *Diane* and *Perviz*;
 October 1

KARACHI

Died

Putlamai Minoo Karanjia (76);

October 2
Daulat Sorabji Shahookar
 (67); October 17
Khorshed Framji Sethna (59);
 November 1
Darbsha Dinsha Bhagalia
 (90); November 9

NEW YORK

Born

A girl, *Fria*, to *Khurshid* and
Faroque Tarapore; October 12

CORRECTION

A girl was born to *Zeno-*
bia and *Zubin Lakda-*
walla on October 25.
 The father's name was
 mistakenly printed as
Kersi in *Parsiana*,
 November 1987. The
 error is regretted.

Compiled by Roxana H. Kaka



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THERMAX

MEETING OF MINDS

continued from page 24

Otherwise the youth of the community will be guilty of the same errors as laid at the door of the elders."

For about an hour and half, at the invitation of chairman Rustomji and panelists Dumasia, Hirjee, Khambatta and Shirin Sethna, the delegates voiced their opinions. Burzin Khan and Khurshid Dadabhoy of the World Zoroastrian Organisation's (WZO) youth wing invited the delegates to a one day seminar being planned by the WZO in Bombay on December 6. The Jamshedpur delegate invited them to the Federation meeting scheduled to be held there in December. The atmosphere was charged with enthusiasm and bonhomie when Rustom Anklesaria of Poona sang his vote of thanks on behalf of the delegates to the thumping of the podium, with the audience stamping and clapping in harmony to endorse his statements. A visibly moved Rustomji rose to share the credit with his team, thanked Sethna for his guidance, Bagli for the capable management, Dadi Mistry for his generous hosting of the Taj dinner.

"Keep abreast of changes taking place; let not national progress overtake you," advised Lt Governor H.L. Kapur at the valedictory dinner and sanctioned another grant of Rs 25,000 from the Delhi Administration to the DPA. A standing ovation greeted his generosity, for the present seminar had been possible thanks to an equal earlier grant by the governor. After a distribution of prizes for academic dis-

tingtion and tokens of appreciation to the DPA's three mobeds - Sorab Govadia, Cawas Bagli and Jamshed Dhabar - Dadi Mistry brought the three-day event to a close. Mistry, who noted that the youth seminar had germinated from an exchange of ideas between Prof Kaikobad and DPA secretary Rustom Daroga at the Dar-e-

"Why don't Parsi couples have extra children and give them for adoption?"

Meher's silver jubilee celebrations in December 1986, recorded the generous financial and service support of community activists from all over the country.

"In the last week there was so much response we had to finally say 'no' to a few people and issue a clarification in the Parsi Press saying we regret we can't accept any more registrations," recalled Rustomji after the show. Though there had been disappointments - people like legal luminary Nani Palkhivala, Dr Mehroo Bengalee, supreme court counsel Fali Nariman had not been able to accept the DPA invitation to address the youth - Rustomji was happy with the outcome: "For the first time the youth were able to speak."

Learning from experience, Rustomji says he'd restrict the topics on a fu-

ture occasion, allowing "the most pressing problems to be talked threadbare, leave more time for discussion." Rustomji referred happily to the Social Center Committee whose chairman Rustom Daroga has young people helping him in his responsibility for holding social functions where 75 per cent of Delhi's Zoroastrian youth meet regularly. Appreciating the quiet moral support extended by the senior trustees of the DPA without intruding with unsought advice or criticism, Rustomji wished other anjumans could provide the same atmosphere to their youth. "We talk of lack of progress, funds within the community. But all can be changed if we have the right attitude." All the expenses of this Seminar were met from donations, he observed.

"We worked as a good team," says Arnaaz Dumasia, adding, "We didn't know things were so difficult (to organize)!" The initial intention had been to break up the delegates into groups, each led by a Delhi-ite. It was one of the suggestions from the seniors that the youth committee rejected because they found the implementation too difficult, she said.

Dumasia found a few people very progressive but said she was surprised with the orthodoxy of the conservatives. Pointing to the inconsistencies in community thinking she laughs, "We pride ourselves on being broad-minded!" The community claims a "false sense of superiority, then asks for reservation. We should stick to our standards. Is the strength of the religion so weak that the power of the fire would be weakened by a few non-Parsis?" She particularly questions the injustice meted out to Parsi girls marrying out of the community. "Parsi girls maintain Parsi traditions more than the boys. Why then this partiality?" she asks.

The potentialities for intermarriage in Delhi are so great - there are only three or four boys of marriageable age in Delhi against 15 to 20 girls," says Veraf Khambatta who is concerned about people marrying out. Khambatta expected greater discussion on the problems of religion, divorce and intermarriage. Anticipating a meeting of the organizing committee shortly to assess its own performance, Khambatta says, "We'll go to the WZO seminar to see how they do it. Then check out the shortfalls here."

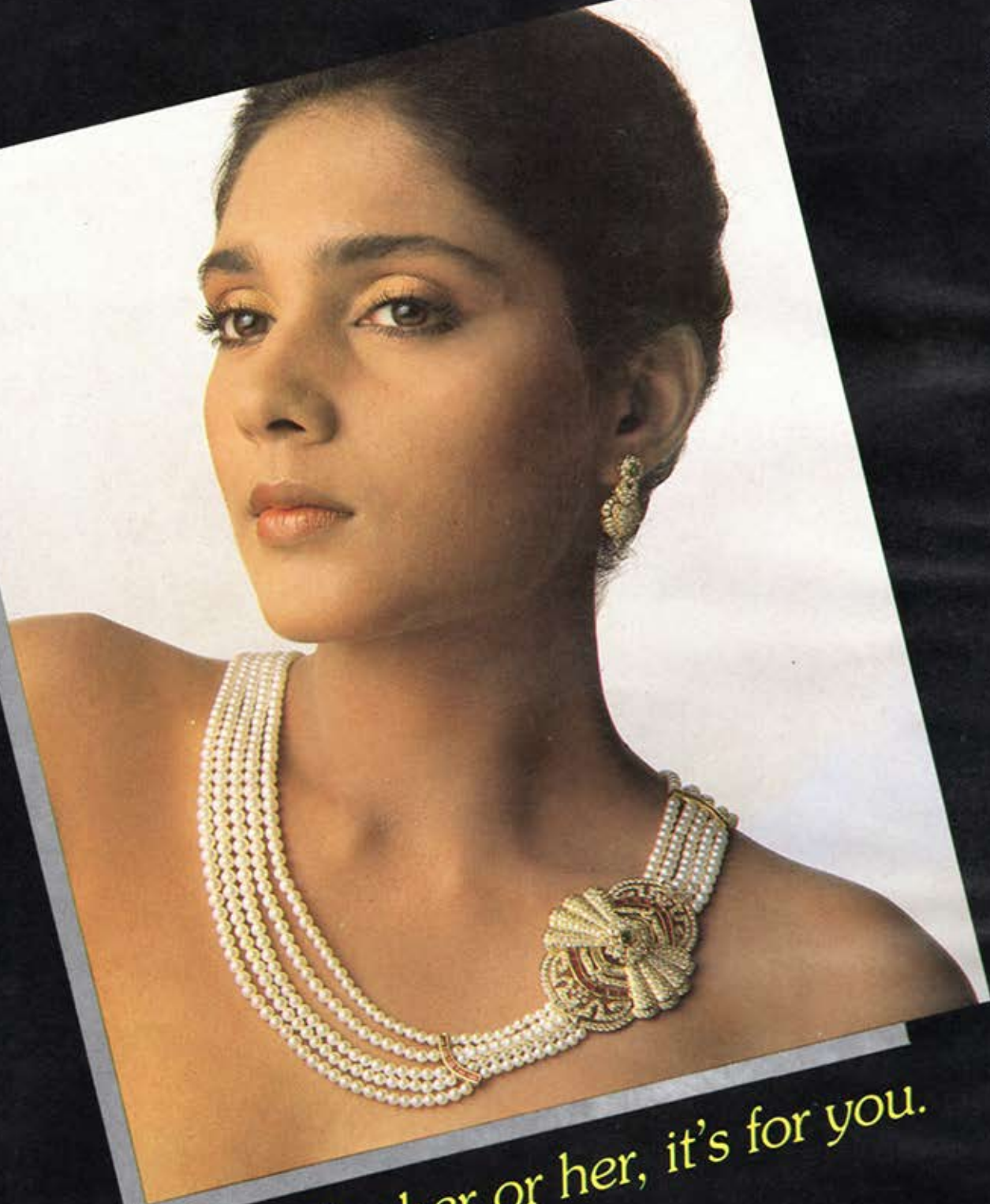
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