

Parsiāna

MARCH 1988 Rs 7



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Parsiana

March 1988
Volume 10 Number 9

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DESIGN ASSISTANTS Kranti Shilotri,
Varghese Fernandez, Deborah Fernandes
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The article *Parsiana* carried in the August 1987 issue titled "The Last Israp," raised a lot of interest in the community about the Israps. The author of the piece, Rignaj Letap, was in Bombay recently to research the habits and customs of the now extinct Israps. *Parsiana* met Letap at his hotel room and interviewed him on his forthcoming book, *Israp Customs: The Path to Extinction* (published by Patel Publishers, London, Pp 420, £40).

Parsiana: What aroused your interest in Israp studies? Many people consider it a waste of time to study a species

that wasn't even fit enough to survive. *Letap*: On the contrary, we can learn a lot from the mistakes of others. My interest in the Israps is not purely academic. The United Nations is keen to know why some communities thrive and flourish and others die out. They want to see if there is a formula for success and a formula for failure.

Parsiana: Well, is there?

Letap: The formula for success we still have to find, but the Israps may provide the formula for failure.

Parsiana: How is that?

Letap: You see, the behavior of the Israps followed fixed patterns. Every time the Israps were faced with a cri-

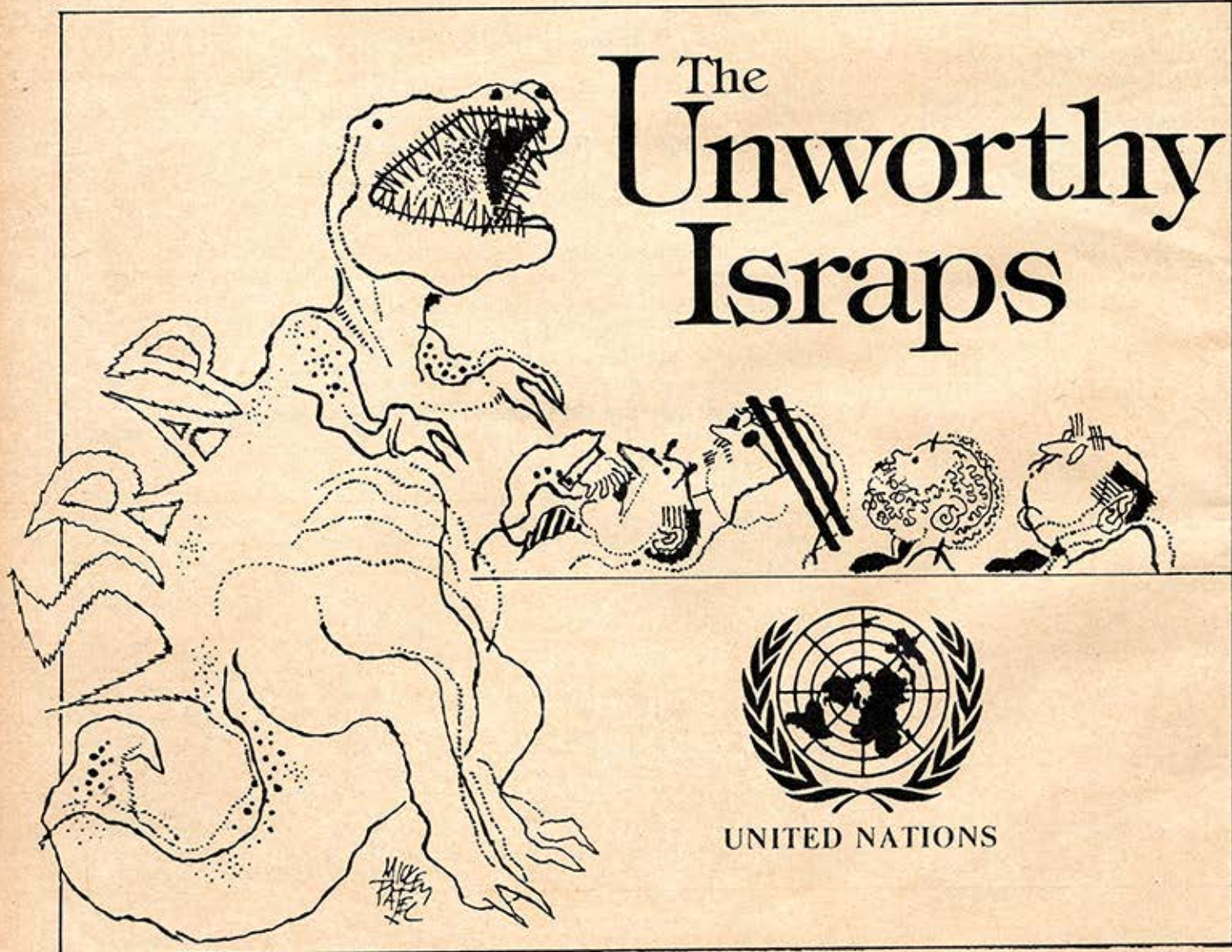
sis, every time the reality of extinction dawned upon them, they responded in such a way as to ensure their doom.

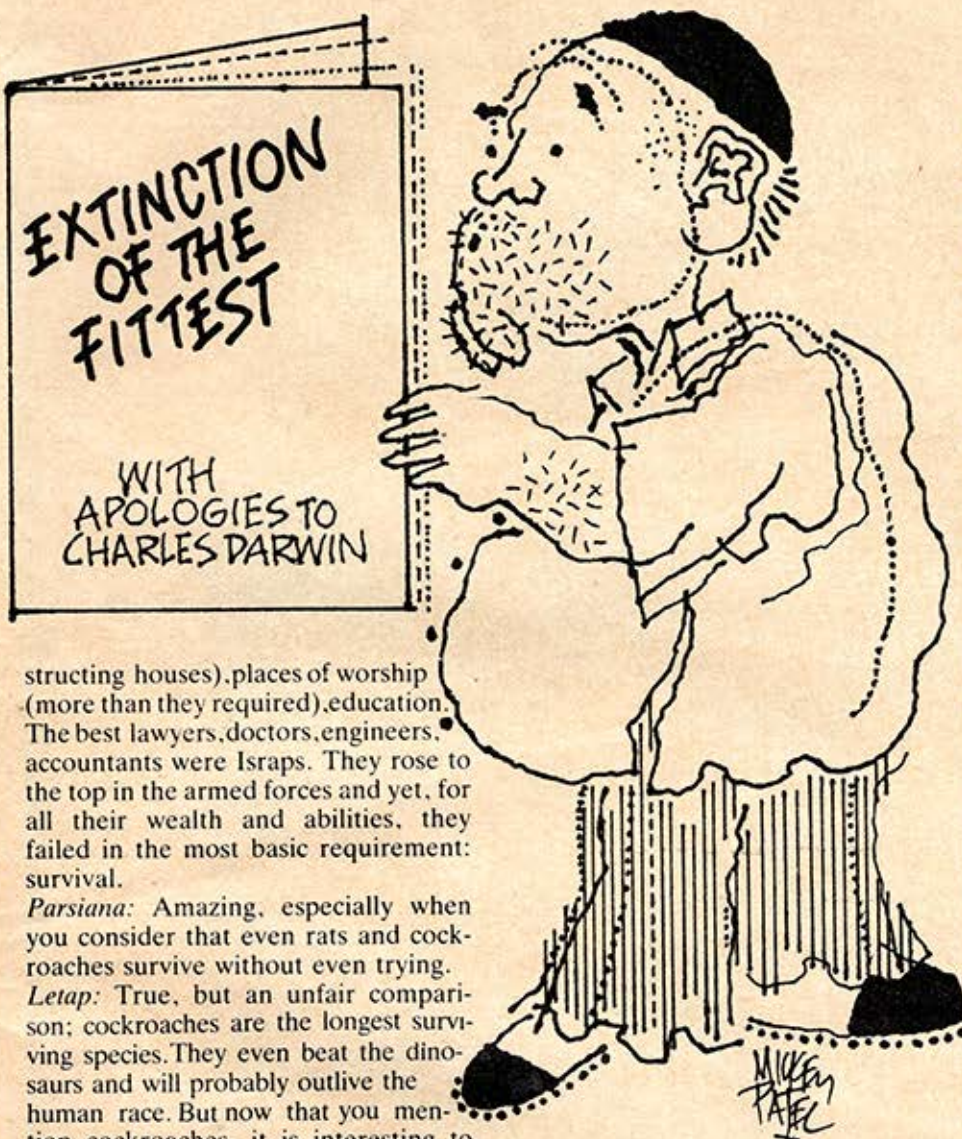
Parsiana: You mean they could not see solutions, only the problems?

Letap: Yes; and what they mistook to be solutions only aggravated the problems.

Parsiana: They sound like a real bunch of losers. Can you cite some examples of their perversity?

Letap: My book is full of them. But I would prefer not to call it perversity, it's more tragedy. Here was a people who had everything - wealth, housing (they were very particular about con-





structing houses). places of worship (more than they required). education. The best lawyers, doctors, engineers, accountants were Israp. They rose to the top in the armed forces and yet, for all their wealth and abilities, they failed in the most basic requirement: survival.

Parsiana: Amazing, especially when you consider that even rats and cockroaches survive without even trying.

Letap: True, but an unfair comparison; cockroaches are the longest surviving species. They even beat the dinosaurs and will probably outlive the human race. But now that you mention cockroaches, it is interesting to know what causes them to survive: their requirements are minimal, they are very adaptable to their surroundings – they have developed immunity to most of our pesticides – and they multiply at the drop of a hat.

Parsiana: And the Israps...

Letap: The Israps were very particular about everything – who they married, where they stayed, how many children they had, what they ate.

Parsiana: What's wrong with that? Many of us are particular about these things – we don't want to live like cockroaches – but we're not about to become extinct.

Letap: Well the Israps went to extremes. An Israp would only marry an Israp and only the children of Israp parents were considered Israps.

**Every time
the Israps were
faced with the
reality of
extinction,
they responded
in such a way
as to ensure
their doom**

Parsiana: It sounds like some exclusive private club.

Letap: Yes, except that private clubs normally have long waiting lists of people wanting to become members; hardly anybody wanted to become an Israp.

Parsiana: Well, a club offers many facilities to attract members.

Letap: The Israps had nothing to offer converts. Their places of worship were dilapidated, the floors would not be swabbed for days on end, there would be dust on the benches; thefts used to take place in them and much of the silverware that one used to associate with Israp ceremonies was stolen. Their most sacred city, Adawdu, became a city of alms seekers – from the elderly priests to the suppliers of religious offerings – and many of the Israp worshippers who went there would drink illicit brew from the touts in the area, and gamble and swear at one another in jest.

Parsiana: It's beginning to sound like the fall of the Roman Empire.

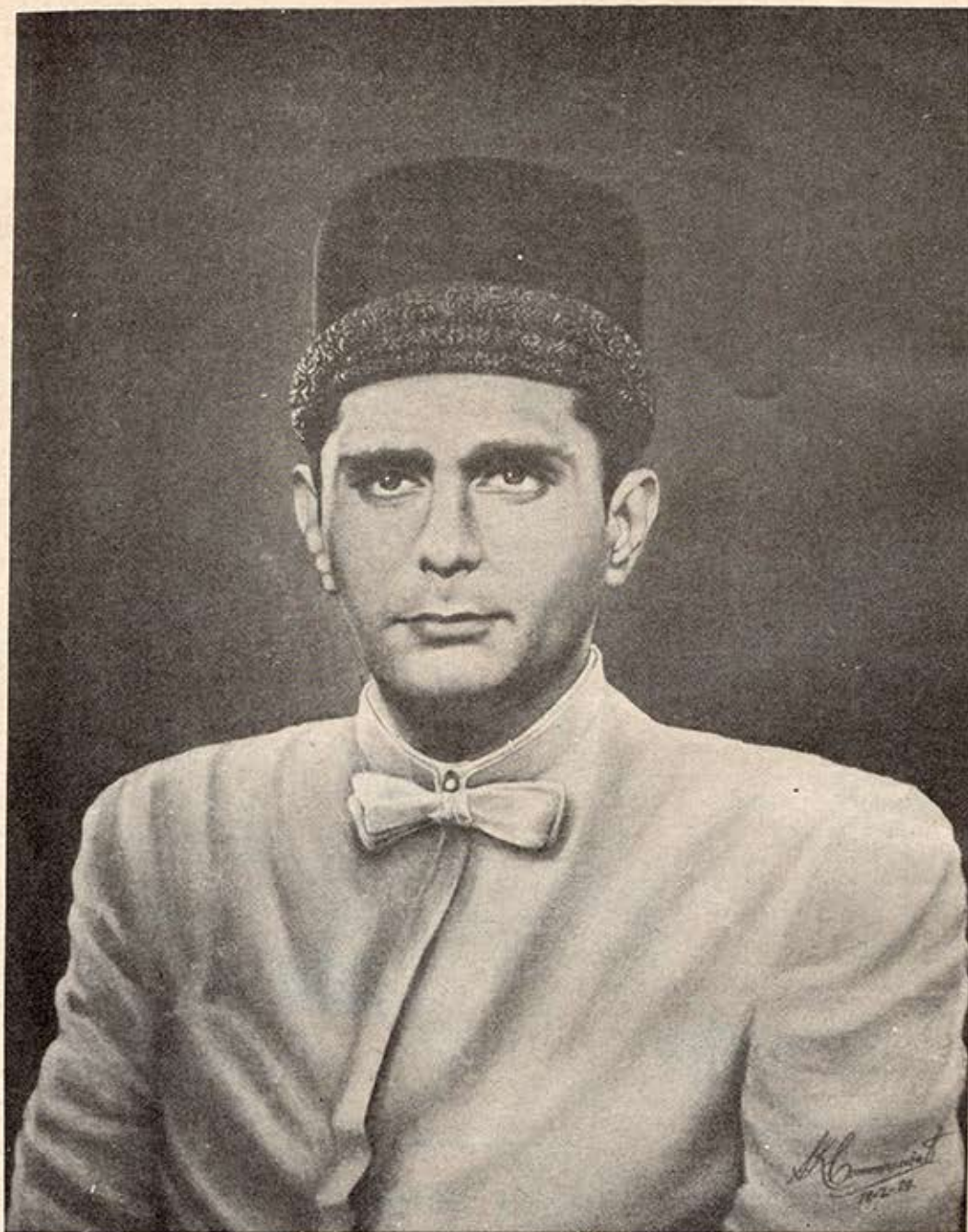
Letap: Not really. The Romans became indolent, debauched, lazy. They made their slaves do all the work and they forgot how to fight. Some of the Israps were hard workers and nearly all of them were great fighters. But they fought each other and not the enemy, and that was their undoing.

Parsiana: Who was their enemy?

Letap: The times in which they lived. You see, the Israps could not adapt. Their thinking became so rigid, they could not distinguish between Israp, the people and Israpism, the religion. They said Israp is Israpism and so the world lost out on Israpism, which was one of the greatest living religions and has now joined the list of innumerable defunct religions.

Parsiana: That's sad. I remember reading about Israpism in my school history book. It said, the Israps believed in speaking, thinking and doing right.

Letap: Yes, but finally they did wrong. People who cannot sustain their religion, their beliefs and customs are failures. History will judge the Israps harshly. It will say the Israps were not worthy of Israpism.



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.

"The Federation debates..."

I have read with interest the details of the discussions at the Federation meeting ("The Federation debates equal rights," *Parsiana*, November 1987) and in particular the write-up concerning the discussion on the Federation joining the World Zoroastrian Organisation (WZO), London.

For obvious reasons I cannot comment on various points raised in the discussions but I would like to correct the wrong impression created at the meeting which has resulted in your printing "The WZO was also expected...to utilize the available funds solely for the promotion and fulfilment of its objects and not to sponsor air passage and hotel costs of the members of the managing committee." The latter half of the foregoing statement is totally uncalled for and I categorically refute the implied suggestion contained

therein. WZO's funds have always been used for the promotion and fulfilment of its objects.

S.F. CAPTAIN
Joint Honorary Secretary,
WZO London, UK

The statement was not made by *Parsiana* but was expressed by the delegates at the Federation meeting

— Editor

"Effects of intermarriage"

Ervad Darius Sethna cites the work of demographer Dr (Ms) Chatterji ("Effects of intermarriage," *Parsiana*, November 1987) who found that in USA, five percent of Zoroastrian men and 11 percent of the women marry outside the community. The demographer concludes that the only single factor that can destroy or diminish the Zoroastrian people is intermarriage.

With so many dar-e-mehers coming up, thanks to the philanthropic munificence of the late Arbab Rustam Guiv and the associations of the USA, Canada, UK and Australia, I have a feeling that our microscopic community is striving hard for the propagation of the community abroad.

Sethna suggests that the increase in intercommunity marriages is due to some parents who are champions of crossbreeding. But it could also be due to insufficient parental influence and/or help in finding partners, or it may be that the persons fall victim to circumstance. Apart from inculcating faith in our caste and creed, the community may also consider accepting children of Parsi fathers who erred in straying into other faiths. By such reforms we may at least be able to retrieve such people as Rajiv Gandhi, the Wadias and the like, back into the Zoroastrian fold.

Dr P.D. SUNAVALA

"Kookadar: the man..."

That the *marghi-na-farcha* and *pulao* served at the foundation stone laying ceremony of the Dastur Kookadar fire-temple at Sanjan proved insufficient for the *khaanaars-pinaars* (gourmands) of the community ("The Sanjan Odyssey," *Parsiana*, December 1987), made good light reading. The caustic comments of our revered elders on this incident (Dasturji Kookadar being a strict vegetarian, etc) were also noted ("Kookadar: the man and the myth," *Parsiana*, December 1987).

However there seems to be much derision cast on 'Dasturji' Aibara who is supposed to be "in touch" with Kookadar saheb and the *manthras* (incantations) cum holy water he hands out to the troubled members of our community. From downright denunciation through a humorous acceptance to a perfect faith in his powers, Dasturji Aibara has seen it all! What is sinful (or *dhong* - farce) about Kookadar saheb telling Dasturji Aibara about "completing my work?" Don't we believe in the immortality of the soul? Does not survival of the spirit take place after shaking off the old and infirm cage at the appointed time? Haven't we been taught to believe that after four days the soul leaves the earth and goes to reside in those planes best suited for its temperament and progress? Spirits of those who are linked with us with the magnetic power of love can never be separated.

Only those who delve into the occult with idle curiosity and to accomplish black magic *siddhis* (powers) are the ones who ultimately suffer the agonies of such a foolish adventure. But to the spirit who was once a beloved child, parent, friend - there can never be any separation. The relationship survives the temporary separation of death and flourishes in the Beyond till such time as is the will and the acceptance of His Holy Power!

Why say that Dasturji Aibara accepts what Kookadar saheb says as gospel truth and forgets that the power comes from Zarathushtra *paigambar*? Zarathushtra was a messenger of the Holy Spirit (God); so were Mohammed, Jesus, Buddha and many others who were all channels through whom the power of the Almighty flowed to rejuvenate the flagging spirits of the earthly ones, to give them a message of hope, love and acceptance of His holy will. Under the right circumstances we all have the capacity to be these very same channels if we decide to purify our lives by loving our fellow human beings irrespective of caste or community.

Dasturji Aibara...is a true messenger of God. He not only believes in the power of Dasturji Kookadar but also accepts that the power does indeed

come from Ahura Mazda Himself! He has never taken any bribe or cash for his services to those who have nowhere else to go. When a human being touches a bottomless well of despair, Dasturji hands out powerful *manthras* and holy water. Maybe it does not work (it did not in my case), but that's not because such a happening is false, but because that was not the will of God. Yet I believe that some sort of a psychic strength does come to enable us to bear the tragedy for which we are destined.

Let us not condemn these "channels" of the Holy Spirit of God as charlatans and rogues. No doubt we have a lot of them doing more harm than good. But there are one or two really great souls who by their *siddhis* help suffering humanity, at least to hope, to accept and to resign ourselves to say "not mine, Lord, but Thy will be done."

Let us all try to be good decent human beings first and true Zoroastrians afterwards. There is no Parsi or Hindu or Muslim heaven. When we leave the body, all are accommodated according to their *karni* (deeds). No one asks, "Did you wear a sudreh-kusti? Did you pray five times a day? Did you recite the Gayatri manthra 100

times?" Only one question is asked, "Did you try to do good to at least one human being whilst you were on earth, or did you just accept everything for yourself, without one thought for your brother?" How we answer that question is what our sojourn on earth is all about!

Ms GOOLOO R. MEHTA

"Narrating home truths"

In "Narrating home truths" (*Parsiana*, July 1987), Homi Rogers inquires "why the Zoroastrian settled in America thinks and behaves differently from his brethren in India."

It is not because of his exposure to the liberal or scientific climate but because of his ignorance and lack of knowledge of our sublime Zarthustee religion and established codes of conduct.

In extending their so-called free will, freedom of choice, these extremists do not ponder that America, Canada, England, etc. are cosmopolitan countries harboring blacks, Koreans, Chinese, Hindus, Muslims, murderers, rapists, sex maniacs, AIDS contaminated junkies - a conglomeration of confusion and complications. Is this the legacy of their freedom of choice which they want to infuse into our generations, present and future?

When they try to make it a point to drag the entire load of North American Zarthustee community, I say such schizophrenic snafu needs a stamping foot.

PHIROZ D. DOTIWALA
Houston, USA

Bahrot pilgrim abode

We are happy to inform you that the Free Food Service Charitable Trust has been donated a plot of land to construct a Bahrot Cave Pilgrim Abode for historical and educational purposes. The Trust intends to provide free accommodation to pilgrims so that the middle-class and poor Parsis can also benefit.

We have performed a jashan ceremony on the site. The land has already been converted from agricultural to non-agricultural use and completely fenced on all sides. The tube well boring has also been done successfully.

Our ancestors had preserved our holy Iranshah fire at the Bahrot Cave for 12 long years. Today Zoroastrians are eager to visit the Bahrot Cave but, due to lack of accommodation and other facilities, are unable to do so.

N.S. ENGINEER
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Edited by Arnavaz S. Mama

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Events and Personalities

Elections appeal admitted

The possibility of holding the overdue Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP) Anjuman Committee elections received another setback when an appeal bench of the Bombay High Court admitted a petition challenging the revised election scheme ordered by Justice H. Suresh in February last year.

Judges S.K. Desai and S.P. Kurdukar admitted the appeal by donor voter Jehangir Bamji and three others on March 21, Jamshedi Navroze.

Bamji's appeal has been pending at the court since August last when H. Suresh refused the plea to revise his order. The Punchayet, meanwhile, was readying for the election under the new scheme, in case the appeal is not admitted by the court: on three previous occasions the appeal benches, each comprising one Parsi judge, had refused to hear the petition. At the last press conference on January 30, 1988 the Punchayet had informed that the trustees, by a majority vote of four to three, had decided to seek the court's permission to postpone the elections.

Bamji and the others have contested Suresh's decision to eliminate the right, hitherto enjoyed by all F Register members (who have donated more than Rs 5,000 to BPP charities), to vote directly at trusteeship elections. In an effort to make the scheme easier to administer, Suresh raised the floor donation to Rs 50,000 for a direct voting right. The present 800-strong Donor Register was to be represented by 100 members who, together with 100 representatives of the rest of the community, would constitute the Anjuman Committee.

According to the old scheme and the new scheme, the existing Anjuman Committee's seven-year term expired on December 31, 1987 and a new

Committee was due to be elected, preferably within three months.

Justice Desai, admitting the appeal, instructed the Punchayet's attorneys to apply for directions to the High Court in light of the impending election.

The uncertainty over the date of holding the elections and the general voter apathy have resulted in only 1,800 of the 19,000 or so revamped voter certificates being collected from the BPP despite their efforts in setting up centers in the various Parsi colonies to distribute the forms.

Home for mobeds

Starting construction this March, the building at Godrej Baug which will house full-time mobeds will be ready for occupancy in one and a half years, notes a press release signed by Kersi Gazdar, joint honorary secretary of the Committee for Economic Revival's House-Our-Mobeds-Endeavour (CER-HOME).

Appointed by the Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP) and chaired by chartered accountant Kersi Limathwalla, the CER-HOME has already collected Rs 12.5 lakhs for this project. In order to raise additional funds, the CER-HOME presented a Burjor Patel-Dinyar Contractor production, *Dou-*

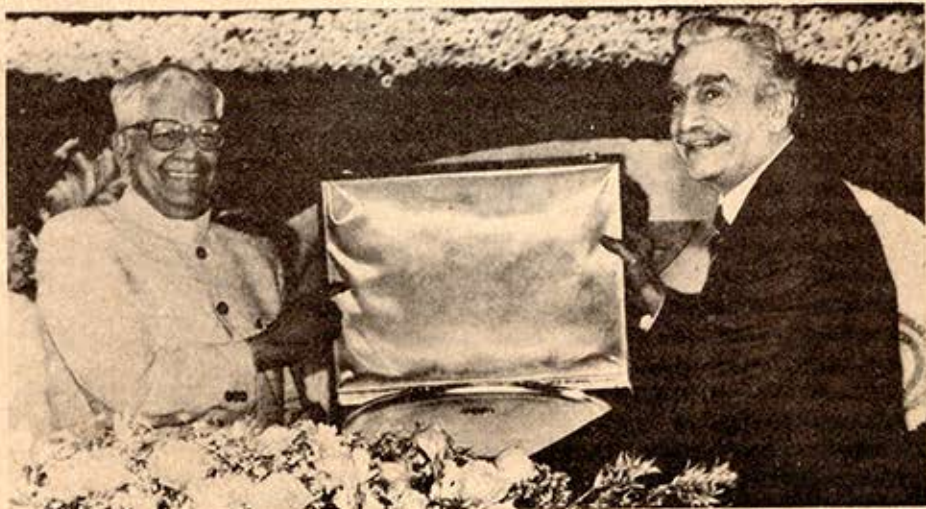
ble Savari, on March 4, 1988, the release further adds.

The building will comprise of 16 flats of two rooms and a kitchen, each admeasuring approximately 500 square feet.

Kudos for Karanjia's pen

"If a pen must write and if a broom must sweep, it must itself be free from all impurities. If the Press is to clean public life, it must itself be clean," said the President of India, R. Venkataraman, whilst speaking at a function held on February 25, 1988 to felicitate *Blitz* Editor, Russey Khurshed Karanjia, on the occasion of his completing 50 years in the field of journalism and 75 years of age.

The gathering at the Birla Matushri Sabhaghar included personalities like Sharad Pawar, chairman of the Karanjia felicitation committee, Maharashtra Chief Minister S.B. Chavan, Bharatiya Janata Party leader A.B. Vajpayee, Lok Dal chief H.N. Bahu-guna, Shiv Sena chief Bal Thackeray, legal luminary Nani Palkhivala, industrialist Nusli Wadia, secretary of the felicitation committee Dr Rafiq Zakaria, as well as film personalities, notes *The Afternoon Despatch and Courier* (ADC) of February 26, 1988.



Venkataraman (left) presenting memento to Karanjia Photo: Blitz

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Pawar announced the formation of a trust in Karanjia's name. It will institute an annual award of one lakh rupees to honor an outstanding editor and publish a volume documenting Karanjia's contribution to the freedom of the Press.

Describing Karanjia as a "crusader for social justice," the President said that his journalism was based on two great pillars of free India - socialism and secularism. The President further credited him for being an enthusiastic interpreter of Nehru's ideas and representing Nehru's perception in international affairs by supporting the Arab cause, attacking apartheid, etc.

Vajpayee added, "If you are faced with a gun, face the gun with a newspaper, like Mr Karanjia has done all these years."

"Speaking in an emotion choked voice," Karanjia said that he was overwhelmed by the honor bestowed on him and attributed his success to his colleagues and well wishers who had stood by him during his turbulent years, states the *Mid-Day* report.

Displaying a penchant for writing from his college days, he contributed to and edited his college magazines.

After completing his college education, he began writing letters to *The Times of India* readers' column. He would then reply to these letters under different names, which were also published, thus sparking controversies, notes an article titled "Life and times of Russey Karanjia" in *The ADC* of February 26, 1988.

Karanjia also authored *Arab Dawn, Dawn or Darkness?, The Dagger of Israel, How Nasser Did It, The Philosophy of Mr Nehru*, etc. For using "his paper and personal persuasive power to cement Arab unity and work for reconciliation between Egypt and the Soviet Union, President Nasser personally decorated Karanjia on June 12, 1965, with the highest honor of the then UAR, the Republic Order of Merit (Grade I)," his achievements were listed in *The ADC* write-up. Inscribed on the medallion in Arabic was: To One Who Merits The Best. Among the other honors he received was a Saropa - the highest honor conferred by the Sikhs - at the Golden Temple.

"Few journalists have interviewed such a galaxy of world leaders as Nehru, Nasser, Khrushchev, Castro,

Chou Enlai, Arafat, and the Shah of Iran as Karanjia has," added *The ADC* report.

Karanjia also started *Cine Blitz*, a film magazine with the second largest circulation with Rita Karl Mehta, his daughter, as Editor. He also launched the tabloid morning *The Daily*, which he had to subsequently sell due to financial liabilities.

Hosting a dental congress

Legal luminary Nani Palkhivala declared, "I wanted to speak about dental research, but Keki (Mistry) said, 'Stick to a subject with which you're less unfamiliar,' so I'll speak about India," and the audience laughed with amazement at the virtuoso's droll confession. The keynote speaker at the formal inauguration of the First World Zoroastrian Dental Congress at the Taj Mahal Hotel on the evening of February 5, 1988, Palkhivala addressed a gathering comprising outstanding dentists from India and abroad and other invitees of the Zoroastrian Dental Organisation (ZDO), hosts to the Congress.

Dr Dinshaw Sorabjee welcomed the 32 speakers at the three-day Congress.

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including representatives from Denmark, UK, USA and the World Health Organisation. The Pakistan representative couldn't attend because of illness.

Recalling the glorious history of Parsi dentists, several of whom were deans of dental colleges and successive presidents of the Indian Dental Association, Dr Ratan Doctor noted happily that nearly 55 percent of the Zoroastrian dental population in Bombay was at the Crystal Room of the Taj that evening.

Lighting a *diva* (oil lamp) in a traditional Parsi *ses* (silver tray) to mark the start of the Congress, Bombay sheriff Jehangir Nicholson praised the ZDO's professional and humanitarian activities. Noting that some had the good fortune to be healthy when young and some had the good fortune to be healthy even in later years, the diminutive septuagenarian, whom Dr Sorab Jhaveri introduced as "the oldest motor racing and rallying driver in the world today," advised the audience, "When you're feeling old, look into the beautiful eyes of a young lady and you will feel as young as you want!"

Looking back "with humility and pride at how this Organisation has grown," Dr Fali Mehta, ZDO's founder member and president of the Congress, recalled how difficult it had been to enroll members and collect funds to help struggling dental students. "Quite a few (of them) are now millionaires," Mehta beamed with satisfaction.

Dr Keki Mistry, a high profile professional whose caliber has been acknowledged by the Indian government as well as various international bodies, chose to introduce Palkhivala not as lawyer, tax expert or author but as "a man of spirit who had crossed the path from his own to every other field of endeavor."

Noting that the Indian population was larger than the combined populations of Africa and America, Palkhivala noted, "Never before in world history have so many lived together in freedom," which is India's basic claim to recognition. Palkhivala's critique of the government emerged as a jest: "To make up for all the benefits I have given India, God said, 'I'll give it the Indian government!'" Though there is no sense of identity - "patriotism begins and ends with cricket" -



Daver (above) visualizing new patterns
(Insets) Models exhibiting her creations
Photo: Phiroze Battivala

Palkhivala was confident that "the unquenchable vitality" that throbs in the heart of rural India will one day throw up a great leader.

ZDO president Cyrus Daruwala informed the gathering that Doctor and Mistry had been, respectively, nominated president and elected chairman of the Asian Pacific Dental Federation. An award funded by civil engineer Ratan Surveyor in memory of his father the eminent dental surgeon Dr Dinshaw Surveyor, was presented to Dr Burzin Khan and Dr Anahita Nalladaroo for topping the grades at the final dental examinations of 1987. Dr Surveyor had practised in Bombay for 43 years until the date of his death. The dental department of the Masina Hospital began with the donation of Surveyor's entire dispensary by his widow Ratanbai, reminisced Ratan. Dr Rushitum Mistry received the ZDO's merit award for the highest marks in orthodontics at the final year Bachelor of Dental Surgery examination.

ZDO secretary Porus Turner spoke glowingly of the achievements of Dr Govind Shankwalkar, ex dean of the Government Dental College as "teacher par excellence." Another individual honored by the ZDO was Homi Randeria, marketing manager of Ciba-Geigy, who has enthusiastically nur-

tured the ZDO's preventive dentistry programs in Bombay's schools and residential colonies with essential material support. Both gentlemen were presented with souvenirs as a token of appreciation before the gathering disintegrated into kaleidoscopic cocktail groups to savor the hospitality of the Zoroastrian Dental Organisation.

Hypnotik nightwear

Unable to find a "decent nightdress" as a bride prompted 25-year-old Pervin Daver to start designing nightwear. Using cottons and synthetics in pastel shades of blue, cream, beige, Daver launched her Hypnotik collection in August 1987. "It's quite funny," says the petit designer, "but I've never sold a synthetic garment to a *bava* (Parsi) so far. Parsis mainly go in for cottons and embroidered stuff. On the other hand, synthetics are bought by a lot of Sindhis and Punjabis."

With no formal training in stitching, Daver's inspiration stems from movies and "what I've been wearing over the years." Changes and adaptations lead to a collection of "elegant peignoirs, alluring pyjamas, comfortable robes, embroidered nightshirts, mix 'n' match sets at affordable prices (Rs 60 to Rs 400), utilizing foreign laces, ribbons and elastics," as notes a press release.

continued on page 97

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FEZANA's first election

Only two offices on the board of the Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America (FEZANA) will be contested at the body's first annual general meeting scheduled for April 1, 1988 in Toronto, notes the February newsletter of the Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Chicago (ZAC). The two nominees for vice-presidency for the years 1988 to 1991 are Homi Minocher-Homji of Toronto and Ms Kamal Tengra of Washington. Ms Dolly Dastoor of the Zoroastrian Association of Quebec and Ms Dhunmai Dalal of the Zoroastrian Association of Pennsylvania and New Jersey are contesting the office of secretary, for the same period. There is no contest for the other three positions – all for the period 1988 to 1990 – of president, treasurer and assistant secretary. Rohinton Rivetna, Fredy Patel and Ms Sabar Balsara are the respective uncontested nominees.

Although the annual general meeting will be a part of the program of the Sixth North American Zoroastrian Congress, only the accredited representatives of the member associations will participate in the deliberations. Others may attend as observers, notes the newsletter.

The number of votes allotted to each association depends upon its membership figures with most associations having two or three votes. For example, while Chicago holds three votes, the California Zoroastrian Center and the Zoroastrian Society of Ontario have five each.

A free seminar on finance is on the cards for Chicago Zoroastrians this April. Although the dates have not been set, members are invited to a series of four lectures dealing with analysis and trading options in stocks to be delivered by Prof Nauzer Balsara, a master in business administration from India who earned his doctorate in money and financial markets from Columbia University. Balsara is currently assistant professor of finance at Northeastern Illinois University.

With increasing attendance, topics

(caps) and scarves at the Chicago Darbe Mehr seem to be falling short of the demand. The ZAC newsletter therefore urges members planning a visit to India to bring back 10 to 15 cloth prayer caps as also to donate those that their children may have outgrown.

"Winter has taken its toll at the Darbe Mehr," states the newsletter. January's below zero temperatures caused water filters to freeze and crack. Water supply could only be restored by bypassing the filters. Another casualty was a part of the metal trim on the building's frontage which was blown loose by a storm.

An appeal from The Zoroastrian Religious Trust for Udvada Mobeds has reached Chicago Zoroastrians via Dr Rostam Sarfeh, trustee of the Arbab Rustam Guiv Trust Fund. With the objective of improving the payment system of the mobeds of Udvada without encouraging lethargy, the Trust aims to provide subsidized food including religious preparations like *daran* and *chasni*, hostel accommodation, medical cover and an infrastructure that will induce youngsters to take up mobedi.

Quoting information provided by the settlor, Ervad Paurusasp Magol, the newsletter states that despite being formed after 1961, the non-cosmopolitan trust is tax exempt thanks to the expertise of legal luminary Soli Dastur.

Open arms in California

Roshan Motivala is the president of the 1988 Zoroastrian Association of California (ZAC) managing committee which took charge on January 9, announces their first newsletter for the year. Other members on the board include vice-president Minoo Katrack, joint secretaries Rattan Appoo and Aban Commissariat, treasurer Dogdo Arjani, program chairperson Keki Engineer and youth coordinator Hoshi Deboo.

In a valedictory letter, outgoing president Keki Gandhi notes with satisfaction, "We tried our best to heal the

past wounds of dead-end quarrels. We stopped the erosion in our membership by making our members feel good about our open-arms policy. Membership climbed to 227, more than double of what it was in December 1985. Our committee meetings were open to all to participate and make suggestions for effective programming and improvement of ZAC policies."

Other high spots of Gandhi's two-year presidency, as stated in the letter, included the emphasis on youth participation that resulted in the organizational and financial success of the First North American Zoroastrian Youth Congress in September 1987 which drew 300 youths and 100 adults from North America, Europe and Asia. Five percent of the profits from the Congress have been set aside for youth activities, writes Gandhi.

Generously applauding the contribution of his team members, Gandhi is particularly pleased at the opening of "the lines of communication with our brothers and sisters of the Zoroastrian Center." The rapprochement has resulted in the ZAC being able to use the Center for its programs for a nominal cleaning fee. "We simply could not afford the Felicia Mahood Hall in West Los Angeles after they raised their rent sky high," admits Gandhi.

Ruttonjee's pace setter

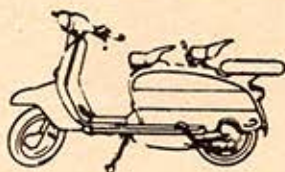
When pioneer Hormusjee Ruttonjee started his own wine and spirits business a century ago in Hong Kong, he could not have remotely envisaged the terraced sophistication of Ruttonjee Centre in Duddell Street which has earned bouquets for its designers and its owners.

The new 28-storeyed Ruttonjee House and the 22-storeyed Dina House which comprise the Centre – described by critic Chris Fawcett in *Vision* magazine as "a skinny, shimmering, sky reaching apparition" – replace two older buildings of the same name constructed 50 years ago in memory of Ruttonjee and his wife Dina. Appropriately, the same architectural firm of Palmer and Turner is responsible for the old look and the new.

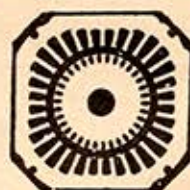
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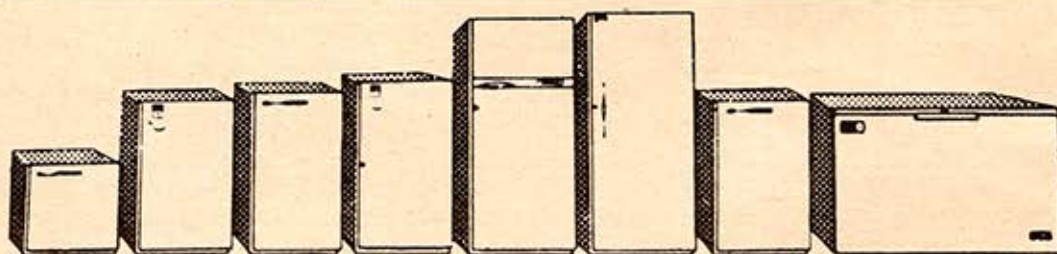
**CASH REGISTER
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Electronic)



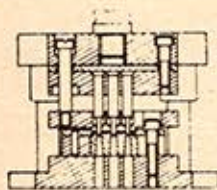
**AUTOMOTIVE
DIVISION**



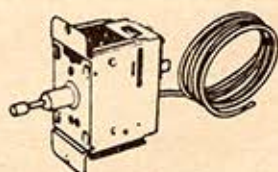
**LAMINATION
DIVISION**
(Electrical Motors &
Stampings)



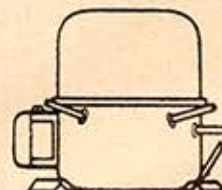
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(Refrigerators & Deep Freezers)



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The use of gold-colored glass, framed in black, result in the structures standing out as "two glittering mountains under the sunshine," notes *Building Review*, a professional architectural publication in Hong Kong. Extensive use of computer analysis has produced the most energy efficient design, reveals *The Hong Kong Tatler*. The Centre ensures 24-hour security with the aid of cameras, monitor screens and computers. A network of smoke and heat detectors provide an early fire warning both at the site and at the fire station.

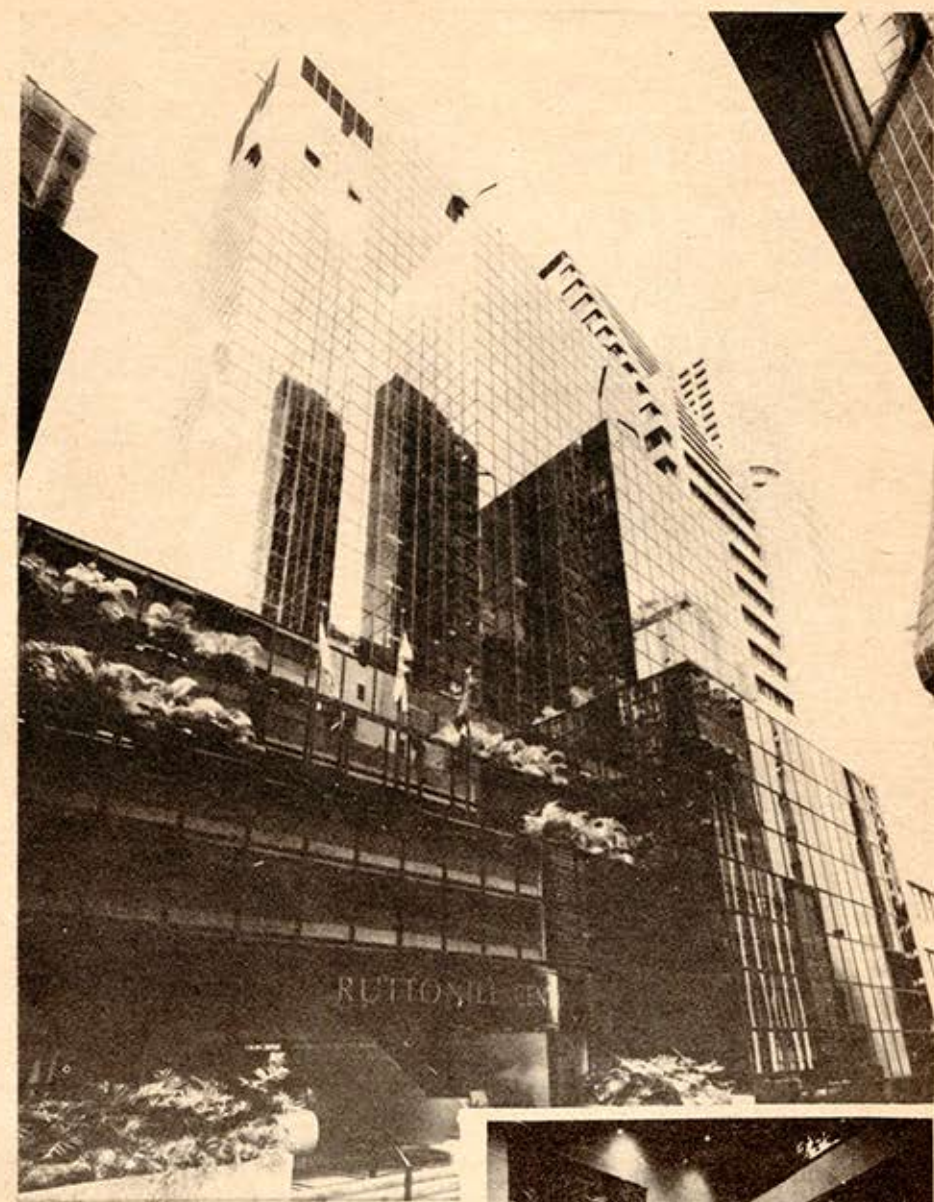
The pace setting commercial complex and shopping mall with car parks in the basement is crowned by three individual suites for Rusy Shroff, Beji Shroff and Ms Vera Ruttonjee-Desai, the managing directors of H. Ruttonjee and Son Limited, who control the family businesses which include the expanding wine and spirit trade as well as real estate.

Plants cover the three levels of podium joining the two buildings, providing a resting area for those working in the offices, notes *Building Review* which describes the arch shaped main entrance to the Centre in the middle of the lowest podium as reminiscent of a European opera house.

"Ruttonjee Centre, as completed, would not have been possible without the enlightened attitude and support of the owners throughout the last seven years," states the architect's press release of June 1986, regretting that the completion of the project meant "the end of the day-to-day collaboration with these patrons."

Hormusjee Ruttonjee had arrived as an employee in Hong Kong in 1884 and lived alone until his wife Dina and 12-year-old son Jehangir joined him in 1892 and made Hong Kong their permanent home. Although young Jehangir did well in school, his father "felt that a university degree would not be as important as a thorough training and grounding in the business for his son to succeed him and the young man...started to learn the wine and spirit trade in the typical Parsi tradition - from the very bottom," writes George Rawdon in 'The Story of Ruttonjees' in *The Hong Kong Tatler* of February 1981.

Although Jehangir flourished commercially, his three daughters predeceased him, the first a prey to Hong Kong's number one killer - tuberculo-



The two towers of Ruttonjee Centre (above) with a glimpse of the main atrium (inset)

sis. The tragedy led Jehangir to found the Ruttonjee Sanatorium now operated by the Hong Kong Tuberculosis Chest and Heart Diseases Association. When convalescing patients relapsed because of bad living habits, Ruttonjee created the Freni Memorial Convalescent Home in memory of his second daughter. His total contribution towards the Anti-TB Association exceeded \$ 2,000,000, records Rawdon. The Society for the Protection of Children, the Family Planning Association, low cost residential housing, all had Ruttonjee's financial and personal support.

Recalling the spirit of the man,



Rawdon notes, "During the Japanese occupation many Hong Kong residents received a whispered invitation, 'Mr Ruttonjee wants to see you.' And his first questions were, 'How are you faring? Do you need money?' Those whom he aided were not always discreet and he was arrested twice, with his son Dhun, and tortured. When he received his CBE (Cross of the British

continued on page 55

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Parinaz Toddywalla

In an endeavor to improve communications with the community at large, the Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP) is increasing the frequency of the BPP *Quarterly Review* from four to six issues a year which will be circulated to 18,000 members on the electoral rolls. To be published in an eight to 12-page format, edited by BPP chief executive Rustom Anklesaria, the newsletter will focus on the achievements of the BPP which are presently "understated" according to trustee Minoo Shroff.

This information was conveyed at a press conference convened by the board of trustees on January 30, 1988. The greater part of the two-hour proceedings was devoted to their housing plans and the ensuing Anjuman Committee elections.

Four of the BPP's seven trustees — Dr Aspi Golwalla, Eruch Desai, Homi Ranina and Dr Mehroo Bengalee — have, by a majority vote, decided to make an application to the High Court to postpone the seven-yearly Anjuman Committee elections in "the interest of administration and economy." (The Anjuman Committee elects the trustees of the BPP as and when vacancies arise.) As the revised election scheme handed down by Justice Suresh of the Bombay High Court is being challenged by members of the old F Register (Donors), there is uncertainty over whether their petition will be admitted or not.

The ticklish question of who will succeed Golwalla as chairman of the BPP when his term expires in October 1988 surfaced at the press conference. Though traditionally the seniormost trustee (in this case Eruch Desai) becomes the chairman, in 1982 Golwalla was elected to the post, even though he was the seniormost trustee, thereby setting a precedent. Jamshed Guzder has, after Golwalla, served the maximum number of years on the board of

Over 18,000
Bombay Parsis
will be receiving
newsletters
from the Bombay
Parsi Punchayet
once every
two months

trustees, though with a break of a year.

Finalization of accounts which previously took "five to six years" are now being prepared within six months of the year ending, thanks to the contribution of Sorab Katpitia, chief executive of the Surat Parsi Punchayet. Guzder, who credited Katpitia for updating the accounts, referred to his introduction of a totally new system to streamline the procedure, often making three trips a week to Bombay to supervise the backlog of work.

The number of nassessalars are dwindling in Bombay. To offset the decline, the BPP is offering them monetary incentive schemes and social recognition.

The Gibbs Road housing project, whose ownership flats for the community are meant to yield the necessary income for the BPP to proceed with its other housing schemes, should be ready for occupation by end March 1988.

Godrej Baug will soon have its own agiary as the Doongaji family which manages an agiary at Bharuch has consented to shift its fire to Bombay and in addition donate a corpus of four lakhs of rupees towards the maintenance of the adarian. (However, a subsequent letter circulated among the Doongaji family members indicates

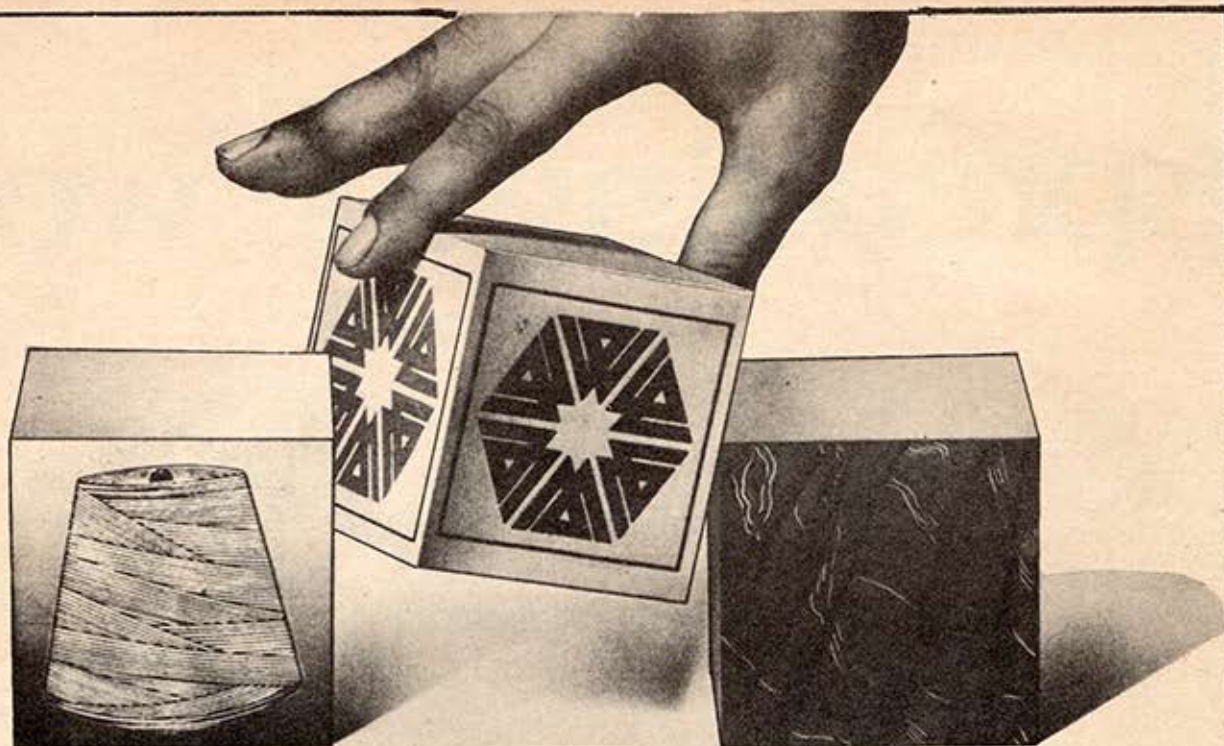
that the corpus is to be utilized towards performance of after-death ceremonies as stipulated by the donors.) Envisaging an expenditure of 15 lakh rupees on this project, of which 10 lakhs are expected to be the contribution from the Doongaji family, the structure will initially house one fire and the adjoining room will be set aside for religious functions. The trustees were happy that this proposition has worked out especially since their earlier plans to transfer the Langrana Agiary fire and the Godavara Agiary fire from Bombay's Fort locality could not proceed. The relocation of the Langrana Agiary fire was thwarted by a ruling of the charity commissioner, while at the Godavara Agiary, a lady social worker's threats to reenact a Jalianwala Bagh situation has made the trustees defer the issue for the present, reported Golwalla.

Boosting priests and nassessalars

A bank employee in Navsari, keen to be trained as a paramobed at the hands of Dastur Meherji Meherjirana, was reportedly embittered by the BPP's refusal to finance his training. Khojeste Mistree of *Ushta* who brought up the case before the trustees wanted to know the reason for this decision.

"Why should he be bitter?" queried Anklesaria. The gentleman is only likely to retire from his career when he comes of age. "The purpose of the paramobed scheme is to train people who are willing to serve the religious needs of the people in smaller places where there is a shortage of mobeds (not areas like Navsari)."

Supplemented Guzder, chairman of the paramobeds subcommittee constituted by the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India, "Our first priority is the immediate future; not five to seven years hence. And besides, why shouldn't he spend on his



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training when he must be earning well in a bank?"

But Ranina felt that this might mean disservice to a man "who may retire prematurely to take up mobedi." Said Guzder, "That is not his intention." Countered Ranina, "That is not spelt out."

For the amelioration of the priestly class, 63 mobeds were given a monthly assistance of Rs 100 each by the BPP during 1987, states the press handout. In all, Rs 75,600 were spent towards the maintenance and amelioration of the priests. Over 12 lakh rupees have been collected through the CER-HOME (Committee for Economic Revival's House Our Mobeds Endeavour) towards the mobeds' housing project, and nearly three lakhs by the BPP.

The dwindling ranks of the nassessalars whose numbers have declined from 29 to 15 has prompted the BPP to introduce monetary incentive schemes. Anklesaria furnished the details. Eight nassessalars have been insured for an amount of Rs 25,000 each. Those who could not be insured due to the age factor will be given recognition in another form. The BPP will set aside Rs 2,000 per annum in their name, subject to a maximum limit. Medical aid is also offered to all nassessalars.

"The diminishing numbers is going to be a problem," said Anklesaria, "so we want to preserve their group." The statistics as provided by him reveal that even a fresh nassessalar gets a salary of Rs 700 per month which soon increases to Rs 1,200 or even Rs 1,400. In addition, he receives tips from the bereaved families, plus "anaj (ractions)" twice a year.

To grant them the much wanted social recognition, the nassessalars and their families will be invited to an exclusive luncheon/ dinner with the trustees' families. Informed CER's Silloo Kavarana, "We will be inviting them to our ghambar on March 20."

On the eve of elections

The election scheme stipulates that a new Anjuman Committee (with a seven-year tenure) must be formed within 90 days of the expiry of the last committee. If the trustees seek a postponement of the elections which are due in March, what then would happen if there is a vacancy on the board of trustees and no Anjuman Commit-

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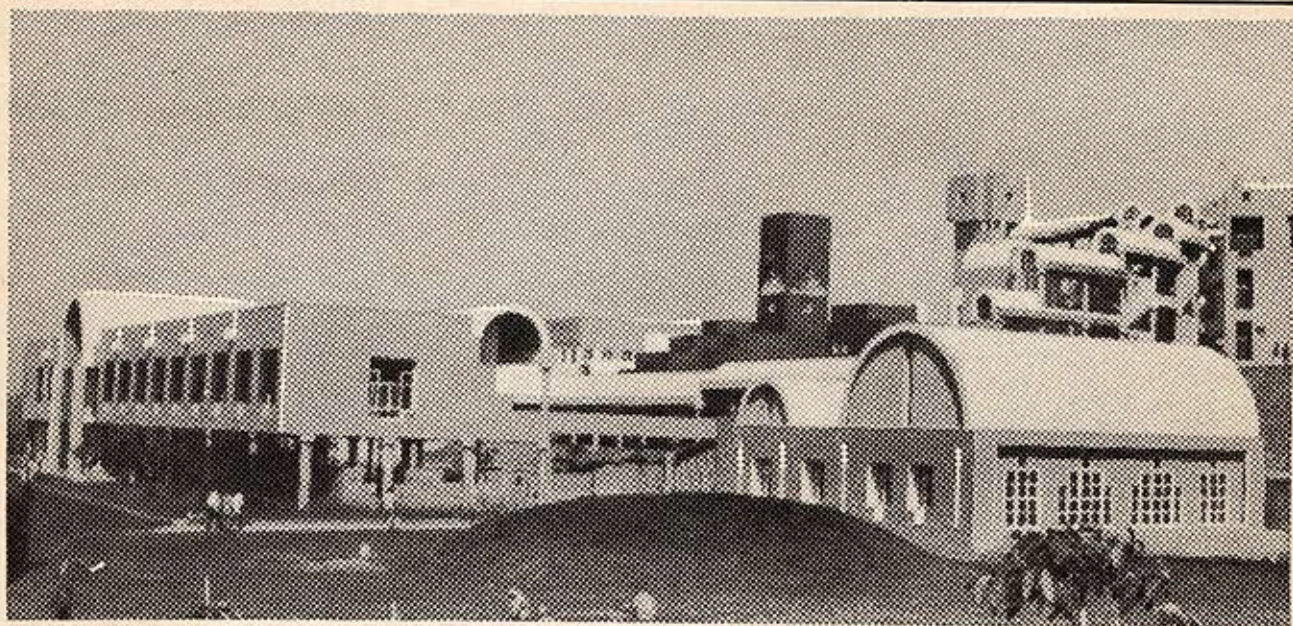
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tee (of 100 General Register members and 100 Donor Register members) to elect the next trustee? This query by Fali Poncha, chairman of the CER's managing committee, had no definite reply. Anklesaria opined that it would imply forming a new committee, whatever the process adopted, or deferring the trusteeship election. Said Ranina, "We could also ask the court to extend the life of the old Committee." Gunder felt, "The whole thing would be simplified if the court doesn't accept the appeal."

Of the 19,000 and odd members on the General Register, barely a 100 have collected their voting certificates. This news came as a surprise even to the trustees who agreed to reconsider their earlier refusal to set up booths at different baugs. Assuming that most would be inclined to collect their certificates in the last few days, the trustees felt that the efforts involved in conveying the entire set of documents to a new destination each weekend and the fear of the "sanctity of the records" being lost, would be offset by the response received from residents of different baugs who may otherwise be unable to collect their certificates in person. While the 2,700 new entrants on the General Register may collect their certificates in due course, Poncha estimated that barely one-third of the old registrants would be interested in picking up their fresh certificates.

Taking umbrage at the insinuations made in the *Jam-e-Jamshed* of January 24, 1988, that the CER, the BPP staff and the trustees had rigged the last anjuman committee elections in 1981, Poncha insisted on knowing whether the BPP would ask them for a suitable apology. Since this allegation had arisen from a group of youth, trustee Jamsheed Kanga, a founder member of the CER, questioned, "Is the Editor going to listen to all Parsi youth? And making such rumors public just on the eve of another election lowers the credibility of a newspaper... We shouldn't submit to sensationalism. If we are to blame, by all means chastise us..."

Since this accusation came close on the heels of the Editor announcing that they would be improving the newspaper and carrying more investigative articles, the trustees were offended and had summoned an emergency board meeting to draft a suitable note to *Jamé*. What was irking

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Tour 2: Moscow: Leningrad: Tallinn: Riga: Sochi: Moscow
30 May to 14 June

Tour 3: Moscow: Leningrad: Tallinn: Tbilisi: Yerevan: Yalta: Moscow
20 June to 05 July

Tour 4: Moscow: Leningrad: Tallinn: Yalta: Moscow
25 July to 05 August

(All departures ex-Bombay)

USSR STUDENTS TOURS

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09 May to 21 May

Tour 2: Moscow: Leningrad: Kalinin: Vladimir: Moscow
16 May to 28 May

Tour 3: Moscow: Leningrad: Kharkov: Rostov-On-Don
23 May to 04 June

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all the trustees was the absurdity of the implication that the CER and the BPP were in cahoots when it was a known fact that the majority of the trustees at the time of the last elections were anti-CER.

Jehan Daruwalla, the Editor of *The Bombay Samachar*, noted, "It is very unfortunate that the Press is being attacked by the Press. Despite both working for the same cause, personal attacks are not avoided...We should have character..."

No place for the aged

The need for more infirmaries for Parsis who are an increasingly aging community was expressed, especially since the BPP's Parukh Dharamshalla on Hughes Road is not able to accommodate any more inmates.

According to Golwalla, "The need is not there. It is being created," citing the case of a family residing in an affluent locality of Bombay, which instead of shouldering the responsibility of the aged relative was trying to take the easy way out by seeking room at the Parukh Dharamshalla.

For the terminally ill patients, shel-

ter will soon be provided at the B.D. Petit Parsee General Hospital's Wadia Block which will be refurbished at a cost of Rs 30 lakhs, informed Ranina.

When Kanga asked in all earnestness, "Do you think we are an aging community?" it was Shroff who

"The need for more infirmaries for Parsis is not there. It is being created"

answered his query, stressing on "the longevity of the ladies."

To encourage Parsis who supplement their income by spinning kustus, the BPP supplied packets of woolltops to 2311 persons from Bombay, Surat, Navsari, Bulsar, Broach, Udawa, Nargol, etc. Acting as middlemen, the BPP bought over a 1,000 kustus, and sold more than 700 at a subsidized rate to Bombayites.

Representations for reservation

"There is a very very strong feeling

within the community that the BPP should take up the matter of (job) reservations," Poncha informed the trustees. In the recruitment lists of banks and insurance companies, no Parsi name appears as against what was once considered "a Parsi citadel," he continued. With the exception of some business families like the Godrejs and Guzders, even Parsi founded organizations like the Tatas don't absorb many Parsis, it was regretted. Whether a representation should be made to Maneck Goiporia, chairman of the Central Bank of India, and the Recruitment Commission in this regard was being discussed when Noshir Dadrawala, representing the *Jam-e-Jamshed*, voiced the fear of the trustees consciously creating a cadre of clerical employees which, many insist, has contributed to the stagnation of the community.

Prevent the community's open lands from being reserved by the government, Poncha urged the trustees. His enquiries with the Minorities Commission indicated that the government would be willing to give a hearing to the community's apex body, the BPP.

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When Desai asked, "How can the Panchayet interfere with separate (independent) trusts?" Kanga cited the case of the Muslim waqf properties. While initially problems of encroachment were dismissed as private disputes, subsequently the Minorities Commission instructed the district collectors to treat such disputes as encroachment on the property of minorities whose lands need to be protected. Similarly they were asked to refrain from reserving lands belonging to the minorities.

Choosing the chairman

The seniormost trustee on the board usually comes in as chairman of the BPP. But this year may see an unprecedented situation.

With Golwalla's tenure as chairman drawing to a close in October 1988, Poncha asked in his written questionnaire submitted to the chairman before the meeting, "What was the process adopted in 1981 in regard to the chairmanship of the BPP? Was the chairman elected?" Replied Golwalla: "We did not follow the old method."

Desai, who would be eligible to the

chair if the criterion of seniority is considered, said, "The seniormost (came in), but by consensus." Clarified Gunder, "There is no mandatory provision in the scheme that the seniormost comes in. The last time, I proposed the name of Dr Golwalla."

If the elections are postponed, what would happen if there is a vacancy on the board of trustees?

Opined Ranina, "If there was only one name, there is no question of candidacy. At the time of (appointing) the last chairman, the 300-year-old tradition was broken." Said Poncha, "A good beginning," but both Ranina and Desai responded with "Not so sure."

As reported in the last *BPP Quarterly*, not a single board meeting was attended by all the seven trustees.

When Poncha suggested that the names of those present be indicated instead of the present practice of stating the number of trustees present, Golwalla declined the move saying, "The trustees have decided not to give the names."

Educate 'em, marry 'em

"To streamline the process of matching and vetting of information (on the community's eligible bachelors and spinsters) on a more scientific basis," 477 applicants on the live register of the BPP's matrimonial bureau were made to fill in fresh application forms. These new forms are so devised that the data therein can be interpreted by the computer. This move was possible due to the assistance rendered by former BPP trustee Naoroji Godrej, noted the press release.

The matching done by the computers will be followed-up by correspondence, interviews, meetings, get-togethers, picnics - activities which have made possible 23 marriages and three engagements under the aegis of the bureau.

continued on page 92

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THE WZO YOUTH CONFERENCE

Arnavaz S. Mama

The second youth session in six weeks marked a search for guidelines through a haze of conflicting ideas

"I am still not quite sure why I was asked to inaugurate a conference on 'The need for religion' and 'Matrimony and family welfare.' As a scientific rationalist and a bachelor of long standing, I am singularly ill-qualified to speak on these subjects." Director of Godrej Soaps, Nadir Godrej, a chemical engineer by profession, was inaugurating the youth conference organized by the World Zoroastrian Organisation's (WZO) youth wing on December 6, 1987 at the J.J. Modi Hall of the K.R. Cama Oriental Institute, Bombay.

The day-long conference, co-sponsored by Mazda Leasing, curtailed discussion to two topics, each followed by a question-answer session and a workshop for which the 150 delegates were divided into four groups. Mazda Leasing director and CER (Committee for Economic Revival) managing committee member Kersi Limathwalla, and Dr Burzin Khan, Havovi Dadabhoy and Tina Rustomji, president, vice-president and committee member of the WZO youth wing respectively, served as moderators.

Hoping that the conference would promote friendship between the youth as they discuss common problems, Khan noted that "youth was least bothered by the rifts between the reformist and orthodox lobbies." The young dental surgeon nonetheless cautioned that the controversies could result in "alienating the young from the community." Khan drew on Man-

chester University Prof John Hinnells' analogy between religion and the chameleon which adapts its color according to the environment but basically remains unchanged. He urged the young debaters to differentiate the essence of the religion from its outer trappings so that the community can concentrate upon preserving the core of the Zoroastrian faith and live in accord with the WZO's motto, 'Zoroastrian unity worldwide.'

WZO vice-president Dadi Mistry read a message from Shahpur Captain, currently the WZO's joint honorary secretary in London, urging youth to take interest in guiding the destiny of the community. Mistry informed that the WZO had intended to synchronize this conference with the first Zoroastrian youth conference held in the US in September, but due to various reasons had to postpone it to December.

Appropriately drawing upon the statements of philosophers and statesmen, noted solicitor, Rotarian and chairman of the WZO's India Committee Dadi Engineer sought to instill in the audience a respect for differing viewpoints, the need to judge men by the lives they lead rather than the creed they claim to follow, to appreciate that it is "not the ideas discussed but the spirit of the conference that is important."

Broaching the topic of community survival, Godrej quoted Richard Dawkins: "Elizabeth II is a direct descendant of William the Conqueror, yet it is quite probable that she does not have a single one of his genes. We should not seek immortality in reproduction. But if we contribute to the world's culture, if we have a good idea, invent a spark plug, write a poem, it may live on, intact. Socrates



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may not have a gene alive today but his ideas live on.' If we admire our religion, shouldn't we want to spread the idea? Is it really necessary that people should have certain genes in order to understand (Zoroastrianism)?

"It is not important that Parsi Zoroastrians survive. It is not important that Zoroastrians should survive. But I think it would be wonderful if the ideas of our religion, its ethics of good thoughts, good words and good deeds, its practical spirituality survive in some form."

Coordinating the session on 'The need for religion,' Dastur Navrooz Minochehr-Homji defined youth as "the ability to live without counting years, with a fluid mind open to new theories, changing opinions, willing to make new beginnings. One who can fulfil these conditions is a young man. If not, he can be old at 25." As to the survival of Zoroastrianism, Minochehr-Homji quoted, in analogy, Benjamin Franklin's reply to a query about how long will the American Republic survive: "The American Republic will endure as long as the ideals and principles

on which it is founded will remain dominant in the hearts of its people."

Ervad Yezdi Panthaky, speaking on the 'Relevance of Zoroastrianism to the twentieth century,' referred to pollution and stress as the evils of our time; despite which, day to day living based on the morality of religion can bring solace and equilibrium, he said. It is a matter of pride, said Panthaky, that Zoroastrianism had accepted the scientific value of the elements, was conscious of solar energy and the need to combat pollution.

Solicitor and Zoroastrian Studies member Bapsy Darukhanawalla likened the role of rituals to the practice of using a computer, "producing certain tangible and intangible results." Defining ritual as a reaching out of the physical through the psychological to the spiritual world to tap latent energy, Darukhanawalla noted that the harvest is proportional to the investment.

"Let us have a fundamental rule to read and understand our prayers for five minutes a day," suggested Minochehr-Homji. "It is easy to sing

'chayyé hamé Zarathosti (we are Zoroastrians);' it is very difficult to sing 'thaiyyé hamé Zarathosti (let us become true Zoroastrians).'"

Ervad Rooyintan Peer spoke about Zoroastrian ethics and noted that all religions are based on morality.

Questions came in thick and fast during the question-answer session which followed:

Is it not enough to practice the philosophy without the rituals?

Bapsy Darukhanawalla (BD): "One who does not experience the religion through rituals is not a complete Zoroastrian."

Dastur Minochehr-Homji (M-H): "Ceremonies are the embodiment of moral truths."

What is the significance and the necessity of after-death prayers beyond the first four days?

BD: "The living are stronger than the dead. It is necessary to give the soul support in the hereafter."

Which rituals belong to the original Zoroastrian preachings?

BD: "Zarathushtra is silent about a lot of things... So it does not mean we shouldn't do them. Rituals are an enactment of the principles given by Zarathushtra."

Why do people die?

M-H: "The thing that is born, must die. It is the law of nature. What will be the state of affairs if the Ravanas



Clockwise from below (from left):
Peer and Minochehr-Homji
Mistry (at the mike), Engineer,
Godrej, Khan and Dadabhoy
Godrej

Bharucha (at the mike), Desai,
Engineer and Ranina



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and the Zohaks don't die?"

Why was Zarathushtra not made immortal?

M-H: "Then by the Law of Asha all mortals must be made immortal. The Law of Asha is supreme."

Introducing the panel in the post-lunch session on 'Matrimony and family welfare' Engineer quipped, "All of us are lawyers, all of us are married and at least three of us look it."

Speaking on the Parsi law of marriage and divorce, Bombay High Court advocate Edul Bharucha described the Parsi response to intercommunity marriage as "not a controversy but a battle which obscured the issue involved." Although Ervad Rooyintan Peer had earlier noted at the workshop that no child of an intercommunity marriage could be initiated into the Zoroastrian faith, Bharucha noted that there is no legal hurdle to the navjote even of the child of a Zoroastrian mother and a non-Parsi father as was accepted by the Privy Council in the Bella Case. (Bella, orphan daughter of a Parsi mother and a Christian father was raised as a Zoroastrian in a Parsi household in Rangoon and her navjote performed. Community members objected to her presence in the agiary. The Privy Council accepted her initiation into the faith but decreed she was not a Parsi Zoroastrian and therefore the trustees of the agiary could prevent her entering it.)

Referring to other repercussions of intercommunal marriages, Bharucha said that men married outside the community have been consigned to the dokhma without controversy. However, when a Parsi woman married to a non-Parsi desired the conventional disposal in 1918, the body was placed in the chotra instead, which was also used for consigning bodies which had suffered capital punishment or disease. In 1928 Sir Dinshaw Mulla decreed that a female who had not renounced her faith be allowed all the rights and facilities of the community except the navjote of her children, said Bharucha.

Basing himself on "information that is fairly reliable and observations which are as objective as possible," solicitor Bergis Desai noted, "Parsis and marriage seems incongruous." Desai blamed the falling rates of marriage and birth in the population on the lack of tolerance, adjustment and appreciation of the other person's

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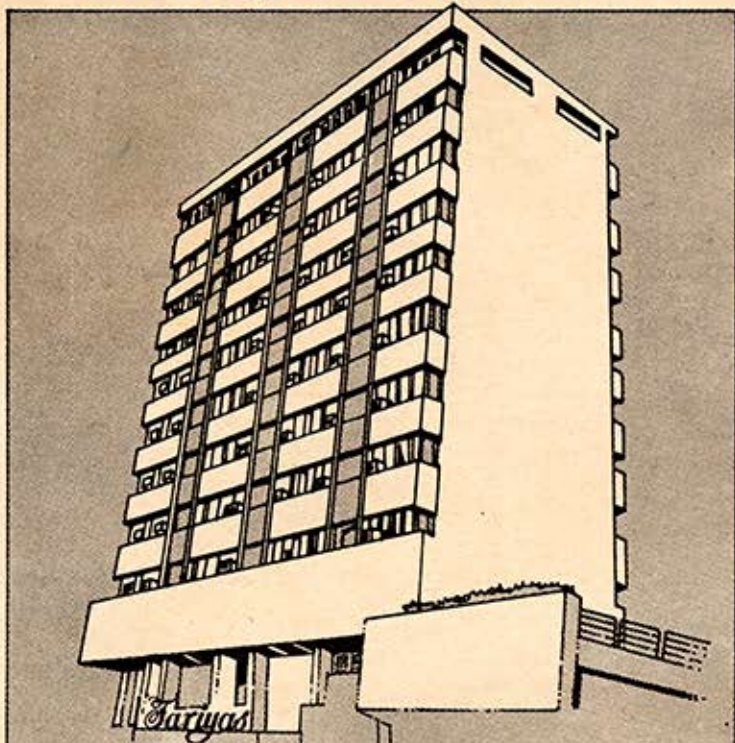
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point of view among the community today; the concept that marriage and career disrupt each other; and the absence of social sanctions against single people. Suggesting that marriage be promoted like new toothpaste, Desai urged special preferences for married people in employment. Not only do Parsi girls excel and are more career oriented but the sexes view each other with hostility, observed Desai, recommending psychological, social and demographic help.

The growing alienation of the young and the emphasis on individual personality development, coupled with the standardization of culture in most urban areas, increased the chances of intercommunity marriages, said Desai. "Though even a liberal will agree that it is easier to adjust when the backgrounds are similar," Desai pointed to the increasing divorce rate among Parsi couples to show that community marriages are also very unstable.

Desai noted that those who are emotionally drawn to a non-Parsi spouse are indifferent to the orthodox argument which compares intercommunity marriages to cross breeding between different species of animals. After all, marriage between cousins can be hazardous for children, he noted. "In the next 15 years, intercommunity marriages will be more the rule than the exception. Consider accepting the children of any one Zoroastrian parent," he advised.

Mazda Leasing chairman and Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP) trustee Homi Ranina presented the orthodox counter to intermarriage: "Just as Parsis came to India, several groups went elsewhere. There were Zoroastrians in China for 300 to 400 years. Others went to Europe. Where are those Zoroastrians today?" Shoring up the argument that mixed marriages are the result of proximity, Ranina noted that 75 percent of such marriages occur between couples working in the same office or firm. A solution Ranina offered was more housing complexes and more employment opportunities, recalling that there have been several marriages among the employees of Tatas, Central Bank, etc. "Mazda's first preference is to Parsi boys and girls. (But) not enough good Parsi boys are available," he added.

An impish Jehangir Nicholson, the septuagenarian sheriff of Bombay, enquired, "Is it merely male chauvinism

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or biological consideration that the child of a Parsi father has a right which the child of a Parsi mother does not have? Secondly, if two Parsi Zoroastrians live together and have children, what is the status of the children?"

The stunned silence which followed was broken by Bharucha explaining that it is the courts that have held that the child of a Parsi father may be considered a Parsi. "I'm not a biologist," he added. As for the status of a child of unwed Parsi parents, Bharucha noted, "Justice Davar said that Parsis were willing to condone bastardy!"

In answer to a question about BPP involvement in these matters it was stated that the marriage bureau was bringing people together and that a 30 percent reservation of new housing existed for engaged couples. However, "the experience is that even after providing two-room kitchen flats in Godrej Baug they don't procreate," and the BPP is now thinking in terms of providing creches for the community.

To lighten the solemn atmosphere Engineer joked, "One suggestion is to permit every Parsi male to have two wives!"

Summing up the discussions at the four workshops Limathwalla recalled that the question of intercommunity marriage had been discussed 100 years ago and will probably be discussed 100 years hence. Optimistic about Zoroas-

"If you can't accept the community's views, you have no right to belong to the community"

trian survival, Limathwalla decried the difference in treatment of Zoroastrian men and women marrying out of the community. "If a Parsi marries out of the community, why talk of community rights? If you can't accept its views, you have no right to belong to the community. (And if) a Parsi who marries out can't have community rights, where is the question of his children having them?"

"Because we are concerned about

the community we are gathered here," reminded Engineer, posing the two most likely alternatives before the community - extinction or merger. "There is no easy solution or we'd all be geniuses. When you clap so loudly, is it merely escapism? The problems need to be debated by sociologists, family counsellors, leaders and the man in the street. The solution can emerge only if we respect the other person's view."

Promising sponsorship from the WZO for any laudable project, Mistry urged the younger generation to live together, grow together as a community.

The majority of the youth organizers of the Delhi seminar had attended the conference and on behalf of them all Farrokh Rustomji, Delhi Parsi Anjuman youth trustee, thanked Burzin and his team and the WZO, while Rustom Anklesaria of Poona sang his song of thanks on behalf of the delegates generally.

The day's talkathon behind them, the delegates repaired to the Elphinstone Club to dine and dance the evening away.

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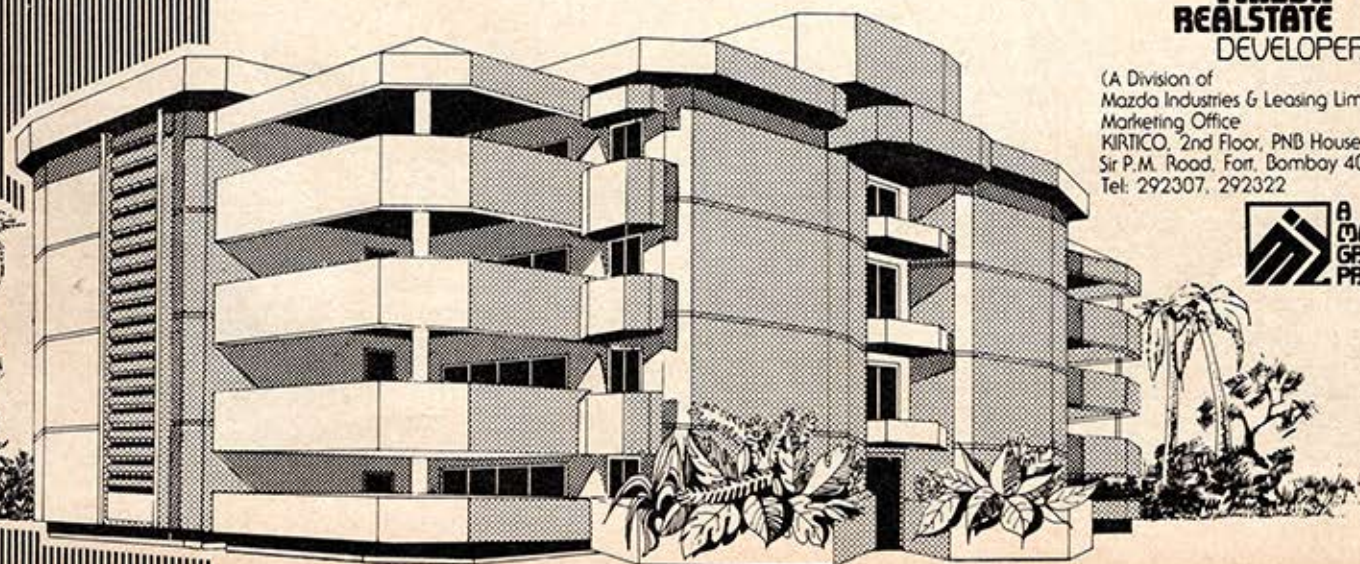
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ATALE OF TWO FIRES

The controversy surrounding the Dadyseth Agiary and Atash Bahram highlights the deteriorating condition of fire-temples in Bombay

Homi J. Rogers

For many Parsis working in the Fountain area of Bombay, a visit either in the morning or after work to the Dadyseth Agiary is mandatory. There are no miracles ascribed to the Agiary. Nor is it a spiritual oasis in the hubbub of the city's commercial nerve center: there are at least six other agiaries jostling within the area of one square kilometer. Even the fire is tended by priests belonging to the minority Kadmi *tola* (sect), in a city where the majority of Parsis are Shahenshahis.

Yet, the following is large and varied: from doctors and *dalals* (stock-brokers) to clerks and chairmen from the neighboring Parsi job bastions of Central Bank, and Bombay House, the headquarters of the Tata empire. Many have been visiting the Agiary regularly for years. Shiva Vakil, erstwhile trustee of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet and a director in numerous Tata companies, claims that he has

been "visiting the Agiary since August 25, 1938, almost every day when I am in Bombay and not indisposed."

Despite the overwhelming popularity, or probably, because of it, the Dadyseth Agiary was in the eye of the storm in August last, when Vakil shot off a long letter to *The Bombay Samachar* on the "shocking condition" of the Agiary. He charged that it was in dire need of repairs which, he insinuated, were not being carried out by the trustees as "they would like the building to become dilapidated so that they can sell it at a fat price."

Vakil's quiver of arrows stemmed from the cesspool formed in the Agiary, and was, according to Jehangir Dadyseth, managing trustee of the Dadyseth Charity Trust, "instigated by our panthaky, Ervad Parvez Nalladaru. The cesspool," explains Dadyseth, "is a rather common occurrence in the monsoons, because a portion of the Agiary where ablutions

are performed and which houses the dadgah (a household fire which can be tended to by the laity) is on a level lower than the road outside. Hence, whenever we get very heavy and abnormal rainfall, water from all sides of the Agiary flows down, flooding the concourse and choking the drainage pipes." On such occasions, according to Dadyseth, there is no alternative but to appeal to the Bombay Municipal Corporation to send their workers to drain out the water.

Above: Depiction of Shah Lorasp and Zarathushtra at the Atash Bahram

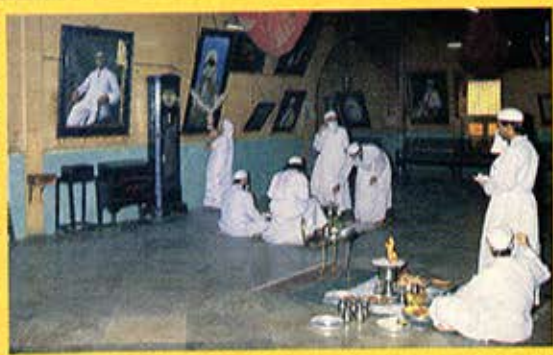
(Facing page) Dadyseth Agiary: commands a large following

(Insets)

Dadyseth Atash Bahram courtyard as seen through the portals

Prayers conducted at the hall of the Atash Bahram

Photos: Homiyar Mistry, Homz Prints



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At the time of the 1987 monsoon, the Municipality was less than prompt, and for five days devotees had to wade through ankle-deep water. "But," says an apparently agonized Dadyseth, "the trustees cannot be held responsible for a matter pertaining to the Municipality. They do not clean the underground drainage in time," avers Dadyseth, "and as there is no outlet for the water to drain out into the regular gutter, the situation cannot be averted." Vakil, however, charges the trustees with lethargy, and says that he got the condition remedied within 15 minutes by getting the gutter opened by a *chasniwala* (a Parsi page who delivers the sacred offerings) known to him.

The inconvenience caused to the Agiary's innumerable devotees till Vakil and/or the Municipality put things aright, caused a lot of regulars to join in the chorus, charging that the management and administration of the Agiary left a great deal to be desired.

"Fire-temples in Bombay," admits Dastur Dr Firoze Kotwal, high priest of the H.B. Wadia Atash Bahram in Bombay, "have not been models of cleanliness," even though the community holds the trait proverbially next to godliness. "Our agiaries and atash bahrams may not be clean in the sense of displaying dazzling marbles and well-polished furniture, but they should be kept neat: devoid of cobwebs, bird and animal droppings, and walls with peeling plaster begging for *chuna* (whitewash) or a coat of paint."

Dastur Dr Kaikhusroo JamaspAsa, high priest of the Anjuman Atash Bahram in Bombay, while stressing the need to keep agiaries and atash bahrams clean, notes that "in this task our community is severely handicapped" by the shortage of personnel. As only Parsi Zoroastrians can enter a fire-temple, the number of people who can be employed to ensure cleanliness is extremely limited.

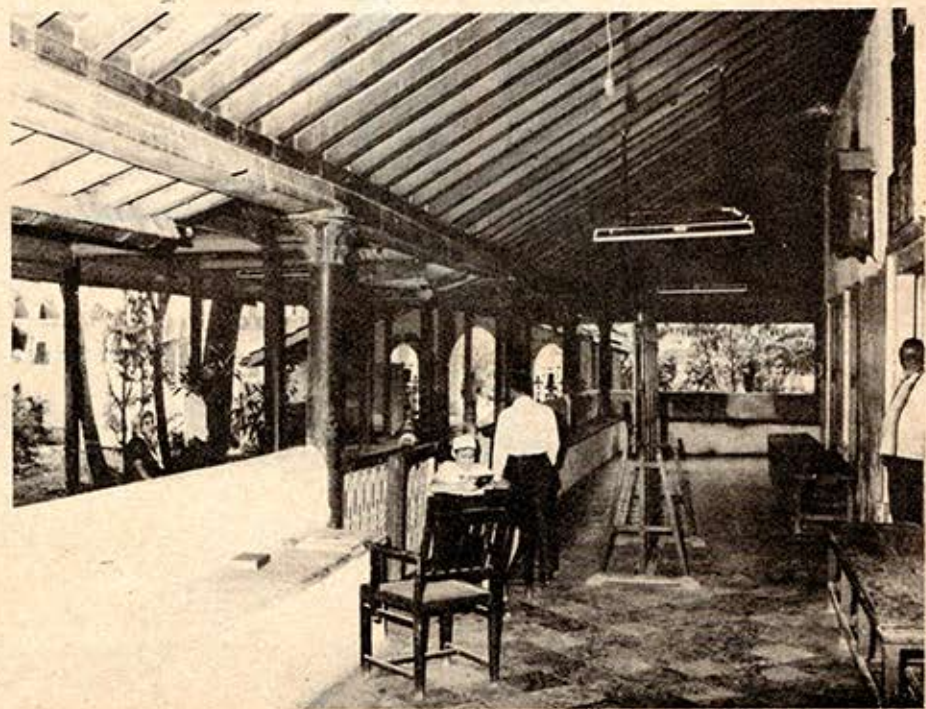
Dadyseth, however, shrugs off the barrage of letters stating that the Agiary is kept in a miserable and messy condition, and insists that he takes a personal interest in keeping the Agiary clean. "But, you know how hard it is to get plumbers and masons. A pipe burst in the *mori* (bathroom) during the monsoons. Immediately after the

rains, we got it repaired," states Dadyseth.

Parvez Nalladaru, who with his brother, Behram, and cousins, manages the Agiary, attends to the Kadmi behdins (laity), and performs the *boi* (ushering in the Gahs) ceremony, is the third generation of the Nalladaru family to be panthaky of the Dadyseth. Having been looking after the Agiary for over the past two decades, Nalladaru is apparently disturbed by the controversy, and his loyalties stand divided. While Dadyseth charges him with being up to

mischievous in Vakil's company, Nalladaru parries between giving his employers a clean chit, and accusing them for the mess in which they have kept the Agiary. "Things are being looked into," he repeats ad infinitum, "and it is no use writing about a matter which is being amicably settled."

There is, of course, no doubt that the trustees have sprung into action. The dadgah premises are being repaired and white-washed, and by the time this article is in print, the dadgah will have been shifted back to its room. The Agiary walls are looking



Entrance to the Dadyseth Agiary (top)
and the Dadyseth Atash Bahram (right)

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cleaner. Even the clock at the entrance is ticking again. "The trustees try their best," reiterates Nalladaru, "and it would ill befit me to malign them." Nalladaru is piqued that Dadyseth, while replying to the Press, stated that "I (Dadyseth) wanted to get these minor repairs completed before the (Shahenshahi) Mukta, but I was requested by Ervad Parvez Nalladaru to carry out the repair work after the (Shahenshahi) New Year." The request, Nalladaru states, was made by him because the time gap allowed by the trustees was so short that it was just not feasible for him to shift the dadgah to-and-fro and get the white-washing done.

The relationship between a panthaky and trustee is a rather tenuous one. While Dastur Dr Hormazdyar Mirza withholds his comments on the equation, stating that it depends purely upon each particular trust deed, JamaspAsa states, "The relationship between a panthaky and trustee is that of an employee-employer. All power vests with the trustees and no member of the community can start painting

walls in a fire-temple without the trustees' permission. Since the panthaky is on the premises, all day-to-day work concerning the fire-temple is his responsibility and hence the onus of

The trustees had refused to have fans installed arguing that it would encourage Parsis to go to sleep in the cool atmosphere

keeping the fire-temple clean and tidy is his. Some agiaries in Bombay are very well-maintained and extremely clean because the panthakies take a keen interest in the upkeep. Much of this depends upon the nature of relationship between the panthaky and trustee. A cordial relationship is essential for the proper upkeep of a fire-temple. Cleanliness also depends on

how much a panthaky can influence his trustees."

Kotwal feels that until a central priestly order is formed, assigning priests to agiaries, panthakies will be like employees of the trustees whose will and bidding need to be obeyed. "There is no substitute for a devout and religious panthaky of good character," adds Kotwal, "and the trustees should continue with the services of such a person, once they have found him."

A panthaky is thus more than an employee: he is a de facto trustee on the spot. Yet, even some minor improvements or additions call for a trustee's nod. Nalladaru, whose benefactors wished to get installed large stainless steel drums for the washing of hands, had to wait till the trustees, rather reticent of accepting people's help in maintaining and bettering the Agiary, approved of it. Vakil claims that he scored a coup when he had fans installed in the Agiary hall although the trustees had refused to do so arguing that it would encourage Parsis to go to sleep in the cool atmosphere.

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To Dadyseth's credit, however, it must be noted that when *Parsiana* called on him, he was about to accompany a Parsi donor down to the Agiary (from his Trust office, which is situated on the Agiary's first floor, overlooking the road) to discuss with him the possible gift of a new wire netting over the well.

Barely had the dust settled on the Agiary front when Vakil fired his second salvo: the deteriorating condition of the Dadyseth Atash Bahram at

"The cesspool is a rather common occurrence in the monsoons because a portion of the Agiary is on a level lower than the road outside"

Fanaswadi. The Atash Bahram, consecrated on September 29, 1783, was built by an influential merchant Dady Nusserwanjee, the founder of the Dadyseth family, who, according to H.D. Darukhanawala's *Parsi Lustre on Indian Soil*, was the first Parsi to trade with the British. The humility of the man is apparent from the absence of his name on the much-erased *takhti* (plaque) in Farsi that is embedded on the doorway of the Atash Bahram attributing its construction to "a servant of God." With the same modesty, Ardeshir, his son, housed the Adarian fire, believed to be older than the Atash Bahram fire, in 1803 at the present Agiary premises, and did not install a *takhti* at all. Prior to that, the Dadyseth Adarian existed very close to its present site at Fountain.

The pineapple orchards of the 1780s which Mulla Kaus Rustom Jalal selected as the site for the first Parsi (Kadmi) Atash Bahram in Bombay is now an inextricable maze of lanes lying between the densely populated Kalbadevi and Bhuleshwar areas of Bombay, and inhabited by a majority of Hindus. The Parsi population around has diminished, practically vanished; and the Atash Bahram has few callers. Its vast courtyard with two

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otlas (buildings) are occasionally used, though with diminishing frequency, for navjote/marriage ceremonies. It is claimed that a few years ago, Dr Aspi Golwalla, chairman of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet, mentioned at a public meeting that this vast plot of land was up for sale. Dadyseth shrugs off the announcement as ridiculous.

Dadyseth, however, says that Golwalla had tried to get him interested in shifting the Atash Bahram from its present premises to Godrej Baug, off Napean Sea Road, where now the atash from Bharuch's Doongaji Agiary will be housed. "I point blank refused," storms Dadyseth. "Why should I give away 6,000 square yards of land for a measly 1,000 square yards? And, at that location, I would get neither behdins (laity) nor athornans (priests)." Dadyseth cites yet another reason for his refusal to accept Golwalla's purported proposal. His panthaky, he notes, told him that a fire once installed cannot be shifted. And he bowed to the priest's wishes, just as his grand-uncle had, for exactly the same reason, conceded in 1933 to the

Nalladarus, by refusing to shift the Atash Bahram to a plot of land then going cheap at New Marine Lines.

Yet, it is the same pliant attitude of the trustees that has now involved them in an impasse regarding the

The Atash Bahram lies in a disarrayed state: the last time major repairs were carried out here was way back in 1916

maintenance of the Atash Bahram. The roof of the Atash Bahram building is in a dangerous state, and could come crashing down, but the trustees cannot get it repaired reportedly because of the non-cooperation from its *boiwallas* led by the panthaky, who refuse to shift the fire. "We have constructed a special room barely 25 feet away for the express purpose of housing the Atash Bahram fire till repair

work is carried out by skilled non-Parsi workmen," argues Dadyseth, "but are helpless in the face of the adamant attitude of our priests...There are only 11 Kadmi mobeds today," adds Dadyseth ruefully, aware that any strong-arm tactics would only jeopardize matters rather than solve them.

The Atash Bahram lies in a state of disarray: the last time major repairs were carried out here was way back in 1916. Nalladaru, when confronted with the information, shrugs off the shifting on the grounds of defiling *pak-parejgari* (piety and adherence to rituals), inconvenience in tending the fire, and a possible intrusion into the sanctum sanctorum by non-Parsis, as there are no security guards and the neighborhood is predominantly non-Parsi. "Should a group of them just enter the new premises, what should I do: tend the fire, or shoo them away?"

The contention that an Atash Bahram cannot be shifted is countered by Vakil, "The Iranshah has been, and has its purity diminished?" Even Kotwal agrees that a fire can be moved, "though, the same must not be under-

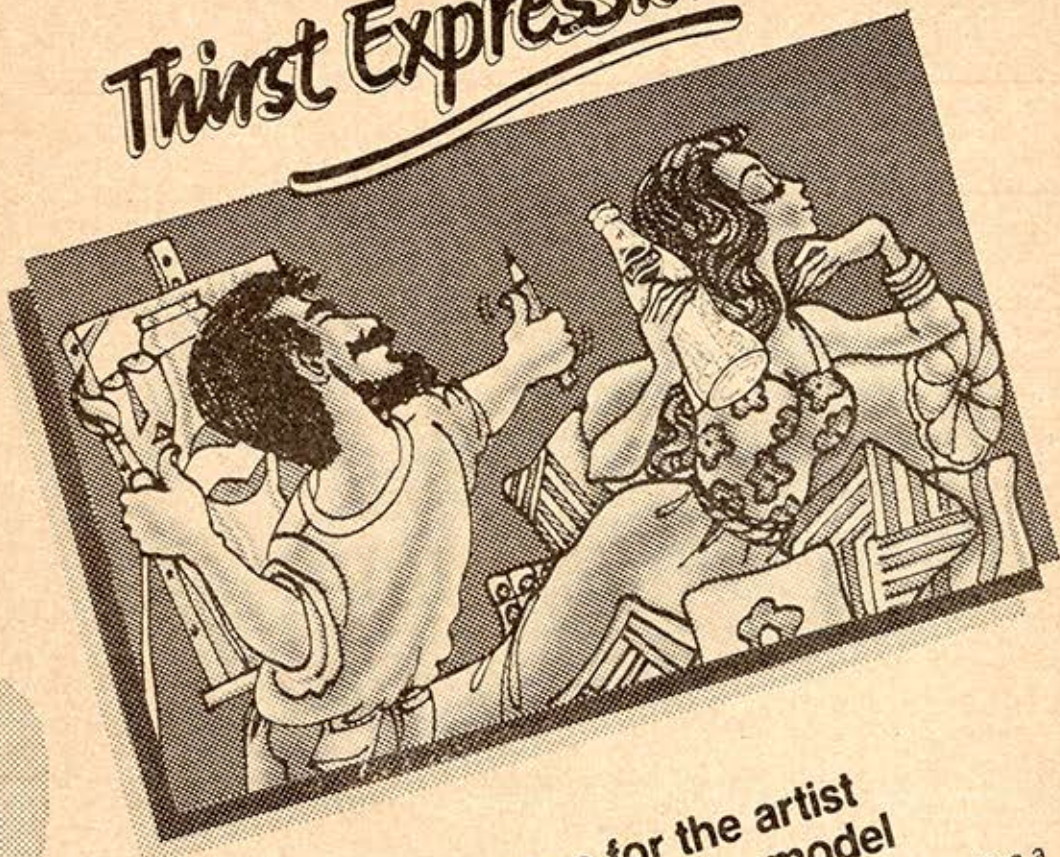
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taken for any small cause, like white-washing," he adds. Nalladaru, similarly, seeks an assurance that once the fire is removed, repair work is so carried out that it should last for at least another 50 years. "You do not shift the padshah alone," he remonstrates. "You shift all the other trappings as well."

While both the trustees and the panthaky are agreed on the imminent need to repair the Atash Bahram, no work can be undertaken till jointly a blueprint is drawn up to ensure the security of the fire in its temporary habitat, which stands within unchecked accessibility, unlike the present abode which faces a block of residences. Dadyseth himself is aware of the presence of non-Parsis in the sprawling Atash Bahram compound, and as an old devotee informs us, it is not uncommon to see young boys of other communities streak across the roofs chasing kites.

Vakil is of the opinion that given a chance, the trustees should dispose of the property here, shift the Atash Bahram to a more convenient location, where there is ample vacant place (the Banaji Atash Bahram compound, for example), and use the money raised by the sale of land towards addressing the community's major problem of housing. The idea not only sounds heretic, but seems a volte face from a man who has charged the trustees with the ill intent of selling off prized land for a fat price, at the cost of sacrificing people's religious feelings. But, as Vakil now claims, that bit insinuating the trustees' greed to let the Agiary building fall into disrepair so as to be able to sell the land, was added by him "just for effect," to stir the trustees into action. "Every time a snake opens its mouth, it should not necessarily sting; hissing too is sufficient."

In the melange of Vakil's *dankh* (sting) and *fufaro* (hiss), matters are being set aright at the Agiary. "The Agiary's structure is strong, like most buildings in this (Fountain) area: it can easily stand for at least another 100 years," says Adil Billimoria, a structural engineer and regular devotee at the Agiary.

But, while the Agiary is being saved, the future of the city's oldest Atash Bahram is as precarious as the doddering dome above its exalted fire.

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Calcutta Parsis celebrate the D.B. Mehta
Atash Adaran's platinum jubilee

Arnavaz S. Mama.

"This Adaran saheb occupies a unique place in the hearts of all of us in Calcutta. We come here to offer prayers of thanksgiving on joyful occasions. In times of distress we turn to this atash to seek solace and consolation. The Adaran is therefore the pillar of our existence. Around it our lives revolve, and you, honored panthaki sahebs and mobed sahebs, are its protectors."

The *maanpatra* (citation in Gujarati) presented to three panthakies and four assistant mobeds on the occasion of the platinum jubilee celebration of the Ervad Dhunjeebhoy Byramjee Mehta Zoroastrian Anjuman Atash Adaran on October 10, 1987 recorded the Calcutta Zoroastrians' affection for the priests and appreciation of their "wise counsel and guidance in all matters pertaining to our religion and the performance of our ceremonies."

Two jashans – a simple one in the *Havan Gah* and another in the *Ujiran Gah* conducted by seven mobeds and attended by nearly 400 members of the anjuman – commemorated the installation of the sacred fire on *roj Sarosh mah* Ardibehest in the year 1912 by Dastur Shams-ul-Ulema Sardar Kaikobad Adarbad, high priest of Poona. "The hall was full of light and the scent of flower garlands. Scores of *divas* (lamps) were lit. The fire in the *kebla* (sanctum sanctorum) burnt brightly, fed by the sandalwood offerings of those who were attending the ceremony. The ladies were in expensive saris and *kasbi kors* (borders of gold and silver thread). Many of the men wore daglis...Ervad Adarbad Dastur's voice rang loud and clear and, after the hambandagi, people surged forward to put *loban* (incense) on the jashan's *afarganyu* (fire urn),"

notes an account of the celebration by Phiroze Dustoor, office manager for the Calcutta Zoroastrian Community's Religious and Charity Funds (CZCRFC).

CZCRFC trustee Dali Bhesania's welcome and a *monajaat* (religious song) arranged by Shirin Modi was followed by an apt, catchy and enjoyable song by Vistasp Bulsara praising the mobeds, notes Dustoor. CZCRFC trustee Dr Russi Anklesaria traced the history of the Adaran and Ms Naja Vakeel, granddaughter of the man after whom the agiary is named, added details from memory. *The Statesman* (October 20, 1987) described Vakeel

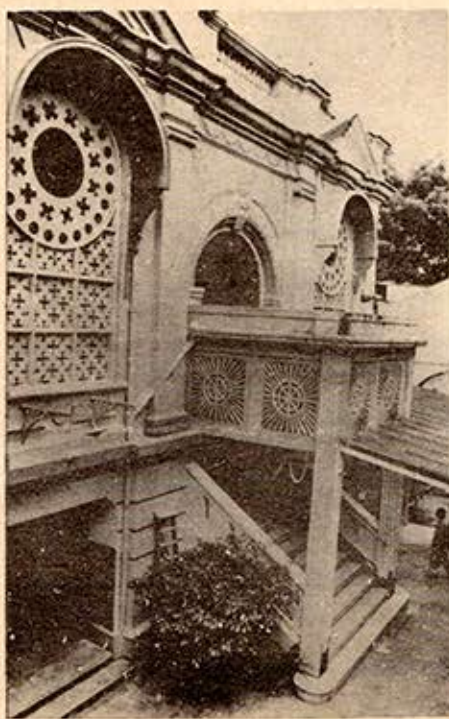
as "a remarkable woman, neither energy, wit nor memory dimmed by her 93 years which she wore as gracefully as the strands of pearls and uncut emeralds at her throat," in a report entitled "Inner temples," forwarded to *Parsiana* by Dhun Mehta. Vakeel was said to be in tears of joy as Ms Dinamai Bhesania presented her with a shawl and flowers on behalf of the anjuman.

In turn, each of the mobeds – Ervad Bapuji Desai, who has served the agiary for 58 years since 1929, Ervad Rustomji Meherjirana and Ervad Adarbad Meherjirana whose contributions span 52 and 42 years respectively, and Ervad Ratansha Karanjia, Ervad Rusi Bhada, Ervad Soli Kotwal and Ervad Khurshedji Katrak – were garlanded and presented with a shawl, purse and copy of the citation. Thanking the anjuman, Ervad Desai noted that perhaps never before had seven mobeds together been so honored. "But then our mobeds are special. Most of us have known them since childhood, and we wanted to express our gratitude and affection," writes Dustoor.

Ardeshir Batlivala, former CZCRFC trustee and a father figure to generations of Calcutta youth, introduced others who were also honored, Ms Bapsy Rabadi presenting each with a souvenir. Among them were those who volunteer their help whenever a Parsi dies in Calcutta; the boys who had qualified as priests during the 15 years that elapsed between the diamond and platinum jubilees of the Mehta Adaran; the volunteer mobeds who help out during the muktad rush. After singing *Chhaiye hamé Zarthosti* and partaking of a round of *chasni* (consecrated food), the con-

The Mehta Adaran's inner courtyard

Photo: Business Standard





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gregation dispersed.

A historical sketch of the Calcutta community, forwarded by Dustoor, names Dadabhai Banaji as the first Parsi to arrive, about 200 years ago. Banaji's descendants achieved great distinction in the industrial and civic life of Bengal and an outstanding scion, Rustomji Cowasji Banaji, founded Calcutta's first Atash Adaran in 1839.

The increase in business activity, specifically the China trade, lured more Parsis to Calcutta which was then the capital of British India. Dhunjeebhoy Byramjee Mehta set up in this eastern port in 1846. Within 20 years Mehta had established a firm each in Calcutta and Hong Kong and, within another decade, a textile mill on the advice of Jamsetji Tata, engaging the services of expert European managers and spinning masters, notes the write-up.

By 1890, the deeply religious Mehta had established a dar-e-meher in his house at 65 Canning Street, said to be the former abode of Viceroy Lord Canning. The *alat* (sacred fire) for the dar-e-meher was brought on foot all

the way from Navsari. "According to tradition, the sacred fire could not be brought over a wooden bridge and since the then Howrah Bridge was an all-wood structure, the mobeds had to wear *pavris* (special high platform shoes of iron) to cross the bridge," notes the historical essay, crediting the details to *Parsi Prakash*.

When Dhunjeebhoy died in 1907, his widow Khorshedbai, son Rustom and family donated one lakh 10 thousand rupees while the Calcutta Zoroastrian anjuman collected another Rs 67,000. Investing Rs 43,000 to buy an old property on Metcalf Street, the community spent another Rs 42,000 to build an agiary building. To this structure was then shifted the sacred fire from Dhunjeebhoy's house and enthroned with all ceremony in the presence of a large number of Parsis from Calcutta and elsewhere. An adjoining building to serve as a residence for mobeds was constructed by the late Pirojba Madan in memory of her brother Ratanji Minwala, while the Bombay-based N.M. Wadia Charities funded the construction of the prayer hall in the agiary.

By May 28, 1986 the central government's ministry of finance had accepted the Mehta Adaran as "a place of public worship of renown," enabling 50 percent of donations made towards its renovation and repair to qualify for exemption under section 80 G of the Income-tax Act, informed trustees Bhesania, Anklesaria and Adi Rabadi, in an appeal for funds dated November 26, 1986.

"Over the decades, the elements have taken a heavy toll of the building, which is now in need of extensive repairs and renovations, external and internal," noted the trustees. "The expenditure will be very heavy (about three lakh rupees), and we have to augment our funds to meet these expenses on this historic milestone in a solemn and befitting manner. We, therefore, make this fervent appeal for your kind and generous donations to assist us in our endeavors."

And Parsis responded for, as *The Statesman* reflected, "75 years as the spiritual anchor of a community that thrives far away from its main stream on the western coast (of India) is not an insignificant period..."

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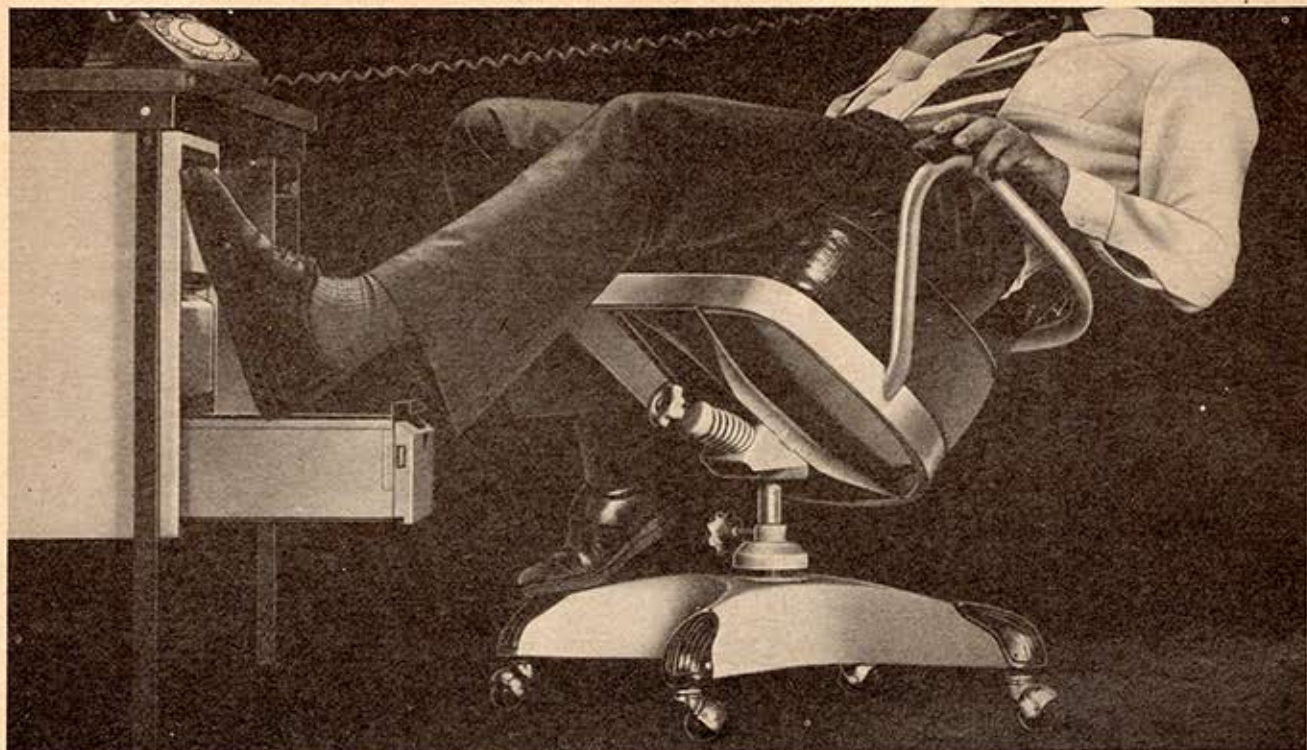
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It was a wobbly climb to the site of Godrej Baug's proposed Pestonji Aslaji Doongaji Agiary as Dastur Dr Hormazdyar Mirza and six mobeds performed the jashan ceremony in the shelter of a shamiana on January 31, 1988. The cool sea breeze tempered the warmth of the afternoon sun as the more sprightly of about 200 assembled Parsis trailed the Dastur, Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP) chairman Dr Aspi Golwalla and trustees Eruch Desai, Jamsheed Kanga, Homi Ranina, Jamsheed Guzder and Dr (Ms) Mehroo Bengalee down an even trickier slope to watch Golwalla lay the foundation stone.

Like a hexagonal crown, the Agiary will straddle a Malabar Hill peak, its garden falling away on all sides in a series of landscaped terraces as witnessed the model on display. Overlooking the Arabian Sea and the affluent residences of Napean Sea Road, the Agiary, as conceived by architect Maneck Engineer of Godrej and Boyce Manufacturing Company Pvt Ltd, will cost 45 lakh rupees to complete, noted Golwalla in a formal address in Gujarati after the ceremony. A shortcoming is that a well has not been provided for.

Though originally designed to house two or three sacred fires, only one *gumbaz* (the site of the atash) and two sides of the hexagon (including the room where the *baj* and *ijashne* ceremonies are held) will be built initially, informed Engineer. The cost of the preliminary construction will amount to Rs 15 lakhs of which the Doongaji "tribe" (not family - as emphasized Hoshang Doongaji in his speech) will contribute Rs 10 lakhs and the BPP, the balance five. This restricted construction could be completed in one and a half years if funds are available, says Engineer.

The original BPP plan had been to shift the Langrana and Godavara agiary fires from the by-lanes of Fort, Bombay and enthrone them at the new setting. This plan was abandoned when some Parsis moved the charity commissioner to bar the shifting of the Langrana fire.



Model of the new agiary

A NEW HOME FOR AN OLD FIRE

Arnavaz S. Mama

**Godrej Baug,
the youngest
Parsi colony in
Bombay, will be
graced by the
254-year-old
Doongaji fire
from Broach**

Anxious to preserve the 254-year-old atash of their Doongaji Agiary in Broach "consecrated by our ancestors with devotion and love," Doongaji noted that with the decline in the Parsi population in Broach there was barely a single devotee visiting the Doongaji Agiary each day. It was "a dream" of all the Doongajis to reenthroned the fire more fittingly that, thanks to the cooperation of the BPP, was beginning to materialize, he said.

Noting that the Doongajis will also be donating the income from their four-lakh rupee maintenance fund, Golwalla appealed to Godrej Baug residents to collect and contribute towards the rest of the Agiary construction which will include a hall for the colony's use. (However, in a letter circulated amongst members of the Doongaji family and published by *The Bombay Samachar* on February 28, it was noted that the income from the Doongaji fund was to be utilized for performing monthly or yearly ceremonies for the dead as required by the donors.)

Golwalla recalled the days when the present Godrej Baug property lay fallow. The biggest snag was that there was no approach road available. In response to the BPP's request, then municipal commissioner M.W. Desai agreed to allocate land for an approach road in exchange for an equal area of the property. The late Indira Gandhi, then Prime Minister of India, interceded to release the plot from government reservation in the interests of housing the weaker sections of the community, Golwalla added.

However, because of the high cost of constructing on virgin land, Godrej Baug rents are high as compared to other Punchayet housing colonies. Even so, by now the BPP has received 100 applications for transfer from the older baugs, Golwalla said, which meant that 100 old flats at cheaper rent would be available to those with limited means.

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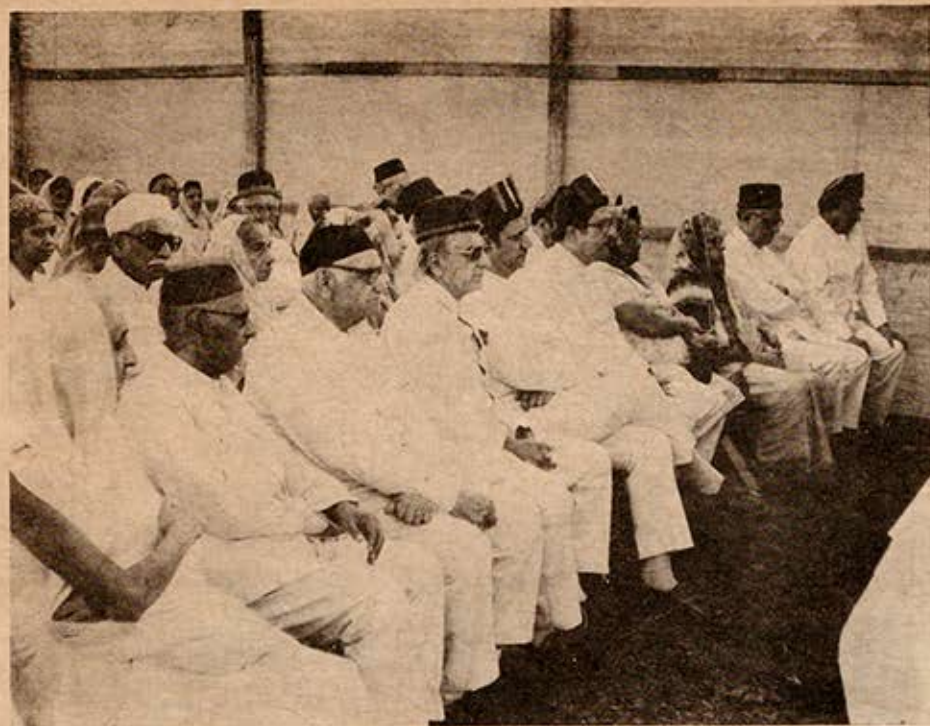
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Traditionally attired audience following the jashan

but the BPP must furnish the government with a list of allottees to satisfy the requirement that the tenants are truly deserving. "If there are too many signs of affluence, the trustees may be blamed for cheating...For the benefit of the remaining 3,000 applicants whose fate will be in jeopardy," Kanga requested cooperation from the Godrej Baug residents. While proposing a vote of thanks, A

The present Parsi community has the special duty "to marry and multiply" to preserve the Zoroastrian heritage

Homi Mehta's plea for an enclosure for indoor sports and a cooperative store in the course of his welcome address, Golwalla noted that the Time and Talents Club had promised Rs 75,000 towards a medical center. Urging patience, the chairman said that it was likely that a cooperative store and even a pavilion for indoor games will materialize after the residential complex is completed. "Perhaps (the house of) Godrej may build a hall in honor of...*saadaa maadaa* (austere) Pirojsha seth," the consolidator of the Godrej enterprise who, according to Golwalla, had started life as a BPP employee!

Sorab Godrej, Pirojsha's son and chairman of Godrej, sought to instill in his audience "the happiness of self-reliance" and suggested that the community involve itself in social work centered round the agiary. Referring to the human tendency to expect benefits, Godrej urged the gathering – the great majority being Godrej Baug residents – to remember others who are underprivileged at the time of receiving a bonanza such as housing. Dastur Mirza invoked the blessings of Ahura Mazda on the fire-temple and the colony, and said that the present Parsi community had the special duty "to marry and multiply" in order to preserve the Zoroastrian heritage handed down from antiquity.

Dastur Mirza (with shawl) leading the jashan

Kanga was at pains to explain why the BPP could not permit the installation of air-conditioners or change in the internal design of the flats at Godrej Baug. Normally, a condition for land to be released from the urban land ceiling act – as in this case – is that allotment of flats would be made with the consultation of the government, informed Kanga. This condition has been waived, he noted,

block resident Yezdi Buhariwalla urged the trustees to ensure the security of the Baug. "There is only one watchman in the whole Baug and he can't manage," said Buhariwalla noting that not only the safety of the tenants but crores of rupees of Godrej investment (the work towards the preparing of the land, roads, etc have been contributed by Godrej at cost) is at stake.



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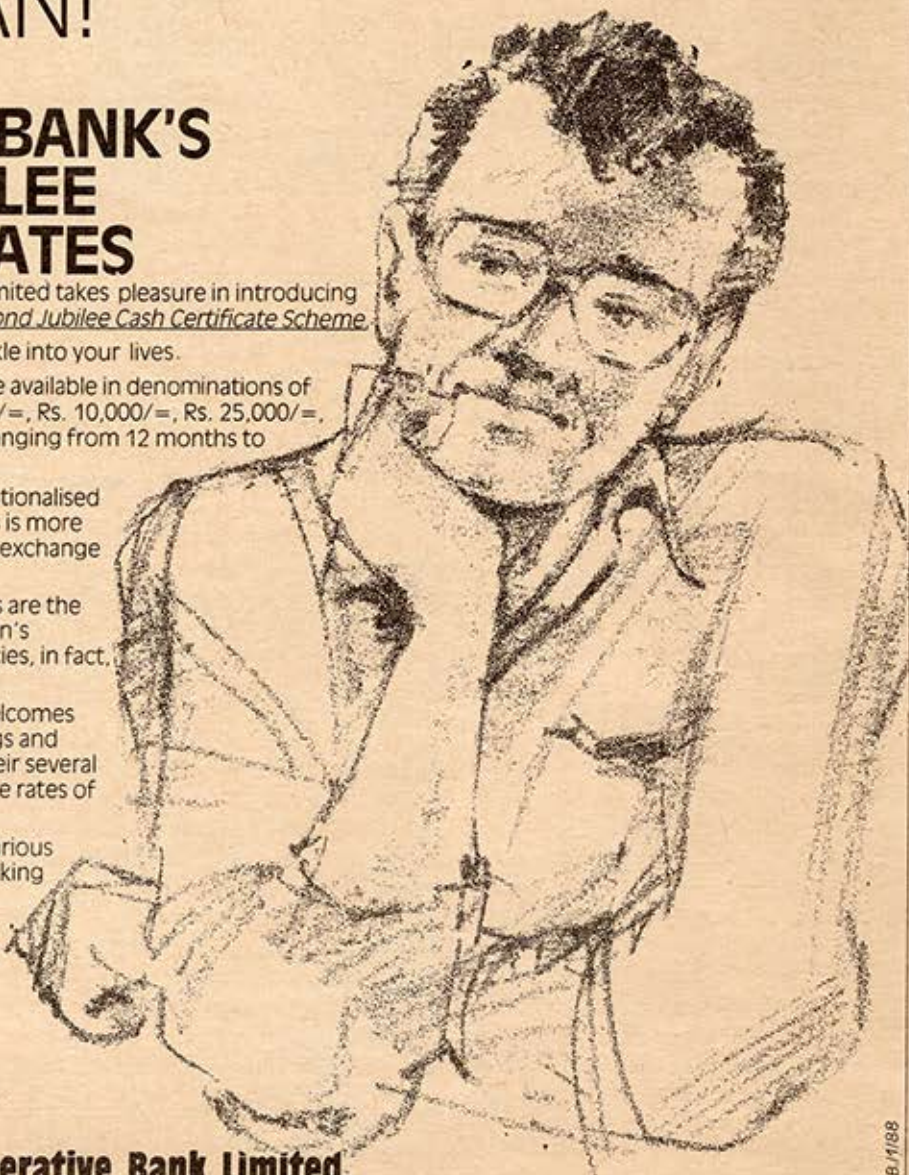


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Empire), the whole colony rejoiced. Never was an honor more fully earned. And when in 1952 he and his beloved wife celebrated their golden wedding at the Peninsula Hotel, 700 guests rejoiced with them." Jehangir Ruttonjee died in 1960 at the age of 80.

The Shanghai connection

The 47 graves solicitously maintained by the erstwhile Parsi community of Shanghai were all removed during the cultural revolution in China, writes Karachi businessman and regular China visitor Shahpur Shroff in a letter dated September 12, 1987 to Jamshed Pavri of Vancouver. Pavri notes that it took Shroff four years of persistent effort to locate the site of the old Parsi prayer hall and cemetery.

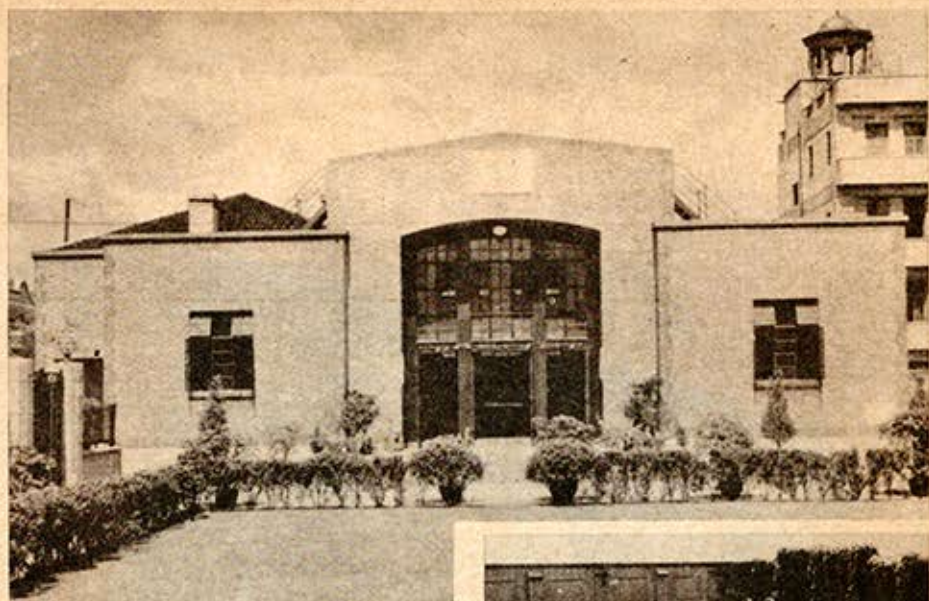
"Where benevolent Parsis and their mobeds once recited prayers and remembered their dear departed ones, there stands today an elevator factory and another factory making machinery for the manufacture of cardboard boxes," writes Pavri, quoting Shroff's letter.

Pavri recalls a letter dated November 22, 1967 in which the Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP) secretary Sapur Desai had written that the Indian Embassy in Peking had informed the Punchayet that the People's Republic of China had acquired the Parsi prayer hall and cemetery in Shanghai. The BPP and the Indian government protested on behalf of the Parsi community, notes Pavri who said he had suggested that "a petition be made to exhume the remains and rest them elsewhere... The cemetery was intact in 1968 and could have been salvaged. Today, everything is lost," he adds sadly.

Shroff, who located the address with the help of his business principals, describes two small houses, on either side of the main gate, of solid stone construction and in very good condition.

Speaking to the manager of one of the factories with the help of his business colleague who helped to interpret in Chinese, Shroff learnt that the high court had entrusted the place to these occupants by a court order only a few months earlier. "In fact, it appeared that (the manager) was afraid that I had come there to obtain a reversal of the court order," writes Shroff.

The wealth of the Parsis was largely



*Prayer hall in Shanghai circa 1932
with the cemetery (inset)*

based on the China trade, notes Pavri. The roll call of Parsi traders in China included such names as Banaji, Khurshedji Cama of the K.R. Cama Oriental Institute, Wadia, Jeejebhoy, Readymoney, Petit, Jamsetji Tata's father Nusserwanji, Talati and Sethna, says Pavri. "Albless Baug and Cama Baug were all built with monies made in China. Numerous agiaries, atash bahrams, dharamshalas, schools, colleges, hospitals, wells, the Poona Waterworks, the Bund, the Mahim Causeway, etc were all made with China money. 'Parsi, thy name is charity' became a slogan only after the (universal) charities made by Parsis with wealth made in China. Recently, Shapur Jokhi built Ava Baug in Navsari at a cost of two and a half crore rupees made in China," recounts Pavri.

Considering it the duty of the BPP and the community to commemorate those benevolent persons whose remains are totally lost today, Pavri suggests that a column be erected at Doongerwadi inscribed with the names and dates of death of the disinherited to preserve their memory. "Those ancestors have left us so much. At least we can do this much in return," comments Pavri, adding that the Macau and Hong Kong cemeteries are "intact today... but the future is uncertain."

Sponsoring refugees

"We may have (eight) refugees in our midst in the very near future," notes

an update from chairperson Moti Balsara of the subcommittee for group sponsorship of Zoroastrian refugees in the February newsletter of the Zoroastrian Society of Ontario (ZSO). Urging the Ontario community to collect furniture, clothing, kitchen utensils, canned food, etc in their basements, the write-up notes, "Let us not forget how very much we appreciated help, guidance and support when we first came to this country."

Balsara and Perin Antia had visited Robert Shropshire of the Working Committee for Refugee Resettlement on January 19. The immigration department at Toronto is said to have processed the ZSO's sponsorship file which has now been passed on to the Canadian immigration office in Islamabad, notes the ZSO's January newsletter.

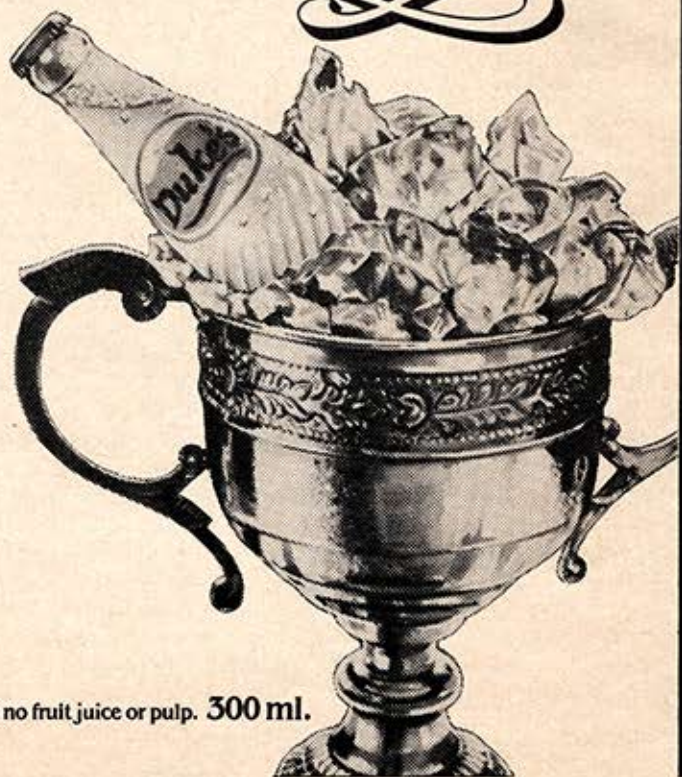
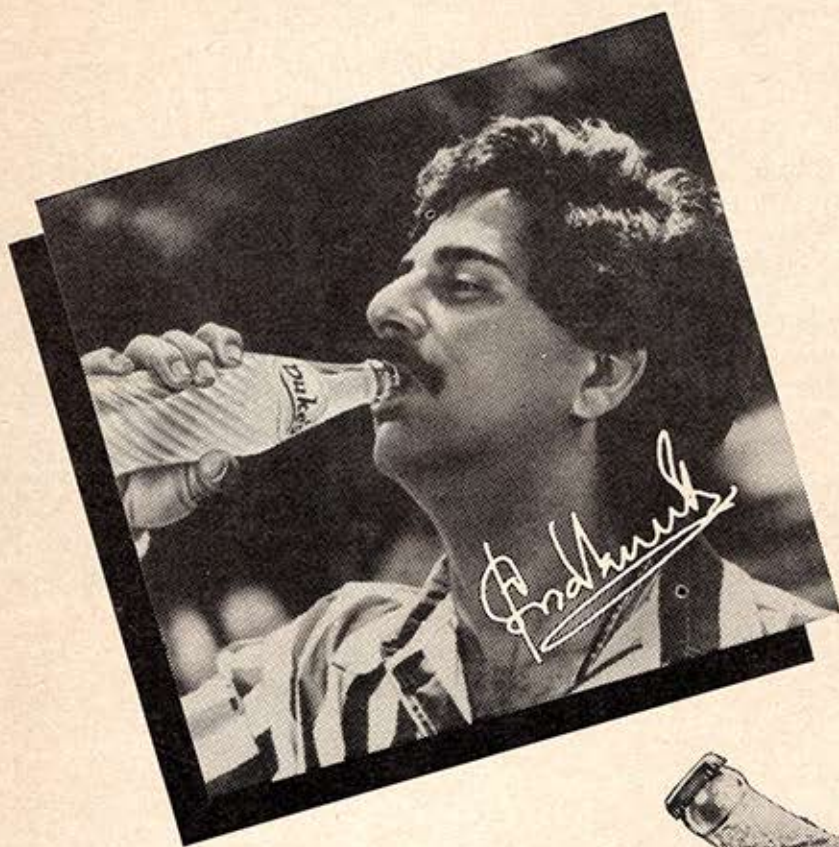
A total of \$ 1,582 has been collected from 17 individuals so far and the youth, under the leadership of Bina Behboodi, are planning a fund raising drive to strengthen the refugee fund.

In the meanwhile, the newsletter introduced Dr Jehangir Rashidi, his wife Kean and their two small children as recently arrived refugees.

A youth meeting (13 to 25 years - "no

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adults please") will discuss youth perceptions of the Zoroastrian way on April 1, 1988, notes an announcement in the newsletter. The subtopics include: how does Zoroastrianism work in our daily life; how can we adapt to western society while maintaining our Zoroastrian identity; the structure of social, religious and educational programs to ensure youth interest in Zoroastrianism; youth/parent relationship; uniting Zoroastrians from different backgrounds; sudreh-kusti - embarrassment or pride. The discussions will be followed by a youth dinner-dance.

To celebrate a centenary of Parsi cricket - the first Parsi team had reached British shores in 1986 - the Zoroastrians of Ontario are planning to send the first Zoroastrian cricket team to tour England from North America. To finance the outing the Zoroastrian Cricket Club was scheduled to present a gourmet evening on February 28.

'Dotbusters' on trial

Judge Salvatore Bovino of the Jersey City Court ruled on February 26, 1988 that the four American 'Dotbuster' teenagers, accused of the fatal mugging of Navroze Mody on September 27, 1987, will be tried as adults, noted a UNI despatch dated February 27.

Identified as Ralph Gonzalez, Luis Padilla, William Acevedo and Luis Acevedo, the alleged killers had been set free after the initial arrest so that they could attend school. The move had angered Navroze's parents Khorshed and Jamshid Mody, other members of the Indian community and a host of Americans who were worried that the criminals, if charged as juveniles, would get off with a lenient sentence despite the horror of their crime.

Petitions from 1,400 signatories had been forwarded to the US Attorney General and other law enforcement agencies, states the February newsletter of the Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Chicago (ZAC). Among those who repudiated the earlier leniency was Zoroastrian scholar Dr James Russell of Columbia University who wrote to Attorney General Richard Hughes of New Jersey on February 6, 1988: "As it is, (Mody's) parents' lives are permanently and irrevocably shattered, but the unspeakable American criminal justice system seems determined to subject

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them, as victims, to additional suffering. I must admit I could ill control my anger when I learnt that the attackers have been allowed to stay at home."

Providing Hughes with a brief background on Zoroastrianism and the Parsis, including the sugar and the milk bowl legend, Russell added, "That's what Parsis are: sweetness... Like the other Indians who have come here, to this country of many races and peoples, they have added sugar to the American bowl of milk. There is no room in our country for the Dotbusters. Teenagers who form a gang expressly dedicated to racist murder are not mischievous little boys and girls, but that is how the criminal justice apparatus you supervise is treating them. And in doing so, it renders a grave disservice to the civilized values of Americans, and good people everywhere. I ask you, therefore, to make every effort to have a special prosecutor assigned to the case of Navroze Mody, and to press for the severest sentences possible under law. Furthermore, I ask you to request the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) to examine all cases of attacks on Indians in New Jersey and to treat the Dotbusters as it would any subversive and violent conspiratorial organization. Nothing but the full weight of the law is enough."

Quoting a letter from Jamshid Mody, the ZAC newsletter notes that the Department of Justice has asked the FBI to investigate the case.

News of the court decision was conveyed to the victim's parents and community members, who were not allowed inside the court room, by prosecution attorney John Molinari, notes the UNI report. Jamshid Mody is also suing the authorities of Hoboken City, where Navroze was attacked, for \$ 10 million for having failed to protect his son's life, adds the report.

Counsel Bernstein pleaded the Modys' case with Prof Jan Pillai, professor of law in Philadelphia, as co-counsel. Another source of support was honorary human rights commissioner Hardayal Singh who heads one of the Indian community groups which have been campaigning for putting the four delinquents on a regular trial.

The 'divine' car

The name of the Japanese automobile - Mazda - has raised many a query in Zoroastrian minds. When *Manashni*,

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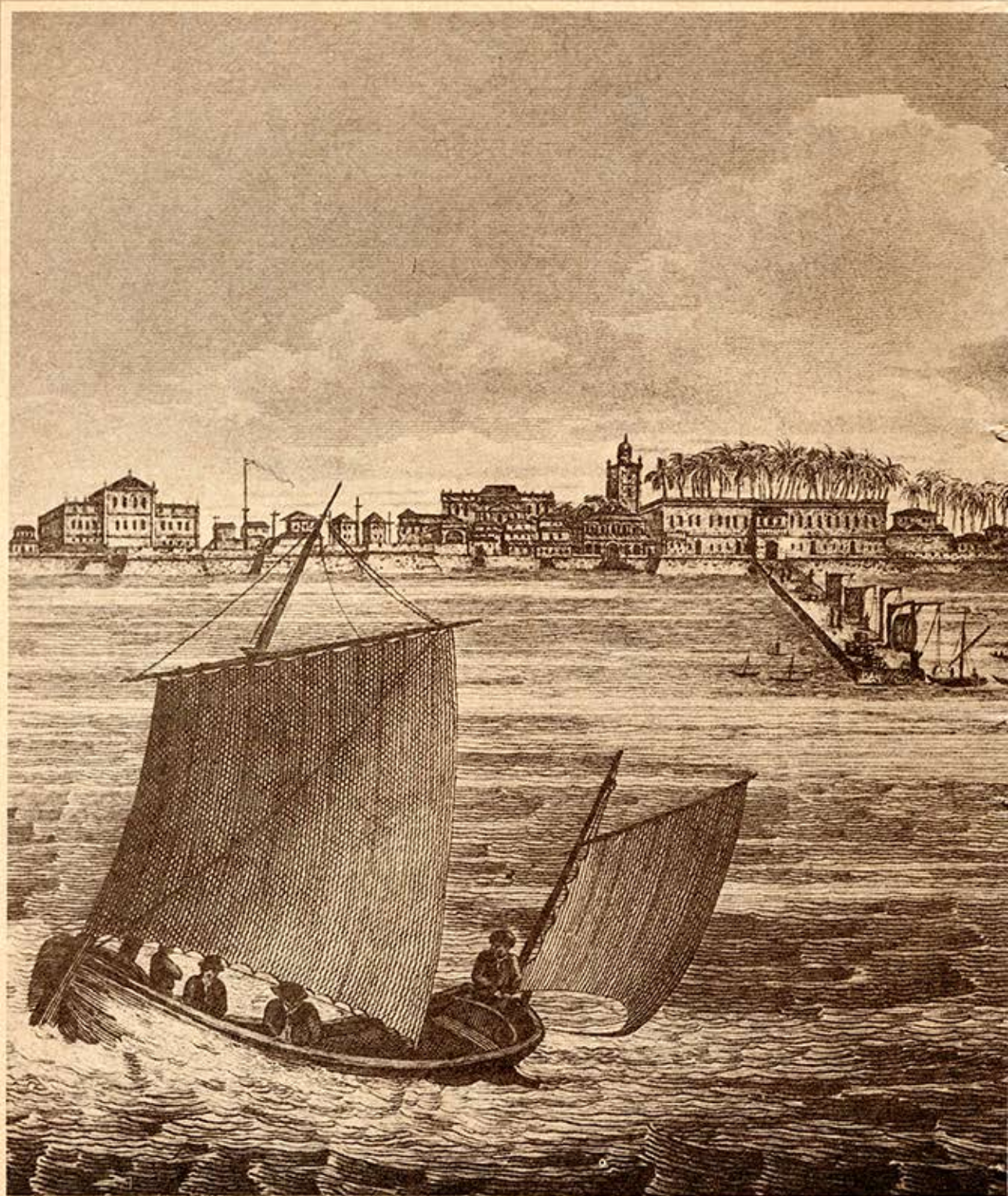
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the newsletter of the Australian Zoroastrian Association of New South Wales, quoted a *Reader's Digest* snippet linking the name to Ahura Mazda, *Parsiana* reported the information for the greater satisfaction of Zoroastrians worldwide.

A letter from Capt Rusi Katila of Bombay however notes, "This matter was a subject matter of correspondence I had with the Mazda Car Corporation and I wonder who fed the information to *Reader's Digest*?" In the xerox copy of a letter dated May 11, 1987 to the managing director of Toyo Kogyo Company Limited, Hiroshima, Japan, which he forwarded to *Parsiana*, Katila wrote, "My curiosity was aroused for many years to know how you came to use the word 'Mazda' as a brand name for your cars. Were there any followers of Ahura Mazda settled in Japan when so many of us had to run away from Iran under Muslim onslaught about 1300 years ago?"

Yumiko Miyoshi, Mazda's international public relations officer, replied on September 24, 1987: "Mazda Motor Corporation was founded as a cork manufacturer named Toyo Cork Kogyo in 1920 and renamed Toyo Kogyo Co Ltd in 1927. In 1929 production of Toyo machine tools commenced. In 1931 production of three-wheel trucks commenced and in 1960 R360 coupe, the first Mazda passenger car, introduced.

"Mazda Motor Corporation was known as Toyo Kogyo Company Limited until May 1, 1984 when the current corporate name was adopted to identify the name of the company with that of Mazda motor vehicles, its leading products."

Explaining that while the company had wanted to use the founder Jujiro Matsuda's name for its products, the word 'Matsuda' was inappropriate as a brand name because it evoked no image for the international buyer. "So we searched for a word that can be pronounced 'Matsuda,' but means something of value. And we hit upon the word 'Mazda' which is the name of the Zoroastrian god of light, Ahura Mazda. As we are longing to produce the vehicle which makes people's life bright, we thought the word 'Mazda' is most suitable to our product. Now we are very happy with the company name, Mazda Motor Corporation."

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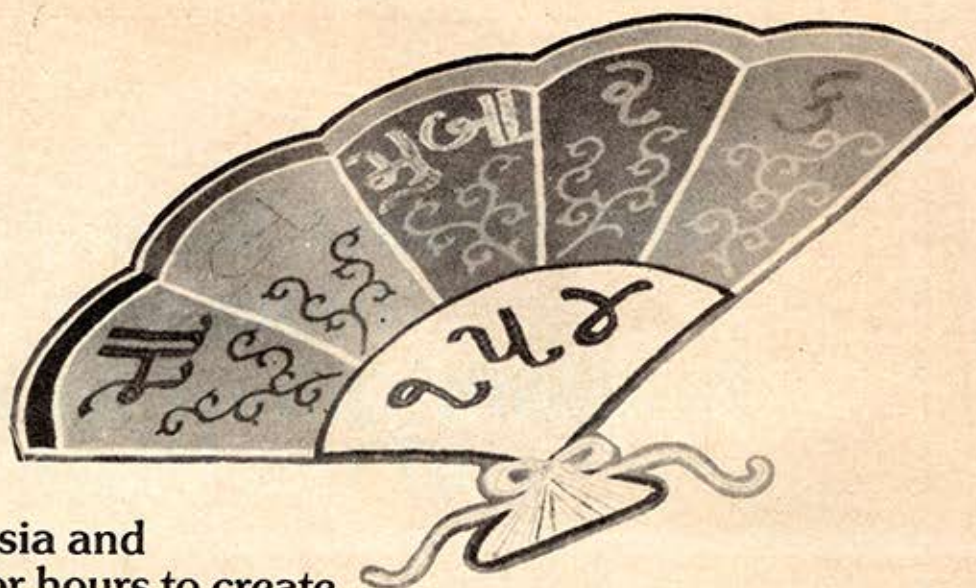
THE BOMBAY SAMACHAR

(Gujarati Daily)
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The chalk that cheers



Members of the Dumasia and Bhagat families labor for hours to create elaborate designs in chalk

Parinaz Toddywalla

The letter 'T' was constantly on their minds. How should it be designed? Will an angular or a curved 'T' blend with the overall background? What will please the parents and more so the child whose navjote is to be performed? To accommodate the requests of the clients and yet maintain their hallmark on *chalk* designs (floor decorations in multicolored powder) is what the Dumasia team of Zarir and his sister-in-law Dinoo hoped to achieve at their next assignment on March 19, 1988. The Dumasias as well as Behroze Bhagat, the only other chalk designer known to the community, are specially commissioned on auspicious occasions to add color to the entrances of buildings, baugs, fire-temple, hotels.

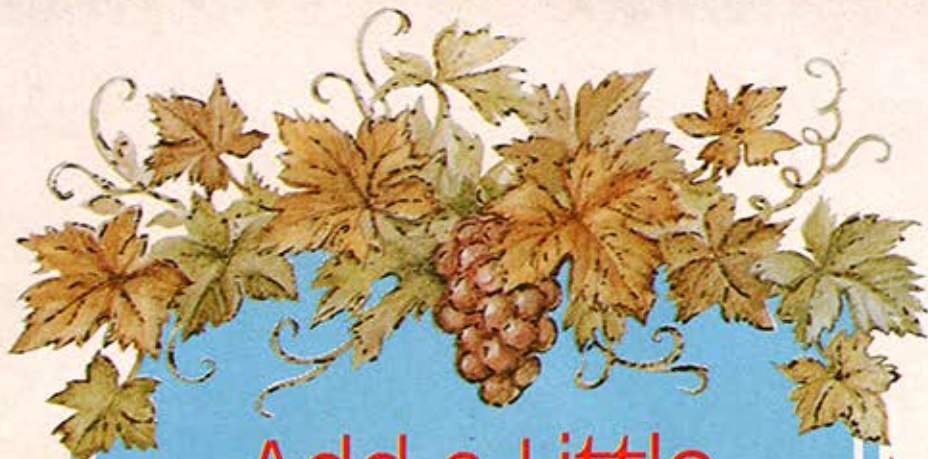
Among their Parsi clientele, "the design preference is usually for flowers," informs Zarir who works for a bank. Dinoo, a housewife, flips through their album to emphasize that even among flowers, the favorites are roses. When the client leaves the design selection to them, the Dumasias have a brainstorming session to come up with new creations. Their aim each time is to work on "something different, something challenging." Scenes from nursery rhymes and fairy tales, depicted on the floorage, are their speciality. Such designs are not done exclusively freehand but with the use of

glazed paper cuttings, prepared beforehand and carried to the site. The components are assembled there and then starts the coloring, beginning always with the background tones.

Faces and figures never feature in the work of Behroze Bhagat who undertakes chalk assignments more out of a sense of commitment to her late father Faredoon Dholoo's memory, reportedly the first in Bombay to introduce the concept of a professional chalk designer. Behroze, who earns her living sending home tiffins and selling snacks (Parsi specialties) concentrates only on floral and graphic patterns. When commencing work, she never knows what shape her design will take. While the central motif is always done freehand, she gradually makes the picture more elaborate, using chalk *dabbas* (boxes) if space permits. Referring to the special *dabbas* that her father got made to order — a three-foot *boi* (fish), a crown, an extra large horseshoe, a box bearing just one tiny hole (for the eye of a butterfly) — Behroze emphasizes, "You must know how to tap the box for the best possible effect." If the four corners of the box leave their unwanted mark, "*pag*," on the floor, it could mar the over-all picture. The floral embellishments take time, informs Behroze, "the lettering of initials, numerals and words like 'Navjote Mubarak,' 'Shadi

Mubarak' and 'Happy Birthday' is much easier."

Behroze usually works single-handed, though occasionally she may be helped by her sister Gool Guzder, as when they jointly completed an assignment at Standard Mills on the occasion of the late Vijay Merchant's (famed cricketer and industrialist) seventy-fifth birthday. Behroze accepts 15 to 20 chalk assignments in a year. This includes her voluntary decoration of Bombay's four atash bahrams on their *salgrehs* (anniversaries) to continue the practice started by her father since his early days. Only once have they permitted themselves an interruption — on the occasion of her father's chahrum, in 1986, which happened to fall on the same day as the *salgreh* of the Dadyseth Atash Bahram. Though the family had not planned on a break, when the priests themselves volunteered to look after the chalk work, the family excused themselves. At the Wadia Atash Bahram, where the interval between the anniversaries of the atash padshah and atash adarian is just four days, the chalk pattern designed by Behroze is preserved for the necessary period. She had also assisted her father design a large carpet-like motif at the Udwa-da Atash Bahram years back. Accepting all these assignments for religious functions free of cost, Behroze says



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she would have liked to have volunteered her services at the foundation stone laying of the Kookadaru Dar-e-Meher at Sanjan, (like they had in 1972 at another community function there), but did not know whom to approach.

The task of decorating the portico on the *salgreh* of the Kappawalla Agiary at Tardeo is delegated to the Dumasias each year. This March they also received an invitation from the Fasli Agiary but with the sudden demise of Dastur Navrooz Minochehr-Homji, the appointment was cancelled.

The foyers of hotels like the Taj, Oberoi, West End and Heritage have seen the Parsi chalk touch at the hands of the Dumasias and Bhagat. The Al-less and the Cama Baugs as well as Parsi residential colonies have noticed the difference a talented hand can make to the art of chalk designing. Roadside corners like Kashinath Street and Firdausi Road have been given a facelift or rather 'floor-lift,' as also affluent buildings like Sterling Apartments.

Taking six hours for completion, the largest design which the Dumasias have tackled so far is a 21 by 4 foot design at the Oberoi. On an average they undertake designs which can be executed in two hours.

The size and colors of each design are adapted to suit the requirements of space and the shade of the floor. Marble tiles lend for the best effects, in Behroze's opinion. Those interested in preserving the designs may cordon off the areas with potted plants, stilts or even bricks. But there is no way of

*Bhagat with her chalk decorations
The motif at the Udwarda Atash
Bahram (far right) was the joint
effort by Bhagat and her father*



*Dinoo and Zarir Dumasia
with their floor creations:
roses are the favorites
among Parsis*

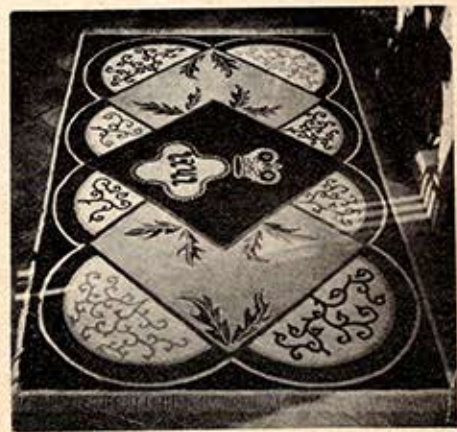
**The Dumasias finish
the chalk work before
the break of dawn
because that is the
time when they can
work in peace...**

stopping the wind blowing away the powder or preventing dust from settling over the colors which can be very disheartening – for the customer who has commissioned the work and for the designers who have taken the pains. That is the only reason why the Dumasias and Bhagat decline to accept any assignment at the Jeejeebhoy Dadabhoy Agiary at Colaba

where the unpredictable winds wouldn't take long to get their handiwork into a state of disarray. What can be particularly dampening is unexpected drizzles like the ones they experienced in January last. The Dumasias had just finished their design on the road at Lalbaug when the first droplets began to settle on their art. An anguished Dinoo cried out, "O God, what are you doing?" But fortunately for all, the design was not spoilt as "God seemed to have heard our plea," Dinoo continued in Gujarati.

Chalk designing starts as a challenge

"At weddings-navjotes, we were the first to start chalk decorations," claims Behroze. "No British firm would employ my father who was known for his Gandhian principles. We were a family of eight children. My father would



go and approach clients (soliciting business) and charge them Rs 25 to 30 for one assignment. He also used to conduct 'mental drill' classes (in mnemonics) to supplement his income. But if he felt that some client could not afford his full fees, he would charge less. Today, the cost of the powder itself is so high that I charge on an average Rs 200 to 300 per job." Behroze herself undertook her first solo assignment about 30 years ago when she was 21 years old, she remembers. Her father had then been hospitalized, but not wishing to disappoint their clients Behroze accepted the task. She can still recall receiving a bouquet and gift from the customers and heading straight for the hospital with a sense of accomplishment.

Their very first customers being the Pandoles of Duke and Sons, the Dhoolos had over the years gained a reputation. Behroze says that chalk decoration offers have dwindled because florists prefer to recommend names of their own associates.

Zarir, who was artistically inclined and enjoyed sketching and drawing,

**"In a design requiring
some minute detail to
be filled in, I have to
literally hold my
breath lest
my hands shake"**

first tried his hand at chalk designing 25 years ago on the insistence of a friend who was to be married. Invitations from other colleagues followed the success of his first venture and the word soon spread. Initially he was assisted by his younger brother Sarosh, but about three years back Sarosh decided to devote himself to his concern Khushnuma Florists so their sister-in-law Dinoo replaced him. Zarir has even had an opportunity to display his talent in Poona on one occasion, but otherwise their activities are centered in Bombay. The traditional Hindu symbols of *Aum* and *diva*

(lamp) are the first choice of their Hindu clientele, but on seeing the different styles in their album, they opt for something more creative, notes Dinoo.

Neither Behroze nor the Dumasias advertize their skills. Usually, recommendations are made by friends or otherwise interested parties make note of the sticker pasted along with the design indicating the name and contact point of the artists. In the case of the Dumasias, the work starts and ends before the break of dawn because "that is the time when they can work in peace, without interruption, spreading out their colors" even though it might involve working under artificial light made possible with extensive wires stretching from the residence of the party to the site where the design is to be drawn. Before starting on their job they have to always ensure that the ground is swept and cleaned with their own hands. Any trace of moisture means delay and patience... "We have no objections to anyone observing us at work and learning
continued on page 88a

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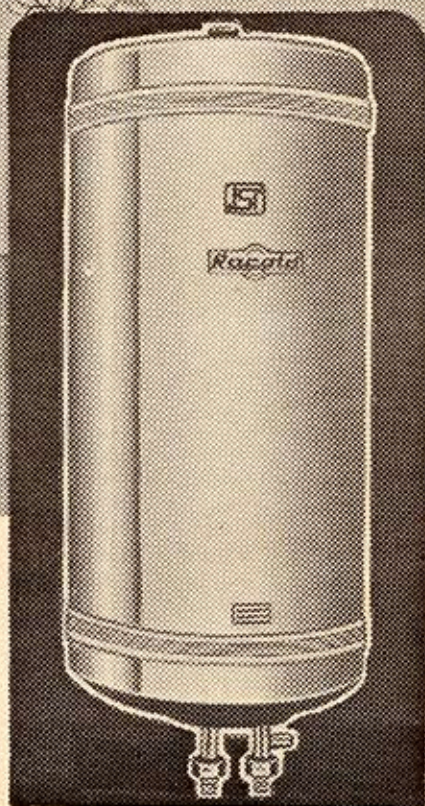
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Dr Patel and *Mister Behram*

Gieve Patel's third play focuses on a man's love for his Warli son-in-law and the consequences of the relationship

Geeta Doctor

The footsteps ring through the vast expanse of the Nehru Centre, Bombay, as a young man walks across and crumbles mid-stage, his arms and legs thrashing about. "You had a fit. You were slithering," says his young wife Dolly as she holds him close to her. Dolly is a highborn Parsi girl; her husband is a dark untamed creature, but the moment he begins to talk there is poetry in his words. Naval is filled with a strange vision of a black goat that he has just seen giving birth and this, coupled with the image of the setting sun engorging the entire world around him, has set his senses spinning. "The sunset," he says looking at Dolly, "It was huge...a red ball...blinding! You could reach out and touch it," and a few seconds later he sighs, "I was reeling with delight."

The first few moments of Dr Gieve Patel's play, *Mister Behram*, are filled with a poetic intensity that sets the tone for the whole action. It is a play that deliberately jars the senses, wrenching the spectator out of his (or her) comfortable expectations by creating a series of confrontations that become more and more intolerable. The climax of the drama is reached when Mister Behram, an influential lawyer and wealthy landowner, who is lording it over his beautifully appointed household, set in the late nineteenth century, admits that he has been harboring an unnatural love for his own son-in-law, Naval – the same Warli tribal boy, Nahnu, whom he has adopted. "To me there is no part of him that is not a source of rapture.

When the sunlight strikes his lip and the moisture glows upon it, it is an invitation to me to drown in the fluids of his body. I could enter his entrails and eat the foul wastes of his bowels," he says. He is talking to his own daughter Dolly, who is fighting to save her husband. Rati, his wife, whose civilizing touch has transformed Nahnu, the little Warli boy in her kitchen, to Naval, the eloquent lawyer, is by Behram's side as he makes his confession. It is a moment of complete degradation. Yet even at this moment, the poetry that shines through this most convoluted of plays, redeems the ugliness and leaves the spectator both reeling with delight and groping in the dark.

What a piece of work is man, the poet asks, and the dramatist displays a twitching mass of neural connections. Is man just a dark lump of living stuff like the birth mass that Naval's goat expels from her womb, or is it his capacity to think, and feel, and suffer, that distinguishes him as a human being? These are some of the questions that are kept tightly curled within the folds of the play, neither fully explained, nor detonated at the end, so that the answers keep growing long after the play is over. Love, perhaps it is love, that is the blinding sun that has convulsed Naval and catapulted him,

A scene from Mister Behram

(Photo: Madhu Gadakari)



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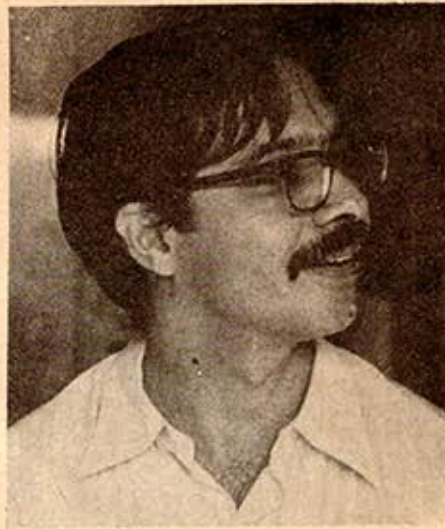
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reeling, onto center stage and our attention.

Meeting Gieve Patel both before and after the play is a dislocating experience. He is as eager and fresh as a young boy in love to talk about his play and yet, for all that, he is completely detached also. He could be discussing the case history of one of his patients. As he talks, his wife, Toni Patel, who is a theater person in her own right, and who has undertaken to direct *Mister Behram*, listens. "The germ of the play started as far back as 1981," says Patel. His method is to write down scraps of conversation or ideas on bits of paper and collect them in a brown paper bag that he puts aside until he feels he has enough material to work into a coherent form. "I remember there was an elderly woman who talked to me about her life, the things that had happened to her. It was a disaster story, you know...She was a wonderful person. It seemed terrible that something like that would happen to her. She felt that maybe she had brought it upon herself.

"From this simple beginning, the idea came into my mind to create a situation whereby a person's life is shattered, unspeakably and absurdly shattered. I began to think...What if a man conceived a feeling...an intense feeling for his own son-in-law. From time to time the idea would come back to me. How would it affect his relations to his family if he were to be filled with this unspeakable motivation? I think I began to be interested in examining how the whole thing begins covertly, the normality of the situation giving it a chance to grow until it cannot be controlled. There is only one drop of poison in this man. Mister Behram is forward-looking, courageous, a liberal in the best nineteenth century sense of the word; he has a library in which he has collected all the best books; all that is good in the family comes from him; but there is that drop working in him. I wanted to see what happens when there is a threat to the strong emotional bond between Mister Behram and the young man who is about to go out of his orbit. I wanted to examine how that drop of poison works its way through Mister Behram, right through to the end." Later on Patel adds that a playwright has to be "merciless" with the truth; anything else would be pandering to the audience. That is the word to describe Mister Behram also. He is merciless with himself and his



Toni (left) and Gieve Patel: "liberating the audience"

family. He takes them to the very brink of self-knowledge.

Patel is an eager, indeed a luminous talker, whose face lights up in a spontaneous smile when he feels that you have grasped a point. Yet, it is difficult to keep pace with him. There are long silences. He seems to be standing both inside and outside his characters, glancing back at you to see whether you too can see the person as clearly as he does. This is all right with the fully fleshed personality of Mister Behram himself. When it comes to Naval/Nahnu, the Warli boy, Patel gets lost in between long pauses, when his own feelings of affection and wonder at the bonds he once shared with the Warlis (who used to work and play with him on his grandfather's estate at Dahanu), mingle with his reactions to the character that he has created.

There is no doubt that the most inspired passages in the play belong to Nahnu. He seems to be a part of the earth. There is a fierce beauty and innocence in everything he does, even in the painful scene when Mister Behram forces him to strip off his Western clothes and don his Warli waistcoat and G-string to the amazement of the others in the room. As he says later to Dolly, "I was transported when I wore that dress...I felt I was seven years old and once again working in a field with 10, 20 others drenched like me! In pouring rain!...Each man works his team next to the furrow made by the preceding, and so the 10, 20 of us would make a huge wheel of upturned earth. It must appear wonderful to the gods, watching from above - this gra-

dual wheel of men and oxen carving the earth into a great outward flower!"

We shift gears as Patel talks to me of his life, growing up in a fairly ordinary, middle-class Bombay Parsi family background. "I think I was a little bit of a recluse and as I grew older I was thrown more and more into myself. I loved my grandfather's house on the estate. It was an open window, an existence outside of what I knew. Maybe all children are attracted to a secret life into which they can wrap themselves but I would go into this other world. It was a male dominated world. It literally was a jungle in certain respects. Even the food we had was different. It lacked the refinement of a woman's cooking. Here I would go and sit by the fire with the Warlis. I don't mean this to sound like a romantic harking back to the noble savage sort of thing. Much later I began to see the Warlis in a sociological context - the exploitation, how they had been reduced to bare skin and bones, and been ravaged by alcoholism and leprosy. But from my childhood there is the memory of an extraordinary richness. There is such a thing as a tribal way of life and, for a moment, I was a part of it.

"In *Savaksa* (Patel's second play, the first being *Princes*) there is a Warli servant moving through the play. But his is a silent presence. People noticed him all the same. Finally I decided that I wanted that person to come out. To make it right. To take him out and probe the depths of a relationship that was very deep and very rich for me. It was not a parallel existence, it was a part of my life. Anybody who has worked on the earth

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A spurt of sports

Athletically inclined community members contributed to the success of the two all-Parsis sports meets held within a week of each other in Bombay

Niloofer J. Madon

The Zoroastrian community in Bombay witnessed a bonanza of athletic activity over two consecutive weekends in February and March this year with the staging of two annual athletic events – the All Parsis Annual Athletic and Cycling Meet held at the Brabourne Stadium and the Sixth Zoroastrian Athletic Championships at the University Stadium.

The afternoons of February 27 and 28 saw the Brabourne Stadium a-hum with activity.

Organized under the auspices of the Nowroze Baug Play Centre, Zoroastrian Physical Culture and Health League, Mancherji Edalji Joshi Memorial Trust and Cusrow Baug United Sports and Welfare League, the All Parsis Annual Athletic and Cycling Meet this year saw a record high of participants, totalling 547. Compared to last year's tally, the number of contestants increased by 125, according to Homi Ustad who was officiating as assistant manager of the event along with Allan Roberts of the Maharashtra State Officials Association. Out of a total of 91 events, nine were reserved for cycling. To facilitate the 28 cyclists, their proficiency was adjudged on the tracks at the V.P. Stadium at Worli a week earlier.

The athletes ran under various banners of colony associations, schools, colleges, youth associations, etc. Kersi Patel (of car racing fame), manager of the recently formed Mazagaon Team, noted that Parsis living outside the colonies do not have adequate sports faci-

lities. At his furniture factory at Mazagaon, he has already made provisions for playing of games like table tennis and carrom. Bringing the second highest contingent to the games (numbering 57) the new team won many laurels and, promises Patel, next year he will bring a bigger team and win more.

Two boys from Surat – Khushru Anklesaria and Jamasp Patrawala – also participated in the games for the first time. The other outstation contingent was from Navsari led by Phiroz Jokhi. Two of his teammates, Rustom Sadri and Abul Pithawalla, were very successful. The outstation athletes, housed at the Nowroze Baug Hall, found that the facilities there were better than what they were a year ago.

"We get the cream of (Parsi) athletes at this meet," notes Khurshid Kalyaniwala, a physical training instructor and warden for the RSP (Road Safety Patrol), who was officiating at the meet. "This is a highly reputed meet, because athletes of cali-

ber and class all participate in spite of other commitments," she adds. Lending credibility, discipline and an immense organizational talent to the meet was veteran sports personality Jal Pardivala. The acknowledged father figure of the meet, fondly called Jal Papa by the Dadar youngsters, Pardivala tried to placate an irate parent who was complaining that the 200 meter run and the long jump events were being held at the same time, thereby restricting his son's participation to only one event. Pardivala noted that it was essential to register oneself for events carefully so as to avoid overlapping. He also cited the example of American olympic athlete Carl Lewis who had participated in four events in quick succession. This however did nothing to mollify the parent who insisted that the timings had been changed since the time of registration. Another parental complaint was that there were only two events for athletes under 10 years when there should have



Running the 3000 meter race at the All Parsis Annual Athletic and Cycling Meet

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been more to encourage the young,

At the prize distribution, Bombay Parsi Punchayet trustee Homi Ranina, the sponsor of the Meet, was the guest of honor and gave away the certificates, medals and trophies. Last year's winners, the Mancherji Edalji Joshi Memorial Trust contingent led by manager and coach Naval Pithawala won the team championship. Kamal Cooper of the Panthaki Baug Welfare Centre was the most successful girl athlete. She was declared the fastest woman of the meet and also bagged the F.K.S. Foundation Trophy for the Best Girl Athlete (girls under 17) and the Cannon Sports and Gift Trophy for the Best Athlete of the Meet. (Ace sprinter Zenia Ayrton was unable to participate in the meet due to a sprained ankle.) Merzi Dubash was adjudged the Fastest Man of the Meet, while Porus Jassawalla was declared the Fastest Man on Wheels and also awarded the trophy for the one mile cycle race. The F.K.S. Foundation Trophy for the Best Boy Athlete (boys under 16) went to Burzin Mehta. Rohinton Nazir was awarded the Dr Sorab K. Nariman Sasaman Challenge Shield for the 3,000 meters run and Firdosh Colah was awarded the Kaikho Ratan Trophy for javelin throw (men).

As promised last year at the same meet, noted community philanthropist Dinshaw Merchant instituted a new award – the Jal D. Pardivala Trophy for Best Parsi Athlete of the Year – which was awarded this year to Zenia

Ayrton, the youngest athlete to be appointed the skipper of the Maharashtra team for the Inter-State Athletic Meet at Jabalpur.

The organizers also took this opportunity to "salute the doyen of sports journalism and ace commentator" A.F.S. (Bobby) Talyarkhan and 14 other Parsi sportsmen and women "who made their presence felt at the national and international levels." Unfortunately, due to a sudden indisposition, Talyarkhan was unable to attend the meet. Nonetheless, Pardivala, after urging all those present to pray for the health of 93-year-old Talyarkhan, requested some helpers to carry the memento and flowers to his room at the adjacent CCI club house.

Felicitations for outstanding performance in the sports field were also offered to Kerman Framna and Porus Jassawalla (cycling); Jehangir Nicholson, sheriff of Bombay, for being the oldest participant (at 73 years) to finish the recently held Himalayan Car Rally; Dilshad Irani, for coming first at the same rally; Cawas Billimoria (judo); Meherwan Daruwalla and Farokh Pandole (squash); Lt Farokh Tarapore (yachting); Gev Katrak, Neville Daroga and Vispi Daroga (weightlifting); and Rustom Patel and Kaizad Patel (motocross). The awards were given courtesy Parle (Exports) Private Limited. The other sponsors were Associated Breweries and Distilleries and the Polson Charity Trust.

Though arranged along the same lines as the All Parsis Meet, the Sixth Zoroastrian Athletic Championships, held at the University Stadium a week later under the aegis of the Federation of Zoroastrian Associations for Welfare and Culture (FOZAWAC), attracted neither as many participants nor viewers. Organized by Dara

Doomasia with the help of F.S. Engineer, Allan Roberts and D.B. Puthran, the 62-event meet had 400 participants vying for the trophies and medals, according to Doomasia. The number included non-Zoroastrians representing various schools invited by the organizers. The outstation teams included the Zoroastrian Physical Culture and Health League from Navsari, led by Phiroz Jokhi and a 15 strong contingent from the Calcutta Parsi Club under manager Aspi Pestonjee and Prochi and Noomi Mehta. There was also one solitary participant from Nagpur. Not impressed by the overall competition at the meet, the Calcuttans nonetheless hope to attend more such meets in future, bringing an even larger contingent.

Yet, the meet had its moments. At the 200 meter race for girls under 10, the starter, after allocating the lanes to the girls, went about patiently explaining the rules of racing. But a little girl was still confused and enquired of her father (standing encouragingly on the field) "Kah ver dorvanu (Till where does one run)?" Replied her father indulgently, "Dori ché tah ver (upto the string)." After another particularly exciting race, a mother was happy that her daughter had at least come in third: "Third avi? Chalo fero vasul (She came third? The trip was worth the effort)!"

However, not everyone was so happy. One parent thought that the meet needed "toning up" and suggested that there should be more officials to make it easier on the participants as well as on the organizers. Another parent did not like the idea of giving cash prizes to the winners and noted that it was better to give either cups or medals to children. Doomasia's experience indicated that cups and medals merely lie around the house and are of no real

Below: Ranina (right) congratulating Nicholson

Center: Gamadia (at the mike) with members of the organizing committee at the All Parsis Meet

Right: Bengalee presenting trophy to athletes Zubin Guzder and Kaizad Mistry



use whereas money is always useful. Yet another complained that the gruelling 1,500 meter run which was held at 2.30 in the afternoon should have been held early in the morning or late in the evening as is done at all other meets.

Dr Mehroo Bengalee, BPP trustee and vice chancellor of Bombay University, was chief guest at the meet and gave away the prizes. Bengalee was introduced by Dr Aloo Billimoria, president of FOZAWAC. In her address, Bengalee noted that the time had come when Zoroastrians must ask of themselves what they had done for their community. She mooted the idea of building for the community a vast sports complex with a swimming pool. Her suggestion was welcomed amidst much cheer and applause. Later she donated a sum of Rs 1,000 towards the cost of the meet.

Sixteen new meet records were set. Once again the team trophies went to the large and enthusiastic contingent from the Mancherji Edalji Joshi Memorial Trust. The J.N. Guzder Shield for the Best Male Athlete was awarded to Burzin Mehta while the H.P. Ranina Shield for the Best

Female Athlete was won by Kamal Cooper. The Wadia Sports Club Team's performance in the tug of war event earned them the Jerbai Mulla Shield.

FOZAWAC constitutes a group of 11 associations, including one from Vancouver, Canada and another from Delhi; the rest are from Bombay, noted Doomasia. The Federation, apart from conducting the annual athletic meet, also conducts all-Parsis badminton tournaments "with the idea of bringing Zoroastrian youth together." Plans for future athletic meets include netting in more outstanding participation and felicitating older sportspersons of renown.

Viewing both these athletic meets, an obvious question that comes to mind is: Does the community need two such meets at an immense cost of money, time and effort? Pardivala refrained from answering: "Ask me no questions..." he said. Doomasia on the other hand noted that there were two groups which did not want to come together and having sufficient funds to hold their own separate meets, were doing just that. According to Kalyaniwala the meets were an un-

necessary duplication, merely due to ego problems. Noomi Mehta, secretary of the Calcutta Parsi Club, was of the opinion that the greater the number of athletic events, the greater the opportunity for the athletes to participate in them. Merely training youngsters through various associations is not enough; they should have the opportunity to put the training into practice.

Dr Viraf Kapadia and weightlifter Vispi Daroga of Petit Street felt that such meets should act as a talent search where upcoming athletes could be identified and given the facilities for intense coaching. The general opinion seemed to be that sports is an expensive proposition and without adequate finance and training it is not possible for young athletes to be successful.

Dr Dinyar Gamadia, president of the Cusrow Baug United Sports and Welfare League, in his speech at the All Parsis Annual Athletic and Cycling Meet, hoped that all colonies and associations would get together and pool in their resources so that the community could have one comprehensive athletic meet representative of the entire community, and different tournaments in other fields of sport.

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Graphic A-181



Navroze Mubarak Sarosh

An assortment of barbecue recipes which offer a change from the usual fare eaten on Navroze

Bhicoo Manekshaw

Last August, when I gave a continental menu for *Parsiana*, you Sarosh, were very disappointed and said, "Aunt, how can you do this to me? I always look forward to your articles and try them out, but this time you let me down by giving a continental menu!" I suppose, if one is living abroad and far from one's country, one does get nostalgic about one's own food. To compensate, I dedicate this article to you and all our people who live out of the country, and are spread to the four corners of the world.

I know your love for barbecues, nephew, so, here is a meal with the accent on barbecue. It is Indian, though not traditionally eaten on Navroze. We have *Bhoojan* (barbecue) from Balsar, *Murgh malai kababs* (origin Iran), Jacket potatoes à la Indienne, Salads of your choice, pickled car-

rots, *Ghau nee rotli* and Falooda ice cream. Our traditional *masoor dar* goes well with *Bhoojan*, but I will be very cross with you if you make it on a *saaro sapermo daro* (auspicious day). You can, if you want *dar*, make the *masalanee dar* which we eat with *palav*.

BHOOJAN

Leg of lamb (2½ kg – deboned and cubed, about 1½-inch pieces)
Liver (1 kg – deskinning and cubed, 1½-inch pieces)
Kidneys (½-¾ kg – well cleaned and kept whole)
Masala
Malt vinegar (as required)
Fresh ginger (250 gms) or ginger powder (about 2 tbsp)
Garlic (2 – medium sized)
Coriander powder (45 gms)

Cumin powder (30 gms)
Chili powder (to taste)
Worcestershire sauce (½ cup)
Mustard powder or paste (1 tbsp)
Oil (1 cup)
Black pepper (to taste)
Jaggery or brown sugar (1 tbsp)
Ajinomoto (1 tsp)
Salt (to taste)

Note: If you can, grind coriander and cumin freshly. Do not wash meat after it is cut, as one loses all the proteins when meat of any kind is cut and washed (the pink liquid that comes out when meat is cut is the protein; do not wash it away). Do not use salt in the *masala*. Apply salt after the meat is 'sealed' on the barbecue.

Mix all *masala* ingredients (except salt) with enough vinegar to make a firm but not dry paste. Apply on all the meat, liver and kidneys. Marinate

overnight or for at least four hours. Grease skewers. Skewer lamb separately from liver and kidneys as lamb takes longer to cook than the offals. Now barbecue, basting with the liquid that has remained in the pan. (Along with the liquid marinade you may, perhaps, need to brush on extra oil. This will depend on the quality of the meat.) When the meat is browned, sprinkle salt. (This is done because if one adds salt before any roasts, grills or barbecues, it draws out the juices and blood of the meats.)

What a shame that while you are barbecuing the *Bhoojan*, there is no *taari* (toddy) to sip or an *ooberyu* (mixed vegetables roasted in an earthen pot) to savor with it!

MURGH MALAI KABAB

Chickens (4 – 1 kg each, deboned and marinated in lime juice for four hours)

Masala

Curds (200 gms – hung in a cloth till all the liquid has drained out)

Ginger (100 gms)

Garlic (1 whole)

Coriander leaves (2 tbsp)

Green chilies (4 to 6)

White masala

Poppy seeds (50 gms)

Four *magaz* (50 gms – seeds of pumpkin, cucumber, water melon and marsh melon)

Cashewnuts (25 gms)

Thick cream (150 gms)

Eggs (4)

Garam masala powder (1 to 2 tsp – cinnamon, cloves, cardamoms and black pepper corns)

Grind ginger, garlic, green chilies and coriander leaves together. Grind the white *masala* together. Mix curds with white *masala*, ground ginger garlic paste, eggs, cream and *garam masala*. Marinate chicken in this paste for four hours. Grease skewers, and barbecue, basting with oil if necessary. Sprinkle salt when the chicken is browned.

Note: Do not throw away the bones of the chicken and the lamb. The Cooks of Chefair, sometimes make from extra bones what they call a stew. It is delicious. They chop up the bones with a little meat still on them, add ginger, garlic, onions, tomatoes, a few black pepper corns and a few bay leaves. Cook all this with water and salt to taste, till the meat on the bones is cooked. Then they add a handful of chopped spinach and some potatoes

and simmer till the potatoes are done. They have always shared this ambrosia with me, and now I share it with you!

JACKET POTATOES A LA INDIENNE

Potatoes (12 – medium sized)

Butter (as required)

Chat masala (as required)

Chat masala

Dry cumin seeds (100 gms – roasted)

Dry coriander seeds (100 gms – roasted)

Dry mango powder (*aam choor* – 100 gms)

Black salt (1 tsp)

Black pepper (½ tsp)

Chili powder (½ tsp)

Salt (1 tsp)

(Powder all ingredients. Mix well.)

Store in a glass jar. Stays indefinitely.)

Wash and dry potatoes. Give 3 slits on the potato diagonally, half-way through the potato. Mix enough butter and *chat masala* together to fill generously the slits. As the potato will absorb a lot of butter, wrap in foil, and bake in the cinders of coal for about an hour. When done, remove foil, add extra butter and *chat*, and serve with wedges of lime or lemon.

GHAU NEE ROTLI

Whole meal wheat flour (½ kg)

Butter or pure ghee (2 tbsp)

Salt (1 tsp)

Boiling water to make a pliable dough.

Mix all the above ingredients with enough boiling water to make a pliable dough. Knead well, or better still, lift the dough and throw it hard on the

floured table several times till the texture is smooth. (This hard throwing not only does good to the dough, it also helps to relieve pent up feelings!) Keep the dough covered with an inverted dish for about an hour. Roll into a sausage, cut into ½-inch pieces, roll into *chapatties* and cook on a griddle. Do not allow the *rotlies* to get brown and over-cooked. Brush with pure ghee or butter, very lightly, fold and keep in an airtight tin. Store the tin in a warm oven till required. (These *rotlies*, if kept in an airtight tin, will stay soft for 24 hours.)

PICKLED CARROTS

Fresh carrots (2 kg)

Mustard seeds (100 gms – slightly crushed)

Red chilies (4 to 5)

Salt (to taste)

Peel and quarter carrots lengthwise. Layer carrots with mustard seeds, salt and chilies which have been broken into bits, in a large jar. Cover with water, to the brim. Cover the top of the jar with a cloth and tie down. Keep in the sun for one week and use.

FALOODA ICE CREAM

Full cream milk (3 ltr)

Cream (2 cups)

Condensed milk (150 gms)

Tookhmari na beech (2 dsp – when covered with water they look like milky globules)

Cornflour (4 tbsp – mixed with water and cooked to a thick paste and passed through a colander into iced cold water to form elongated drops)

Rose water (to taste)

Almonds (100 gms – blanched, skinned and slivered)

Pistachios (100 gms – blanched, skinned and chopped)

Salt (a pinch)

Egg yolks (4)

Sugar (3 to 4 tbsp)

Scald milk and condensed milk together. Beat egg yolks and sugar together. Pour scalded milk over egg yolks mixing all the time. Put on fire and cook gently or in a double boiler till the mixture thickens. (Do not allow it to boil, because it will curdle.) Remove from fire, pass through a sieve immediately and cool. Whip the cream and fold into the mixture. Add rest of the ingredients and freeze. Serve with rose syrup.

Bon appétit!





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Plans for survival

The future of the Zoroastrian community hinges on its willingness to accept socio-religious reforms

Homi B. Minocher-Homji

The Zoroastrian community is accelerating towards a demographic catastrophe – extinction. Every fifth Parsi is over 65 years of age; only every eighth is under 14 years. We are both, an aging and a dying community. The housing shortage has nothing to do with it. If it is any further comfort, in recent years, in at least two major centers of Parsi population, annually twice as many died as were born!

At that rate, perhaps by the first quarter of the twenty-first century, and certainly by the end of the second quarter, we will have decimated ourselves as a distinguishable ethnic group. Do these stark facts cause any ripple of concern in the community? In our continuing petty quarrels are we losing the forest for the trees? When four blind men were asked to describe an elephant by touching it in different parts, they described it as a pillar, a hose, a rope and a fan. All were right in their limited approach, yet wrong on the concept of the total form. Is this what is happening in our community?

Even if a change in attitudes and habits can, by some miracle, save us from extinction, then as any sociologist will affirm, the individual or family is not likely to heed the counsel. Offer of incentives to produce more children will have marginal effect. Social and attitudinal changes cannot be ordered – they can only be sympathetically channelized. The entire community must work towards that goal. If so, who should take the leadership and provide overall guidance? The anjuman trustees? The high priests? The Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India? The media? Or should the community at large produce a new leadership overriding all these hitherto ineffective institutions to reorder our

community priorities, perceptions, standards and behavioral patterns?

The trustees are political-cum-elective bodies who must nourish their own electorate which is basically orthodox, introspective, narrow/local in vision and unable to comprehend a concept of the current worldwide social flux. Their implicit thrust on housing has little effect on the regeneration of the community.

The high priests must safeguard their own hereditary or traditional positions (with some exceptions) and exercise it through their monopoly on rituals as well as through the modulated training of mobeds at the madressas, imparting a strict ritual-based concept of religion which bears no change. They could possibly have no love at all for social change which would only hurt their position.

The Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India is a recent body in a formative stage, with little executive power; the trustees are a part of it. Once the Federation gets firmly assimilated and accepted as the voice of universal Zoroastrian conscience around the world, it has the potential to guide social change. In fact it may then transform itself into a world Zoroastrian body in partnership with other federations.

The scholars, greatly respected for their research on the *Avesta*, are unfortunately neither able to speak with one voice of conviction, nor sustain a uniformity of meaning on the essence of the *Gathas*. Recently, they also happen to be a majority of non-Zoroastrians and therefore either inhibited from speaking out or shunned as not being in tune with traditional thought.

Finally, there are skilled demographers like the late Sapur Desai, C.

Chandra Sekar, Dr Malini Karkal and Dr Ketayun Gould who present an unbiased, stark picture of our statistics, generally overlooked amidst the community's petty preoccupations.

In so far as the media is concerned, *The Bombay Samachar* has consistent courage of conviction but can devote limited though effective space in "*Parsi tari arsi*," which however is lost in its widely non-Parsi circulation. So it reaches only limited Parsi households. That leaves *Parsiana* as the last resort, but with little political clout to effect a social change with any authority.

So where do we look for a new leadership that can still muster public response and hopefully save the community from extinction? It has got to be the people themselves. They have got to come up with well-thought-out five-year and 30-year social and community restructuring plans. These plans have nothing or little to do with financing. They have everything to do with attitudinal and self-preservative changes. They have to proceed on the presumption that some community is better than no community; that Ahura Mazda will only help those who will actively help themselves with intelligence (*vohumana*) and faith (*daena*). They have to be progressive plans with true Gathic ethics as their basis and compatible later tradition as their guide. Moreover, they should be prepared to ride roughshod over all regressive, post-Gathic ukases, outdated rituals and homemade traditions of convenience, formed throughout the Sassanian and Sanskrit hegemony, which have become a source of much irritation and communal disharmony. This is necessary because now it is a question of survival, not of who is right or wrong.

The short term plan should for example progressively consider:

- the immediate acceptance of all children of mixed marriages where any one spouse is a non-Zoroastrian, both for initiation by navjote and for social acceptance at par, provided both parents agree and support;
- similar acceptance of adopted children where both parents are Zoroastrians or in case one is a non-Zoroastrian, then subject to approval of both parents;
- acceptance of other categories like orphans, widows, divorcees, single parents, etc who were originally Zoroastrians, whether offshoots of mixed marriages or not;
- in the third year (gestation period) of the plan, the initiation and social acceptance at par of non-Zoroastrian spouses, whenever so requested, provided he/she accepts Zoroastrianism as his/her only religion in future;
- initiation of those of former Zoroastrian descent, going back to two or three generations, if they can so prove and desire;

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- in the fifth year, acceptance of non-Zoroastrians by proselytization, subject to a panel evaluation of their sincerity, motive, conviction, study and practice of the religion in a prescribed manner;
- review the possibility of incorporating within the community, the one-time Zoroastrian communities, known to reside in various parts of Iran, the republics of Soviet Union bordering on northern Iran, Armenia, Afghanistan, north-west Pakistan, as also Mazdayasnis of Europe and the USA.

Independently, through these five years and later, a strong educational process should be launched, supported by Gathic and compatible younger Avesta, Pahlavi/Pazand and Sanskrit scriptures, so as to bring out clearly the pristine message of Zarathushtra regarding the universality of our faith, ethics, philosophy and religious practices. This should be done by holding annual world Zoroastrian symposia. (Our congresses, with few exceptions, consist of stereotyped invitations to scholars to read papers but produce no acceptable solutions or guidelines.) Instead, the future world, European or North American symposia should focus only on one specific objective – survival. The recommendations should be progressively fed into the two plans.

A committee of highly respected 'neutral' individuals from India and abroad, known for their competence and integrity, should be elected at a samast sabha to conduct the symposia. Individuals like Nani Palkhivala, J.R.D. Tata, Neville Wadia, Farhang Mehr, Kaikhosrov Irani could be considered. The venue for these symposia should also be neutral e.g. The Tata Institute of Social Sciences at Chembur. The organizers should be professionals like Armaity Desai, Noshir Kaikobad, Ketayun Gould, John Hinnells, Mehroo Bengalee, Vera Mehta, etc. The topics for discussion should be oriented to produce step-by-step progressive recommendations, each feeding into the next symposium, and all modulating the two plans. Each topic should have one paper pro-change and one paper anti-change. A panel of six to eight distinguished community experts should be invited to comment on the two papers in an open forum. Questions from the floor would be directed to the lecturers and the

panelists. The desired change should then be voted in.

The topics for example could be:

- the preparation, reorientation, timing, standards and conditions required for inducting new initiates into the religion;
- the fundamentals of research and standards necessary to induct new initiates and the funding of such research abroad;
- the measures, reforms and loosening of traditional practices to be undertaken to encourage marriages among Zoroastrians leading to more children;
- the new role of our institutions, trustees, priestly class, scholars, media and the community in promoting this social change;
- the mechanics, logistics and structure of a Federation of World Zoroastrian Associations which can then regulate and govern the regenerated world Zoroastrian community;
- the socioreligious reforms necessary to ensure a better adherence to the religion by all Zoroastrians so as to prevent a decline in their own faith and reversion to other non-Zoroastrian faiths and practices.

The media should help in widespread dissemination of the results of these symposia throughout the world community. The trustees, high priests, scholars, media, professional businessmen, industrialists, associations, mobs, youth and women should all be invited to join the panels and the floor discussions. The process should be completely democratic, voluntary, serious, intellectual and unpressured by violence or vitriolics.

If this idea meets with the approval of your readers and the community at large, I am sure we could work it out in greater detail in consultation with the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India, the trustees of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet, the World Zoroastrian Organisation and the Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America. The writer is available for any assistance and feels sanguine that many other like-minded people will join forces with him.

About the author:

Homi Minocher-Homji, a former member of the Pakistani civil service, is a past president of the Zoroastrian Society of Ontario and author of the publication *Oh Whither Parsis? Placate and perish or reform and flourish.*

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from us," notes Dinoo but then goes on to explain that when interested persons were intimated of their 4 a.m. work commencement schedule the enthusiasm began to wane.

Though requests for more designs keep coming in for the Dumasias, they don't expect the younger generation Parsis to take to this "tiring job." According to Behroze this is a "back-breaking task where after three hours your legs feel jammed. In a design requiring some minute detail to be filled in, I have to literally hold my breath lest my hands shake while filling in the color...No one wants to do *mehnat* (exert)."

For the Dumasias and Behroze it is not the monetary motivation that makes them want to excel each time, but the recognition and appreciation conferred on them. Usually they are never at the venue of the function, when the guests start trooping in, to gauge their reactions, yet there is a certain element of conviction that the hosts and guests though full of care, will have the time to stand and stare...

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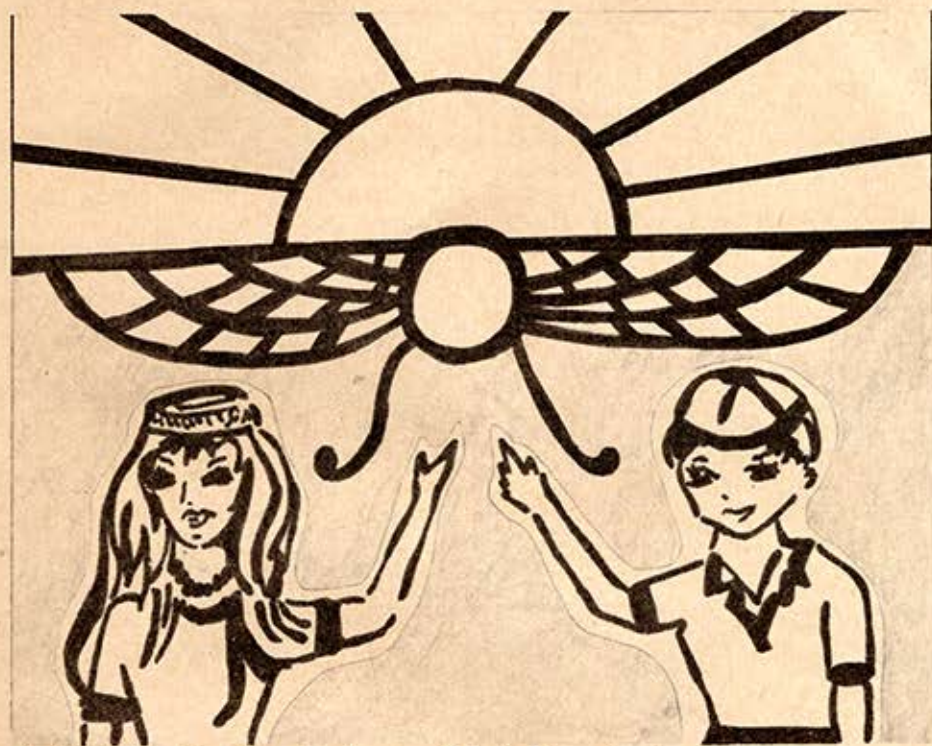
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No kidding

Homi J. Rogers



An illustration from *Zarathushtra and Me* by Tenaz Irani

Our Religion - Book 1: Zarathushtra by Piloo Nanavutty. Pp 20 (illustrated). *Our Religion - Activity Book 1: Zarathushtra and Me* by Preen Lalkaka. Pp 28 (illustrated). Both books published in 1987 (*Zarathushtra* was first printed in 1979) by the Delhi Parsi Anjuman, and printed at Indraprastha Press, Children's Book Trust, 4 Bahadurshah Zafar Marg, New Delhi. Price Rs 10 each.

Writing children's books is no child's play. Short sentences. Simple words. Even simpler concepts. And to make the mix truly appealing, visuals that plead for repeated viewings.

A book on religion for children, and especially on Zoroastrianism, is an extremely difficult proposition. Kids love to be told of, or read to about, miracles. Our religion offers few. Our scholars have played down the drama, if any existed, in our religion. There is no immaculate conception, no resurrection, no flight from tormentors, no parting of waters...and no commandments, either.

There have thus been few forays

into books being written solely for the Zoroastrian child. Amar Chitra Katha brought out a comic book on the prophet and, well over two decades ago, Preen Lalkaka wrote a book, *Zarathushtra: The Golden Star*, which narrated the prophet's life and message, and some stories from the *Shah Namah*.

Now, Piloo Nanavutty, Preen Lalkaka's sister, has re-issued her text (first published in 1979) compiled from material loaned to her by the Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Chicago and Lalkaka's book, as the first in a series of children's readers. Lalkaka has corroborated by preparing an activity book based on the reader, as a "workbook helps children to recall what they have read better." The books are mainly aimed at the pre-navejote kids, between the ages of six to eight years. Nanavutty's reader has been tested, Lalkaka informs, on children of the above age-group who

Piloo Nanavutty's reader and Preen Lalkaka's activity book simplify for the children the message of Zarathushtra

attend Nanavutty's class in religious instruction in Delhi. The children have understood the language, Lalkaka confirms, and in a few cases, according to the feedback received, the author has suitably altered the words, though over-simplification has been ruled out if it would alter or dilute the point being made.

Zarathushtra is a 16-page book of around 500 words, written in clear bold letters like those employed by a teacher writing on a blackboard. The story of our prophet is told in simple words. His message is explained succinctly. There is no bigotry or fanaticism in impressing children with the greatness of their faith. And yet, with a simple line, "Zarathushtra gave mankind for the first time the idea of one God," Nanavutty stresses the wisdom and foresight of our prophet, and the fact that Zoroastrianism is the oldest monotheistic religion in the world. Yet in the economy of words used to express ideas, a sentence like "Zoroastrianism is the first religion of the world based on Zarathushtra's inner vision" seems to convey little.

Lalkaka's activity book, *Zarathushtra and Me*, is designed as a companion piece to Nanavutty's work. The child, having read and understood *Zarathushtra*, is invited to work out the activities devised by Lalkaka: a mixed fare of coloring, word puzzles with jumbled words and pictures as

clues, and even a maze creatively titled "Find the path leading to Ahura Mazda." Children love to draw, and the activity book provides a page to draw *your* (italics ours) Zarathushtra, and good deeds.

The workbook is an innovative idea, and though the nature of activities covered seems quite minimal, Lalkaka informs us, in the course of an interview, that the book under review is the first in a series of four activity books (along with the readers) that she has worked on. The forthcoming three books have different activities, and I, for one, hope that they make up for the lacuna in the present book, by including activities like join the dots, or paint a picture with colors as indicated in areas by numbers, and even a snakes-and-ladders board game that children can play, with the ladders being ascended for a good deed done, or a question answered rightly, or a prayer recited properly.

The possibilities of activities in a workbook are endless. With a little more ingenuity, and the use of a better color scheme, Lalkaka could have given Zoroastrian children, through the introductory volume itself, a rip-roaring time, learning about their religion. But despite the colors seeming dull, and a shade too light at times,

There is no
fanaticism in
impressing
children with
the greatness of
their faith

and a word broken up rather awkwardly (Alph-abet), Lalkaka's book should strike the right chord amongst children. Being an educationalist and a vocational guidance counsellor, Lalkaka knows the minds of the young. And that she reaches out to them, is apparent from the very title itself: *Zarathushtra and Me*. The pronoun used would set the grammarians fretting, but give the child a feeling of identification. And that is what counts.

Borrowed thoughts

The fundamental beliefs and practices of Zoroastrianism are outlined in Capt Dara Driver's booklet

Handy Booklet on Zoroastrianism - A Lofty Topic in a Small Volume by Capt Dara E. Driver. Published in 1987 by Rumar Publications, 424, Anand, Flat No 6, Khar Danda Road, Bombay 400052. Pp 68. Price Rs 12.50.

Captain Driver's *Handy Booklet* (should it be handbook?) on Zoroastrianism at first glance seems a sincere and well-devised effort by a member of the laity taking an interest in the religion, and explaining it through 14 chapters, which encompass its rites and rituals, its theologies, and its calendar. Compact, 68 pages, it has no laborious footnotes at the bottom of every page, or a long bibliography at the end. It is, one feels, a personal view of the religion by Driver - one, not necessarily meant to create new controversies or fuel old ones, but explain to the layman, the concept of fire worship, the need to wear a sudreh-kusti and their significance, and inform him of the Zoroastrian ceremonies of birth, marriage, death, navjote, navar and maratab (initiation into priesthood), and the liturgical services.

But, alas, Driver's dismissal of footnotes and bibliography is the result of no such originality. More than half the book is a direct lift from Sir Jivanji Modi's classic work, *The Religious Ceremonies and Customs of the Parsees*, which was first published in 1922, and reprinted in 1986. There is no attempt by Driver to present anything new, either in thought or word. Of course, to make the book "handy," Driver has deleted many lines from the original work, but not taken the trou-

ble to condense them. The 'execution' is thus amateurish.

Mention must also be made here of the very poor quality of proofreading. Errors in spelling abound, even altering the intended meaning: "His (Zarathushtra's) growing success spelt disaster for the wicked chiefs and hypocritical priests who prayed upon the ignorance and credulity of the people." And what should one make of "instead of crying, this infant smiled at birth and, according to the scriptures, nature also smiled with him in sympathy" (sic).

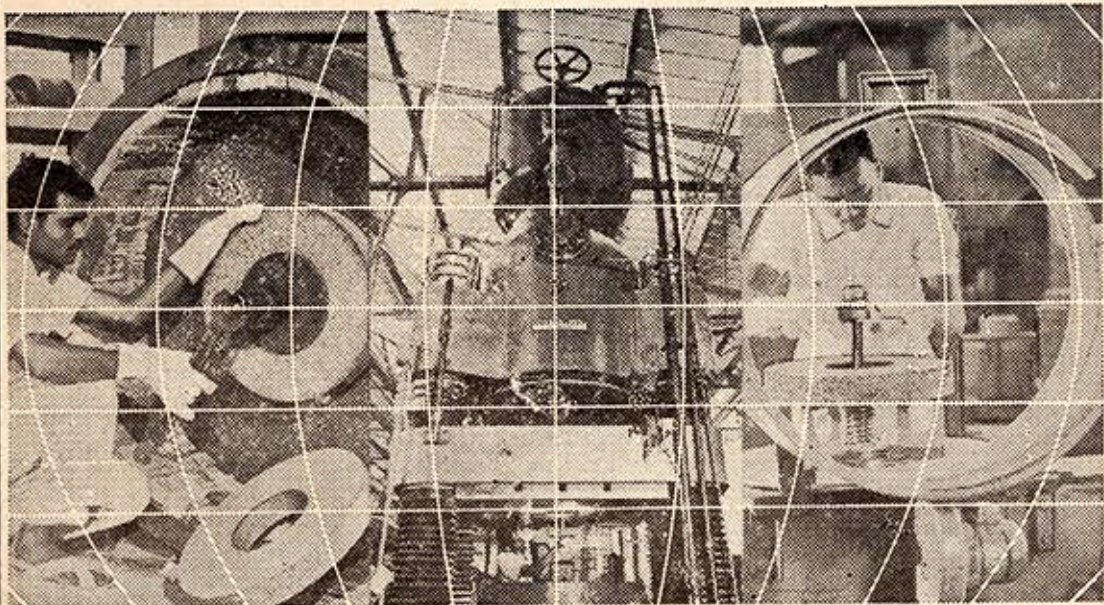
A chapter "Beyond Zoroastrian Death" warrants attention by its title. But, beyond explaining the rites that take place once a Zoroastrian is dead (as lifted from Modi's work), Driver fails to explain whether Zoroastrianism recognizes reincarnation or not. A lot of verbiage does not offer the reader any clear answer.

Driver however, must be commended for placing the age in which the prophet preached at the court of King Vishtaspa at around 1,500 B.C., as against the orthodox and more traditionally-held date of 6,000 B.C. But, here again, Driver offers no explanation for choosing this date. Probably, he quoted it because his source material had it so.

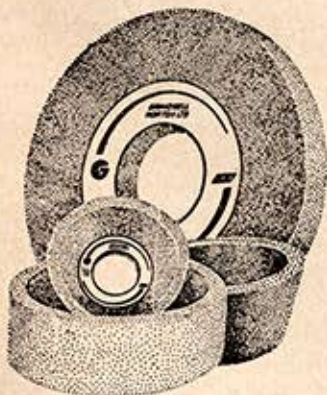
Even more commendable is Driver's essay on "Why do the Parsis not admit aliens to their fold?" Here, Driver puts forth the legal verdicts of the Lady Tata (the Davar-Beaman judgment) case, and a comparatively lesser known case of Bella, a girl of mixed parentage from Rangoon whose navjote was performed, and who was brought to the fire-temple there (in 1915) by her foster father, Shapurjee Cowasjee, to buttress the contention that "there is nothing in the tenets of the Zoroastrian religion which prohibits any person or any race or any nationality from becoming a Zoroastrian." While the views put forth would please the reformist, Driver should have stated the traditional viewpoint too.

Driver's handy booklet is one which a serious student or a layman could do without. Is Driver's purpose in writing this book to explain the religion to non-Zoroastrians who are not aware of the faith? Or, is the concluding sentence just a vague suggestion, more in the nature of a faint hope, to suggest

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that the community may have to accept initiates from other faiths? "If, however, new fire-temples or Towers of Silence are dedicated by fresh trust deeds for the benefit of all, there may be no legal bar. Law respects the wishes of donors who have a right to lay down the scope of beneficiaries of a trust."

Homi J. Rogers

Dollar scholar

For those aspiring to study abroad, Dr Dina Dalal's booklet provides some interesting data

Handbook for Study Abroad by Dr Dina Dalal. Published in 1987 by Institute of Management Studies, Bombay 400034. Pp 86.

For over half a century, a foreign education meant a degree from the portals of Oxford and Cambridge. The Master of Arts in English literature, who could quote *King Lear* at the drop of a hat, attracted attention at work and in matrimony.

Gradually, as science and technology started to shape the future, the attention shifted to across the Atlantic Ocean. A doctorate in the sciences from the technical institutes in the USA was the pinnacle of high education. And as business management, side by side, became the 'in' career, scions of industrial families and those aiming to rise in life flocked to the management schools. If once, battles were won on the playgrounds of Eton, today's corporate wars (and friendships) were wrought in the classrooms of Harvard and Princeton.

How does one go abroad for higher studies? And which institutions offer courses in what disciplines? "Many postgraduate students, research scho-

lars and professors...are desirous of going abroad for higher education, but they lack information regarding foreign universities, their names and addresses, system of education, method of instruction, admission requirements, cost, financial aid available in India and abroad, foreign exchange regulations, visa requirements, etc."

To these students, Dr Dina Dalal, a student counsellor at U.S. Educational Foundation in India and secretary, Foreign University Information Bureau, provides a chock-full of information through her slim but extremely useful *Handbook for Study Abroad*.

The book concentrates on the current Mecca of higher studies - the United States of America. A complete statewide list of universities, and recognized colleges is given in the book. It also lists over 200 American colleges, universities, foundations and philanthropic organizations.

Not that it neglects other equally good centers of education. With a view to being useful to any student seeking suitable specialization after graduation, the handbook includes names and addresses of institutions in the UK, Australia and Canada too. Full information about the educational system, academic standards and requirements for admission have been provided by the author.

What further enhances the appeal of the *Handbook* is the inclusion of a list of over 500 sources for financial help, available to Indian students for studying abroad. Two Parsi-funded trusts appear in this list: the R.D. Sethna Trust and the J.N. Tata Endowment Fund.

Dalal's *Handbook* is a labor of love for the betterment of youngsters and of the country. Her tips to help one select the right university, especially in an age of specialization, would be welcomed by any reader consulting the book. A comprehensive index listing subjectwise the courses available, opens up vast avenues of career opportunities, even for a casual reader.

The *Handbook* is heartily recommended for Parsi students who, fired with zeal and ambition, wish to escape the mediocrity of settling down as bank clerks. Uncle Sam (and for that matter, John Bull) are not that inaccessible.

Homi J. Rogers

SPREADING THE WORD

continued from page 24

A sum of Rs. 1,68,250 was expended on gift scholarships to 350 Parsi college students in India. For vocational and technical education, 100 students were given help of Rs 85,800. For postgraduate studies abroad, 42 students were sanctioned gift scholarships of Rs 1,99,000 and loans of Rs 1,50,000. To encourage participation in international sports and medical meets, participants were awarded free grants of Rs 20,500, the press release provided the statistics for the year 1987.

Coaching to students appearing for the civil and defence services examinations as also those planning to enter the medical or engineering stream on their own merit have been arranged by the BPP.

Enthusied by the feedback received on the last summer's holiday program arranged for students who had appeared for their school leaving examinations, the BPP will organize a similar program this year.

A preliminary meeting of the Parsi professors and college students who had volunteered their services to fight drug addiction was convened for the first time in November last under the chairmanship of Dr Mehroo Bengalee. Follow-up measures will now be initiated. Meanwhile the BPP is continuing with its curative program, helping 12 boys with detoxification (at Bhatia Hospital), outdoor aid (at Hope Centre in Bombay) and indoor treatment (at Seva Dhan in Goa) depending on the needs of the addicts.

A-hum with housing activity

Sixty ownership flats at the Panchayet's Gibbs Road building are awaiting installation of electricity. When it was brought to the trustees' notice that a further delay by a couple of months would amount to a breach of contract, Anklesaria said, "It's both ways. Despite the rising costs, we have kept our price the same." The house at Gibbs Road being built on a rocky terrain, they had reportedly to lay one and a half times the regular foundation to ensure a solid construction.

At Godrej Baug, two more buildings are nearing completion and work on six more is progressing. At Khareghat Colony, one new ownership building of 10 to 12 flats will be

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constructed. At the Dadar Parsi Colony, two more floors will be added to one building by September 1988.

While construction of 274 flats at Panthaky Baug will be stalled until the High Court resolves the dispute between the BPP and P.D. Jilla who is claiming ownership rights there, at Bharucha Colony, 12 two-room kitchen flats and eight one-room kitchen flats are awaiting occupancy certificates. Further 160 ownership flats of two-room kitchen are to be constructed there. When Poncha enquired if some of these could be converted into tenancy flats, the explanation given was that the land being in short supply there, they had planned a 10-storey structure for which the cost of construction would be higher and therefore would need to be borne by the owners.

This made Golwalla reiterate the need for the Punchayet to buy more land whether at Thana or Jogeshwari for additional housing activities for the community.

Construction work on the BPP land at Sanjan has shown no further progress and a new architect was appointed there. To ensure a smooth pace of

housing work, Golwalla intimated the Press of the BPP's decision to appoint one architect for each colony.

Should the BPP, as the landlord, recognize Dr Dina Patel as a direct tenant? Should the BPP oppose if Dr Patel were to file a declaratory suit in court? (A subtenant at Jer Baug, Patel was never given the option to change her status to that of a tenant when the BPP confirmed Dr Rajan Bhonsale as the new tenant in place of Dr N.R. Zunwerkar. Though Patel reportedly did not make an application for tenancy at that time, the BPP's decision enraged many sections of the community.) The BPP has decided not to proceed in this matter until Bhonsale intimates them of his plans. At an earlier meeting with the trustees, Bhonsale had pleaded for some time before committing himself.

In the meanwhile, as per a suggestion made by Shroff, it is proposed that all the seven trustees of the BPP be appointed on the Wadia Committee of Management instead of the present practice of the three seniormost trustees representing the Board. Before seeking the mandate of the other committee members, Golwalla first prop-

osed to sound out the scion of the Wadia family, Neville Wadia.

The Punchayet was represented by trustees Dr Aspi Golwalla, Eruch Desai, Jamsheed Kanga, Homi Ranina, Jamshed Guzder and Minoo Shroff, chief executive Rustom Anklesaria, and joint secretaries Hormusji Kapadia and Gool Tata. The Press was represented by *The Bombay Samachar*, *Jam-e-Jamshed*, CER's *The Zoroastrian*, *ZS' Ushta* and *Parsiana*.

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Sd. (Jehangir R. Patel)
1 March 1988

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EVENTS AND PERSONALITIES

continued from page 12a

"The nightshirts are mostly in stripes or polka dots, though some may be in different designs. The bridal collection in light pastel shades has a bed jacket which is waist high," she informs. Pervin says she likes her sales points to be beauty parlours "as a woman should be completely at ease while buying sensual nightwear."

Talking about her first encounter with the public, Daver says, "I displayed my first set of about 50 garments, when my aunt (gara designer, Naju Daver) was holding a sari exhibition. Fifty percent of my nightwear was sold and I got about 20 orders."

In future, Daver plans to design maternity gowns and bed linen.

SPOTLIGHT

On the occasion of the Republic Day of India, **Wg Cdr Homi Faramroz Buhariwala** was awarded the Vishisht Seva Medal by the President of India, notes the *Indian Express* of January 26, 1988.

Community activist and freelance



Dadrawala: community activist

journalist **Noshir Dadrawala** is expected back at his desk as executive secretary of the

Centre for Advancement of Philanthropy after being operated for cancer at the B.D. Petit Parsec General Hospital and undergoing post operative treatment at the Tata Memorial Hospital.

Among the 22 entrepreneurs and executives of the Ladies' Wing of the Indian Merchants Chamber who were due to tour Bangkok, Taiwan and Hong Kong in February was **Ms Gul M. Engineer**, notes the *Mid-Day* of February 2, 1988. The team was to study the scientific and technological progress and trade possibilities in these countries.

Kerman Framna and **Jasmin Arethna** emerged as "the fastest man and woman on wheels" clocking 13.37 and 16.25 seconds respectively at the thirty-sixth annual State Cycling Track

Meet held at the Vallabhbhai Patel Stadium, Bombay, notes the *Free Press Journal* of December 1, 1987.

Gulshan Sunawalla won the women's javelin throw at the inter-collegiate athletic meet at the University Stadium, Bombay. A student of the Government Dental College, Sunawalla threw the javelin to a distance of 31.64 meters, notes *The Times of India* of November 12, 1987.

In the Harris Shield inter-school cricket tournament, medium pacer **Darayas Shroff** of Sir Cawasji Jehangir School captured eight wickets for 19 runs to help his school score a victory over St Anne's (Orlem) who were dismissed for 75, notes a report in the *Indian Express* of January 8, 1988.

The men's title in the above 85 kg class at the inter-collegiate judo competition was won by **Dinshaw Billimoria** of the Government Law College, Bombay, notes the *Sunday Mid-Day* of November 15, 1987.

Compiled by Roxana H. Kaka

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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 May, 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.

Out of the 78 Parsis who died in Bombay, 26 fell victim to heart disease (including hypertension), while old age and anemia claimed 11. The other killers were lung disease including pneumonia (nine), diabetes (six), cancer (five), kidney failure (four), brain disease (four), and accidents (three, including two youths of 20 and 25 years). A centenarian also breathed his last.

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, *Viraf*, to *Shermaz* and *Bomi Boyce* on November 7, 1987
A girl to *Firoza* and *Rohinton Arif*; February 8, 1988
A boy to *Meher* and *Keki Panthaki*; February 9
A boy to *Parvin* and *Khodaram Mehrabani*; February 12
A boy to *Anahita* and *Bahadur Nalladaru*; February 14
A boy to *Hutoxi* and *Aspi Engineer*; February 16
A boy to *Kamal* and *Rustom Irani*; February 17
A child to *Maharukh* and *Aspi Toddywalla*; February 17
A boy to *Erzaan* and *Cyrus Patel*; February 21
A boy to *Homai* and *Darayus*

Baria; February 27
A boy to *Bakhtavar* and *Percy Mistry*; February 28

Married

Dolat Nariman Sagar and *Feroze Jamshed Contractor*; December 26, 1987
Nergish Firoze Batliwala and *Zarir Dara Govekar*; January 24, 1988
Parizad Jal Mistry and *Darayus Noshir Bajan*; February 1
Khushnum Soli Manekshaw of *Kathmandu* and *Vistas Sam Mehta*; February 1
Zinobia Purvez Bhesania and *Cyrus Dorab Pavri*; February 1
Roshni Pestonji Bhathena and *Kersasp Minoo Aibara*; February 2

Tannaz Keki Khan and *Hoshang Jehangirji Nikorawala*; February 2
Freny Sapurji Saher of *Billimora* and *Jamshedji Ardeskar Chivalwala*; February 4
Ava Burjorji Gimi and *Farokh Savak Ghadiali*; February 4
Roshan Rustomji Kolah and *Maneck Nariman Pithawalla*; February 4
Maharukh Homi Kapadia and *Khurshed Dosabhai Paliwalla*; February 5
Nazbanu Daryush Bozorgmehry and *Soorosh Behram Radmanesh*; February 6
Parivash Shahrokh Babakhan and *Mehraban Rostam Mehrabani-Zartoshti*; February 6
Annahita Adi Engineer and *Pesi Keki Sidhwa*; February 7
Naaz Sohrab Foroogh and *Shahzad Behram Doneshwar*; February 8
Binaifer Minoo Deboo and *Aspi Tehmuras Hilloowala*; February 8
Feroza Sam Joshi and *Yezdi Fram Unvala*; February 8
Zarin Eruch Madon and *Darius Noshirwan Ghaswalla*; February 9
Jasmine Bapuji Patrawalla and *Sarosh Dadiba Banaji*; February 11
Manaz Behram Faredooni of *Deolali* and *Noshir Faramroz Irani (Meher Shahi)*; February 11
Shera Jimmy Sidhwa and *Sharukh Dinshaw Bharucha*; February 13
Ruby Rustom Bhagal and *Vispi Jemi Bhagwagar*; February 15
Zarine Nariman Panthaky and *Jimmy Behram Elavia*; February 15
Mahanaz Behram Farhadi (Irani) and *Kiyoumars Rashid Azargoshsebi*; February 18
Tanaz Adi Sarkari and *Adil Gustad Katrak*; February 19
Nilufer Khurshed Shroff of *Kalyan* and *Dady Kersasp Wadia*; February 19
Behnaz Ratan Mehta and *Nariman Ardesher Kolah* of *Daman*; February 20
Parizad Homi Patel and *Adil*

Minoo Mistry; February 21
Zenobia Jehangir Balsara and *Burzis Keki Patel*; February 21
Shirin Soli Behram-Kamdin and *Cyrus Rattan Gazder*; February 22
Armin Eruchsha Bastawala and *Kerman Khushru Sukhia*; February 22
Navaz Minocher Dumasia and *Rumi Keki Umrigar*; February 22
Aban Mahiar Dastoor of *Akola* and *Rohinton Aderbad Billimoria*; February 25
Katy Rusi Langarana and *Neville Khurshed Kapadia*; February 25
Kashmira Shivax Billimoria and *Noshir Darayes Pestonji*; February 26
Shirin Jimmy Framroze and *Vistas Dara Vesuwala*; February 26
Nawaz Shapoor Taraporewala and *Ruzbah Jimmy Guard*; February 29
Perviz Jangoo Mandroina and *Sharukh Firoze Rumwalla*; February 29

Died

Mithan Sohrabji Contractor (87), residing at A-14 Flower Queen, Veera Desai Rd, Andheri (W), 400058; January 31
Roshan (Alamai) Manchershah Randelia (78), F.S. Parukh Dharamshalla, 34, Hughes Rd, 400007; January 31
Homi Phiroze Ratnagar (90), Above New Empire Cinema Bldg, Fort, 400001; January 31
Piroja Darabshaw Thuthi (84), 59, Queen's Rd, 400002; January 31
Naval Fardoonji Ghadiali (77), 3-A Navsan Mitra Hsg Soc, Nagargaon, Lonavla; February 1
Katayun D. Machhi (92), 17 Hendre Bldg, 8, N. Bharucha Marg, 400007; February 1
Kaikhushroo Dosabhai Chinoy (89), Engineer Bldg, 815, Jame Jamshed Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; February 2
Dinshawji Sorabji Hilloo (82), 7A5, Tata Clny, Sir Ratan Tata Rd, 400034; February 2
Dhanjishaw Sorabji Patel (75),



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Cavarana Bldg, Cross Rd, Dadar, 400014; February 2
Khorshed Ratanshaw Gandhi (69), 6/17 Panthaky Baug, Andheri (E); February 3
Bamanshaw Dorabji Turner (87), 124/B Madhuban Apts, A.G. Rd, Worli, 400018; February 3
Bomanshaw Phirojshaw Umrigar (90), 8 Commiseriat Bldg, Khareghat Clny, Hughes Rd, 400007; February 4
Katy Homi Patel (39), 406/A Ketayun Mans, Vile Parle (E), 400057; February 5
Behram Jehangir Gandhi (67), G-12 Shapurji Bharucha Baug, Andheri, 400058; February 6
Roshan Jamshedji Pardiwalla (60), 4 Dr Kerawalla Bldg, Tata Clny, Bandra, 400050; February 6
Goolcher Ratanshaw Billimoria (80), Hormuzd Bldg, Sleater Rd, 400007; February 7
Jamshed Framroze Billimoria (60), Petit Sanatorium, August Kranti Marg, 400036; February 7
Jerbai Dhanjishaw Madon (94), Hormuzd Baug Bldg, Kasinath St, Tardeo, 400034; February 7
Jerbai Maneckji Tatna (93), Marine Chmbs, Marine Lines, 400020; February 8
Jehangirji Rustomji Vazifdar (59), C-2 Jyoti Complex, Murbad Rd, Kalyan; February 8
Shirin Cowasji Gobhai (91), Marble Arch, 52 Peddar Rd, 400026; February 9
Najamai Hormusji MinocherHomji (87), H, Nowroze Baug, Lalbaug, 400012; February 9
Jal Kharshedji Pardiwalla (72), 111 Diamond Court, B 40 Napean Sea Rd, 400036; February 9
Cooverbai Behramshaw Patel (75), Hirabai Petit Bldg, Grant Rd, 400007; February 9
Homi Manecksha Chageman (53), Minocher Block, Balaram St, Grant Rd, 400007; February 10
Sanobar Phiroze Elavia (25), Cosy Bldg, Gowalia Tank, 400036; February 10
Rusi Phirozsha Italia (76), Italia Bglw, Dahanu; February 10
Jaiji Nadarsha Patel (94), M/11

Nowroze Baug, Lalbaug, 400012; February 10
Homai Khodaram Irani (80), Dina Manzil, Ramwadi, Dahanu Rd; February 11
Ardeshir Eduljee Damkevala (82), 2 Lam Bldg, Lower Parel, 400012; February 12
Doosanmai Meherwanji Hataria (78), 9/5 Tata Clny, Tardeo, 400034; February 12
Banoo (Mamai) Dadiba Ichhaporia (91), 276 Princess St, 400002; February 12
Bacha Keki Screwalla (85), 26 Old Khareghat Clny, Hughes Rd, 400007; February 12
Ratanshaw Dorabjee Sepoy (70), 44/46 Karani Bldg, Opp Cama Baug, 400004; February 12
Virbai Nariman Zavri (82), 73 Piroja Villa, Malcolm Baug, Jogeshwari, 400060; February 12
Khurshed Cawasji Driver (72), Windsor Chmbs, Cawasjee Patel St, Fort, 400001; February 13
Tehmuras Nussurwanji Gorewalla (68), Motiwalla Bldg, Patanwala Marg, Byculla, 400027; February 13
Baji Beramji Antea (82), C-9 Shapur Baug, V.P. Rd, 400004; February 14
Erachshaw Shapurji Mistry (83), Ram Nivas Bldg, 16 Khambatta Lane, Khetwadi, 400004; February 14
Eradshaw Naswanji Pastakia (82), Q/4 Dalal Est, Lamington Rd, 400008; February 14
Motamai Burjorji Sanjana (84), A Harbour Heights, Colaba, 400005; February 14
Kety Bapuji Sarkari (63), C-12 Rustom Baug, Victoria Rd, Byculla, 400027; February 14
Behram Dhunjisha Mehta (57), Bottawala Bldg, 239-A Tardeo Rd, 400007; February 15
Darabsha Bomanji Mistry (87), Katy Ter, 7, Sleater Rd, 400007; February 15
Khorshed Nadir Tumboli (88), M/11 Cusrow Baug, Shahid Bhagat Singh Rd, 400039; February 15
Bamanshaw Darabji Fatakia (72), 6 Parsi Anjuman Bldg, Doodh Naka, Kalyan, Dist Thane; February 16
Banoobai Sorabji Dalal (76), C/o Nergesh F. Dumasia, Taher Manzil, Mehella Patel Agiary Lane, Grant Rd,

400007; February 17
Najamai Navroji Elavia (72), D Block, Dinbai Petit Chawl, Balaram St, Grant Rd, 400007; February 17
Fareedoonji Dorabjee Seervai (75), R/3 Shapurji Bharucha Baug, Andheri (W), 400058; February 17
Eruch Nussurwanji Chhoi (77), 5 Sea-View, First Pasta Lane, Colaba, 400005; February 18
Alamai Boharamshaw Gotla (76), Parsee Fire Temple, Tilak Rd, Hyderabad; February 18
Jehanbux Hoshang Kavarana (20), 9/8 Patel Bldg, Gamadia Clny, Tardeo, 400007; February 18
Homi Sorabji Sadri (85), 39 Dev Chaya, Haji Ali, 400034; February 18
Vistasp Jehangir Contractor (60), C/o Ms R.J. Ghandhy, Ranjit Villas, Dadisheth Lane, 400007; February 19
Piloo Navroji Desai (71), Master Chmbs, Cinema Lane, 400020; February 19
Soonamai Aspi Mistry (74), A/19 Cusrow Baug, Colaba, 400039; February 19
Shapur Nadirsha Rabadi (69), 21 Dubash Bldg, Khareghat Clny, Hughes Rd, 400007; February 21
Pouruchisti Yazadiar Taraporewala (92), Jeradi, 115 Prof Almeda Rd, Bandra, 400050; February 21
Ardeshir Khodadad Irani (75), 73 Dawoodi Manzil, Gogha St, Fort, 400001; February 22
Keki Ardeshir Madon (68), 33 Tardeo Court, 251 Tardeo Rd, 400007; February 22
Aspandiar Khoduram Yazdani (71), Multani Bldg, Khambata Lane, Khetwadi, 400004; February 22
Khurshedjee Nadirshaw Kias (74), 505 Lotlikar Bldg, Chira Bazar, 400002; February 23
 Female child of Rustom P. Dubash (premature); F-11 Cusrow Baug, Colaba, 400039; February 24
Jamshed Ardeshir Khariwalla (69), Daulat Manzil, 607/A Dr Ambedkar Rd, Dadar, 400014; February 24
Sheramai Darabsha Parakh (86), 22, Petit Widows' Chawl, 133 Mody St, Fort, 400001; February 24
Cyrus Jehangirji Dadachanji (63), 62 El-Cid, B.G. Kher

Marg, 400006; February 25
Maneck Bomanji Mehta (69), 101 Sagar Darshan, Worli Sea Face, 400025; February 25
Navrooz Dinshaw Minochehr-Homji (75), 44, New Marine Lines, 400020; February 25
Rati Ratansha Mistry (64), 36 Adi Marzban Path, Ballard Est, 400038; February 25
Nariman Shapoorji Shroff (82), Hira Chmbs, Tembi Rd, Thane 400601; February 25
Homi Cawasji Umrigar (83), Gandhi Mans, Wadia St, Tardeo, 400034; February 25
Dolat K. Dastoor (59), 66, Worli Hill, 400018; February 26
Piroja R. Jhabwala (80), F.S. Parukh Dharamshalla, 34, Hughes Rd, 400007; February 26
Rustomji Savakshaw Bhathena (74), 8 Master Bldg, Contractor Baug, Mori Rd, Mahim, 400016; February 27
Jehangir Rustomji Meherhomji (100), 1/B Tata Mills Co-op Hsg Soc, Parel, 400012; February 28
Hilla Erach Mehta (78), A/3-33, New Khareghat Clny, Hughes Rd, 400007; February 28
Shera Rustomji Palkhiwalla (80), E-37-38, Jer Baug, Byculla, 400027; February 28
Kaikhusrroo Sorabji Engineer (77), 241-A/1, Jolly Maker Apts, Cuffe Parade, 400005; February 29

CALCUTTA

Born

A girl, *Karishma*, to *Jasmine* and *Mehernosh Baria*; January 31

Died

Pestonji Nowroji Chowna (87); father of Jimmy, Russi and Piloo Dinshaw Kotwal; February 13

CHICAGO

Born

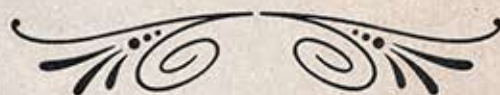
A girl, *Roshni*, to *Kashmira* and *Rumi Jamsetjee*; January 27

KARACHI

Died

Fareedoon Boman Abadan (61); January 5
Hirabai Virji Divecha (87); January 30

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