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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.

"Kookadaru: the man..."

In "Kookadaru: the man and the myth" (*Parsiana*, December 1987) it is reported that I informed Ms Toddywalla that "Kookadaru was among the priests who performed the nine *vansda* navjotes...in Mazagaon in 1882." This is likely to create misunderstanding, as the '*vansda* navjotes' were performed about six decades after the 'Mazagaon navjotes.'

Allow me to put the record straight by mentioning that the word used by me in the above context was *juddin* (not *vansda*). However, while giving the reference, I had mentioned *Vansda Navjoto* (a Gujarati booklet published by the Rahnumae Mazdayasnan Sabha in Bombay in 1940) in which

names of the nine priests (not nine persons whose 'navjotes' were performed) comprising five dasturs (one of whom was Kookadaru) and four mobeds are given on page 58.

It appears that, in the article, the number of priests is confused with the number of persons whose 'navjotes' were performed, and the title of the Gujarati publication for the 'Mazagaon navjotes.' FARIBOURZ NARIMAN

"The first lady bachelor"

It was most enlightening to read about "The first lady bachelor" (*Parsiana*, November 1987), our dear Ms Cornelia Sorabji, and it will not be amiss to also write about our dear principal Ms Susie Sorabji who started the co-educational St Helena School at Poona.

Coming from a Kutchi Memon family which observed strict purdah, my grandmother refused me permission to go to an English school and that too where boys studied. But Ms Susie Sorabji tackled my grandmother in such a wonderful way! She convinced her that she would get God's blessings if she allowed me, and my younger sister Mariam to come to school along with our brother Essa. She assured my grandmother that we will be safe and will be able to do something with our future.

Our grandmother relented and sent us to school. Those were happy days and by the end of 1926 when I finished my schooling at the age of 17, I was married. Because of my training from

Ms Susie Sorabji and Ms Cornelia Sorabji, all my children were well educated by me and grew up to stand on their own feet and be very close to each other. This was because I got a good basic sound education and this is all thanks and thanks only to the Sorabji sisters who have done much not only for me but for thousands of girls and boys who passed through their institution.

AMINA RAHIMTOOLA (nee BAYA ESSA)
Poona

"Need of the hour"

Dina Mehta in "Need of the hour" (*Parsiana*, January 1988) states, "when a Parsi boy's children (from a non-Parsi mother) are accepted as Zoroastrians but a Parsi girl's children (from a non-Parsi father) are shunned...Is this fair?"

She would be interested to know that a Parsi (I would use the word Zoroastrian) girl's children from not only a non-Parsi but a Parsi father too are shunned because the Parsi (man from Pars), for various reasons, has not had his navjote ceremony and is not considered a Zoroastrian. Even though he is married to a Parsi woman, who has had her navjote performed and is a Zoroastrian, his child is shunned!

So, who should get priority? Children of Parsi fathers married to

Kookadaru (left) who had performed *juddin* navjotes in 1882. Cornelia Sorabji (right): sound education



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Zoroastrian ladies, children of Zoroastrian fathers married to non-Parsi ladies, children of Zoroastrian ladies married to non-Parsis or children of two Parsis who are not Zoroastrians?

No doubt the community could discuss this to death. Let's hope it won't be to the death and eventual eclipse of the community. In any case one wonders if such conversions would make a substantial difference to the growth of the community whose needs lie more in the area of housing, early marriage, etc.

Ms S.N. NANPORIA

"The 11 days' controversy"

I read with sorrow and anguish in "The 11 days' controversy" (Readers' Forum, *Parsiana*, December 1987) that a mobed in London had called a learned, devout and revered high priest like the late Dr Maneckji Dhallala, and also Dastur Framroze Bode, "criminals," and later tried to modify his arrogance by claiming that what he said was that the reforms advocated by these learned men were "criminally detrimental" to our community.

I would like to answer this self-appointed protector of our faith in Dr Dhallala's own words. I quote verbatim from a prayer in his book *Homage Unto Ahura Mazda*:

"In our exaggerated notion of our religious piety, we have learnt to attach impurity to any intercourse with non-Zoroastrians while we pray or perform ceremonies. The proximity of men and women of alien faiths, we brand impure. The merest touch of theirs is defiling and the veriest of their shadow spells pollution to all our holy things. Unknowingly have we come to know and speak and write of all non-Zoroastrians as 'darvands'."

"Darvand, in its original Avestan form *dregvant* means wicked. It is an ethical appellation of unrighteous persons. Angra Mainyu, the evil spirit, is *dregvant* or darvand or wicked, as Spenta Mainyu, the good spirit, is *ashavan* or righteous."

"Thou Ahura Mazda, dost recognize only two classes among mankind, the *ashavan* or righteous and the *dregvant*, darvand or wicked, to whichever religion they belong. Those alone among Zoroastrians, who think good thoughts, speak good words and do good deeds are *ashavan* or righteous in Thy sight. Those who don sudreh and kusti, the sacred shirt and girdle, and call themselves the Mazda worshipping Zoroastrians yet think evil

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thoughts and speak evil words and do evil deeds, are darvands or wicked. Those that profess to be good Mazdayasnians, but whose conduct gives the lie to their profession, are themselves 'darvands,' wicked indeed."

To which category can we assign this new Zoroastrian messiah in London?

NOSHIR H. VAJIFDAR
Ootacamund

A cohesive calendar

This year, March 21 is the first day (Hormazd) for the Faslis and the last day (Aneran) for the majority - the Shehenshahis and the Kadmis.

From 1992 to 1996 the first day of both the calendars will coincide. For the Shehenshahis and the Kadmis, it would be the most appropriate time to switch over to the Fasli calendar.

If the high priests and the punchayets could be induced to think about the idea, we have four years to consider it and four more years to implement it.

The Fasli calendar is linked to the solar (Gregorian) calendar and is the most accurate. Dr (Ms) S.S. SOPARIWALA
Surat

Spirit of superiority

In the days of my grandparents it was widely believed that Parsis belonged to a superior category of God's creations and that, if one were to believe in the ladder of rebirth, being born a Parsi

was absolutely the topmost rung.

As young "rationalists" of the scientific age, we pooh-pooed the weird concept as ancient, pompous and utterly ridiculous even as we are prone to lightly dismiss many of our time-tested traditions whose dimensions we are unskilled to fully appreciate.

It was only recently when I chanced to visit Japan that my eyes were opened to the very close parallel between our ancient belief and what every Japanese honestly believes in, even today. Japan's mighty advance in science notwithstanding, I found every Japanese deeply convinced that his race is superior to every other.

This gives the Japanese tremendous self-pride: they are so proud of everything Japanese that they will even go to a personal loss to save this image before others, even if they are not directly concerned.

Looking back, it is this same self-pride which made Parsis the pioneers in many areas of excellence before we became, what one eminent Parsi called, "a generation of bank clerks."

If we are to regain a dominant position in Indian society, and also if we are to retain our individuality as a race, we Parsi parents must, infuse in our children *Parsipanu* - the spirit of Parsi superiority.

This cannot be done because, before we can convincingly overcome our children's expected scepticism, we

must ourselves believe in what we preach. First, we must ourselves feel proud of being Parsis: we must feel superior, we must act superior and, with determination, we must be superior. We must be to our children living examples of what Parsis are.

With this, our future generations will get the correct starting point to shoot ahead. They will aim their goals higher than we could, work hard, overcome the suffocating competition that will become even more suffocating then, and achieve the excellence required to become truly superior - if only to live up to an expectation...

Every society that has reached the top - the Germans, the Japanese, the Israelites, the Koreans, and, closer home, the Marwaris - have had this one common denominator of believing in their own superiority. So had we, before we lost it. It is time we claimed it back with a vengeance and never mind if lesser mortals call it antisocial, irrational or anything else...it has been, and must remain, our tradition.

KHURSHED PASTAKIA

Gateway of India

I find that many of my friends have missed viewing the earlier episodes of the serial *Gateway of India*, recently telecast by Doordarshan on Sundays at 9 p.m. With a total of 13 episodes, this documentary focusses on the history of the Iranian plateau, depicting Iran as a bridge between the Indian subcontinent and the Mediterranean world and emphasizing its age-old friendship with India.

It would be premature to pass judgement on the serial until it has run its full course. In any case, a lover of the ancient history of Iran would be interested to view it with a discerning eye. (After having reviewed the Achemenids and the Parthians), the serial is expected to focus upon the Sassanian empire whose religion was Zoroastrianism; the surviving Zoroastrian community in Iran; the spread of Islam; the all-embracing Islamic code; Genghis Khan's and Timur's devastation of Asia; the history of some of the world's most exquisite artistic and architectural creations; the life of the Persian Shah Abbas; the disintegration of Persia; and Persia's experiments with democracy.

SHAPUR K. VAJIFDAR

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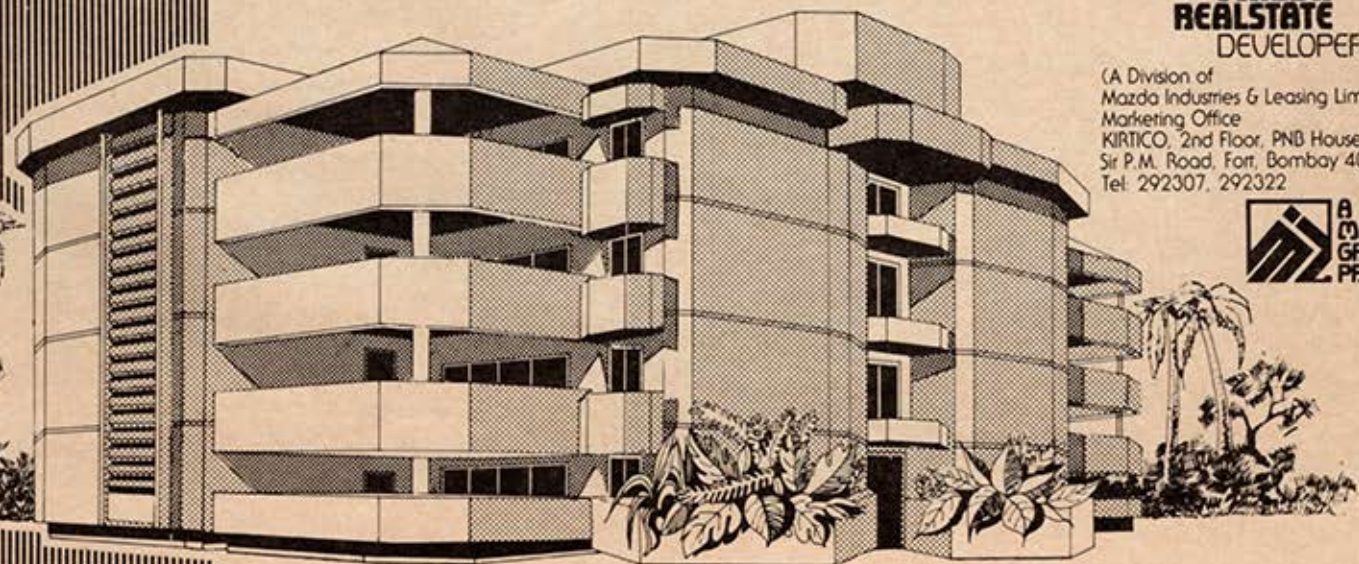
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Events and Personalities

First paramobed

The Allahabad Parsi Zoroastrian Anjuman (APZA) members are "very much satisfied with the prayers of Rustom Jal Madon, the first paramobed," notes president of the Anjuman, Capt Homi Dandiwalla, in a letter to *Parsiana*. Madon was trained "under the leadership of the late Dastur Navrooz Minochehr-Homji."

Madon reached Allahabad on March 6, 1988 and performed the first



jashan and machi the following day — Meher roj, Meher mah.

His next jashan was on the occasion of the Ghandhi Daremaher's anniversary after which the APZA held two jashans, on March 10 and 11, 1988 at the Aramgah and Daremaher respectively, which were also performed by Madon.

In keeping with the resolution adopted at a general body meeting held on June 27, 1987, the APZA paid a sum of Rs 7,200 towards the cost of training Madon who was recommended by the paramobed committee constituted by the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India.

Minister among Parsis

The Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh N.T. Rama Rao said on March 21,

1988 that Parsi students would get reservation in the state's medical and engineering colleges.

Unveiling the foundation stone for a residential colony for poor Parsis on the occasion of Jamshedi Navroze, he said the government would maintain the identity of the community by renewing the license to the Zoroastrian Club leased by the government.

Donning a traditional Parsi cap, he said that the history of Parsis in India was a noble and inspiring one. He expressed happiness over the community's loyalty and allegiance to the national objectives, ideals and aspirations. Every sector of the national life and achievement was enriched by their memorable contribution, whether it be science, art, literature or the saga of the freedom struggle. It was an instance of a complete identification of a race with the country of its adoption, he said.

Earlier, Nani Palkhivala, eminent jurist, mockingly said that at a time when everybody took orders from Delhi, Andhra Pradesh was the only state which had asserted its self-respect with

the election of the present government. He said that some respect was infused into politics with the emergence of Rama Rao when the nation was drifting aimlessly in an unhealthy direction. He reassured the Parsis that they, as minorities, need not feel endangered in the state.

Earlier, B.F. Dittia, president of the Parsi Zoroastrian Anjuman of Secunderabad and Hyderabad, welcomed the gathering. P.E. Bapooji, president of the Zoroastrian Club, proposed a vote of thanks.

Reprinted from Newstime, March 22, 1988

Children's cassette

"Most children have an innate love for rhythm and when the music gets going, learning becomes easier," notes an introduction on the inlay of the audio-cassette on religious songs in English which was launched by Zoroastrian Studies (ZS), Bombay, at a function organized at the Cricket Club of India on March 26, 1988.

Entitled *I am proud to be a Zoroastrian*, the cassette has 26 songs sung by the 16-strong ZS Children's Choir con-



Facing page: At CER ghambar (from left) Mistry, Tukina, Eruch Desai, Mirza, Engineer, Udwardi, Limathwalla and Nicholson

(Above left) Madon: prayers for Allahabad
Above: Children enacting religious songs of cassette (left) (Photo: Rohinton Bamboat)

ducted by Ms Freny Dalal-Paghdwalla. The songs, kept short and simple, tell of the life of Zarathushtra and expound his teachings on side A of the cassette, while side B deals with the prayers, festivals and on how to live your life the Zoroastrian way. It ends with the all-time favorite, *Chaiye amé Zarathoshti*, both vocal as well as instrumental. The cassette is accompanied by a small convenient booklet containing the lyrics.

"The idea of making a cassette for children, in order to teach them about Zoroastrianism, emerged from the basic Zoroastrian Studies' belief that a simple though effective way of communication is through music," states the write-up. ZS stalwart Ms Shehnaz Munshi wrote the lyrics and adapted them to popular English melodies and

special mention must be made of the enthusiasm and verve with which the children sang and enacted their parts and of the cleverly adapted costumes. Not surprisingly, therefore, there were frequent and enthusiastic bursts of applause from the audience, some of whom had to stand at the back and along the sides of the hall. The tableau was followed by a floral tribute to all the helpers and contributors after which Ms Siloo Commissariat, principal of the Panday School, presented mementoes to all the ZS personnel. A 20-minute film on Zoroastrians, *Happiness Unto Others*, was screened after the snacks.

This first music cassette by ZS follows close on the heels of the children's book *The Story of our Religion - Zoroastrianism* by Ms Ava Mehta which was launched in January this

for Economic Revival (CER)," remarked BPP trustee Jamsheed Kanga, founder member of the CER, to the gathering assembled at Albless Baug on March 20, 1988. The release of the second edition of the directory by eminent physician Dr Farokh Udwadia was scheduled to coincide with the annual CER ghambar on Navroze eve.

Almost 1,700 donors are alphabetically listed under different blood groups, a laborious effort spearheaded by CER committee members Silloo Kavarana, Kersi Limathwalla and Kersi Gazdar. "Blood transfusions are usually required in times of desperate emergency. Rather than accept it from professional donors whose blood may not be very healthy," it would be advisable to avail of donations from community volunteers, recommended Udwadia. The high cost of printing restricting the reach and utility of the directory, Udwadia urged the congregation to donate towards its costs.

By the time Udwadia had finished his address as the chief guest highlighting therein the monotheistic and practical emphasis of the "grand old religion - Zoroastrianism, and agitating about the future of the community, lest we become a tribe," the Albless Baug courtyard had filled out with Parsis of all age-groups. Urging the young Parsis to get married and procreate at an early age, Udwadia assured, "The good lord will look after all." The tributes to the simple dictums of the Zoroastrian faith were followed by Udwadia's promise unto himself "to study the Avestan language when he has a little more time."

On behalf of the community, CER president Dadi Engineer offered felicitations to Udwadia who had been conferred the Government of India's Padma Bhushan award. Congratulations were also showered on Bombay sheriff Jehangir Nicholson and blood donors Nariman Mistry and Dinyar Tukina who had spared their blood 108 and 102 times respectively.

Engineer, a leading solicitor, jocularly drew a parallel between the legal and the medical professions by stating, "A lawyer's mistake hangs seven feet above the ground while a doctor's mistake is buried seven feet beneath the ground."

The gathering, numbering over a thousand and including 175 priests, was treated to an entertainment program comprising short skits by Nozar Buchia and his group, religious songs by students of the Dadar Athorman Madressa,



nursery rhymes, while the music was arranged and produced by Zubin Bala-poria, part of the popular Bombay-based rock group, The Rock Machine. The recording was done by Kaizad Bhabha at the studio of Sarosh Bhabha and Associates. Sponsored by Khodadad and Aban Irani of Wibs bread, the cassette has been marketed and distributed by CBS (India).

Releasing the cassette, Bombay sheriff Jehangir Nicholson, praised the activities of Zoroastrian Studies and noted that the basic tenets of all religions were the same: "All religions are good and they are a pathway to God." The main attraction of the evening however was the live singing of all the songs on the cassette by the choir accompanied by their visual representation in the form of a tableau. Spe-

cial mention must be made of the enthusiasm and verve with which the children sang and enacted their parts and of the cleverly adapted costumes. Not surprisingly, therefore, there were frequent and enthusiastic bursts of applause from the audience, some of whom had to stand at the back and along the sides of the hall. The tableau was followed by a floral tribute to all the helpers and contributors after which Ms Siloo Commissariat, principal of the Panday School, presented mementoes to all the ZS personnel. A 20-minute film on Zoroastrians, *Happiness Unto Others*, was screened after the snacks.

Niloofer J. Madon

CER's blood donors list

If you are the person who requires blood, "you will realize how valuable is the blood donors' directory brought out by the Youth Wing of the Committee

a Laurel and Hardy film, and a hearty dinner wherein 600 less affluent members of the community were treated to a free meal. There was not however a respectable attendance at the evening's jashan performed by nearly 125 priests and the hambandagi led by Dastur Hormazdyar Mirza.

Parinaz Toddywalla

Merwanji's Voice

Newspapers described him as a new crusader. Jehangir Merwanji, said to be a former employee of the Associated Cement Companies and the House of Tatas, launched a new monthly publication this January called *The Voice of People Awakening*. Its inaugural issue demanded that the government publish the Lentin commission report which investigated the deaths of 14 people who were administered adulterated glycerol at the J.J. Hospital in Bombay two years ago. Editor and publisher Merwanji's campaign proved to be successful when after filing a writ petition in the Bombay High Court, Justice S.C. Pratap directed the Maharashtra Government to specify a date by which it would place the report before the State Assembly and make copies available to the public.

Described by *The Indian Post* daily as a grey-eyed, pale gold skinned, balding, curly-pated individual who "could easily be mistaken for a *phirang* (foreigner)," Merwanji refuses to give personal interviews, notes a report in *The Afternoon Despatch and Courier*. "No one," he says, "is interested in whether he is fair or dark, tall or short," notes *The Afternoon* writer Carol Andrade. "It was the magazine that was important, and after that, the Lok Jagruti Kendra which was working for the people. Any other details were superfluous for, the magazine said more about the group than any interview could. About the only thing that one could gather is that he is a geologist by training, worked abroad for many years, but where another man might be content to collect a green card and come down to India on an occasional flying visit, Merwanji chose to return to the country and throw himself into working for causes, individuals and issues as completely as he could. A friend says that ever since he could remember, Merwanji has been the same - concerned, caring, ab-

out issues, individuals, causes, the poor and the vulnerable. (This) would make him perfect for the role of a crusading editor, provided one were sure that that was what he wanted."

The report goes on to note, "One can visualize that the magazine (priced at Re 1) being brought out for the Lok Jagruti Kendra, a social service organization based in Andheri, working particularly for women and the homeless, is going to make things pretty uncomfortable for the authorities."

As the first issue stated, *The Voice* will "stand in the court of the people...searching for a direction that will lead the country out of the abyss and darkness..."

'Playful' fiesta

Organized as a fund raising activity, the Zoroastrian Youth Association (ZYA) of Poona staged a play *Three's a Crowd* on the evening of February 6, 1988, notes a press release from Percy Jijina, president of the ZYA. Working under the direction of ex-ZYA vice-president Yezdi Talati, the group called themselves The Thespians.

"The proceeds of the play (and the souvenir published on the occasion) will be used for the betterment of the community," noted the press release. Having installed new sanitary fittings at the J J Agiary, the group plans to develop the place further.

At the Jamshedi Navroze function organized by the youths, Minorities Commission member Homi Taleyarkhan was the chief guest. The jashan in the evening was followed by games, entertainment and, finally, a dinner. At such functions "we ensure that our less fortunate Zoroastrian brethren share in the celebrations," notes the souvenir.

Mazda in the market

Having entered the capital market on April 4, 1988, Mazda Textile Industries, promoted jointly by Mazda Estates and Finance Private Limited along with non-resident Indians, is offering 10,80,000 equity shares of Rs 10 each for cash at par, notes a press release from the company.

Headed by chairman of the Mazda Group of Companies, Dara Deboo, who has "several profitable ventures to his credit," the board of directors includes managing director Yezdi Master, chartered accountant Pradeep

Shukla, advocate Farrokh Mehta, solicitor and partner of Little and Company Farokh Sidhwa, businessman Kersi Deboo and non-resident Indians Vinubhai Patel and Surendra Patel.

Operating one of the most modern texturising and twisting plants at Pipodra village near Surat, the company has set up another plant for the weaving of partially oriented yarn at the same place, states the write-up.

"According to the Association of Man-made Fibre Industry, the demand for partially oriented yarn will be 4,50,000 tonnes by 1990-91. As against this the present texturising capacity is only around 65,000 tonnes. In another decade the domestic cloth consumption will register a growth from the present 8,500 million meters to 20,500 million meters," notes the release which anticipates that the recently announced excise reliefs will ... improve the profitability of texturising units considerably. "The company is therefore sure of declaring 18 percent dividend to the shareholders" in its first year of business, further adds the write-up.

Mazda Properties, another company promoted by Mazda Estates and Finance Pvt Ltd. has entered the capital market on April 21. It is confident of declaring a dividend of 20 percent on the public issue of six lakh shares of Rs 10 each, notes the *Business Express* of April 18, 1988.

Developing a housing complex at Badlapur near Bombay and a complex of bungalows/ row houses at Bardi, in Dahanu district, the estimated cost of the project is Rs 12.5 millions, adds the *Express* report.

In league with murderers?

In early 1987, a Bombay municipal corporator was murdered as he *phut-phutted* on his motorbike down the lanes of his constituency at Kamathipura, the red-light district of Bombay. In environs where stabbings are not uncommon, the murder sent shock waves down the alleys. For, the deceased, Rusi Mehta, was an all-popular figure, a politician with scruples, loved and admired by his electorate.

Who then could have murdered Mehta? As the first crack of dawn ushered in 1988, the police swooped down on a gang, reportedly involved



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in numerous cases of larceny, a major theft at a local cooperative bank, and the murder of the Congress-J elected corporator, Mehta. Two of the doors the police knocked on were at Nowroze Baug, the Parsi-tenanted residences at Lalbaug, which house in its 18 blocks middle and lower-middle-class Parsi households. "We first came to know about the arrests," say the residents, "when our *doodhwallas* (milkmen) in hushed but excited voices told us about it; else, we may not have been aware." The city's leading morning, *The Times of India*, flashed the news on its front page. Couched between the text enumerating the crimes, were the names of the two Parsi accused - Jal Rustumji Patel and Porus Sohrab Bharucha - who, *The Times* stated, were assisting the core group.

Life at Nowroze Baug, however, continues to flow past undisturbed. Patel's wife with her small son stays aloof from her neighbors as before, deriving company and solace from her married sister and nephew who stay just a floor above. And the Bharuchas

- three generations of them, as Porus' elder sister has recently become a grandmother - dwell undisturbed by the event. Even the neighbors show no signs of sympathy; only mild ripples of revulsion. None of the residents *Parsiana* spoke to exhibited any reaction but indifference, and a recalcitrance to speak. Most of them say they were never friendly or socially involved with either the Patels or the Bharuchas even though many of them have stayed in the same block for over three decades.

Hanging around the huge Baug gates, Patel's evetearing reportedly caused him to be expelled from the social group formed by the Baug residents. Despite the warnings, he continued to haunt the gates, and indulge in what is, unfortunately, the popular and peculiar trait of many Parsi boys staying in baugs.

"Bharucha had no friend in the colony," says a neighbor, "save Jal Patel, because he always considered himself as someone different from the rest of us." The two reportedly became like blood brothers.

Residents claim that both had been petty thieves ever since they could remember. "*Aatlu motu kari nakhshé...tevi asha nahin hati* (We didn't, however, expect them to get involved in such a big way, though)."

Recently, when some major construction repairs were being undertaken on buildings at the Baug, Bharucha reportedly cried off from paying his share, while Patel, it is believed, raved and ranted against the trustees, and swore at those who agreed to pay, alleging they were rich.

Yet, neither of the two boys have unleashed a *goonda raj* (gangsterism) in the Baug. They have always moved about in shorts and without a sudreh, baring their hirsute chests and legs as they paraded down the building's corridors. But short of cussing and this masculine exhibition, Patel and Bharucha have kept to themselves.

"Let them remain where they are. Why bother to write about them?" say the residents, displaying not an iota of sympathy.

Compiled by Roxana H. Kaka

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The first Zoroastrian, Parsi or Indian known to have visited Britain was Naoroji Rustomji in 1723. He came to complain to the directors of the East India Company about the injustice that his family had suffered from the Company in India. His appeal was successful, and he appears to have returned to India a happier man. In 1832 we hear of the first of many Parsis to come to Britain for education. In 1840 and 1841 members of the famous shipbuilding family of Bombay, the Wadias, published two books on their visits to Britain. The purpose of their visit was to study British dockyards and engineering. What impressed them about Britain was the bustle, the technology, the ease and speed of travel.

The Wadias were forerunners, at least in some ways, of many who came later; they came to study in order to develop their own business and then returned to India. Almost all the Parsi leaders of the late nineteenth century came to Britain to study, usually law, though others came to study medicine, as well as for business. The first Parsi and Indian firm to be established in Britain was founded in London and Liverpool in 1855 by Dadabhoy Naoroji and members of the Cama family. The numbers visiting Britain (it would not yet be appropriate to use the term 'settling') were such that in 1861 the Religious Society of the Zoroastrians of Europe was founded. Its main task was to obtain a funeral ground. The journey back to India took too long for the corpse to be sent home and Christian burial grounds were not an option for Zoroastrians. The Society obtained burial rights at Brookwood cemetery in 1863.

It is not necessary to give details here of the Society's history. There are just a few mileposts in the story which can be highlighted. The first Parsi and Indian cricket team to tour England came in 1886. In 1892 perhaps the most famous Zoroastrian in London, Dadabhoy Naoroji, was elected as Liberal M.P. for Central Finsbury. He was followed in parliament by Mancherjee Bhownagree (1895-1905) and Shapurji Saklatvala (1922-23, 1924-29).

The Association was formally incorporated in 1909 with substantial



legal help from Bhownagree. In 1921 it acquired its first premises on rent. In 1925 the Society purchased its own premises, 11 Russell Road, Kensington. There are no records of the number of Zoroastrians, that I can find, until the Second World War. A reasonable guess is probably about 150.

Migrations

Since the Second World War there have been four main waves of Zoroastrian migration to Britain. The first came in the mid 1940s. It consisted

Left: Hinnells

Below: The late Dastur Sohrab Kutar (wearing shawl) performing the initiation ceremony. The two priests on the left are Darius and Zal Sethna



Zoroastrians in the U.K.

John R. Hinnells

A survey of the Zoroastrians in Britain focusses on how they have adapted themselves and their religion

mainly of individuals leaving India and Pakistan, their fears fanned by the communal violence. There were also a number of doctors who were attracted here by the New National Health Service. The second wave was in the 1960s with the change in the British immigration laws. Here, as before, most people came from the Indian subcontinent. Again, the motivation was largely education and career enhancement. It was, in other words, migration by choice.

In the late 1960s and early 1970s Asians felt more or less compelled to leave a number of East African countries – Zanzibar, Kenya, Tanzania, Aden and Uganda. Some Parsis went to India, some to the American continent but most settled in Britain. The

fourth wave of migration, was in 1979, after the fall of the Shah. Most Irani Zoroastrians settled in the American continent but some settled in Britain.

One of the issues which interests me is, what difference does it make to an individual's perception of his or her new home if he feels forced to move rather than choose to migrate of his own free will?

These four waves highlight a central issue – that the small community encompasses diverse groups, 'groups' which have come at different periods, for different reasons and from different cultural backgrounds. Sometimes these differences are presented in stark terms as conflicts between 'orthodox' and 'reformist.' That is too simple a division. Zoroastrians have

traditionally emphasized their loyalty to the ruling power wherever they have been. As a tiny minority they have had to accept and work with established political authority wherever they have settled – being Indians in Bombay; Pakistanis in Karachi; Iranians in Tehran and British in London.

Now, what happens to a religion which has become interwoven with a particular race or national grouping when those nationals meet during migrations, in small communities, in another country? There is, also, a further important and growing section of Zoroastrian society, namely those born in the West.

The last 40 years have in some ways been among the most tumultuous in the history of Zoroastrianism. In addition to the international migrations already referred to, there have been others within India and Iran. Since 1947 there has been a steady move of Parsis from Gujarat to Bombay and in Iran in the 1960s there was a similar move from the desert cities of Yazd and Kerman to the metropolis of Tehran. Zoroastrianism has, there-

Left: Setayesh-gah at the Zoroastrian House

Far left: A family posing outside the Zoroastrian House for traditional picture prior to the navjote ceremony

Below left: Kutar ties the kusti for the navjoti

Below: After-death prayers outside Brookwood Cemetery chapel



Parsi merchants of England in the 1860s (from left): Rustomjee Umrigar, Dadabhoy Cama, unidentified, Framjee Mowdawalla, Sorabjee Captain and Mancherjee Cama

(Photo: *Parsi Lustre on Indian Soil*)

fore, become an increasingly urban phenomenon.

For centuries Zoroastrianism had been restricted, essentially, to two cultures. Now it is found in more countries around the world than ever before. What impact does this international dispersion have on the religion? The perceived center of authority is also shifting. Originally the focus of religious authority was Iran. Within the last 200 years the Indian community has become more the locus of power.

But numbers have dropped dramatically in India: by 20 percent in the last 10 years down to 71,630 according to the 1981 census. The numbers are likely to continue declining at the same dramatic rate because, as a recent survey has shown, approximately 20 percent of the Bombay Parsi population is aged 65 and over. With numbers decreasing similarly in Pakistan, the centers of Zoroastrianism in the western world are likely to play an increasingly important role in the future of the religion. Outside the Indian subcontinent and Iran, the biggest center, in numerical terms, is Britain, specifically London. What, then, is the community here like?

Characteristics

My survey questionnaire conducted in 1985 was carried out in Hong Kong, Britain, America, Canada and a pilot



study was undertaken in Karachi. At a future date I hope to carry out a similar, though necessarily larger, study in Bombay. I had 1466 respondents internationally to the questionnaire. This represents approximately a 30 percent response rate which, for a postal survey, is considered high. In Britain I had 463 responses; 346 of these came through Zoroastrian House; 67 came from what might be termed the 'East African Parsi network.' A further 50 were from Zoroastrians not on the Zoroastrian Association mailing list who wrote in to me. The point of the figures is that the response rate was good and approximately 25 percent of them came from outside the Association, hence yielding quite a broad sample. If there is any bias, in numerical

terms, it is probably weighted in favor of the East African group because of the high response rate achieved there.

The Zoroastrian population is heavily concentrated in London and the Home Counties – with almost half the addresses in this area. Such a concentration in one region will be seen to be significant for the practice of the religion. The sample is mainly from India and Pakistan. Some 78 percent of the respondents have settled in Britain in the last 25 years, but that leaves a substantial proportion, roughly one in five, here for longer than that. This longevity of the community marks it off from those in America and Canada, a fact which, we shall see, has its religious consequences. In general terms it is a fairly settled community in that it does not move house much in comparison with the American community – though it is more mobile than that in Bombay. As far as the age range is concerned, it has a wider spread of ages than the groups in America, which is generally a younger population. But with 61 percent under the age of 50 it is a younger community than those in Bombay or Karachi.

There is a difference with regard to families between those living in or near London and those living in the rest of the U.K. (For the sake of brevity these two groups will hereafter be alluded to simply as 'the center' and 'the periphery.') Because of the student



First Parsi cricket team to England in 1886 (Photo: *India's Hambledon Men*)

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Above (from left): Dadabhai Naoroji, Mancherjee Bhownagree and Shapurji Saklatvala, the three Parsi members of the British House of Commons (Photo: Parsi Lustre on Indian Soil)

Right: Zerbano Gifford, Harrow's only Asian councillor

kusti. I suspect that contact with fellow Zoroastrians works to stimulate practice. But what is very striking is the contrast with the children. Whether it is the practice of wearing the religious emblems or whether it is the parental actions and resolve with regard to teaching the prayers, quite consistently the more peripheral groups have a far lower rate of affirming the tradition. The clear implication is that the religion is not being handed down so determinedly where parents live away from a Zoroastrian center.



population there is a higher percentage of single people among London Zoroastrians than elsewhere. Typically, however, Zoroastrians live in family groups in Britain, with 75 percent being part of an extended family. As in Bombay, however, family sizes are small. Although most families have children, only 13 percent have more than two whereas 40 percent have less than two.

Overall, the community is highly educated. If the figures for those who have a first degree are conflated with those who took a higher degree, then 68 percent of respondents have been to university. Obviously this is a far higher proportion than in the general British population and much higher than that in Bombay. Here lies a problem for the Zoroastrian communities. In Asia it is often the young and the educated who have migrated, thereby depleting the parent community of potential leaders. It also, of course, leads to an unusual social mix in the new community. The problem is not as great as in New York where 91 percent of respondents studied at university.

Here a problem emerges which will recur: to what extent can Zoroastrianism (or any religion) be the same in, say, rural Gujarat, in Bombay, in London and in New York? Because the environment is different and the practitioners are different, must the religion also be different if it is to be meaningful to its followers? That is a religious question which an outsider like myself cannot answer – but which your community does have to answer.

Although most British Zoroastrians correspond with co-religionists overseas – certainly more than they do with non-Zoroastrians – the figure is not as high as it is in America. Compared with 62 percent of British Zoroastrians who say they correspond regularly, 79

percent do so in Texas and an average of 70 percent throughout America do. The difference is presumably due to the fact that the American communities are more recent 'settlements.' As the migration to America is a more recent affair, the links to the homeland are closer. That may seem an obvious remark but it is important. If links with the homeland weaken with time, what does that suggest for the preservation of the religion, in the long term, in the overseas communities?

Obviously, a small community like the Zoroastrians cannot keep separate from the majority host society. It is therefore somewhat surprising that only two-thirds of the respondents say they come into regular contact with non-Zoroastrians. Within the family, it seems, a proportion keep close contact mainly to fellow Zoroastrians. For an educated community it is remarkable that relatively few (15 percent) read Zoroastrian literature. Looking at what literature is read, clearly *Parsiana* has the widest international readership.

Attitudes

How do these characteristics affect the religion? The great majority of British Zoroastrians affirm that they pray – certainly more than I suspect a survey of the rest of the British population would show. And the manner of that prayer, in Avestan, is traditional. There is a greater tendency for those from 'the center' to wear the sudreh-

If one compares what parents report they did with the children who have grown up, with what is said parents now do, and with what the respondents envisage doing with future children, then there is a marked decline in London and elsewhere in the resolve to pass the religion on to the next generation. These figures look extremely serious for the future of the religion in this country.

Marriage outside the community happens more often in the smaller scattered groups. Thus 15 percent of respondents from the center have married out of the community compared with 26 percent from the periphery in the U.K. A similar pattern emerges elsewhere: 13 percent of New York respondents have married out of the community compared with 23 percent in the scattered American groups; eight percent in Toronto compared with 17 percent in the rest of Canada.

The difference can also be seen in religious beliefs. Regarding prayers for the dead, for example, 44 percent of the London community consider them absolutely essential whereas only

32 percent of respondents from the scattered groups do.

The theme which is emerging is the extent to which an individual's personal circumstances affect his or her religion. If a person has had his or her education in the West, does it affect the individual's Zoroastrian heritage? The answer seems to be unequivocally 'yes.' Those educated in western schools do not keep in as close touch with fellow Zoroastrians as the rest either by letters to co-religionists overseas or with those in this country. Nor

only 13 percent of the general sample – and evinced all the abovementioned social and religious behavior. As far as the perpetuation of the religion is concerned, they do not teach their children the prayers so often and frequently assert they will not be doing so in the future; nor are they so committed to having their children's navjote performed. More commonly, they do not advise their children to wear the sudreh-kusti and, consequently, their children wear it less frequently than do the children of the global sample.

ern country as their homeland. Naturally there is also a link between what one conceives the mother country to be and the place of education.

There is a similar correspondence between an individual's concept of mother country and his religious adherence. People who assert links with Asia display the characteristics associated with 'the center' while the westerners correspond with those at 'the periphery.' The latter accept that in the West they have changed their religious beliefs.

The youth

Comparing the figures relating to the youngest generation studied in the survey (those aged 16-25), with the oldest (those over 65), the younger generation speak more English and less Gujarati; they keep in touch with fellow Zoroastrians overseas and at home less; they read less religious literature; pray less; wear the sudreh-kusti less regularly; they attend Zoroastrian centers less regularly both for religious and community matters. In terms of belief, a consistently smaller proportion believe in the various forms of after-life and are less ready to see India as the center of religious authority.

In assessing these figures it would be possible to exaggerate their significance. Whichever community one studied, not least in western society, one may well find that the younger generation is less (overtly) religious. Whether those individuals will display the same characteristics when they themselves are aged over 65 may be another question.

More than half the younger respondents, however, say they pray daily and wear the sudreh-kusti regularly – in some ways a high proportion. The statistic – a higher proportion of the younger generation would refuse judjins access to the prayer room in their community center than would the older generation – is striking. One simply cannot equate being young with being less traditional. In personal conversation, one young Parsi commented to me that every day of the week she lived in a multi-cultural environment at school; she wanted one place, she said, where she could go and be herself.

The figures for the younger generation show rather different trends from one region to another. For example, whereas 65 percent of younger Zoroastrians from 'the center' keep in



Above: Bailey Irani, president of the Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe

Above (right): Shahpur Captain, secretary of the World Zoroastrian Organisation

Right: Thrity Shroff, chairperson of the Harrow Zoroastrian Council



do they read as much Zoroastrian literature. The implication is that their education distances them from their religious roots. Consequently, the western educated pray less often; the prayers they offer are less traditional and they do not wear the sudreh-kusti as regularly. They are more open to intermarriage and less inclined to believe in any aspect of the afterlife – either the immortality of the soul, reincarnation, heaven and hell or prayers for the dead.

The place where people had their primary education is clearly linked with what they consider to be their mother tongue. Thus 71 percent of those who had their primary education in the West considered English to be their mother tongue (briefly referred to as English speakers) compared with

A people's concept of what is their mother country has its impact on their religious adherence. The East African Parsis and the Persian speaking Iranian Zoroastrians display their own specific characteristics and further establish the point that the personal circumstances of individuals significantly affect their religion. Gujarati speakers identify the Indian continent as their homeland but among English speakers there is more of a tendency (even if still a minority) to see a west-

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contact with other Zoroastrians, only 42 percent of those from 'the periphery' do so. Similarly 59 percent of younger London Zoroastrians pray daily in contrast with only 47 percent of the young U.K. Zoroastrians. It seems that when different factors combine, such as being young and living in a scattered group, the religion is most at risk.

Survival

It seems that those who have children are more concerned to preserve or practice the religion compared with those who have no children. Those with children appear to pray more often and in a more traditional way. They wear the sudreh-kusti more regularly; attend Zoroastrian centers for various activities more often. They also wear the traditional dress and eat Asian food more regularly. Evidently, having children reinforces the will to preserve traditional identity. A similar pattern is observable among those who have family members in this country – aunts, cousins and brothers. In general, it seems to be the single person who is most vulnerable to non-Zoroastrian influences.

The ladies of the community are most active in the preservation of the tradition. I could detect no significant differences in male/female patterns of belief, but when one considers the figures for the practice of the religion it seems to be the women who tend to keep greater contact with fellow Zoroastrians either abroad or at home; they pray more regularly, teach the children to pray and attend Zoroastrian House more – at least in London.

In the last 40 years the community has on the one hand undergone a dramatic decline in numbers and on the other spread around the world into more countries than ever before. The human resources have never been stretched so thinly. There have also been periods of severe trauma – for the communities in East Africa and for those in Iran in 1979. Some people fear there are similar dangers ahead, with the hand-over of Hong Kong in 1997; with the increasing Islamization in Pakistan, for example. Even in the apparently secure base of India, the declining numbers and the agonies of extreme and public dissension together with the recent loss of many young and educated people through out-migration, means the Zoroastrianism there faces

enormous difficulties.

The overseas communities in America, Australia, Canada and Britain are – for better or for worse, and however the traditional centers may view this – likely to play a vital role in the future of the religion. The danger is that the dispersion will result in the dilution of the religion. It would, in my opinion, be a mistake to present this simply in terms of orthodoxy versus reform. The issues are far more complex and include such questions as: the difficulty of practising what has hitherto been an Asian religion in a non-Asian setting; the difficulties of practising the tradi-

For an educated community it is remarkable that relatively few read Zoroastrian literature

tions in areas remote from a center of Zoroastrians – be that in northern Britain or in the various parts of the American continent. How, in particular, does a person living alone, separated from his or her family, keep alive the community's traditions? How is the reality of the religion translated not only into western languages but also into the different thought patterns of those educated here? This last problem is especially acute for young people brought up to imbibe values and assumptions about the nature of religious truth and attitudes to religious practice which are different from those of the older generation.

Changing perceptions

There is a strong feeling among many of the youth in 'the West' that co-religionists in India simply do not understand their difficulties or their situation and that they seek to impose rules and principles which are entirely inappropriate in a different culture. In contrast some people in Bombay feel that those who have migrated to advance their own personal future should not then seek to change the religion to suit their convenience. There are two sides to almost any question. Perhaps the greatest danger is that either side will fail to listen to the other.

Religion is like a chameleon – it changes its coloring according to its environment but the substance remains the

same. The crucial question with religion is, what constitutes the substance and what is simply the coloring? What to change and what not to change?

Determining that issue is a religious or spiritual question which the community has to face. I honestly believe that Zoroastrianism is under greater threat now, than at any other time in its history. Persecutions have rarely removed such a high proportion of your total population as dispersion and the dramatic decline in the birth rate are doing. Oppression has rarely resulted in such a high percentage forsaking their traditions as acculturation and the seductions of western materialism are now causing. It is an insidious danger you now face – but it is no less real for that.

One particularly sad part of the survey is the contrast between the figures for the attitudes of the different generations to the future of the community and its religion. Since we often speak of the idealism and optimism of youth, it is surely extremely serious for your community when your own youth see less cause for optimism than their elders do. Whether the perceived danger was declining numbers, the youth not following the religion, conversion out of the community or some other danger, in each case a higher proportion of the youth saw dangers than did the older people. Turning to the perceived sources of hope – be it a savior, the youth, a global movement, the evidence of the religion's past record of survival, the strength of traditional values or any other reason – the younger generation consistently saw less reason for hope.

It is noticeable that a higher proportion of the youth themselves consider there is danger they will not follow the religion and fewer of them consider they are a source of hope for the future. What is also sad is that it was the younger generation which was least positive about internal community relations. Their assessment of relations between Parsis and Iranis, among Parsis, between new and old settlers, was that things were not as good as the older generation consider them to be. The danger of alienating the young from your community through quarrels seems very real indeed.

The obvious problem, however, for the community is that when your numbers are dwindling at such a dramatic

continued on page 29

The view in Iran

More than 1,400 Zoroastrians turned out to elect a managing committee of 21 members and seven reserve members of the Anjuman Zartoshtian Tehran last February, informed committee member Mehraban Kushesh. The community also elected Rustom Zarapush, Faramand Yazdi and Jamshid Khosravani as auditors-supervisors of the Anjuman's affairs. The managing committee will now elect its office bearers. While the president, vice-president and treasurer will hold office on an honorary basis, the executive secretary is a professional appointment, Kushesh added.

This was the first election, under a mandatory new constitution, since the revolution in Iran. The last president of the Anjuman was heart surgeon Dr Dinyar Farin, appointed in the time of the Shah. Under that system office bearers continued without election for 15 to 20 years. Under the new dispensation, three terms of three years each is the maximum spell for any individual in office, says Kushesh.

The community has lost nine boys in the war with Iraq — one doctor, five engineers and three soldiers — and 20 Zoroastrian buildings have collapsed under the onslaught of missiles so far, notes Kushesh. Nonetheless, the 25,000 Zoroastrians in Tehran and others in the rest of the country are treated well and the Anjuman contributed 300 million rials to the war fund (approximately 60 million rupees).

Currently the minority communities are not taken into the regular military or the police and though it is rationalized that the Muslims do not wish to allow non-Muslims into positions of authority, Kushesh does not believe there is real discrimination. Three senior jumbo captains of Iran Air are Zoroastrians and also one of its senior managers, he says. "Considering our population, Zoroastrians are tops—as doctors and engineers. The Ayatollah was operated upon by a Zoroastrian doctor. Older Zoroastrian employees hold high positions in government."

The Khomeini regime has strengthened the community by its stern implementation of the requirement that every child must be taught his religion — a compulsory subject in schools from standard one to standard twelve. Whereas the rule had existed even

during the Shah's era, it had not been enforced upon the minorities and while the Christians had been taught in their churches, the Zoroastrians tended to be lackadaisical, recounted Kushesh. Now Zoroastrian children are made to learn Avestan language and the scriptures as well as their history. "Since the revolution, we have printed 10 times as many religious books as before," says Kushesh. The course is set and the coaching is conducted by the Anjuman through the Zoroastrian Youth Association which holds classes every Friday where attendance is compulsory. The Anjuman sets the question papers and corrects the answer books. The results are then returned to the schools.

Though boys are not allowed to leave the country after the age of 14, they are not disturbed if they continue their studies. While getting into college is difficult, almost 95 percent of Zoroastrian students succeed in the entrance test. Professional education for engineering and medicine is, however, much tougher to manage.

All Iranians are required to have an identity card without which no rations, passport or hospital registration is possible. Children of Zoroastrian parents must get a Zoroastrian identity card countersigned by three members of the Anjuman. Although military service is compulsory, not everyone actually goes to the front. The boys are organized in batches and a lottery system exempts the lucky batch from active service.

The Anjuman is required to maintain statistics of death as no Zoroastrian can be buried anywhere except in a Zoroastrian graveyard. Maneckji Hataria, the Indian scholar whose representation to the ruling Shah of Iran had resulted in the scrapping of the *jezia* tax long enforced on Zoroastrians in Iran, was the last person to be interred in the *dokhma*. The graveyard in Tehran is maintained "like a park," says Kushesh.

There are two fire-temples in Tehran, one approximately 25, the other 80 years old. Close to the Anjuman office is the Shah Bahramizad where there is no fire but where devotees light candles or divas. In Shiraz, Isfahan and Yazd there are *agiaris* and in Kerman, an *atah bahram*. And each place has its own *anjuman*. The Tehran Anjuman has a very large plot

of land where it is awaiting permission to construct the biggest *atah bahram* in Iran, says Kushesh. Some part of the property was nationalized in the flush of revolution but, by and large, Shia Muslims respect *waqf* properties and therefore any charity, Kushesh informs. The Anjuman has approximately 15 buildings of two or three storeys, 40 shops and five schools under its administration. Although the salary of teachers and principals is paid by the government, maintaining the schools is difficult as the buildings range in age between 60 and 90 years; the repair bill last year amounted to 25 lakh rials (approximately five lakh rupees), says Kushesh.

The Tehran Anjuman also administers the vast Pestonji Marker (Indian merchant and philanthropist and a president of the Iranian Zoroastrian Anjuman in Bombay) property in Yazd, now in the center of the city, says Kushesh. "We cannot dispose of the land because it's trust property. We are trying to construct a housing colony but there are no funds." The Anjuman is seeking the cooperation of the government or the banks, offering the partner a 50 percent share in the property.

There is also a medical clinic in Yazd, built by Sir Ratan Tata, which has been closed due to shortage of funds. It is an old type of structure on a substantial plot of land which is looked after by the Tehran Anjuman, where the only option seems to be to demolish and reconstruct. The Hospital Bahman in Yazd, founded by the Jahanian family, is now cosmopolitan and managed by the government.

There are two types of Zoroastrians in Iran, says Kushesh — the very orthodox and the liberal. There is a new Zoroastrian Association in Abadan and Khorramshahr whose members are not of original Zoroastrian stock and bear Muslim names. More than 300 such have scattered in Italy, Germany and England, informs Kushesh.

By and large Zoroastrians do not marry outside the community, says Kushesh, placing the annual statistic at one or two cases. A *mobed* registers the marriage and where the boys have brought Muslim brides into the community, the *mobed* interrogates them and tries to give them a Zoroastrian name. One Zoroastrian girl found an Austrian mate who has accepted the

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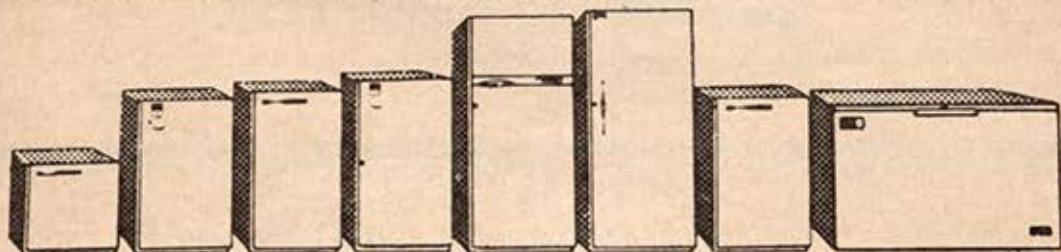
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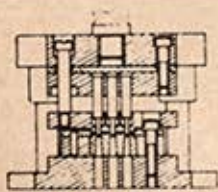
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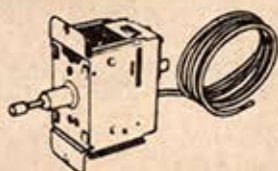
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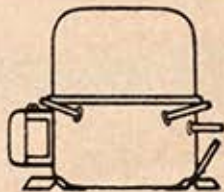
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Zoroastrian faith and registered his name as a Zoroastrian. "Why shouldn't we accept those who are superior and really interested in Zoroastrianism?" questions Kushesh.

The war has escalated the cost of living in Iran and Tehran is experiencing housing problems familiar to Bombayites, observes Kushesh. "With high rents and low income, people hesitate to marry or have children."

Parsis in Bombay and the Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP) in particular seem to be unconcerned about the fate of their correlative in Iran, feels Kushesh. "They know that Iran is a war zone but do not even bother to ask how the community is faring. We contacted the Iranian Zoroastrian Anjuman in Bombay for funds for medicine and bandages but the general community's response is lukewarm, he says. When Perviz Maleckpour, Zoroastrian member of the Iranian Majlis (parliament) arrived in Bombay in 1985 to attend the Fourth World Zoroastrian Congress (FWZC), "the Iranian consul general sent his car to receive him, but no one from the Punchayet bothered... There were 165 Iranian delegates to the Congress. We requested Mr (Jamshed) Guzder (chairman of FWZC) to try to arrange residential accommodation in a sanatorium. Armenians or Christians would have emptied the YMCAs to accommodate their people. We wrote and asked for (an estimate of) the expenses but they never replied... I write 10 letters to the BPP, they reply with one. We have already advertised for the 1989 Congress. We did not know that it has been postponed to 1990."

At the election of the Zoroastrian representative to the Iranian parliament which had been scheduled for April 8, 1988 Maleckpour faced competition from Aflatoon Zeryafal and Faramand Yazdi. People feel Maleckpour hasn't done enough work, says Kushesh, although he is personally inclined to give Maleckpour the benefit of the doubt. Maleckpour's popularity in Kerman is high, says Kushesh, but then, "Yazd and Kerman have been free from bombardment."

Australian attitudes

A child whose any one parent is a Zoroastrian and whose navjote has been performed, would be welcomed into the community fold by 80.7 per-

cent of the 59 Zoroastrians in New South Wales, Australia, who responded to a questionnaire on the subject. Of the remaining, 17.54 percent said they would not accept (though two respondents favored the children of Parsi fathers), while 1.75 percent said it was none of the community's business.

The attitudinal survey was conducted by the Australian Zoroastrian Association (AZA) of New South Wales' president Purviz Kolsawalla last September at the request of the AZA's adult discussion group. The questionnaire, circulated through the Association's newsletter *Manashni*, was intended "to determine the community's attitude towards several religious and social issues affecting the Zoroastrian community in Australia," notes Kolsawalla in a preamble to the results, analysed and tabulated with the aid of computer graphics. The response rate varied from question to question, and at the maximum clocked 20 percent of the Association's 1987 total membership of 297 adults.

Of the 55 who indicated their preferred method of disposal of dead bodies, 42 opted for cremation, six for burial, one for burial at sea and six for dokhmenashini in India or Pakistan.

Asked whether the AZA should purchase burial plots for its members or create a rose garden at its premises for disposal of ashes after cremation, 36 opted for a rose garden while 12 voted for burial plots. Twelve persons felt that the AZA should "do nothing."

A suggestion, that voluntary guidelines be set by the management committee for the conduct of the funeral and obsequial prayers for the first four days, found favor with 48 (89 percent) while six vetoed the idea. An equal number (48) volunteered to participate in saying prayers for the five muk-tad days (as against five who said they would not), but only 21 agreed to clear the hall, set flowers, etc on a roster basis (24 declined to volunteer).

An effort to evoke community attitudes before setting any guideline resulted in 13 respondents voting against the use of *sagdid* (viewing of dead body by a dog); nine voted against the use of *nirang*; 16 were in favor of women reciting prayers (with the exception of the *geh sarna*) before a dead body (one against); 10 *behbins* volun-

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In the preface to the results, Kolsawalla states, "Such discussions, conducted in an orderly and dispassionate way, are bound to help the community to chart its future destiny."

Bilingual directory

"To enable all Zoroastrians to communicate and locate each other easily," the Zoroastrian Youth Committee of Southern California planned to publish, by April 1988, a three-section telephone directory listing the numbers of all Zoroastrians in North America in English and in Farsi. The information is contained in a letter from chairperson Parviz Mazdiyasni, which has been reproduced by the Zoroastrian Association of Greater New York (ZAGNY) in its February newsletter. A yellow pages section will acquaint the community of the business and professional activities of U.S. and Canadian Zarathushtris.

"In the long run this will result in more understanding, sharing, and eventually, unity among Zoroastrians," writes Mazdiyasni. Urging community participation across the continent by providing the necessary information and booking advertising space, Mazdiyasni notes that the budget for the project would be provided through advertisements in the yellow pages plus donations.

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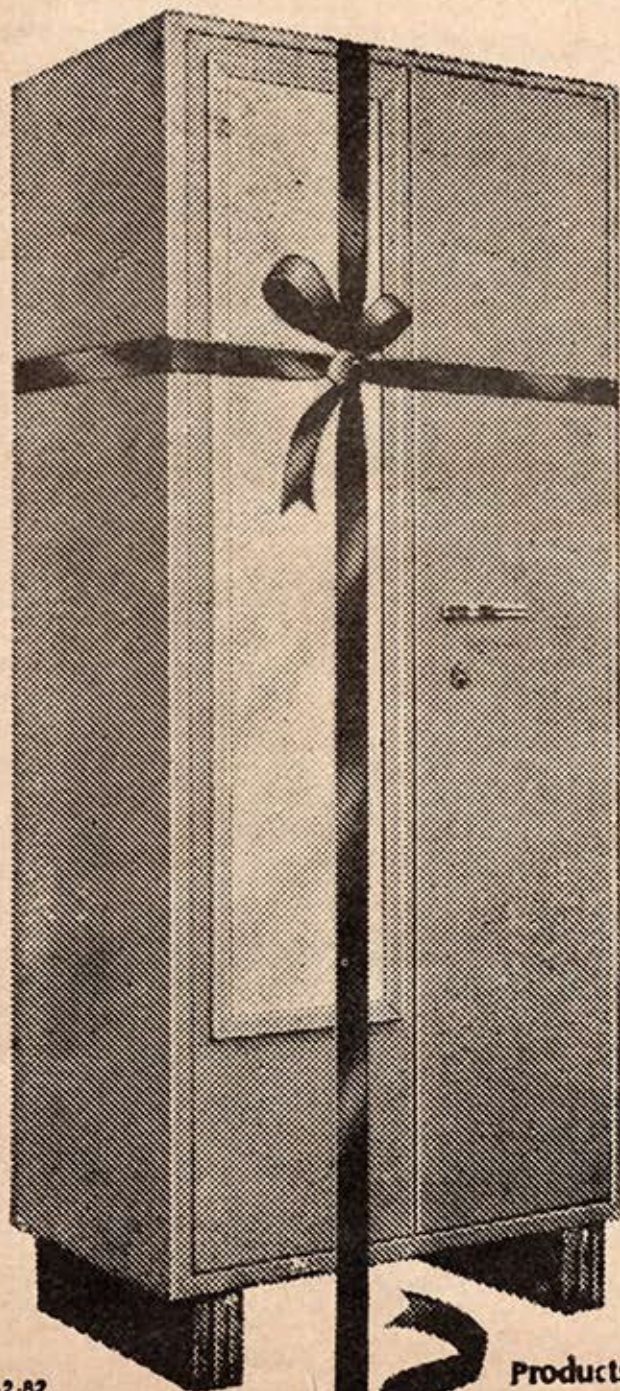
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Ophthalmologist honored

Eminent Pakistani ophthalmologist Dr Jamshed Wania has been awarded the prestigious Ramzan Ali Syed Gold Medal instituted by the President of Pakistan General Mohammad Zia-ul-Haq, notes the *Parsi Sansar ane Lok Sevak* of March 5, 1988. The citation, presented by the selection committee under the chairmanship of Prof Mahmud Ali Shah, lauds Wania's unique operational technique presented at Kyoto, Japan in 1978 "(which) has earned a place as 'Wania's operation' in a book, *Recent advances in the surgery of lacrimal apparatus*, published in 1979."

Honorary ophthalmic surgeon at Karachi's Parsi General and Masoomen Hospitals since 1960, Wania is a trustee of the Layton Rahmatulla Benevolent Trust dedicated to the provision of quality eye-care to the poorest of the poor, notes the citation. Wania is also credited with continuous active service with the Pakistan Medical Association, serving as its honorary

secretary and treasurer and as president of the medical association in Sind.

Praising Wania's efforts spread over 30 years - he has more than a dozen publications to his credit - the award reads, "Internationally you have striven to bring Pakistan ophthalmology on the world map."

Fire-temples in Russia

Two ancient fire-temples have been recently discovered in Russia according to newspaper reports and Soviet information. Situated in the Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan Soviet Republics which lie to the west and east of the Caspian Sea respectively, the fire-temples are said to have been excavated and restored by Soviet archaeologists. The Caspian Sea is the natural boundary between Iran and the USSR and the two republics once formed part of the Persian Empire.

The unique 'Ateshgyah,' a gas-fuelled 'temple of fire,' is located almost in the center of the Apsheron peninsula where oil gas comes to the

surface. A hilly region on the eastern edge of the Caucasian range, jutting into the Caspian, the Apsheron peninsula is now recognized as one of the USSR's major oil reserves. The area is known for its natural gas wells, mineral springs and mud volcanoes.

Acknowledging that the major religious belief in ancient Azerbaijan was Zoroastrianism, the release states, "The sacred fire burnt at the altars of temples and in the houses of ordinary people" who sought protection, happiness and welfare. Thus Azerbaijan acquired its name as the "land of fires."

"Azerbaijan was a developed feudal state and this aspect of its history was reflected in the Ateshgyah," informs the release. An important commercial and cultural link in the caravan trade route, merchants contributed to the construction of the temple and behind its walls, a hostelry comprising residential cells, stables and guest room where they could live and worship, adds the write-up.

The nineteenth century lust for oil almost destroyed the temple, records

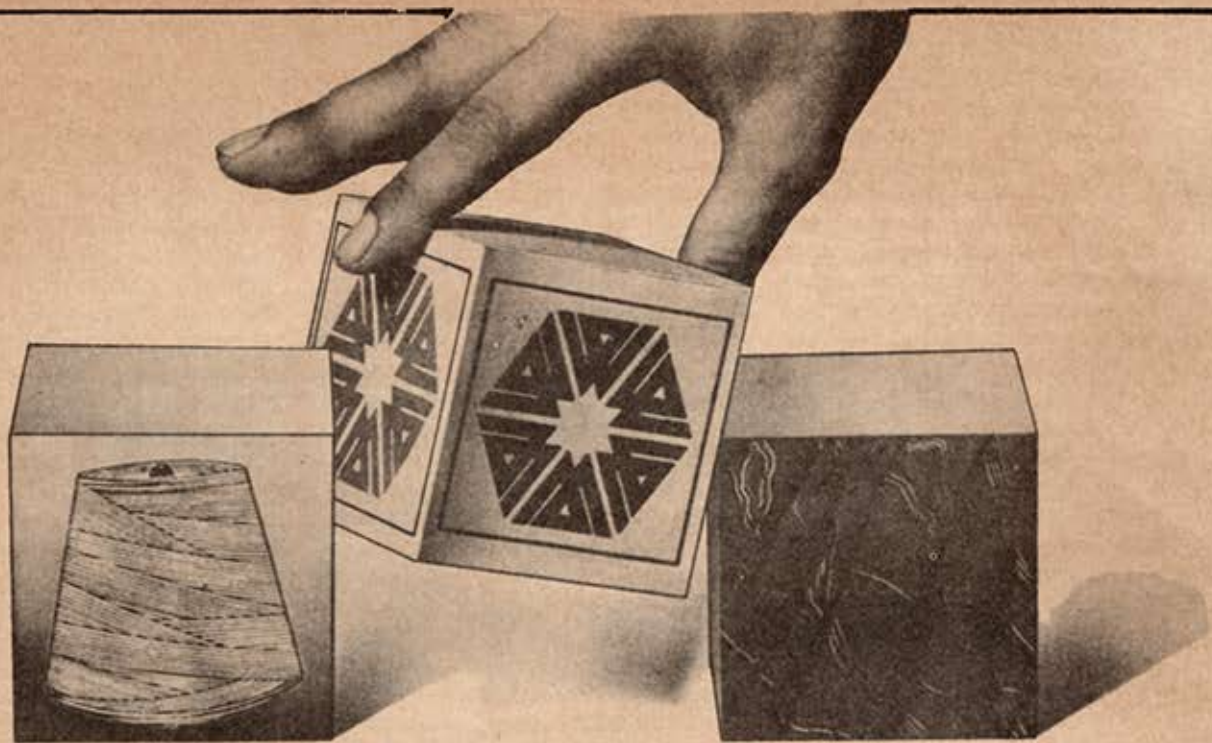


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the release: "The sacred fires were put off. For several decades the temple stood dead, waiting for its time to come...Now thoroughly restored and carefully preserved, its fires burn again."

The Uzbekistan temple lies in the small town of Karshi, the archaeological site of ancient Yerkurgan, a major economic and cultural center of Sogdiana, notes a report in the *Free Press Bulletin* of February 17, 1988 forwarded to *Parsiana* by Dhun Mehta. Sogdiana, according to *The Columbia Encyclopedia* was a part of the ancient Persian Empire, corresponding to the later emirate of Bukhara and the region of Samarkand.

While experts have dated the ancient town's walls at fifth century A.C. the ruins of the Zoroastrian temple is estimated to be 29 centuries old, notes the *Bulletin*, attributing the information to a press release of the USSR Information Centre, Bombay. Among the artefacts discovered at the site are a golden hedgehog embel-

ished with turquoise and mother-of-pearl, a stone frog, coins, terracotta statuettes, ceramics and feminine accessories which indicate that people lived there long before Alexander the Great whose military campaigns in the fourth century B.C. marked the end of the Achaemenid Empire.

Chief Dotbuster

The alleged leader of the racist American gang, known as Dotbusters, James Kerwin, was arrested along with accomplice Peter Jester, notes a *United News of India* (UNI) report from Jersey City datelined March 20 and published in *The Daily* the next day.

The Dotbusters are said to be responsible for a spate of racial incidents against Indians in New Jersey, including the fatal mugging of Nowroze Mody. Though the two men were "charged with aggravated assault and possession of weapons and burglary," they were freed on bail the same day, adds the report.

Compiled by Arnavaz S. Mama

ZOROASTRIANS IN THE U.K. *continued from page 21*

rate, mainly because the birth rate is dropping, you cannot afford to lose the young people you have.

Yours is the world's oldest prophetic religion, one which my colleagues and I find worthy of enormous respect. But I fear that here in Britain, as in other countries, it faces extinction if your generation - if you - do not do something to keep it alive. Few communities can have so much to offer in terms of past record, noble achievements and personal ability. I can only hope that you may harness these in the necessary spirit of harmony to ensure that Zoroastrianism continues to make its own unique impact both in Britain and throughout the world.

Edited and abridged from a paper on "Zoroastrian migration to Britain: its history and impact" by Prof John Hinnells of Manchester University presented at a seminar on "Zoroastrian Religion, Culture and History" on July 20, 1986 in London under the auspices of the World Zoroastrian Organisation and the World Zarathushtrian Trust Fund.

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Anklesaria: efforts to improve administration

"The general feeling prevailing in the community is that the trustees don't know what to do with the funds at the disposal of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet," states Rustom Anklesaria, chief executive of the BPP. To counter the mistaken notion that the BPP has assets worth "crores and crores of rupees" and realizing that the trustees were not able to project "the good activities that they were initiating and the limitations under which they were functioning," the board of trustees of the BPP will, beginning April, publish a community newsletter with a print order of around 18,000 copies.

Titled *Bombay Parsi Punchayet Newsletter*, the bimonthly, to be edited by Anklesaria, will focus on the problems facing the community and the various services, programs and plans offered by the BPP from improving the child's academic performance, broadening the horizons of a student who is on vacation after appearing for his school leaving examinations, financing higher education from the loans available, to curing a drug addict and bettering the relationship of a disillusioned couple.

"Apart from late marriages and lack of housing," what BPP chairman Dr Aspi Golwalla would also like to see

highlighted in the BPP newsletter is the danger of accidents facing young Parsis. A decade's statistics collected by him indicate that deaths due to accidents are increasing in the community. His other suggestions for incorporation in the newsletter include: the escalating cost of sandalwood and the experiments with bawal kathi in a fire-temple in Bombay. Golwalla also hopes that leading community figures will contribute short articles to the newsletter but Anklesaria was not sure whether such a column would materialize as earlier requests for contributions never generated any interest. What he would like to solicit, however, are readers' views for improvement of the publication and presentation of certain news items by way of stark facts.

"Our purpose is to inform the community, without any desire to create controversy. It may result in controversy, but the idea is to avoid confrontation in our own sweet gentle way," says Anklesaria who perceives his role as an architect "building bridges between the trustees and the community."

The six-to-eight page BPP Newsletter will replace the over 20-page BPP Quarterly Review which featured only

Every other month, 18,000 copies of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet Newsletter will inform the community about the developments, plans and services offered by the Parsi Punchayet and also focus on the problems facing Parsis

routine matters concerning the Punchayet like Doongerwadi news, doles handed out by the Punchayet, number of inmates at the different institutions run by the BPP and the progress of the housing schemes. "It was a mere statement of facts," acknowledged Anklesaria. The feedback from several quarters indicated that the *Quarterly Review* was considered "dull," admitted Golwalla who then cited two reasons—readability and economy—which favored a change of format.

Elaborating on the cost effectiveness, Anklesaria explained, "While formerly the BPP used to spend Rs 36 to 40 thousand a year on three issues, each with a print order of approximately 1,500, now the cost works out to Rs 80 thousand a year for six issues and a circulation of 18,000 each. All the 20,000 or so registered voters on the BPP's electoral rolls will receive a free copy of the newsletter but, to avoid duplication, only one copy will be sent per family. To save on postage, the residents of the various Punchayet-administered baugs and colonies will get their copies hand delivered.

Industrialists like Dhunjisha Neterwala and BPP trustees Jamshed Gunder and Homi Ranina have willingly offered to sponsor one issue each at a cost of Rs 7,500. Thus if three more sponsors can be found in the first year, the BPP will not have to incur any additional expenditure despite its message reaching out to so many more thousands. The *Fed Newsletter*, published by the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India, which has a circulation of around 5,000, is also financed in the same manner.

Tool for the trustees

The columns of the Parsi Press are often utilized for accusing the BPP management of striking wrong deals at the wrong time with the wrong people, whether it be for auction of lands or appointment of contractors. But irrespective of whether the Press is discharging its duty in the interest of the community or out of prejudice, Anklesaria maintains, "I have always believed 'don't cut them out,' but rather try and remove doubts, remove misunderstandings. The newsletter is, after all, an instrument in the hands of the trustees."

Not disputing "the fourth estate's right to write with understanding or misunderstanding," Anklesaria pointed to

the Hobson's choice before the trustees: Formerly, on the question of allotment of housing, "the trustees were charged with nepotism and corruption. Now, after the merit rating scheme has been introduced, the trustees are blamed of heartlessness and callousness."

Interaction between the BPP and the Press is now more open, "more cordial," the way Golwalla perceives the situation, comparing it to a decade earlier. Hardly seven days back, Golwalla had received a phone call from a member of the Press who wanted to ascertain whether a piece of information was true. Appreciating the newspaper's stand in seeking a clarification from him before going into print, Golwalla recalled how he got an opportunity to depict the true picture.

During the course of the last five years, the BPP has reportedly con-

"Our purpose is to inform the community without any desire to create controversy"

vened seven press conferences and three separate meetings for the leading Parsi publications. At the end of it, Anklesaria is not happy with the outcome or the interest generated. What he finds particularly irritating is the Press' unwholesome interest in "wanting to know which trustee attended which meeting. A trustee's performance cannot be evaluated only by his attendance at board meetings. You have to judge him from his general contribution to the community: his ideas, concepts, policies, decision-making ability, positive attitude, ability to transform difficulties into programs. We are not here to promote competition among the trustees nor to expose their shortcomings."

The chief's challenge

His own role in the Punchayet, Anklesaria views as that of "a silent worker" who is committed to making "sincere efforts to improve the administration and to learn from failures and shortcomings." Anklesaria's seven-year contract with the Punchayet ended last year but was renewed for a fresh term of five years. Former administrator and municipal commissioner of Ahme-

dabad, the "chief," as he is fondly designated by the BPP staff, had brought with him a wide vista of experience. His association with the Indian Administrative Service necessitated variegated expertise in different fields. Starting as an income-tax officer, some of his other designations included inspector general of prisons, sales tax commissioner, director of traffic, area development commissioner. Declining to make any personal observations on controversial issues confronting the community, Anklesaria advised, "When a person is in a seat of power, one must not say things knowingly or unknowingly which could affect the well-being of the community." In addition to the known problems of dwindling community numbers, another cause of worry, according to Anklesaria, is the increasing incidence of migration which could be avoided if unrecognized talents are rechannelized.

The housing shortage faced by community members in Bombay, and the repercussions felt by the Punchayet which manages several Parsi housing colonies and baugs, was referred to by Anklesaria. The latest racket is that supposed real estate agents, claiming to have access to the BPP, are swindling innocent Parsis. Assuring a flat on a payment of an advance fee, the cheat is then difficult to trace. Receiving several such complaints, the BPP is keen to nab the miscreants but is disappointed with the lack of cooperation from the public which is only interested in recovering its lost money and not punishing the wrong-doer.

"It is such items which would be published in our *Newsletter* so that it can be of some service to the community," emphasizes Anklesaria. Articles of interest to the common man, written in a brief and pointedly informative style will be the characteristic of the bimonthly. In the collection of data, Anklesaria will be assisted by BPP staff member Dara Bharucha who will work as associate editor. But the selection and writing work will all be undertaken by the Editor.

"There will be neither glorification nor criticism of the Punchayet," reinforces Anklesaria. What they wish to convey to the community is that the BPP administration, too, functions with its constraints of finance and manpower. "And when we are able to show results despite working under limitations and pressures, that is achievement," believes Anklesaria.

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The



story

Vipul Dalal

As Duke and Sons approach their centenary, the Pandole family owned and managed soft drinks company intends to market its products nationally

Amidst the competitive and rapidly growing soft drinks industry in India, one company which appears sedately confident while remaining alive to the changing scenario is the Bombay-based Duke and Sons Pvt Ltd, manufacturer of the well-known Duke's brand of soda and lemonade and a popular range of soft drinks such as Mangola and Tango. A household name in western India – especially in Bombay – Duke and Sons (promoted almost a century ago in 1889) is not a typical rags-to-riches story. It is a closely-held company which has concentrated its attention on the western India market and is quite content to have acquired the reputation of being the manufacturer of qualitative – rather than quantitative – fruit-based drinks. But, though often confronted with heavyweight challengers, Duke and Sons has adapted to changed circumstances and has not only survived but prospered.

Success tradition

In particular, for Pheroze Pandole (74), chairman and managing director of the 99-year-old company, the business of satisfying thirsty palates has been a "particularly enjoyable and cherished experience." Better known as 'Papa' Pandole to family and

friends, he joined the family business way back in 1934 even before completing his graduation as he preferred "hands-on experience to academic knowledge." Pandole, who was a young 21 in 1934, has since successfully guided the company's destiny for a major part of the last half century. Now in the twilight of his career, Pandole is confident that his two sons Dinshaw (48) and Naval (42) and grandson Darius (21) will continue the Duke's tradition of success based on the popularity of its products with consumers.

Even if Duke and Sons' cash registers are not as busy as those of soft drink market leaders such as Parle Beverages, Pure Drinks and others, the company is rich in history. In the 1880s, the late Dinshaw Pandole – Pheroze Pandole's grandfather – was a school teacher who enjoyed the then gentleman's game of cricket avidly when he was not dreaming of striking out as an entrepreneur in the soft drinks manufacturing business. Dinshaw toured England as a member of the second Zoroastrian cricket team and achieved a good measure of success as a slow bowler. The brand name of the ball which aided the school teacher's cricketing exploits was Duke's. This inspired Dinshaw Pan-

dole to manufacture and market soft drinks under the brand name Duke's, soon after his return to India.

Duke and Sons commenced as a partnership business of Dinshaw Pandole and one Mr Panthaky in 1889. The beginning was appropriately humble with the manufacturing unit located in a room on the ground floor of a two-storeyed residential building in Bombay's Grant Road. The manufacturing unit was wholly manually operated. All the bottles were cleaned by hand, the filling of the 'marble stoppered bottles' was done on a hand-operated filling machine and even the distribution of the soft drinks was restricted to nearby localities, with the bottles being transported by bullock carts. But such humble beginnings notwithstanding, business flourished and the Duke's brand of soda and other aerated drinks became increasingly popular with the citizens of Bombay where the mercury can rise to 40°C in summer.

Exclusive property

Sometime in the early 1890s, Panthaky and Dinshaw came to a parting of ways and under the terms of the settlement, the brand name Duke's became the exclusive property of Dinshaw Pandole. Says Pheroze Pandole: "The parting

*Trucks replace bullock cart transport
(Far right) Switch to automated filling
technology*

marks a milestone in the successful history of Duke's. Displaying commendable foresight, my grandfather agreed to each and every condition of Mr Panthaky and asked only for the Duke's brand name as his part of the bargain. Duke's was already a familiar name by then and, as the future course of events reveal, retaining the Duke's brand name ensured the growth of this business."

Soon after the break in the partnership, Dinshaw Pandole's two sons, Pestonji and Eruchshaw, joined the business on a full-time basis. Pestonji looked after sales and general administration while Eruchshaw, who had earned a local reputation as a mechanical genius, supervised the production and machinery maintenance functions.

With both the sons devoting all their attention and energy to it, business prospered at a steady rate and new flavors were continually added to expand the market reach of Duke's. Yet, while an entire range of aerated waters and soft drinks was manufactured and sold under the Duke's brandname, Dinshaw and his sons always laid emphasis on establishing the Duke's soda as the leader in its category. "Duke's soda orientation was evident as early as when I joined the business in 1934," recalls Pheroze Pandole. "By then, Duke's was already a mature, 45-year-old company, and though concentrating on soda, had developed successful in-house marketing strategies for a wide range of popular soft drinks. Moreover, a new unit had already been opened at Byculla to satisfy the growing demand for Duke's products."

The company's operations were, however, severely disrupted by the Second World War. "In fact, Duke's faced the worst ever crisis in its 99-year history during the war," says Pandole. "All the basic requirements - bottles, sugar, essences, flavors, chemicals, machinery and fuel - which were being imported, became scarce as they were diverted for the war effort. Despite a growing demand for Duke's products, the company could not manufacture soft drinks in adequate quantities as raw materials were simply not available," recalls Pandole.



Minimum damage

However, Duke's managed to weather the crisis with minimum possible damage because of the soda manufacturing orientation of the company. Soda was already the major product of Duke's and with the production of other soft drinks being forcibly curtailed, the company diverted its production facilities towards manufacturing soda on an even larger scale. The stress on soda has continued since then and this fizzy additive currently contributes approximately 60 percent of Duke and Sons' annual sales turnover.

The immediate post-war era marked another milestone in the history of Duke and Sons. By the end of the Second World War, Pheroze Pandole was at the helm and eager to modernize the company's operations. In 1949, Duke and Sons was incorporated as a private limited company and switched over to automatic high speed filling technology which replaced the obsolete marble stoppered bottles with the much more hygienic cork seal and crown bottles. Bullock cart transport was also phased out and modern trucks took over the job of transport and distribution of the Duke's brand of soft drinks.

"The soft drinks market in India was becoming highly competitive and all these changes were initiated by us in Duke's to remain competitive," says Pandole. With the advent of modern technology and transportation methods, Duke's soft drinks started becoming available all over the rapidly



expanding city and nearby towns and mofussil areas. And once again, after the wartime crisis, Duke and Sons bounced back into profitability.

Not satisfied with resting on his laurels, Pandole was always on the lookout for new growth opportunities and avenues. This restlessness eventually resulted in the launch of the first fruit-based drink in India in 1954. Mangola, the mango-based soft drink, was Pheroze Pandole's brainchild and a success from day one. "In the early fifties, I perceived the lack of a healthy and wholesome fruit-based soft drink in the domestic market. Mangola was launched to fill this gap in the soft drinks market. It was in tune with the Duke's strategy to retain its hard-won competitive edge in the marketplace," says Pandole.

Mangola has never looked back since and despite the spate of other mango-based soft drinks entering the market in the recent past, the sales volume of Mangola has shown a continuous - even if modest - growth, and Mangola lovers continue to swear by the drink. The reason behind the continued success of Mangola, as indeed all Duke's brands, is an emphasis on quality and consumer orientation, says Dinshaw Pandole, Pandole's eldest son. A commerce graduate of Bombay University, Dinshaw joined the business in 1962 and is currently the executive director in charge of marketing. "I think one of the explanations for Mangola's success is that we have never compromised on quality. Even now,

Mangola is the only drink which has the genuine Ratnagiri Alphonso mangoes as its base. No other mango-based drink can boast of such a high quality and exquisite-tasting mango as its base," says Dinshaw.

At every retail outlet

"In the soft drinks market, meticulous care must be taken to ensure that products are available at every retail outlet in adequate quantities. But while our distribution network is not extensive, it is intensive. Thus every day from 6 a.m. until midnight, 365 days of the year, the company's fleet of 70 trucks and an additionally hired 15 trucks in the peak summer season, weave their way in and out of Bombay's streets and lanes, distributing the entire range of Duke's products. The fleet distributes soft drinks to every possible restaurant, club, hotel, bar

and canteen all over the city," claims Dinshaw Pandole.

In 1968, Pheroze Pandole's younger son Naval joined Duke's as a trained food technologist and is currently executive director in charge of technical operations and production. A science graduate of Bombay University, Naval Pandole trained and worked as a food technologist in several West German firms prior to joining the family firm.

By the time Naval settled down, it was obvious to Pandole and his sons that the 4,000 square meter premises at Grant Road were woefully inadequate to serve the company's growing operations. A hunt for new premises began in right earnest and after toying with the idea of shifting to an MIDC (Maharashtra Industrial Development Corporation) estate in a backward region of Maharashtra, the Pandoles decided to move their factory to a

sprawling two and a quarter acre site at Chembur, a suburb north-east of Bombay.

According to Naval Pandole, the choice of Chembur was dictated by several factors: a regular supply of water, sufficient power to run the company's high speed machines and close proximity to the consumer. "The firm's factory consumes enormous volumes of soft water and our first priority was to be located at a place where an adequate supply of soft water is assured. Bombay's water is perhaps the softest in the country. Besides, our major market is in Bombay and hence we decided to stay put in the city rather than shift to the uncertainties of any MIDC estate," recalls Naval.

Despite their unwillingness to stray far from their base in Bombay, the Pandoles had to open a canning unit



(Left) Duke's factory at Chembur

(Inset) Dinshaw Pandole: founder of Duke's

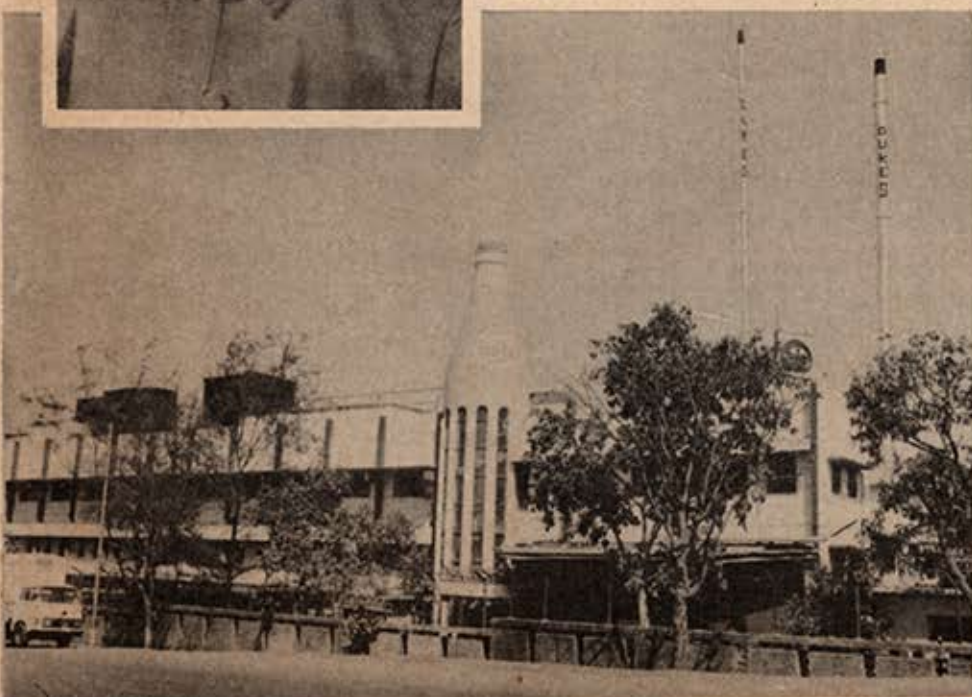
(Above from left) Directors Pheroze, Dinshaw and Naval Pandole: eager to modernize

Photos: Homyar Mistry, Homz Prints

for Alphonso mangoes in an MIDC estate near Pune. "Since the Ratnagiri Alphonso mango is available for only three months in a year and the mango pulp is required round the year for the manufacture of Mangola, a canning unit was essential. However, despite repeated requests, the state government did not grant us permission to open the unit at our Chembur premises," says Naval. The canning unit in Pune has been in operation since 1976.

Almost all activity, however, is centered at the Chembur factory, which is popularly known as the "Duke's soda factory" to the residents of Chembur.

continued on page 38



THE COOL TASTE OF WINE

Soli Shroff of Graphal recently introduced two brands of wine coolers in the Indian market

Jeroo Irani

Wine and women, it is said, need to be lavished with patient and infinite care; only with constant attention do they flower into vintage beauties or noble wines.

While it is a moot point that women need to be looked after, wines and their new offshoots, wine coolers, certainly need careful nurturing. Defined as a cross between a fruit juice, soft drink and an alcoholic beverage, wine coolers were launched in the US as recently as the early 1980s. "Wine coolers have become very popular since then in the US, Europe, Africa and the Far East," says Soli Shroff, managing director of Graphal Wineries and Distilleries Pvt Ltd who is trying to seduce the Indian palate with his own wine coolers - Blue Buck and Lady Amour. Blue Buck was placed on the Indian market in September 1987 starting with Nagpur, Sholapur, Kohlapur, Poona, Nasik and Bombay, and the second offering, Lady Amour was released early this year.

Made from apples from Himachal Pradesh and raisins, what these wine coolers offer to many wine lovers, even the considerably sophisticated ones, is the delight of discovering something new. "The taste has to be cultivated for any new product," says Shroff as he points to a colorful array of imported wine coolers behind him, leading brands like Bartles and Jaymes, California Cooler, Sun Country and White Mountain. "Wine cool-

ers are fun drinks...light and bubbly," says Shroff. Like sparkling wines they have become associated with joyful, festive occasions. "Ours are light, have no synthetic aromas or flavors added to them. The fruit is merely fermented and carbonated."

Marketed in pint-sized skittle-shaped bottles, Blue Buck is clean, tart, medium dry and is moving faster than Lady Amour which is a medium sweet wine cooler. Both, however, are coming in for praise and fulfil, on the palate, the promise held out by their fine champagne color.

Eminently drinkable and affordable (selling for Rs 20 and Rs 22), the last sip leaves the palate with a refreshing sting rather than a fiery taste or a hangover. "The wine coolers should accompany a bowl of pasta or a pizza," says Shroff, or an informal lunch

which calls for an easygoing quaff: "They are basically appetizers or 'any time' drinks. Nutritious too... ask any medical man. Anyone above 21 can drink them safely."

While one cannot envisage having these coolers with veal chops or medallions of venison, "Few people today follow these conventions of having white wine with white meat and red wine with red meat," says Shroff. However, wine coolers are best had chilled (they should be kept in the fridge three hours prior to serving) and should be finished in a single sitting.

The genial, bearded vintner, who seems to get as much of a high talking about wine as drinking it, is the third generation in the family liquor business (the parent company P.C. Shroff and Sons dates back to 1867) which includes a beer bar, permit room and retail outlets. He is not a stranger to wine and its mysteries and is finding sweet satisfaction in the earthy pleasure of making wine.

His entry into wine making was serendipitous rather than calculated. "It was first an adventure and a hobby," he says. As the depth of involvement and commitment to developing a quality product deepened, so did his investment in laboratory equipment and research and development. "We did a survey which revealed that India does not have much of a market for wine. Everyone was making hard liquor and I wanted to be different; to

Shroff: dreams of making "champagne"



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give our people something that they had not enjoyed before," he says with boyish enthusiasm. The company was christened Graphal ('gra' for grapes and 'phal' from the Hindi word, *phal*, meaning fruit).

Shroff did not enter into any foreign collaboration agreement but read voluminously on wine making which became for him something of an obsession and an intellectual challenge. He visited wineries abroad to try and tap the accumulated wisdom of generations of wine growers. "I had many wine tasting sessions and first came up with a darker colored wine." The feedback from various quarters including the food and beverage departments of five star hotels suggested that a lighter colored wine cooler might be more acceptable, he says.

Shroff decided not to use Indian grapes as a base due to their non-availability at certain times of the year. The cost of refrigeration would have been high and Indian grapes are more of a table fruit, he explains. "The recovery of juice is only 40 percent. With Indian grapes retailing at Rs 10 to Rs 12 a kilogram, it would have proved an expensive proposition," says Shroff. "To keep the drink at a competitive rate, I decided to use the best fruit available - high quality apples which are in abundance."

Available capital dictated the size of

his winery in Dahanu which is small but modern. With an installed capacity of 3,000 cases per month (one case contains 24 bottles), "On an average, we are operating on 70 percent of our installed capacity. We have started on a small scale but can expand 10 to 20

"Everyone was making hard liquor. I wanted to be different; to give our people something that they had not enjoyed before"

fold. Equipped with an automated bottling line and sophisticated filters for filtering the wine, the winery employs 18 to 20 people. "This summer will be our period of observation and we will decide whether to step up production. I don't want to overextend myself," he says. The coolers are available in places as far away as Meghalaya and Goa and Shroff had, at the time of the interview, obtained the permit to sell his liquor in Pondicherry and is expecting permits for Chandigarh, Faridabad and Haryana. "Delhi is not registering new labels at the mo-

ment," he explains.

Buoyed by the growing popularity of his wine coolers, Shroff is experimenting with developing a rosé which is in between a red and white wine. "As people get more sophisticated, they will perhaps accept the ultimate sparkling wine - champagne - more readily. As you know, champagne is named after the region where it is made," says Shroff. "It is the only sparkling wine in the world permitted to carry the name," though there are wines made in a similar way in other countries as well. Take the case of the California Champagne which uses the special Chardonnay grapes - one of the great white grape varieties of France with 80 to 85 percent recovery of juice, says Shroff. After all, grape or grape varieties used in the making of a wine is the key element in its eventual character just as the parents are the principal element in the formation of the child. "Indian farmers are now experimenting with growing better grapes and one could avail of this fruit later."

Champagne has always been and still is the most extravagant of wines and the most fascinating. "We have the technique to manufacture it - the classical, second fermentation-in-the-bottle *methode champenoise* - which is used to make other sparkling wines as well. But this method is costly and requires considerable amount of time and manpower."

From the time of harvesting the grapes to its metamorphosis into wine, it would take three years and the bot-

Shroff monitoring the working of fermentation vats (left) and finishing line (below)



tle would retail at Rs 300. Finally, the "champagne" would have to measure up, financially, to the extraordinary capital it would take to produce. While Shroff is still haunted by his dream of making the ultimate "champagne," he feels that the outlay that it would demand may prove to be a *folie de grandeur*.

Such grandiose schemes may also take a toll on his family life and his health; for Shroff admits that at one time he was a workaholic, working steadily from six in the morning to nine at night, shuttling constantly between Bombay and Dahanu. He now keeps rational working hours and is assisted in his business by his wife Roshni. "One can't afford to neglect growing children," he says, referring to his two daughters Shezine and Anahita and son Kaizad.

Not a religious man in the strict sense of the term, Shroff points to his heart and says, "The temple is here. I like visiting the fire-temple in Dahanu - it is so quiet and not crowded. I am a God-fearing person but I don't make a show of it. If our religion is based on the concept of good words, good thoughts and good deeds, I can honestly say that I have abided by its tenets."

Tracing the Parsi community's link with wine, Shroff narrates the story of how wine evolved, occasionally referring to an intimidating tome on the history of wine. The Persian King Dsem-sit was so fond of the grapes of his country that he had them stored in stone jars in cellars so that they could be enjoyed out of season, relates Shroff.

Left in this way, the grapes fermented and the people thought that they had become poisonous. A rejected favorite of the king tried to put an end to her unhappiness by drinking the "poisonous" liquid. She did so but returned to the court flushed and happy; so much so that she caught the eye of the king and was restored to his affections. It is the first known example of the power of wine to bring happiness.

Shroff is confident that his wine coolers will bring happiness too, being "bottled sunshine" as Dante described them. "Other big companies plan to enter the market, but since I have the lead, I am confident more and more people will enjoy guzzling our wine coolers."

THE DUKE'S STORY *continued from page 35*

The factory is equipped with four high speed automatic bottle washing and filling units, two imported and two indigenous, each capable of filling 100,000-125,000 bottles per shift of eight hours. The plant consumes 175,000 litres of water on an average every day and, after fully treating the water by chlorination, dechlorination and filtering to make it germ-free, has a production capacity of 350,000 bottles valued at approximately five lakhs of rupees per day.

Currently, the annual production of Duke and Sons' Chembur factory is over five million cases of 24 bottles each or 120 million bottles per year - statistics which place it in the big league of India's soft drink manufacturers despite the company being essentially a regional marketer. Soda is the main product with Lemonade and Mangola accounting for a large portion of the balance. Other brands manufactured by the Chembur plant are Tango, Duke's Pineapple, Orange, Raspberry, Icecream Soda, Tonic Rose and King Cola. The plant - with 500 employees on its rolls of which 15 are executives - enjoys an enviable re-

Mangola, the mango-based soft drink, was Pheroze Pandole's brainchild and a success from day one

cord of harmonious industrial relations. "We are proud of our industrial relations record. We have not lost a single day's production because of labor trouble in the 99-year history of Duke and Sons," says Naval Pandole with justifiable pride.

Cautious extension

With an estimated annual turnover exceeding Rs 15 crores (the actual figures are a closely held secret) and the ever growing popularity of its brands despite intense competition, there is little doubt that Duke and Sons is an atypical firm which has grown slowly and steadily, and has built up a good reputation in the process. Nor are the socially well-adjusted Pandoles consumed with burning ambition.

During his younger days, Pandole

acquired a reputation for working and playing hard and was a keen squash player for several years. In fact, until he attained the age of 70, Pandole regularly played a rigorous game of squash, and has instilled a passion for the game in his children as well - both Naval and Dinshaw played the game. While the former still does, the latter has opted in favor of a less strenuous and more profitable hobby - horse breeding and racing.

Now in the autumn of his life, the 74-year-old Pandole still puts in half a day's work, preferring to spend the rest of his time in the comfort of his residence at Malabar Hill. Although his sons live separately with their families, the Pandoles are a closely-knit family and all business decisions are taken jointly. This harmony - both within and without the home - has contributed not a little to the enduring success that is Duke and Sons.

But the winds of change and the compulsions of commerce are beginning to be belatedly experienced in this 99-year-old firm. Increasingly aware of the fact that Duke and Sons is categorized as a small-time regional company, the younger Pandoles are working towards going national. Since the onset of the eighties, several new brands have been added to the Duke's range, even as the geographical reach of the firm is being cautiously extended. Tango, a mango and orange-based drink, was launched in 1984 and, according to the Pandoles, is doing very well in the market. A number of other brands are also in the pipeline.

Today the septuagenarian Pheroze Pandole looks back on more than 50 years at the helm of Duke and Sons and in the indigenous soft drinks industry with considerable pride and satisfaction. A fifth generation of Pandoles is all set to take over the reins of the company. Darius Pandole is scheduled to join the family business after acquiring a bachelor's degree in economics from Harvard University. And in 1989, when Duke and Sons Pvt Ltd celebrates its centenary, "the new generation will commit itself anew to the Duke's tradition of adding fizz to an ordinary citizen's life," he says. Except, it will do so on a national scale.

Abridged and edited with permission from BusinessWorld (October 12-25, 1987)

The data on births, marriages and deaths has been compiled from information provided by various anjumans in India and abroad, courts and hospitals. The news provided differs from place to place, depending on the source.

Of the 94 Parsis who died in Bombay, 34 succumbed to heart disease. The next most important killers were pneumonia and lung disease (11), cancer and old age (eight and seven respectively), kidney failure (six), diabetes and accidents (five each). Asthma and brain disease each claimed three victims. There were isolated cases of malaria and tuberculosis and one alleged suicide. The age of the deceased ranged between 29 and 100 years. One body was cremated and one Parsi Christian was buried.

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.

ALLAHABAD

Died

Jaiji Jamshed Mehta (79) on January 17, 1988
Najamai Sorabji Sukhia (96), January 19

BOMBAY

Born

A boy, Hanoze, to Arnavaz and Hoshang Malesra; January 6
A girl to Avi and Nowshir Bilimoria; March 1
A girl to Rati and Farhad Forbes; March 4
A girl to Zenobia and Adil Navder; March 12
A boy to Indirani and Cyrus Gandhi; March 13
A boy to Gulshan and Homi Gae; March 14
A boy to Khorshed and Bomi Doctor; March 20
A girl to Dinaz and Percy Medhora; March 20
A girl to Roxana and Miki Buhariwala; March 22
A boy to Khorshid and Porus Buhariwala; March 25
A girl to Nazbanu and Farokh

Bustani; March 28
A boy to Parizad and Gev Dalal; March 30
A girl to Sanobar and Dhanjisha Medhora; March 31
A girl to Bernadette and Rostam Parvaresh; March 31

Married

Rita Phiroze Lala and Rumi Noshirwan Andhyarujina; February 15
Shernaz Kaikobad Dastur and Dinyar Savaksha Turel; March 1
Armaity Dinshaw Irani and Adil Rusi Anklesaria; March 6
Sanobar Keki Mory and Adil Dali Bharucha; March 7
Binaifer Jamshed Bhagwadia and Kersey Nadirshaw Bhesania; March 7
Pilloo Cursetjee Jamsetjee and Burjor Sorabji Cooper; March 7
Armaity Savak Sarbhanwalla and Neville Firoze Arjani; March 8
Havovi Rustom Bhomisha and Farokh Roomi Patel; March 8
Rashna Temurasp Majoo and Firoze Homi Wadia; March 8
Roshan Sohrab Pavri and Behram Rustem Colah; March 11
Rashna Burjor Guard and Dicky Eruch Contractor; March 11
Navaz Rusi Sethna and Jehangir Russa Ginwalla; March 11
Ashish Phiroze Chinoy and Keki Minoo Dubash; March 12
Goolu Minoo Bharucha and Armin Dossabhoy Kalyaniwalla; March 12
Pervin Noshir Mirza and Keki Khurshed Surti; March 13
Farnaz Kaikhushroo Jehan and Daneshmand Ardeshir Fallah of Iran; March 18
Goolrukh Jemi Contractor and Khurshed Pheroze Daruwalla; March 19
Roshan Jehangirji Akolawala and Kerman Hoshang Katrak; March 19
Jasmine Beji Billimoria and Jehangir Hirji Jehangir; March 21
Laila Minoo Batlivala and Rohinton Sam Sethna; March 21
Maki Eduf Punegar and Percy

Faramroze Lakadia; March 22
Daulet Merwanji Todiwalla and Bahadur Sorabji Kerawalla; March 24
Niloofer Minoo Sanjana and Rumi Tehmuras Patel; March 24
Daisy Nadir Sodawaterwala and Nozer Soli Sabavala; March 24
Meherangiz Perviz Contractor of Ahmedabad and Percyus Farokh Kasad; March 27
Keki Pesi Damania and Hosang Kekhushroo Marfatia; March 27
Anaheet Godrej Patel and Adil Feroze Nariman; March 27
Kamal Kersi Darasha and Hosang Khushroo Pavri; March 27
Firooze Phiroze Kharas and Youhann Sam Dadabhoy; March 31

Died

Katie Jimmy Vasaigara (35), residing at B/503 Rizvi Nagar, Santacruz (W), 400054; February 25, 1988
Dhun Rustom Masani (85), 10 Podar Hse, Marine Drive, 400020; February 29
Ardeshir Phirozeshah Patel (66), Pandey Hse, 94B Cumballa Hill, 400036; February 29
Piroza Wadia (85), 22 Wadia Bldg, Marzban Clny, 400011; February 29
Goolbai Shiavax Damanwalla (82), Dhan Mhl, Garden Rd, Colaba, 400039; March 1
Bhicaaji Kekobad Kathawala (68), 1/384 Bhaya St, Nanpura, Surat; March 1
Meheramai Savaksha Shaw (73), 194 Talaty Bldg, Khetwadi Back Rd, 400004; March 1
Sanum Soli Colombowala (46), 11, Stardust, Off Carter Rd, Bandra, 400050; March 2
Morvand Behram Irani (52), 3 Kashinath Bldg, Kashinath St, Tardeo, 400034; March 2
Dina Bejan Khambatta (84), 809 Cumballa Crest, Peddar Rd, 400026; March 3
Burjorji Jivanji Patel (66), Benkuvar Mans, Wadia St, Tardeo, 400034; March 3
Phiroze Jehangirji Bhagalia (78), Alpawala Bldg, Station Rd, Mahim, 400016; March 4

Thriti Rustomji Guard (59), Tehmi Ter, 805, Parsi Colony, Dadar, 400014; March 4
Merwan Kekobad Zandbaf (60), 7, R.C. Sethna Bldg, Parel Tank Rd, 400012; March 4
Dinbai Ardeshir Karma (88), Cama Bldg, Kasinath St, Tardeo, 400034; March 5
Dhunjisha Bhikhaji Rana (94), Dr Dossibai & J.R.D. Charity Home, Byculia, 400027; March 5
Jehangir Irach Taraporewala (68), Anchorage, 7, Vatcha Gandhi Rd, 400007; March 5
Dhunjishaw Framroze Bharucha (84), 158, Modi St, Fort, 400001; March 6
Minoo Burjor Billimoria (29), Fakri Bldg, Shankar Seth Rd, Grant Rd, 400007; March 6
Burjor Behramji Jamaspjina (93), 'O,' Dalal Est, Bombay Central, 400008; March 7
Burjor Behramji Kerawala (65), M/12 Nowroze Baug, Lalbaug, 400012; March 7
Nargiz Rustamji Madon (68), 44/C Batliwala Villa, Sleater Rd, 400007; March 8
Bahadurji Jehangirji Master (84), C-11 Shapur Baug, V.P. Rd, 400004; March 8
Darabshaw Jamshedji Vaghaiwala (75), Nanabhoy Chmbs, Gunbow Lane, Fort, 400001; March 8
Minocher Dinshawji Bhesania (65), H-13, Shapurji Bharucha Baug, Andheri, 400058; March 9
Pirojbaai Ardeshir Dalal (85), Todiwalla Bldg, Lower Parel, 400013; March 9
Minu Jal Desai (45), G-3, Shapurji Bharucha Baug, Andheri, 400058; March 9
Dadabhoy J. Dumasia (76), 15 Girja Sadan, Khetwadi, 7th Lane, 400004; March 9
Motamai Dosabhai Guard (88), 8/15 Sir Ratan Tata Clny, Tardeo, 400034; March 10
Bhikhaji Ratanji Jijina (69), S-10, Cusrow Baug, Colaba, 400039; March 10
Dhun Nariman Canteenwalla (39), March 11 (cremated)
Ardeshir Navroji Mistry (75), Dadachanji Bldg, Marzban Clny, Dr Nair Rd, 400011; March 11
Pasotan Dinshaw Mowdawalla (62), 20 Guru Gangeshwar

Sadan, 14 A Rd, Khar, 400052; March 11
Koovershaw Burjorji Bulsara (80), Old Master Bldg, 275C Zoroastrian Clny, Tardeo, 400007; March 12
Khorshed Hormazdyar Coyajee (80); March 12 (interred)
Aloo Boman Talati (80), 20, Khodabux Bldg, Mazagaon, 400010; March 12
Jerbai Rustomji Wadia (100), 19 Khareghat Clny, Hughes Rd, 400007; March 13
Rustom Phirojshaw Bilpodiwalla (56), Dolat Manzil, 607 A, Dadar, 400014; March 14
Homi Ardeshir Makujina (63), Hirjibhoy Sethna Bldg, 275 A Chikalwadi, Tardeo, 400007; March 14
Burjor Curshedji Daruwalla (87), B/204 Yusuf Mans, Khetwadi Back Rd, 400004; March 15
Nadirshaw Burjorji Mistry (92), Jassawala Sanatorium, Juhu, Santacruz (W), 400049; March 15
Darius Shapurji Balsara (65), Sea-View Ter, 17th Rd, Khar, 400052; March 16
Cooverbai Pestonji Cama (94), Sea-Foam, 2, Windy Hall Lane, Colaba, 400005; March 16
Dolly Phiroze Katrak (57), 8 Dr Daji Bldg, Chhotani Rd, Mahim, 400016; March 16
Amy Soli Poonjiaji (58), Master Chmbs, Cinema Rd, 400020; March 16
Katy Framroj Amra (69), 4, Nana Bldg, Gilder Lane, Tardeo, 400008; March 17
Behram Sohrabshaw Daruwalla (74), Baliwala Bldg, 764C, M. Joshi Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; March 17
Shera Minocher Daruwalla (83), 1/10 Navjivan Soc, Lamington Rd, 400008; March 17
Manekshaw Bapuji Mistry (83), 22 Purshotam Bldg, 232, Grant Rd, 400007; March 17
Sorabji Jehangirji Patel (73), Radha Niwas, Gautam Rd, Malad, 400064; March 17
Nariman Adarji Vesuna (71), New Cama Bldg, 275 Tardeo Rd, 400007; March 17
Meherbai Jahangir Bamboat (93), F.S. Parukh Dharamshalla, 34 Hughes Rd, 400007; March 18

Nergish Navroji Bhungara (82), 696, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; March 18
Jaloo Eruch Kapadia (52), 8 Dinshaw Bldg, Dhanbai Wadi, Vile Parle, 400056; March 18
Nergish Dosabhoj Nalladaru (74), 87 Ghoga St, Fort, 400001; March 18
Perinbanoo Dossabhai Naterwalla (75), R-9 Dalal Est, Opp Bombay Central, 400008; March 18
Hiraji Khodabax Wadia (64), Patel Charity Bldg, Forjett St, 400036; March 18
Dolly Nariman Bhoot (53), 104-B Ashiana, Glaxo Co-op Hsg Soc, Bandra, 400050; March 19
Freni Rustom Joshi (79), Khandala Cottage, Khandala (Dist Pune); March 19
Pirojshaw Jamshedji Mahudawala (80), 20-A-1 Takshila, Off Mahakali Caves, Andheri (E), 400093; March 19
Seheriaji Ejiarji Sidhwa (83), Meherbai Wadia Bldg, Wadia St, Tardeo, 400034; March 19
Erachsha Jamshedji Avasia (70), Swadeshi Mills Ors, Sion, 400022; March 20
Sarvai Hoshang Pithawala (71), 39 Piroja Mans, Tardeo, 400034; March 20
Phiroze Hormasji Ranina (78), Commonwealth, 181 Backbay Reclamation, 400020; March 20
Nariman Hormusji Siganporia (84), 10/19 Tata Clny, Tardeo Rd, 400034; March 20
Nargesh Nasserwanji Taraporewalla (83), Ajai Niwas, 443 Jagnath Shanker Sheth Rd, 400002; March 20
Savakshaw Manekshaw Amroliwala (83), C/o B.P. Bharucha, 725 Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; March 21
Goolbai Nasarwanji Bam (83), 1-B-32 Tata Mills Co-op Hsg Soc, Parel, 400012; March 21
Najoo Kavas Patel (63), Javalkar Mans, 280/A Sopari Baug Rd, Parel, 400012; March 21
Jamshed F. Rana (80), Dilkush, 758, Parsi Clny, Dadar 400014; March 21
Themina D. Farasman (87), Ketty Ter, 7, Sleater Rd, 400007; March 22
Meherji Edulji Lelinwalla (87), F.S. Parukh Dharamshalla, 34 Hughes Rd, 400007; March 22
Behram K. Mehromjee (58),

Hormusz Mans, Opp Bhatia Hosp, Tardeo, 400007; March 22
Sorab Fararroze Patell (57), 23, Colaba Court, Colaba Causeway, 400005; March 22
Homai Rattanshaw Fitter (67), 13/37, Nowroze Baug, Lalbaug, 400012; March 23
Tehemton Jehangir (68), C-11, Cusrow Baug, Colaba, 400039; March 23
Coomi Phiroze Gimi (78), 8/2 Rustom Baug, Victoria Rd, Byculia, 400027; March 24
Roda Kersi Panthaki (40), 6, Banaji Bldg, Delile Rd, 400013; March 24
Nariman B. Rudina (67), Talukdar Bldg, Marazban Clny, Dr Nair Rd, 400011; March 24
Pirojsha (Pillo) Savaksha Sanga (65), C/o A. Damania, 643, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; March 24
Nader Jamshedji Vesuna (57), 780 Karani Mans, Jam-e-Jamshed Rd, Dadar, 400014; March 24
Navaz Jehanbux Dastur (81), 31 St Paul's Rd, Bandra, 400050; March 25
Jehanbux Cawasji Hansotia (78), Gemfrina, 630 Khareghat Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; March 25
Shehara Manekshaw Mistry (93), 102-A Montana, 4, Lokhandwalla Comp, Andheri, 400058; March 26
Naja Manek Bamji (75), A/4 New Khareghat Clny, Hughes Rd, 400007; March 27
Mehramai Cawasji Daruwalla (87), C. Bhatia Co-op Hsg Soc, Princess St, 400002; March 27
Salamut Noshirwanji Irani (71), 17/D, 39 Rustom Baug, Victoria Rd, 400027; March 27
Nariman Dinshaji Katrak (67), Vatcha Hse, Gunpowder Rd, Mazagaon, 400010; March 28
Jehangir Hormusji Pestonjamasji (90), B-51, Meherzin, Wodehouse Rd, Colaba, 400005; March 28
Themuras Nasarwanji Dubash (61), Umbergaon Bldg, Dr Ambedkar Rd, Parel, 400012; March 29
Behram Edulji Elavia (78), Uranwalla Mans, Parel, 400012; March 29
Kaikhushroo Dinshaw Panthky (83), 2/A Tata Hsg Soc, Parel, 400012; March 29

Mani Kaikhushroo Gandhi (75), Meherabad, Azad Rd, Juhu, 400049; March 30
Shirin Pestonji Nariman (78), E-27, Jer Baug, Byculia, 400027; March 30
Piroja Navroji Pavri (86), Tehmi Ter, 805, Khodadad Circle, Dadar, 400014; March 30
Khorshed Khurshed Panthaki (43), A/2 Ness Baug, Nana Chowk, 400007; March 31

CALCUTTA

Died

Pestonji Chowna; February 13

CALIFORNIA

Born

A girl, **Diana**, to **Arnaz and Jehangir Bharucha**; November 13, 1987

KARACHI

Died

Gustad Pirosha Mody (78); February 3

Dosamai Burjorji Gandhi (90); February 4

Banubai Jal Pohwala (58); February 10

MHOW

Born

A girl, **Niloufer**, to **Arshish and Nauzer Nakra**; March 10

Died

Ardeshir Edulji Malesara (85); December 6, 1987

Goolbanoo Dhunjishaw Bharucha (68); January 10, 1988

Pullamai Erachshaw Powwalla (75); February 18

Dhunjishaw Ardeshir Bharucha (78); March 13

PENNSYLVANIA

Born

A boy, **Matthew-Jehangir**, to **Becky and Rohinton Morris**; January 26

Died

Dolat Dorabshah Pavri (77), daughter of **Ranibai** and **Behramji Patel**, mother of **Hoshan**, **Dinyar**, **Ketayun**, **Coomi** and **Roshan**; February 8

VALSAD

Married

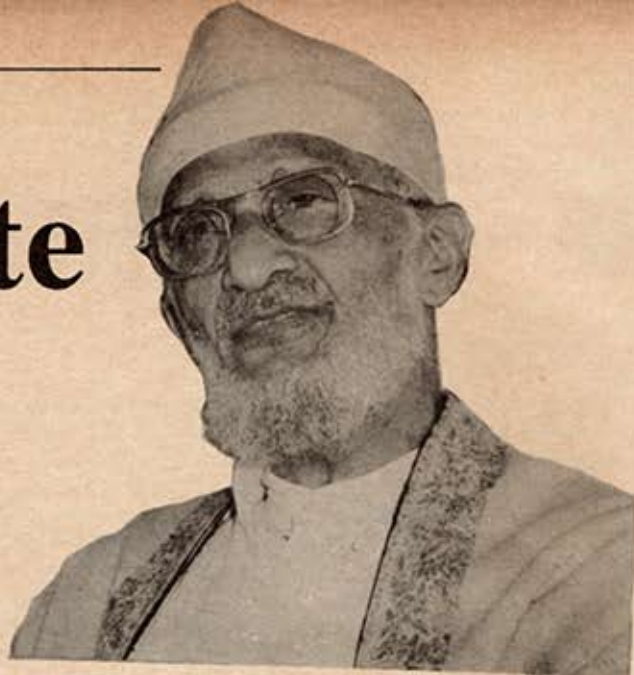
Kamal Contractor and **Rustom Rustomjee** of **Calcutta**; February 28

Compiled by **Roxana H. Kaka**

The compassionate priest

The essence of Zoroastrianism, according to Dastur Navrooz Minochehr-Homji, lay in its practice

Arnavaz S. Mama



A heedless cyclist defying traffic laws near the Overseas Communications Service, Bombay, became the harbinger of tragedy: Dastur Navrooz Minochehr-Homji, high priest of the Seth Nuserwanjee M. Petit Fasli Atash Kadeh, was knocked down and sustained a fractured thigh, was operated upon but lost the fight to a blood clot (a frequent result of a broken bone) that lodged in the lung.

The end came at 12.30 a.m. on February 25 – too late for any newspaper announcement. Yet, mourners of all ages and walks of life gathered at Doongerwadi to bid adieu to the youthful 75-year-old whose boundless empathy had touched them mentally, emotionally or spiritually.

A spate of condolence meetings were held all over the world – three of them in Bombay. Suggestions to commemorate the priest's memory included the founding of a hall and the institution of a chair in comparative religions at Bombay University. The Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Chicago (ZAC) initiated the Dastur Navrooz Minochehr-Homji Endowment Fund dedicated to the enrichment of Zoroastrian heritage worldwide. The Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP) has decided to ensure a monthly stipend to his widow as also a flat as and when she is required to vacate her present home at the Fasli Atash Kadeh as BPP chief executive Rustom Anklesaria reported to the executive council of the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian

Anjumans of India, at its meeting in Ukai on April 2, 1988. The Federation itself is setting up a fund which would generate the income for her upkeep.

"Dasturji Minochehr-Homji was a religious scholar of Zoroastrianism and other religions. He could quote as fluently from Sanskrit as from Persian, English and Gujarati," noted the condolence resolution adopted by the trustees of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet. A condolence meeting cosponsored by the K.R. Cama Oriental Institute, the Rahnumae Mazdayasnan Sabha and the India Iran Cultural Society recalled his association of over 24 years with the institutions whose objective he had "greatly helped in promoting." The resolution adopted at the meeting referred to his "motivating the youth of the community by scholarly discourses...By his passing away, the Parsi community has lost a sincere and able religious leader." Speaker after speaker referred to Minochehr-Homji's simplicity, dedication, sincerity and dislike for controversy. BPP trustee Eruch Desai admitted, "We are styled as akabars, but there was one elder to whom we always turned for advice...a towering personality whether alone or in society."

BPP trustee Jamsheed Kanga recalled his student days at Boys' Town, Nasik where Minochehr-Homji was then employed: "My first day (at the school) I spent in his house. I used to go to him for navar prayers and could cry on his shoulder when I was home-

sick...He never had a harsh word. One could rely on him to project the rational approach."

Claiming the "singular honor of being his teacher" at the teachers' training college where Minochehr-Homji acquired his BEd degree in 1962, BPP trustee and Bombay University vice-chancellor Mehroo Bengalee reminisced how Reverend Sologran, a Jesuit priest who was then principal of the institution, put Minochehr-Homji, "on a pedestal, even among Catholic priests...(He) was looked upon as a true guru by all his classmates."

At the condolence meeting summoned by the trustees of the Fasli Atash Kadeh – Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy, Sorab Morris and Rusi Sethna – Jejeebhoy noted how the Dastur had "devoted his entire life to preaching and teaching," saluted "this humane person who was as great at heart as he was a priest," and recalled Minochehr-Homji's "unfailing courtesy, graciousness and simplicity."

Emphasizing Minochehr-Homji's concern for the brotherhood of man, Sethna spoke of the time when India's foremost nuclear scientist, Homi Bhabha, had died in an air crash and an uthamna had been scheduled at the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (TIFR) in Colaba. Minochehr-Homji had to make the necessary arrangements as the Bhabha family prayers were conducted at the Fasli Atash Kadeh. He was appalled by cer-

tain orthodox people who insisted that non-Parsis couldn't be allowed to witness the uthamna ceremony and in his distress sought the legal help of Nusserwanji Sethna (Rusi's father) who was a trustee of the Agiary. The argument was that non-Parsis are not allowed into the bungli at Doongerwadi and hence should not be allowed at the TIFR either. But the Dastur argued that the Doongerwadi rule was an administrative decision of the BPP and had no religious significance. In a timely compromise, the many non-Parsis who came to pay respect to Bhabha were made to sit in an area outside the hall whence they could view the proceedings through a glass door. Said Sethna, "Minochehr-Homji was not a bigot and not a reformist. He was orthodox – the word which derives from the Greek root, *orthos*, meaning the right thing."

"Follow the precepts of Minochehr-Homji," urged member of the Minorities Commission Homi Taleyarkhan: "The selflessness that he preached and practiced as the motto of our religion ... the simple creed of being kind ... which (he) was constantly repeating." According to Taleyarkhan, Minochehr-Homji had begun work on the religious aspects of an encyclopaedia on the Parsis for the Minorities Commission.

In a letter, Dastur Kaikhusroo JamaspAsa, high priest of the Anjuman Atash Bahram who had conducted the uthamna prayers for Minochehr-Homji but was away in North America at the time of the condolence meetings, referred to his "happy privilege to be associated with him for the last 30 years. Dastur Minochehr-Homji instilled in his pupils not only the precepts of Zoroastrianism but the milk of human kindness."

At the ZAC condolence meeting on February 28, Dr Mehroo Patel, Minochehr-Homji's hostess in 1984-85, described the Dastur's dedication: "During his 70-day stay here he delivered 40 lectures of almost two hours each on *Avesta* and Zoroastrian scriptures. To each of his lectures he devoted a preparation time of close to 10 hours. He never excused himself at being unprepared for his lecture for lack of time. This he considered insulting to his audience. He was up at 4 a.m. (and) put in two hours of study before we got downstairs...His reason-

ing was scientific, his discussions were rational, his answers straightforward and to the point. If he did not know, he said so without hesitation. He was an easy houseguest... Punctuality was his password."

The Bombay Samachar, in its editorial tribute on February 28 noted, "Along with Dastur Faramroze Bode, he was the standard bearer of the reformist movement, but he believed in discipline and when the 14 high priests passed their resolution (that the navjote of a child of a Parsi mother and a non-Parsi father could not be performed), he carried it out in letter and spirit."

His gentle voice, benign words, the light in his face, etched an indelible imprint. "We are microscopic but not myopic. Therefore we are holding our head erect," Minochehr-Homji had stated at the First All-India Youth Seminar at Delhi in October 1987, re-

"I used to go to him
for navar prayers and
could cry on his
shoulder when I was
homesick"

ferred to the Zoroastrian community. The description fitted himself specifically. Again and again he advised the youth to live the life of good thought, word and deed. "Religion is morality in principle; morality is religion in practice," he repeated. In the introduction to *My Prayer Guide* (number three) Minochehr-Homji quotes the words of J.G. Whittier, "We live by Faith, but Faith is not the slave of text and legend; Reason's voice and God's, Nature's and duty's, never are at odds."

In *My Prayer Guide* (number two) he quotes the Muslim mystic J. Rumi, "Far more people are lost to prayer rugs and beads than are saved by them!" "If asked, 'Aay bhanavanu joiyé ké (is this ceremony required)?' he would question, 'For the living or the dead?'" recalled one admirer. "He was very clear in his mind that there is no need for ceremonies except the bare minimum. The essentials according to Minochehr-Homji were the geh sarna, the evening saroshes and the

pathi ratnu uthamnu (pre-dawn prayers on the fourth day). Then the *dasmu* (tenth day), *masiso* (first month), *chhamsi* (sixth month), *varsi* (first year) and the first year muktads."

Such views, though sincerely held and courageously expressed, had led to much criticism from those who consider rituals the most important aspect of the religion. Another source of brickbats was his performance of the navjote ceremony of children of Parsi fathers and non-Parsi mothers born in lawful wedlock – the only contemporary high priest to do so. Two recent episodes occurred in Bangalore in late 1986 when he performed the navjotes of the Soonavala and Mistry children whose mothers are non-Parsis. On both occasions the panthaky at Bangalore had opposed Minochehr-Homji and though the ceremonies were completed, Minochehr-Homji "suffered a lot when everyone was rude and insulting. Life was not easy at all," said his daughter Dinaz Damania who resides in Bangalore. "Yet his advice to me always was, 'You be nice, even if someone else is hurtful.'"

Minochehr-Homji started his career with a diploma in comparative religion and languages at the Cama Athornan Institute, Andheri, in 1935 for which he studied 16 subjects including Sanskrit, Hindi, German and French, recalled his widow Nergish. Revering his "two gurus" Sorab Balsara and Irach Taraporewalla to the end of his life for the intellectual foundation he acquired under their guidance, Minochehr-Homji proceeded to educate himself and got through the SSC at the second attempt. His bugbear was mathematics which he termed "*mathakutics*," (a pun in anglicized Gujarati referring to the subject as a headache) laughed his daughters who fondly recall doing their own "homework with papa at the agiary – everything, that is, except mathematics!"

"When we married he was only SSC and earning Rs 90 teaching at the J.B. Vachha School in Dadar," remembers Nergish. A lecture that he delivered at the Anjuman Atash Bahram was presided over by P.M. Mehta, founder of Boys' Town, Nasik, who offered an assignment there and Navrooz and Nergish, with their 10-month-old daughter Yasmin, went to Nasik where they spent the next 15 years of their lives. One condition that Minochehr-Homji had negotiated with

Mehta was permission to attend college and in 1948 Minochehr-Homji graduated from Bombay University with English and Gujarati. Invited to Secunderabad as high priest, Minochehr-Homji spent seven years there before returning to Bombay as high priest of the Fasli Atash Kadeh in 1957 – the main interest being the proximity to the libraries, says the family.

A research thesis on the sociological aspects of ancient Iran as viewed from the *Yasht* literature won him the Master of Arts degree from Bombay University in 1960 and two years later he graduated as Bachelor of Education along with his eldest daughter who was taken aback to discover her father sitting in the same class!

A prolific lecturer in Zoroastrianism and comparative religions, Minochehr-Homji travelled frequently. Indeed, he was preparing to leave for Oxford, England to attend the global forum of spiritual and parliamentary leaders on human survival which was scheduled to meet between April 11 and 15 – an invitation he received through philosopher-politician Karan Singh with whom he had shared the platform at the Delhi Youth Seminar.

A triumph that lay particularly close to Minochehr-Homji's heart was the training of the first paramobed, Rustom Madon, who met the Dastur in hospital before proceeding to Allahabad to take up his appointment. The paramobed scheme had been discussed ad infinitum by the executive council of the Federation until Minochehr-Homji, who sat in as observer at the Delhi meet in December 1986, volunteered his service along with Dastur Meherji Meherjirana of Navsari. Federation joint honorary treasurer Peshotan Nargolwala, who had mooted the scheme, noted that though Minochehr-Homji had suggested to the community that teachers should be paid, had personally given honorary, selfless service.

Unless otherwise engaged, Minochehr-Homji held free religious classes at the J.B. Petit and Bengalee Schools which were announced in the *Jam-e-Jamshed*. Ironically, the *Jamé* of February 26 carried a notice of his lecture the next day as well as the announcement of his demise.

At the Fasli Atash Kadeh, Minochehr-Homji was a beloved status symbol for the institution. He was not required to tackle any part of its

administration. Every morning he would sit there advising people who sought him out, and never considered it below his dignity to walk into the sanctum sanctorum to present sukhad offerings to the sacred fire when the mobeds were busy with other ceremonies – a chore dasturs do not generally undertake, as notes an agiary trustee.

By letter and in person, people recalled how he'd come to help. His early morning visits to the Doongerwadi

"Life was not easy at all. Yet his advice to me always was, 'You be nice, even if someone else is hurtful'"

were routine (it was easier to get into a BEST bus at that hour), for there was always someone he knew to whom he wanted to pay his last respects, his family observed. "He reached out to people in trouble and they didn't forget."

"I don't think we had a conventional household," says Zarin who lectures in English at the Elphinstone College. "There were restrictions in the sense of comings and goings, though he never restricted us in terms of studies. However, when I wanted to stay on in the U.S. to do my PhD, he said 'nothing doing!'"

There were "no restaurants, no picnics, no family outings," says his daughter Nahida Mehta yet the family was a cohesive group and the girls were nostalgic about the last Xmas when for the first time their father joined them in Goa for a memorable vacation. "People used to say, '*Garib Dasturji ni chaar dikri ché. Kawn punsé* (The poor priest has four daughters. Who will marry them)?" they remembered with a laugh, but three of them got married in one year – though Zarin's marriage outside the community was a jolt from which the family took some time to recover. "*Beechara toopai gayela* (The poor man had been mercilessly criticized)," commiserated one admirer. Questioned about it by a journalist in 1984, Minochehr-Homji had refused comment. For a while it seemed as though Zarin did

not exist. Then one day, Nergish says she received "a phone call saying 'Your daughter is very ill and bleeding like a tap.' I asked Navrooz, 'What shall I do?' 'Go to her,' he said." The impasse was overcome, though the memory is still painful.

They spoke about his inner peace, strength and self-confidence despite the pecuniary restrictions and the brickbats which were his lot. "Papa never feared death," said Dinaz. "Senility was one thing he dreaded," said Zarin, and the family was grateful to God that "he went the way he wanted – with all his faculties intact."

The day of the illfated accident, Minochehr-Homji had told his wife, who was recuperating from an abdominal operation at the B.D. Petit Parsee General Hospital, he would be late because he hoped to see the first two episodes of the Doordarshan serial on ancient Iran, *Gateway of India*, on video. He never got to see them. Karl Mehta, on his way to the Minochehr-Homji residence to deliver an invitation to his father-in-law *Blitz* Editor-proprietor Russey Karanjia's seventy-fifth birthday celebrations, found the old priest prostrate on the road and whizzed him off to hospital in his own car, narrated Nergish. At the K.R. Cama meeting Zarin said she had referred to the dictionary – as her father always did – for a definition of 'embolism' (pulmonary embolism was the immediate cause of his death) and was surprised to discover that, apart from its medical meaning, embolism also meant inscribing a period of time or interpolation as in a leap year – the day of rectification: an appropriate definition for one who was "a reformist in many senses of the word," as noted his daughter.

"He made Zoroastrianism a religion to reckon with on the international platform. A lot of non-Parsis say they've heard papa," said Dinaz. During the trauma of Indira Gandhi's assassination, the Doordarshan authorities had sought him out to represent the community and provided transport for his convenience. "A very sweet Muslim man from Hyderabad had asked, 'Are all your priests like him? Then there'll be many more Zoroastrians!'" reminisced Nahida.

Minochehr-Homji is survived by his wife Nergish and daughters Yasmin Khambatta, Zarin Pinto, Dinaz Damania and Nahida Mehta.

Arnawaz: REBEL WITH A SMILE

Geeta Doctor

The first time I met Arnawaz she was like a coral tree in bloom. Glowing, with bright black eyes, a thick plait of hair down her back, a bold vermilion disc in the middle of the smooth white brow and the curving smile of a tigress at rest. In a few weeks she would give birth to her only son, Barani. I had gone to talk to Vasudev, her husband, about his work, but within a few minutes of being there at their house by the sea, the conversation had swung over the founding of Choramandal, the artists' village (in Madras), the pioneering days under Paniker and the meaning of art – not just the stuff you put on walls or display on shelves in museums, but the art of life.

"Choramandal may have been Paniker's baby, but we were all equals here when we started the artists' village. If I didn't like something I could go up to him and say, 'Yenna saar'" and here Arnawaz breaks into the fluent Tamil which gave her conversation its earthy quality. "What sir, what do you think you're doing now? And if I had a point he would laugh and agree at once. That was the sort of relationship we had. There was complete trust. Complete freedom. He kept an open house."

This spirit of generosity blew through the doors and quaint windows of the house that Arnawaz and Vasudev built at Choramandal. It attracted friends, sheltered strangers, and nurtured a fellowship amongst dancers, writers, musicians, photographers, artists, that was as explosive as it was interesting. Presiding at the center, Arnawaz was the uncrowned queen and the keeper of Paniker's dream of founding a place where the arts would form a dynamic relationship with the traditional crafts.

Was it Paniker who discovered the spark in her and gave her the artistic fire to revolt against her comfortable middle-class background and burn her

way into the fierce competitiveness of the artists' world? Or was Arnawaz Driver a born rebel? The answer possibly lies in the fact that she was a Parsi. Her parents gave her the strong roots, the self assurance and the fierce sense of independence that characterizes the Parsi, particularly the Parsi woman, and that set her free to choose her own way.

There was also the strong sense of humor. One of the stories that was a favorite with her son was "The night the snake came into the house." "In those days," she begins with the born storyteller's gleam in her eyes, "I was the only girl around so the artists all felt very protective. So one evening I was all alone by myself, like Sita, in the house, and I felt something move near the fridge so all the boys came in their lungis and started poking around and they said that there was nothing and I should go back to sleep. But I had seen this shadow so I took the stick and suddenly this snake came out and I was standing there shouting with the stick and all the boys had jumped up on the bench and were shouting at me to do something because only I had the stick in my hand!"

Looking back to those days, Vasudev is amazed even now at her calm acceptance of his offer to share his life. "In those days I was living in a cottage that had been bequeathed to me by Viswanathan who had accepted an offer to go to Paris. It was just a mud hut. She was prepared to come and live with me in a mud hut! We had no vessels for cooking, so the first thing we did was to go and buy some pots and pans. That was how we started," he reminisces. From the first major work that he sold, for ten thousand rupees (that was a huge sum at that time), he remembers how he went and bought a scooter. "Arnawaz was standing at a bus stop at Adyar. She didn't know that I had bought the

scooter so you should have seen her face when I drove up and picked her at the bus stand," he recalls laughing at the memory.

With the leftover from that sale and with the help of a few judicious loans, both of them built their house-cum-studio. It is now crammed with memories. There are terracotta and stone heads that they gathered on their travels together or which were left by their artist friends like the brown mud bull at the entrance, the incised brass and copper bowls that both of them worked upon, a ceramic glazed flower that Arnawaz made when a Dutch couple visited Choramandal and a papier-mache puppet that she had worked on only last year. Everything has a casual air of having just found a place, yet each piece has a story to tell. A lot of them are a testimony to Arnawaz's innate sense of style that was both sophisticated and elemental.

Looking back at the early work of Arnawaz, one is immediately struck by her zest for Hindu mythology, specially the dramatic segments of the *Ramayana*, and by her almost instinctive response to the symbolic forms that were used to depict the subtler aspects of its philosophy. Yet, there was practically no artistic encouragement in her background. She came



into the field with both her artistic and mental vision completely uncluttered so that there is an almost childlike glee and spontaneity in her response. She used to say that it was not so much the actual myths that inspired her but the forms and spatial relations by which traditional artists conveyed their ideas.

She had also discovered that her strength lay in fine pen and ink drawings that she brought to life by creating wet patches that would flare into fine networks of color. The lotus, symbol of the flowering of consciousness at the root of the personality, began to dominate some of her work. From this, her drawings became more stylized and also more decorative as her fancy led her into playing with symbols purely for her own satisfaction.

"I found much happiness in your work," a Japanese photographer wrote to her after a visit to Japan in the seventies, and that is perhaps the best way to describe this phase of her artistic development which was becoming more craft-oriented. Arnawaz described the intense concentration that her bowls evoked during her trip to Japan. "They would pick up one of

my bowls and hold it in their hands and look at it, turn it around and study it in silence for so long that you could feel the respect that they had for the craft. If only we could respond to our craftsmen in the same way. It gave me

"They would pick up my bowls and study it for so long that you could feel the respect they had for the craft"

such a feeling of pride and satisfaction to see my work being handled in such a way."

It seems fitting that two of her most striking commissions, the large copper and beaten metal murals done for the Grindlays Bank and the Standard Chartered Bank, should reflect both her delicate line drawing studies of the earlier period and the strong confident craft element in her work. As Vasudev points out, there was a strong design

line in her approach and most people will remember the table that she hammered out for Grindlays, in the shape of a half-open lotus flower, which had great charm and elegance.

Few may know that, by the time she started to work on the murals, she had already been attacked by the cancer that would eventually take her life. It is customary and perhaps kinder to pass over the painful aspects of a person's life in just a few lines. In the case of Arnawaz, an exception has to be made. The manner in which she fought the disease is a saga of triumph in itself which might serve to inspire others. She met the disease head on with her usual candor, neither sparing herself or others of the truth. After the first round when she had lost some of the muscles of her arm during the course of a mastectomy, she joked about how she had cursed the nurse (in choice Tamil) who had crudely come to her the next morning and asked her to get up and brush her teeth. The horrors of the ordeal included being in the same room with another woman who was dying, and a person who had been abandoned by her husband. But the

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response of Arnawaz was to rally the others around so that they could take collective action against the nursing staff who were callous through their indifference. For the doctors who looked after her during the first round of her illness, she had only the highest praise.

This was followed by a long period of remission when she began to enjoy watching her son grow up and when she could share the triumphs of her husband who was invited to participate in exhibitions abroad and also as a member of a cultural delegation to China. As Vasudev mentioned later on, she did not even tell people who came to interview him that she was an artist also. She was proud to see the recognition and fame that he was able to get. It was at this time that she received the Grindlays assignment. It was in many ways an exacting challenge because she had to work around a huge central figure of a carved wooden Garuda (eagle) that had been purchased earlier. She got round the problem by throwing an arch around the figure that served to frame the Garuda and also suggest the entrance to a sanctum. The arch itself was adapted to display the curving forms and designs that are a vivid embodiment of her personal style.

When the disease struck again, this time at a spot near the hip joint, she had to go through repeated doses of

chemotherapy that left her weak and nauseated. After a few sessions the dreaded after-effects of the treatment took place. Her beautiful hair came out almost in one sweep. Arnawaz rose to the occasion and tied a bright printed scarf around her head like a Russian peasant and soon enough borrowed a fashionably smart short haired wig. To combat the nausea she invited friends for all-night sessions that would have left most people limp. For Arnawaz, a conversation was a challenge. It was always an argument, a clash of wills in which she took sides until the air would be sparkling with animosity, that would just as quickly be dispelled with a smile. When she could not walk, she played games with her son from a wheelchair; but most of the time she managed to forget that she was ill. Every day that she lived was one more day in which to share the richness of the world around her with her son until the time came when she could leave him on his own.

Even as her condition worsened her mind remained active with plans for the future. A particularly sore point was the state of the road going to and from Cholamandal. She was determined that some action should be taken to see that it was repaired. "Please tell the authorities that we will go and lie down in the middle of the road and stop the traffic," she told Harry Miller whose piece in the *Indian*

Express finally prompted the authorities to take some notice.

"Has Barani learnt his multiplication tables?" she asked during the last phase. When a visitor brought some roses she murmured even as she was drifting through a drugged sleep, "What beautiful roses! Can you see the color and the form of the petals?" When finally she realized that there was no going back for her, there was anger and rage at the unfairness of it all, but no self-pity. Soon, even that last flicker of life spent itself and there was only a slow descent into silence.

Arnawaz died on February 24, 1988 at the age of 42. She was cremated within view of her house facing the sea at Cholamandal. A large gathering of friends and close relatives was there as the words from the sacred texts in Sanskrit and the Avesta were chanted. Not a tear was shed because her son Barani, as though forewarned by her, rose to the occasion like a warrior. He stepped forward on his own and steadily lit the sandalwood that had been placed on the body.

"I forgot to tell my mother that I learnt my 12 times tables today in school," he said. In a few moments the wind blowing in from the sea fanned the flames towards the orange of the setting sun. Arnawaz had laughed at death itself. She was truly free.

Reprinted with the author's permission from Indian Express, March 19, 1988.

Humane to the bone



Died: Bejonji Burjorji Wadia, 78, former trustee of the Surat Parsi Punchayet and the Gopipura Parsi Jarthosti Anjuman, and noted bone-setter of south Gujarat, on February 24, 1988.

As a mark of respect to Wadia who was "known for his social service, a number of educational institutions run by the (Surat) Punchayet remained closed" for a day, read a news item in the *Free Press Journal* of February 26. His association with the Surat Punchayet spanned almost 10 years, and with the Gopipur Punchayet, more than 20 years, during which time he was known for his "bold and frank" opinion.

"He never used to charge Parsi patients (any fee)," notes a press release issued by the Surat Parsi Punchayet, and is known to have gone out of his way to give monetary help to the needy and the suffering who viewed

him as their "godfather." He would also pay regular visits to the nearby towns of Bardoli, Bilimora, Kosamba, etc so that those with dislocated bones and torn ligaments could avail of his services in their hometowns.

Before starting his independent practice in 1941, for 10 years Wadia was coached in "the art of healing" by his brother-in-law Darabsha Navroji Hadvaidd and in turn passed on the training to his son Diniyar. Wadia had studied at the I.P. Mission Boys' High School in Surat.

Though confined to the bed, Wadia, who had a religious bent of mind, performed his kusti and chanted "*Khshnaothra Ahurahe Mazdao*," just before breathing his last, it was reported.

He is survived by his wife Piroja, son Diniyar and daughters Viloo, Dhun and Jolly.

Compiled by Parinaz Toddywalla.

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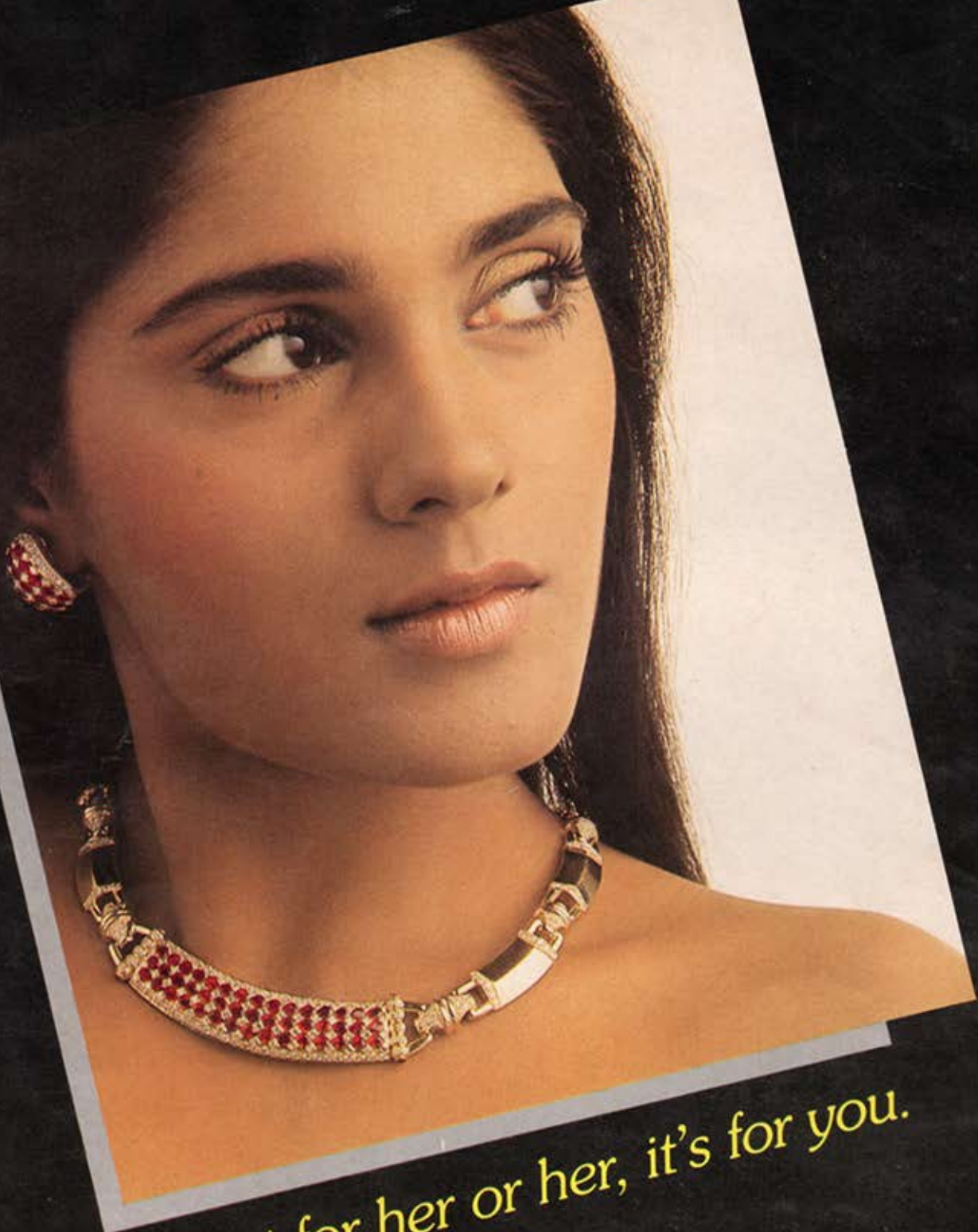
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