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Parsiana

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THE ISRAP TEMPLES

Rignahej Letap



Many *Parsiana* readers have noted similarities between the manners and customs of the now extinct Israp community and the fast dwindling Parsi community. Hence they have requested further excerpts from *The Israp Diary*. The extract published in this issue deals with the decline of the Israp houses of worship. The Israps placed a high value on water and most of their religious ceremonies required a bowl of water to be present. Their houses of worship were built around an elevated pool with a fountain in the middle.

The decline of the Israps was perhaps most apparent in their house of worship which they called seiraiga, a word derived from the ancient Israp words 'seir' or sea and 'iga' or abode. It was customary for the Israps to visit their places of worship on auspicious occasions, dressed in all their finery. They would bow and kneel before the central pool of water and watch for any fluctuations in the fountains, or any unusual formation of ripples in the pool, to see if their prayers were having any effect and being heard by the Almighty. Those who were not familiar with the Israp way of life referred

to them as water worshippers but that was incorrect. To the Israps, water was a symbol of all that was clean and life-giving. Water cleansed your body; it gave life not only to humans and animals but also let plants and crops grow. The rivers, when dammed, provided electricity and irrigation. Water was the lifeblood of the land and the Israps held it as the most appropriate symbol of God.

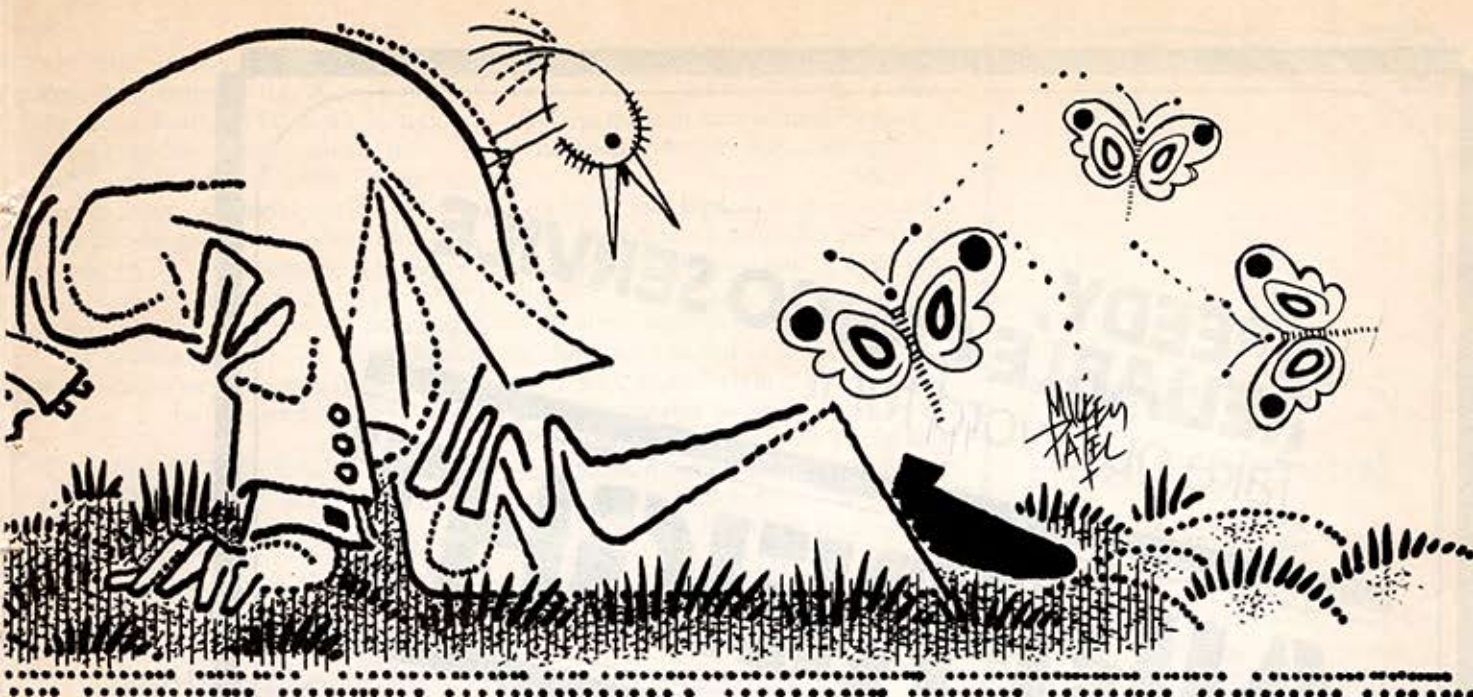
The water in the Israp temples had to go through several processes before it could be considered sacred. First, the water was collected from three oceans, two rivers, seven ponds and one swimming pool. It was then distilled, prayed over, stirred but not shaken, and finally after numerous ceremonies, poured into the Israp temple pool. Daily, a priest watched over it zealously to ensure no impurities, foreign objects, insects, etc fell into the water. The priest would adjust the height of the fountain five times a day, in conjunction with the position of the sun in the sky.

As time went by, the distinction between water as a symbol of God and God itself started to blur for many Israps. They prayed to the water and the fountain as though the liquid had certain miraculous powers. The water

in certain temples was considered to be more efficacious than in others and the Israps would flock to these temples in large numbers. The Israps also began to worship water in all its forms. For example, an orthodox Israp would never permit his corpse to be buried at sea. He felt it would pollute the water. Once, when floods affected a certain town, many Israps went there to pray to the flood waters which they looked upon as a bounty of nature. The Israps also objected to spitting because saliva was believed to be a form of water. While the saliva remained in the mouth it was in its natural state. But when converted into spit, the saliva was contaminated with germs. This impurification of saliva was considered sacrilegious.

The Israps also used to boast that their religion's symbol was more powerful than say the Parsis', because water can put out a fire. Slowly they began to generally feel superior to others and barred the entry of non-Israps to their temple for fear they may pollute the water or spit in it or, by their very physical presence, affect the sanctity of the temple.

It was this last custom that started the Israp religious decline. As the Israps declined in numbers, they found



The distinction between water as a symbol of God and God itself started to blur for many Israps

it hard to get priests to tend the water and look after the seiraigas. Leave aside the priests, it was difficult to hire Israps even to keep the temples clean. Unlike the other communities where lay people would assist and participate in the upkeep of the temples, the lay Israps and the priests were always wary of one another. In numerous seiraigas the priests and the lay trustees of the temple would be at loggerheads. The laity visited the temples only to pray and did not consider it their duty to assist in sweeping or dusting the premises. As a result, in most seiraigas a fine layer of dust covered the benches, walls and floors. Cobwebs could be discerned in the far corners of the temples.

Aside from the uncleanness, the incessant quarrelling between the laity and the priests resulted in the neglect of the temple structures. Paint would peel off, plaster would fall and, during the monsoons, rainwater would seep into the temple. To the superstition-riddled Israps this was heresy. No other water could exist or be present in seiraigas besides the holy water. When, for example, a suggestion was made for shifting a temple from a low-lying area prone to monsoon flooding to a more elevated, secure place, the

orthodox Israps objected, saying that the water had found its resting place and should not be disturbed. Still waters ran deep, they said (an old Israp saying). They feared that if sunlight fell on the water it would start to evaporate and if a non-Israp viewed the water so that his or her reflection appeared in the holy water, the water would be contaminated.

As the Israp population shifted from certain localities and as the number of Israps declined, the seiraigas were left to fend for themselves. With hardly any worshippers visiting the temples and with the refusal to shift the holy waters, some of the temples were abandoned once the last priest retired or died. The water in such temples leaked out or was covered with moss. Urchins and passersby stole most of

the doors and windows, and other paraphernalia that the trustees were unable to salvage. In certain other temples, the disputes between the priests and the trustees reached such proportions that the trustees refused to pay the priest and the priest in return refused to vacate the temple premises. Soon thereafter, Israp worshippers found locks on the doors of these temples during the daytime, something unheard of in the Israp community. The priest, forced to eke out a livelihood, would seek a job elsewhere. In the evening, on returning to the temple, he would open the doors to permit worshippers to enter.

After the priest and his family died or migrated, these temples lay vacant, like haunted houses; or squatters invaded the temple premises and made them their homes. Only in the cases of a very few temples were the doors opened to all, non-Israp trustees inducted and the sanctity of the water and surroundings preserved. But these temples were viewed with distaste by the orthodox Israps who never frequented them and instead prayed before jugs of water at home. For them the religion had already died. They were now praying only for their own salvation.

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"Distinguished men..."

In the article "Distinguished men of science" (*Parsiana*, May 1988), the paragraph on Dr Zal R. Kothavala states "date of death unknown." I would like to add that there is a slight error in the year of his birth also.

Zal Uncle, as we nieces and nephews knew him, was my father's sister's husband and also my father's first cousin, their fathers being brothers. Zal, the third son of Rustomji Ratanji Kothavala, was born at Ahmedabad on June 13, 1895. After his retirement from the dairy service, he lived the rest of his life in Bangalore, which was his hometown, expiring there on June 16, 1980. His two granddaughters (son's daughters) continue to live on his estate: Rustam Baug, H.A.L. Road, Bangalore - 17.

My father, Mr Saros N. Kothavala of 18, Kahun Road, Pune 411001, could definitely help you with particulars of individual members of the Kothavala family or even of the Lalkaka, Vakil, Kekobad or Camcatta families. For that matter, any Parsi family belonging to Ahmedabad or living there until about 20 years ago, would be known to him.

FIRDAUS KOTHAVALA
Pune

"Atash adarians..."

I am intrigued by Mr Adi Doctor's "Atash adarians : not for shifting" (*Parsiana*, May 1988). Mr Doctor says that if the fire is removed from its original location, "the padshah is then deprived of his spiritual power and authority... In short, instead of *hukhshathra* (benevolent power) prevailing there, the *duzhshathra* or wicked rule of Ahriman is virtually clamped thereon!" Further on he says: "Removal of an atash padshah tantamounts to a breach of trust in nature and a hurdle in the progress of the departed souls of their founders." Mr Doctor however concedes, "in very very rare instances should an adarian be moved to a new location."

Let us consider the case of the Iranshah, now in Udwarda. This fire was installed in Sanjan towards the end of the eighth century, soon after the Parsis landed there. Seven hundred years later, when Sanjan fell to the Muslims, the Iranshah was removed to the hills of Bahrot. I presume Mr Doctor will allow this removal as one of his "very very rare instances." After some years

there, the fire was shifted to Bansda. The reason for this is not known, but it cannot have been as serious as the shift from Sanjan to Bahrot and therefore, according to Mr Doctor, the fire must have been "deprived of his spiritual power and authority." After some years in Bansda, Iranshah was shifted to Navsari. The reasons for this shift are interesting. The Parsis of Navsari used to go to Bansda to venerate the fire, led by their *dahewad* Changa Asa. One year, after they returned from performing the *Adar roz* *Adar mah* ceremony, Changa Asa called a meeting of the Navsari Anjuman. I now quote in extenso from R.B. Paymaster's translation of the *Kisseh-i Sanjan*:

"One day he called the entire anjuman and there he made a speech about the fire-temple thus:

'I wish, O well-wishers! that we should bring from there (i.e. Bansda) our king of kings to this place.

If we daily have sight of the king, much benefit will accrue from it.

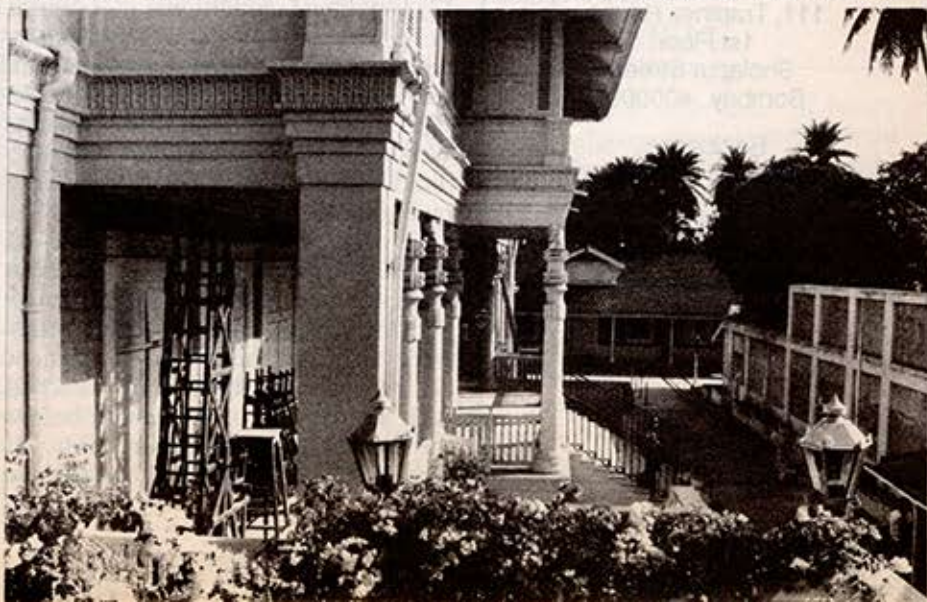
Secondly, every year we experience much difficulty on the way on his account.

Because in this month there is excessive rain, our going there is inconvenient.

O my dear friends! What would be better than this, that we should go there with wise persons.

And bring the victorious fire, so that

Atash Bahram in Udwarda: venerated, though its fire was shifted seven times



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we may daily see his face.

By him our livelihood and income would increase and the hearts of the people of the faith would be gladdened.'

All the people rejoiced at hearing him, all were relieved from trouble of going to Bansda. They brought the sacred fire with a hundred marks of honor and located him in a beautiful temple."

One would feel that these were rather selfish reasons for removing the fire from Bansda. Hence, following Mr Doctor, the removal from Bansda must have depleted further the Iran-shah's stock of spiritual power and authority. It will be noted that the Navsari Parsis had no qualms about shifting the Iranshah; in fact they expected benefits to accrue from it.

When the Sanjana priests brought the fire to Navsari, they reached an agreement with the Bhagaria priests there as to the division of priestly duties. This agreement lasted for over 250 years, but tension must have built up between the behdins, the Bhagarias and the Sanjanas, because in 1673 the behdins of Navsari decided that they would not accept the decisions of the priestly Anjuman as to the choice of priest for performing their private ceremonies. In 1685 an agreement was signed before the Diwan of the Gaekwad that the Bhagarias and the Sanjanas would honor the arrangement originally made in 1419. The peace, however, was shortlived; behdins and priests were split into rival camps and in a riot in 1686 several behdins and priests were killed. As a result of the riots, the behdins secured a fresh agreement between the priestly parties in 1687.

Truce now prevailed for a while. In 1733 political conditions in Gujarat were very unstable and Navsari was raided by the Pindaris, so the Iranshah was removed to Surat in that year. In 1736 the fire returned to Navsari. Would Mr Doctor consider these two removals in three years a "very very rare instance?"

In spite of the various agreements, quarrels continued, mainly because the Sanjana priests wanted the right to perform ceremonies from which they were barred by the original agreement of 1419. Eventually matters reached such a pitch that in a litigation before the Diwan, the Bhagarias said: "If they all would stay in Navsari, we

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would be performing all their ceremonies. Or, as an alternative, they should quit. It would be better if they live within the limits of their own panthak." The Sanjanas accepted this suggestion and in October 1740 they removed the Iranshah from Navsari to Bulsar. However, even here the Bhagarias harassed them and, in 1742, they carried the Iranshah to Udwada, where it now remains.

Two facts should be noted here: first, neither the Bhagaria nor the Sanjana priests thought it wrong to shift the Iranshah from place to place; in fact, it was the Bhagaria priests who suggested that it be removed from Navsari. Second, the cause of removal was the constant quarrels between the two priestly parties, neither of whom were willing to abide strictly by the terms of the various agreements. If the reason for removing the Iranshah from Bansda to Navsari can be called 'selfish,' then the reason for removing it from Navsari to Udwada can only be called 'unethical.'

The Iranshah has now been shifted seven times, twice for selfish and unethical reasons. If, as Mr Doctor says, shifting an adarian fire deprives it of spiritual power and authority, then the Iranshah must now be totally drained of all power and authority, and is no longer worthy of the veneration Parsis pay to it. Does Mr Doctor agree with this?

It would be interesting to have Dasturji Hormazdyar Mirza's views on this, as he must be very concerned about the sanctity of the Iranshah.

H.E. EDULJEE
Ootacamund

It was distressing to read Adi Doctor's arguments in "Atash adarians: not for shifting" (*Parsiana*, May 1988), against relocating adarians.

If similar arguments had been put forward by an ordinary Parsi, one could have ignored him, saying, "He is just being emotional." But Doctor is supposed to be an orthodox scholar of Avestan, and scholars in general are supposed to be balanced. I wonder how many orthodox dasturs, mobeds and scholars will be prepared to agree with Doctor's arguments, which are nothing but a refusal to take into account the circumstances and predicaments we are facing as a community.

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scholar, Dr Rooyinton Peer, had analysed the same problem in *Jam-e-Jamshed* and he had rightly arrived at the conclusion that for the Padshahs, the laity and the practising priests, it would be ideal if some fires, from a cluster of half a dozen among the dwindling Parsi population of Bombay's Fort area, are shifted to the suburbs where agiaries have become a necessity for the increasing number of Parsis there.

As Mahatma Gandhi has said, "Religion which takes no account of practical affairs and does not help to solve them, is no religion." Emotionalism on religious issues often leads to fanaticism which is a destructive force.

PESHOTAN H. CHARNA
Bangalore

"The silenced Voice"

Very few may have shed tears because *The Parsee Voice* is silenced for good (Events and Personalities, *Parsiana*, May 1988). The reason can be given in the words of one of our mobeds. About two years ago this mobed had said, "*The Voice* is crying itself hoarse, therefore it can't last long." The prediction came true. Other points to be taken into account are:

- It was *not* the voice of the community.
- It was the voice of the editor and three or four others. Contradictory views were never published.
- The high priests and scholars, even of the orthodox variety, kept their distance from this tabloid.
- It took up matters which were either non-issues or publicity stunts.
- Even the arguments advanced for or against various contentions in this tabloid were hollow. For an example of this, one has only to go through Mr Adi Doctor's article "Atash adarians: not for shifting" (*Parsiana*, May 1988) which, in plain language, advises us to shut our eyes to hard facts so that the "padshahs can take care of themselves." An amusing proposition by any standards.

It is significant that a picture of the Karani Agiary appears alongside the article. The significance would need some explanation. About five years ago, the trustees of the Agiary wanted to carry out painting and whitewashing work in it and, as per the accepted procedure followed in our places of worship (including the Iranshah), the holy fire was to be temporarily shifted

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and then brought back to the sanctum sanctorum after performing the requisite ceremonies. I know about this episode because my parents live in Cusrow Baug and when it took place I was with my parents for a few days.

Mr Doctor and one or two others threatened the panthaky saheb saying that they would not allow the holy fire to be shifted even temporarily, but they would provide Parsi "volunteers" who would carry out the painting work free of labor charge and, therefore, there was no necessity to shift the holy fire at all. Now we know very well that our community no longer possesses skilled masons, painters, tilers, etc. and that mere zeal can never produce quality workmanship, which was the need of the hour. In view of the threatened agitation, one of the trustees, Mr Jehangir Shroff, showed immense diplomacy by inviting the three dasturjis - Hormazdyar Mirza, Kaikhusroo JamaspAsa and Firoze Kotwal - and the well-known scholar M.F.Kanga from Cusrow Baug to be present at a particular time and give their candid opinion in the presence of



Minochehr-Homji: "foresighted and ..."

Mr Doctor and his supporters. The priests and the scholar were unanimous in saying that considering the circumstances, the shifting of the holy fire was a must. Thus the agitators were silenced.

I think the approach of such self-styled knights in shining armor is responsible for our right thinking, educated brethren being turned away from such a travesty of religion. The

compiler of 'Events and Personalities' laments the decrease in Parsi readership, but isn't it a natural reaction to the holier-than-thou attitude of some who like to throw practicality to the winds?

Mr Doctor says that the shifting of the holy fire would displease the sanctified land and that such an exercise would evoke evil forces. By the same logic, that piece of land which would be sanctified to relocate the holy fire should be pleased and this procedure should evoke good forces. Thus, even by extension of the same logic, the forces of good should be able to neutralize the forces of evil. So we may conclude that, even from the spiritual point of view, ultimately we have nothing to lose by relocating the holy fires which can be better looked after in their new abodes.

ARNAWAZ P. KALAPESI

"The compassionate priest"

Some so-called orthodox practised duplicity on Dasturji Minochehr-Homji in Bangalore ("The compassionate priest," *Parsiana*, April 1988), for they

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never raised a finger when navjotes similar to those of the Soonawallas and the Mistris were performed in Bombay, Poona, Ahmedabad and Madras, to name just a few places.

I am one of those who have benefited from meetings and discussions with the late High Priest. When the author of the piece Ms Arnavaz Mama states that he had asked his daughter to be good even to his denigrators, the reason is that Minochehr-Homji was not perturbed by their views. But he was shocked that the present office bearers in the Rahnumae Mazdayasnan Sabha should invite advocate K. N. Dastoor, who lacks a background in the Avesta and Pahlavi languages, to give sermons from its platform. Foresighted and prudent as the late Dasturji was, he took a step (rare in his life) to enter into a controversy by warning the Sabha in particular and the community in general about the harm which would be caused by such indiscretion.

Would it be too much to hope that, in future, the powers that be would be guided by the words of wisdom of the erudite High Priest?

HORMUZ J. KHORAMSHAHI

Addendum

Subsequent to the publication of "The compassionate priest" (*Parsiana*, April 1988), we learnt that kirtankar Parvez Katrak had also been of considerable help to the late Dastur Navrooz Minochehr-Homji on the day of his fateful accident. While Minochehr-Homji was driven to the B.D. Petit Parsee General Hospital by Blitz director Karl Mehta, Katrak undertook to convey the unhappy news to the Minochehr-Homji family.

Encyclopedia on Parsis

I have been asked by the Minorities Commission, Government of India, to prepare a paper on the Parsis' contribution to philanthropy, charity and relief, to be included in an encyclopedia on the community.

May I request the major anjumans, through the columns of *Parsiana*, to favor me with information on the community trusts, including the trusts of a cosmopolitan nature, under their control?

Information regarding institutions, hospitals, dispensaries, schools and colleges, or any other public charity organization in their area to which

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donations may have been given by a Zoroastrian, would also be very useful.

The information may be forwarded to H.S.Dalal, 27 Convent Avenue, Santacruz, Bombay 400054.

HORMAZDYAR S. DALAL

The Minorities Commission of the Government of India has asked me to compile a history of Parsi dentists – past and present – for inclusion in the proposed encyclopedia on the community. I would appreciate Parsi dentists around the world sending me their life sketches at an early date. Heirs of deceased dentists are also requested to send their ancestors' life sketches to the undersigned at Yusuf Building, Flora Fountain, Bombay 400023.

Dr DINSHAW F. BOGA

Calcutta youth festival

The Calcutta Parsee Youth League (CPYL) – the youngest of six Parsi organizations in Calcutta – is celebrating its golden jubilee this year and, inter alia, is giving the youth of our community all over India a golden opportunity to get together for a festival at Calcutta. The festival is intended for

young Parsis between the ages of 17 and 40 years and will embrace discussions and debates on matters vitally affecting youth and the community and, in a lighter vein, quizzes, sports and games, outings and lively entertainment specially laid on for them.

The festival will be held from Saturday, November 5, to Tuesday, November 8, 1988. The CPYL will play host to the participants and will guarantee four pleasant days of fun and stimulation. The only expense the participants will have to bear is the fare to and from Calcutta.

Registration forms are available from the anjuman offices in the various cities and from the convener of the youth festival – Ms Aban J. Medhora, 215 Karnani Mansions, 25A Park Street, Calcutta 700016. The forms should please be filled in and returned to the convener not later than September 5, 1988. Although it may be difficult for the participants to plan so far ahead, it is imperative that the deadline be observed to enable the organizers of the festival to make adequate arrangements and, in particular, to book return reservations. So here's calling on Parsi youth to be pre-

sent in large numbers at this festival of the youth, by the youth, for the youth.

Ms ABAN J. MEDHORA
Calcutta

The dwindling community

I have been reading with interest the alarmist articles about the dwindling Parsi population. I find, however, no attempt being made to place the problem in its proper historical perspective. The only point of reference seems to be the higher population figures of the last 150 years. Would some student of Parsi history care to answer some of the following questions?

How many Parsi boat people landed in Sanjan in 716 or 785 AD? 500? 5,000? If more than 5,000, they would have required a fleet of ships (not boats) to reach India. And if their number was so large, might not the Hindu king who helped them have been less hospitably inclined?

It is said that around the year 1484 the Parsis of Gujarat took shelter in the Bahrot Caves to escape persecution. I have not visited the Bahrot Caves, but would they (and the surrounding areas) have been able to support a population of, say, 20,000 or 50,000 for 12 years? If the answer is 'no,' then where was the rest of the Parsi population of India?

Unless historical evidence is produced to the contrary, the only logical conclusion one can arrive at is that the population of Parsis in India, throughout their 1,300-year stay here, has averaged less than 50,000. The 1,00,000 plus figure at the beginning of the present century can be regarded as a freak occurrence.

ASPI DOCTOR

The endangered species

"Marital statistics" (*Parsiana*, January 1988) states that an average of the last five years indicates that 27 Parsi girls and 29 Parsi boys contracted intercommunity marriages per year. It is possible that these figures are confined to Bombay, whereas Parsis living in other parts of India, where there is less chance of meeting and mixing with members of the opposite sex of their own community, are more prone to intercommunity marriages and the figures, therefore, are likely to be higher. This is particularly true of Parsis who have migrated to other countries. Hence, if our present policy of not accepting the children of Parsi women married outside the community per-

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sists, we are only hastening the disappearance of the Parsis.

Is there anything wrong in allowing people of other faiths to adopt or accept our religion if they wish to do so voluntarily, without any coercion or compensation? Let us not forget that initially our Prophet Zoroaster must have preached to those who did not belong to the faith and convinced them to believe and practise the preachings of Ahura Mazda as enunciated by him. Repeated migrations notwithstanding, the numbers that came from Iran were undoubtedly small. Since there are few genuine historical records of the migrations, it must be assumed that Parsi males must have had more than one wife (which was common practice in those days) and many of these could have been local women. It is obvious that in this way alone could the Parsi community have reached a figure of over 1,00,000. There is nothing like a "pure" race or community. Even in ancient Iran, during the Achaemenian, Parthian, and Sassanian dynasties, soldiers and particularly members

of the ruling families married people of other nationalities. Hence, the custom of not marrying outside the religious community must have been of recent origin, that is, after the community was well established, perhaps when it became prosperous!

The number of our community being so limited, this custom has unfortunately led to too much inbreeding which accentuates the more negative genetic traits as compared to the positive ones. Day by day, the physical constitution of the members of our community has deteriorated as compared to that of our forefathers, despite the better nutrition and improved health care which our community enjoys today. Inbreeding leads to an increase in degenerative diseases and results in infertility, defects in the newborn, deterioration of the visual system, increase in mental disorders, etc. This can be easily ascertained by checking the health records of the members of our community, particularly the families of those who marry amongst close relatives.

Records and information on all aspects of our community should be computerized, so as to be easily retrievable for research and development. There is a need for health insurance and preventive health care for the entire community or at least for those who want it. The community has enough financial resources to fund a system of preventive health checkups for the very poor, which will serve to improve the overall health of those who are most vulnerable and thereby reduce absenteeism at work as well as the need for hospital beds.

From the information given in *Parsiana* regarding births, marriages and deaths, the average age at death is above 80 years. In fact, the average age of our community is over 50 years. Day by day the problem of looking after and caring for old people is increasing. Hence there is a need to build sanatoria having boarding facilities in places which are not overcrowded and polluted, and where the climate is salubrious, with access to medical care and hospital facilities, so that the aged can be properly cared for. This would also be of help to many young people who are unable to get married or leave their homes to take advantage of better opportunities elsewhere, as they are burdened by the care of the old

and often infirm members of their families. Such sanatoria would also be better for those living alone, uncared for and entirely at the mercy of servants.

In most metropolitan cities and particularly in Bombay, there is an urgent need to build hostels with cafeteria services for singles and married working couples who have little time for cooking and household chores. Cafeterias should provide nutritious meals at economical prices. Such hostels should have social and recreational facilities which would provide better opportunities for unmarried boys and girls to get together.

It is high time we look forward to where we are going rather than live on the past laurels of our forefathers. Parsis today have alienated themselves, both culturally and socially, and created an artificial barrier by their reluctance to learn the national and local languages, thereby being unable to properly integrate amongst the people with whom they live. With the increase of education amongst the masses and more emphasis on providing jobs for "the sons of the soil," the members of our community are unable to compete with their fellow citizens.

If the Parsis want to rejuvenate their community, it is time to discuss all the problems frankly, objectively and unemotionally. If we plan properly for the future needs of our community and boldly implement these plans for the larger good of the entire community, we can face the future optimistically. It is true that *Humata, Hukhta, Hvarshata* means good thoughts, good words and good deeds, but surely one good deed is better than a hundred good words and a thousand good thoughts!

SAM H. DALAL
Pune

"Be like us..."

Why can't the others like us Parsis be?
We think ourselves first as Indians,
then Parsis.

In none other brethren we ever any
malice see,

Each one unto himself we let be.
We stake no claims to a new *Parsi-sthan*
Or start a fight with some Khomeini.
So why can't other communities
Like the Parsi minority be?!

Ms MICKIE SORABJEE

Edited by Arnavaz S. Mama

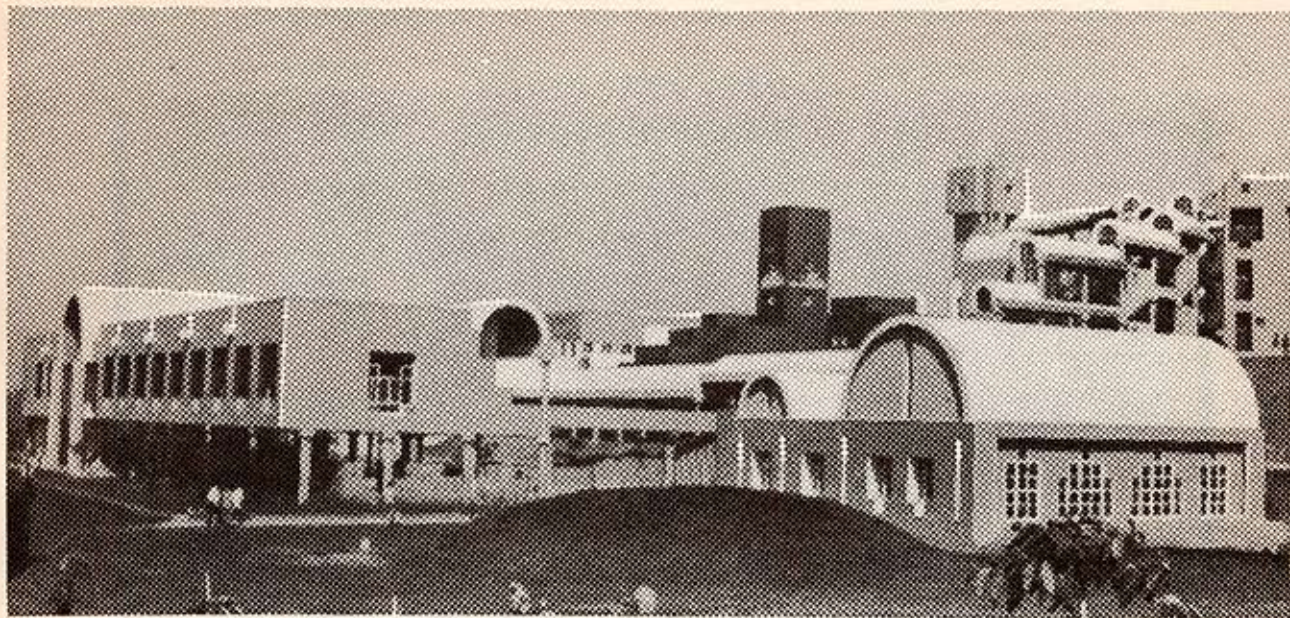
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Events and Personalities

Navroz editor honored

On the occasion of the Calcutta weekly *Navroz* completing its seventieth anniversary, its editor Ms Jaluben Naval Kanga was felicitated by the Abhivadan Trust at a function in Bombay on May 27, 1988. Several leading Gujarati writers were present, with Jehan Daruwalla, editor of *The Bombay Samachar*, presiding over the function.

Sixty-seven-year-old Kanga has been involved with the Gujarati newspaper for over 45 years, according to an interview in *The Bombay Samachar Weekly* dated July 10, 1988.

Navroz, which serves the Gujarati-speaking population of Calcutta — Parsis, Muslims and Hindus — has a circulation of around 4,000 copies and has several reputed Gujarati authors writing for it, Kanga said.

Started by Edulji Kanga with the purpose of reaching out to the Gujarati readers in Calcutta, *Navroz* continues to be a family newspaper. Edulji's son Naval (Jaluben's late husband) became its editor soon after Edulji died in 1955. Jaluben was the associate editor and while the entire editorial "responsibility for *Navroz* and the press" was hers, Naval was in charge of the advertisements and other administrative work. After Naval's death in 1982, the paper is virtually a "one-woman show," in the words of Kanga's daughter Bachi Karkaria, who is the Bombay-based assistant editor of *The Statesman*.

The younger generation of Parsis in Calcutta is not conversant with Gujarati, admits Kanga, who is worried about the future of Gujarati periodicals and literature.

Despite "powerful lobbies" among the Gujarati-speaking community in Calcutta who tried to get *Navroz* closed down, the paper has remained "fearless and value-based (in its coverage)," Karkaria told *Parsiana*.

The fundamental principle of the paper, which later became a tradition, Kanga said, was that it should "never be used as an instrument for getting money, position or power... We have gained the goodwill of the people by adopting a non-partisan policy and encouraging good causes and good work," she added.

Patrawala sworn in

Forty-one-year-old barrister and Bombay city MLA Marazban Jal Patrawala was sworn in as a minister of state in the cabinet of Maharashtra's new chief minister, Sharad Pawar, on June 28, according to *The Afternoon Despatch and Courier* of the same day.

As minister of state for three departments — general administration (including protocol), law and judiciary, and tourism — Patrawala will be interacting with three cabinet ministers and will also be involved with promotions, demotions, the departments of housing, languages, archives and civil aviation.

Now based at Mantralaya, he told *The Afternoon* of July 14 that he would be making changes only after much deliberation. "I will change things only after careful study and if I find any lacunae that need bridging."

At a function organised by the United Graduates Association (a volun-

tary social organization of graduates) on July 22, Patrawala was felicitated by over 40 associations "from different parties, groups, factions, views and states," reported the *Jam-e-Jamshed* on July 24. Patrawala was congratulated on being one of the 19 ministers of state who form part of the 36-member, two-tier cabinet, and one of the 14 new faces inducted into the cabinet.

Patrawala reportedly comes to his new post after 17 years of political activity. After starting out as founder-convenor of the National Students Union of India (NSUI) in 1970-73, he worked his way up, "through the ranks," holding posts in several committees and cells set up by the Congress (I). Patrawala, whose loyalties lie with the Congress (I), had first been elected to the legislative assembly from the Colaba constituency in 1985, and was chairman of the privileges committee for four years in succession.

Prior to his new appointment, Patrawala practised at the Bombay High Court and the Supreme Court. He was called to the bar at Lincoln's Inn, UK, in 1973 and has also studied air and outer space law and done research on the subject. He was part of the United Nations Commission for Space Law from 1977 to '79, adds *The Afternoon* report.

Below: Kanga
Right: Patrawala
(Photo: Homiyar Mistry)



His appointment as minister of state is a further fulfillment of a childhood ambition, as he had wanted to enter politics from the time he was seven, Patrawala told *The Afternoon*.

On board the airlines

Ratan Tata, chairman of Tata Industries, was reappointed as chairman of the board of directors of Air India for a new term of one year, according to a report in *The Times of India* of July 2, 1988. Tata is also a director of Indian Airlines.

With a view to "encourage more professional handling of issues and less debating," the boards have been reconstituted with personnel from the hotel and tourism industry, notes *The Times*.

Cyrus Guzder, representing the travel trade, was among the new members inducted on the Air India board, according to the report. The *Jam-e-Jamshed* of July 3 says that Guzder, chairman and managing director of Airfreight, has been a president of both the Travel Agents Association of India and the Air Cargo Association of India.

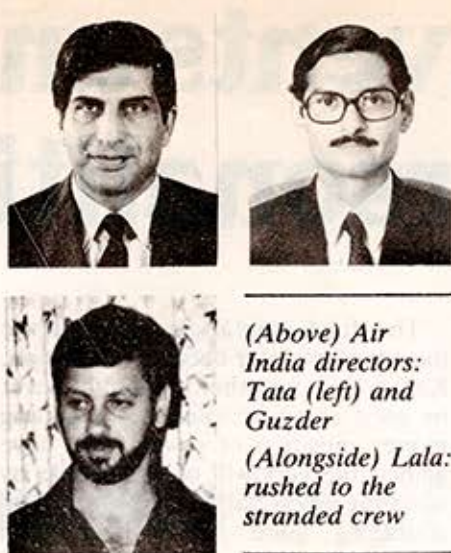
The 12 new directors who have joined the airline boards include Ms Sharmila Tagore, film actress, Ms Shobhna Bhartiya, managing director of *The Hindustan Times*, and Ms Billees Latif, wife of the former chief of the air staff. In the case of Air India, "all the 'management baiters' have been dropped" to support the managing director Rajan Jetley, "who has been having problems with the board," according to *The Times of India*.

Some of the directors are common to the boards of both Air India and Indian Airlines. "This commonality between the boards is expected to lead to greater coordination between the two carriers," says *The Times*.

Rescue drama at mid-sea

Responding to an SOS from a sinking ship, *Swiftco Angel* Anosh Eruch Lala, the 31-year-old captain of *Jag Pragati*, an Indian oil tanker, played a key role in rescuing the stranded crew members of the ill-fated ship, according to the *Indian Express* dated May 16, 1988.

Captain Osuyos of the 5,600 tonne *Swiftco Angel*, and its 20 crew members reportedly had to bail out when



(Above) Air India directors: Tata (left) and Guzder

(Alongside) Lala: rushed to the stranded crew

their ship started flooding and sank "in a matter of minutes," at a location 160 miles north-east of Visakhapatnam. The vessel carrying timber from Malaysia to Visakhapatnam was probably damaged in the bad weather, according to Osuyos.

Sailing from Haldia to Madras, Lala received news of the accident and immediately altered *Jag Pragati's* course. Two other ships joined the rescue operation and after a search of more than nine hours, five crew members in one life raft were picked up. Soon thereafter, the remaining crew in the second life raft were also rescued.

For Lala, "the rescue mission was a unique event in his career," the report says. "My ship (a three-year-old, 27,400 tonne oil tanker owned by Great Eastern Shipping Company) did an excellent job and it is a feather in the cap of the country's merchant navy," he is quoted as saying.

Indian book in Germany

The German edition of *Understanding Management*, one of the latest books by Indian author Minoo Rustomji, is on its way to becoming a runaway bestseller, according to a press release from its author.

Published by leading West German publisher Norman Rentrop, the book is said to have received over 20 rave reviews.

Illustrated with 130 cartoons by leading Indian cartoonist R.K. Laxman, the book's sale in Germany is expected to bring in considerable foreign exchange. The publishers are, reportedly, also keen on having more ti-

tles from Rustomji published in German.

Normally the importer of high technology from Germany, India is now "reversing the process and exporting management expertise in a big way to West Germany," notes the release.

Khurody revisited

Home on vacation after a year at the University of San Francisco, Ms Khurody has been taking stock of the social service activities she had begun in 1987. The singing group of school children she had organized to liven up the depressed patients at the B. D. Petit Parsee General Hospital and the J. J. Hospital's Parsi Ward has continued to frequent the hospitals. The constitution of the group has changed a bit, however, as the weekly routine has now been adopted by the Bombay Parsi Punchayet's (BPP) Youth Club, comprising junior college students under the supervision of the two BPP counsellors Ms Diana Marfatia and Ms Kamal Shroff. And Khurody was a little sad to find that the group's original name - Sweet Medicine - has been a casualty along the way.

Undeterred, Khurody reestablished her rapport with Ms Roshan Driver, principal of the Byramjee Jeejeebhoy Parsi Charitable Institution (BJPC) who arranged a substantial group from the school to visit the J. J. Hospital, providing the transport as well as a specially ordered meal for the patients. Khurody was delighted to find that the ward has acquired a coat of paint, [courtesy Fali Poncha, managing committee chairman of the Committee for Economic Revival (CER)] and that the patients were happy to see her again. Khurody is eager to furnish the place and make it more like home for its forsaken inmates.

The response from the Parsee General Hospital was different. Khurody's offer to find donors to get sections of the hospital painted was declined by its medical superintendent Dr Homi Mehta who, she says, firmly told her to confine herself to the singing! "The group has lost the excitement of singing at the Parsee General," notes Khurody. "They prefer to go to the J.J. where they are not always monitored," she adds.

Khurody was disappointed with the high mortality rate of the saplings she had planted at doongerwadi last year



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Above: Marfatia (in sari), Khurody (in striped T-shirt) and students of Byramjee Jeejeebhoy entertain patients at J.J. Hospital (Photos: Roxana Kaka)



with the aid of BJPC volunteers. Lack of watering and weeding had ensured that even the survivors were wilting, she says, contrasting their plight with the exquisite looking specimens at the Saher Agiary at Breach Candy, which had been planted the same day. Appalled at the "dead and rotting trees...bottles, slippers, old clothes" littering the doongerwadi grounds, Khurody and 45 BJPC youth celebrated Kadmi New Year on July 25 by clearing up the mess. BPP joint secretary Ms Gool Tata and member of BPP's subcommittee on doongerwadi Ms Homai Modi took time off to appreciate the children's involvement, informs Khurody.

"Why can't they get an ex-army officer and pay him professional wages to run the whole estate, cultivate it into a garden?" asks Khurody, adding, "There are plenty of Parsis with a lot of money, ready to donate."

The year at Frisco has been busy but fulfilling for Khursheed. She bagged one award for her piano playing and two for her essays. Although she had initially desired to go into medicine, she realizes that she loves to write, and studying medicine, "I won't get to write anything except prescriptions and death certificates!" So Khurody has opted for psychotherapy which is "close enough to medicine yet gives time to study philosophy and theology." Khurody finds Aristotelian philosophy and Zoroastrianism, Socrates

and Plato utterly engrossing.

Throughout her holiday here, Khurody was busy learning the navar prayers, spending a couple of hours with a priest every evening. "It'll tear the Parsis apart to have the first girl priest!" she laughs, then adds solemnly, "Everyone says it's against the religion (but) I don't think Ahura Mazda is going to punish me for wanting to be a priest." Khurody hoped to finish learning the five *gahs* and the *tandoorasti* prayers before the end of the vacation.

"Kids of seven and eight in California know more about Zoroastrianism than I did when I went last year." So

Figure of Nargis Engineer at a function commemorating her masiso



Khurody picked religion as the topic of her undergraduate research "because it fascinates me... (Also) being alone among 6,000 students, you have to defend your religion and your community. You can't do anything without knowledge..."

Special feeding program

Five hundred poor, crippled and blind persons were fed on June 13, 1988, the day marking the first month anniversary (*masiso*) of the late Ms Nargis Engineer, a joint founder trustee of the Free Food Service Charitable Trust, notes a press release. Dinner was also sent for the inmates at the widows' chawls in Bombay. The feeding program was sponsored by her husband, Samy S. Engineer, the founder trustee of the organization.

Also participating in the dinner function were some of the regular donors to the Trust. The collections netted at the donation box, placed alongside a life-size figure of Ms Engineer, will reportedly be used to promote the Trust's projects.

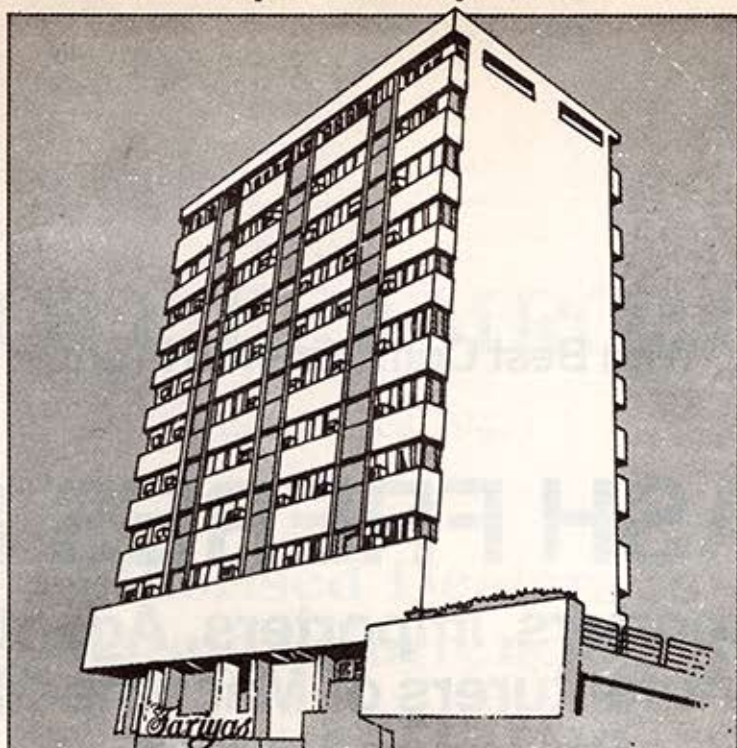
Founded in 1979, the Trust mainly aims to feed the destitute. Poor pilgrims are also taken on tours to religious places, free of cost, adds the write-up.

A group of young social workers, some of whom have been appointed trustees, will now shoulder the work of the Trust, according to an announcement in the *Jam-e-Jamshed* of June 19.

Badminton's new prospect

"A new star is emerging on the badminton horizon," wrote Ramadas Rao in *The Times of India* dated June 16,

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1988. He was referring to Pune school-girl Firoza Batliwala who reportedly played a gruelling match against Ami Ghia, the 31-year-old national women's champion. "Firoza lost (12-10, 9-12, 9-12) but what a match it was!" exulted Rao.

With "subtle deception" and court-craft marked by varied strokes, she reportedly "had the crowd delirious with delight." The "brilliance" of her play was however unable to outlast Ghia, probably because it was the 15-year-old's fourth match of the day.

Batliwala, a left-handed player, is the reigning national sub-junior champion. She has reportedly won all the major titles in her age-group since she started playing as a 10-year-old. She has been coached by Satpal Rawat, a renowned coach responsible for "a number of promising prospects from Pune." According to Batliwala's mother, Firoza exercises for two hours in the morning and plays an hour of badminton in the evening.

A tenth standard student at St Anne's School, Batliwala wishes to concentrate more on her studies for the present year, but after that, she would like to join an arts college to "devote more time to the game."

High on his marks

In the Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) - twelfth standard - board examination (Pune division) for 1988, Piroze Minoo Davierwala stood fifth in the overall merit ranking and first in his college, according to a report in the *Jam-e-Jamshed* dated June 19, 1988. He also ranks first in the Parsi community, the report says.

A student of St Vincent's Junior College in Pune, Davierwala has had a

Below (from left): Batliwala, Davierwala and Dastur



At Zoroastrian College convocation (from left): Chandrika Kenia, Justice Madhukiran Kenia, Master, Dr Aspi Golwala and Dr Ketayun Dalal

brilliant academic career throughout his school life, according to the report. He now wishes to take up a career in medicine.

Davierwala is also a good sportsman and has taken part in intercollegiate hockey, football, table tennis and softball matches. His hobbies include music and reading science-fiction books, the *Jamé* adds.

Navar sponsored

The Athornan Boarding Madressa, Bombay, was instrumental in finding a sponsor - Ms Coomi Faramroze Bhathena of Toronto, Canada - to bear the expenses of the four-week-long navar ceremony of its student Mehrooz Bahadur Dastur, says the Madressa principal, Ervad Rustom N. Panthaki.

Thirteen-year-old Dastur, who is now qualified to be addressed with the prefix 'Ervad,' is one of the Madressa's four students who have completed their navar training this year. The rituals to mark his initiation into the priesthood were performed at the Bisi Atash Kadeh, Surat, in June this year.

While some boys are fortunate to have family members who are practising priests, in which case the financial burden of the necessary ceremonies and accessories is reduced, others are

dependent on the Madressa and well-wishers to help defray expenses which total nearly Rs 10,000, notes Panthaki.

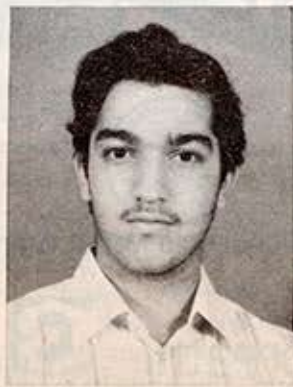
Zoroastrian College

Nine Zoroastrians received first year diploma certificates at the second convocation ceremony of the Zoroastrian College on June 11, 1988 at the Khareghat Colony Hall, notes a press release from Dr (Ms) Meher K. Master, founder-president of the All India Shah Behram Baug Society which manages the College. The ceremony was held under the auspices of the Society and the Mazdayasnie Monasterie which set up the Society in 1983. The chief guest, Ms Chandrika Kenia, then Maharashtra minister for education, presented the certificates to the College's second batch of diploma holders.

Since 1986, the College has been running monthly lecture courses that lead up to a diploma certificate after 10 months and 125 to 150 hours of lectures attended. The subjects include "health, alternative medicine, spiritual science, ecology, the esoteric, ancient, occult wisdom of the Zoroastrian religion, history, culture, law, music and interfaith (insights)," notes their brochure.

The College's diploma holders will be eligible to work towards a second year diploma certificate, and perhaps, at a later stage, a third year program that will include a research and writing project, and lead to a degree through university affiliation.

The College also started a research library in 1984, which now includes nearly 7,000 volumes, among them a collection of rare books on Parsi history, Zoroastrianism, and the culture of Iran. It contains "some valuable manuscripts and rare nineteenth century publications in Gujarati, English, German, Avesta-Pahlavi, Pazend



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and Persian," adds the brochure.

As the construction of the College building at Sanjan is still under way, monthly lecture courses are held in Bombay. Since 1984, an agricultural research center has also been functioning on the site. To meet the present cost of running this center (apart from the cost of construction) which works out to Rs 45,000 per annum, the Society hopes to receive donations for their project in either cash or building materials.

Lease increase

In its third year of operation ending March 31, 1988, Vitta Mazda Limited showed an increase in gross income by 88.45 percent over the previous year, according to a press release from the company. The provisional statement of profit and loss account showed an income of Rs 228.26 lakhs as compared to Rs 121.12 lakhs for the previous year, notes the release.

Affiliated to the Mazda group of companies, Vitta Mazda, whose chairman is Dara Deboo and managing director, Yezdi Master, procured additional leasing and hire purchase business worth Rs 224.38 lakhs during the year, according to the release. It also invested Rs 35.11 lakhs in property development and Rs 24.89 lakhs in shares and securities.

The public issue of Mazda Properties Limited was managed by the merchant banking division of the company, jointly with the merchant banking division of the Bank of India, adds the release.

Packaging gets under way

Mazda Packaging's highly sophisticated plant, situated in Uplat in the Thane district of Maharashtra, commenced production of nylon-based films on June 13, 1988 according to *The Indian Post* of June 15.

Although the estimated cost of setting up the plant was Rs 5.65 crores, the actual cost was cheaper by Rs 15 lakhs, mainly because the project was completed ahead of schedule, according to Homi Ranina, chairman of Mazda Packaging.

The computer-controlled plant manufactures films which are capable of "revolutionizing the packaging industry" because of their universal application, the report says. The films are also believed to have more

strength and resistance.

The cost of the film is comparatively cheaper than conventional tin or plastic containers, yet hygienic packing and unadulterated products can be ensured. To package one kilogram of edible oil, for instance, will cost just 25 percent of the expenditure that would be incurred if conventional containers were used, according to *The Indian Post*.

The company has already received confirmed orders to supply the film to firms like ITC, Britannia and Glindia, according to Ranina.

The plant and machinery to manufacture the film were supplied by Reifenhauer GmbH of West Germany, reportedly the world leaders in extrusion machinery. The plant has a capacity to produce 1,200 to 1,500 tonnes of different varieties of the film, while the country's annual requirement is around 60,000 tonnes, notes the write-up.

Piloting local trains

Fifty-six-year-old Minoo Cantinwalla is the oldest serving motorman on the Central Railway's suburban service in Bombay, according to an article in the weekend supplement of *Indian Express* dated July 2, 1988. With trains carrying up to four times their normal capacity, and basic amenities not functioning due to overloading and breakdowns, Cantinwalla has had to face the wrath of commuters on different occasions.

When engines or brakes fail, the motorman "immediately becomes the personification of Central Railway's evils," the article says. On one occasion, he nearly lost his left eye when a stone smashed his windscreen and the glass splinters got embedded. A quick operation, however, saved the eye. Once, when he was driving a 'fast' local, the train was converted into a 'slow' local due to a technical problem. Unaware of this, Cantinwalla continued to drive the train as a 'fast' local, skipping the smaller stations. At the next halt, he was reportedly dragged out of his cabin and manhandled.

The increasing number of slums has caused, among other things, more people to be knocked down by trains, he feels.

Cantinwalla joined the Central Railway in November 1950. Belonging to a family of railwaymen (his grandfather,

father and younger brother were motormen), after stints as assistant driver and a goods train driver, he became a motorman on Bombay's local trains.

In the past Cantinwalla used to drive the "Old Stock" — teakwood carriages — for the suburban system which were discontinued in the 1960s. The first motorman to drive these wagons, J. Daruwalla, died last year, according to Cantinwalla.

In the centenary year of the Central Railway's Victoria Terminus, Cantinwalla finds "the past more pleasant to contemplate" than the present, notes the *Express*.

SPOTLIGHT

Noshir Maneckshaw Mistry, the seniormost general manager of Central Bank of India, has been elevated to the post of executive director of the bank, according to *The Economic Times* of July 2, 1988.

Ms Farida D. Khambata has been appointed divisional manager, Capital Markets, Division III of International Finance Corporation (IFC), a World Bank affiliate, Washington, reports *The Economic Times* of July 2. It is reportedly the first time that IFC has appointed a woman as head of the division.

H.B. Dhondy, a chartered accountant and director of various companies, including Glindia, has been appointed director of The Pharmaceutical Products of India Limited, reports *The Economic Times* of July 2.

Compiled by Ramgopal Balakrishnan

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Despite the Bombay High Court stay on elections, social worker Perviz Dotivala has announced her candidature for the BPP trusteeship seat to be vacated by Dr Aspi Golwalla

The chances of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP) elections being held in the near future appear dim following an order of the two judges of the Bombay High Court that elections not be held until the appeal pertaining to electoral reforms is decided. Even then, social worker Perviz Dotivala has announced her candidature for the trusteeship seat to be vacated by BPP chairman Dr Aspi Golwalla, this October.

Citing the "wishes of my numerous friends and well-wishers" that she stand for election, Dotivala stated in a letter to the Press, "I would like to continue to serve my community to the best of my ability and I see no better way to do this than as a trustee of the Parsi Punchayet." Her candidature was supported by letters to the Press by Maharashtra minister of state for general administration, law and tourism Marazban Patrawala, Minorities Commission member Homi Taleyarkhan and several educationists, amongst others. Dotivala is president of the Maharashtra Youth Hostels Association, and vice-president of the International Tourism Council. She is active in community politics, having been a leading member of the C Register of graduates and, hence, an elected member of the Anjuman Committee. *The Bombay Samachar* however appealed to Dotivala to withdraw her candidature in favor of Nani Palkhivala who has so far declined to run for the office.

The CER (then known as the Committee for Electoral Rights and thereafter renamed Committee for Economic Revival) which won the last Anjuman Committee elections in 1981 has so far not announced its support for any candidate. The CER is one of the parties in the election suit before the High Court.

In an interim order, Justice Shah and Justice Sawant of the Bombay High Court have decreed that there will be no BPP election until the

appeal pending before the court has been disposed of. The blanket ban now covers the Anjuman Committee elections which were originally scheduled for March 1988, as well as the trusteeship election which was anticipated in September this year. When Golwalla's second 10-year term expires in October, his place on the board will thus remain unfilled until the challenge to the new electoral scheme, handed down by Justice H. Suresh in February/March 1987, has been settled.

The hearing on July 4 was postponed to August 1, when lawyer Keki Mehta of Payne and Company who represents the petitioners — Jehangir Bamji and three others — told the court that Jamshed Guzder, one of the three BPP trustees who support

Suresh's scheme, was having second thoughts. (Suresh's judgment, which abolished the right of donors — of Rs 5,000 and more to BPP charities — to directly elect trustees, has split the BPP's board of trustees with Guzder, Jamshed Kanga and Minoo Shroff supporting the revised scheme and Golwalla, Eruch Desai, Homi Ranina and Mehroo Bengalee seeking to make common cause with the petitioners in opposing it.) Mehta, who sought time to arrive at an out-of-court consensus, was supported by Rusi Sethna, counsel for the intervenor, the late municipal councillor Rusi Mehta (now represented by his son Dinshaw). A donor member himself, Rusi Mehta had been opposed to the concept of the donor's "vested right to vote."

The other controversial aspect of Suresh's scheme is the raising of the level of donation to Rs 50,000 to merit a direct voting right. Keki Mehta described this amount as unrealistic "because the donor would be required to pay an additional Rs 10,000 as gift tax." Though the judge countered, "You have the money and therefore you pay," Mehta contended that the donation limit should lie between Rs 15,000 and Rs 19,000. According to Mehta, "an unscrupulous builder" could easily buy 100 direct votes by paying Rs 50,000 each and "have the Parsi Punchayet in his pocket."

Soli Cooper, the Punchayet's counsel who had allegedly not been briefed about his client's response to the consensus moves, was against any further delay as the Punchayet administration would be snowed under "weeks and weeks of work if constituency-wise voting" was the final outcome of the appeal. The suggestion for constituency-wise voting had initially come from the CER as a way of ensuring fair representation from all Parsi localities on the elected E Register.

When the lawyers met again at the next hearing on August 1, they sought — and were granted — another postponement of four weeks as the consensus talks did not seem to have made much headway.

No elections in sight

Arnavaz S. Mama



Dotivala with Taleyarkhan: "no better way to serve than as trustee"

BPP LABOR: settlement likely

Homi J. Rogers

For over the past four months, trouble has been fermenting amongst the Class IV staff of the Bombay Parsi Panchayet (BPP). Numbering 165, according to official sources, the employees in this category include *mazdoors*, *hamals*, sweepers, gardeners, watchmen and nassessalars. They help in the maintenance of the BPP-administered properties like the Parukh Dharam-shalla, Lady Hirabai Jehangir Health Unit, the Parsi-tenanted colonies and the doongerwadi (Towers of Silence).

Governed by a settlement between the BPP trustees and the employees' union, reached three years ago on September 13, 1985, the workmen have submitted a fresh memorandum, asking for higher wages and better service conditions. The demands, if granted, informs the BPP in a public notice, "would increase the annual wage bill of the Class IV employees alone by about Rs 12.5 lakhs, and overall for all employees to about Rs 25 lakhs per annum." This would incur for the BPP "a burden (which) can never be sustained by the trustees from the income derived (from interest on permitted investments and donations)" which, the BPP publicly confessed, "are dwindling."

It was on July 8 that the workmen, seeing no visible breakthrough, launched an agitation to secure their demands. Little red flags and banners (now removed) proclaiming allegiance to the Indian National Trade Union Congress (INTUC) — the trade union body affiliated to the ruling party — were strung up at the Panchayet properties, and a notice was issued to the trustees, threatening to go on an inde-

**With an agreement
between
the Bombay
Parsi Panchayet
and its workers
close at hand,
the chances of
a strike recede**

finite strike from August 5, if the demands were not met. The wheels of the Panchayet were set in motion, and a hurried settlement staved off the strike. Had it materialized, it would have had the Panchayet, as much as the workers, facing the wrath of the disgruntled community. Inconveniences like non-removal of garbage, shortage of water in the colonies, and non-cooperation and go-slow tactics at the doongerwadi, would have assumed greater importance in Parsi households at a time like the muktads.

Ten days after the agitation was launched, the trustees convened a meeting with the workers at the Mancherji Khareghat Hall at Khareghat Colony. The venue was situated, ironically, at the foot of the doongerwadi — the huge, sprawling Parsi Panchayet property which would have been the focal point of the stir as the majority of the union-led workers are concentrated there. The trustees said to be present at the meeting on July 18 were

Dr Aspi Golwalla, Jamshed Guzder, Jamsheed Kanga and Eruch Desai, the Panchayet's chief executive Rustom Anklesaria, and its joint secretary Ms Gool Tata. Sharing the dais with them was H. N. Trivedi, president of the INTUC-affiliated Bombay General Employees' Association, who, say the union members, had demanded on their behalf, an increase of Rs 275 per month. The Panchayet, it seems, had offered an increase of Rs 50 per month which, according to its chairman Aspi Golwalla, "had been accepted by some Class IV members."

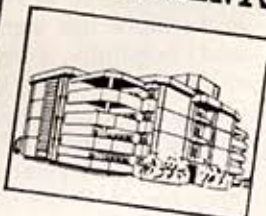
The speeches at the meeting, as reported by different staff members, supposedly alternated between requests and threats. Golwalla is said to have beseeched the workers to call off the stir, explaining that the BPP is no industry and hence cannot generate additional funds. Guzder, we are told, threatened to recruit substitute labor. Kanga, speaking in fluent Marathi, is believed to have cajoled the workers to call a truce, quoting the allegory of "do not kill the cow, lest you be deprived of milk altogether." No settlement, however, could be reached. But, Trivedi pulled himself out of the fray and appointed six members of the union to continue negotiating with the trustees during his absence over the next fortnight.

According to Dr Syrus Irani, son of the late Darvish Irani (caretaker at the doongerwadi for over 40 years till his demise in the early '80s), what caused Trivedi to retract was his (Irani's) letter published a day before, on July 17, in *The Bombay Samachar* and *Jam-e-Jamshed*. In this letter, Irani, as presi-

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dent of the one-year-old Zoroastrian Cultural Welfare Association (which aims to infuse cooperation and commitment among the youth), forewarned the community of the agitation planned. He put forth a three-pronged campaign to counter, with the help of

Inconveniences like non-removal of garbage and shortage of water would have assumed greater importance in Parsi households during the muktads

young and bold volunteers, "anti-socialism (on) the doongerwadi lands... and protection of our colonies." Irani, a medical general practitioner, whose dispensary lies opposite his residence at the Punchayet-managed Navajbai Contractor Baug at Mori Road, Mahim, credits himself with having "foiled the bid to hold the community to ransom by exposing the sinister plot of a strike."

Tehmuras Mehta, who continues as manager at the doongerwadi (when his appointment was not confirmed by the trustees after the expiry of his probation period, Mehta reportedly moved the Labour Court which granted him a stay order), agrees that should the strike have materialized, the doongerwadi would have been badly affected. The staff would have resorted to a go-slow: the *ravaan gaadi* (hearse) would have taken its own time in getting the body; the *nassessalars* (pallbearers) would have lifted the *ravaan* (corpse) at their own convenience, and even the ceremonies might have been delayed by at least an hour or two. However, according to a clarification from the Punchayet, only the non-Parsi workers would have joined the strike, not the *nassessalars*.

"I would have none of this," says

Irani, who claims he got wind of the action plan when he went visiting his mother who has been provided residential accommodation on the doongerwadi premises as a goodwill gesture for the 40 years' service undertaken there by her husband. While Irani's letter may have dissipated the stir, it was treated as a stab in the back by many workers at the doongerwadi who knew him as a child and were shocked at the volte face by a person who had first-hand knowledge of the low wages and poor working conditions. "My father, at the time of his demise, after working for 40 years, drew a monthly salary of only Rs 850," admits Irani. "But," he argues, "the letter was written by me not because I am against the workers, but because I am for the protection of my religion. I will not allow anything against the faith to take place at the doongerwadi as long as I am alive," Irani asserts, alleging that "today if these demands (for extra wages) are fulfilled, then tomorrow they will even demand houses in our private colonies, and finally a place at the doongerwadi for their last rites."

It is a matter of conjecture, however, whether it was really because of Irani's letter, dubbed by *The Bombay Samachar* editor Jehan Daruwalla as "unduly alarmist, immature and misleading" that Trivedi withdrew. Left to promote their cause were his lieutenants who included Anand Natakar, a peon at the Punchayet's office, two *ramoses* (as watchmen at the doongerwadi are called) Rajaram Sawant and Dattu Pawar, and a *mali* (gardener) Balkrishna Pohelekar from the doongerwadi. "*Aay beechara garib manaso chhè* (these people are poor) and easily intimidated by the trustees," explains Mehta.

Sawant recalls his meeting with Guzder, Desai, Anklesaria and Tata on July 27, in the company of five other union members. "Guzder-sahab refused to pay a rupee over 100. The settlement, nevertheless, inched its way up to an additional payment of Rs 115 per month." After working as a watchman for over 23 years, Sawant, today, draws a salary of around Rs 950. BPP sweepers, according to Sridhar Ankush, employed as one, are paid in the range of Rs 800 to Rs 1,000 per month. *Nassessalars*, whose numbers have dwindled from 40 to 15 dur-

ing the past seven years, receive, according to Irani, a salary of around Rs 930 per month (Rs 230 basic + Rs 679 dearness allowance + Rs 20 house rent). The relief obtained, even though less than half the amount demanded, has been welcomed by most of the employees *Parsiana* spoke to.

But while the imminent threat of a strike has blown over, the unsavory chapter has not ended. Anklesaria, aware of "the sensitive nature of the topic," as he puts it, refuses to discuss it in detail with *Parsiana*. "Suffice to say, we are looking into the matter and working out an amicable settlement," he says, adding that "it would be premature to write about the issue now." Sawant guardedly expresses the same view, stating that it would be up to "Trivedi-sahab to finalize the matter, as he alone can sign the settlement," and, hopefully, convince the trustees to raise the amount by at least another 10 rupees. To be looked into also is the matter of an eight-hour duty for watchmen, as against the present 12-hour round. Other facilities, like an increase in travel allowance, are also being sought.

The tinderbox could be ignited in

"Tomorrow they will even demand houses in our private colonies and a place at doongerwadi for their last rites"

the early future once again. For Mehta, deprived of his confirmation and other facilities, threatens to take up the union's demands forcefully once the court gives its decision on his appointment. "There may yet be a strike," he cautions. The present silence could well be an opportunity for introspection. The community, renowned for its charity, needs to re-evaluate the sad plight of those who serve them, and as Jehan Daruwalla notes, "seriously think about helping the BPP to cope with the situation."

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THE BURNING NEED OF FIRE-TEMPLES

Text and photographs: Parinaz Toddywalla

"We were wondering whether we should discontinue selling sandalwood sticks worth 50 paise...But we felt we must not deny this to the poor who can only afford humble offerings to the sacred fires." Ms Gool Contractor, a partner in Edulji Rustomji Sukhadwalla (a sandalwood retailer next to Banaji's Atash Bahram), was narrating the challenge faced by the sandalwood establishments in Bombay. Their hired laborers have to put in extra effort to cut the expensive wood into such fine splinters, yet the customer is always dissatisfied with the diminishing returns of his money's worth, she says.

Indeed, even the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India dwelled on the rising cost of firewood for the fire-temples, at its executive council meeting in Ukai last April.

Located near fire-temples, with the largest concentration at Dhobitalao which boasts two atash bahrams and four agiaries, sandalwood shops bear a fraternal resemblance. Shelf space within easy reach of the buyer is earmarked for different forms and denominations of sandalwood. *Maachi* (thin long sticks), *ganderi* (stumps), *periya* (small pieces), *tachho* (shavings) and *vher* (powder) are the

Zoroastrian favorites presented to the ceremonial fires. There is a demand for sandalwood derivatives like oil, paste and incense sticks from the Hindus while artefacts in the shape of idols, animals and decorative desk accessories may take anyone's fancy.

Usually, it is the family members, whether first, second or third generation who, under the protective eye of the shop's founder whose portrait is prominently hung on a wall, attend to the customers, exchange pleasantries and gossip, revive memories of the good old Parsi ways, and speculate as to what the future will bring. Most sandalwood merchants are confident of their customers' loyalty which has been retained over the decades. The skilled laborers, who saw the wood and chip it to the desired size, have also been with the family for generations.

The storage of sandalwood logs and the weighing of this valuable commodity is relegated to the inner confines of the shop. Every chip of wood is weighed precisely, as a difference of 10 gm could mean a price fluctuation of Rs 2.50.

During the course of the interviews spanning a week, when *Parsiana* sought to glean the reactions of different sandalwood retailers, the per kilo rate of sandalwood had increased from

Sandalwood tree and close-up of branch

Rs 210 to Rs 230 to Rs 250 with the sellers and consumers looking on helplessly. With an additional tax on sandalwood sales imposed by the government, and the wholesalers' boycott of the last auction, it was the small-timers who were bearing the brunt of the inevitable price escalation when demand exceeds supply. "Yet, we never compromise on the quality of the sandalwood. We buy only the best and never from black marketers who illegally cut the forests in Karnataka to sell wood in truckloads in Bombay," notes Ms Daulat Mulla, managing the family shop next to the H.B. Wadia Atash Bahram. The government inspectors' monthly visits to check the stock and sales figures is considered unwarranted harassment by most retailers who believe in self-imposed honesty. Mulla's constant lament is that Parsis occasionally offer inferior quality sandalwood at the fire-temples as noticeable in the *khumchas* (ceremonial platters) there. In contrast, well-to-do Hindus buy generous pieces of sandalwood for cremation purposes, she sighs. Framroz Sukhadwalla (Contractor's father) remembers the time when one maund of sandalwood was sold for Rs



With the escalation in the costs of sandalwood and kathi, the community is finding difficulty in sustaining the fires in the numerous agiaries and atash bahrams in India

10 (one maund = 12½ kg approx).

Operating from his shop next to the Dadyseth Agiary in Bombay's Fort area, Bomi Irani says that he has no fixed supplier. He would go wherever a good deal is assured: Sorabji Rustomji, Sorabji Nowroji, Gordhandas Thackersey and others. And according to him, even the wholesalers may not be able to meet the needs of all the retailers.

In June last, all sandalwood wholesalers boycotted the government auction in Tamil Nadu. They are reportedly protesting the 35 percent additional tax imposed on the sale of sandalwood, and the income tax deduction at source which has become obligatory under the 1988 amendment to the Income-Tax Act. In India, sandalwood is used mainly for religious purposes unlike the countries to which it is exported where its chief use is for cosmetics, informs Samee Lawyer of Sorabji Rustomji and Company, one of the largest sandalwood wholesalers in Bombay. With exports comprising 90 percent of his business, Lawyer prides himself on transacting in only pure "malbari (government authorized)" sandalwood bought in consignments worth Rs 20 to 30 lakhs at the auctions. He feels that as long as Parsi wholesalers are able to meet the demand, community retailers should patronize them and not go to non-Parsis.

The visible threat of galloping prices and scarcity of sandalwood that is plaguing most retailers is exaggerated, feels Lawyer. "At least for our religious purposes there is no fear of non-availability of sandalwood for the next few years," he maintains. There is a demand for export of sandalwood products - chips, powder and oil - because the superior quality available in India is not found elsewhere in the world, not even in Indonesia and Australia, it is believed. Reportedly, 50 kg of oil is extracted from 1,000 kg of sandalwood. "The government is only interested in its earnings from exports and not in looking after the religious needs of the community," laments Jamshed Parbhu, a partner in Faredun Burjor's at Princess Street.

A member of the sandalwood advisory committee which looks after the interests of the trade, Lawyer explains that up to now it is the natural growth

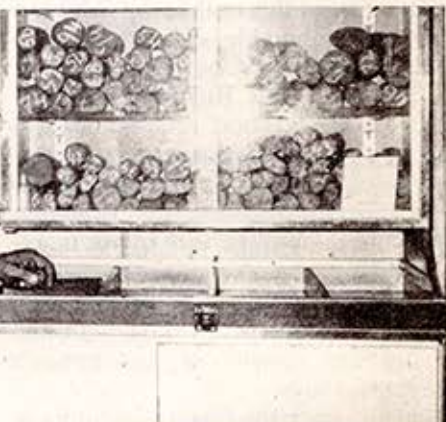
of the sandalwood trees that has been meeting the country's internal and export requirements. But with the sandalwood tree taking 40 to 60 years to mature, and no successful formula being available for the propagation of such trees with a rich yield, India's natural reserves are being depleted. In addition to Tamil Nadu where the government holds its six-monthly auctions, sandalwood trees are also found in Maharashtra, Kerala and Karnataka. From these tropical parasitic trees (botanical name *santalum album*) which gather their nourishment from the host trees, only the heart of the trunk is valued as sandalwood. The remnant branches and twigs do not fetch even one-tenth the price of sandalwood whose wholesale rate is in the region of Rs 1,40,000 per ton. The prices quoted at every auction inevitably show an upward trend. The modern means of communication and transportation make the Lawyer brothers - Samee, Faroukh and

Rohinton - feel comfortable, realizing that their father had to spend nearly two months to journey by bullock cart to the site of the auction.

Since the government does not allow you to cut a sandalwood tree even if it is grown in your own garden, Behram Nava, sitting in his shop opposite the Wadia Atash Bahram, sees a dreary future for the fire-temple and recommends that they be amalgamated to conserve the scarce supplies of sandalwood.

The temple-goer usually spends the same amount on sandalwood that he did years ago, but in terms of quantity it means less sandalwood for the fire, note the retailers. Ms Dina Dordi, who owns the shop next to the Anjuman Atash Bahram, feels that the number of devotees visiting the temples has not dwindled, but increased, with a substantial number of youngsters frequenting it regularly, and not only on auspicious or earmarked occasions.

Most of the shops are open all seven



Above: Bomi Irani
Alongside (from left): Framroz
Sukhadwalla and Behram Nava

days a week. A commitment to their forefathers is the common motivating factor which inspires every subsequent generation to continue the sandalwood business though there have been cases of two retailers at Dhobitalao closing shop because of the non-viability of their ventures, or, as may happen with Dordi, there is no offspring to continue the business. Many shops, however, are seen diversifying into sale of Parsi garments and other religious requisites. The business from the Hindu, Jain, Marwari and Muslim clientele too, considerably eases the load on the retailers, acknowledges Homi Mody, manager at Manekshaw Nowroji's shop opposite Cama Baug. Opening the shop at 6 a.m. and downing its shutters at 7 p.m., Contractor says, "We are almost like the chemists." The only difference being that medical stores sell remedies to soothe the pains of the physical body and the *sukhadwallas* sell fuel for the sustenance of man's religious beliefs.

The sweet-smelling sandalwood is supposed to signify the devotee's determination to spread the fragrance of charity and good deeds



Above: Jamshed Parbhu
Alongside: sandalwood artefacts
Left: cutting sandalwood into chips



out that in the absence of sandalwood, any clean, good wood may be used. This indicates that alternatives to sandalwood had not been ruled out for the ceremonies.

Kathi is convenient

With the exception of a few fire-temples like the Dadyseth Agiary, and the Rustom Framna and Narielwalla Agiaries in Dadar where, according to Irani, more sandalwood than kathi is consumed, in the case of most others it is kathi from the babul trees that is used to keep the fire burning for 24 hours, while sandalwood is only offered at stipulated hours and in measures gifted by the laity. Since the cost of kathi is one-hundredth that of sandalwood, it is considered economical to use it for the fire-temples where this heat-retentive hard wood is popular because it burns slowly, without emitting any sparks or toxic smoke.

The prices of kathi have more than doubled in the last two years, informs Farroakh Govadia, partner in Hormusji H. Sidhwa and Son, reportedly Bombay's only Parsi wholesaler dealing in firewood, the other two having wound up their business years ago. Supplying kathi to 36 of the 42 fire-

Significance of sandalwood

Proffering the sweet-smelling sandalwood is meant to signify the devotee's determination to spread the fragrance of charity and good deeds, explains Jivanji Modi in his book *The Religious Ceremonies and Customs of the Parsees*. Like the fire, the pilgrim is supposed to spread the light of righteousness and knowledge before being reduced to dust, the shared destiny of both, the sandalwood and the human being. Sandalwood could not have formed an integral element of Zoroastrian ceremonies while the community was keeping alive its faith in Iran, surmises Lawyer, because there are no

sandalwood forests there. The custom must have originated after they settled down in India.

For the *bui diyan* ceremony, which ushers in a new *gah* (five times a day, corresponding to the time cycle), the amount of sandalwood fed to the fires differs, depending on the status of the fire in the temple. It is enjoined that one piece of sandalwood should be offered to the atash adarian fire (second in hierarchy). But for the most venerated atash bahram fire, six pieces, resembling of a throne, are necessary for the *maachi* (sandalwood offering at the time of *bui diyan*), details Jivanji Modi. It is further spelt

temples in Bombay, Govadia states that formerly the family owning the agiary and the trustees would donate towards the kathi costs, but with the rising prices they can no longer afford to do so as there are hardly any "sethies (moneyed gentry)" left in the community. If there is a harmonious relationship between the panthaky and the trustees of the agiary, observes Govadia, the panthaky will approach clients for donations (approximately Rs 3,500) for a month's supply of kathi. This gesture prevents the burden from falling on the trustees who, faced with a static corpus, can hardly spare funds for the repairs of the agiaries, most of which are nearly 100 years old. But when there is a disgruntled panthaky on the scene, it is often the Govadias who are left to solicit donations towards the kathi funds of that agiary.

The fresh wood with its reddish tint does not burn as well as the wood which has aged and which is costlier by Rs 500 per ton, yet most often there is a plea, "*Kathi apo, junu ké navu* (give us kathi, whether old or new)" as the clients cannot afford to be choosy when there is a scarcity of kathi, reports the kathi stockist. The Govadias usually store about 1,000 tons of kathi in their *vakhar* (godown). While the produce is brought from the forest in trucks, the Govadia brothers - Farroakh, Hoshang and Mehernosh - take turns in personally delivering the cut, manageable pieces of kathi to their customers.

Sawing babul wood for easy handling



Samee Lawyer: sandalwood is soaring (Right) Farroakh Govadia: kathi is dearer



Formerly, kathi was brought to Bombay from Karnataka and Madhya Pradesh but now the embargo imposed by these states prohibits the transport of firewood outside their geographical limits. Later it was bought at the auctions at the Gujarat government sales depots, but the recently introduced moratorium under the reforestation program prohibits the cutting of babul trees on government-owned lands in Gujarat. The private growers, faced with an increasing demand, sell the wood to the highest bidders.

Of the one and a half lakh tons of firewood annually consumed in Bombay, barely 500 tons is used at the fire-temples, estimates Govadia. The chief users are caterers/bakeries, crematoriums, kilns and liquor stills which may

perforce have to opt for alternatives like coke, diesel, electricity, kerosene, gas. "But what about the agiaries?" asks Govadia.

The only solution he visualizes is to grow babul trees on community lands like the tract in Palghar owned by the Iranian Zoroastrian Anjuman. Each agiary should be self-sufficient in its kathi stock and minimize the intervention of middlemen, advises Govadia. Maturing after a minimum period of 15 years, each tree yields half a ton of kathi, insists Govadia, countering the claim of others that a tree can mature in seven to 10 years. He also refuses to consider su-babul as a substitute for babul, saying, "It is just like a matchstick that burns and is soon extinguished."

In an agiary in Bombay, the Parsi Punchayet is known to have experimented with su-babul to gauge its burning properties. The project was abandoned when the priest tending the fire indicated his dissatisfaction. Renewed attempts to measure the serviceability of su-babul were to be made by Dastur Meherji Meherjirana of Navsari.

With the prohibitive costs of sandalwood, will the devotees be forced to offer kathi sticks instead of sukhad to the sacred fires? The 'faith-fulls' look forward to a day when sandalwood for religious purposes will be easily available. But there are also the 'fear-fulls' who predict a gloomy future. In the words of one sandalwood retailer: "*Varso pachhi Parsi mari jasé né lakdu bari jasé* (after some years Parsis will be dead and the wood will be burnt)!"



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Feeding the fires

Two schemes have been proposed to help meet the fire-temples' requirements of kathi



Besides coping with a shortage of priests, fire-temples are also being faced with rising firewood bills. Approximately 7,300 kg of firewood obtained from the baval (also known as babul) tree are used in an agiary annually. While sandalwood is used as an offering and at specified times, it is the baval wood that burns for 24 hours.

In order to provide kathi to the fire-temples in India at a reasonable rate, two proposals were put forward at the executive council meeting of the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India in the Gujarat township of Ukai in early April: one by businessman Dara Deboo, chairman of the Mazda Group of Companies, and the other by retired forest officer Homi Chothia of Baroda. Deboo's scheme envisages a Rs 60 lakh project: acquir-

ing a 250-acre plot of land near Navsari to grow baval trees and to serve other community uses. Chothia suggests that the punchayets and agiaries utilize the land available with them to cultivate baval trees.

Parsiana publishes abridged and edited versions of their proposals.

Chothia's recommendations

The kathi requirements of atash bahrams, adarians and dar-e-mehers is around 600 tons (1 ton = 1,000 kg) per year in Bombay city and thus the annual cost of kathi consumed in Bombay alone is around Rs 7,50,000 per annum. In spite of the high cost, sometimes sufficient quantity of kathi is not available in the market because some of the states have placed an embargo on the movement of firewood to other states. A time may come when babul

wood may not be available.

The permanent solution for supplying babul kathi is to grow babul trees in the compounds of doongerwadis, atash bahrams, agiaries or on any land available with Parsi punchayets, anjumans or members of our community. At the Udwada doongerwadi, about 400 trees of babul, casuarina and eucalyptus, planted under my guidance in 1982, have grown very well. Some babul trees have also been planted at the doongerwadi in Baroda.

If any punchayet, anjuman or individual of our community wants to plant trees, I am willing to offer my honorary consultancy services to prepare a scheme or project depending on the availability of land, funds and water.

Left: Growth of a 10-year-old babul tree (Photo: Gujarat State Forestry Department)

Below: Devotee offers firewood



The quality of the babul tree

The babul tree produces firewood of good quality – with a high calorific value that burns slowly, without sparks or toxic smoke. The tree can grow successfully in different types of soil, rainfall regimes and terrains. The most common gauge to measure the wood's combustive quality is its density – the heavier the wood (when dry), the greater its calorific value which keeps the fire burning slowly. This quality is present in the babul tree. The technical name of babul is *acacia nilotica* (old name *acacia arabica*).

Babul is a fast growing tree under favorable soil and irrigation condi-

leather industry. The pods are also used as cattle-feed.

Babul trees exude gum known as gum ghati or gum arabica. It is of great use in calico printing and dyeing-sizing silk and cotton. This gum is also highly nutritive and is often used in the creation of sweets and *paaks* (special nutritive preparations) in winter.

Babul plantations on community lands

For producing 600 tons of kathi per year for Bombay city alone, we must have 2,000 trees per year. One thousand one hundred trees, spread over 10 to 15 years, can be grown on one hectare at a cost of Rs 10,000.



Left: Foliage of a su-babul plantation after four years
Chothia (center) and Deboo

If sufficient land and funds are available, 20,000 trees can be planted in one year or the project can be phased out to plant 5,000 trees per year in four years or in any other suitable instalment.

If, at the end of 10 years, it is found that the trees have not sufficiently matured or grown big enough to give good kathi with hard wood, the period of exploitation can be extended to 15 years.

Similarly, for all other punchayets and anjumans throughout India, a project can be prepared according to their requirements of kathi and availability of land, funds and irrigation.

It is suggested that the data on availability of land should be collected by the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India from punchayets, anjumans, private trusts and individuals of our community.

Those interested in the project may contact Homi P. Chothia, "Zar-E-Hom," 66, Suvarnapuri Society (Chikuwadi), Jetapur Road, Alkapuri, Vadodara 390005, Tel 324187. A copy of the letter may be sent to the honorary secretary, the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India, D-24 South Extension Part II, New Delhi 110049.

Deboo's plans

The wood of the baval tree, kathi, is of very great importance to our community as it is used principally by our agiaries and atash bahrams to keep our sacred fires burning.

We have been using kathi for the above purpose for years on end, and it was freely available until now in sufficient quantities and at reasonable rates. But in the last few years, the price of kathi has gone up considerably. Nor is it available in the quantities we need. It is feared that in the future, due to paucity in the supply of kathi, our religious institutions will be faced with great difficulty in obtaining their regular requirements.

Keeping this idea in mind, we have been making strenuous efforts to obtain a suitably large piece of land for growing baval trees.

To the good fortune of our community, about 250 acres of land owned by Hindu and Muslim families is available about 25 km from Navsari. The site is approachable by a pucca road. Although these families have received higher bids, they have shown their willingness to sell the land to us with a view to help us out on religious grounds. Thus an excellent opportunity has arisen for us to purchase a vast area of land for kathi cultivation.

The land is situated on the Navsari-Umbharat Main Road which is about four km away from the seashore and government beach resort. Electricity and telephone facilities are available. A canal nearby provides as much water as required. Besides, the new coastal highway from Kanyakumari to Kandla passes quite near our land, and therefore, the distance from Navsari would be reduced from 25 km to 17 km.

According to the rules and regulations applicable to agricultural land in Gujarat at present, an individual or a trust can hold only 15 to 20 acres of agricultural land. Further, as per the law in Gujarat, only farmers or agriculturists can purchase more agricultural land. Thus the question of how to acquire such a large piece of land of about 250 acres posed a problem. Several Parsi public trusts in Navsari, however, hold small tracts of agricultural land and thus come within the definition of "farmers" in accordance with the prevailing law. They can therefore acquire and hold additional land up to the prescribed ceiling. We

tions. Silvicultural practices such as weeding, intensive soil working and pest or disease control can greatly increase the yield. The trees grow two to three cm in diameter each year. Firewood plantations, if carefully managed and protected from fire, animal grazing and poachers, can be self-renewing. The plantations are usually managed on a short rotation of about 10 years, though they could be managed in a 15-year rotation cycle.

Besides the firewood, the bark of the babul is highly prized as tanning material and is one of the most extensively used tanning barks. Babul pods contain high percentage of tannin. The tannin content of deseeded pods (pods without seeds) is 18 to 27 percent. The bark and pods are mainly used in the

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can thus purchase the entire 250 acres of land through the agricultural trusts of Navsari.

Kathi demand and supply

We have eight atash bahrams and about 100 agiaries throughout India. We have obtained complete statistical data of their annual requirements of kathi. Each atash bahram requires 100 kg of kathi every day. Each agiary needs 20 kg of kathi per day. Accordingly, the daily requirements of eight atash bahrams would be 800 kg and of 100 agiaries, 2,000 kg. The total daily requirement thus works out to 2,800 kg. The annual requirement of kathi therefore would be $(2,800 \text{ kg} \times 365)$ 10,22,000 kg. Scientifically we can grow 1,400 baval trees on one acre of land. On a conservative estimate, if we can grow 1,300 trees per acre, we can grow 32,500 trees on 25 acres (one-tenth of the total area) and annually use the wood therefrom as kathi.

Each tree yields 25 kg of kathi on maturing after eight to 10 years. On this basis our annual production would come to $(32,500 \text{ trees} \times 25 \text{ kg})$ 8,12,500 kg. Thus, against our annual requirement of 10,22,000 kg, we can obtain 8,12,500 kg (80 percent) of kathi from our plantation.

We are trying to obtain additional land near the 250 acres available to us, and if we succeed in this, we will be able to meet the entire 100 percent requirement ourselves.

Normally, a baval tree matures eight to 10 years after it is planted though its wood can be used even after five years. At present a new variety called su-baval has been imported which matures even in five years, and we intend to plant those trees also on our land. We will start cutting some trees after five years so that in the sixth year, we will be able to provide kathi to our religious institutions.

Project costs

A sum of about Rs 60 lakhs needs to be amassed in two years for the project.

The entire scheme will be divided into 101 sectors of two and a half acres each, based on the 101 names of Ahura Mazda, and whosoever gives a donation of Rs 51,000 or more will be entitled to select a name for that particular sector.

The name of each donor of Rs 11,000 or more will be displayed on a tab-

let, erected on every half acre of land.

According to the above data, each agiary requires kathi from one tree daily, and the donor of Rs 3,000 will be deemed to have presented a tree or provided a day's requirement of kathi to an agiary.

As a result of the three schemes, the trust hopes to complete the entire kathi project within two years.

Twenty persons will be employed to manage the farm. If needed, additional laborers would be available from nearby areas.

We have been fortunate in obtaining the honorary services of Firoj Panthaky in connection with the plantation and management of the entire kathi scheme. Panthaky, a resident of Navsari, has recently retired from the Gujarat Government's service as divisional forest officer and is now working as a consultant.

Profitable trees

Some farmers of Navsari grow sandalwood trees on their land although the product's quality cannot compare with the sandalwood grown in Mysore. To ascertain whether we can profitably grow sandalwood trees on our land, we have approached the Agricultural University of Navsari as well as the Research Centre and Forest Department of Gujarat.

Considering that a teakwood plantation would result in additional income, we would plant these trees also.

Future plans

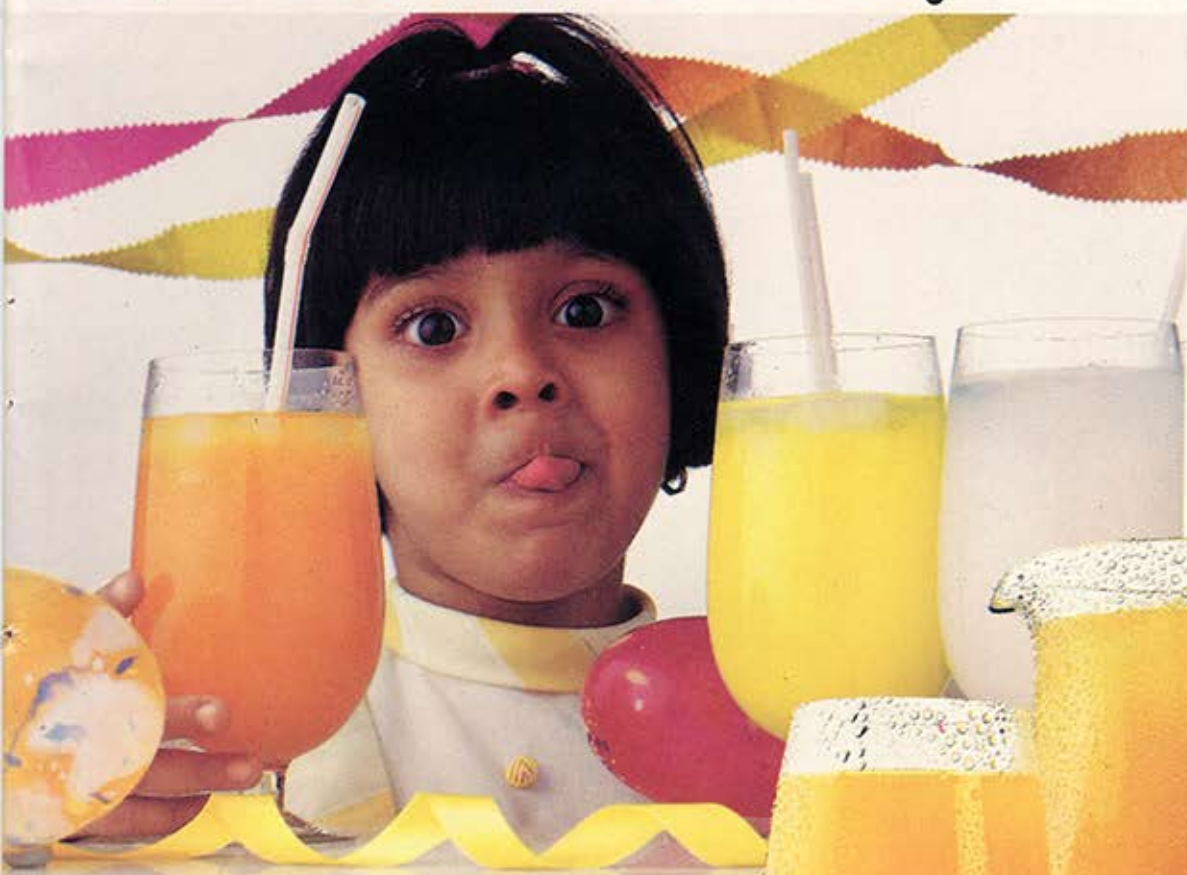
As our land is only four km away from the seashore, and as Umbharat is a holiday resort, we have set aside about 10 acres of land to build for the community a dharamshala, sanatorium, play center, scouting camp, etc from the income of the trust, or the help of donors.

Since only the Parsi trusts of Navsari would be entitled to purchase plots of land, the donors will be requested to donate the amounts to the trusts named by us. The trusts will purchase the land and hand it over to the central trust, for administration.

Since donations are to be obtained through various established trusts only, we will give further particulars within a very short time.

We hope that our community will respond splendidly as always, and help us in keeping the fires burning perpetually in our religious institutions.

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Does Zoroastrianism teach REINCARNATION?

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7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	X	X	X	X
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Most Zoroastrians believe that the soul of the individual has to cross the Chinwad Pool (Bridge of the Separator) after death. But there is a divergence of opinion as to what happens to the soul thereafter. While the Zoroastrian doctrine talks of a heaven and hell and a final resurrection, there are many who state that Zoroastrianism preaches reincarnation.

In order to ascertain the views of high priests, scholars and well-known writers and speakers on Zoroastrianism, *Parsiana* sent out 52 questionnaires, eliciting responses to 11 questions pertaining to the after-life and, specifically, whether reincarnation is a part of Zoroastrian doctrine.

The subject was suggested to *Parsiana* by Avesta-Pahlavi scholar Faribourz Nariman who drew up the initial questionnaire on which some minor modifications were made. Nariman also helped in identifying the people to whom the questionnaire was to be sent.

The questions are published along

No, say 25 of the 29 scholars who responded to *Parsiana's* questionnaire on the subject

with the answers, with the respondents being listed in alphabetical order. Each respondent's style and spellings have been retained. Where the answer has been a simple 'yes' or 'no,' the respondents have been grouped alphabetically after the 'yes' or 'no' response.

The 29 respondents (in alphabetical order) are:

High priests — Dastur Dr Kaikhusro JamaspAsa of the Anjuman Atash Bahram, Bombay; Dastur Dr Firoze Kotwal of the H.B. Wadia Atash Bahram, Bombay; the late Dastur Navrooz Minochehr-Homji of the Petit Fasli Atash Kadeh, Bombay; Dastur Dr Hormazdyar Mirza of Udawa;

Other Zoroastrian priests — Dr Kersey Antia, head priest of Chicago; Ardeshir Azargoshab of Tehran, Dr Jehan Bagli, editor of *Gavashni*; Dr Peshotan Peer, president, Parsee Vegetarian and Temperance Society; Dr Rooyintan Peer, professor, J.J. Madressa, Bombay; Rostam Shahzadi of Tehran;

Non-Zoroastrian foreign scholars – Dr (Ms) Mary Boyce, professor of Iranian studies, University of London; Dr Paul du Breuil, professor of Indo-Iranian studies and of oriental anthropology, Sorbonne University, Paris; Prof William Darrow, Department of Religion, Williams College, Massachusetts; Prof J. Duchesne-Guillemin, Department of History and Oriental Literature, University of Liege, Belgium; Prof John Hinnells, head of the Department of Comparative Religion, University of Manchester; Prof Rev Gikyo Ito of the University of Kyoto, Japan; Dr Philip Kreyenbroek of Amsterdam; Dr Cyrus Pangborn, professor of theology, Rutgers University, USA; Dr James Russell, associate professor of Iranian studies at Columbia University, New York; Dr H. Michael Simmons, director, Center for Zoroastrian Research, Bloomington, USA;

Zoroastrian scholars in India and abroad – Ms Arnavaz Chubb, Avesta-Pahlavi scholar; Adi Doctor, Ilm-e-Khshnoomist, public speaker and editor of the now defunct *The Parsee Voice*; Prof Kaikhosrov Irani, head of the Department of Philosophy, City

College, New York; Dr (Ms) Meher Master-Moos, president, Mazdayasnie Monasterie; Dr Farhang Mehr, faculty associate, Center for Middle Eastern Studies, Harvard University; Khojeste Mistree, author, public speaker and founder of Zoroastrian Studies; Fari-bourz Nariman, Iranologist of Bombay; Dr Rustam Sarfeh, chairman, Arbab Rustom Guiv Foundation, USA; Farrokh Vajifdar of London, Avesta-Pahlavi scholar and English translator of Dr Paul du Breuil's works.

Question 1a: Regarding life after death, Zoroastrianism teaches that the departed soul's future existence is confined to the spiritual world (*menog*).

If yes, please describe, in not more than five lines, the scriptural view regarding the future existence of the soul.

No: J. Duchesne Guillemin, Meher Master-Moos, Michael Simmons.

Kersey Antia: Yes. In the case of the *Ashavan* (Righteous souls).

Ardeshir Azargoshasb: Yes. We Zoroastrians believe that from the moment a person breathes his or her last

breath, his soul departs from the dead body but stays in this world till the dawn of the fourth day when his good and bad deeds are judged by the angels Mehr, Srosh, Rashn and Ashtad. Then only the soul passes the Chinvat Bridge towards the spiritual world and does not return to the material world in human form.

Jehan Bagli: Yes. Prophet Zarathushtra questions the Creator in *Hadokht Nask* (Yasht XXII) in verses 1 and 19 regarding the souls of the righteous and evil beings respectively. The answer of the Creator is contained in verses 2-16 and 20-25. Furthermore, *Gatha Ushtavaiti* (Yasna 46) verses 10 and 11 also refer to the Bridge of Judgment and the consequences that the souls of the righteous and the deceitful humans will experience at the juncture.

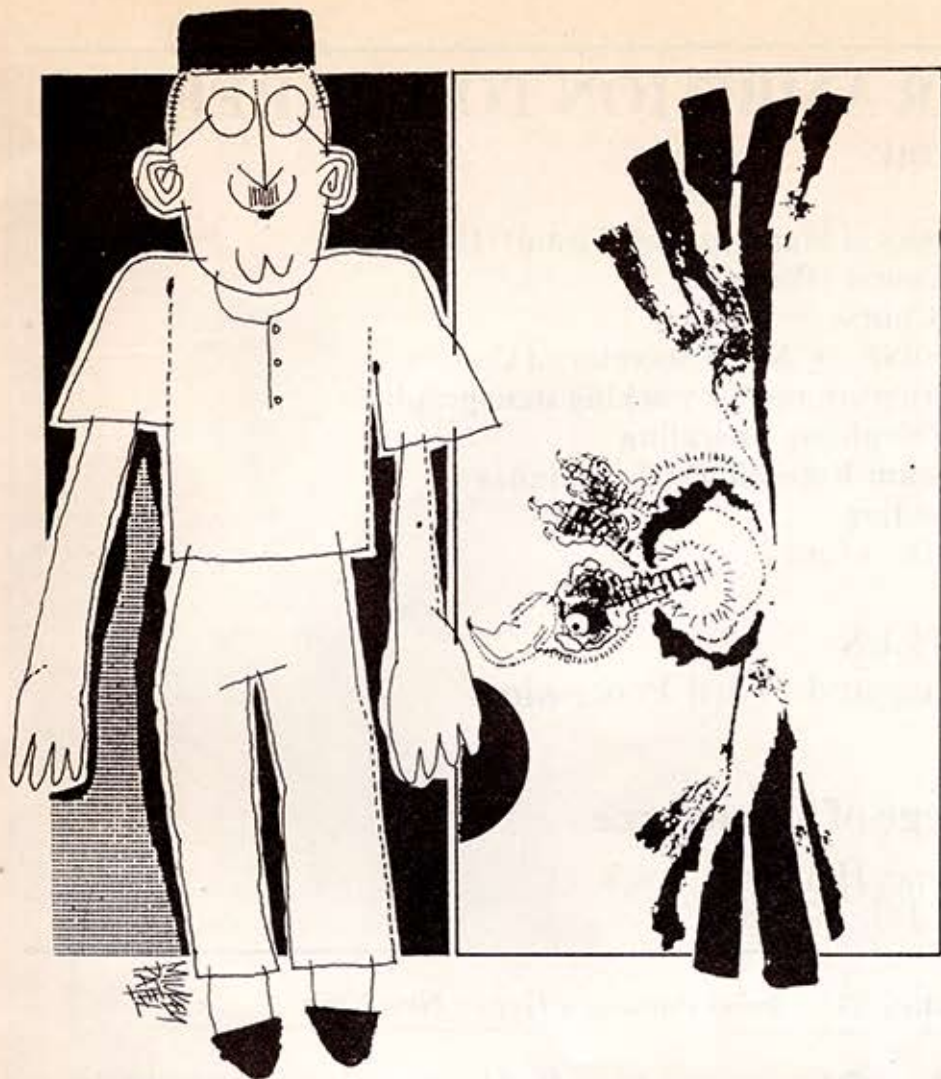
Mary Boyce: Yes. The soul is judged, three days after death, and departs accordingly to heaven, hell, or an intermediate place. There it remains until the last day (*Frashegird*). Then all departed souls will be reincarnated in their own resurrected bodies and, with

"Between the past and the future there is an interval which is ours"

those then still living, will undergo the Last Judgment through the river of molten metal.

Paul du Breuil: Yes. The soul remains three nights near the dead (person's) head, then meets her *daena* (conscience) at Chinvat Bridge. The quality of his life leads his first, second and third steps to Heaven's places of good thoughts, good words, good deeds; the fourth one to the (*Garodman*) of Infinite Light while the bad will be brought to the Infinite Darkness. The departed soul (*urvan-ravan*) remains alive thanks to her *Fravohar* (Fravarti) in the spiritual world (*menok*). The dead go from the perishable world to the everlasting one (Ys 22.7/34). Without the Fravarti there would be no survival, for the body goes to earth, *ahu* to the wind, *baodho* and form (*divinak*) to the Sun, the soul (*urvan-ravan*) to meet and be fed by her Fravarti with whom she becomes one.





Arnavaz Chubb: Yes. On death, after the separation of the soul from its physical body, the soul travels into the spiritual plane and is judged at the Bridge of the Separator (Chinvat Pool). If its good deeds outweigh the bad, it goes to heaven; if the bad outweigh the good, it goes to hell and if both are equal, the soul remains in limbo until the Renovation.

William Darrow: Yes. The important proviso on this is that, at the end of time, the body of the soul will be reconstituted and the distinction of *menog* and *getig* will collapse after the material world has been purified. We will then exist in the final body, *tan-i pasen*, where matter and spirit are united.

Adi Doctor: Not always.

John Hinnells: Yes. Graphic imagery is used to depict the soul's encounter with Ahura Mazda as pure light.

Kaikhosrov Irani: Yes. In the *Gathas* the expressions that refer to the final state are (in translation) the Best Mental State, or the Best State of Consciousness; the House of the Good

Mind, or the House of Best Thought; and the Abode of Songs. All these are states of the spirit.

Gikyo Ito: Yes. For example, Zoroaster refers in the *Gathas* to the soul's passing over the Chinvad Bridge without any mention of its return to this world.

Kaikhosroo JamaspAsa: Yes. After death, while the body is disposed of, the soul, which is immortal, passes into the spiritual realm where it is judged by a divine tribunal. In accordance with its earthly existence, judgment is passed, and, while the soul of a good person leads a blissful existence, the soul of a wicked one experiences the pangs of hell; if a person's good and bad deeds are equal, the soul is in *hammistagan* (limbo).

Firoze Kotwal: Yes. After death, the soul remains for the first three nights in this material world, which is its last resting place. On the dawn of the fourth day, depending on its own actions performed in the material world, the soul makes its way to the Bridge of the Separator (*Chinwad Puhl*), where

it is judged by a divine tribunal. If judged righteous, the soul crosses the Bridge with ease and enters *Garodemana* (the House of Hymns), Heaven; whilst if wicked, the soul falls from the Bridge into the abyss of Hell, called *Drujo-demana* (the House of Deceit).

Philip Kreyenbroek: Wrong question. At the End of Time, the body will be resurrected in *getig* form viz *Greater Bundahisn III*, 23. This does not, however, point to the notion of reincarnation as commonly understood.

Farhang Mehr: Yes. The *Gathas* speak of *Tanu* and *Urvan*, of *Astvan* and *Manahya* (Yasnas 28-2, 43-3); it speaks of the law of consequences (I do not like rewards and retributions): the happiness and the sufferings (Yasnas 44-8, 43-4) in this and the next world. The soul reaps what it causes the body to sow.

Navrooz Minochehr-Homji: *Paro-asti* in *Hormuzd Yast* para 25 and *Parahu* (*Gatha*, Yasna 46, stanza 19) both mean "life beyond." Referring to *Getig-menog*, the *Dinkard* says, "Happy is the man who maintains the balance between matter and spirit." Between the past and the future there is an interval which is ours. "*Ravaan garothmaani baad* (May the soul gradually - progressively - experience the deeper realizations of consciousness)." There are three stages of consciousness in Zoroastrianism - the star stage, the moon stage and the sun stage. *Garothman* is the highest. Hence, future life is progressive, not static in the Zoroastrian concept. The five *gahs* are the five stages of the soul's increasing consciousness from *Usha-hina* (without consciousness) to *Aiwi-sroo-threma* or the highest self-realization (*Fravashi*).

Hormazdyar Mirza: Yes. The soul is immortal. After bodily death, the soul passes to the spiritual realm, and divine justice is meted out. Accordingly, the soul of a good person leads a blissful life, and the soul of a wicked person leads a miserable life, in the spiritual world. If good deeds are equal to bad, the soul leads a mixed life in purgatory.

Khojeste Mistree: Yes. The soul is judged at the Bridge of the Separator by a host of spiritual beings at dawn, on the fourth morning after death. Depending upon the life the person has led in this world, the soul is rewarded

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to the House of Song (Heaven), if the good thoughts, words and deeds outweigh the bad ones. If judged wicked, the soul relegates itself to the House of Deceit (Hell). The soul remains in either of these spiritual states till the end of time, when the Last Judgment and Resurrection for all the souls will take place, upon the total annihilation of Evil from the world.

Faribourz Nariman: Yes. On the fourth day after death, the soul is judged by a divine tribunal at the Bridge of the Separator (*cinvato pere-tu*). The soul of a good person obtains blissful existence, that of the wicked suffers the torments of hell, and *hammistagan* (limbo) is meant for the soul of a person whose good and bad deeds are equal.

Cyrus Pangborn: Yes. If, at death, a person's virtues exceed his sins, the person's soul is admitted to paradise and assigned to one of four levels according to merit. If sins exceed virtues, the assignment is to hell. The *fravashis* (prototypal souls) of persons who were good are the "entities" which maintain spiritual contact with the living descendants.

Peshotan and Rooyintan Peer: No. Not permanently; it depends on the stage of advancement of the individual soul.

James Russell: Yes. Until *ristaxez* (the final resurrection), disembodied souls remain in Paradise, Hell, or the place called *Hammistagan*, where there is neither pleasure nor pain.

Rostam Sarfeh: Yes. Asho Zarathushtra, in eight verses of the *Gathas*, mentions the word Soul (*Urvanem*, *Urvano*, *Urva* which in Persian is called *Rawan*). All verses indicate the permanency of the soul, after its departure from the body. In Yasna 28.10 and 49.10, Zarathushtra teaches that the Soul of the Truthful, attuned to *Vohumano*, full of Divine Love, will gain abode with God or Exalted Home (Paradise).

Rustam Shahzadi: Yes. We have both *Geti* and *Mino* in Avesta. While *Geti* or the material world can be seen and thought, *Mino* or the spiritual world can neither be seen nor thought.

Farrokh Vajifdar: Yes. Our *Gathas* teach us (on the postmortem fate of the soul) that anyone who lives a life of pious deeds in accordance with the good words emanating from a cultivated good mind shall forever dwell in



spiritual bliss before Ahura Mazda. The reinstated Fravarti doctrine in no way contradicts this. Gathic references are many and unequivocal.

b: Regarding life after death, Zoroastrianism teaches that the departed soul returns from the spiritual world once again to the material world (*getig*) in human form.

If yes, please describe, in not more than five lines, the scriptural view regarding the future existence of the soul.

No: Antia, Azargoshasb, Boyce, Chubb, Darrow, Guillemin, Ito, JamaspAsa, Kotwal, Mehr, Mirza, Mistree, Nariman, Sarfeh, Vajifdar.

du Breuil: No. Fravartis come back once a year at the Farvardin (Jashne-Farvardigan). They remain in Heaven and help the incarnate souls until the world becomes perfect by the exclusion of Evil. The soul will not come back to this world (*getek*) until the Renovation (*Frasho-kereti*) and resurrection of the Final Body ("glorious body" Yt. 19.11.89; Bdh. XXX). Immortality everywhere will come only when the (one) responsible for death, the Destroyer of Life (called Ahri-man) will be expelled with every evil substance (Bdh. 11.10/11).

Doctor: Yes. "Those souls of the sinners who enjoy evil power, who are doers of wicked deeds, speakers of evil words, those with evil conscience and

those with wicked thoughts do come back after getting their desserts — truly their existence is in the abode of *druj*" — Yasna 49, 11.

Hinnells: No. The *menog* and *getig* are harmonized at the Renovation.

Irani: No. However, in late Pahlavi literature, there is a description of bodily resurrection at the end of time.

Kreyenbroek: See 1a.

Master-Moos: Both yes and no. The soul crosses the Dakhyus regions and reaches the Chinvat Bridge which separates those souls who are judged by the Yazatas in charge of the laws of karma (*Keshas*) as fit spiritually to cross over and attain immortality through spiritual progress on the Path of Ashoi from those who are spiritually unfit and have to return to this classroom of Nature called Planet Earth to learn the lessons of obedience to the Divine Laws.

Minochehr-Homji: Rev James Hope Moulton in *Early Zoroastrianism* notes, "Deed is the determinant of destiny."

Pangborn: Yes. But this doctrine is not found in the Scriptures. It is the doctrine of the Pahlavists who wrote such tracts as the *Denkard* and *Bundahishn* (ninth century AD). According to this doctrine, all souls are eventually perfected and given perfect bodies for dwelling eternally in a perfected world — a world coextensive, so to speak, with heaven. But this is after



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Angra Mainyu (the evil spirit) is finally defeated.

Peer and Peer: Yes. Yasna Ha 49.11 (i.e. *Gatha* No. 3 – ch.3, para 11); *Nirang-i-Gozashtegan*; Yasna Ha 43.5 (i.e. *Gatha* No. 2 – ch.1, para 5); the significance of reciting *Patet Pashemani* prayer at the time of a child's navjote, etc.

Russell: Yes. After ristaxez, men live in restored bodies at the eternal age of 15. Their bodies are reassembled by Ohrmazd.

Shahzadi: No. Avesta mentions an illimited *Zarwan* or time and illimited *Twash* or space. Why then should God send the departed souls of this world again to it?

Simmons: Yes. *Fraso-Karqti* will be accompanied by the reunion of soul and resurrected body prior to the Final Judgment. The process of "making wonderful" will culminate in the establishment of the righteous in the perfected (terrestrial) world where they will dwell with Ahura Mazda and the immortals for eternity.

c: Zoroastrianism teaches that the departed soul's future existence is con-

fined to the material world.

If yes, please describe, in not more than five lines, the scriptural view regarding the future existence of the soul.

No: Antia, Azargoshasb, Boyce, Chubb, Darrow, Doctor, Guillemin, Hinnells, Irani, Ito, JamaspAsa, Kotwal, Kreyenbroek, Master-Moos, Mehr, Minochehr-Homji, Mirza, Mistree, Nariman, Russell, Sarfeh, Simmons, Vajifdar.

du Breuil: No. The essence of Man is *menok*. He got a *getek* body only as a vestment to be "parachuted" down in this material world to fight against the Druj and help to expel Evil out of the mixed world (Dk. 245).

Pangborn: See 1b.

Peer and Peer: No. Not permanently; it depends on the stage of advancement of the individual soul.

Shahzadi: No. In Pahlavi book there is mention of *Mah Paye* or moon stage, *Setareh Paye* or star stage and *Korshid Paye* or sun stage of the departed souls.

Question 2: Is there any reference to reincarnation or rebirth (in the sense

that the soul of a deceased person is born once again in this world) in extant Zoroastrian texts?

If yes, please mention the chapter and verse of the text.

No: Bagli, Boyce, Chubb, Darrow, Guillemin, Ito, JamaspAsa, Kotwal, Mirza, Nariman, Shahzadi, Simmons, Vajifdar.

Antia: No. The texts quoted by Dasturji Khurshed Dabu and Prof I.J.S. Taraporewala are now translated differently and do not support reincarnation. However I was deeply influenced by them until I studied the problem on my own.

Azargoshasb: No. In none of the extant Zoroastrian texts (Avesta, Pahlavi, Pazend and Parsi books) can you find a reference to reincarnation.

du Breuil: No. The only misunderstood reference comes from a wrong interpretation made of the *Gathas* by I.J.S. Taraporewala (Y.49.11) who confuses this world with the Druj House (*drujo demane*) i.e. in a Manichean way instead of the Zoroastrian view where this world is only mixed with evil but belongs to Ahura Mazda's creation. He translated the words



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paiti yeinti as "coming back" instead of "going forth" (to the Druj House). No other translation agrees with this. The other person who quoted reincarnation wrongly was M.N. Pundol in his *The true knowledge which Minocheher Pundol Saheb acquired from the Sahebs of Demavand Koh, Udwada*, November 14, 1976, with no argument nor evidence whatsoever.

Doctor: Yes. (1) Yasna 49.11; (2) Yasna 31.20; (3) Yasna Ha 12; (4) Our Kushti's *Jasa-me-avangahe Mazda* prayer in which the word *Nidâs-nayithishem* occurs. This means (the religion which enables one) "to put down the weapon." The "weapon" here is our physical body which is the "weapon" of the soul. Even the Sanskrit translation of this word is pertinent: *Bhava-chhedam* means release from (this) incarnation; (5) Paragraph beginning with *Yeshân keshân...* in *Afrin of Gahambar Pâvi* and in *Dhoop sarna* ritual.

Hinnells: No. But as a non-Zoroastrian I do not think my opinion is important on spiritual matters.

Irani: No. See 1b.

Kreyenbroek: No. Not in the sense the word is normally understood. See 1a.

Master-Moos: Yes. *Gathas* Ha 43/verse 5, Ha 46/verses 8, 11, 19 (This is the Ha regarding reincarnation). *Meher Yasht, Fravardin Yasht*.

Mehr: (1) Yasna 49-11 speaks of the return of the souls of the wicked. It is by no means explicit. (2) *Desatir* speaks about reincarnation, but *Desatir's* authority has been challenged. Both Dastur Dhalla and Dr Taraporewala regard reincarnation as non-Zoroastrian.

Minochehr-Homji: Yes. (1) I.J. Taraporewala's *Divine Songs of Zarathushtra*, Yasna 30 St 10 (p 167) is debatable but Yasna 49, St 11 (p 730) is positive. (2) In his *The Religion of Zarathushtra*, Sohrab Balsara thinks that the above is a categorical mention of the doctrine of reincarnation in the *Gathas*. (3) Also Yasna 51, St 12: Taraporewala says, "It is possible to attain this goal (perfection) within one life upon earth." (4) *Desatir* (published circa tenth century AD). (5) Of *Qayaamat* (Resurrection) Dr S. Radhakrishnan wrote "Resurrection is not the rise of the dead from their tombs, but the passage from the death of self absorption to the life of unselfish love (*bahman* love), the transition



from the darkness of self individualism to the light of universal spirit, from falsehood to truth, from the slavery of the world (matter) to the liberty of the eternal (spirit)."

Mistree: No. In fact, not only is there no proper reference about reincarnation in Zoroastrianism, but there is a clear reference against it in the *Jamasp Namag*, where it is stated: "They cannot return to this world once again so that they may do virtuous deeds (*Persian Rivayats* translated by Ervad B.N. Dhabhar, pg 485)." The Avestan references given by the supporters of reincarnation are spurious and for further details see "Reincarnation and Zoroastrianism" by Dr H.E. Eduljee published in the Zoroastrian Studies newsletter of March '82.

Pangborn: No. Even in the Pahlavists' tracts, the soul is not said to be reborn but, rather, given back its original, finally perfected and thereafter perfect body. (I can't cite chapter and verse of these tracts, but see M.N. Dhalla's *History of Zoroastrianism* for references to them.)

Peer and Peer: Yes. See 1b.

Russell: No. Nobody is reborn. The bodies of men, dispersed into the elements of the material world (bones to stones, hair to plants, etc), are reassembled.

Sarfeh: No. This 'no' should be qualified. Some scholars, both occidental and oriental, influenced by Hinduism and Buddhism, misinterpret the words *Demane Drujo* in Yasna 49.11 as "this world," but the real meaning is the "abode of untruth." Asho Zarathushtra, in none of his verses in the *Gathas*, refers to this world as abode of untruth.

Question 3: Did any scholar in the middle or late nineteenth century speak of reincarnation as a Zoroastrian idea?

If yes, please mention the name(s) of the scholar(s).

No: Boyce, Chubb, Guillemin, Ito, JamaspAsa, Kotwal, Kreyenbroek, Mirza, Nariman, Simmons.

Antia: No. I am not sure if Dastur Azar Kaewan Bin Azar Gusasp, who taught in Patna in King Akbar's time, preached reincarnation because though born and raised in Iran, he comes close to being a precursor of modern-day theosophy. His teachings, however, are colored by mysticism and cannot be said to be purely or strictly Zoroastrian.

Bagli: Yes. (1) Dastur Khurshed S. Daboo in his books *Message of Zarathushtra* (p.54-61) and *Handbook of information on Zoroastrianism*

(p.66-79). (2) I.J.S. Taraporewala in his book *The Religion of Zarathushtra* alludes to the concept (p.30, 31, 136). *du Breuil*: Yes. But they were no scholars. Two authors of high esoteric inspiration but of no scientific background and no specific knowledge on history of religion and on the Iranian religion: Edouard Schuré (1841-1926) mostly in his *Les Grands Initiés* (The Great Initiates), Paris 1889; and his master, Rudolf Steiner, (1861-1925), another esoteric author influenced by the Theosophical Society and who founded his own Anthroposophical Society.

Darrow: No. i.e. among European scholars I don't believe any have presented a case for a doctrine of reincarnation among the Zoroastrians. I do not know as much as I should about Parsi scholars.

Doctor: Am not aware of it.

Hinnells: Yes. Those scholars associated with Theosophy in Bombay.

Irani: No. As far as I know.

Master-Moos: Yes. Late nineteenth century: Ustad Saheb Behramshah N. Shroff.

Mistree: No. No scholars of Zoroas-

trianism, in the mid or late nineteenth century, mentioned this alien belief as the oral tradition within the community was tight and the community was relatively insular to alien ideologies, save that of traditional Christianity in which reincarnation does not feature. *Pangborn*: No. I say "No," but I suppose there could be some such scholars whose works have never come to my attention.

Peer and Peer: Yes. Ervad Kavasji E. Kanga, the celebrated translator of the entire *Avesta*, and the compiler of the *Avesta Dictionary*.

Russell: Yes. I believe the followers of Mme Blavatsky were disposed to reinterpret the Zoroastrian faith this way.

Sarfeh: Yes. Khurshed S. Dabu of Surat, Professor Bartholomea and probably others.

Shahzadi: Yes. Dr Irach Taraporewala in his translation of the *Gathas* believes that in the eighth para of the twenty-ninth Ha of *ajasma* there is such an idea, but we know that this Ha was added to the *Gatha* later on as a preface to it.

Vajifdar: No. No responsible scholar of Zoroastrianism would claim this as

in any way a Zoroastrian idea!

Question 4: Who among the Iranologists were the first to see reincarnation in Zoroastrian texts and what was their background? (Answer in not more than one line per Iranologist.)

Antia: No Iranologist who is non-Zoroastrian has ever seen that and only those Parsis (never Irani Zoroastrians because they are never colored by Hinduism in their beliefs) who were theosophists and Ilm-e-Khshnoomists have tried to see it.

Bagli: Textual sources for the *Study of Zoroastrianism* (p. 155-157) edited by Prof Mary Boyce, refers to some of the references mentioned in answer 3 above.

Boyce: I know of no serious Iranologist who has done so.

du Breuil: I do not know any serious Iranologist having taught reincarnation as being a Zoroastrian belief. One cannot take argument that we own a little part of the original *Avesta*. In no remaining part is there any tiny reference to reincarnation. Would someone decide that Zarathushtra might have taught cannibalism in the lost parts of

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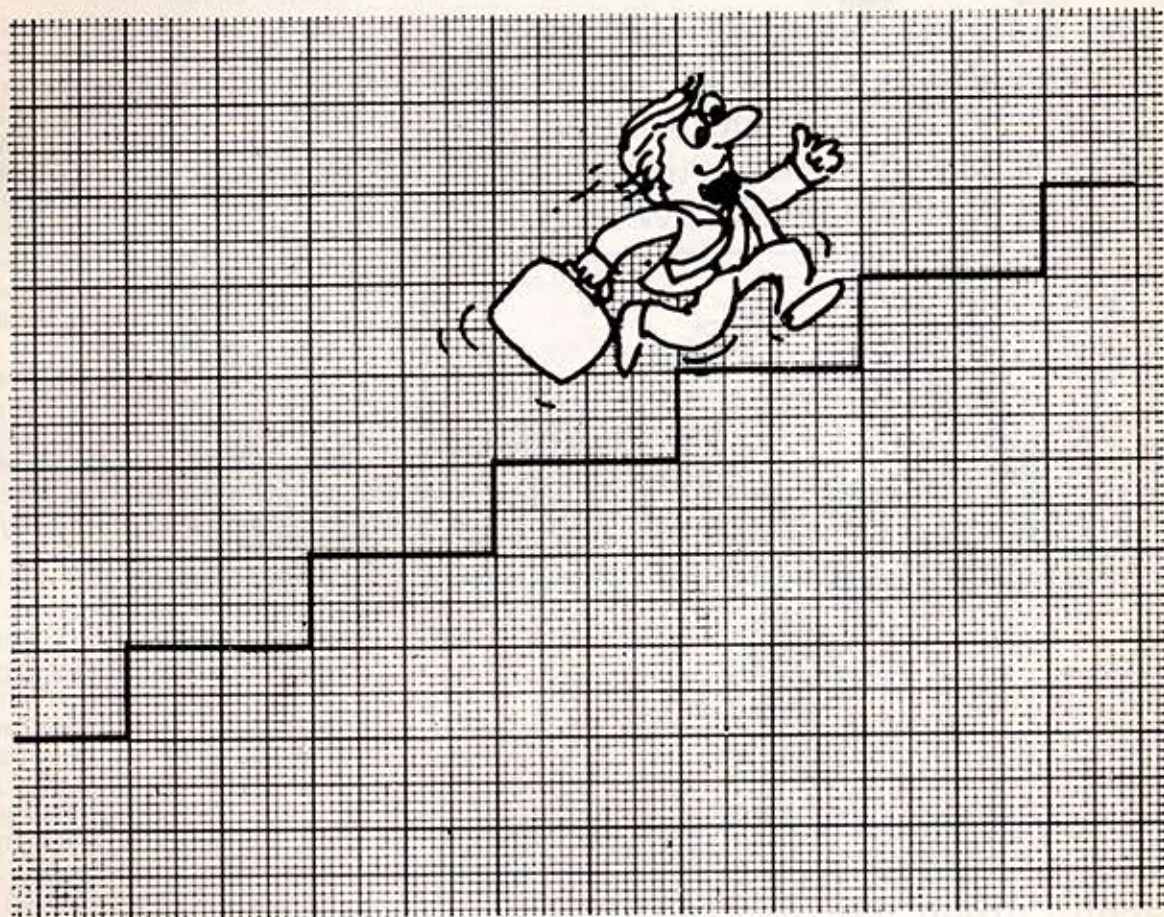


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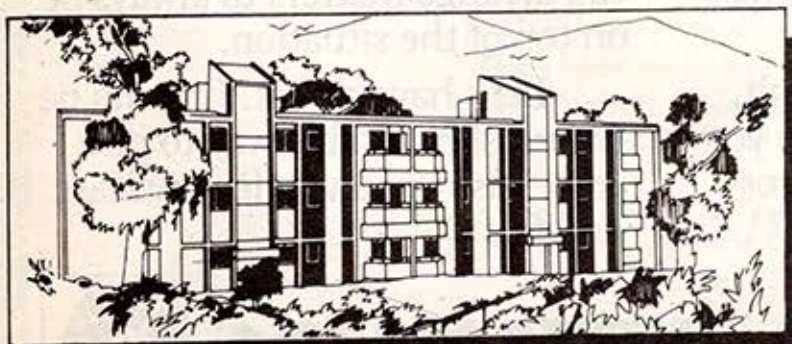
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his *Gathas*, in spite (of the fact) that no other part mentions it and that he preached against every kind of crime, slaughter and violence? Silence is no evidence.

Chubb: Dr I.J.S. Taraporewala and Dastur Khurshed Dabu are among the better known. Their belief is based upon Theosophy and their interpretation of certain texts along those lines.

Doctor: I think those who had also studied the mystic side of religions, theosophy at first, and later Ilm-e-Khshnoom (the esoteric side of the Zoroastrian religion) along with philology, were among the first Iranologists: Dr Irach Taraporewala from among the former, and Ervad Phiroze S. Masani from among the latter.

Irani: I do not know.

Jamaspa: Dr I.J.S. Taraporewala, Dasturji Khurshed S. Dabu and Dr Peshotan F. Peer. Their belief of reincarnation in Zoroastrianism is based on their interpretations of certain religious texts and their leanings towards Theosophy.

Kotwal: Ervad Phiroze S. Masani, an ardent exponent of the mystic school of Ilm-e-Khshnoom; Dr Framroze S. Chiniwalla, a silent propagator of the mystic school of Ilm-e-Khshnoom; Dr Irach J.S. Taraporewala, an erudite Iranologist who was greatly influenced by Hinduism; Dasturji Khurshed S.Dabu, a venerable high priest who was committed to Theosophy.

Master-Moos: Dr Irach J.S. Taraporewala (Theosophical), Kavi Ardeshir F. Khabardar (astrologer), Dr Framroze Chiniwalla, Jehangirji Chiniwalla and Ervad Phiroze Masani (Khshnoomists) and Dasturji Dabu, High Priest of the Wadiaji Atash Bahram.

Mirza: Dasturji Khurshed Shapurji Dabu, Dr I.J.S. Taraporewala.

Mistree: Iranologists who supported Theosophy, Ilm-e-Khshnoom or the Vendantists were the ones who imported this idea of reincarnation into the Zoroastrian faith: (1) K.R. Cama, who tacitly supported Khshnoom and Theosophy; (2) Dr Irach Taraporewala, deeply influenced by the Vendantists and post-vedic Hinduism; (3) Dastur Khurshed Dabu, a staunch Theosophist and High Priest of the H.B. Wadia Atash Bahram; (4) Ervad Phiroze Masani, a staunch Khshnoomist; (5) Dastur Framroze Bode, a secular reformist of no fixed

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persuasion; (6) Ervad Peshotan Peer, a Theosophist and follower of Dastur Dabu.

Nariman: Khurshed Dabu and Irach Taraporewala – both of them were considerably influenced by 'theosophism.'

Pangborn: I know of no bona fide scholars who do. The less-than-scholarly ones would be: (1) Behramshah Naoroji Shroff who had no credentials at all; (2) Framroze Sorabji Chiniwalla, a librarian when I met him; (3) Ms Meher Master-Moos, a Bombay lawyer, originally from Pune; (4) Dastur Khurshed S.Dabu of the H.B.Wadia Atash Bahram, Bombay.

Peer and Peer: 1) Dastur Khurshed Shapurji Dabu, well-known High Priest of the Parsi community in this century and MA gold medallist in Avesta-Pahlavi; 2) Dr Irach J.S.Taraporewala, BA, well-known scholar, celebrated linguist and the translator of the *Gathas*; (3) Ervad Phiroze Shapurji Masani, MA gold medallist in Avesta-Pahlavi; (4) Dastur Kaikhusrav M. Kutar, MA in Avesta-Pahlavi.

Sarfeh: Cannot say.

Shahzadi: Most of the Iranologists in translating the twenty-ninth Ha of *ajasma* suppose so, among whom is the late Dr I. Taraporewala.

Simmons: None (of whose work I am aware).

Vajifdar: See answer 3.

Question 5: Are you aware of any non-Parsi living scholar who is prepared to accept reincarnation as a Zoroastrian idea?

If yes, please mention the name(s) of the scholar(s) and their background.

No: Antia, Azargoshasb, Bagli, Boyce, Darrow, Doctor, Guillemin, Hinnells, Irani, Ito, Kreyenbroek, Nariman, Pangborn, Russell, Shahzadi, Simmons, Vajifdar.

du Breuil: No. Because the idea of reincarnation is against the Zoroastrian doctrine which is based on an active teleological view of the world, with a transfiguration thanks to human deeds (while Indian views think human activity is useless). No serious Iranologist, past and present, may accept reincarnation as a Zoroastrian idea because it is contrary to the historical records of this religion, to its dogmas and ethics. One must know how the reincarnation doctrine came about (See 9a).

Chubb: Yes. Jatindra Mohan Chatter-

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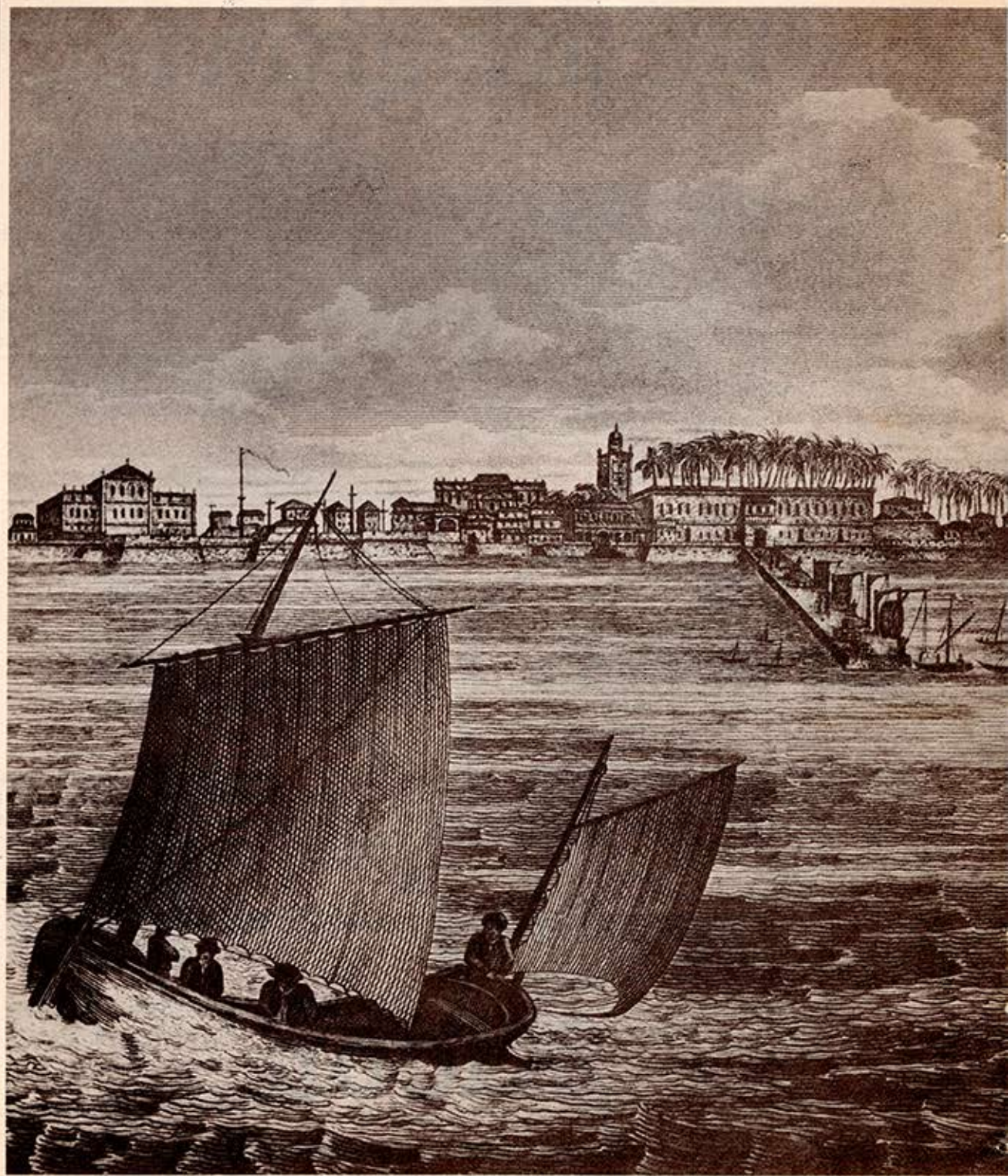
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ji, a Bengali scholar. Author of *The Hymns of Atharvan Zarathushtra* and *Ethical Conceptions of the Gathas*. He believes that Sufism was ultimately based on the teachings of the *Avesta*. He also holds that Vedic culture developed along two lines: one leading to the Vedanta tradition and the other the Avestan tradition.

Jamaspa: Yes. Jatindra Mohan Chatterji of Calcutta, who has translated the *Gathas* - *The Hymns of Atharvan Zarathushtra*.

Kotwal: Yes. Dr Jatindra M. Chatterji who passed away recently. He was deeply interested in linking Sufism and later Hinduism to the Zoroastrian faith.

Master-Moos: How is this relevant? I have not read all the works of the scholars of Europe, Asia, America, etc and hence cannot answer this question either way.

Mirza: Yes. Jatindra Mohan Chatterji, translator of the *Gathas* - *The Hymns of Atharvan Zarathushtra*, published by the Parsi Zoroastrian Association, Calcutta.

Mistree: Yes. Dr J.M. Chatterji, who recently died in Calcutta, believed in a

quasi-mystical and syncretic approach to religion, linking Sufism, Hinduism and Zoroastrianism. No serious scholar of the faith could possibly believe in such a doctrine.

Peer and Peer: Yes. Shri Jatindra Mohan Chatterji, author of several books on Zoroastrianism, including the celebrated work - *Atharva Zarathushtra*.

Sarfeh: Yes. I have had the privilege of talking to educated Parsis of India and Pakistan whose names I do not allow myself to mention here. Some of them were under the influence of their Indian (Hindu) gurus.

Question 6a: Are you aware of the existence of any Parsi group(s) or institution(s) which propagates reincarnation as a Zoroastrian idea?

If yes, please mention the name(s) of such group(s) or institution(s).

No: Azargoshasb, Darrow, Guillemin, Ito, Kreyenbroek, Russell, Sarfeh.

Antia: Yes. Ilm-e-Khshnoomists and theosophists. Dr Mary Boyce in her *History of Zoroastrians* contends that Ilm-e-Khshnoom is "a thorough-going adaptation of theosophy" with com-

mon beliefs in reincarnation, vegetarianism, Magaven Sahebs and Saheb-e-dilan Sahebs, and other esoteric beliefs. If she is right, one can see why the two agree on this issue.

Bagli: Yes. Ilm-e-Khshnoom.

Boyce: My knowledge here is only vague. Ilm-e-Khshnoomists are, I think, only one of several groups, which tend, I gather, to become subdivided.

du Breuil: No. I am not aware of any Parsi group propagating reincarnation as being a Zoroastrian idea, but I often hear Parsis, ill-informed about their own religion, believing in it under the Indian influence in the East and the Theosophical Movement in the West (powerful in the Masonic circles). This does not occur in Iran among the Zarthoshtis with the Muslim majority who don't believe in reincarnation.

Chubb: Yes. Ilm-e-Khshnoom; Mazdayasnie Monasterie; Parsi Vegetarian and Temperance Society (now defunct?).

Doctor: Yes. (1) Zarthoshti Radih Society; (2) Parsi Vegetarian and Temperance Society; (3) *Dini Avaz* Committee; (4) Dadar Jashan Committee;

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(5) Committee of Vigilant Parsis (COVP) and many, many others.

Hinnells: Yes. Ilm-e-Khshnoom and its various teachers.

Irani: Possible. I believe there may be, but I am not personally acquainted with such a group.

JamaspAsa: Yes. Ilm-e-Khshnoom; Mazdayasnie Monasterie.

Kotwal: Yes. Groups: Parsi Theosophists; Ilm-e-Khshnoomists. Institutions: Parsi Vegetarian and Temperance Society; Mazdayasnie Monasterie; Council of Vigilant Parsis, Rahnumae Mazdayasnan Sabha (in the process of being reborn as a forum for reincarnationists).

Master-Moos: Yes. (1) The Zoroastrian Ilm-e-Khshnoom Institute; (2) The Parsi Vegetarian and Temperance Society; (3) The Zoroastrian Radih Society; (4) Mazdayasnie Monasterie; (5) All India Shah Behram Baug Society for scientific and educational research; (6) Zoroastrian College; (7) Parsi Lodges of The Theosophical Society; (8) The Ilm-e-Khshnoom Felavani Committee; (9) Din-i-Avaz Committee; (10) *The Parsee Voice* magazine.

Mehr: Dastur Dhallal refers to them without giving any name.

Minochehr-Homji: Ilm-e-Khshnoom.

Mirza: Yes. Ilm-e-Khshnoom; Mazdayasnie Monasterie.

Mistree: Yes. Parsi Theosophists; Ilm-e-Khshnoomists; Pundolites; Mazdayasnie Monasterie; Rahnumae Sabha; Parsi Vendantists; Parsi Vegetarian and Temperance Society.

Nariman: Yes. (1) A small group of four or five Dabuites (followers of the famous Parsi reincarnationist Dastur Khurshed Dabu). (2) The K.N. Dastoor faction of the Khshnoomist group. (3) The Parsi Vegetarian and Temperance Society.

Pangborn: Yes. Ilm-e-Khshnoom, the sect inspired by Behramshah Naoroji Shroff and (propagated) today by Ms Master-Moos. (Dastur Dabu did not inspire or found any special interest group, but my recollection is that he himself entertained the idea of reincarnation as a result of the interest he took in Theosophy - a "system" which borrowed a number of ideas from Hinduism.)

Peer and Peer: Yes. The Parsi Vegetarian and Temperance Society; and the

Zoroastrian Radih Society, both founded by Ervad Phiroze S. Masani (see answer 4). The founders of the Jashan Committee, among them mainly stalwarts like Jehangir D. Vimadali, Faredoon K. Dadachanjee, etc, and the editors of the Jashan Committee's magazine - *Rah-e-Zarathushtra*. Also Nusserwanji Billimoria and his son Ardeshir Billimoria, editors of the magazine *Cherag*.

Shahzadi: Yes. Those who have come in contact with the Hindu scriptures.

Simmons: Yes. Ilm-e-Khshnoom.

Vajifdar: Yes. The modern "theosophists" closely connected with Indian religious thought. Parsi theosophy conveniently neglects the *Gathas* and later Avestan texts. Alternatively they wilfully misinterpret the *Gathas* to suit their particular viewpoints. Remember Moulton's warning on the Parsi departure from the *Gathas*!

b: Are you aware of any Parsi group or institution which supports those who propagate reincarnation as a Zoroastrian idea?

If yes, please mention the name(s) of such group(s) or institution(s).

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No: Azargoshasb, Boyce, Chubb, Darrow, Guillemin, Irani, Ito, JamaspAsa, Kreyenbroek, Mirza, Russell, Sarfeh.

Antia: Yes. Ilm-e-Khshnoomists and Theosophists.

du Breuil: No. This would be a lie and a historical error. Because not only Zoroastrianism is part of the question, but also the Western religions which have inherited its eschatology and soteriology. Judaism (after Babylonian exile), Christianity and Islam have the same views on the end of the world, one life on earth, the world transfigured by a Savior (Saoshyant, Christ or Imam) and the resurrection of the bodies. Moreover, as I have written about this, Zoroastrianism has a leading task towards these religions influenced by Mazdaism: to show that the concept of resurrection of bodies does not concern physical bodies but transfigured and spiritual ones (see my *Zarathushtra and the Transfiguration of the World*, pgs 158, 276, 337).

Doctor: Yes. See answer 6a.

Hinnells: Yes. Ilm-e-Khshnoom.

Kotwal: Yes. See answer 6a.

Master-Moos: Yes. (1) Theosophical Society writers such as Duncan Greenlees; (2) Mazdasnans of Europe (3) Rosicrucians; (4) Writers of masonic societies / lodges; (5) Minocher Pundole's followers; (6) Edgar Cayce's researchers.

Mistree: Yes. Dadar Athornan Mandal; Jashan Committee; Council of Vigilant Parsis (COVP); Parsi Freemasons. In the above-mentioned groups, the chief office bearers or officials invariably believe in reincarnation as a comfortable palliative as versus the traditional Zoroastrian viewpoint.

Nariman: Yes. (1) The Dabuites, common to both the Parsi Vegetarian and Temperance Society and The Bombay Jashan Committee; (2) the Dadar Jashan Committee; (3) the truncated Council of Vigilant Parsis; (4) the Rahnumae Mazdayasnan Sabha (of 1987); (5) the *Dini Awaz* Committee. *Pangborn*: Yes. *Parsiana* and the newsletters of several Canadian and American Zoroastrian associations carry notes from time to time about lectures Ms Master-Moos will be giving (or has already given) at association meetings. From the tone of the notes, I take it that she is cordially welcomed. I know nothing, however, as to whether or not she receives finan-

cial remuneration for these lectures. (I hope no remuneration is given.)

Peer and Peer: Same as 6a.

Simmons: Yes. See answer 6a.

Vajifdar: Yes. See answer 6a.

c: Are you aware of any group or institution which opposes those who propagate reincarnation as a Zoroastrian idea?

If yes, please mention the name(s) of such group(s) or institution(s).

No: Azargoshasb, Darrow, Guillemin, Ito, JamaspAsa, Mirza, Sarfeh.

Antia: Yes. All those scholars other than some Khshnoomists and theosophists who have studied Avesta and Pahlavi with an unbiased mind.

Bagli: Yes. Zoroastrian Studies (see supplement to the Newsletter of Zoroastrian Studies Vol. III, No. 1 April 1982).

Boyce: Yes. Zoroastrian Studies. I do not know of others, but had always hoped that the majority of Parsis opposed those who propagate this idea.

du Breuil: Yes. I think the mobeds' body does, and is right to do so.

Chubb: No organized body as such, but most scholars with a deep knowledge of the sacred scriptures will refute the idea of reincarnation as a Zoroastrian precept.

Doctor: Yes. I don't remember their names.

Hinnells: Yes. Zoroastrian Studies.

Irani: Yes. Most scholarly institutions concerned with Zoroastrianism.

Kotwal: Yes. Groups: Parsi scholars of repute who follow faithfully the whole gamut of the Zoroastrian scriptures.

Institutions: (1) Rahnumae Mazdayasnan Sabha (of yore); (2) Zoroastrian Studies; (3) Athravan Educational Trust.

Kreyenbroek: Yes.

Master-Moos: Yes. Zoroastrian Studies.

Mistree: Yes. Zoroastrian Studies; Athravan Educational Trust; present day Parsi scholars and priests; top foreign scholars of the religion.

Nariman: Yes. (1) A small group of illustrious and dedicated scholars; (2) The Rahnumae Mazdayasnan Sabha (till the end of 1986); (3) Zoroastrian Studies; (4) Athravan Educational Trust.

Pangborn: No. The great majority of Zoroastrians, since they have little or no interest in the doctrine of reincarnation, do not feel threatened enough to organize resistance to the

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few who promote the idea.

Peer and Peer: No (to the best of our knowledge).

Russell: Yes. Zoroastrian studies (Bombay); Athravan Educational Trust.

Shahzadi: Yes. We real Zoroastrians of Iran.

Simmons: Yes. Zoroastrians who consider themselves orthodox.

Vajifdar: Yes. All honest students of Zarathushtra's teachings as clearly set out in his *Gathas* and, later, in the Pahlavi texts and commentaries.

Question 7: Is the concept of reincarnation compatible with the spirit of Zoroastrian tradition?

No: Antia, Azargoshasb, Boyce, Chubb, Guillemin, Irani, JamaspAsa, Kotwal, Kreyenbroek, Minochehr-Homji, Mirza, Mistree, Nariman, Pangborn, Russell, Sarfeh, Simmons, Vajifdar.

Yes: Bagli, Doctor, Ito, Master-Moos, Peer and Peer, Shahzadi.

Can't say: Darrow, Hinnells.

du Breuil: No. See answer 9a.

Question 8a: What percentage of your Iranologist colleagues, past and pre-

sent, would agree that reincarnation is a Zoroastrian idea?

Zero percent: Antia, Boyce, Hinnells, Ito, Kreyenbroek, Simmons, Vajifdar. Cannot say: Minochehr-Homji, Sarfeh.

du Breuil: Very few, if any...

Doctor: 25 to 30 percent.

Irani: Below two percent.

JamaspAsa: Minuscule.

Kotwal: One percent.

Master-Moos: Cannot give percentages.

Mirza: Minority.

Nariman: Less than one percent.

Pangborn: Zero percent of those I know.

Peer and Peer: Maybe a few.

b: What percentage of your Iranologist colleagues, past and present, would agree that reincarnation is not a Zoroastrian idea?

100 percent: Antia, Boyce, Hinnells, Ito, Kreyenbroek, Simmons, Vajifdar. 99 percent: Kotwal, Shahzadi.

Bagli: I cannot answer this question.

du Breuil: Most of them.

Chubb: Difficult to state percentages accurately, but most scholars will not agree that reincarnation is a Zoroastrian belief.

Darrow: I think the vast majority would be in this group.

Irani: At least 98 percent.

JamaspAsa: Majuscule.

Master-Moos: Cannot give percentages.

Mirza: Majority.

Mistree: That reincarnation is not a Zoroastrian idea — 99 percent would agree, amongst serious scholars of the religion both East and West.

Nariman: More than 99 percent.

Pangborn: 100 percent of those I know.

Peer and Peer: Maybe several of them.

Russell: Most would say it was not a Zoroastrian idea.

Sarfeh: Cannot say.

Question 9a: If, according to you, the majority of Iranologists, past and present, accept reincarnation as a Zoroastrian idea, what, in general, prompts the minority to reject the majority view?

(Answer in not more than three lines).

Antia: A study of the *Avesta* in general and the *Gathas* in particular will provide a ready answer. Even the Pahlavi literature does not mention it. The Iranian Zoroastrians have never believed in it.

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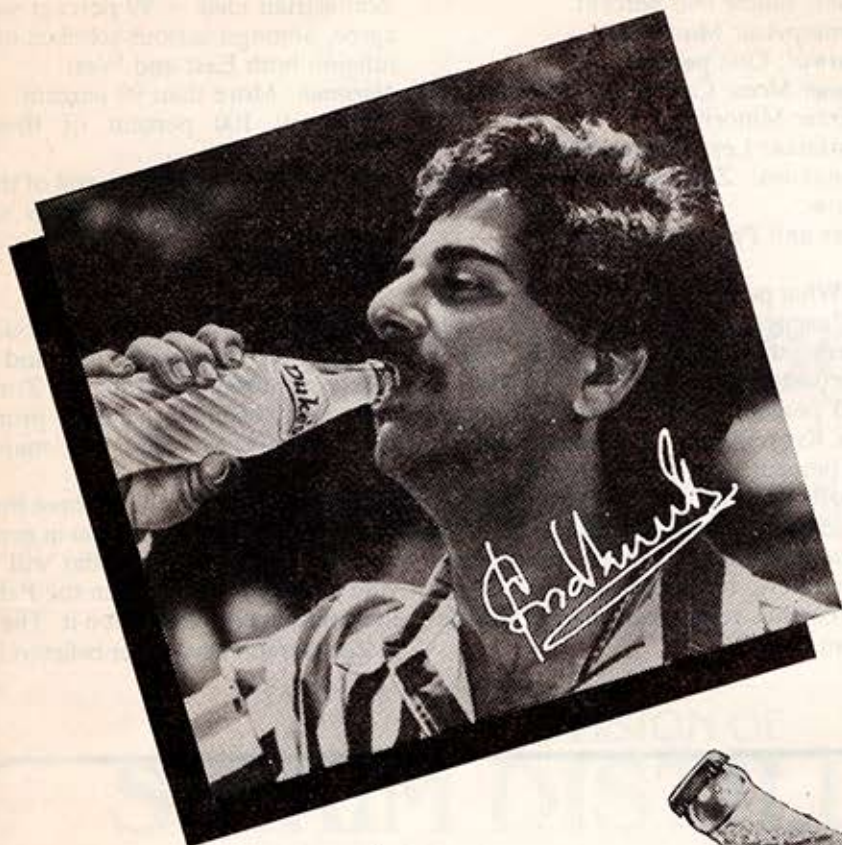
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du Breuil: No, they don't because: Zoroastrianism and reincarnation come from two different religious traditions. Reincarnation was unknown to the first Vedic tradition. It is not an Aryan belief, but comes later from the Indian non-Brahmanic creeds. Reincarnation (which is also metempsychosis, i.e. reincarnation into animals) appears for the first time in the early *Upanishads* [*Brhadaranyaka* (VI) and *Chandogya* (V)] among ascetic groups of monks preaching the illusion of the world and the suffering of life and of birth and rebirth (*samsara*). In order to escape from the world (this is anti-Zoroastrian) they preached retreat and non-activity, i.e. all the contrary of the active ethical doctrine of Zarathushtra who preached struggle against one's own wickedness and against all kinds of evil thoughts, words and deeds. This comes from the virile Aryan tradition and not from the Indian one which is now influencing fatalistic Parsis with the karmic law as many Sasanian Zoroastrians were influenced by the fatalistic Zarvan doctrine of 'Fate.'

Ito: No textual suggestion in the *Gathas*.

Jamaspa: On the basis of the reply to 8b, the question does not arise.

Kotwal: The majority of Iranologists have rejected reincarnation as a Zoroastrian idea. In fact, it is the majority of lay people who believe in this idea, not the true scholars.

Master-Moos: Ignorance; superficial knowledge and lack of spiritual understanding of the surviving texts; egoism.

Minochehr-Homji: Uncertain guesswork. "From whose bourne no traveller returns to tell the tale."

Mirza: The question does not arise.

Mistree: The majority of Iranologists, past and present, have rejected the idea of reincarnation. Scholarship should not be in terms of majority view, but one based upon intellectual inquiry and truth.

Sarfeh: They are unable to or are indifferent.

Simmons: Does not apply.

b: If, according to you, the majority of Iranologists, past and present, reject reincarnation as a Zoroastrian idea, what, in general, prompts the minority

to reject the majority view?

(Answer in not more than three lines).

Antia: The minority may so want to believe in it that they will stretch the meaning of Avestan words to prove their theory. There is no word for 'reincarnation' in Avesta and probably in Pahlavi also.

Boyce: As far as I know, there is not even a minority which rejects the view that reincarnation is not a Zoroastrian idea.

du Breuil: Most of the Iranologists reject reincarnation as a Zoroastrian idea but a minority of Parsis don't care about the science of religion. They are fond of syncretic ideas even when (these) are opposed to their religion. The same syncretism existed in ancient Iran and accepted into the pure Zoroastrian faith ideas of Mithra's cult, of Zarvanism, of Iranian popular beliefs (even of blood sacrifices quite opposed to Zarathushtra's teachings). Teaching reincarnation as a Zoroastrian concept is a lie and a historical error (see answer 9a). The *fravartis* are (referred to) by their (unique) identity name from Gayomart to Saoshyant (Yt 13.96.142) of their one and only

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incarnation. Even Keresaspa, the Aryan hero, instead of being reincarnated, is lying and awaiting his resurrection under the guard of the Farr (Xvarenah) and of 10,000 fravartis (Yt 13.61. Bdh.XXIX 8).

Chubb: Erroneous interpretation to texts based upon their leanings towards theosophy or, perhaps, Buddhism.

Darrow: I would think it is the Indian context in which many Zoroastrians now live that lends authority to the truth of reincarnation.

Doctor: Tangible, incontrovertible evidence even in the fragmentary, extant Avesta and Pahlavi texts, as stated earlier.

Hinnells: The Pahlavi texts have a linear view of time in which individual souls have a single life in the *getig* world where they have free will but in which the Zoroastrian goal is to help the restoration of the Good Creation. Life hereafter is determined by the use of that lifetime of free will. I believe the Pahlavi texts here spell out what is implied in the *Gathas*.

Irani: Pervasive influence of the spiritual conceptions emerging from Hin-

du thought.

Ito: The minority cannot be supported by any textual description in the *Gathas*.

Jamaspa: Their convictions based on their interpretation of certain religious texts.

Kotwal: The background and/or influence of non-Zoroastrian ideas and Indian pluralism yoked to various gurus and mahatmas prompts the minority to reject the majority view of scholars whose conclusions are founded on the solid rock of the Zoroastrian scriptures.

Kreyenbroek: Hindu or Theosophist influences.

Mehr: The influence of Hinduism and Buddhism; some similarity between the effects of the Law of Karma and the Law of Asha (as to action and reaction or the law of consequence).

Mirza: Their convictions based on their interpretation of certain religious texts.

Mistree: The majority of Iranologists have rejected the reincarnation theory but people are exposed to popular religious beliefs where they live. In India, as reincarnation is a popular theory,

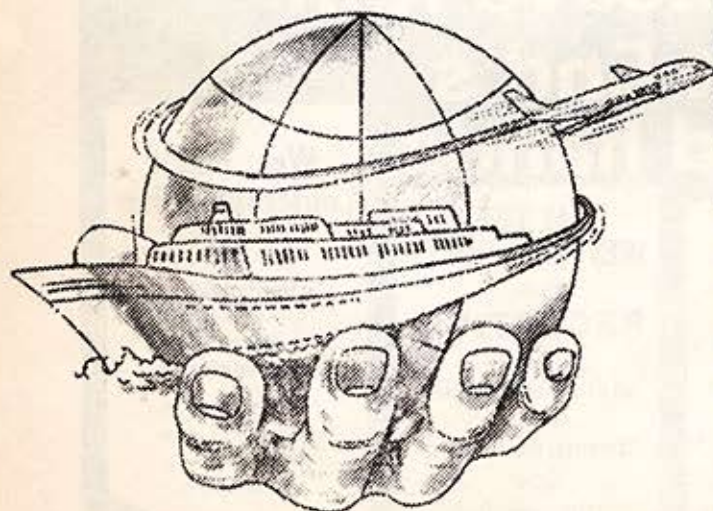
the majority of people, including Parsis, accept it, without giving it much serious thought.

Nariman: The fatal eagerness of the few in minority to be projected as discoverers of "hidden meanings" combined with their irremediable incomprehension of the spirit of Zoroastrian tradition.

Pangborn: There are always some people for whom curious speculative notions are more exciting than is the serious task of ordering their lives around sound character-building precepts.

Peer and Peer: The majority of Iranologists are as such non-Parsi Western scholars, and some of the Parsis are under the influence of these people. Besides, the majority of them do not want to go deep into this concept. They would stop at a certain stage, and would generalize it as "mystery of life," "mystery of God," etc. The concept of reincarnation is based not only on the study of philology, but also requires philosophical insight and common sense. If Zoroastrianism firmly believes in the Doctrine of Justice of God, then the theory of reincarnation

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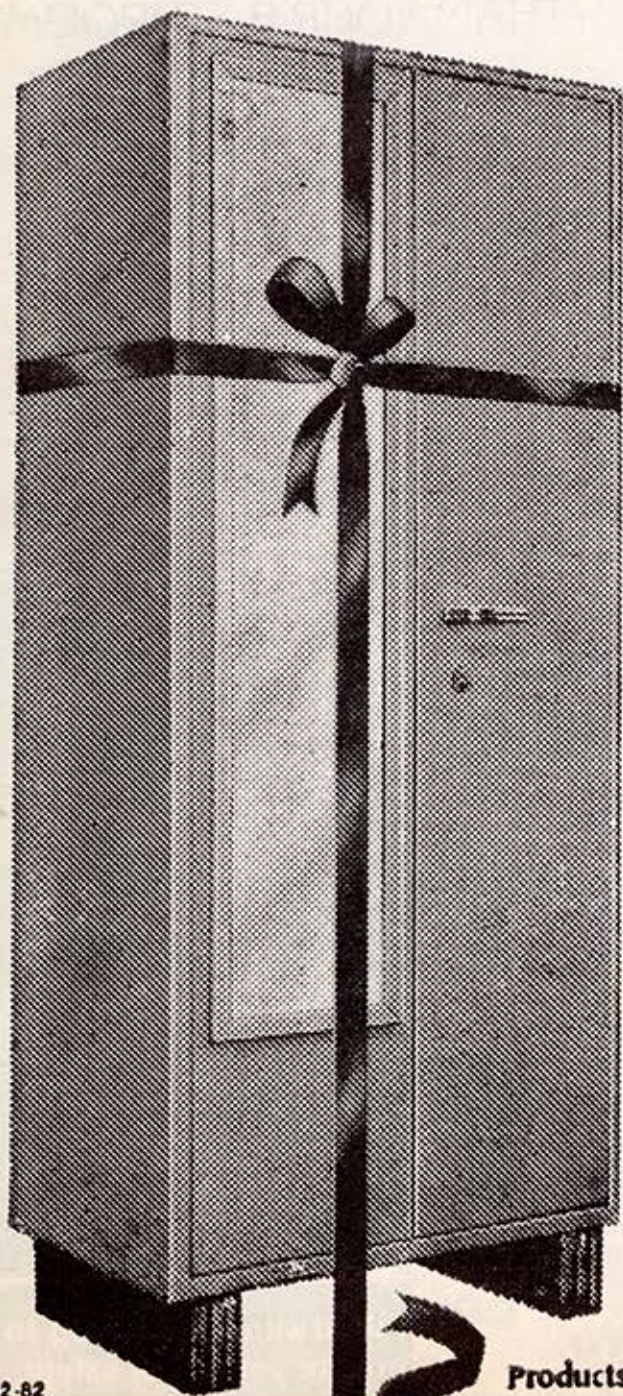
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is its natural corollary. When references are found in the scriptures, why not expound them?

Russell: Reincarnation accords with the doctrine of *karma*. Both represent inroads of Indian religion and are convenient explanations for circumstances in life and fate which proponents of this (Zoroastrian) doctrine find inexplicable otherwise.

Sarfeh: If I knew who are the majority, probably I could answer this question.

Shahzadi: Those who believe in reincarnation think that there is no planet or space beyond this earth for God's creatures.

Simmons: There is no minority among Iranologists who support reincarnation as a Zoroastrian idea. Among Zoroastrians who believe in reincarnation, the reason is faith.

Vajifdar: An incorrect evaluation of Zoroastrianism, perhaps through a strong background of "karmic" influence and, again, theosophy.

Question 10a: If Zoroastrianism preaches reincarnation, what, according to you, would be the harm caused to young Zoroastrians if they are persuaded to believe that the doctrine of reincarnation is un-Zoroastrian / anti-Zoroastrian?

(Answer in not more than three lines.)
du Breuil: It does not. Thus it is good to tell them that it is anti-Zoroastrian not to have confidence in this world, not to act to serve it, not to believe in Zarathushtra's faith (that it is Man's duty) to help God to save the world. How can the most audacious and gorgeous doctrine ever edicted in religions be balanced by beliefs coming from another ethnological world? (see answer 9a).

Ito: The young Zoroastrians will surely be perplexed by the antinomy and ask the textual foundation of reincarnation.

Jamaspa: Since Zoroastrianism does not preach reincarnation, the question does not arise.

Kotwal: Zoroastrianism does not preach reincarnation, and so the harm lies in misleading the youth and making a mockery of a number of Zoroastrian doctrines crucial to the proper understanding of the faith.

Master-Moos: Harm caused is (1) misunderstanding the sublime, spiritual, lofty teachings of Asho Zarathushtra; (2) confusion, which can lead them to

grasp at other religions or "holy persons" and thus lose faith in their own religion; (3) spiritual regression through ignorance.

Mirza: The question does not arise.

Mistree: If Zoroastrianism preaches that there is reincarnation, which it does not, then no harm would come to the youth by telling them that the doctrine of reincarnation is un-Zoroastrian anti-Zoroastrian.

Peer and Peer: It would be harmful in such a way that the young minds would tend to be shaky in their belief in the Justice of God. They would think that if nothing is going to happen afterwards, then why take trouble to differentiate between good and evil; this would thereby affect their moral responsibility.

Sarfeh: The ignorant, uninterested youth does not care one way or the other.

Shahzadi: If Zoroastrianism preached reincarnation then there would be no need of killing or destroying harmful creatures, such as microbes, flies, mosquitoes or other of Ahriman's creatures.

Simmons: Does not apply.

b: If Zoroastrianism does not preach reincarnation, what according to you, would be the harm caused to young Zoroastrians if they are persuaded to believe that reincarnation is a Zoroastrian idea?

(Answer in not more than three lines.)

Antia: Little harm can come to those who are not aware of the Zoroastrian philosophy and way of life as explained in the *Gathas*. Asho Zarathushtra, however, preaches that we have a mission to fulfil in this life and that mission has to be fulfilled in this very life, and we'll be judged on the basis of one life alone. He does not say there is more life than one nor does he say there is no reincarnation. He simply wants us to take this life seriously or else.

Azargoshasb: As said before, Zoroastrianism does not preach reincarnation so the harm done to young Zoroastrians who believe in reincarnation is that, since according to their idea, the soul of a departed person returns to this world in human form, so our religious ceremonies such as *Sevom* (*oothumna*), *Chaharom*, *Daha*, *Siroozah*, *Rooza*, anniversary day and *Gatha* and *Farvardigan* days would be senseless to them.

Bagli: Regarding the answer to ques-

tion 10(a) and (b), I personally see no reason to persuade the young minds one way or the other about a concept that is so profound and yet so poorly understood. When there is no unanimity among the learned and scholarly individuals, the best option for the laity is to admit the limitation of knowledge, and encourage the interested young Zoroastrians to investigate and think for themselves.

It is important to point out that the dogmatic attitude presented by Mr. J.E. Sanjana (as quoted in *ZS Newsletter* Vol. III No. 1, April 1982) is totally unacceptable. To say that belief in 'transmigration' and belief in one Creator are incompatible is a clear expression of one's ignorance of either concept in its fullness. One does not find answers to ideas of this magnitude in 'black and white.' It is the experiences accumulated over long periods of time — a lifetime, maybe more — that evolves the contention of humans through appreciation of the knowledge of creation around them.

Boyce: Their grasp of the essential doctrines taught by Asho Zardusht would be weakened, and they would become wholly confused, more Hindus than Zoroastrians.

du Breuil: Zoroastrianism teaches the truth as first commandment. Teaching reincarnation to young Zoroastrians would thus be a lie. Most of all, Zarathushtra did not teach reincarnation because he preached the affirmation of life while the Indian teaches the negation and illusion of life. Hence the Zoroastrian has a reason to fight for the good in one life, and not to escape by hoping for another life and flee the responsibilities of doing nothing for the world, humanity and improvement of life. Instead of willing to leave this world for ever (*moksa*, *nirvana*) a Zoroastrian knows that he is Ahura Mazda's soldier and that he has only one life to become a righteous man if not a saint. Once he struggles against evil in this life, he (is) sure to (feel) safe in the spiritual world (*menok*) and to serve with the Fravartis until the Renovation comes.

Chubb: The very rationale of reincarnation being against the basic teachings of Zoroastrianism, acceptance of such an alien doctrine would naturally lead to un-Zoroastrian ideas and beliefs.

Darrow: This is a moral judgment that

I do not think is appropriate for a sympathetic outsider to make.

Hinnells: As a non-Zoroastrian I am not happy to say what spiritual path you should or should not follow.

Irani: Religious beliefs are matters of deep personal conviction; they are harmful only if they lead to, or permit, a life of moral corruption. I do not think belief in reincarnation would be harmful.

JamaspAsa: It would lead to un-Zoroastrian ideas and beliefs.

Kotwal: If Zoroastrians are persuaded to believe that reincarnation is a Zoroastrian idea, important Zoroastrian doctrines such as the belief in Heaven and Hell, the Last Judgment, the Resurrection and Renovation of the world would become redundant. Un-Zoroastrian ideas like blind destiny and the theory of ceaseless births would make Ahura Mazda a weak creator and a powerless ruler of the universe. Furthermore, maintaining genealogies and remembering the souls of the dear departed ones would also become redundant, as there would be no purpose in performing the All Souls' Days (Muktad) ceremonies if the souls have already been reincarnated. In sum, the belief in reincarnation would reduce Zoroastrianism to an adulterated form of an indefinable creed.

Kreyenbroek: No greater harm than a young Christian would suffer if he believed that Christ was a Marxist: one can believe in both – they are just not part of the same system.

Mehr: Distortion and misrepresentation of the Zarathushtrian doctrines.

Mirza: It leads to un-Zoroastrian ideas and beliefs.

Mistree: As reincarnation according to the Zoroastrian scriptures does not exist in the religion, then clearly it is wrong for the youth to believe in this theory, as ideologically they would be heretical to the faith. Our eschatology and after-life rituals are based upon the assumption that reincarnation does not exist in the faith, otherwise what is the point of performing the Muktad ceremonies, if the soul has already reincarnated into this world, whilst we pray for its salvation in the next?

Nariman: Young Zoroastrians would become fatalists because Zoroastrian ideas of individual judgment, final (collective) judgment and renovation would be blotted out in the process.

Pangborn: It could, and often does, encourage complacency with social evil and injustice. Becoming infatuated with wholly speculative ideas about a next life distracts from the task of improving the present one. It substitutes "toying with ideas" for engagement in the struggle to live the good life in the "here and now."

Russell: The idea of inherited *karma* encourages a fatalistic and quietist approach to the inequalities and misfortunes of life. This undermines Zoroastrian belief in the necessity to

"The concept of reincarnation requires philosophical insight and commonsense"

fight evil, assist others, and promote equality and brotherhood.

Sarfeh: The intelligent and educated youth who has studied the *Gathas*, knows very well that reincarnation has not been preached by Asho Zarathushtra, and is not compatible with the modern trend of thought in the realm of spirit. If we insist to preach to them this non-Zoroastrian idea, we might lose some of the followers of the religion.

Shahzadi: A real Zoroastrian would never come to believe reincarnation.

Simmons: This is a question which can only be answered by a Zoroastrian. Non-Zoroastrians should not make prescriptive statements about the religion, and this question calls for an answer which would not qualify as simply descriptive.

Vajifdar: As the very notion of reincarnation contradicts basic Zoroastrian doctrine, it stands to reason that any such acceptance vitiates their beliefs and distorts their knowledge of Zarathushtra's wonderfully unique system.

Question 11a: From the viewpoint of comparative religion, do you find the doctrine of reincarnation in Vedic tradition?

Yes: Azargoshasb, Hinnells, Master-Moos, Mehr, Pangborn, Peer and Peer, Russell, Sarfeh, Shahzadi, Vajifdar.

No: Boyce, Chubb, Guillemin, Ito, JamaspAsa, Kotwal.

Can't say: Doctor, Kreyenbroek.

Antia: Yes (Hindu tradition). Early *Vedas* may not mention it, especially those *Rig Veda* hymns written before the Aryans reached India.

Bagli: Yes (with reservations).

du Breuil: No – not before the *Upanishads*.

Darrow: Yes, i.e. after the *Vedas*.

Irani: No – But in the late Hindu tradition, yes.

Simmons: Yes – If one includes the *Upanishads*

b: Do you find the doctrine of reincarnation in Judaic tradition?

No: Antia, Azargoshasb, Boyce, du Breuil, Chubb, Darrow, Guillemin, Hinnells, Irani, Ito, JamaspAsa, Kotwal, Kreyenbroek, Mehr, Mirza, Mistree, Nariman, Pangborn, Russell, Sarfeh, Shahzadi, Vajifdar.

Yes: Doctor, Master-Moos.

Can't say: Bagli, Peer and Peer.

Simmons: No – if one excludes the Kabbalah.

c: Do you find the doctrine of reincarnation in Christian tradition?

No: Antia, Azargoshasb, Boyce, du Breuil, Chubb, Darrow, Guillemin, Hinnells, Irani, Ito, JamaspAsa, Kotwal, Kreyenbroek, Mehr, Minochehr-Homji, Mirza, Mistree, Nariman, Pangborn, Russell, Sarfeh, Shahzadi, Simmons, Vajifdar.

Yes: Doctor, Master-Moos, Peer and Peer.

Bagli: Can't say.

d: Do you find the doctrine of reincarnation in Islamic tradition?

No: Antia, Azargoshasb, Boyce, du Breuil, Chubb, Darrow, Guillemin, Hinnells, Irani, Ito, JamaspAsa, Kotwal, Kreyenbroek, Mehr, Minochehr-Homji, Mirza, Mistree, Nariman, Pangborn, Russell, Sarfeh, Shahzadi, Simmons, Vajifdar.

Can't say: Bagli, Doctor, Master-Moos, Peer and Peer.

e: Do you find the doctrine of reincarnation in Buddhist tradition?

Yes: Antia, Boyce, du Breuil, Chubb, Darrow, Doctor, Guillemin, Hinnells, Irani, Ito, JamaspAsa, Kotwal, Kreyenbroek, Master-Moos, Mehr, Mirza, Mistree, Nariman, Pangborn, Peer and Peer, Russell, Sarfeh, Simmons, Vajifdar.

Can't say: Azargoshasb and Shahzadi.

Bagli: Yes (with reservations).

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The rift at Masina Hospital

Homi J. Rogers



For over the past five months, Bombay's Masina Hospital, lying sandwiched between the two Parsi-tenanted Wadia Baugs at Byculla, has been in the eye of a storm. The controversy, that has spilt over into the Parsi Press and subsequently into the leading Bombay dailies, saw a split amongst the Hospital's board of trus-

tees, charges of misconduct against the institution's superintendent, and a strike by the staff members affiliated to the Hospital's militant union.

*Frontage of Masina Hospital
(Inset) Statue of Jerbai Masina*

Photos: Homiyar Mistry (Homz Prints)



Once a palace belonging to the rich Jewish merchant David Sassoon, the building was converted into a hospital in 1902 by Dr Hormasji Masina to whom it was gifted by his Jewish benefactor, as a token of gratitude for having treated him. Until the Hospital went cosmopolitan, Masina functioned for the Parsi community like a step-sibling to the larger and more renowned B.D. Petit Parsee General Hospital. Over the years, however, the Hospital made a name for itself in laying down standards of professionalism in medical care, thanks to the untiring efforts of its strict superintendents — men like Col Dara R. Bharucha, and later, Col Gev S. Godiwala. They brought the discipline and regimen of the armed forces to bear upon the administration. With the onset of advancing age, coupled with an untimely stroke, Col Godiwala's presence at the Hospital became minimal, forcing Rustom Kuka, one of the trustees, to comment that the "Hospital became an orphan after 5 p.m."

On the lookout for a dynamic superintendent, on November 27, 1986 the trustees placed the mantle on Dr Sam Batlivala (now 47), a doctor who, over six years ago, had started the acupuncture division at Masina's outpatient department. He remarks with justifiable pride that he "has sold drugless therapy to a company manufacturing drugs," referring to his appointment as a medical consultant at Glindia (previously Glaxo India), a job which he has continued to hold even after assuming charge as superintendent at Masina.

Trouble, however, was soon to start when Batlivala, who kept his patients on 'pins and needles,' extended the same treatment to his staff. It was not uncommon for Batlivala, who stays in the neighboring Rustom Baug, divided

from the Hospital by just a wall, to frequent the Hospital at any time of the day or night and catch the nurses or wardboys unawares — sleeping on the job, stealing food and vials of dangerous drugs. "I have frequently caught my staff indulging in malpractices," says Batlivala, "and not hesitated to chastise them. After all, I am not here as a candidate in a popularity poll." "He is a man in a hurry: he tried to do too many things in too short a time," says Dr (Ms) Maharukh Joshi, an honorary pediatrician at the Hospital.

It was on one of his nocturnal visits



Batlivala: earned censure for?

that he summoned a young, attractive houseman, Dr (Ms) Farida Badar "at an unusual hour of 11 p.m. to take on the rounds...You are aware that no physician takes a routine round at 11 p.m.," complained the 22-year-old Badar to the trustees, in her letter of January 6, 1987, written a week after she had resigned of her own accord, not willing to reply to a charge sheet served on her. "Similarly," the letter continues, "the superintendent of a hospital does not take (a) round at 11 p.m., unless he has some purpose. Once he called me at 1 a.m. in the

casualty (department) and took me to task for an alleged negligence...which showed his callous (?) mind."

Soon, other stories of Batlivala's glad eye started making the rounds. A nurse he confronted in the dark courtyards around the building insinuated that he had come around to molest her. Six nurses alleged verbal and physical advances in a memorandum submitted to the Kamgar Utkarsh Sabha (KUS), the militant union (not recognized by the management) whose president is Gulab Joshi. The union has a hold in many medical and research institutions (Haffkine's for one) and commercial companies, including the J.K. group, which publishes *The Indian Post*, a fledgling city daily, for long quite strident in its anti-Batlivala stand.

When Badar released to the Press (or, was it scooped?) a letter to the trustees written by her with the object "that no other person should suffer (like me)," the local Press had found its new whipping boy. Hailing from the backwaters of Ratnagiri district, Badar claimed that Batlivala offered her "dinners at the Taj, and a good time," when she had chosen the medical profession with the "aim and object to practice medicine in (my) village where there is a general scarcity of lady doctors." And though the Industrial Court gave its verdict that "not much credence can be given to Badar's grievance," the slur on Batlivala's character continued to be perpetrated. The Court also felt that Badar had been a negligent doctor, and Batlivala shows us a thick file on Badar, with warning letters and memos issued to her even by Col Godiwala — not just by him, to persecute her, as has been made out.

Badar's "mental agonies and torture at Batlivala's hands" upset the aging

A controversy over the management of Masina Hospital and the conduct of its superintendent has led to a split amongst the institution's trustees, doctors, nurses and workers



Dr Abbas H. Nakhooda who, having completed his MBBS in 1939, was one of the oldest and most highly respected honoraries practising at the Hospital. Nakhooda credits himself with being one of the 'founding fathers' of Masina by bringing it to public notice when it opened its doors to other communities. "I shifted all my practice to Masina, even forgoing honorary-ship and the superintendent's post at other hospitals," recalls Nakhooda. Enjoying a fairly large practice amongst the middle class, he would admit his patients, including the workers of Mahindras, where he is a company doctor, to Masina. Badar was his houseman, and Nakhooda, it is said, embarked upon a whisper campaign against Batlivala. "I knew he was a womanizer even before he took over as a superintendent," says Nakhooda, and mentions that Dr Jimmy Vajifdar, the managing trustee

Top: Busts of Ardaseer N. Mody (left) and Merwanji K. Alpawala in the Masina Hospital compound

Above: Marble slab (below Jerbai Masina's statue) depicting Zoroastrian virtues

Right: A patient in the female ward

Far right: An operation theater at Masina Hospital

of the medical committee of the Hospital, and one of the trustees, also admitted awareness of this fact to him.

Nakhooda, however, denies that he was part of a vilification campaign against Batlivala. He is visibly upset with Drs Bejan Parakh and Maharukh Joshi, Sister James, the matron, and Ms Banoo Irani, a social worker attached to the Hospital for over 20 years, for having testified against him at an enquiry conducted by the trus-

tees to determine his involvement in the affair. They confirmed that Nakhooda had spoken to them of Batlivala's alleged sexual misdemeanors. Recalling the day (March 3, 1987), Nakhooda says: "After the testimony session (with the trustees) Dr Batlivala called me to his room, shook me up physically, and threatened to throw me out of the Hospital if I did not write down an apology letter. I obliged under duress since I needed a hospital to admit my patients to." When Nakhooda needed hospitalization a few days later, there was a split in the sympathies and allegiances of the medical fraternity. Batlivala earned censure for his arrogance, a trait many — patients and their relatives, as well as senior doctors — feel Batlivala possesses in abundance.

Simultaneously, Dr Batlivala had been moving the trustees to bring about a retirement age for honoraries, with the prime purpose, asserts Dr Nakhooda, of getting rid of him. (The honoraries appointed by the board of trustees are expected to render free service to the Hospital's poor patients.) The Hospital trustees reportedly passed a resolution at their meeting of February 14, 1987, retiring from January 1, 1988, all honoraries above the age of 65. What, however, made the resolution a red rag was that under the move, one trustee and his brother-in-law, who were availing of the benefits extended to a hospital honorary, would not be allowed to do



so any further. The matter was reportedly sought to be raised at the following meetings and the resolution rescinded. The affected trustee Dr Aspi Golwalla is said to have called a meeting on December 19, 1987 without consulting the chairman, Dr Rustom Colah, with the two-point agenda of rescinding the retirement-at-65 resolution, and accepting Dr Batlivala's resignation. Dr Golwalla has no answer as to how such a meeting could be called, and maintains a stony silence, refusing to discuss the Masina Hospital affair with *Parsiana*.

His brother-in-law, Dr Adi Sahiar, is more vocal. In an interview with the staff reporter of the city evening, *The Afternoon Despatch and Courier*, Sahiar laments that he did not get so much as a "thank-you" note from either the trustees or the Hospital management after putting in 35 years of service at the Hospital.

Nakhoda is even more critical. He shows us the curt note dated December 26, 1987 signed by Colah, the chairman, stating that "as you are already aware, by the resolution...your services stand terminated as on December 31, 1987." Nakhoda claims that he was never aware of such a resolution, though the trustees claim that they had announced it to the honoraries at a breakfast meeting held on May 17, 1987 at the Talk of the Town restaurant.

If the termination letters served to around nine doctors of the old guard

stirred a hornet's nest, it was the vertical split amongst the trustees that pushed matters to breaking point. The straighter-than-thou Batlivala, according to Burjor Antia, the managing trustee of the Hospital and a partner in the city's leading firm of solicitors, Mulla and Mulla, Cragie Blunt and Caroe, reported to the trustee the un-

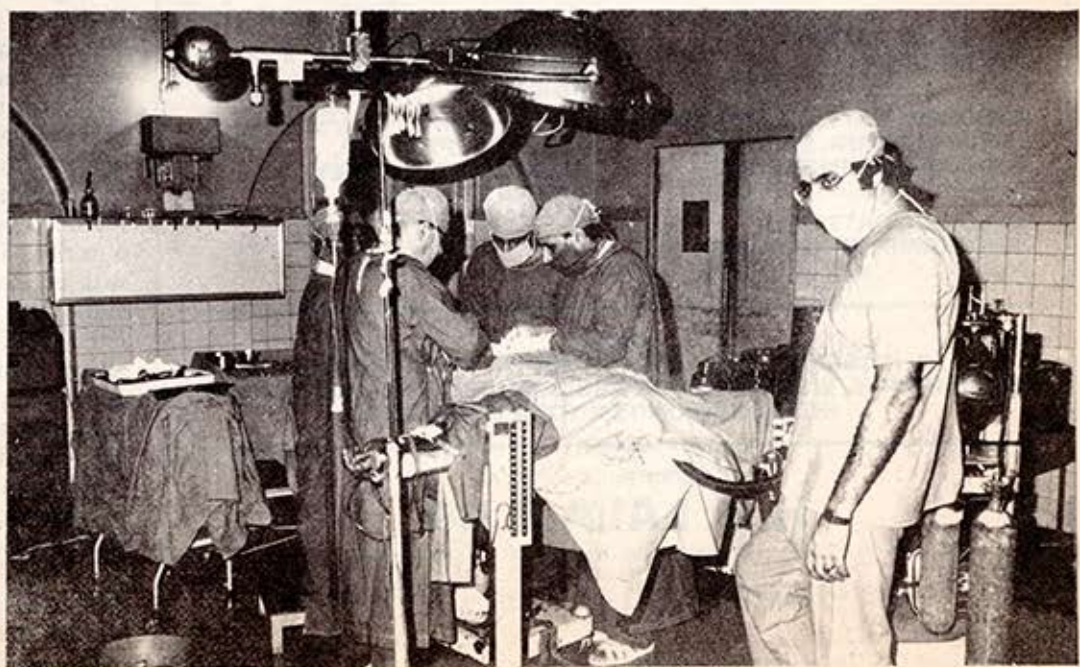
"A trust is to be administered as per the decisions of the majority of the trustees"

necessary expenditure incurred by the Resident Medical Officer (RMO) Dr Rahil Nachin in renovating his quarters. The RMO, it seems, was receiving support from one of the trustees, whose unnecessary interference in Batlivala's duties was frowned upon. The same trustee was also criticized for allegedly offering concessions running into thousands of rupees to friends and acquaintances without the knowledge and consent of the board.

It was Batlivala, according to Antia, who had brought the Hospital out from the red within just one year, and showed a healthy profit of six lakh rupees against a loss of two lakh rupees. He ensured that all outstandings were properly collected, brought

in donations, and, informs Antia, was naturally upset about the misuse of funds. In the bargain, he turned not only the RMO, but also certain trustees against him. Rustom Kuka was reportedly requested by a fellow trustee to discontinue his daily visits to the Hospital as his functioning is supposed to have prevented the superintendent from discharging his duties. Kuka refuses to talk to the Press though he says he knows everything.

When Batlivala resigned on December 14, 1987 — for the fourth time, as claimed by a newspaper espousing the line of Golwalla and Kuka — these two trustees pressed for the acceptance of his resignation. While Batlivala and Antia strongly deny that this was the fourth resignation tendered ("Ask them to produce my earlier three resignations," challenges Batlivala), another trustee, Keki Alpawala, according to an honorary, felt that he had had enough of Batlivala's resignations and threats of resignations, and, lending credence to the four-resignation theory, voted for accepting the resignation. The schism was complete: three trustees against Batlivala, three (Antia, Vajifdar and Colah) favoring his continuation as superintendent at the Hospital. The chairman's casting vote carried the day, and it was decided to persuade Batlivala to stay. Had the resignation been accepted, Masina Hospital would, for the first time in its checkered history, have had a non-Parsi superintendent



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appointed, say the institution's associates of long standing. Golwala, it is believed, was preparing for a vacancy to be filled by either Dr Khare from Nagpur, or Dr Varde, dean of J.J. Hospital (for a short duration).

Within barely three days of Batlivala's resuming work as superintendent at Masina, the KUS launched an illegal strike, with a 22-point charter of demands, including a revision in wages of all categories, quarters for staff, payment of allowances like dearness, leave travel, house rent, education, etc and other facilities. Nowhere in their charter, however, did they mention the removal of Dr Batlivala due to his alleged sexual misconduct. This was a new facet they introduced only on April 5, 1988 by when the Industrial Court had declared their strike prima facie illegal, and Batlivala had demonstrated that despite their effigy-burning and placard-wielding, he could keep the Hospital operations going.

Badar filed, at this late stage, an affidavit against Batlivala, which was summarily rejected by the Court. Yet another intern, Dr (Ms) Seema Rajguru, was quoted as having resigned due to Batlivala's sexual advances towards her. The decision to terminate her services as a part-time externee in the outpatient department was taken by the trustees because she refused to take the post of a houseman offered to her in the gynecology department, stated a press release issued by the management. The Hospital, explained Batlivala, did not require a homeopathic intern at a salary of Rs 400 plus lunch, when they already had 12 interns doing the same job.

When, on the night of May 29, 1988 one of the temporary ward boys at Masina allegedly raped a girl, who was neither a patient, nor a relative, but an outsider who had come to the Hospital with her bag of clothes, presumably to elope with her boyfriend, the Bombay Press cried blue murder. "Masina staff allege molestation by superintendent," ran a headline in *The Indian Post* in a manner that suggested that the superintendent had raped the girl, or had had a hand in it. The campaign to oust Batlivala was persistent even if it meant that the fair name of the Hospital could be tarnished. It was, as Antia put it, "a case of a mother killing her own son, so that her daughter-in-law would become a widow."

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But does Dr Batlivala have a glad eye? *The Indian Post* reporter, Ms Bharati Sadasivam, affirms that he does, and claims that female employees at Glindia have also testified to this. Dr Daksha Jadeja, his first houseman, diplomatically evades the answer with a "Well, it takes two hands to clap." Yet another honorary, who does not wish to be named, says that it was not uncommon for Dr Batlivala to put an arm around any lady, and all had witnessed this behavior at the New Year's Eve parties hosted by the Masina trustees.

Some residents of Rustom Baug

"I am not here as a
candidate in a
popularity poll"

who do not wish to be named, but hold a know-it-all attitude, seem to indicate that the doctor is a lothario. But Darab Ghadiali, a special executive magistrate and the vice-president of the Rustom Baug Association, who resides in a flat right across from the Batlivalas, thunders that these are canards being spread to harm and bring disrepute to a man who has brought honor to the community. (Batlivala recently won the Pax Mundi Dag Hammarskjöld award for his contribution to alternative medicine.) "Yes, he is reserved, he walks with a dignified air — but a womanizer, never!" avers Ghadiali. Meanwhile, over 100 women employees, in a letter to *The Times of India*, stated that they feel absolutely safe with Dr Batlivala, and dismiss the charges levelled against him as false and biased. A patient at Masina quipped: "It seems the doctor is only attracted to KUS women."

Batlivala himself shrugs off the accusations though, as matters have gone too far, he has filed a defamation suit against the *Jam-e-Jamshed*, a paper edited for years by the master of bedroom comedies, Adi Marzban, and after his death, by Rusi Dhondi. "I refrained from taking this step earlier," says Batlivala, "as a lot of cost and time is involved in filing a civil case, and I would like to spend my time doing my research work, and attending to the Hospital, rather than frequenting the courts and paying hefty court fees." The suit, however, had an

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immediate result. The *Jame's* advocate, as stated by Colah in his rejoinder countering *Jame's* stand, voluntarily gave an undertaking not to publish any further defamatory articles regarding Batlivala. The calumny did stop, though the next week, the *Jame* shifted its focus to the trustees, increasing the age of the chairman (who is in his mid-70s) by 10 years. It also urged Alpaiwala, a practising chartered accountant, to undertake a fresh study in the matter so that he would revert to voting against Batlivala, when the need arose.

Yet, amidst the fury and furore, the Hospital continues to attend to the sick. As reported by the management, the operation theater is booked more than two months in advance. And the register of inpatients for the period June 1 to June 11 reveals that the Hospital had 2,080 patients, as against 1,904 during the corresponding period in 1987. This higher figure is all the more creditable as it shows that the Masina Hospital, despite the campaign against it, enjoys the confidence of the people and the doctors, barring a few. Even the outpatient figures, 1,842 for May 1988 are higher than the 1,141 patients attended to in May 1987. The staff attendance muster shows that there are around 45 workers, from a total strength of 330, who are not

attending. And, even if the *Jame* has stopped publishing the list of donations received by the Hospital, contributions are yet pouring in, for the people continue to have faith in the Hospital, says Batlivala. The Lions Club of Byculia has donated dental equipment worth Rs 25,000 on June 12; an association called the Friends Unanimous Trust have offered to build an additional unit of 1,500 beds in the Masina complex, and Batlivala has plans to set up a new burns unit with the donations received.

But when will the present imbroglio end? Dr Batlivala feels that once the enquiry against Sister Chandrika Mohite (who spearheads the Union's movement against the Hospital's administration) for using abusive language against him is over, and she can be sacked by a majority vote of the trustees, the KUS will fall like a pack of cards, closing the messy chapter. The KUS secretary, a ward boy, was sacked earlier.

Antia, who would like facts to speak for themselves, sees no problems, for despite the strike and the mudslinging, the Hospital is working normally, "as you can see for yourself," he says. The Courts have already passed judgments in the management's favor. Of course, normalcy can only be fully restored when all trustees jointly

put their shoulders to the wheel. The trustees who wish to disassociate themselves from the Hospital administration should do so, rather than claiming to do so, recommends Antia. "A trust is to be administered as per the decisions of the majority of the trustees," writes Colah, subtly calling

**Batlivala, who kept
his patients on
'pins and needles
extended the
same treatment
to his staff**

for the resignations of the trustees who are pitted against the majority. In the meanwhile, Antia, an ordained priest, disappointed with the approach of Golwala and Kuka, states that he has resigned from all other trusts where the two are trustees, "for they have deviated from the principles of our religion, viz *Ashoi* (righteousness), by not upholding the truth in our Hospital."

A fresh fusillade will probably be fired at the end of the year when the Hospital management may refuse to renew the term of those honoraries (appointments are made annually for a period of one calendar year) who they believe have not supported it in the hour of trouble.

It is hard to tell how the matter will finally close, though like Eliot's world, it could end with a whimper rather than a bang. The Press, save for *Jame*, have called off the war against the Hospital; the Court judgments have struck continuous blows to the Union. And Dr Batlivala is determined to fight it out till the end with the support, as he claims, of his wife Viloo, formerly practising as a nurse, and their children, Niloufer, now an intern at Masina, Zubin, a student at Grant Medical College, and Khushnuma, a fresh collegian, who have taken the calumny campaign and threatening phone calls in their stride.

But ultimately, for a complete recovery of the Masina Hospital, it is essential that its ailment be diagnosed. For the Hospital, as a body, has to function robustly if it wishes to inspire health and confidence in its patients.

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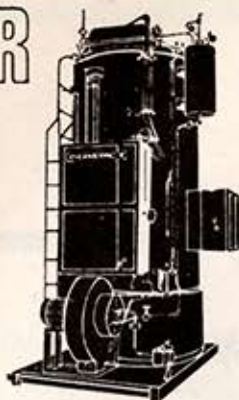
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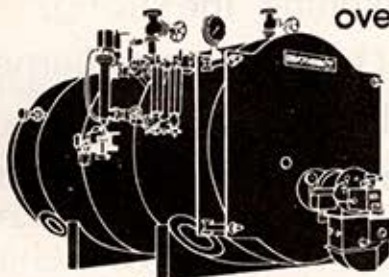
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The state of Zoroastrian orthodoxy

Adi F. Doctor

The orthodox movement has not been able to regain the momentum it had under men like Vimadlal, Shroff, Masani and Chiniwalla

There is perhaps no other word in the English language to which a modern Zoroastrian is more allergic than the word "orthodox." Through the years, its meaning has been so distorted and twisted, that it has now acquired pejorative overtones in many circles! It has been wantonly and wrongly used to suggest a bigot, a fanatic or someone whose thinking is outdated. It shouldn't surprise many, then, that a couple of years ago a registered Zoroastrian organization approached the charity commissioner with a request that the word "orthodox" be removed from its name as some of its members thought it a hindrance to their activities!

But the etymology of this abused word indicates that its meaning is almost the opposite. Made up of two Greek words - *ortho* - straight, upright, genuine, and *doxa* - opinion, doctrine - its meaning in any standard

dictionary is given as "sound in doctrine; believing, or according to, the received or established doctrines or opinions" (Chambers Twentieth Century Dictionary). If I am a believer or a follower of sound and established doctrines where the Zoroastrian religion is concerned, how does it make me a fanatic?

Having established the word's true meaning, the purpose of this article is to briefly survey the scene of Zoroastrian orthodoxy as it exists today. For this, a glimpse of religious orthodoxy, as it prevailed in the past, is necessary as a background.

The picture of a typical Parsi home, just about 100 years ago, shows how it was the bastion of Zoroastrian orthodoxy, in keeping with the religious principles of righteousness and purity of body, mind and soul. At a very early age, children were taught the Zoroastrian way of life. The people

then had such immense faith in their religion that with utmost sincerity and fidelity they responded to the observance of many an austere religious rite. As one writer has aptly put it, "So staunch was their faith in the religion, and so untiring were they in its service, that they ungrudgingly put up with many inconveniences and willingly sacrificed many transient pleasures and comforts..."

It is pertinent to note that the Parsis, during their thousand-year stay in India, until, say, the middle of the nineteenth century, had passed through the rules of the Rajputs, the Moghuls, the Marathas, etc, but by and large the fortress of orthodoxy was kept intact. Through these centuries, the Parsis adapted themselves to the times and conditions in which they lived, as far as social, cultural and economic customs and mores were concerned. But they never even dreamt of

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making any changes in the religious traditions and customs because they were well aware that the gospel truths mentioned in the extant scriptures were timeless and universal.

Then came the British. And slowly but perceptibly, the bastion of orthodoxy began to develop cracks and, later, to crumble. How and why did this happen? After years of study and mulling over this sad decline of orthodoxy, I can pinpoint three major causes:

With the advent of the British, highly materialistic, rationalistic winds began blowing from the West. Quite a few Parsis of those times outclassed all other Indian communities in unwittingly proving Darwin's theory! As Prof John Hinnells, senior lecturer in comparative religion at Manchester University, so admirably put it, "The middle-class Parsis at the turn of the century became so westernized that they were more British than the British...Where, I believe, the community went wrong was in the way it copied or aped the West...That generation departed from its own ideals and deserted its tradition; they and those like them are not true to themselves..."

How, then, did the Parsis resist these same westerly winds through the eighteenth and the first half of the nineteenth centuries?

That brings us to the second reason for the decline of Zoroastrian orthodoxy. The passing of the Parsi Marriage and Divorce Act, 1865, triggered the beginning of the fall. It was only after that year that the communal discipline – engendered and splendidly maintained by the Bombay Parsi Panchayet (BPP) since its inception in about 1728 AD, with the backing of the anjuman and the samast anjuman (general assembly of the Parsis convened for specific purposes) – began to weaken.

It is interesting to note briefly that up to 1786 AD the membership of the Panchayet was generally hereditary. Then on January 1, 1787, the government of Rawson Boddam reformed it by decreeing the election of six members from the behdin (laity) and six from the athornan (priest) class, who would be responsible for "the settlement of private disputes and the internal management of the community." All legislative work, however, was subject to the sanction of the samast



anjuman, while the judicial work was managed by the full complement of the Panchayet, and the administrative work by some of the members of that body.

When settling burning issues, the whole case was referred to the samast anjuman which assumed the roles of law-giver, judge and jury, all rolled into one, for every member of the community. Not only was the justice meted out impartial, but it was tempered with mercy. The sethias (rich merchants – some of whom were knighted by the government – also known as akabars) were the de facto custodians of the morals of the community.

"Thus the Panchayet vindicated its existence as an authoritative body and its members always commanded the respect of both the government and the public..." The akabars were very strict regarding two issues in particular, proselytism (converting non-Parsis to Zoroastrianism) and morality. As the late historian J.R.B. Jeejeebhoy states in his article in the *M.P. Khareghat Volume No I*, "The elders perceived clearly that once the sluices of immorality and brazen-faced conversions were opened, there would be no staying the tide which would soon envelop in its fatal fold those eminent qualities which the Parsis had inherited from their ancestors and of which they were so justly proud." What's pertinent is that the sethias of yore had earned an abiding place in the hearts of the masses. "They were a band of sincere and honest workers, the interests of the anjuman were their interests, the spiritual and moral salvation of their *hamdin* (coreligionists) their only aim."

After the passing of the Parsi Marriage and Divorce Act in 1865, the Panchayet ceased to legislate and act in personal matters or domestic affairs. Thirty-five years later, the wheels of "reform" and "progress" introduced, for the first time, the scheme of having the trustees elected by an electoral college or the "Anju-



The orthodox who tried "to keep the flame flickering": Vimadalal (top), Kutar (left) and Karkhanawalla



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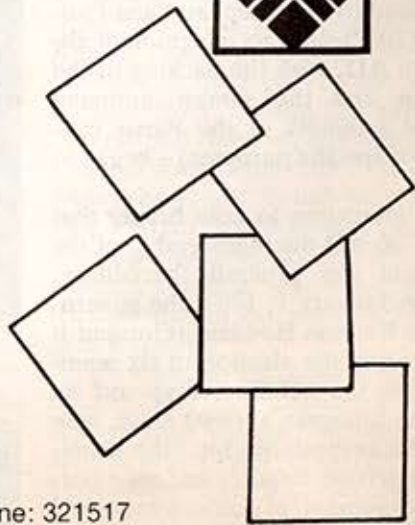
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man Committee," as per the judgment of Justices Davar and Beaman.

It is significant that simultaneously with the akabars who ruled the roost in almost every single department of communal life and meted out punishments ranging from social ostracism to religious boycott (the latter included being barred from visiting places of worship, one's body not being consigned to the Towers of Silence, and even excommunication), there grew a new, small breed of sophisticated, westernized and mostly aristocratic Parsis, strongly influenced by rationalist thoughts of the West. Their ideas were supported by the nascent Zoroastrian school of philology, founded by the great K.R. Cama, which had begun to grow steadily.

This brings us to the third main cause which virtually shook the very foundation of the orthodox citadel. Through the centuries that the Parsis lived in India, since the ninth century AC, the highest common factor that bound together both the priestly class and the laity, the rich and the poor, was their implicit, unquestioning faith in the Zoroastrian scriptures, tenets, doctrines and tradition. Like the central character in the movie *Fiddler on the Roof*, all of them firmly believed



Reformists supporting rational thinking (from left): Cama, Dhalla and Bode

that tradition was everything, and that without it they just wouldn't exist. But the translations and interpretations of the *Avesta* scriptures and Pahlavi literature by foreign and Parsi philologists changed all this. No more were the scriptures taken as the gospel truth. Inquiring and sceptical minds among the followers of Prophet Zarathushtra began to question and doubt the veracity of their own religious heritage! If Dastur Darab of Surat had not removed the veil of secrecy over the mystic revelations of the Prophet of Iran, before Anquetil du Perron (the first European scholar to spend three years in Surat learning Zoroastrian scriptural languages) nearly 230 years ago... will surely remain one of the

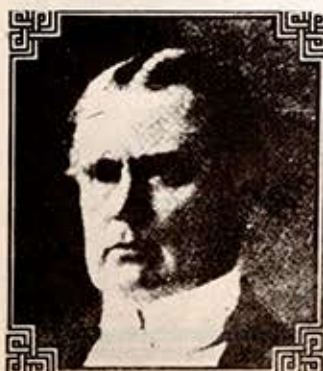
biggest IFs of the history of the Parsis in India!

Thus, these three factors, operating at the end of the last century, combined to produce a vertical split between the orthodox majority and the so-called "reformists" or "progressives" – a new group of anglicised Parsis who accepted the philological interpretation of religious lore. One disastrous result of this formidable combination of factors was evident in that cause célèbre, the Parsi Punchayet case of 1906, in which, for the first time in Parsi history, a suit was filed in the Bombay High Court against the Punchayet trustees. The petitioner was a leading Parsi industrialist who claimed that his French spouse, who had undergone the navjote and ashirwad ceremonies, was entitled to all the rights of a Parsi Zoroastrian. Although this plea was negated by the Davar-Beaman judgment, Zoroastrian orthodoxy had sustained a vicious blow – not so much by Ratan Tata, as by the renegade priests who performed the ceremonies on Ms Tata, as well as by some scholar-priests of Cama's school who endorsed conversion and alien marriages as having the approval of Zoroastrian doctrine!

Again, at that time, emerged a white-turbaned Doctor of Philosophy from the University of Columbia in the person of Dr M.N. Dhalla. For the elite reformists, he was a godsend who had come to boost their morale and rationalist thinking. A couple of "Zoroastrian conferences" were called to thrash out burning religious problems. Though the infinitesimal number of the "reformists" resulted in these meetings being veritably stillborn, a warning bell seemed to have been sounded for Zoroastrian orthodoxy!

Yet, the operation of the law of polarity in nature saw to it that ortho-

Justices Davar and Beaman (bottom) recognized Tata (right) as a Zoroastrian



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doxy survived. During the Parsi Panchayet litigation, two great personalities emerged on the orthodox front. One was a champion of tradition and a first-rate orator: Jehangir R. Vimadlal who thundered against alien or *juddin* navjotes and weddings and, of course, against conversion.

The other was a taciturn mystic who not only revolutionized the orthodox camp and instilled it with renewed vigor, but firmly cemented the cracks that had developed in the very foundation of orthodoxy. He was Ustad Behramshah N. Shroff, the founder of Ilm-e-Khshnoom – the beatific knowledge or science which expounded Zoroastrian philosophy in its pristine purity. So great was the impact of the various explanations and expositions of the cryptic Zoroastrian scriptures that Shroff propounded, that many intellectual Parsi philologists, including the veteran K.R. Cama himself, and theosophists like Jehangir Vimadlal, came under the influence of Khshnoom.

Many were the battles royal which were fought between the reformist camp, led by Dr Dhalla, and the orthodox camp, led by Vimadlal, Ervad Phiroze S. Masani, etc. Once again the scales of victory tilted in favor of orthodoxy.

The early forties – by which time both Shroff and Vimadlal had died – saw at least two major events that almost knocked the bottom out of the orthodox edifice: the *Vandsa* navjotes (of children of Parsi men and native women in the village of Vandsa – thereafter sometimes used as a synonym for *juddin*) and the wrongful consecration of the Fasli fire-temple in Bombay. The doyen of the reformist movement, Dr Dhalla, was now joined by Dr Framroze Bode who played a leading role in both these events. It is significant to note that both Dhalla and Bode were ordained dasturs in peculiar circumstances. While Dr Dhalla was perhaps the only navar (he was not a maratab) who was made a dastur, Dr Bode, though belonging to the Shehenshahi sect, became a Fasli dastur. The lectures and writings of these two priests created an unprecedented furore in the community, the vast majority of whom were orthodox.

Though the orthodox Parsis had stalwarts like Dastur Kaikhushru Kutar, F. Dadachanji and many others



Many of today's orthodox don't want to risk unpopularity by upholding the basic religious tenets

who had banded together under the Parsi Federal Council, a lion of the caliber of the late Vimadlal was urgently needed. Nature, abhorring a vacuum, threw up another such fearless leader, Jehangir Chiniwalla, an ace disciple of Behramshah Shroff. So great an orthodox firebrand was he, that the religious gauntlets he threw down to Drs Dhalla, Bode and their patrons like Sir Rustom Masani and Burjorji F. Bharucha, were never picked up by them!

Instead, the reformists suggested a Round Table Conference between the two warring groups to thrash out various religious issues. But this move was aborted by the orthodox group, who felt that the new breed of liberals tried to snuff out whatever faith Zoroastrians had in their scriptures even though the orthodox had always attempted to rekindle that flickering flame. Incidentally, the main platform

from which the reformists carried on their propaganda was the Rahnumaye Mazdayasnan Sabha. This had been established in the mid nineteenth century, ostensibly to weed out non-Zoroastrian beliefs, dogmas and superstitions from the community. But, unfortunately, it invariably ended up throwing out the baby with the bath-water!

The role of the Parsi Press

In the ding-dong battle between the two groups, the Parsi Press took sides depending on the convictions and beliefs of the owners and editors. Thus, for example, *The Rast Gofstar* and the *Kaiser-E-Hind* were right from the beginning taking brief for the reformists, to be joined later by *The Mumbai Vartman*, while *The Sanj Vartman*, and *Jam-e-Jamshed* upheld the cause of orthodoxy.

However, in the late forties, the

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very backbone of Parsi orthodoxy began to crack, thanks to the volte face of its staunch champion, the *Jam-e-Jamshed*! Almost overnight, this most popular newspaper of the Parsis, which had lambasted the reformist section for decades, suddenly took up the cudgels on their behalf and began ridiculing the orthodox section and their leaders. This was one of the severest blows anyone had delivered to them in decades! The traditionalists, for the first time, were without any medium of their own through which they could voice their views. It was in such circumstances that Chiniwalla's *The Parsi Avaz* was born in 1947. Though basically meant to air the philosophy of the Zoroastrian religion as interpreted by Ilm-e-Khshnoom, it became the voice of the orthodox section for 27 years.

The attacks and counter-attacks between the two camps soon became more vicious and vitriolic. The reformists were now openly branded as "heterodox" and the enemy of the religion, while the orthodox were castigated as fanatics and bigots. The orthodox group had stalwarts like Ervad Dr J.M. Unvala, Dr Maneckji Davar, Dastur Dr H.K. Mirza, Jehangir Sanjana, Dr M. Karkhanawalla, and others, all of whom were freely accommodated in the columns of *The Parsi Avaz*.

But two relatively new and disconcerting factors emerged, which made the orthodox camp a house divided. One was the somersault of some supporters, who began to placate, though subtly, the reformist class, which was now gradually growing in strength. For them the temptation of being in the limelight with the elitist intellectuals was stronger than any principles or scruples.

The other factor was the emergence of a new disease, called "I-trouble," from which some erstwhile orthodox persons began to suffer. The demon of a bloated ego gripped them so firmly that traditional values went by the board.

The effects of these two factors snowballed in the next three to four decades, so that today there are at least a dozen splinter groups, all of them claiming to be the legitimate espousers of orthodoxy! Fissiparous tendencies and internecine squabbles and wrangles have done far more damage to the orthodox cause than the attacks of all the heterodox thinkers put together!

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As regards the Parsi Press, while *Jam-e-Jamshed*, in the seventies, once again changed sides and tried to take up the cause of Zoroastrian orthodoxy, it had lost the trust of its orthodox readers and was a mere shadow of its former self. *The Bombay Samachar*, while having a distinct slant towards the reformist movement, has had a remarkable penchant for blowing hot and cold on various religious issues through the years.

Parsiana, the monthly magazine started by the late Dr Pestonji Warden, began by projecting the orthodox image, but later on, under the stewardship of young Jehangir R. Patel, it published several write-ups catering to the non-orthodox readership.

Keeping these factors in mind, the late B.K. Boman-Behram mooted the idea of starting at least a small tabloid that would take up the cause of orthodoxy and he asked this writer to take over as editor of *The Parsee Voice*. The complete lack of unity among those who styled themselves orthodox was the biggest disappointment for its editor, through the journal's four-year

existence. While some wore orthodoxy on their sleeve, others, either out of jealousy or vindictiveness, never hesitated to run down the editor for his forthright comments on certain burning issues. The trouble with many of today's Zoroastrian orthodox is that they don't want to risk unpopularity by upholding the basic religious tenets: they'd rather compromise on principles than earn the opprobrium of society. Equally bad are the cheap publicity seekers – and they are legion. When the crunch comes, these self-styled orthodox champions do not hesitate to go into hibernation!

One blatant fact of modern life that kept hitting *The Parsee Voice's* editor straight in the face was that the younger generation of Parsis does not bother to read about, and is not interested in, communal matters or religious controversies. A host of modern gadgets and contraptions, ranging from the video and TV, to computer games, keeps them "busy." So, with virtually no feedback and a poor subscriber response, *The Voice* had to fold up.

What is the future of Zoroastrian

orthodoxy in India? To many, the near future may look bleak. Once-prominent organizations like the Bombay Jathoshti Jashan Committee – from where giants like Jehangir Vimalal, Dastur Kutar etc. had thundered against heterodoxy and launched highly effective campaigns against it – have become almost moribund [though the newly-formed Council of Vigilant Parsis (COVP) is doing a commendable job in preserving Zoroastrian traditions]. The orthodox camp is divided into factions. The trustees and members of various punchayets and anjumans – most of whom are members of the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India – are vying with one another to not appear orthodox in their views or way of life!

But to this incorrigible optimist, the pot of gold is almost visible at the end of the rainbow. In the last decade of this century, when nature takes a hand in a big way in the affairs of the community, and drills some sense in the highly materialistic granites of most of us, the clarion call will be, "Back to orthodoxy!"

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ZOROASTRIAN THINGS TO GIFT

Gifts and Things is one of the largest retailers of Zoroastrian artefacts

Joy Fernandes

Perin and Cyrus were looking for a gift for their parents. "It must be something special," they decided, "not an article they'll use for a few months and then forget about. And it has to mean something, have some significance..." Eventually a friend guided them to a little shop where they discovered a wide range of Zoroastrian artefacts and, after much discussion, bought an engraving of the prophet on mother-of-pearl.

The name of that shop is Gifts and Things, located on the mezzanine floor of Bombay Swadeshi Stores on Sir P.M. Road, and Perin and Cyrus are typical of many of the customers who visit it to buy gifts for Zoroastrian relatives and friends. Today, eight years after the shop started stocking such articles, the Zoroastrian artefacts are crafted from various materials. There are desk sets in rosewood and acrylic, wall plaques in wood and metal, silver

pendants, decorative items in shell and bone china, and small miscellaneous items like stickers and magnets. Prices range from a few rupees for a keychain to several thousand rupees for a huge fravashi metal plaque which can be made to order.

"We realized years ago that there was no shop catering to (such) Zoroastrian needs, so we started developing this section," says proprietress Ms Siloo Limboowalla. But although Gifts and Things claims to be the largest re-

tail stockist of Zoroastrian artefacts, the general public is far more familiar with the shop's wide range of exclusive gift articles.

Gifts and Things started stocking Zoroastrian items in 1980 when a sister concern called Things began manufacturing small articles for Zoroastrian Studies – an organization aimed at ethnic and religious revival and founded by Khojeste Mistree. (Things is a wholesale manufacturer of gift and novelty items.) "We began mainly with them," recalls Siloo's husband Keki, who is a partner in Things. "They wanted somebody to develop artefacts. Khojeste Mistree gave us the right indication: he was sure that a lot of Parsis would want them." These PVC stickers, magnets and keychains were sold at the Zoroastrian Studies office, and at Gifts and Things. "We gradually started expanding as more and more Zoroastrians kept asking for



At the Gifts and Things shop: a wide range of souvenirs

PHOTOS: JOY FERNANDES



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more and more items," explains Siloo, tracing the growth of this section. The articles grew bigger, the price range grew wider, and she began ordering a few items from other suppliers.

We turn the conversation to competitors. Aren't there any rivals who are capable of grabbing their market? "None," say both the Limboowallas firmly, and after some thought Keki adds, "One probable reason why a lot of people haven't entered this market is because they feel it's limited." At a rough estimate, about 30 percent of their customers are Parsis, though not all of them come in for Zoroastrian artefacts. "We get a lot of young people coming in for something religious," says Siloo. "They either buy it for themselves or as a gift. Then there are those who are going abroad and come here to buy gifts for their relatives. And in the winter we get quite a few who have come to India on holiday." She feels that the demand for such objects is increasing, perhaps due to a growing religious awareness. "I think more Zoroastrians, especially youngsters, are aware of their own religious beliefs today," she says with conviction. "Perhaps it is due to the

talks and lectures they hear." And when they give such gift items, she adds, it "seems to personify their faith, make it more concrete."

Later we wander round the shop, paying special attention to the Zoroastrian artefacts which are ranged along

"When they give Zoroastrian gift items, it personifies their faith, makes it more concrete"

the shelves and hung on the walls. The themes and motifs are repeated, but the materials and execution vary. Among them are images of Zarathushtra in brass (Rs 37 to 57), photos of Zarathushtra in acrylic frames of different sizes, a German silver etching of a priest in an agiary, richly framed in silk (Rs 240), winged bull and fravashi plaques (Rs 45 to 110), *afarganyas* (traditional fire holders) of stainless steel or German silver, with a flickering electric light (Rs 154 to 250), and German

silver *ses* (tray with traditional accessories) which can be bought as sets or piece by piece.

Desk accessories are among the most popular items here, and shelves are laden with pencil tumblers, paper and pin holders, and paperweights, all decorated with fravashi or Zarathushtra motifs photoprinted on iridescent ovals of mother-of-pearl. "We put them together ourselves, so they are absolutely exclusive," notes Siloo. Among the ornamental items are portraits of the prophet carved on mother-of-pearl (Rs 115), on a capiz shell (Rs 45), and painted on a bone china plate (Rs 125).

The variety available in this section devoted to Zoroastrian artefacts is indicative of the wider range of general gift articles sold at the shop. Copper trays and plaques, enameled in glowing greens and oranges, fascinate one customer; another lingers over the costume jewelry section; in other corners are decorative note paper, leather jewelry boxes, delicate miniatures painted on ivory and lamps cunningly constructed of shell. At the far end of the room are the desk accessories and brightly colored hangings crafted out of fabric, braid and cord, swinging in

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the draught of the electric fan. "We try to stock items you can't get in the open market," says Siloo. The room is hushed, with an occasional murmur as someone asks a sales assistant about prices. They encourage browsing: "You may not buy anything today," reasons Siloo, "but you may come back for something tomorrow." There are the 'regulars' - mainly from nearby offices - who drop in frequently to look for new items, tourists, and corporate clients who shop here for giftaways.

For Gifts and Things, the festival season - lasting from November to April - is a busy one when they can expect about 70 customers per day. The dull trend is from May to July, with an average of about 20. Working hours are 10 a.m. to 7 p.m., and they are closed on Sundays, and from 2 to 3 p.m. daily for lunch.

We talk about the sources of the articles and learn that Things supplies the rosewood and acrylic items - the desk sets, trinket boxes and photo stands - while local suppliers produce the metalwork pieces such as the *ses* and the *afarganyas*. The shisham wood items, however, come from North In-

dia, and the shell ones directly from the Andamans. And if a client wants something special? "We do take orders," admits Siloo. "It all depends on the items. If someone comes in and tells me they want 25 pieces, I can give it if the item is a handcrafted one. But

**They encourage
browsing for, even if
you do not buy
anything today, you
may come back for
something
tomorrow**

for a machine-made one, this order would be too small. Also, I can depend on my husband to supply the items in time; I can't depend on some other suppliers. So we are frank right from the start, and tell them whether or not it is possible."

Talking of what it means to be Parsi business people, Keki admits that Parsis are generally thought to be depend-

able and honest. But he disagrees with the oft-heard criticism that Parsi youth are less enterprising today. "There might not now be new Tatas or Godrejs," he says firmly, "but there are a lot of young entrepreneurs who have started small concerns in electronics, printing and the fabrication of metal items. I personally know many that have come up, are growing and doing well. Finally, it is up to the parents to inculcate that sort of spirit in the child." And what qualities does Siloo think would be necessary to make a business venture a success? "You would first have to visualize the type of items or service you wish to project. Then honesty and forthrightness help a lot. You may not make a lot of extra money, but it helps run up the business."

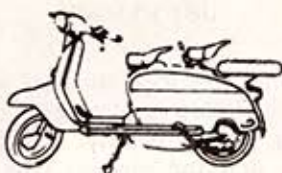
In future, the Limboowallas intend to concentrate on the two main factors that have built up the clientele of the shop: the exclusivity of the gift items and the friendly service. Their plans include constant change. "We have to think new, otherwise we wouldn't survive," says Siloo. "We have to dream up (new ideas) at night; we have to wake up with (them) in the morning..."

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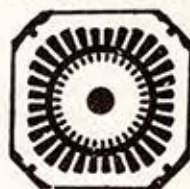
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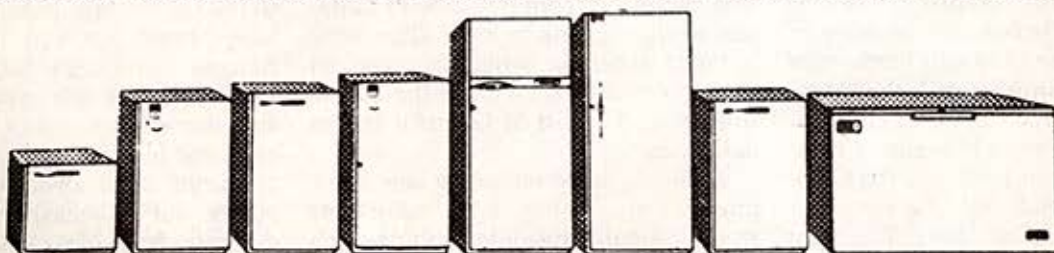
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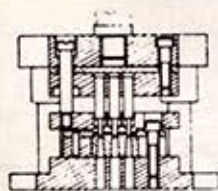
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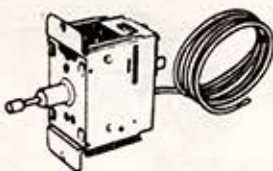
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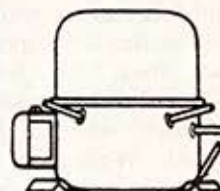
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A QUESTION OF GOOD TASTE

Jerroo Irani

Emperor Akbar, it is said, asked a Negro courtier to scour his realm for the most beautiful child in the kingdom. The courtier returned with his own child, which he presented to the emperor as the most cherubic specimen.

"Does that answer your question?" asks Bhicoo Manekshaw who relates the story in response to the query, "Which is your favorite cuisine?" "Parsi cuisine is my favorite. I love cooking Parsi food more than any other Indian cuisine," says the master chef whose magic culinary creations have graced many of the country's catered capers. Till recently a catering consultant to Chefair, a subsidiary of Air-India, and to the flight kitchens of the Hotel Corporation of India, Manekshaw has catered for VIP flights during the Non Aligned Movement Conference in Delhi in 1982, and the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meet in 1983, among others. The flight kitchen was also responsible for catering for the rostrum and the VVIP lounges at the Nehru Stadium during the Asian Games in 1982, for which she received a special commendation from the ministry.

Creating good food demands talent and imagination and Manekshaw waxes eloquent as she enumerates the various Parsi delicacies to which she gives a novel twist. Continental dishes present an interesting challenge, whether it's a soufflé or a Steak Wellington or anything that demands precise monitoring of cooking and serving time.

"I have to cook or I go mad," says the chef who has completed the advanced certificate course at the Cordon Bleu School of Cookery. Manekshaw has also attended an intensive refresher course at the famed School in London. She is currently researching and writing a paper on Parsi cuisine, to be included in an encyclopaedia to be brought out by the Minorities Commission of India.

Clad in a printed silk sari with exquisitely coiffed hair, face alight with vestiges of past beauty, it is hard to believe that the elegant lady sitting across can don an apron and a chef's cap to sweat over a stove and oven. In the process, she can whip up many an inspired creation as she once did at a quiet dinner party presided over by the former Prime Minister of India Ms Indira Gandhi. A splendid dessert that she concocted was elegantly named Indira Gateau – a confection of meringue, dried apricots, cream, brandy and chopped walnuts. The rest of the menu was enough to conjure up wild fantasies of dining with princes. The table groaned under the weight of succulent duck, juicy lobster, melt-in-the-mouth soufflé, and a host of flavorful Indian delicacies.

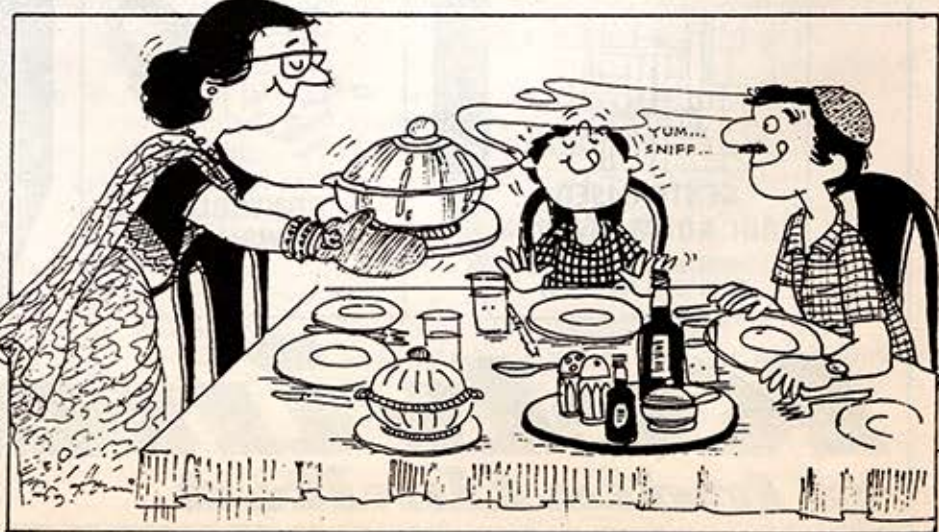
If talking to Manekshaw can make one salivate, eating her concoctions would probably result in rubbing one's stomach with gleeful satisfaction. An alternative would be to leaf through the pages of her book, *The Traditional Recipes of India*, which captures the essence of her culinary wisdom for posterity. "Indian cuisine is one of the foremost cuisines of the world," says

Manekshaw, quoting a great French chef, Antonin Carême. He reportedly said that Indian and Chinese cuisines are the best. "No other country has our variety, not even the Chinese," exults Manekshaw. "Rasam (a spiced drink of South Indian origin) and dhansak (a well-known Parsi delicacy of fried rice and mixed spiced lentil curry) taste different in every home. In fact, one of my South Indian friends can identify the family from the taste of the rasam."

Just as no "self-respecting" Frenchman would drink Tang or instant soup, so too the average Indian would rather have freshly cooked food. "In the Bengali community for instance, the man shops for fish, meat, vegetables and the woman cooks. Our Bengali cook and his wife took as much care in preparing their own food as ours," points out Manekshaw. Scarcity of domestic help has made people even more conscious of the necessity for good, nutritious and fresh food.

Good food a luxury?

Good food is not a luxury in our country for India is not poor, emphasizes Manekshaw, who obviously feels





Master chef Bhicoo Manekshaw outlines the qualities and ingredients that make cooking a fine art

in the transmission gets metamorphosed into something which cannot be replicated in a restaurant. For this reason, the average housewife might prefer to entertain at home. "How can she ensure that her dinner party is a success?" we ask Manekshaw. "The housewife should not overtire herself by preparing hundreds of dishes. It is not economical and today it is considered positively vulgar to have more than two to three main courses, a salad and a dessert. A gourmet cannot savor more than one or two dishes at a time. So prepare a few but prepare them well," she counsels.

The most important factor to be considered when preparing a good meal, however, is the choice of raw materials – fish, meat, vegetables. "No amount of expensive ingredients and splendid cooking can set a meal right if (some of the basic) ingredients are inferior." Today vegetables are allowed to be served crisp, meats have permission to be rare, and pastry is light and flaky.

Visual elements

It is also the visual elements of the feast that make the difference between a successful and mediocre evening – sparkling crystal, gilt-edged crockery, champagne that is perfectly chilled and too delectable to be refused, dishes of contrasting tastes, textures and colors. And given an elastic budget, the hostess can do anything to keep her guests from yawning.

Connoisseur's palate

Keeping all this in mind may be difficult for the average housewife, but not for Manekshaw who developed her connoisseur's palate dining on continental fare and Parsi delicacies like *patra ni machi*, *murgi na farcha* and *dhansak*, prepared by Goan cooks who worked for her aunts and her grandmother. She was allowed, as a

strongly on the point. "The lot of the poor has certainly improved in our country," she argues, pointing out that her butler bought himself a TV set a few years ago and that her ex-sweeper dons a safari suit and thunders to work on a motorbike.

Whether the country is developed or under-developed, cooking is a science and an art, probably more an art than a science, says Manekshaw. "It is the only art that has not been officially acknowledged by the government. Painting, dancing, literature have received official recognition, yet this vital and important art has never been accepted or appreciated. The Govern-

ment of India awards prizes to weavers, even cricketers! But it has never thought of awarding it to a chef," she regrets. Manekshaw reveals that in Lucknow alone, 120 varieties of kebabs are available and are concocted by traditional *kebabwallas*. "The kebabs are fantastic. The *kebabwallas* are a dying breed and if something isn't done for them..." she trails off.

However delectable the food may be in a fancy restaurant or a sidewalk eatery, tradition has it that the best cooking is done at home. Many an Indian recipe has been passed down from mother to daughter and from mother-in-law to daughter-in-law, and

child, to go into the kitchen and fuss over the cleaning of rice and dal. The three-month advanced certificate course at the Cordon Bleu School in London in 1963 opened out a whole new world for her. "I thought that I was a good cook; but I realized, after I joined the course, how little I knew, and that one can go on learning." Manekshaw in fact gave several demonstrations of Indian cuisine at the Cordon Bleu School of Cookery as also to the Royal Air Force Wives Association and Council Boroughs to collect money for their Freedom from Hunger campaign.

Even an ordinary housewife can attend the fortnightly courses at the Cordon Bleu School of Cookery – it all depends on her level of interest. Cordon Bleu teaches a technique of cooking which is foolproof and it emphasizes the finer points of the art, explains Manekshaw. After her return from London Manekshaw continued to conduct cooking classes, and when her husband Air Vice-Marshal J.H.F. Manekshaw was posted at Bangalore, she worked as a catering consultant to West End Hotel, run by the Spencers group at that time. She was also a consultant to the Governor of Mysore, supervising and planning his banquets. On her husband's transfer to Delhi, Manekshaw put in five years as a catering consultant at the India International Centre and also taught at the Delhi Polytechnic for Women. In 1978 she did a refresher course at the Cordon Bleu School of Cookery.

Manekshaw has given lecture demonstrations to the wives of the members of the Commonwealth Press Club during CHOGM in 1983, and was interviewed on Indian cookery by Mark Tully of the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC).

Encouraged to scale culinary heights by her parents, husband and children, Manekshaw has now passed on her skills to her two daughters. Her older daughter has perfected the art of making a soufflé omelette. "She now makes it better than I do," admits Manekshaw. The younger daughter is "a born cook" and Manekshaw's five-year-old grandson already has a refined palate. "I always say 'I hope he becomes a chef.' I think he has the potential to be a great cook."

And what are the qualities of a great cook? Read a recipe thoroughly, use

substitutes where necessary, but up to a limit. Cleanliness is very important as are sharp knives, and use of the right utensils: "I was horrified once to see my cook turn a fried egg with a spoon! It broke, naturally." But ultimately, all it requires to be a good cook or a great chef is to cook with love and patience, she concludes, offering a few recipes for *Parsiana* readers...



KERI KANDA MA MURGH

Chicken (1 – jointed, with skin)
Garlic (6 cloves)
Ginger (2-inch piece)
Green chillies (4-6 – slit)
Turmeric (1 tsp)
Onions (4 medium – sliced)
Cloves (4)
Black cardamom (4)
Cinnamon (½-inch piece)
Salt (to taste)
Ripe alphonso or pairee or malgoba mangoes (2)
Small pickling onions (1 kg)
Oil (50-75 g)
Cummin powder (1 tsp)
Grind garlic, ginger and green chillies together. Peel and finely slice the 4 onions. Peel pickling onions. Heat oil. Brown sliced onions on a slow fire. Add ½ cup water and simmer till the onions are mushy and the water has evaporated. Add ground paste, cardamom, cinnamon and cloves, salt and turmeric. Saute for about 2 minutes, adding about 2 spoonfuls of water. When the water has been absorbed, add chicken and saute till it is brown, adding a little water if needed. When the chicken is browned, add a cup of water, cover and simmer till chicken is three-quarters done. Add pickling onions and simmer for another 5 minutes or so. In the meantime, peel and cube

mangoes in 1-inch pieces. Add to chicken, mix well, cover and simmer for 5 minutes. Serve with *ghau nee rotli*.

TOMATO FETTUCCINE WITH LAMB LIVER AND KIDNEYS

Fresh lamb liver (1 small)
Fresh kidneys (6)
Seasoned flour (as required)
Butter (75 g)
Oil (30 g)
Bacon (6 rashers)
Onions (2 large – peeled and cut into rings)
Green and red capsicum (1 each – seeded and cut into strips)
Fresh basil (1 tbsp – torn into 2-3 pieces)
Tomato fettuccine (500 g)

Tomato fettuccine
Flour (500 g – sifted)
Salt (1 tsp)
Tomato puree (4 tbsp – thick)
Eggs (3)
Oil (1 tsp)
Water (if required)

Sieve flour and salt together in a bowl or on a marble slab. Make a well in the center. Add beaten eggs, tomato puree and oil. Mix and knead, maintaining a fairly solid consistency. Knead for about 10 minutes with the heel of your hand. Then pick up the dough and slap it down hard on the table about 6 to 8 times. The dough should by this time have an elastic consistency. Sprinkle the work surface with flour and roll out half the dough. Wrap the dough round the rolling pin after each rolling and flour the surface of the table or board. At each rolling, stretch the paste a little more with the rolling pin until it is transparent enough for you to see the surface of the table through it (this will take about 10-12 rollings). It should be like a piece of material and can be picked up as if it were a piece of cloth. Lay it on the back of a chair which is covered with a floured cloth while the other piece of dough is rolled out. Hang both sheets of pasta for 30 minutes, on the backs of chairs. Then roll up each one lightly like a newspaper and cut across with a sharp knife into ¼-inch strips. Spread them out on a cloth or a flat *thal* or basket.

Heat half the butter and oil. Fry bacon and when cooked, remove and drain. Dust liver and kidneys in seasoned flour, fry separately, drain and keep warm. (Do not overcook liver

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and kidneys as this toughens them.) Add rest of butter and oil and lightly fry onion rings. When light brown, remove and drain. Toss capsicum in pan and stir fry on high heat for a minute; remove and keep hot. Have a pan of boiling water ready while you are frying. Add a teaspoon of oil and cook fettuccine a few at a time till they rise to the top; drain. When all the pasta is cooked, place on a warm platter, re-heat liver, etc, spoon over pasta and serve.

PRAWNS, CASHEW NUTS AND CAPSICUMS

(Far Eastern Cookery)

Oil (6 tbsp)

Garlic (4 cloves - crushed)

Prawns (500 g)

Cashew nuts (40)

Capsicums (2)

Salt (2 tsp)

Sugar (2 tsp)

Ajinomoto (½ tsp)

Cornflour (2 tbsp)

Spring onions (2 - with greens, finely

sliced, and kept in ice - cold water)

Wash, shell, devein and dry prawns.

Mix well with sugar and keep aside for

20 minutes. Dice capsicums into ¼-

inch pieces. Make a mixture of corn-

flour and cold water. Heat oil, fry gar-

lic till light brown. Toss in capsicum,

prawns and cashew nuts and stir fry

over high heat for 1 minute. Add the

cornflour solution, salt and ajinomoto

and bring to a boil. Pour in a bowl,

sprinkle with spring onions and serve

with boiled rice.

GATEAU INDIRA

Egg whites (4)

Granulated sugar (250 g - powdered)

Dried apricots (350 g)

Salt (as required)

Cream (300 g)

Brandy (1 tbsp)

Walnuts (50 g - chopped)

Clove (1)

Cinnamon (1 small piece)

Lime juice (as required)

Castor sugar (as required)

Thick baking trays [2 - well greased

and dusted completely with flour with

2 circles (8 inches in diameter) marked

out]

Icing bag fitted with a fluted meringue

nozzle

Note: The whisking bowl and the bal-

loon whisk should be completely free

of all grease. If an unlined (unplated)

copper bowl is used, rub the inside of

the bowl with a piece of cut lime and salt, rinse and wipe. The result of mixing the meringue in a copper bowl is quite marked. A chemical reaction takes place between the egg white and copper so that one gets a faster and greater bulk of 'snow'. There is less tendency to 'grain' (i.e. when the beaten egg white separates into fine particles with a liquid residue). There should be no trace of egg yolk among the whites.

Soak apricots overnight in water with the clove and cinnamon. Next morning, simmer till all the water is absorbed and dry out the apricots a bit. Stone and puree them. Add a pinch of salt and a dash of lime juice. Keep in refrigerator until needed.

Whisk egg whites, which should be at room temperature, with a pinch of salt. They are whisked gently at first, the pace being increased as their consistency changes from a viscous mass to froth and from froth to firm white 'snow'. Add 1 to 2 large tbsp powdered sugar and continue whisking for about ½ minute or until stiff peaks form again. Remove the whisk quickly. Fold in half the sugar with a metal spoon. Then repeat with the remaining sugar. Spoon into the prepared icing bag and fill in the circles marked on the baking trays. Sprinkle with castor sugar and leave for 4 to 5 minutes before putting them in the oven preset to 200°F. This gives the meringues a crisp frosted surface.

Note: This is the Cordon Bleu way of making meringues; there are other methods as well.

Dry out the meringues in the oven for about 1½ hours or until they can be easily detached from the trays. Turn over and dry out the reverse side until quite crisp.

Whip cream till stiff and add 2 tbsp to the apricot puree. Add brandy, a pinch of salt and mix well. Put a spoonful on a serving platter and place a meringue circle on top of this, so that it does not shift about. Spread apricot puree on top of the meringue and cover with the second meringue. Spread cream evenly on the top and sides of the gateau. Make rosettes of cream on the edge, top and sides of the gateau, gently pressing in the chopped walnuts on the sides. Make a fluted edge around the bottom of the gateau with remaining cream and serve.

Note: Do not keep this gateau in the refrigerator for more than 1 or 2 hours.

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SURTI'S SHAH NAMAH

**Having translated
Firdaosi's epic
into seven volumes
of English prose,
Dr Bahman Surti
says the
Shah Namah's
true worth lies
in its moral code**

Arnavaz S. Mama

"**R**ustom (pahelvan of the *Shah Namah*) was history's first caesarian baby," says consulting gynecologist Dr Bahman Surti of Secunderabad who has himself performed more than 1,900 obstetric operations. The quiet, diminutive septuagenarian has labored hardest, however, over the birth of his own brainchild – reportedly the first complete English prose translation of Firdaosi's *Shah Namah*. Not only did the 55,994 extant couplets of the 60,000 which Firdaosi composed over more than 30 years take 12 years to translate, but publishing the work was to lead Surti onto an emotional seesaw where he was sustained only by his inherent faith in God. The special function in Dadar on Jamshedi Navroze 1988, where the last two volumes of the seven-volume series were released by Bombay Sheriff Jehangir Nicholson, thus marked the successful culmination of an epic effort.

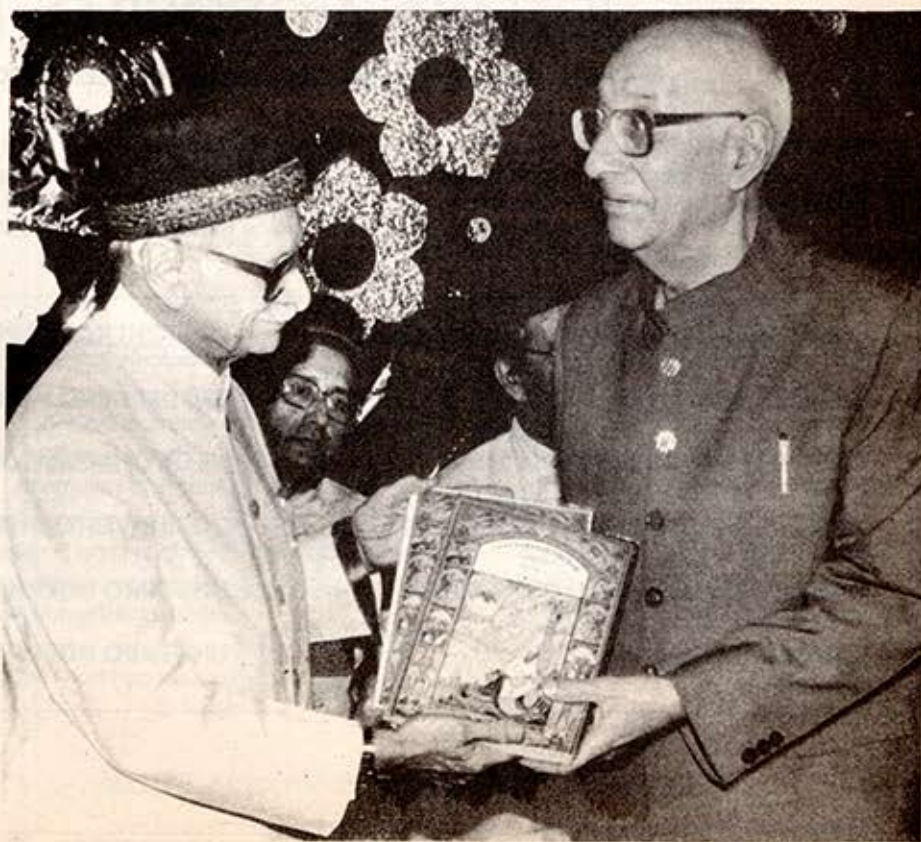
Although Firdaosi's great work is replete with adventure and history

mirroring man's best and worst emotions and actions, Surti felt driven to translating the epic because the present generation was "unable to appreciate the magnificence of the ancient Mazdayasnian, Iranian religion, culture and civilization...a treasure-house of morals and ethics," he said in an interview with *Parsiana*.

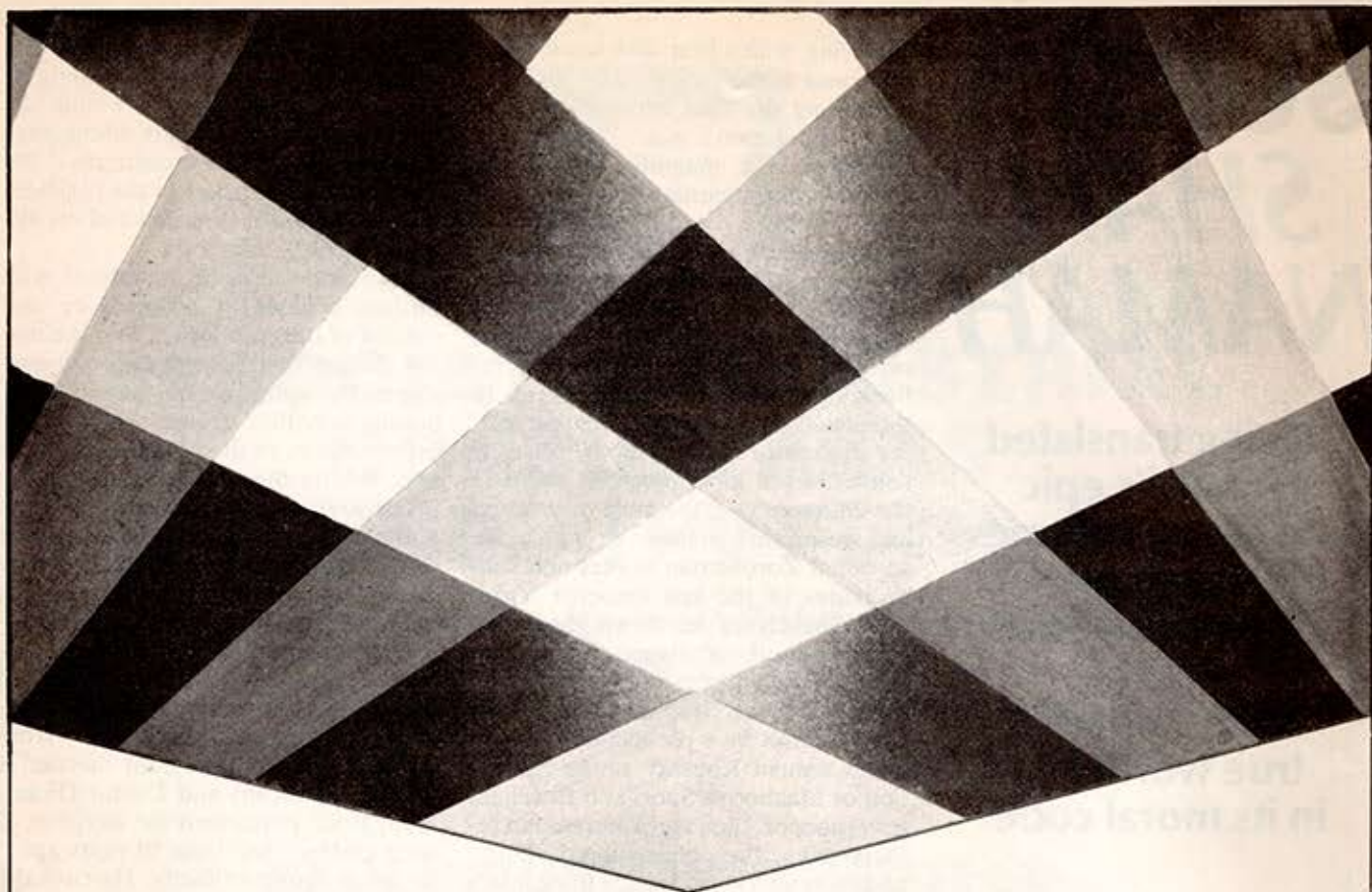
Fully attuned to Firdaosi's concept of goodness as righteous action, Surti says the values of a religion are reflected in the lives of its followers. In the concluding pages of Volume VII, the translator writes about what he considers the most poignant event in the entire epic – "the most disgraceful and despicable manner in which the so-called Zoroastrian nobles and subordinates of the last emperor Yazd-gurd Shahriyaar let down the brave emperor and sabotaged his valiant efforts to rally forces from all over Iran to drive out the Arab invaders." Stabbed to death by a pseudo-Zoroastrian miller named Khusrav at the instigation of Maahooya Soori and Beezhan, governors of Toos and Khoraasaan respectively, the beleaguered king's body was unceremoniously flung into a rivulet whence it was salvaged by a

Christian priest and his assistants who arranged for its disposal according to Zoroastrian rites. "Now I would like to know from my readers whom they consider to be real Zoroastrians – the Roman Catholic priest or the regicides Maahooya Soori, Beezhan and the killer Khusrav?" asks Surti.

Surti, who says he is imbued with Firdaosi's ideas of nonviolence and control of the emotions, views the major Zoroastrian controversies dispassionately. Referring to the dokhma-burial-cremation debate that periodically surfaces in the community, Surti says, "After the soul leaves the body, it's up to the relations to dispose of the body." Nor will he "condemn men or women to spinsterhood because they do not find suitable (partners within) their own community." As for the navjote of children of mixed marriages, Surti believes that the decision should reside with the parents. "Roda Mistry's (prominent politician from Andhra Pradesh) daughter married a (black American) and Dastur (Fram-roze) Bode performed the navjotes of their children less than 10 years ago," he notes matter-of-factly. He cites the instance of a Catholic nun – Mother



Nicholson (left) with Surti: releasing the last two volumes of the *Shah Namah*



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Gloria – who used to follow Zoroaster's principles, and says he remembers with distaste how Noshirwan Engineer, an orthodox Parsi, used to break up meetings addressed by Dastur Bode in the Eros building...

A vegetarian by conviction (eggs excepted), Surti believes the people of Iran were vegetarians prior to the reign of the evil king Zahhaak and that "the devil appeared in the form of a cook," luring the good people, initially, with the taste of eggs! "The body is like a temple; thoughts will be good if the body is healthy," says the ramrod-backed practitioner of yoga who believes diet and exercise hold the key.

Questioned about his opinion regarding the declining community, Surti says simply, "People must desire children (as recommended in) the *Atash Nyaish*. If you have the will (to raise a family), the resources will come," illustrating his faith by his own recent experience in publishing the *Shah Namah* translation.

The sherwani-suited doctor patiently answered *Parsiana's* questions at computer professional Marazban Giara's Dadar residence that Navroze afternoon. Giara's invaluable assistance in the printing and sale of the total edition of 1,000 copies has been acknowledged by Surti in his preface: Surti had originally sought a sponsor but when no sponsor was forthcoming and all avenues to a publisher led instead to discouraging dead ends, he met the like-minded Giara. The two were determined to produce a simple, inexpensive book that the average reader could afford. When they joined forces in 1982 they decided they "didn't want profit (but) attractive books to catch the eye... There were two reasons for breaking up the work into seven volumes. One was the ease of handling; the second was the cost. A hard-bound book wouldn't be affordable," says Surti. The seven volumes are available at Rs 540, including postage within India.

Surti had been taught Persian since he was eight years old by a senior pupil of the Madressa Nizamia in Hyderabad. He started reading the *Shah Namah* in the original at the age of 15. Steeped in Persian literature, Surti says he has translated the *Odes* of Sufi poet Haafiz into English in matching rhyme and meter, has authored a booklet *Thus spake Zarathushtra* for the Sri Ramakrishna Math of Madras

and written various articles underlining the concepts of freedom, meditation, yoga and divine grace in the Mazdayasnian faith. Surti was introduced to publishing activity when an article on Rabindranath Tagore's visit to Iran, written by the first consul general of Iran in Hyderabad, needed translation. The Osmania University, Surti recalled, assigned the task to Persian scholar Sheriar Kawasi, but when it remained incomplete, the job was reassigned. Surti's translation was approved and published in a memorial volume of the Maulana K. Azad Oriental Institute in Hyderabad.

Translating a couplet at a time between obstetric demands – his professional help was freely available even to those unable to pay – Surti first wrote by hand, then painstakingly typed his own manuscript, eschewing secretarial help that would hike the cost of the final product. Even so, by the time the first volume was published, the project had entailed an expense of more than Rs 50,000.

Surti's only regret has been that all this work resulted in a certain neglect of his wife and children, acknowledging their tolerance and encouragement verbally and in print. Wife Khorshed, a Licentiate of the Royal School of Music (LRSM), London, has imbued their daughter Rati with a love for music and the latter is now practising music therapy – which lulls the patient, requiring very mild anaesthesia – in Switzerland; son Navzar is a fully qualified gynecologist following in his father's footsteps – the third generation doctor in the family, as Bahman's father Sohrab had been a surgeon.

Surti, who retired as an additional director of the medical and health services of the government of Andhra Pradesh, had also served as the principal of the Gandhi Medical College and superintendent of the Government Maternity Hospital in Hyderabad, besides being directly involved in teaching as professor and head of the department of gynecology and obstetrics of the Osmania Medical College for 19 years.

At a function organized by the Oriental Heritage Trust on the occasion of the release of Volume III by Nani Palkhivala in 1986, Surti stated that it was Firdao's desire that "the Iranians should not forget their Persian language and that they should always speak (it). Many people do not

know that 200 to 300 years after the Arab invasion, the Persian language was taboo in Iran. It was not allowed to be spoken." Surti then illustrated the conditions of the time with an anecdote about a Persian poet named Marv Abbasi in the days of Khalif Mamun, a son of the benevolent Harun-Al-Rashid. Known to be a benevolent khalif himself, Mamun is said to have enquired, "Is there anyone here who can recite Persian verse?" and Abbasi responded with a beautiful Persian piece. As soon as the recital was over, Mamun ordered Abbasi's execution. When some people remonstrated, Mamun explained, "If you want to destroy the culture, the civilization of a people, the first thing you must strike at is their language." Such were the conditions preceding Firdao's attempt to resurrect the language and history of Persia although Sultan Mahmood who commissioned the work was of Persian stock. All the Sufi poets – Haafiz, Omar Khayyam, J. Rumi – were to draw their inspiration from Firdao's, informs the scholar.

Surti hopes that his English translation of the epic will lead to a similar revival of the sterling spiritual qualities which had sustained the Zoroastrians of those bygone days.

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“The actions of the just”

Homi J. Rogers

Astad Gorwala's book
The Making of a Marriage portrays
the travails of a civil servant

The Making of a Marriage (Roumela - Alfresun) by Astad D. Gorwala. Published in November 1987 by H.M. Patel, Charutar Vidya Mandal, Vallabhvidyanagar, Gujarat 388120. Pp 271. Price Rs 80.

Memoirs of civil servants normally make interesting reads. In the Indian context, one recalls the profound knowledge and meticulous presentation by Deshmukh, the lyrical charm of Menon, the gourmandizing of Noronha, the delicate situations encountered by Dharma Vira, and the poignant portrayal of the '40s' famine by Mangat Rai. Thus, when A.D. Gorwala, one of the oldest hands at the game, having joined the ICS (Indian Civil Service) in 1921, writes a book which the blurb claims "is a story with many sidelights on administration, and the management of men and affairs," one reviews it with an autobiographical interest, even though the author cloaks it as fiction with the rather romantic title, *The Making of a Marriage*. The narrative deliberately misguides the unsuspecting reader by setting it in a semi-feudal society, complete with knights in shining armor and damsels in distress.

The protagonist, on whom the book opens and who dominates the proceedings with a rare blend of power and subtlety that Gorwala may have lent to his post, is a nameless assistant collector. He sets things right, be they as petty as restoring conjugal bliss or meting out punishment to a pimp, to allaying matters like ensuring that the state is not deprived of any revenue due to lapses in land assessment, or a war is not brought about due to the romantic liaison between Roumela and Alfresun who belong to two warring clans. The assistant collec-

tor is the alter ego of Gorwala: just, deeply fanatical about his duties, a gourmet (as all Parsis are) and a sage-poet who seeks the company of the wise and the literati of the land.

The Marriage is a series of adventures in the life of the assistant collector: the central strand being the story of how he brings about the union of Roumela and Alfresun. Woven into this narrative, with the skill of a master storyteller, are innumerable subplots, which, in the manner of many a medieval story, add to rather than detract from the main plot. Shuttling back and forth in time, *The Marriage* abounds with tales of social mores, gently satirizing, as Jonathan Swift had done over two centuries ago, the politics, intrigues, bigotry and human selfishness. Midway through the book, one realizes that Gorwala desisted from making his work an autobiography, for what he wanted to tell was not only how he handled the situation, but how, in view of the recurring nature of such events, they should be dealt with.

The Marriage is thus a satire on India up to the late sixties – the time when the novel was serialized by Gorwala in his magazine, *Opinion*. Though the parallels, in the absence of a diary of events being appended to the book, cannot be viewed as sharply as in Orwell's *Animal Farm*, the phantoms of the past cannot be missed in Gorwala's narration which, unlike Orwell, does not sledgehammer the satire, but coats it, like Swift did in *Gulliver's Travels*, in a totally different garb. Yet, one cannot miss getting a nagging feeling that Zubeida Khanum whom the assistant collector cultivates, as she alone can bring about the end as desired, is a disguised version of

Indira Gandhi. And her husband, Grey Eyes, who was her father's adversary at one time (shades of the Mundhra-Menon scandal), is Feroze Gandhi, who dies young, leaving Khanum all powerful, and in charge of his kingdom, and, as it happens, her father's too.

On yet another plane, Gorwala's work can be read as pure fiction, without seeing any parallels to the course of modern Indian history, which Gorwala, in his own little way, had nevertheless helped to shape. Viewed in such a light, *The Marriage* is a rejuvenated *Ivanhoe*, replete with tales of chivalric honor and rivalry, complicated plots and scenes of high action and adventure. It may be purely coincidental but the name of Gorwala's heroine, Roumela, is faintly similar phonetically to Scott's Rowena, the fiancée of Athelstane. (Now, does not that, too, sound like Alfresun?)

As with Scott, all actions in *The Marriage* spring from a feudal code of honor: the assistant collector abides by it; Zubeida Khanum adheres to it while dealing with friends or foes alike; even the minions' deeds are ruled by it. It is the towering virtue in Gorwala's narration. One senses Gorwala's lode-star in matters of adminis-

He sets things right,
from meting out
punishment to a
pimp, to allaying
matters of
importance to the
state

tration lies in a strict code of honor that he believes bureaucrats should govern with, rather than resort to subterfuge and deceit. Gorwala, who is named after the Zoroastrian angel of righteousness, Astad, stresses this quality through the deeds of the assistant collector, who sings, summarizing his beliefs:

"Only the actions of the just
Smell sweet and blossom in the dust."

The Marriage is strewn with homilies in blank verse and rhyme, laying

down the code of a moral life, and stressing the greatness of the soul over mundane mortal matters. "See ye the soul? No. Yet there greatness lies. Learn ye then, kings, to recognize the soul. Its sign is magnanimity, its symbol serenity..." And where the law cannot bring about a decision, the *lorh* (a mace-like weapon) lays down the victor, or rather, the *lorh*, wielded skillfully by our protagonist, lays down the vanquished.

Gorwala charms equally at playing Aunt Agony. Take for example his advice to two souls in love with each other, facing economic retribution and the stigma of a broken vow, if they should marry. "Now God guide me right," said the assistant collector, "for truly it is a fearful responsibility you put upon me. Fifteen years hence, when your beauty is no longer fresh...will you not think with deep regret of the ease and comfort you would have had in your intended's house instead of the endless work in your lover's? Men change too, you know, and so do women's hearts." His verdict, arrived at after much deliberation, may not win approbation from all readers, but the presentation here, as with many other incidents in the book, is plainly delightful.

The assistant collector is the alter ego of Gorwala: just, deeply fanatical about his duties, a gourmet and a sage-poet

The Marriage, despite its rather stilted and archaic style, in tone with the period wherein it is set, is a panegyric to a hard-working, honest civil servant. It is a celebration of righteousness, of fair play, of chivalry, of selflessness, of self-knowledge and discovery. And if the life of an assistant collector is as colorful and exciting as Gorwala tells it, one would wish to muzzle the snorkel of the Bofors gun (and all it stands for), and live it out in the wild open, judging marital compatibility and the quality of stallions. Or, do today's civil servants prefer horse-trading?

A thought-full book

Nariman Dotiwala has culled more than 1,000 quotes and compiled them into a book



Great Thoughts and Wisdom of Ages - A to Z. Culled by Nariman H. Dotiwala, Ness Bag, C Block, Nana Chowk, Bombay 400007. Published in 1987. Pp: 204.

Poets and philosophers down the ages have contributed nuggets of wisdom that have enlightened and inspired generations of the more worldly mortals. A noble thought reposed in simile, a practical advice based on the study of men and manners, or, even a simple wish that touches the chords of one's heart, as it reads like an innocent brook gurgling past, have never ceased to fascinate man. For a long time, it was considered proper to begin an essay with a verse or a quote from an ancient seer, and books of quotations remained perennial sellers, being used continuously for reference by students and writers.

Great Thoughts and Wisdom of Ages is a collection of such noble quotations, as selected by Nariman H. Dotiwala, who informs us in his preface, that "right from my school days it was my hobby to collect in well-bound books, good thoughts and words of wisdom of the truly great men and women of yore and modern times." Over 1,000 quotations have been assembled by Dotiwala in this magazine-size book of 204 pages, with the explicit purpose of being of "permanent value to the young and the grown-ups to help them become better citizens not only of India, but also of the world."

One cannot grudge Dotiwala's lofty aspirations and ideals, and distributing the book free amongst individuals and institutions (though, Dotiwala regrets that due to the high cost of printing, only a limited number of copies have been published) is indeed a laudable

venture. Yet, one cannot help commenting on the limited fountainheads of wisdom that Dotiwala has scalped for his work. The book is primarily a collection of the wisdom of the East. There is very little of Western thought and content, the quotes of the great minds or the poets of Europe being few and far between. This is all the more disappointing, for Dotiwala states that he has culled these selected thoughts from "voluminous volumes." The reader would hence expect quotes from Dante, Voltaire, Milton, Russell, and the Russian masters like Dostoevski and Tolstoy, who are, but for a stray thought or two, generally unrepresented, while over 20 pages are filled with quotes from the *Bhagavad Gita* as interpreted by A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (the founder Acharya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness - ISKCON), not, as many would agree, the most qualified or able translator of the *Gita*.

Churlish as it may sound, Dotiwala's collection does not explore the wisdom of the Zoroastrian scriptures either at its fullest. The Ahunavar prayer (*Yatha Ahu Vairyo*) is translated twice in the book (quotes 14 and 52), but two equally beautiful prayers - the *Ashem Vohu* and *Yenghe Hatam* - which are ennobling in thought and contain the quintessence of the faith, are not included. Dotiwala's translation of *Vohu Mano*, an all-encompassing term for the good mind, is rather limited as "wisdom." Similarly, the translation preferred by him for Kabir's *dohas* (couplets) do little justice to the weaver-poet in getting either the right meter or matter.

Dotiwala has culled great thoughts,

but the wisdom of ages is amiss. Equally missing is the A to Z part of the book's title. The work is neither assembled in chronological nor in alphabetical order; nor have the quotes been arranged under subject-wise headings. Hence, what Dotiwala means by A to Z, remains a mystery.

Yet, it is this manner of carelessly strewing gems over 200-odd pages that is the book's strong point. What would have otherwise become a dictionary of wisdom to be referred to only when

"You have killed the elephant and you have revived it. But has it enabled you to realize God?"

one requires to learn how a particular theme has been reviewed by seers and sages, is now a book that can be pored over at any time, lending succor and soothing one's mind. *Great Thoughts*, hence, is mercifully not encyclopedic: its amateurishness, even by way of quotes repeating themselves, is its strength. The repetition of certain quotes, as Dotiwala gracefully explains, helps "in laying emphasis on certain valuable thoughts." Only, it is a bit disturbing to find the same quote repeated on facing pages. Surely, Dotiwala could have been just that marginally more careful in proofing. Unfortunately, mistakes abound in spellings, and, even more tragically, in the names of the authors being quoted. Hence Gibran is often referred to as 'Khalil' instead of 'Kahlil.'

What however shocks and dismays is the fact that Dotiwala seems to have paid little regard to the subject matter of his quote, and the person to whom the quote is attributed. Could the Satya Sai Baba, who is remembered, and even revered, for whisking out watches from his sleeves and offering vibhooti (ashes) to his devotees allegedly by a sleight of hand, actually have said: "Then the Lord said to the vain sadhu with occult powers: 'You have killed the elephant and you have revived it. But what has that done for you? Do you feel uplifted by it? Has it enabled you to realize God?'" Or, take the example of Goldsmith, to whom Dotiwala attributes "Ill fares

the land where files accumulate and men decay." The original quote is, "Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey Where wealth accumulates and men decay."

Dotiwala has lapsed in quoting what must have been a later-day parody on Goldsmith's famous and longer couplet.

Besides, what are political opinions, of the likes quoted below, doing in a work like this? "Nehru has been the greatest disaster to India, and in any well-organized country, he would have been thrown out early...His successors are mediocre and merely carry on..." or "Whose has been the principal responsibility in this matter (of encouraging corruption)? Why, clearly the Prime Minister's, Indira Gandhi's...far from discouraging corruption, she has encouraged it by her own example." The latter is attributed to P. C. Sethi, a Congressman till last year in Rajiv Gandhi's cabinet. And he said the above lines on October 9, 1972. Not a very wise selection, when Chankya or Machiavelli could have been quoted if an emphasis on politics was necessary.

Yet, for all its pitfalls, *Great Thoughts* is definitely worth preserving. Ponder over the political commentary that rears its head occasionally. Try and work out the diversity in the wisdom of the West vis-a-vis the East by contrasting "There is everything in a name. The world will dissolve into nothingness if we take away the name and form" with Shakespeare's contention that "A rose would smell as sweet by any other name;" or King Vikramaditya's ghoul's statement that a man's good and evil deeds accompany him, with "The good (that men do) is oft interred with their bones..." This reviewer had hours of fun in undertaking this workbook exercise. Reflect over the thoughts and try to put them into practice. Debate over ideas expressed. And memorize Abraham Lincoln's deeply touching prose-poem, *Teach Him Kingly World*, where the sentiments expressed by Lincoln on the eve of his son going to school, will be shared by all parents.

Great Thoughts is a collector's item to be dipped into at will over the years. The wistfulness lies in the fact that *Great Thoughts* is more a cornucopia of other men's flowers, rather than a bouquet.

Homi J. Rogers

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The data on births, marriages and deaths has been compiled from information provided by various newsletters and anjuman in India and abroad, courts and hospitals. It must be pointed out that this information is not always complete or consistent.

Of the 94 Parsis who died in Bombay, heart disease claimed 35, while seven fell prey to cancer. The other killers were diabetes, lung disease and pneumonia (six each); brain disease, bronchitis and old age (four each). Accidents, blood disease and hypertension claimed three victims each, while two died of dehydration. Isolated cases of asthma, hernia, kidney failure, liver disease, nervous disorders, septicemia and tuberculosis were recorded. Two infants, both stillborn, were lost to the community.

In the breakup of deaths according to illnesses, it must be noted that in some cases, especially in those of the very old, death is often due to a combination of several diseases.

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 would appreciate this requirement and cooperate with us.

BOMBAY

Born

A girl to *Roshni* and *Harvesp Sopariwala* on July 6, 1988
A boy to *Persis* and *Ferrok Billimoria*; July 9
A girl to *Rita* and *Homiar Billimoria*; July 15
A boy to *Veera* and *Anand Mahajan*; July 17
A girl to *Maharukh* and *Homi Ustad*; July 19
A girl to *Persis* and *Darayus Bharucha*; July 20
A girl to *Dolly* and *Rohinton Bharucha*; July 20
A boy to *Armine* and *Hoshedar Muharaka*; July 20
A girl to *Persis* and *Vistasp*

Irani; July 21
A girl to *Rashna* and *Chalakkal Harikumar*; July 24
A boy to *Parveen* and *Percy Wadia*; July 26
A girl to *Ketayun* and *Sarosh Sanjana*; July 27
A boy to *Gaimai* and *Rajesh Sachdev*; July 28
A boy to *Gulcher* and *Hormazd Chesani*; July 31
A boy to *Yasmine* and *Mehran Irani*; July 31

Married

Veera Ratan Cooper of Poona and *Yezdi Sorabji Engineer*; July 4

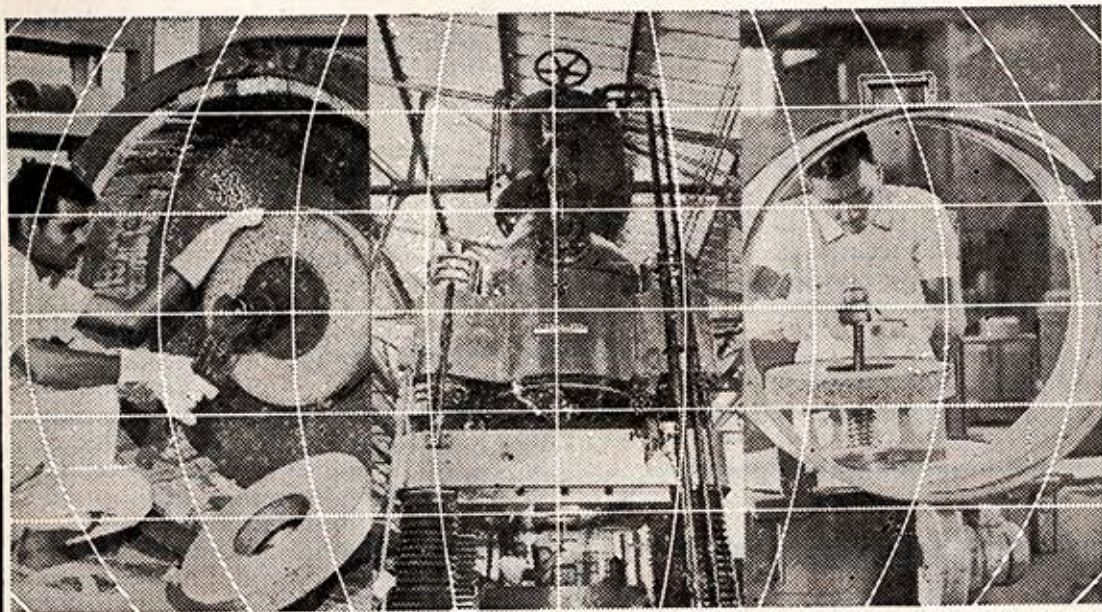
Died

Firdosh Tehmuras Colah (24), residing at 679, Kudiyaniwala Bldg, Katrak Rd, Wadala, 400031; June 30
Bachi Noshir Daruwala (56), Sainara, Cuffe Parade, 400005; June 30
Nergish D. Anklesaria (80), Shroff Bldg, Dadi Santoke Lane, Dhobi Talao, 400002; July 1
Rusi Hiraji Baria (71), C. Banoo Mans, Cumballa Hill, 400026; July 1
Dosibai K. Cambhatta (84), 19, Petit Sanatorium, B. Desai Rd, 400026; July 1
Bomi Behram Gordan (51), 5/1, Sleater Rd, 400007; July 1
Tehmina Gustasp Nadirshah (76), Gool Mans, Dinbai Petit St, Grant Rd, 400007; July 1
Bomanshaw Nadirshaw Pardiwala (75), 18, Orion, Omer Park, B. Desai Rd, 400026; July 1
Minocher Eruchsha Dotivala (72), Ratan Manor, 511-A, R.P. Masani Rd, Matunga, 400019; July 2
Shirin Merwanji Patel (80), A, Kanta Bldg, Maulana Shaukatali Rd, 400007; July 2
Soli Themulji Rabadi (70), Lam Bldg, Lower Parel, 400013; July 3
Tehmina Ardeshir Amaria (90), 726, Parsi Clny, Dadar,

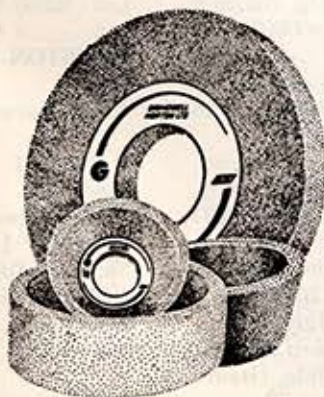
400014; July 4
Fredoon Peshotan Tavaria (81), A/4, Rustom Baug, Victoria Rd, Byculla, 400027; July 4
Freni Nusserwanji Daruwala (59), B/7, Shiv-Chhaya Co-op Soc, Andheri (E), 400069; July 5
Bachoo Jimmy Irani (62), 512, Meher Muncher Mans, Matunga, 400019; July 5
Mehran Darabshaw Kapadia (85), Happy Home, Forjett Cross Lane, 400036; July 5
Jerbanoo P. Patel (82), B-47, Gool Mhl, Sleater Rd, 400007; July 5
Khorshed Meherwanji Turel (78), B/52, Central Apt, Vile Parle, 400057; July 5
Firoz Navroji Dastoor (50), Fairy Manor, Rustom Sidhwa Marg, Fort, 400001; July 6
Eruchsha Ardeshir Goza (86), 191, Bhabha Hse, Fort, 400001; July 6
Eruch Navroji Jamula (75), 815, Engineer Bldg, Jam-e-Jamshed Rd, Dadar, 400014; July 6
Dinabai Piroshaw Sutaria (72), 4, Elavia Bldg, Mori Rd, Mahim, 400016; July 6
Minocher Ardeshir Tavaria (72), Dotiwala Est, Byculla, 400027; July 6
Meher Hosang Jal (27), Banoo Manor, Babulnath, Chowpatty, 400007; July 7
Khorshed Dorab Kanga (74), 123, Aderbad, 34, Hughes Rd, 400007; July 7
Sherbanu Merwan Khaksar (65), 135, B. Sindhi Soc, Chembur, 400071; July 7
Banoo Gustad Dubash (75), Wadia Bldg, Marzban Clny, Motlibai St, Nayar Rd, 400008; July 8
Tehmina Byramji Nariman (73), Arsiwala Bldg, Grant Rd, 400007; July 8
Ardeshir M. Sukhia (73), Ashish Apt, Sorabji Santoke Lane, 400002; July 8
Dhun Adi Irani (54), 302, Swati Apt, Juhu Lane, Andheri (W), 400058; July 9
Aloo Dinshaw Panthaky (64), 10/21, Tata Clny, Tardeo, 400034; July 9

Rati Rusi Buhariwalla (68), 44-A, Batliwalla Villa, Sleater Rd, 400007; July 10
Dinbai Erachshaw Choksey (75), C-52, Meherzin, Wodehouse Rd, Colaba, 400005; July 10
Homiyar Jal Patel (21), 16/2, Wadia Block, Malcolm Baug, Jogeshwari, 400102; July 10
Vicaji Jehangirji Unwalla (86), Roda Bldg, South Frere Bridge, Grant Rd, 400007; July 10
Shirin Rustom Irani (76), Ramesh Bldg, Pawwalla St, Grant Rd, 400007; July 11
Shernaz Phiroze Siganporia (20), 286-C, Irani Chawl, Supari Baug, Parel, 400012; July 11
Jehanbux Cawasji Barsiwala (82), 489, Jagganath Shankarseth Rd, 400002; July 12
Ratanshaw B. Bhesania (82), 679, Kudiyaniwala Bldg, Katrak Rd, Wadala, 400031; July 12
Dhunjisha Jehanbux Sethna (63), Chandra Mhl, 241, Shamaldas Gandhi Marg, 400002; July 12
Herabai Jehangir Meherji (93), Shirin Mans, Gamadia Clny, Tardeo, 400007; July 13
Phiroze Palonji Mullan (76), 98 Sunita, Cuffe Parade, 400005; July 13
Kersi Nariman Sahukar (54), 112-B, Twin Towers, Prabhadevi, 400025; July 13
Shirin Motabhooy Shapoorjee (78), A-3, Botawalla Bldg, 239, Tardeo Rd, 400007; July 13
Nasarwanji R. Bam (89), C/o M.A. Ghadially, F-51, Cusrow Baug, Colaba, 400039; July 14
Soona Behramshaw Mehta (74), 3, Manek Bldg, 112, Lamington Rd, 400008; July 14
Minocher Sohrabji Patel (84), T-16, Cusrow Baug, Colaba, 400039; July 14
Ratamai Framroze Writer (88), Rita Villa, Amboli Rd, Andheri, 400090; July 14

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Katie Byramji Daroowala (82), 66-D, Soonaiji Ter, Gowalia Tank, 400036; July 15
Boman Naserwanji Shroff (85), 6, Ahmed Bldg, Gunpowder Rd, Mazagaon, 400010; July 15
Naznin Minoo Engineer (9), 785, Ready Money Bldg, Dadar, 400014; July 16
Phiroze Erachsha Mallu (70), Durlabh Bhavan, Jalbhoy St, Charni Rd Junc, 400004; July 16
Khorshed Pesi Motashaw (70), Achrekar Est, Dist Thane; July 16
Homi Pestonji Vajifdar (77), 2, Banet Bldg, Bharucha Parsi Clny, Andheri (W), 400058; July 16
Dhunmai Darabsha Singanporia (81), 7, Jeejeebhoy Bldg, Gamadia Clny, Tardeo, 400007; July 17
Fredoon Savaksha Todywalla (65), 12-3, Tata Clny, Tardeo, 400034; July 17
Minoo Shapurji Bhaijina (63), F.S. Parukh

Dharamshalla, 34, Hughes Rd, 400007; July 18
Mehera Framji Kapadia (81), 7/A, Sagar Sangeet, 58, S.B. Singh Rd, 400005; July 18
Dina Savaksha Mistry (72), Dharwar Bldg, Zoroastrian Clny, Chikalwadi, Tardeo, 400007; July 18
Avan Jamshed Talati (81), King of Suburb, 7th Rd, Khar, 400052; July 18
Kersas N. Kharas (74), 2, Jalsagarika, 273, Off Carter Rd, Bandra, 400050; July 19
B/o Silloo Jehangir Dadachanji (stillborn), 682/B, Kapadia Bldg, Khareghat Rd, Dadar, 400014; July 20
Rustom A. Vakshoor (75), 404/A, Bahubali Tower, S.V. Rd, Borivali (W), 400092; July 20
B/o Navaz Keki Meherji (stillborn), B. Rawalpindiwalla Bldg, Tribhuvan Rd, 400004; July 21
Keki Bomanji Irani (68), Mubarak Manzil, Gholvad, Dist Thane, July 22

Rustom M. Irani (69), 7, Gamadia Clny, Tardeo, 400007; July 22
Naval Rustomji Mistry (65), Batliwala Bldg, Zoroastrian Clny, Chikalwadi, Tardeo, 400007; July 22
Dhun M. Printer (46), 13/2, Rupal Apts, 98, D. Phalke Rd, Dadar, 400014; July 22
Noshir Marzban Shroff (58), 59-B, Wadia Bldg, J.S.S. Rd, 400002; July 22
Boman Behramji Desai (82), 205, Kenwood, Lokhandwala Complex, Andheri, 400058; July 23
Pesi Kaikhushru Kerawalla (72), D-20, Rustom Baug, Victoria Rd, Byculla, 400027; July 23
Keki Dhanjishaw Mistry (77), Hira College, 68, R.R. Roy Rd, 400004; July 23
Ratan Keki Panthaki (80), U-4/3, Cusrow Baug, Colaba, 400039; July 23
Pesi Naoroji Patel (58), 4-B/17, Sir Ratan Tata Bldg, C.J. Clny, Tardeo, 400034; July 23
Peshotan Ardeshtir Sanjana (82), 5, Dev Doot, B.J. Rd, Bandra, 400050; July 23
Ratanbai Framroze Mukadam (88), 1/3, Lady Dorab Tata Bldg, S.V. Rd, Bandra, 400050; July 24
Hirabai Jalejar Contractor (83), Sethna Bldg, Khan Est, Stn Rd, Mahim; 400016; July 25
Kaikhushroo Manekshaw (76), New Mistry Bldg, Balaram St, Grant Rd, 400007; July 25
Jamshedji F. Hansotia (76), E-11, Cusrow Baug, Colaba, 400039; July 26
Khodayar Kayomurzi Irani (55), 5, Hirabai Petit Bldg, Opp Grant Rd Stn, 400007; July 26
Jal Rustomji Vimadlal (73), 5, Moti Mhl, Churchgate Recl, 400020; July 26
Khodadad Rashed Irani (74), E, Vasiemall Bldg, Grant Rd, 400007; July 27
Freny Dinshah Lellinvala (75), 598, A.H. Wadia Bldg, J.S.S. Rd, 400002; July 27
Hilla Nusserwanji Rana (78), P/31, Nowroz Baug, Lalbaug, 400012; July 27
Nariman Bamanshah Cama (83), 81, Cassa Grande, Little Gibbs Rd, 400006;

July 28
Nariman Sorabji Golwalla (76), C-24, Rustom Baug, Byculla, 400027; July 28
Maneck J. Manekshaw (89), 6, Kerawala Bldg, Tata Blocks, Off S.V. Rd, Bandra, 400050; July 28
Sherbanoo Jehanbux Mehta (90), 5, Piroja Mans, Opp Grant Rd Stn, 400007; July 28
Eruchshaw Naoroji Patel (60), 12/3, Baria Bldg, Gamadia Clny, Tardeo, 400007; July 28
Perin Maneckji Dalal (80), Nepean Hse, B.G. Kher Marg, Malabar Hill, 400006; July 29
Aloo Kaikhushroo Engineer (73), C.M. Banaji Bldg, Gowalia Tank, 400036; July 29
Khorshed Rustomji Mehta (52), 5, Radha Bldg, 44, Paowala St, 400004; July 29
Soonamai Darabsha Dalal (77), Motibai Bhavan, Proctor St, Grant Rd, 400007; July 30
Nariman Edulji Buchia (62), 89/90, Bhivandiwala Ter, J.S.S. Rd, 400002; July 31

CALCUTTA

Born

A girl, *Roxanna*, to *Perveen* and *Xerxes Vesuvala*; July 20

COONOR

Died

Roshan Nazir (68), wife of Col (Retd) Soli; July 3

HOUSTON

Died

Cavas Dubash; March 10

KARACHI

Died

Piroja Tehmurasp Mehta (76); May 1
Shirinaib Sohrabji Cooper (83); May 6
Dhunmai P. Panthaky (82); May 20

POONA

Died

Freny J. Irani (76), 10, Ma Parviz Hall, Ma Parviz Rd, 411001; June 6
Boman Jehangir Dalal (83), 62, Koregaon Park, 411001; June 28

Compiled by Roxana H. Kaka

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