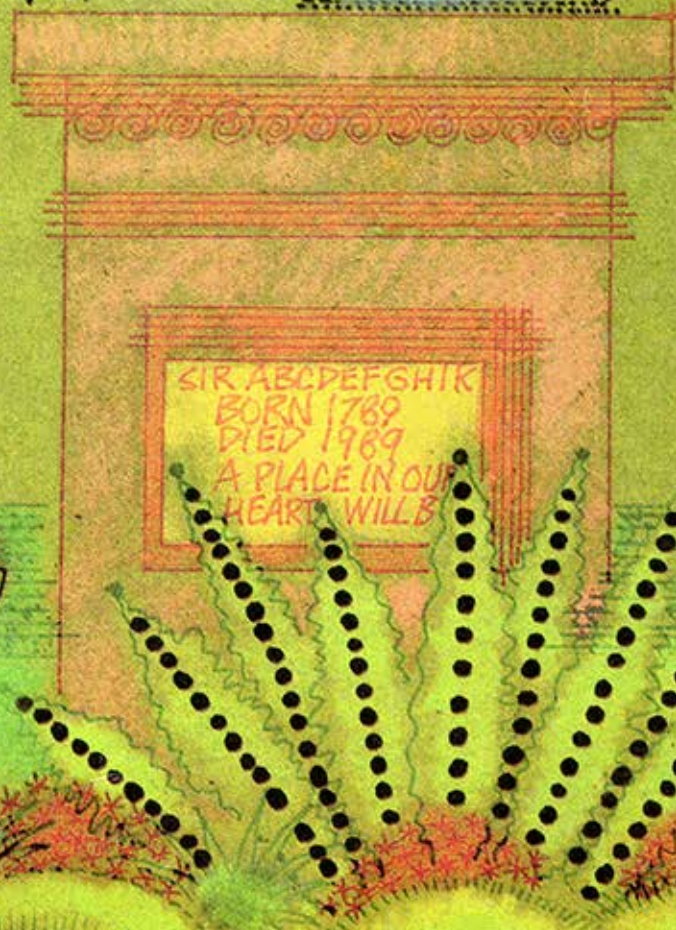
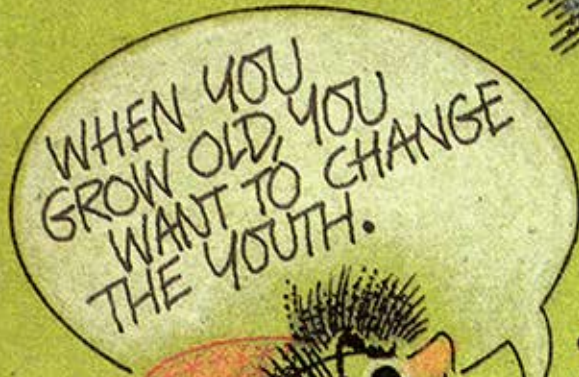
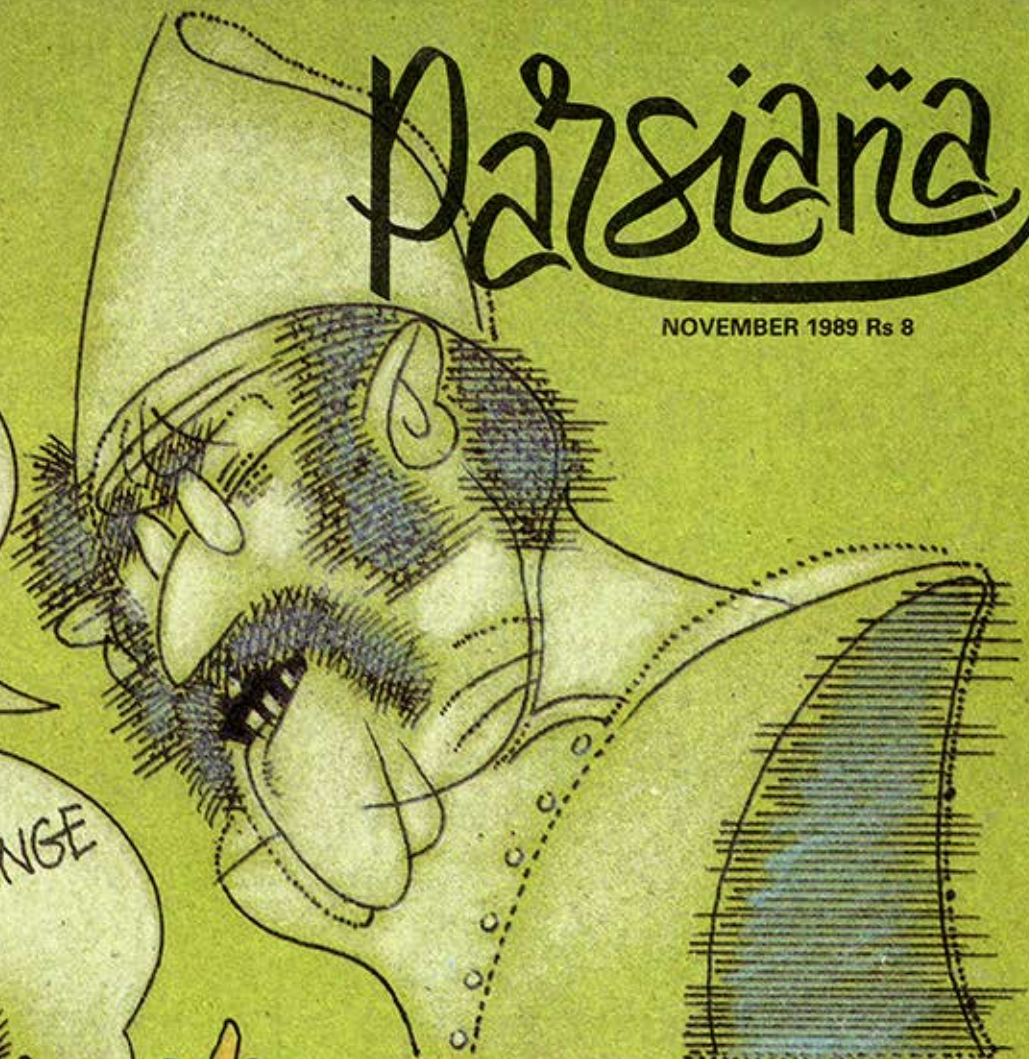
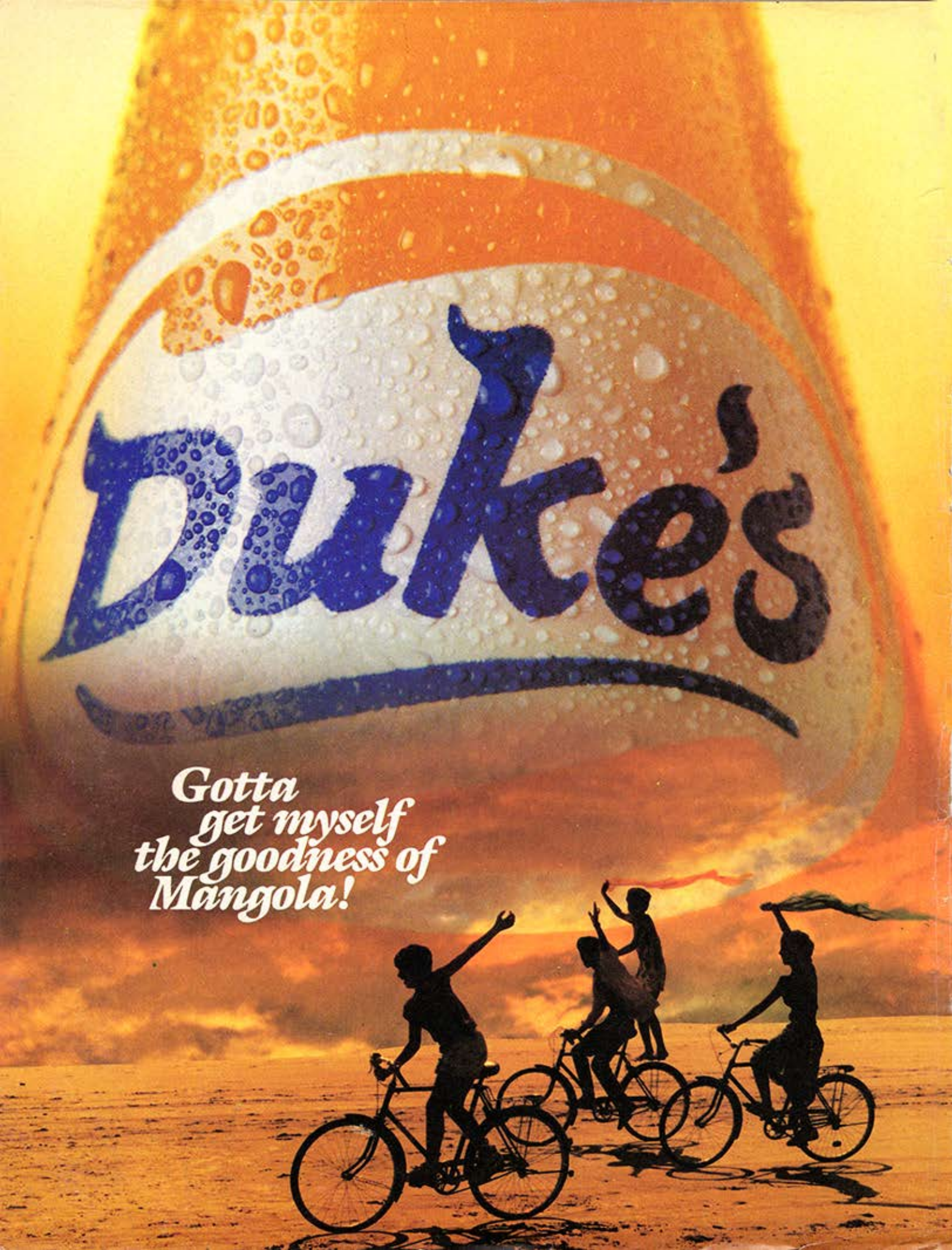


Paṛsianā

NOVEMBER 1989 Rs 8





Duke's

*Gotta
get myself
the goodness of
Mangola!*



Parsiana

November 1989
Volume 12 Number 5

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Three words
of good advice for
walls and floors.





Readers' views are welcome on any subject of interest to the community and should be sent to the Editor, Readers' Forum, Parsiana, G.P.O. Box 892, Bombay 400 001. Letters are subject to editing for reasons of space and clarity. Unsigned letters or those without a complete address will not be published.

Fraternal bonds

My mother expired in Sholapur on October 7, 1989. I would like to take this opportunity of thanking the members of the Sholapur Parsi Anjuman for the excellent help, support and sympathy shown to our family during this tragic happening.

The president Ms Zarin Amaria, secretary Mr Rohinton Darukhanawalla and all others were extremely helpful and kind. We did not have to lift a finger for the arrangement of the ceremonies. This was done in a spirit of camaraderie and love. The question of remuneration or caste and creed was not even whispered.

I hope people of other anjumans emulate this wonderful example of brotherliness.

Dr YEZDI MISTRY
Trichur

Commenting on comments

"Readers' Forum" (*Parsiana*, August 1989) carried a particularly interesting crop of letters and I would like to comment appreciatively on some of them:

- A. A. Jafarey's excellent reply to H. Michael Simmons ("Does Zoroastrianism...?") again demonstrates the fact that scholarship must be accompanied by inspiration if it is not to become dry and, possibly, misleading. Our Avestan scriptures enshrine layer upon layer of esoteric meaning whose depths can never be plumbed by rationalistic scholarship alone.

- Z. M. Zend's spirited defence of the Iranis ("Irani achievements") will hopefully temper remaining pockets of Parsi jingoism exemplified by epithets like "jungli Irun" still employed by otherwise responsible journalists. Never forget that while we Parsis spent the post-Sassanian period under the benign hospitality of our Hindu cousins, the Iranis endured and survived a persecution as brutal as any in recorded history. For that alone they deserve our profound respect. Above all else, can it ever be forgotten that we are both the common custodians of the exalted legacy of Asho Zarathushtra?

- Neville Sarkari's clear thinking on conversion ("Declining numbers?") must be applauded. Far more for spiritual than symbolic reasons, the minimum qualification to count as a Zarathushtrian is unflinching adherence to sudreh and kusti without which the spiritual initiation by navjote lapses through wilful default. It is a disease of the times that we may possibly have today more Parsis than Zarathushtrians. Conversion of apostate Parsis into Zarathushtrians should be the sole connotation of that term (conversion) at the present critical juncture. We must first of all set our own house in order before seeking to invite guests.

RONI K. M. F. KHAN
Nasik

How about non-achievers?

Articles on Peshotan Kuka, Adi Marzban and others who achieved success through dedication and hard work (*Parsiana*, August 1989) are inspiring.

However, please also let us have, from time to time, articles about common people, the "non-achievers." In particular, there are numerous poor Parsis living in old dilapidated buildings in the Fort area, women in *vidhwa* (widow) chawls in Dadar, Grant Road, etc, old people living alone with scarcely any organized assistance like home-visitors, homes for the aged, etc, as well as those living in villages.

The general impression, among non-Parsis in particular, is that Parsis are all very rich; reading articles only about

"achievers," heightens such an impression.

JAL M. KORKHAO

"Outcaste milestones"

With reference to Ms Reena Kavina's letter "Outcaste milestones" (*Parsiana*, August 1989), there is scriptural evidence from the *Gathas* that Zoroastrianism does not and cannot preach conversion. The whole idea of conversion is contrary to the truths set out in our *Gathas*.

A Hindu trying to convert a Christian will have to say that Krishna is superior to Christ. A Parsi Zoroastrian cannot say that because he is taught by his prophet that all religions emanate from the divine design of Ahura Mazda and for every man the religion of his birth is prescribed as the path to his salvation.

I also wish to clarify that cousin marriages, and not intermingling among members of a community, leads to the birth of retarded children.

Ms PERVIN BHARUCHA

Propagating Zoroastrianism

It appears from a news article that Muslims in North America are propagating Islam on TV for half an hour daily, explaining in detail what Islam is. Cars with large stickers like "Read Koran for salvation," "Allah is great," roam the city and perhaps other parts of North America.

The Hindus propagate their religion, culture, tradition through conferences, seminars, *garbas* (folk dance of Gujarat) and cultural shows inviting large crowds of westerners including luminaries.

Thus fellow ethnics from Asia put themselves in the forefront in every walk of life in mainstream USA, religiously, culturally, economically and even politically.

In contrast, the Parsis propagate mixed marriages and hold endless stereotyped seminars and conferences with no end result and no progress.

Such effort could better be applied to the fundamental requirement of consolidating our cultural identity by educating our youth about the essence of our religion and working towards the resurgence of our established codes and heritage vis-a-vis those of the other communities.

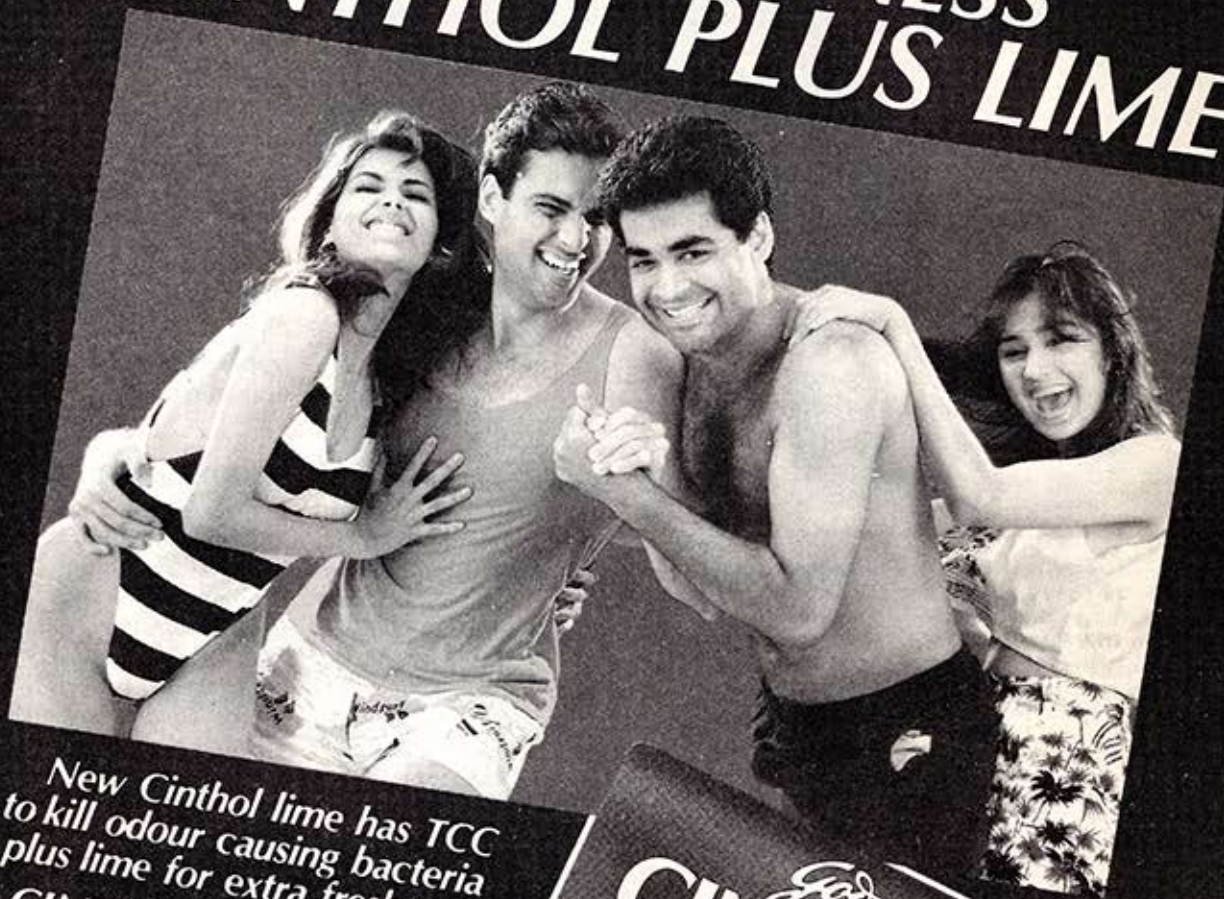
It is high time we adopt more conducive methods to gain the limelight in the mainstream of the western hemisphere.

PHIROZ D. DOTIWALA
Houston, USA

Edited by Arnavaz S. Mama

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Events and Personalities

Dorabjee trust dispute

The Bombay High Court has admitted a writ plea filed by Dr Sam Bhacca and the trustees of the Surat Parsi Punchayet (SPP) challenging the sale of property belonging to the Dorabjee Pallonji Patel Trust (DPPT) in Poona. Since the SPP trustees (as per the settlor's wish) are the custodians of 50 percent of the charitable funds earmarked for education, they are contesting the sale of the property on Moledina Road which they say is worth over a crore of rupees and is being sold for a paltry Rs 9,75,000. The funds entrusted to the SPP are to be used for the education of poor Parsi boys and girls, as per a report in the *Indian Express* of December 2, 1989.

This is the second time that a writ plea has been filed in the High Court by the SPP trustees alleging that the sanction granted by the joint charity commissioner of Pune P. V. Kakade, permitting the DPPT to sell property to one of its former trustees was obtained by fraud. Justice S. P. Bharucha and Justice B. U. Wahane ruled that the hearings be expedited and Savak Patel to whom the property was sold, be restrained from disposing of the property or creating any third party rights, notes a UNI news report.

The main contention of the SPP trustees was that when in March 1988 the DPPT trustees applied to the charity commissioner for permission to alienate their property "what was not stated in the application was that Savak Patel had been a trustee of the DPPT until February 1988 and that the value of the property was over one crore rupees." In fact, it was mentioned that the original offer of Savak who is the nephew (wife's brother's son) of the settlor was Rs 6,00,000 and only later was it raised to Rs 9,75,000.

When the first writ petition was filed before the Bombay High Court, Justice Chittatosh Mookerjee and Justice Khatri directed the SPP trustees to appeal to the charity commissioner instead, and issued instructions that the hearing be expedited.

Before the charity commissioner, the DPPT trustees contested on two grounds: that it was not within the jurisdiction of the charity commissioner to hear the appeal;

and that once a conveyance is drawn up, the charity commissioner could not revoke his sanction. They further announced that Savak Patel had already sold the Moledina Road property to Mehta Raheja Construction company and had authorized them to develop the property. The SPP's counter arguments were turned down by the charity commissioner so once again an appeal was filed in the Bombay High Court.

R. A. Dada with S. J. Kathawala, B. H. Antia and H. N. Vakil instructed by Mulla and Mulla and Craigie Blunt and Caroe appeared for the petitioners, F. D. Sorabjee appeared for the DPPT trustees, R. R. Salvi for Savak Patel, Ms Anita Agarwal for Mehta Raheja Construction and W. M. Yande for the charity commissioner.

Strength of MP anjumans

There are 77 Zoroastrian families in Indore, 60 in Mhow and 17 in Ratlam with a total Zoroastrian population of 435, according to a press release issued by the Indore Parsi Anjuman. The listing of Zoroastrians in the Directory of Parsi Zoroastrian residents of Madhya Pradesh (MP), released on September 17, 1989, indicates that MP too, like the other parts of India, has an aging population.

The age distribution pattern shows that nearly 50 percent of the 145 Zoroastrians in Mhow are over 60 years of age while only 17 percent are less than 24 years of age. In Indore and Ratlam almost 50 percent fall in the 25-59 age-group and about 25 percent each in the under 24 and over 60 age-group.

The sex-wise break-up indicates that the males are just marginally larger in number than the females in Indore and Mhow. In Ratlam the males account for 65 percent of the total population of 64.

While Zoroastrians have been living in MP for the last 150 years, they are mainly concentrated in the western MP towns of Mhow, Ratlam, Nimach and Indore with Indore accounting for the largest concentration of 226 Zoroastrians.

"The trend in MP is not at all different from that of Parsis in other parts of the country," writes the Indore Anjuman secretary Meher Khurody. "MP too... faces

the same problems of mixed marriages, disposal of the dead and confusion in matters of religion. And yet (the Zoroastrian there) are the very picture of solidarity and integrity." Both Indore and Mhow have their own dokhmas. In addition, Indore maintains a dadgah and Mhow an adarian.

Since August 1988 the MP anjumans have been organizing inter-city meets "to promote kinship and fellowship amongst various anjumans." In September last, it was the Indore Parsi Zoroastrian Anjuman that hosted the meet when fun and entertainment was accompanied by discourses and question-answer sessions on subjects concerning the religion, traditions and culture by Dastur Kekobad Dastur of Udwada, Ervad Pervez Karanjia of Mhow and Noshir Dadrawala of Bombay.

Stree Mandal past 40

Over 300 Zoroastrians had assembled at the Sir Ardeshir Dalal Hall on Khordadsal, August 29, 1989 to celebrate the fortieth anniversary of the Jamshedpur Parsee Stree Mandal, notes a press release sent by Ms Homai Patel, secretary of the Mandal. To mark the celebrations, the surviving founder members of the Mandal were felicitated, and the audience entertained with a garba dance and a Gujarati comedy.

The guest of honor at the evening's function, Tata Steel's joint managing director Dr Jamshed Irani, commended the organization for initiating the rotating trophy, in memory of the Mandal's founder president Ms Khorshed Kutar, to encourage the Parsi youth to strive towards academic excellence at the school level, states the write-up. To help the poor members of the community with financial assistance for school fees, books, clothes, etc has been the main thrust of this social welfare organization, as outlined in a write-up.

With the introduction of three trophies donated by Behram Aibara and his wife, academic performance among the youths of Jamshedpur is now recognized at the school level, higher secondary education level and at the graduation level. The awardees this year of the Khorshed Kutar Trophy for excellence at the school finals were Ms Binaifer Davar, Ms Benaifer Tar-



At a felicitation function organized by the Giants International on September 17, 1989, well-known homeopath Dr Sa-rosh Wadia (left) receives a memento from Bombay's sheriff and world chairman of Giants International Nana Chudasama

apore, Marzban Bharucha, Kaizad Wadia and Ms Dimple Raisurana. The Dr Nari-man Kutar Trophy for excellence at the higher secondary level went to Ms Havovi Vasania and Zubin Bharucha; and the Phiroz Kutar Trophy for excellence at the graduation level went to Ms Franak Karai and Shiraz Bharucha.

The Mandal will next concentrate on creating religious awareness among the children. To encourage the Parsi children of Jamshedpur "to acquire knowledge of our religion, customs and rituals...in their formative years," the Mandal will be organizing a competition early next year in which they hope to involve the youngsters between the ages of 6 and 19.

Minority cell appointee

A recent entrant to the political scene, 34-year-old Ronnie Wadia has been appointed co-convenor of the minority cell of the Bombay Regional Congress Committee. In a letter dated September 4, 1989, the chairman of the Congress (I) minority cell, Azeez Sait, notes that Wadia will work with the Congress party member of parliament from South Bombay, Murli Deora, to make "the cell active." Wadia is also on the executive committee of the Maharashtra Pradesh Congress Committee.

"The main objectives of the cell are to

protect the interest of the minority communities in India," notes a press release. According to Wadia, the cell takes special interest in removing communal tension, promoting national integration and redressing various problems of the minority communities.

Wadia has plans to organize a session on Parsi problems "shortly" and is keen to assist Parsis in areas of education and socio-economic development.

A financial consultant and property developer, besides holding a law degree, Wadia is preparing for degrees in chartered accountancy and company secretaryship. He has earned a black belt in karate, having studied under the noted karate expert Pervez Mistry and runs karate classes. His wife Hutoxshi is a company secretary with the Mazda group of companies. Wadia can be contacted at 277572 (office) and 388943 (residence).

Armed for a new post

Lieutenant General Faridoon Noshir Bilimoria took over as the General Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Central Command in November 1989, notes a write-up forwarded by the family. He is reportedly the third Zoroastrian to become army commander, the first being Field Marshal Sam Manekshaw who was chief of army staff

and the second being Lt Gen Adi Sethna who was vice chief of army staff.

It was in June last that Bilimoria was promoted to the rank of army commander. Prior to that he has held several important posts as notes his bio data: commanding the Second Battalion The Fifth Gorkha Rifles (Frontier Force) in the Indo-Pak war, the Infantry Brigade in the Rajasthan desert, a mountain division in the Eastern Sector, and a corps in the Western Sector. He has also served as Indian Army liaison officer at the school of infantry in UK and as Commandant of the Defence Services Staff College, Wellington.

In defence studies Bilimoria holds a master of science degree from Madras University. He is the author of two theses, "Non-alignment - its relevance today" and "Strategy in the age of nuclear deterrence and its application to developing countries."

Police medal for Irani

Inspector Homi Sorabji Irani of the special branch of the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) was presented the President's police medal for meritorious service in August last, notes *The Times of India* of August 16, 1989. His name was included in the list of 22 awardees selected from Maharashtra.

During his 21 years of service with the police department, 45-year-old Irani has been attached to different police stations in Bombay, the traffic control branch and, since the last two years, with the special branch of the CID. In the course of his duty he has succeeded in arresting smugglers and drug peddlars, nabbing thieves and burglars with booty running into lakhs, and tracing dacoits and murderers. Of late he has also handled the security arrangements during the Festival of the USSR, Apna Utsav and the Festival of France in India, notes his curriculum vitae.

When in 1984 a recurrence of thefts at the fire-temples in the Fountain-Girgaum-Grant Road locality had created a scare in the Parsi community, it was Irani's intervention that succeeded in identifying the thief, it is reported.

The President's police medal for gallantry was awarded to Irani in 1985 when

continued on page 16

Bilimoria (left): forte is defence
Wadia (center): to redress Parsi problems
Irani (far right): commendable service



Pune 28/12/89
 Dear Fram, ~~Don't~~ forgotten us already? Look I've started asking around for a place for you and Shirini. And I think we've hit a jackpot!

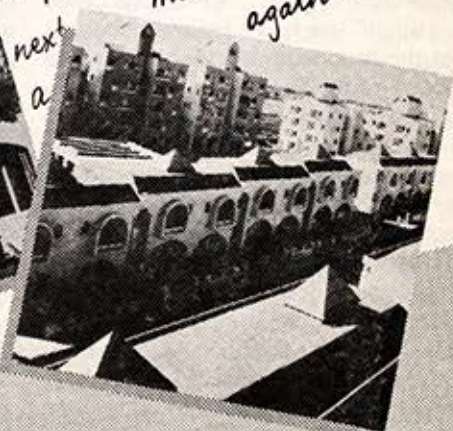
OK. Now just imagine Cusrow Baug. In Pune. Got it? Nice buildings, clean well maintained and really peaceful — no transistors and gongling early morning. Plus 137 crazy Parsi neighbours!! The area is Viman Nagar, a growing suburb, but close enough for Dorabjee, Kayari and Dastur Meher Road.

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 love. S
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 he really

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 next month. It would
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Keeping the tally

Arnavaz S. Mama

As Secretary to the Senate of South Dakota, Feruzeh Jacobsen has several onerous responsibilities

March. That includes listing the bills, resolutions, etc to be discussed and implies grouping together of topics so as to allow the maximum convenience to the members of the Senate's subcommittees. When the session begins each day at 2 p.m., presided over by the Lieutenant Governor, Jacobsen calls out the name and number of the bill under discussion, maintains an "action sheet" to ensure an effective countercheck to the stenographer noting the proceedings and, after each debate, takes a tally of the ayes and nays. Whereas the larger states have installed electronic voting systems in the legislatures, "Our senate leadership has chosen to keep the old way (of manual tally of votes)," says Jacobsen. This system permits each senator to vote not only according to his own stand on the issue but also to temper his sail to the wind. Indeed, until the final tally is called out, senators have the facility to change their minds, informs Jacobsen. At the end of the day's session — which may last till 4 p.m. or extend to 10 p.m. or later — all the shorthand minutes are typed into the computer and by next morning the printed text of the daily *Senate Journal* is available for distribution. It's her job to check the minutes before printing to ensure that the report of the proceedings is accurate in letter and spirit, says Jacobsen. Any valid objections to the day's report are included in the following day's *Journal*.

The senators represent each of the state's 35 districts, informs Jacobsen and clashes of opinion and personality are a part of the game. But the administrative staff must remain above these party and political maneuverings. Since the proceedings are televised and Pierre, with its population of 12,000 is the smallest state capital in the United States, most local people know of the confident administrator who, along with the rest of the legislative staff, gets appointed afresh every year.

Surprisingly, Jacobsen has had no legal training. Daughter of Ms Nergish and Keki Erani of Bombay's Steelage, her strengths are her command of the English language and a secretarial background honed with Chubbs, the well-known security

equipment manufacturer of UK. After her marriage to Peace Corps volunteer Jerry Jacobsen, home to Feruzeh was her in-laws' sheep ranch in South Dakota. "It was all like a big adventure...so different from anything I had experienced," says Feruzeh, recalling her stints at cooking for a crew of 12 to 15 shearers, looking after the livestock, including such chores as branding. The firsthand experience with farming economy was an asset when a senator neighbor provided the lead to the first three-month stint with the legislature of a primarily agricultural state, where her ability and interest in the work resulted in increasing responsibility. Before reaching her present position she was chief of the training and management section catering to the needs of the various subcommittees of the legislative body. Here she learnt "how to train people to do a job... You can't give them all the information all together... (It's) too much to absorb," she explains.

Since Jerry is a Christian ("though he doesn't go to church — he's open to all faiths"), most people take it for granted that Feruzeh is too. The rare individual who enquires is baffled when told she is a Zoroastrian "and the conversation ends there!" she smiles, adding, "At home we do more Zoroastrian things like *batti, sagan* and all" but lack of coreligionists in the vicinity has curtailed community involvement.

Hitherto Feruzeh helped in the family's successful ice cream shop — a seasonal business March through September — which the Jacobsens sold recently after 11 years. Her social service commitments include work for the cancer society, volunteering at the museum and with the Hospice — an organization that helps the terminally ill and their families to endure the anguish and debilitation of fatal diseases. Volunteers help by collecting funds, visiting and staying with the patient while the family works, or helping out with domestic chores. Hitherto the majority of cases were cancer patients, though now AIDS victims are increasing in number, says Jacobsen.

Feruzeh and Jerry, who now looks after public relations for the transportation

"I get requests all the time and get accused all the time!" laughs Ms Feruzeh Jacobsen about the occupational hazards of being Secretary of the Senate, the upper chamber of the legislature, of the state of South Dakota, USA. This top staff position came her way three years ago as a summation of 17 years spent working for the legislative branch of the state government. The majority party in the Senate — currently the Republicans — determines who will hold the job, informs Jacobsen.

The only Zoroastrian (and Indian) in Pierre, the miniscule capital of South Dakota, Jacobsen schedules each day's program for the state's 35 senators when they meet over seven weeks in January, February and

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Rasna Shahi Gulab





Dr Rumi Sukhia presented his book, Preventive Dental Measures for Handicapped Children to Pakistan Prime Minister Ms Benazir Bhutto at a reception at Avari Towers, Karachi. Byram Avari (center), minorities representative in the Pak Parliament, looks on. The book has been distributed free of cost to institutions working for the handicapped in Pakistan and elsewhere.

Zav (Zavahir) Patel has been appointed vice president, supply, of Ultramar Canada.



A course of 12 lessons on the *Gathas* of Zarathushtra has been compiled by Ms Dina McIntyre of Pittsburg. Presented in the form of short essays in clear, contemporary language easy for a lay person to grasp, one lesson per month will be circulated by mail to interested people in the US and Canada, informs the October newsletter of the Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Chicago. McIntyre may be reached at 1609 Lawyers Building, Pittsburg, PA 15219.

Fulbright scholar Dr Beheruz Sethna has been appointed dean of the College of Business at Lamar University in Beaumont, Texas, informs *Mid-day* of August 3, 1989. He joins the faculty as professor of marketing and information systems management.

Sethna, who earned his doctorate in business administration from Columbia University, is also Master of Philosophy. His career includes stints with multinational corporations in the US, reports the newspaper, as also a 13-year term as professor and chairman of the marketing and MIS department at Clarkson University in Potsdam, New York.

A keen scout and Rotarian, Sethna has been honored for five consecutive years with the national award for instructional innovation, notes *Mid-day*.

Compiled by Arnavaz S. Mama

department of the government of South Dakota, have two boys — Eric (19) and Zak (13).

ZAGNY directory

The ninth edition of the directory of the Zoroastrian Association of Greater New York (ZAGNY), published earlier this year, lists more than 300 family units. It is not limited to ZAGNY members — currently numbering 280, as per the introduction by Association president Erach Munshi — but includes the non-Zoroastrian scholars who reside and work in the area as well as others who do not belong to the Association. The directory seeks to provide information including names of spouse and children, the residence and business address of both husband and wife, their professions and their country of origin. Not everyone, however, has obliged with all the answers.

Revised by Ms Behroze Clubwalla and Ms Teshtar Irani, the directory has 18 "yellow pages" and advertisements on its inside covers. The front and rear of the attractive plastic covered, 116-page volume bear the ZAGNY logo and a sketch of the Arbab Rustam Guiv Darbe Meher, respectively.

Other information provided includes the names and addresses of 28 Zoroastrian organizations worldwide. The Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America (FEZANA) and the Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe (ZTFE) however are conspicuous by their absence from the list. Zoroastrian publications listed include only *Gavashni*, *Hukht*, *Parsiana* and *Ushta* (erroneously referred to as *Parvanda*).

Houston directory

The compact, 34-page directory of the Zoroastrian Association of Houston, received by *Parsiana* on August 10, 1989, lists the members of the Association. Its 115 entries are interleaved with advertisements, among them a supplier of kustis, topis, sudrehs, sandalwood, etc. The executive committee report of March 21, 1988 which prefaces the directory notes, "Because of the sluggish Houston economy, we have continued to see some of our members leave Houston for better opportunities elsewhere. However, despite this downturn we are also seeing new Zoroastrians and their families move to Houston."

ZAC's scholarship fund

The Zoroastrian Association of California (ZAC) has instituted an educational fund to help students finance their college/university education. The scholarship awards must, however, be returned to the Association after completion of study so that the money would be available to help other students on an ongoing basis, informs the Association's June newsletter.

ZAC has also bought four burial plots for the use of the community. The number was based on assessed needs as indicated by past statistics, adds the newsletter.

NA achievements

The United States government has granted the Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America (FEZANA) a retroactive tax exemption from June 2, 1987 — the date of its registry as a non-profit organization — informs ZAC's September newsletter.

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The reformists as well as the orthodox must learn from each other, says professor of philosophy Dr James Boyd



"PHILOSOPHY IS DIALOGUE"

Arnavaz S. Mama

"How would you define ritual?" (Answer: religious ceremony) "Who does it?" (The priests) "What about the laity?" (Both do it!) "What are lay rituals?" (kusti, nahn...) "Do all rituals deal with God?" (It's all in the mind...Rituals make a connection between the divine and the profane) "Do you believe you have a soul?" (Yes, yes...) "Any dissenters? Will you please tell me about it?"

These are some of the questions Dr James Boyd bombarded at the bemused Parsis assembled at the M. C. Ghia Hall to listen to the professor of philosophy from Colorado University speak on "The reality of authentic ritual in religion," under the auspices of Zoroastrian Studies (ZS) on January 19, 1989. The comments in brackets document some of the responses. Their predicament was sampled earlier by *Parsiana* when what seemed to be straightforward questions were subject to philosophical autopsy and tossed back with the suggestion, "Let's take this question to a different level" or "I am asking for this question to be reworked." Nor could one take umbrage at Boyd's responses — he was obviously delighted in channelling us, individually and as a crowd, into challenging new approaches instead of accepting pat statements.

Having coauthored several publications with Dastur (Dr) Firoze Kotwal, High Priest of the H. B. Wadia Atas Bahram, Boyd was conversant with the community's psyche and its ongoing controversies. He was puzzled though by the community's

attitude towards foreign scholars. "The role of non-Zoroastrian students of Zoroastrianism is a very complex one. It requires a great deal of thought and discussion. What is being expected? What should (the scholars) offer?... I suspect some non-Zoroastrian scholars are playing a neo-priestly role... I would object to any scholar telling the Zoroastrian community what they should do," he adds.

Unhappy at the tearing gulf between the community's liberals and conservatives, the philosopher has attempted to uncover their basic assumptions in order to establish mutual respect for the integrity of both positions. He defines a reformist as one characterized by a general position that favors conversion and intermarriage, emphasizes the ethical teachings of the *Gathas*, finds the priestly rituals less than meaningful and considers Avestan mantras unnecessary mumbo jumbo. Boyd argues that it is "a genuine effort to bring a new focus to what they consider to be the essentials of the faith in order to live more meaningful lives. They seek a refinement of their heritage, a liberation from outmoded practices and concepts which only breed inauthenticity." He explains the thought process of the reformist as one who conceives of religion as a body of concepts and definitions which are true or false. According to Boyd, the reformist believes that the religion deals with ideas, and hence prayers should be said in a language that the votary understands. Rituals are considered inessential because they

provide no information — just an endless repetition.

Furthermore, the sensibility of the reformist is totally at variance with that of the orthodox and is established by family upbringing from early childhood. The child is made sensitive to the personal feelings of others (e.g. How would you like it if you were treated that way? etc) and is asked to inspect his own feelings, to learn to judge right and wrong in terms of ethical standards of well-being, success, happiness, freedom which are individual states of mind and emotion, says Boyd.

The orthodox, on the other hand, have grown up learning values in terms of external, social roles as when explanations offered to the questioning child are couched in terms of authority, seniority, etc ("Because I say so," "Because you are the oldest"). Such a child becomes attuned to organized patterns of thought and behavior outside of himself which he accepts as datum or final authority, theorizes Boyd. Such a mind is ready to credit rituals with special efficacy simply because they have been so accepted for generations.

Seeking to explain the impact of ritual on the orthodox, Boyd draws upon the analogy of drama. "The actors' spoken lines in the context of the stage set, create a situation in which both the actors and the audience participate. Each actor is not reflecting upon his or her own ideas in a spontaneous way but is voicing a prescribed 'text' which, when properly ut-

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tered, effects or creates the situation intended," he elaborates. When the priest voices a fixed text, the intention is not to inform but to create a specific situation in which the laity (like the theater audience) participates. "When *Ashem Vohu* is recited, when the priest praises good thoughts, words and deeds, and professes the Zoroastrian confession of faith, he is not simply 'talking about' the ideas of righteousness and good conduct or explaining to himself and others that he is a Zoroastrian. He is seeking to bring about the actual situation of personal and social righteousness, to take an ethical stance then and there. His assertion that he is a Zoroastrian, helps him to be one," argues Boyd.

According to the professor, a ritual, like a great piece of music, goes beyond thought and creates an experience, transforming the player and the listener by a deeper awareness and new perspectives which are not easily defined. "Furthermore, musical sensitivity is acquired over time, through repeated exposure to fine performances. Similarly, ritual sensitivity, which creates a receptiveness, an openness at the 'vital depths of our being,' is acquired over time." Hence the orthodox resistance to conversion and intermarriage. As notes Boyd, "Deafness to the articulate power of ritual is not easily overcome."

This careful analysis of the thinking of the two groups is based on Boyd's hope that each group would learn to accept and respect the position of the other, realize each other's viewpoint, integrity and consistency of thought and behavior. The North American Zoroastrians view the religious world as a natural rather than a theological one because they live in a mental environment where theology and ritual have no place, notes Boyd. "On the other hand, there is a resurgence of the traditional ways of thinking, as exemplified by Zoroastrian Studies and the Athra-van Educational Trust (AET) — an attempt to rethink and restate traditional values, theology, rituals," says Boyd. "My hope is that these two directions (which the community is taking) will speak to each other."

Boyd, whose own training has been secular, says he has seen this happen in Judaism, Christianity and Buddhism. "Other communities have already experienced this. I hope Zoroastrian leaders will take the advantage of the experience of others to help formulate their (community's) growth... Take into account the cultural climate and intellectual attitudes of all persons involved in the Zoroastrian

community. Philosophy is dialogue, (the) willingness to hear out the other position, willingness to grant that maybe, the other side has integrity too. Maybe, the orthodox/reformist labels need to be reworked. (We are) talking about religious people who are well meaning. The orthodox have a lot to learn from the reformists and vice versa. I have studied this in the three other religions. The orthodox have an aesthetic sense of tradition. They feel that religion is filled with masterpieces. The reformists have contemporary modes of thought which are helpful in conveying the essential truth of the Zoroastrian tradition," he asserts.

In Bombay to present a paper titled "The noetic function of ritual repetition" at the International Congress on Indo-Iranian history and culture hosted by the K. R. Cama Oriental Institute, Boyd said he had "enjoyed the firsthand conversations" and discussions with other scholars. The deliberations had raised "some aspects of great interest, others of peripheral importance." It was "unfortunate," he said, that Kotwal did not participate. (Kotwal had reportedly not been invited, the assumed reason being his chairmanship of the AET with which the Cama Institute is legally embroiled.)

Boyd labelled the AET controversy as yet another "misunderstanding within the

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community." He had met the mobeds training under the AET program and had been explained their mode of study, he said. Boyd is convinced that "the education of mobeds is absolutely foundational for the future of Zoroastrianism," and described the AET students he had met as "very responsive, bright-eyed, alert." He had expounded to them some samples of Jewish thought, "given them new perspectives to think through. As an outsider, I don't see why there are objections (to the AET)," he added.

Boyd, who began his professional life as a teacher of social studies and music in

1956, had first come to India as a Fulbright scholar in 1962. In 1971 the students of Colorado State University had chosen to honor him, along with three others, for excellence in teaching. Ten years later, the University's College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences endorsed that honor, designating his work 'excellent.' With two books and several articles on Zoroastrianism behind him (apart from papers on other religions and subjects) and several contributions awaiting publication in the *Encyclopedia Iranica* (published by the Columbia University, New York) and the *Encyclopedia Zoroastriana* (a project of the Zoroastrian Community Development Institute) Boyd has also worked with Kotwal on *A Persian Offering: The Yasna, a Zoroastrian High Liturgy*. Thus the many aspects of ritual come easily to Boyd.

"Don't think of yourself as soul and body," Boyd told his listeners at the ZS lecture. "Let's think of ourselves in process — as a series of conscious choices (of listening or not, reading or not, thinking or not). What kind of person am I moment after moment?" He then tried to describe the various types of human consciousness — of the child aesthete (who experiences peaks and lows, joys and sorrows), of the intellectual aesthete (who looks at his own life at a distance, never becoming passionately involved, strongly influenced by the scientific outlook and tending to measure life in terms of interesting/boring), Don Juan (who takes the mask that suits the occasion), the ethical person (who gives an honest answer to any question) and, at an even deeper level, the religious person who descends to the depths of his own being in search of relevance.

Most of us go through life with 'I-it' relationships which are objective, almost like an autopsy, without mutual understanding. Occasionally, we reach an 'I-thou' relationship where the 'I' is not a spectator, where there is communion between the two, the philosopher tells the groping audience. That, according to Boyd, is when you know reality. "Such reality exists between people when the experience is totally honest, totally open, when life flows between..."

"God can never be known in an 'I-it' relationship," says Boyd. "Most people say 'God is up there.' (But it is in an 'I-thou' relationship) that I'm in the presence of the true. In that dynamic relationship I touch, experience, reality. That 'thouness' is God, the real experience."

The objectivity of the 'I-it' relationship

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puts us out of touch with the world around us, explains Boyd. It is a manipulative relationship, he says, citing the Ten Commandments of Moses as an instance. "Most rituals are manipulative," he asserts, illustrating from his experience of the Jewish synagogue where there are too many people, "where prayers are like birds with broken wings, fluttering on the floor," he illustrates poetically.

Though most rituals may belong to the 'I-it' category, Boyd believes that "genuine rituals are ways of giving expression to 'I-thouness,' something to sustain the communion... Rework, change, examine yourself in terms of your reaction to ritual," he tells the Parsis. "When you are critical, what is talking? The child aesthete? The intellectual aesthete, because it is mumbo jumbo and gives no information?" Though the word 'ritual' bears a negative connotation in American English, "there must be something powerful in rituals that have lasted thousands of years," he challenges. "The history of religion is the life and death of traditions and rituals... You don't create rituals which have given people a sense of belonging, overnight..."

"'I-thouness' happens. You can't make it happen. You can't go to someone and say 'love me; it doesn't happen that way... We always want to reduce reality to our concepts... When you say God is immaterial, incorporeal, it becomes an intellectual notion..."

"Don't make God an intellectual thing," the philosopher advises. "Only know God in dynamic relationship. In Zoroastrianism God is wisdom. Wisdom is a powerful concept, but a concept. Don't reduce reality to your notion of wisdom..."

ALL-PARSI ATHLETICS

**The tenth annual meet
is scheduled for
February 10 and 11, 1990
at 1 pm**

**at University Stadium
Marine Lines, Bombay
Cycling meet on
February 4, 1990 at 2 pm
Last day for entries:
January 28, 1990**

Forms available at

- Nowroz Baug Play Centre
- Cusrow Baug Sports Pavilion
- Naval Pithawalla, 584-85, Lady Jehangir Road, Matunga

EVENTS AND PERSONALITIES

continued from page 6

he arrested a gang which was responsible for committing 47 armed robberies and attempting one murder.

In fact, since his enrolment with the police force, Irani has been repeatedly commended, notes his bio data. He was enlisted on the Maharashtra Police Force in 1968 as a sub inspector. During his initial two years of training at the Police Training College in Nasik, Irani was declared 'the best turnout.' At the All India Officer Traffic Training course, Irani had ranked third in the merit list. Altogether his association with the police force has been recognized with 101 good entries and cash rewards of Rs 17,000.

Message on video

Message of Zarathushtra, a full-length educational video film giving a background on Zoroastrianism was released at a full-day function organized by the Mazdayasnie Monasterie. Nearly 300 persons were present on the occasion at Palamkote Hall, Dadar on September 3, 1989, notes a press release. The purpose of this video is to "spread religious knowledge," according to the write-up forwarded by the president of Mazdayasnie Monasterie, Dr (Ms) Meher Master-Moos.

With a running time of five to six hours, the film is divided into three parts and taped on two cassettes. Part I gives a historical perspective and depicts the ancient fire-temple sites. Part II concerns the preservation of the ancient *manthras* by the Zoroastrian priests, and Part III deals with the work of the Zoroastrian College in disseminating religious knowledge, adds the release.

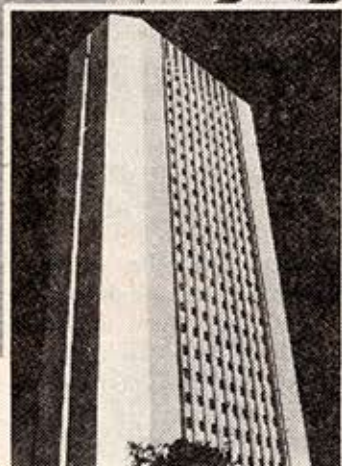
Sponsored by Ms Mehroo and Hoshang Golwalla, the set is priced at Rs 750 (US \$85) and is available at the Mazdayasnie Monasterie office, Mustafa Building, Sir Pherozeshah Mehta Road, Bombay 400001. Deepak and Sandeep Pardeshi of Studio Trends are said to have made a substantial contribution in the recording of this video project.

SPOTLIGHT

Jam-e-Jamshed correspondent Noshir Dadrawala's contribution to journalism was recognized by the Lions Club of Byculla on September 22, 1989. Dadrawala is presently editor of *Philanthropy*, a bi-monthly journal on trust management and law, and *Hamazor*, the newsletter of the World Zoroastrian Organisation.

Compiled by Roxana H. Kaka

Reaching for the Sky



Two landmarks in Bombay – the Commerce Centre of the World Trade Centre Complex and the new Reserve Bank Building.

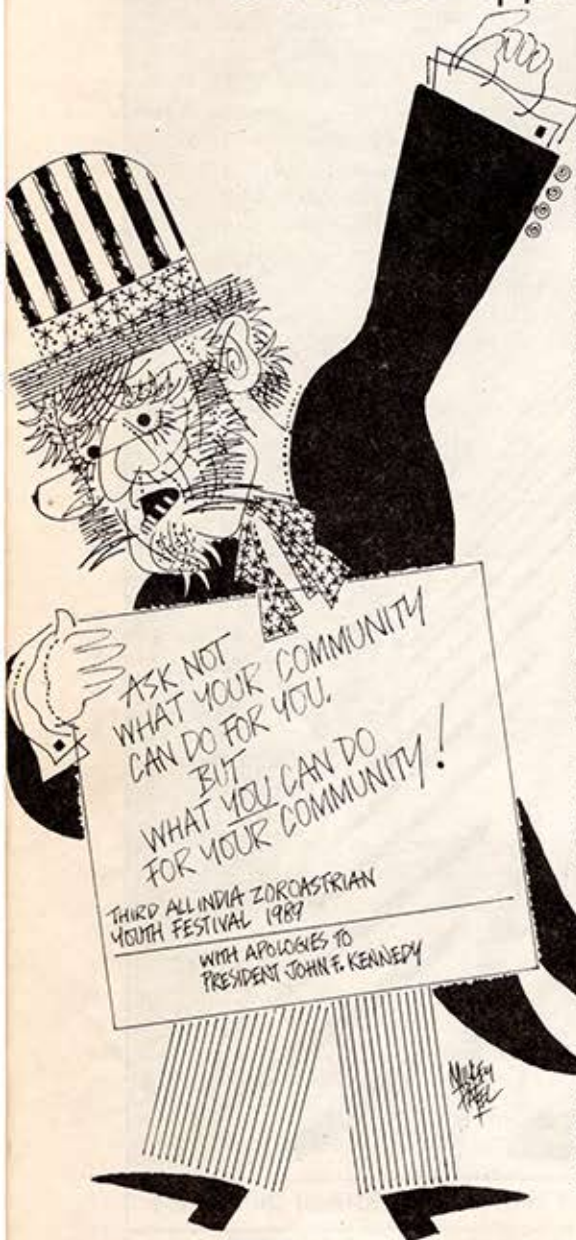
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At the Third All India Zoroastrian Youth Festival in Poona, the subjects discussed once again related to identity and demography problems, educational and career opportunities, religious and cultural threats



As the Deccan Queen pulls into Poona station, disgorging passengers, the unmistakable clusters of Parsis are greeted by enthusiastic young men. One pumps your hand, another whisks away your baggage which reappears in the coach that ferries you to the J. N. Petit Technical High School on Bund Garden Road. Here an eager team of young men and women welcomes you with cheery smiles and registration forms. The formalities over, you are ushered to your quarters – the spartan dormitories of the School that are lined with rows of mattresses along the floor – and from there to the dining room. The operation is efficient, smooth and casual, and you grow increasingly aware of the absence of older folk. If nothing else, the Third All India Zoroastrian Youth Festival, 1989, organized by the Zoroastrian Youth Association (ZYA) – Poona and held between November 3 - 5, heralds the emergence of Zoroastrian youth, impatient and energetic.

The pre-ordained theme of the Festival was "Beyond the Year 2000," the theme slated for the Fifth World Zoroastrian Congress (WZC) scheduled for January 3 to 7, 1990. In the course of the three days of the Festival, the members deliberated on several subjects, discussing on an average two major topics per day. The first day was reserved for identity problems of Zoroastrians, demographic implications and inducing youth to join the armed forces. The second day saw participants discussing educational and employment opportunities and involvement of youth in community organizations. The final day's

sessions were earmarked for dwelling on the significance of religion and traditions and making them understandable to the present and coming generations. There was one main speaker for each session after which the delegates got a chance to discuss the issue threadbare at workshops and group discussions. The evening programs included games, sightseeing, campfire and dancing.

In the final count 100 youth delegates from 16 towns attended the Festival. The delegates came from Agra, Ahmedabad, Ahmednagar, Baroda, Bangalore, Bombay, Calcutta, Delhi, Dahanu, Hyderabad and Secunderabad, Indore, Jabalpur, Jamshedpur, Mhow, Nagpur and Ratlam. Another 60 delegates from Poona also took part. "If nothing else, youth festivals are important in a social context. They bring together youth from different parts of the country, foster a sense of belonging and make us feel proud of being Parsis," says Eruch Irani, one of the founder members of ZYA who with his team of workers shouldered the responsibility of the Poona Festival.

Khojeste Mistree of Zoroastrian Studies (ZS), an organization that made it a point to be well represented, sees the Festival as a product of an identity crisis facing the Parsi community. "Before we tackle the problem of survival we have to know who we really are. The process of self-discovery is vital as life gets more complex in India. It happened earlier in America because the need for an identity was greater there. It's happening now in India."

On crucial, controversial subjects, the

Coming to terms

Gustasp Irani

discussions at this Festival too, as in those past, were inconclusive but it emerged that the two areas in which delegates were willing to make commitments of sorts were: religious studies and regional Zoroastrian community directories. The last group meeting of representatives of different towns, areas and organizations felt that a beginning had to be made somewhere, and the strengthening of the community's religious identity and data base was the somewhere good enough.

Speakers from the stage and the floor reflected this sentiment and concern. "The building blocks of our identity is that we are Parsis first, then Zoroastrians and only then Indians. If the foundation is weak what do you get? You get a pack of cards," said noted religious scholar Mistrree who, in his talk on the identity problems of Zoroastrians, portrayed the community as adrift and rudderless in a society that prized secularism and secular education.

"We have no data base. With no data there is no basis for thought or action. What we've got to do is we've got to have credibility," said Aspi Moddie, vice chairman, subjects committee, Fifth WZC, when summing up in his exacting manner the general concern of the gathering. Credibility is the issue. It remains to be seen how the follow-up action manifests itself. Representatives undertook the task of sounding out their respective anjumans and youth bodies about preparing regional

directories and organizing religious classes. Keki Gandhi, secretary of the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India promised to furnish a copy of the Federation's data collection questionnaire and Ms Bapsy Dastur of ZS assured the group that ZS would be happy to conduct religious classes and even train instructors from different parts of the country.

Dastur, in her talk on survival of traditions, recalled how, as a child, ignorance of her religious heritage made her cower apologetically from her Parsi identity. "We tend to reinterpret our religion in a Western (and/or) Hindu light to make it more acceptable to others," she observed. Her journey of rediscovery of self was a journey into the past, to her roots, to her religious identity, to an understanding of what it means to be a true Zoroastrian. Only then did she feel that she was ready to face the challenge of the future and change. "Change," she asks, "is it change that comes from knowledge or is it change that comes from seeking acceptability (or from) ignorance?"

"Forget the punchayets and anjumans, forget the big issues. It's what we can do as youth and individuals that matters," implores Ms Anahita Dastoor at a group discussion. "Let's work at the grass roots levels like religious classes. How many of us are willing to join religious classes?" she asks. In a show of hands seven of the 10 in the group commit themselves. At that instance the fan in the class room where

the discussion was taking place starts to churn much to the delight of all present — even the gods were happy.

Irani muted sceptics by declaring that the youth of the community have a record to commend them. "Parsi youth have not only been the talking type, we have been the acting type too." To back up his claim he cites as examples the directories of Parsis in Ahmedabad and Madhya Pradesh brought out by the youth of those areas, the activities of the Poona youth, their Navroze program, their sports camps and of course the organization of three youth festivals in Delhi, Calcutta and Poona. "Don't say elderly people don't want change. It's for you to get them to change. This is not a revolt. We are asking for what has been destined for us," Irani continued. The crowd cheered.

The undertone of friction between trustees and youth organizations rippled through the three days. Marazban Patrawala, Maharashtra's minister of state and chief guest at the inauguration function, fired the first salvo when he declared to a delighted audience: "The job of trustees of punchayets and anjumans is to administer funds and properties of the community. They cannot give opinions in religious matters. Unfortunately many of them often think that they have a direct telephone line with Zoroaster."

"We don't dabble in religious matters," clarified Meher Anklesaria, president of the Poona Parsee Panchayat on the



From left: Anklesaria, Patrawala, Taleyarkhan and Irani

(Above) A section of the audience

Photos: Farokh S. Irani

second day's morning session. "Religion — let's talk less, practice more." He believed: "Youth's place is not on the board of trustees. These are hotbeds of politics and youth can be spared (from them). The role of the youth is to supplement the activities of the anjumans and punchayets, not compete with them."

Gandhi confessed that he had broken his resolve to be a passive observer when he went to the stage at the fag end of the Festival to clarify the role of the youth, the trustees and the Federation: "Youth organizations are for the welfare of youth... In matters of community problems you are members of the anjuman and there is nothing to stop you from voicing criticism or opinion. But," he clarified, "as individuals and not on behalf of youth organizations." The Federation, he pointed out, unanimously carried a proposal recommending all member punchayets and anjumans to amend their rules to provide one seat on the governing body for a youth representative. "Some complied, some did not. The Federation is only a recommending body." He implored: "Keep a cordial atmosphere. Remember, we are all eventually working towards the betterment of the community."

"When you are young you want to change the world. When you grow old, you want to change youth," observed Prof Hoshang Moogat before an appreciative audience. In fact the theme of his talk on education, resources, motivation and vocational guidance was in praise of Parsi youth. "I challenge the statement that we (Parsis) do not match up. Take the percentage of admission our community gets to medical and engineering colleges; it works out 20 times higher than any other community." But if he had any lament it was about the disproportionate emphasis put by students and parents on medicine and engineering. "It has killed the spirit of enterprise in our community... It amazes me: everyone wants to join a big business house; does not anyone want to start one?"

Similar sentiments were echoed by Kersi Limathwalla, noted tax consultant and Committee for Economic Revival (CER) leader, in his talk on entrepreneurship and job opportunities in which certain generalizations about the community were examined under a microscope — or rather, charts. Contrary to the oft repeated tirade that Parsi youth are not inclined to pursue higher studies, Limathwalla points out that the percentage of Parsis going abroad for

higher studies compares more than favorably with other communities. Likewise the notion that Parsi girls are better educated than Parsi boys is in the realm of myth. "If you go through any scholarship or merit list you will find that boys fare as well as girls or even better." But the spirit of entrepreneurship? Yes, Limathwalla concedes, it's declining. "In the 1931 census Parsis were classified as a trading community. Now there is a trend to seek white-collar jobs... Why not carpentry and plumbing? These jobs are not only for the not-so-bright but also for the bright. It's a question of right attitudes. Why not retail trade? Seventy-five percent of our Parsi surnames are derived from trades, businesses and professions."

"My father was a *kerawalla*," (banana vendor), declared Dr Dinshaw Kerawalla, noted legal personality and former principal of the Symbiosis Law College, Poona. He first briefed the delegates on the importance of trade before continuing, in his probing, analytical and enlightening style to make the religion more meaningful for the youth of today. Retail trade, he pointed out had sustained the community in the past, as Parsi surnames sufficiently testify, and retail trade he believes will help the community survive in the future. Drawing on the Jewish analogy he observes: "They had no home, no state, only economic power to hold their own and this economic power came from retail trade... We Parsis can't speak the local language. We are misfits. We are *bawajis* (colloquial term of reference used by other Indian communities), other communities recognize us as *bawajis*, and speak to us as *bawajis* and not

individuals. But retail trade bridges the language barrier — it's money language."

Will Parsi parents permit their sons to join the armed forces? Brig Noshir Grant, an ex-service man, sees no reason why they should not and is amazed that they are not doing so. In his talk he detailed the various benefits that an army officer gets in order to show that they more than match up to what the private sector has to offer. He offered to start special coaching classes for those who might be interested in joining the country's defence services. A girl from the audience was sufficiently inspired to inquire if the armed forces recruit women. Only in the medical cadre as of now, said Grant and suddenly found himself dueling to preserve the honor of today's young Parsi men who the girl faulted for not being sufficiently daring. Girl from audience: "Maybe young Parsi men of today are not as manly as before. Grant: "It's for you girls to make them manly."

If enlisting in the armed forces is important, so is participation in the nation's political sphere: "Parsis can't back out of public life; the community will regret it," warns Patrawala, elaborating, "Lesser men will dictate terms to us... Our strength has not been in numbers but in the strength of our ideas. Even if all Parsis were to come together we won't (have the majority) to elect one councillor and yet we have four Members (in various) Legislative Assemblies (MLAs) and numerous councillors throughout India. That in itself is a tribute to our community." Patrawala asserts that the British House of Commons had only three non-Englishmen in its entire life-



Youths at a workshop Photo: Farokh S. Irani



time. "All three were Indians – all three were Parsis: Dadabhoy Naoroji, Shapurji Saklatvala and Mancherjee Bhownagree."

No Parsi gathering is complete without the mention of the community's glorious past, where deeds of eminent personalities are eulogized in order to inspire the present generation to greater heights. At The Third Youth Festival too, the ghosts from the past took their bow. "Parsis have been pioneers in so many fields – steel, ships..." enumerated Homi Taleyarkhan, ex-minister and governor and presently member of the Minorities Commission. "But the glory of the past will not do, we have to work towards the future," he observed. He admitted that in the past, Parsis had greater opportunities than what the present, highly competitive environment has to offer the youth of the community today. "There is a misconception among our sister communities that we are wealthy... Pockets of riches do exist but we also have our poor." He does not wish to equate Parsis with scheduled castes and tribes but there are benefits the community can avail of, he feels. "We are not fully aware of the extent of facilities available. Nationalized banks are willing to give assistance to

minority communities," he informs.

Expressing the same opinion, that the community today faces difficult times as compared to the past, Kerawalla observed: "The worth of a community is known in moments of crisis – I think we can make it." But, to make it, many felt that reservation of seats in educational institutions would help. "I know of a Parsi student with 96.4 percent marks who could not get admission into a medical college," said Patrawala to illustrate the kind of competition one has got to face today. "Let's forget the ego problem. I don't see why we should equate ourselves with schedule tribes and castes. We want opportunity, not charity," argued one young man in a group discussion. Reservation in education, one gathered, eventually is a futile cry. The alternative? Parsi run medical and engineering colleges; the Sindhi community touted as the example. Yes, we have heard the plaint before.

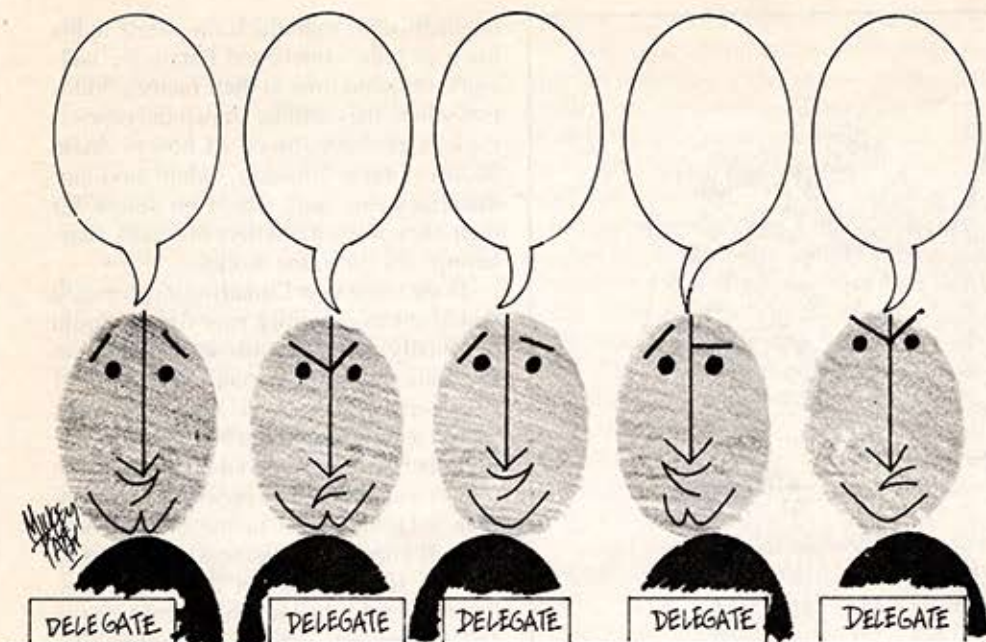
A more concrete proposal made by some of the Poona-based industrial houses was in the area of job opportunity. Irani, who outlined the scheme, stated that these industrial houses are willing to give practical advice to any Parsi who wishes to set

up small scale manufacturing units in his town or area. Interested Parsis are welcome to spend time at their factory premises where they will be shown the ropes – the legal problems involved, how to obtain licenses, raise finances, what auxiliary manufacturing unit would be suited for their area or town, matters of inputs, marketing... in short, the works.

In the same vein Limathwalla proposed that if the community saw fit, he would personally work towards establishing an International Zoroastrian Chamber of Commerce which, by his own admission, was an ambitious project but feasible. The Chamber, as he perceived it, will provide contact and information between all Zoroastrian establishments in the country and abroad, encourage business and exports, provide information on loan financing, licensing policies, knowhow and assist in establishing new enterprises; in sum, provide comprehensive business services – and more. Limathwalla also sees it as a social catalyst where the youth may get information about opportunities abroad, of jobs and studies, of scholarships and ...

The vision falls just short of the centrally computerized World Zoroastrian Directory proposed by Ms Mahrookh Shroff, delegate from Ahmednagar. Not only should it list Parsi enterprises but also Parsi trusts. Listing of individual members of the community would include their age, their qualifications, their profession – a master file on the community. Many in one group discussion, tossing around ideas about what should go into the directory, felt that if it indicated marital status it would help the unattached find suitable life partners from within the community. "It should also include horoscopes," suggested one enthusiastic young man from Mhow.

If the man from Mhow was 'shushed,' the man from Agra who complained that Parsi girls did not like to settle outside Bombay, Poona or the west coast of India won sympathy and understanding. The girls shot back that young Parsi boys did not match up to their image of an ideal husband. "It's not just physical appeal. The man I hope to marry need not necessarily be well-established, but he has got to show one that he has got something going for him," explained one spirited young girl. "The Parsi boy has been described by one in my group as a PLPP, i.e. *Papa na Legha par Parelo Parsi*," says Ms Sanaya Nariman, delegate from Delhi and youth trustee of the city's anjuman. The battle of the sexes was generally a good-humored



affair.

The setting helped. The dormitory atmosphere; young men ferrying hot water up two floors for the 'weaker sex,' the common dining room, the indoor and outdoor games, the camp fire night sprinkled with fun and a touch of lewdness, the tour of the National Defence Academy at Khadakvasla and the farewell dinner-dance night. If nothing else, the youth festival was an enjoyable social occasion at which Parsi youth from the different regions of the country got to meet and know each other – some intimately too. The sight of young Parsi couples entwined in each other's arms on the dance floor must have warmed the hearts of those who champion the fight against mixed marriages.

The same hearts might have quivered, however, if they had sat in on some of the group meetings. "I'd like to marry a Parsi," said one young girl. "But I don't know. I just might marry outside. After all, love is blind." But love is not blind to other realities, like the issue of accepting children of Zoroastrian women married outside the community into the fold. The reaction to the issue was mixed. One group reported near unanimity opposing it, another total unanimity championing it. "If children of men married outside the community are accepted, why not children of women married outside the community?" demanded one girl. Commodore Lovji Menta (Retd), director of the Petit School, confessed that he himself had a non-Parsi wife and warned: "Don't discard those who have married out of the community. With intramariage in a

community of 70,000 we will be breeding a race of infirms and mental retards. The community needs a shot of fresh blood."

But who will decide? Where are the leaders? "In a small community like ours, leadership is crucial. If it does not come from the community where will it come from?" Mistree's search for religious leadership could apply equally to the dearth of general leadership in the community. "If there are two Zoroastrians, you have one anjuman. If there are three Zoroastrians, you have two anjumans," joked a young man in one group discussion.

Malcolm Printer, of Bombay, offered to carry the torch of the religion and the community via his organization – The Zarathustrian Project. The Project goal is: To solve all the problems of the community by 1992. "We can do it," declared Printer. "Our first goal is to enroll a critical mass of 20,000 Zoroastrians worldwide and the second aim is to generate finances." The power of context, he believes, is force enough to attain the final objective, just as the power of context helped US President J. F. Kennedy put a man on the moon within seven years.

Noted astrologer Bejan Daruwalla assured a cheering audience that the best is yet to come. On August 19, 1990 when Jupiter, the planet that rules Zoroastrianism, moves into Leo, the sign that presides over the religion, the lucky phase of the Parsi community starts. "The Parsis have done well in the past, they are doing well now, but from August 1990, for a period of 75 years the best is still to come."

Back on earth, in the context of the

series of youth festivals, Moddie, a self-confessed organization man, asked a pertinent question: what is going to be the nature of the organization bridging the different festivals or for that matter the nature of the organization bridging the different World Zoroastrian Congresses? The answer: a loosely held group of representatives from different corners of India glued together with pride in being part of the community – of being *hawajis* as one speaker observed.

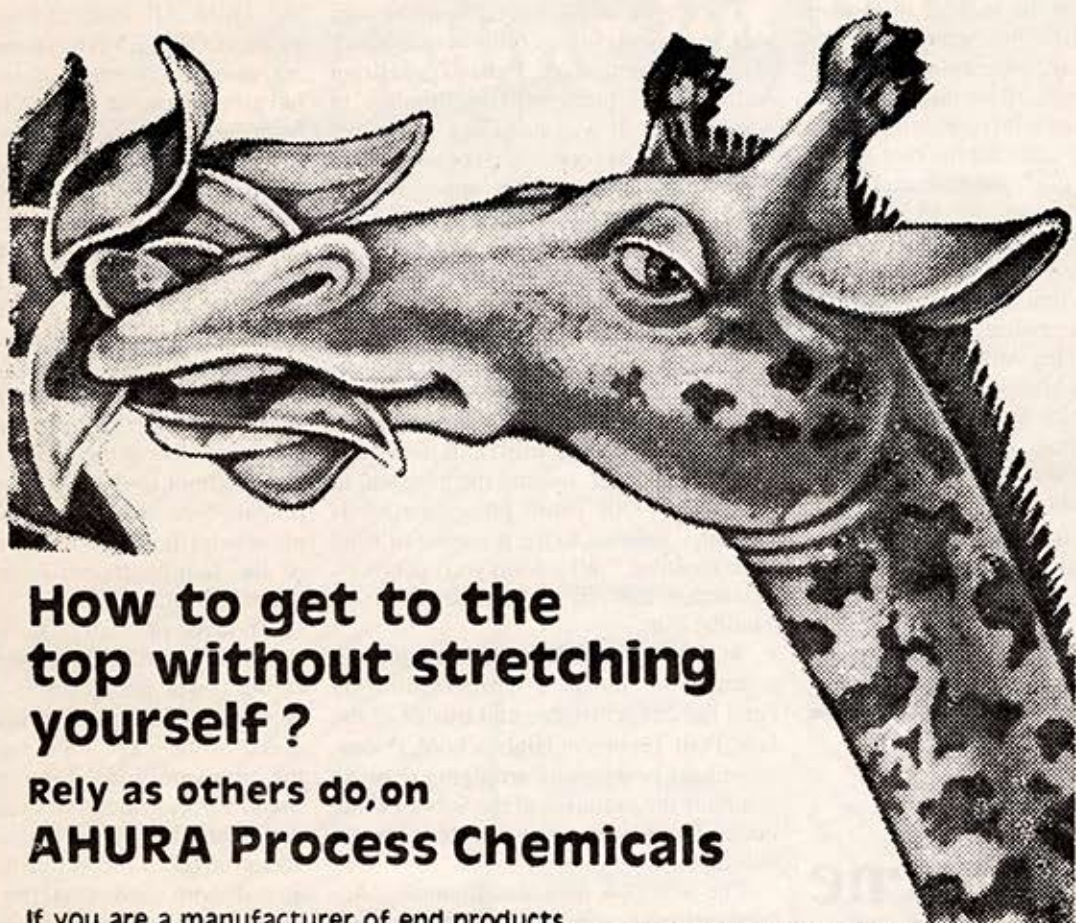
The next festival, Gandhi feels, should schedule more time for group discussions and less to speakers pontificating to an impatient generation. The lesson to be learnt is: "If you want better results out of these youth festivals, send the topics for discussion along with briefs well in advance, so that the youth can hold local meetings to thrash out the issues first. This way delegates will come well prepared."

But what has emerged from these annual youth festivals? The first in the series of youth festivals was held in Delhi in 1987 on the promptings of the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India. "Since it was the first, a lot of time was spent briefing the youth on the various aspects and problems of the community – religion, personal law, career opportunities, social aspects, etc. It was a very exhaustive briefing," says Gandhi. "We did not schedule any group discussions but since delegates wanted to discuss matters we organized informal groups that kept going well past midnight."

The following year, the festival held in Calcutta programed time for group discussions but from what Gandhi gathers, it placed considerable emphasis on the social aspects also. "They had a lot more time for games and sports and even had a camp fire night," Gandhi explains. Further, while Delhi restricted the number of delegates to two per city, Calcutta placed no limits on numbers.

Poona too opted for the open arms reception: send as many as you want. In fact, invitations were sent to various bodies like the World Zoroastrian Organisation, ZS, CER and the madressas to send youth representatives. The organizers also sought to strike some sort of balance between the social activities and the discussions on community issues, observed Gandhi.

"Oh yes, the frustration of the youth was present at all three festivals," says Gandhi. "At Delhi their attitude was: We did not come only to listen, we also came to talk. In Calcutta, it was a desire to get involved in community affairs, to partici-



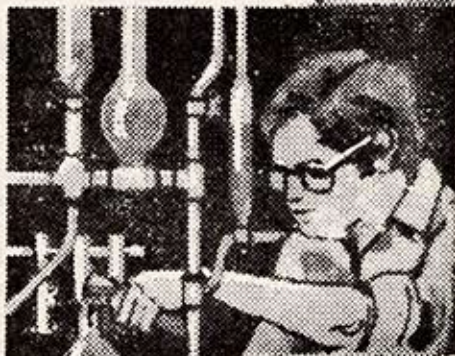
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pate in assessing the problems and finding solutions. In Poona it was: we are tired of talking, we want action."

It was apparent that the youth are impatient with endless talking about community problems and the lack of follow-up action, a frustration that was voiced repeatedly. "We are repeating ourselves; I'm getting stale with all the talk," said Ms Roxanne Kavarana who represented Baroda and who had attended the two earlier festivals in Delhi (1987) and Calcutta (1988). "We talk, we discuss, we identify the problems and then nothing happens. The elders tell us that it is not easy to change things and so we come back again for more talk and more discussion and all we have to show for it is a big zero," observes Ms Yasmin Bhote of Mhow.

"One difference between Poona and the other two festivals," observed Gandhi, "is that in Delhi and Calcutta it was the anjuman elders who did most of the work in organizing the festivals. Here in Poona it was totally a youth affair; they did it entirely on their own." A tribute to the youth of Poona, a tribute to the youth of the community — they have come of age.

Behind the Festival Scene

Gustasp Irani

A hard day's night and they still shunned sleep. With boundless energy and enthusiasm the young volunteers at the Third All India Zoroastrian Youth Festival 1989, held in Poona from November 3 to 5, pushed the days into the wee hours of the next morning; the chatter of work mingled with laughter and fun. The joy of being involved, participating, radiated from their tired, lack-of-sleep-weary faces. Then when it was all over, they materialized from 5 a.m. in the compartments of different trains, reserving seats on behalf of delegates returning to Bombay and other parts of the country. "It was not all *maja-masti* (fun and games)," Eruch Irani, founder member and the chief moving force of the resurgent Zoroastrian Youth Association (ZYA) — Poona which organized the Festival, assures you.

Behind the scene was quiet planning and coordination. Invitations were sent to about 100 anjumans and punchayets around the country. "Most did not even reply,"

lamented Irani. "There is something wrong with these anjumans. Either there are genuinely no youth in these communities or they are just plain not interested in youth activities."

The origins of the Poona Festival goes back to the executive committee meeting of the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India held in Bombay in April 1989. It was proposed that since Poona had the second largest population of Parsis in India, it would be appropriate to hold an all-India youth festival in the city prior to the Fifth World Zoroastrian Congress scheduled for January 3-7, 1990 whereat the same theme — 'Beyond the Year 2000' — and topics slated for the Congress could be brought up for discussion. When it was suggested that Poona host the youth festival, Irani remembers Dinshaw Anklesaria, trustee of the Poona Parsee Panchayat, tossing the proposal to the ZYA: "Our youth representative is present," referring to the presence of Irani at the meeting. "Why don't you ask him?" or words to that effect. Irani picked up the gauntlet but...

At first, accommodating delegates was a problem. Jamshed Guzder, Bombay Parsi Punchayet trustee and trustee of the J. N. Petit Technical High School, Poona, solved the problem by arranging to make available the premises of the School while the children were away for their Diwali holidays.

The next task now was finance: "According to our estimates the festival would cost us around one lakh rupees. Initially we approached a few institutions and trusts meant for youth welfare and Adi Bhatena, founder trustee of the Jagruti Trust, was the first to donate Rs 10,000 from the trust amount," states Irani. Soon other organizations and individuals chipped in: J. N. Marshall, Selvel Publicity, Penosh Transport, Poonawalla Stud Farms, ABC Farms, N. M. Wadia Trust, Firdous Kyani, Tehmina Grant, Avi Doctor, Rustom Jeejeebhoy... "There were so many others too who helped out and we are grateful to all. Every penny counts," says Irani. Darius Khurshedji of Zamu's Place provided his catering staff who along with the Petit School staff fed the delegates on a cost-to-cost basis. Likewise, wedding caterer Jehangir Dorabji took care of the last evening's *patra-nu-bhonu* on a no-profit-no-loss basis. "There were so many who gave so much," said Irani.

The youth gave their enthusiasm, the elders their monetary support. "The elders of the community should not feel that the youth are stealing their thunder. In

fact, they should come forward and help and guide. On their own the youth have to run around from pillar to post," Irani conveyed his point.

Apart from the successful organizing of the Third All India Zoroastrian Youth Festival 1989, ZYA has a number of other activities to commend it. "Poona youth have not been the talking type; we have been the active type," declares Irani. "For instance, we have been holding sports camps. We have a hockey and football team."

Another activity on the organization's calendar is its Navroze function, a contributory dinner cum social event. "First we invite all Parsi inmates of The Central Mental Hospital (there are 10) and they are fed and entertained. We want them to know that the community cares for them," says Irani. Later, at the main function, all Parsi boarders at the J. N. Petit Technical High School in Poona are invited to participate free of charge. "We make it a point to let the kids know that they are part of the family, that they belong to the community," he adds.

Though presently an estimated 85 members contribute to the ZYA's success, earlier it was intergroup rivalry that consumed their energies. Prior to the resurgence of the ZYA — Poona, the youth of the city were divided into two organizations: Zoroastrian Association of Poona (ZAP) and United Zoroastrian Youth Association (UZYA). While the two crossed swords with each other, the ZYA, started by Burjor Patel in 1970, lay moribund. Yet it was the only legally registered youth body in the city. "It was disturbing that the youth of our community in Poona were divided, so we rallied both ZAP and UZYA to dissolve themselves and unite under ZYA," says Irani. Today the organization is alive and vibrant under Irani's leadership.

Yet, Irani feels that more youth from Poona should come forward and participate in the activities of the organization. "For instance, we don't have a single member from Mody Colony." He pauses, thinks, scratches his beard, his light eyes distant as he mentally scans the membership file. "No, not a single member," he confirms the statement.

Irani also sees no reason why the organization's activities should be restricted to Poona. "Should any youth organization from other parts of the country come forward with any suggestions or proposals, we, in Poona, will be happy to follow up on them." The success of the recently concluded Youth Festival is a shot in the arm for the ZYA; it exudes confidence.

19th Century India

ADVANTAGE PARSIS

Joy Fernandes

Adapting their life-style to the ways of the British,
the Parsis were privileged to win recognition
in every walk of life

"On the seventh day of June 1853, the Parsis enforced a *hartal* (strike) in the city and made a big riot (because) on the previous day the dogcatchers entered the Parsi *wada* (locality) in the Fort (area) and took away a number of dogs (pet dogs from the verandahs). The Parsis had tried to prevail on them not to do it as it was against the law to catch dogs in that manner, and to release the dogs caught by them. But no heed was paid to this...

"Later 50 or so Parsis from the neighborhood got together and made a plot that all provision shops should be made to close...thus stopping supplies of food to the Englishmen. One happy thing in this



was that rich Parsis were neither in this plot nor were they even aware of it. The rioters were mostly cooks, domestics and such other low-class men, and 25 or so men from the middle class."

This unusual episode is from K. R. Mondkar's English translation of *Mumbaiche Varnan*, a Marathi book by Govind Narayan Madgaokar, which was first published in 1863. It continues, "They forced the bazaar to close and stopped supplies of *roti* (unleavened bread) and bread to Colaba. Many butchers who were...carrying meat (to the Fort) were beaten up and the meat snatched from them and thrown into the moat of the Fort. Christians who were

There were loud protests and there were continuous efforts to take back the converts into the original faith but to no avail

carrying bread were driven away and the bread thrown onto the roads...Thus the riot continued from the morning until eleven o'clock...(Sir John Audrey's) carriage was stopped and dirt from the road and a couple of dead bandicoots were thrown into it.

"After this the magistrate arrested many, and Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy and other respectable Parsis were called upon to see that this was stopped. However, those uncouth fellows with their heads lost could not be brought to their senses." So the soldiers from the garrison were called in and were ordered to shoot. "Seeing their determination the Parsi gang started disintegrating and took to their heels helter-skelter...They became so piteously helpless against 50 or 100 whites...Some were given gaol sentences of two, others of three years.

"As a result of this riot, the Englishmen remained somewhat hostile to the Parsis

Ice from America being unloaded in Bombay (circa pre 1880). It was Nanabhoy Jeejeebhoy who provided Bombay with a cheap and constant supply of ice by breaking the monopoly of a European firm.

(Right) Cotton merchants of the mid nineteenth century. Third from right is Merwanji Panday who founded the Panday Sanatorium in Bombay

Photos: Parsi Lustre on Indian Soil

for many years. However when they were convinced later that the respectable and educated Parsis had no part whatsoever in the riot and were, in fact, strongly against the rioters, they were reconciled and became as fond of the Parsis as before, probably a little more."

Mumbaiche Varnan gives an account of the city and a nineteenth century view of contemporary Parsis. The author has not dealt with the Parsis in a self-contained chapter, but makes references to them in various parts of the book. These remarks have been gleaned, grouped and translated into English by K. R. Mondkar who explains, "As far as possible the translation has been literal...(but) in the process some of the flavor of the author's forthright and homespun diction has been lost."

Throughout, Madgaokar's tone is admiring, often verging on the reverential as he details the thousands of rupees donated to worthy causes, the esteem in which the community was held by the British, or their spirit of enterprise. He writes, "See! The Parsis had no ancestral properties here and they were utterly supportless. Yet today they have come to own half of Bombay. This is the fruit of their industry and liberality."

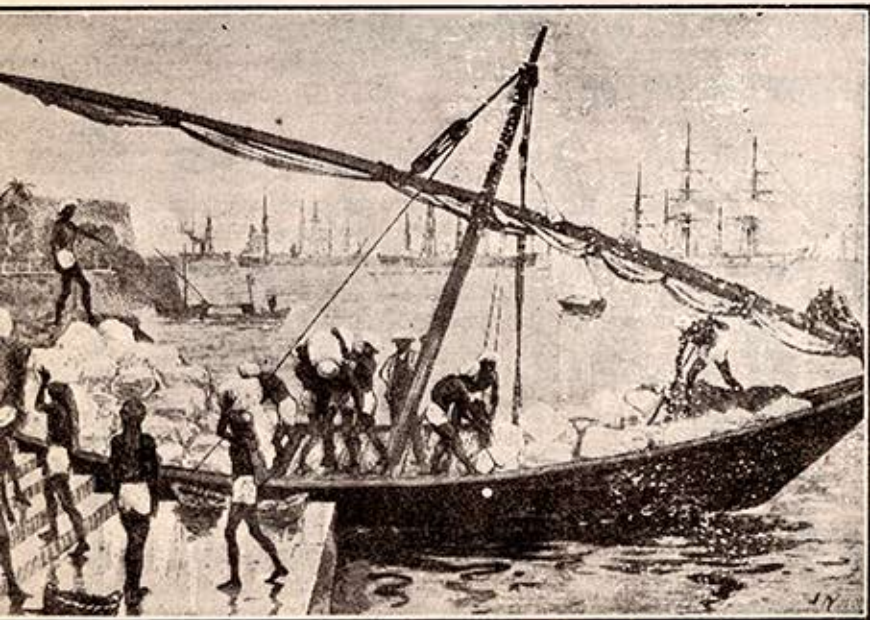
In his covering letter, Mondkar explains the author's "downright adoration" of the community. Madgaokar felt that his coun-

try, religion and language lay languishing because his people had chosen to isolate themselves from the burgeoning knowledge of the day. To him, the Parsis of his time were a living illustration of his faith that a community must keep moving with the times in order to prosper."

Mondkar has grouped his translations of varying length under the following headings: the coming of the Parsis, life-style and culture, religion, trade and industry, charity (to co-religionists), philanthropy, and miscellaneous references.

There is reference to the year 1692 when cholera swept Bombay, killing most of the English armed forces and much of the local populace. The island being rendered practically defenceless, the Siddi of Janjira attacked Bombay, but his invasion was repelled by a Parsi, Rustom Dorab. He was the son of Dorabjee, a settler who had worked for both the Portuguese and the English administrations. "Transforming the Kolis into soldiers (Dorab) met the invasion on all fronts and finally repulsed it," says Madgaokar. For this he was awarded the office of the Patel of Bombay, and was "empowered to dispense justice among the Kolis" — both of which endowments would be hereditary.

After the death of Dorab, his son Cowasjee Rustomjee was given the office of Patel by Governor Hornby. It was he





Parsi students in England in 1838. They were sent abroad to receive further training in matters of trade on the understanding "that their religious sentiments would be preserved from the influence of strangers" Photo: Parsi Lustre on Indian Soil

of the olden days were known to be people spending their lives in eating, drinking and merriment. Once they learnt Gujarati a little and knew how to sign their names in English, they went straight into business." Because the Parsis had begun to read, sales of Gujarati books went up and the writers were encouraged. Many schools were also established.

In less significant ways too, prosperous Parsis modelled their lifestyle on that of the English. "Any rich Englishman has in his house a minimum of five to seven clocks and two or four gold or silver watches. The clocks are placed like this — one each in the kitchen, on the staircase, in the hall, near the dining table, in the study, in the living room and in the bedroom. In the same manner clocks have places also in the houses of Parsis and other rich people..."

But the Parsi fondness for the ways of the British did not extend to the area of religion. In 1839 Dr Wilson (after whom Wilson College is named) converted two Parsi students of the Free Church School. "There were loud protests on the very day the rites were administered, and there were continuous efforts for a month or two thereafter to take back the converts into the original faith...(but) they were of no avail."

Not surprisingly, the section dealing with trade and industry is very extensive. The author recounts the achievements of the community not only in the larger fields such as factories, but also their work in humbler professions such as printing, the liquor trade, carpentry and clock repairing.

Talking about the smaller trades, Madgaokar says, "every road is dotted with five to 10 shops belonging to Parsis and others engaged in repairs of clocks and watches..." The liquor business too was a common one. "Retail liquor shops belonging to Parsis and Bhandaris are at every few yards all over the city. Additionally, the Parsis and the English have warehouses in the Fort from where liquors of all varieties are sold on a wholesale basis..." There were also many who speculated in opium, a trade which was on a very large scale. In 1861, for example, the opium trade in Bombay "covered 45,000 boxes, each box costing Rs 1,500 and

who built the Cowasjee Patel Tank, arranged for a Parsi settlement in Thane after the English wrested the area from the Marathas (in 1774), and, in 1735, was instrumental in bringing over to Bombay Lowji Nusserwanji Wadia (a shipbuilding expert) who was the superintendent of the East India Company's ships in Surat.

Other families also chose to come to Bombay, and the Parsi population grew steadily. Thus, in the 1850s, the Parsi men, women and children in Bombay

numbered 1,10,544, approximately 20 percent of Bombay's total population of 5,65,160, according to the author.

Many of the Parsis who grew prosperous in Bombay put their money into real estate. "In (Khetwadi), the Parsis have raised mansions as also fashionable, well-ventilated bungalows for being let out to the English..." notes the book. Several of these houses were located in the area extending from Byculla to Mazagaon, and were reputed to be of great beauty. "Sir Jamsetjee (Jejeebhoy) was one of those who had such a garden and bungalow in Mazagaon." The account continues, "The area from Bazargate to Churchgate is inhabited by the Gujarati-speaking people such as the Wanees, the Parsis, the Bohris, etc, the Parsis more so." Their residences were also scattered from Churchgate to Apollo Gate.

Though not the attire, the ornaments worn by the women have been described. It was not customary, it states, for Parsi women to wear ornaments on their feet and toes, and even the nose rings were simple and not uniformly worn. The men were not accustomed to adorn themselves with jewelry, except, perhaps, with a diamond ring.

With the advent of the art of printing, he writes, the Parsis developed a liking for learning and even among the poor, the children were sent to school. "The Parsis



containing three and a half maunds of opium..."

Then there were steamships for coastal traffic whose operation was conducted mainly by Parsis for the Oriental Steam Navigation Company. They were also involved in the manufacture of furniture—"When it comes to woodwork the Parsis are generally the people to do it; however, any carving is offloaded to Gujaratis." Among their more famous creations was "an exquisite *palkhi* (ornamental seat) for Baijibai (probably Her Highness of Gwalior). Its price was about Rs 5,000 and many people used to go there to see it." There were others too—one craftsman sold his chairs for Rs 800 each, an exorbitant sum for those times.

Madgaokar mentions that Parsis were among the owners of residential hotels which were then a novelty in Bombay. "The customers are served with liquor, meat, bread, tea, coffee, and anything else they may desire. Each meal here costs from one to five rupees, so steep are their rates." There were about 40 or 50 such hotels; small and large, in Bombay, and besides the Parsis the owners were Muslims, Christians and Englishmen.

On a larger scale was the shipbuilding industry which, after 1735, was carried out by Wadia who had started out by building

small sailing ships in the East India Company's works at Surat. "This extraordinary man showed great skill and honesty in his work and later built a number of sailing ships," reports the book. A big man-of-war named *Miani* was built in his dock in 1810. It could carry 74 guns. It took 10 years to build and the cost was seven lakh rupees. *Jamuna* and *Narmada* were two other men-of-war to be built here." Obviously impressed by the ship's furnishings, Madgaokar writes, "The internal arrangements of these ships could have made even the tent of Aurangzeb himself or the halls built by the heavenly architect pale into insignificance. Inside there are all kinds of rooms having four-poster beds, chairs, sofas, almirahs and chandeliers."

But it was chiefly in the field of industrial enterprise that the Parsis were true pioneers. "All the efforts put in to date to start mechanized and other factories were probably made by Parsis alone," enthuses Madgaokar. "The (textile) mills were first put up by them. The spinning and weaving machines were brought in first only by the Parsis. It was again a Parsi who started the first printing press. Again only the Parsis went to China, England, America and other foreign lands and pioneered trade with them."

Trade was a prominent means by which many Parsis made fortunes: "Among the native businessmen, Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy was verily a jewel. He had made five trips to China. He had also seen Calcutta and Ceylon. This famous person earned lakhs upon lakhs of rupees in business through his own effort." Madgaokar includes an extract from another book which traces the progress of Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy's career: from helping his father-in-law sell bottles to trading with Calcutta, Singapore, Siam and China while he was still in his twenties.

Framji Cowasji too was famous—he had ventured into diverse fields. "He had established a factory at Powai, a village about nine miles away from Bombay in the district of Salcette, for the production of sugar, sugar candy, silk, tea, cotton and other valuable commodities which are natives of China. He had employed some Chinese and wanted to generate a variety of skills in his factory. He endeavored to breed silk worms from the ones he had imported. For their feed (mul)berry plants were planted over many places." The factory's annual income was 20 or 25,000 rupees, and attached to it was a farm which produced sugarcane and a variety of fruit. "In 1838 Framji Cowasji sent to Victoria, the Queen of England and Empress of

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India, a present of the best mangoes from Bombay... Seeing that he brought great prosperity to the village, Sir John Malcolm granted him the title of Inam in 1830."

The community was famous for its philanthropy as well as its enterprise. Madgaokar lists their charity to co-religionists, and to society in general. "The navjote of a Parsi gentleman's son took place in 1862...The gentleman donated lakhs of rupees to the (community funds) and his wife gave away eight or 10,000 rupees in general charity." Many schools were set up by benefactors such as Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy, and a sanatorium for the convalescence of the sick of the community was provided for when, in 1863, "a well-to-do Parsi" set aside three lakhs of rupees for the purpose and purchased a piece of land in Colaba on which it would be built. Similarly, says Madgaokar, another Parsi had set aside four to five lakhs of rupees, the interest from which would be used to give grants to "Parsi gentlemen who fall on evil days and have to suffer poverty."

In the field of general philanthropy, the author cites numerous examples that transcended the barriers of religion and even of nation: At Bhendi Bazaar, Seth Kharsetji's Lake had been constructed to alleviate the suffering of the Byculla residents who faced severe water shortages; the Mahim Causeway was built by Sir Jamsetjee

Jejeebhoy in 1843 at a cost of Rs 1,53,000 and his wife donated another Rs 25,000 to have a road laid out on it; at the time of the 1797 famine, several philanthropic Parsis brought thousands of khandis of rice from Bengal and distributed it to the poor; since the Chembur creek was an obstacle to commuters, Dhunbai, the widow of the late Dhunjibhoy Nusserwanji Cama, donated Rs 15,000 in 1861 so that the creek could be filled in, a bund built, and a road laid out on it; others, such as Seth Kharsetjee Nusserwanji Cama, spent much money to help poor students every month.

In 1862, Bombay heard that Lancashire was in the grip of a severe famine. And, within a fortnight, Bombay collected three quarters of a lakh of rupees, with most of the larger amounts being contributed by Parsis.

Among the most famous of the Parsi philanthropists was Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy who, the book estimates, spent about Rs 35 lakhs on charity during his lifetime. For his generosity and attentiveness to the welfare of his country, Sir James R. Carnac — ex-Governor of Bombay — had commended him to the English court. Consequently, Queen Victoria issued a charter giving him the title of 'Knight'; in 1843 she bestowed a bejewelled crescent upon him and in 1858 he got the title of baronet — a hereditary one. After his death, a marble statue of him was commis-

sioned and installed at the Town Hall. It was paid for by voluntary subscriptions which amounted to Rs 20,000.

Under the miscellaneous head there is a report of the Parsi riot over the dogs and another riot when the Muslims rose up against the Parsis in mid-October 1851. It was triggered off by a badly printed picture of Mohammed that was published by a Parsi in a journal called "Chitranyanadarpan." The outlines of Mohammed's face were blurred and a blotch of ink over one eye depicted him as if he were blind in one eye; this picture was stuck on the main door of the Jama Masjid of the market area on a Friday morning. Thinking that some Parsi had done this deliberately, the Muslims resolved to avenge it and "with staffs in their hands, surged through the streets to take revenge on the Parsis," reports Madgaokar.

"Any Parsi who could be sighted was beaten up. Many non-Parsis also were hurt. There was looting in the bazaars. The Parsis themselves were greatly frightened." Since the riot could not be quelled, the military was called in, and a platoon was posted at the *chowkie* (local police sub-station) in the bazaar for a month. The hostility continued for about a year during which time the Parsis dared not move through the Muslim localities.

Then the police commissioner and senior government officials arranged a meeting between the two communities and amity was brought about. The printer explained that it had been a mistake, and was made to apologise. And so peace returned: "On the evening of the day the settlement took place, many respected Parsis and Muslims, seated in their carriages, toured the Muslim localities. The arrangement was like this. Two Parsis, two Mussalmans, and an English official occupied a carriage and toured one or two main streets."

There are other interesting items among the miscellanea: the Parsi loyalty towards the English rulers, the belief of some Parsis in horoscopes, and the dramas that they had started staging at the English-built theatre at Grant Road.

The success of the Parsis of yore made Madgaokar comment, "In sum it is only these people that secured leadership in trade and all other big tasks. They travel to all continents. Name any business and they will do it... That is why the goddess of wealth resides in their houses."

Mumbaiche Vaman's second edition was brought out in 1961 by the Mumbai Marathi Granthasangrahalay, Thakurdwar, Bombay 400002, and it is this edition that Mondkar has used for his translation.

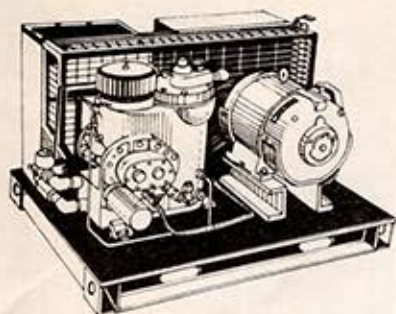
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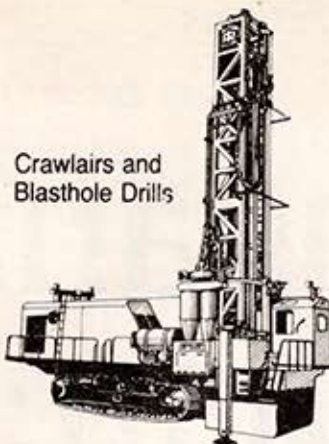
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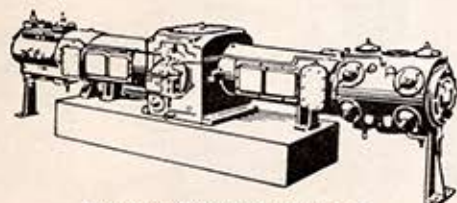


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Panchgani Anjuman: marked by a plateau



Gustasp Irani

When John Chessen discovered Panchgani in 1852, in the party of explorers accompanying him was one Merwanji Mottabhai Mistry — the first Parsi known to have set foot on the world's largest tableland. By the time Mistry died in 1898, the community had grown large enough to have an aramgah of its own (established in 1897) to receive his mortal remains. By 1928, a prayer hall was built on the land adjoining the aramgah by Ms Sirinbanoo Bhedwar and four years later, in 1932, Nanabhoj Choksi gave the Zoroastrians of the town their own agiary. But the Panchgani Zoroastrian Anjuman (PZA), earlier known as the Panchgani Parsi Anjuman, "is more than an anjuman of property," clarifies B. N. Billimoria, trustee of PZA and principal of the Billimoria High School, Panchgani. According to him, the Anjuman is also concerned with its local populace: "We hold about two jashans a month to which all Zoroastrians are free to come." In addition, there is the fire-temple which is used not only by the Zoroastrian residents of Panchgani, but also by the coreligionists of neighboring Mahableshwar and members of the community visiting the hill station.

As a community, the Zoroastrians constitute a small proportion of the town's total population. There are no exact figures. Ask for an estimate and invariably your source counts the families on his finger — the Virjees, the Sethnas, the Kalyaniwallas, the... "about 20 families. That makes it a total population of about 50."

Yet Panchgani has been home for a great number of other Zoroastrians too —

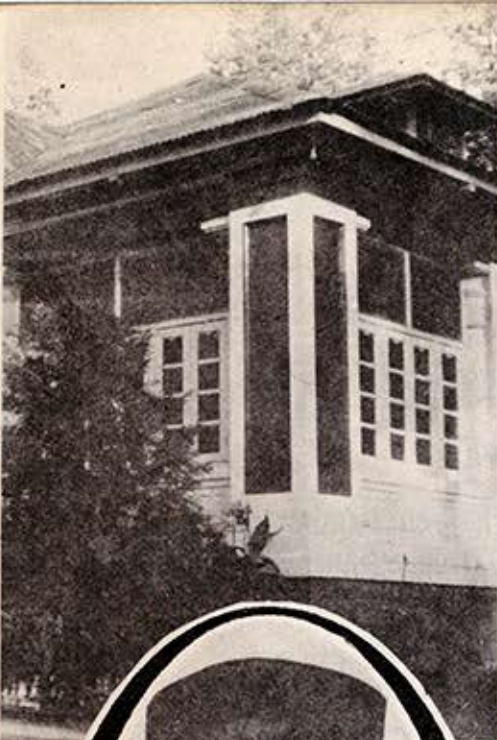
those who have spent their student days as boarders in the various schools there. Behram Contractor, editor of *The Afternoon Despatch and Courier*, in his famous Busybee column often reminisces about his childhood days at Billimoria High School. The other Parsi-run school is the Bhata High School which, along with St Peter's Boys' High School, has been the alma mater of a number of young Zoroastrians. Likewise, two girls' schools, St Joseph's and Kimmins, have housed numerous Parsi girls in their dormitories.

"All Zoroastrians of Panchgani are considered members of the Anjuman," states Behram Irani, a Panchgani-based businessman who recently resigned from the board of trustees as he plans to migrate to Australia. Yet, beyond "considered members" there is no membership registration, membership dues or any democratic system of election of the trustees. Whenever a seat on the trust board falls vacant, the ruling trustees appoint another incumbent who could do justice to the post. The trustees are primarily responsible for the maintenance of the assets, particularly the agiary, aramgah and prayer hall. According to Bombay-based busi-

nessman Hormuzdiar Choksi, trustee of PZA, grandson of the man who built the Panchgani agiary, the criteria for selection of a trustee are: "The person must have a religious bent of mind and must dedicate himself to the welfare of the community." The other trustees, in addition to Choksi and Billimoria, are Parvaiz Khambatta of Panchgani, Hormuzdiar Dastur of Poona, Darab Bajina and Navroze Kotwal of Bombay. Only three of the trustees reside in Panchgani.

"A trustee once appointed can't be forced to resign," says Irani. "Though we may not be democratically constituted, we are not above accountability," adds Choksi. Three weeks before the annual general meeting is held at the agiary premises, invitations are sent to all Zoroastrian residents of the town to attend. "The audited statement of accounts of the Anjuman are left at the agiary where anyone from the community may come and examine them," says Choksi.

Presently, the assets of the Anjuman are valued at seven lakh rupees, according to Bajina, partner of the Bombay-based chartered accountancy firm Bajina and Jain. Of this Rs 4.9 lakhs are liquid assets,



Despite their informal set-up and limited financial and human resources, the trustees of the Panchgani Zoroastrian Anjuman have succeeded in preserving community assets



Community assets in Panchgani:

Agiary (top left) and aramgah

Photos: Gustasp Irani

Benefactor Nanabhoy Choksi (below)

invested in securities specified by the provisions governing public charity trusts. "The average yield on investments works out to about 10 to 12 percent," says Bajina. Total annual expenses, including the cost of kathi and the priest's salary, works out to about Rs 75,000. "We have got to make good about Rs 25,000 per year through donations. The problem with a communal body like the anjuman is that there are no tax benefits," says Bajina. The shortfall of income over expenditure, however, is made good by collections in the charity box kept in the agiary (about Rs 10,000 per year) and contributions made by local

residents and parents of children studying in the various schools in Panchgani.

To get around this dependency on donations, the trustees are tossing around the idea of renting out the prayer hall. The prayer hall, informs businessman Khambatta, is used only one day in the year — Farvardin roj of Farvardin mah—when a jashan is held there. "The ideal tenant will be some Parsi owned company that will return the premises without the least bit of problem," clarifies Khambatta. He sees the proposal as a means of setting idle assets to work for the anjuman. "Of course, we will make provisions in the terms and conditions so that we can legally take back the premises whenever we want to," he adds. Bajina points out that the Maharashtra Tourism Development Corporation (MTDC) Ltd, which runs the Five Hills Hotel on the adjacent plot, was interested in using the place as a conference hall but the trustees said 'no' to the proposal. Billimoria however sounds a note of caution: "Once you surrender possession of a property it is almost impossible to get it back." The Anjuman could be drawn into unnecessary legal and court battles, he warns.

Likewise, the aramgah also lies in dis-

use — the last person to be buried here was in 1955. "The aramgah is only for the use of Zoroastrian residents of Panchgani," states Billimoria. Even those born in Panchgani but settled elsewhere do not qualify. Many Zoroastrians from Bombay and elsewhere have sought permission to be buried in Panchgani but all such requests have been refused.

One important factor leading to the disuse of the aramgah has been the improvement in the transport facilities. According to Billimoria, most families now transport their dead to either Bombay or Poona to be consigned to the dokhmas there. The other factor is that in recent years there have been very few deaths in the community. "The last Zoroastrian resident to die in Panchgani was about eight years ago," says Billimoria.

But it is not only deaths that are few in Panchgani. The celebration of births, navjotes and weddings are rare too. The last navjote celebrated was about four years ago. The two youngsters initiated into the religion at the time were the Canadian-based grandchildren of Jal Irani who earlier ran the Mahableshwar Boat Club and

continued on page 40

PEOPLE WITH POWER

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Engineer: on the firing line

"Every man thinks that a fire will not hit his home. We have to convince each individual that it can happen to him," says Pheroze Engineer, chairman and managing director of Real Value Appliances Pvt Ltd which recently launched its fire-fighting apparatus, Ceasefire.

The convenience of the customers has been kept in mind when designing this product, asserts Engineer who was formerly the head of Universal Luggage Pvt Ltd. Its "user-friendly" qualities have been enumerated in detail: It weighs just 600 gms, can fit into a palm, has a sprayer-type arrangement, has a longer shelf life so doesn't necessitate refilling or regular checking, it is non-corrosive, leaves no residue behind so documents won't be defaced, does not hamper visibility nor causes untoward toxic reactions, and is reasonably priced at Rs 300.

Packed in the aluminium aerosol can is Halon 1211, a liquified low pressure gas "internationally proven to be the safest and most effective way to extinguish a fire," notes the information brochure promoting the product. Since there is no cumbersome seal to be broken in an emergency, it can be operated within seconds while "it would take an average person 15 minutes to start a larger conventional system," according to Engineer, quoted in

Adworld, October 1-15, 1989. He clarifies however that "any portable fire extinguisher can only be effective if put into action in the first three to five minutes of a fire, depending on the combustibility of the material."

The product is directed at the institutional sector like factories, godowns and shops where the need is pre-established, and the home sector where the need has to be created. For domestic purposes, their advertisements address the office-going husband whom they expect will be the decision-maker since wives are generally believed to be indifferent to their own safety.

The marketing of Ceasefire is being handled by Direct Marketing Pvt Ltd whose managing director M. M. Abadan was formerly working with Engineer as vice president (finance) of Universal Luggage. Distribution of this safety device will be effected through a personalized direct marketing strategy involving door-to-door selling. Thirty-five lakh rupees have been earmarked for the launch budget by Engineer who hopes to show a turnover of eight to 10 crore rupees in the first year itself, as reported *BusinessWorld*, September 27-October 10, 1989.

It was Engineer's contribution that set the project moving. When Universal Luggage,

more popular by its brand name Aristocrat, sold out to Blowplast a year ago, Engineer resigned as chairman and managing director of the company. He used his share of the sale proceeds to set up a new company, Real Value Appliances, in June '89. Presently Ceasefire is being produced at Real Value's plant at Bhore near Pune, notes the fortnightly. The installed capacity is 60,000 pieces per month. Engineer received his experience in advertising and marketing when he worked with Lintas for two years before he took over as marketing director of Universal Luggage. Prior to that he was the works manager with Universal, his foundation in manufacturing and engineering aspects being laid in different departments of the concern where he started as management trainee.

Under the Real Value umbrella, they decided to make their "debut in the safety-security sector and build a name around a safety-security product," notes the entrepreneur. After Ceasefire he plans to introduce new household convenient electronic appliances in the Indian market. Once their market position is secure, they will diversify their production range relying on the company logo, the tick mark, to convey their "assurance on products which work the way you want them to."

MILESTONES

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

Of the 81 Parsis who died in Bombay, 22 succumbed to heart disease, while cancer and old age claimed seven victims each. The other killers were diabetes and pneumonia (five each), kidney failure (four) and hypertension, septicemia, blood disease, infection, lung disease and general debility (three each). Isolated cases of bronchitis, burns, respiratory failure, malnutrition, dehydration, high blood pressure and liver disease were also registered. A 22-year-old youth, a two-day-old infant and a stillborn baby 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 *Nilofer and Rumi Patel* on September 28, 1989
A girl to *Sunoo and Sarosh Mirza*; September 29
A boy to *Daisy and Aspi Daruwalla*; October 3
A boy to *Roshan and Neville Deboo*; October 3
A boy to *Dilshad and Sheriar Irani*; October 3
A girl to *Jasmine and Darius Kotval*; October 3
A boy to *Roxana and Meher-nosh Khushrushai*; October 4
A girl to *Rupi and Viraf Chinoy*; October 5
A girl to *Hufrish and Darayas Sarkari*; October 5
A boy to *Firuz and Rumi Patel*; October 8
A boy to *Ketayun and Farhad Irani*; October 10
A girl to *Thrity and Gaiv Mistry*; October 12
A boy to *Nargish and Bomi*

Irani; October 13
A boy to *Pervin and Framroz Ghaswala*; October 15
A boy to *Tina and Pesi Shroff*; October 15
A boy to *Hufrish and Rohinton Barucha*; October 16
A boy to *Ruby and Sam Daruwalla*; October 17
A boy to *Percis and Hoshi Dubash*; October 17
A boy to *Kamal and Rusi Rustomjee*; October 17
A girl to *Senober and Nozer Pajnigara*; October 20
A boy to *Jasmine and Adil Bharrucha*; October 21
Twins (girl and boy) to *Nargish and Zarir Mehta*; October 21
A girl to *Arnaaz and Keki Mistry*; October 24
A boy to *Mahrugh and Daryus Panthaky*; October 26
A boy to *Nazneen and Percy Bilimoria*; October 27
A boy to *Jeroo and Farokh Mistry*; October 28
A girl to *Farida and Maher-noosh Govadia*; October 29

Married

Yasmin Framroz Kalwachwalla and Eric Rusi Kheswalla; October 1
Navaz Jahbaux Dastoor and Cowsi Rosi Writer of Bangalore; October 1
Dinaz Tehmuras Patel and Kayomars Burjor Bajina; October 5
Lily Jal Irani and Rustom Jamshed Karai; October 8
Pervin Fali Variava and Aspi Noshir Panthaki; October 10
Shenaz Jalejar Dalal and Shahrouk Behram Jogina; October 12
Roshan Gustasp Mithuji and Homa Homi Mistry; October 12
Roshni Behram Jogina and Rumi Khurshid Vakil of Ahmedabad; October 12
Firuz Minoo Forbes and Noshirvan Nariman Dubash; October 13
Tanaz Khodadad Irani and Cyrus Soli Deolaliwala; October 15
Armaity Dadi Gazdar and Freddy Keki Dinshaw; October 15
Daisy Homi Korkhao and Hos-hang Pirojshaw Ichhaporia; October 16
Shiraz Homi Meherjina and Sohrab Framji Jussawalla; October 17

Arnavaz Merwan Irani and Rohinton Jamshed Rostami; October 19
Maharookh Nariman Patel and Pesi Feroze Bilimoria; October 21
Farida Jehangir Banaji and Shiraz Tehmasp Mogul; October 31

Died

Shirin Savaksha Vakil (72), residing at Meherbai Wadia Bldg, Chikalwadi, 400007; September 30
Homi Framroze Bamboat (78), Bhabha Sanatorium, Bandra, 400050; October 1
Shirin Rustomji Malia (82), 1, Manikunj Co-op Soc Ltd, Santacruz (E), 400055; October 1
Daulat Khodayar Raisi (60), A/8, Rustom Baug, Victoria Rd, Byculla, 400027; October 1
Roshan Bejon Shroff (48), B/72, Cozy Bldg, Gowalia Tank Rd, 400036; October 1
Female baby of Rohinton Parvez Chinoy (stillborn), 646, Gai Bldg, Khareghat Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; October 2
Mani Kaikhusroo Mehta (81), 28/9, Godrej Clny, Vikhroli, 400079; October 2
Freny Cawas Dastur (38), 19/31, Panthaki Baug, Andheri (E), 400069; October 3
Dina Jamshedji Billimoria (88), Phirojshaw Bldg, Gowalia Tank, 400036; October 4
Jamshed Rustomji Desai (82), 19, Cumballa Chmbs, Cumballa Hill Rd, 400036; October 4
Jerbai Savaksha Daver (68), C/1, Nowroz Baug, Lalbaug, 400012; October 5
Burjor Hormusji Gandhi (68), K/7, Dalal Est, Lamington Rd, 400008; October 5
Khorshed Phiroze Kotwal (53), K/12, Shapurjee Bharucha Baug, Andheri (W), 400058; October 5
Peroja Dadabhoy Sett (79), Rustom Villa, 91, Worli Sea Face, 400018; October 5
Tehmi Nadirshah Boatwalla (73), 664, Roshan Mans, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; October 6
Dhunmai Peshotan Damkevala (76), A/406, Kalpita Enclave, Sahar Rd, Andheri (E), 400069; October 6
Behram Rustom Irani (Rodmard), (85), 722, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; October 6

Homi Bomanji Mistry (85), B Rd, Marine Drive, 400020; October 6
Veera Sarosh Sukhara (38), 140, Char Pul, Navsari, 396445; October 6
Noshir Rustom Mistry (59), C/785, Khareghat Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; October 7
Framroze Sorabji Contractor (80), 10/5, Rustom Baug, Victoria Rd, Byculla, 400027; October 9
Manijeh Dhunjisha Dalal (87), B/1, Monolith, 7, Nepean Sea Rd, 400036; October 9
Kety Framroze Elavia (37), B-1, 618, J. S. Rd, Dhobitalao, 400002; October 9
Bomanshaw Rustomji Vakil (92), 109, Maharshi Karve Rd, Churchgate, 400020; October 9
Rattanshaw Munchershaw Wadia (84), 603, Jame Jamshed Rd, Matunga, 400019; October 9
Ratanbai N. K. Dubash (77), A/4, Sterling Apts, Pedder Rd, 400026; October 10
Mary Kaikhusroo Commisariat (72), Rajesh Mans, D. Vacha Rd, 400020; October 11
Bomanshaw Ardeshir Printer (83), Prem Court, 24, Peddar Rd, 400026; October 11
Piloo Firoze Vachha (71), Sealand, 41, Cuffe Parade, 400005; October 11
Mani Dhanji Bharucha (79), B, Mancher Manzil, 35/C, Jairajbhai Lane, 400008; October 13
Homi Sorabji Hirji Khorshed (89), 22, Gulistan, 34, B. Desai Rd, 400026; October 13
Homi Darabsha Parakh (80), A, Bhiwandiwalla Ter, Dhobitalao, 400002; October 13
Jer Jamshed (Jimmy) Mistry (67), Green Acres, Rd 5, Khar, 400052; October 14
Pestonji Edulji Shastri (55), G/9, Nowroz Baug, Lalbaug, 400012; October 14
Roda Jehangir Garda (83), High Peak Apt, Bandra, 400050; October 15
Eruchshaw Burjorji Kasad (69), 35, Homi Hse, Fort, 400001; October 15
Female baby of Zarir Dali Oomrigar (2 days), E-7/2, Godrej Hill Side, Vikhroli (W), 400079; October 15
Hiraji Kawasji Bharucha (84), F. S. Parukh Dharmshala, 34, Hughes Rd, 400007; October 16

Baimai Burjorji Jijina (64), 17, Ahura Apt, Gunpowder Rd, 400010; October 16
Hosang Behramji Khambata (47), 9, Patel Bldg, Gamadia Clny, Tardeo, 400007; October 16
Jeroo Peshotan Moudawalla (62), F. S. Parukh Dharam-shalla, 34, Hughes Rd, 400007; October 16
Sorabjee Dhanjishaw Todiwala (83), 3/14, Jamas Tata Blocks, S. V. Rd, Bandra, 400050; October 16
Meher Adi Palkhiwala (22), Khorshedbai Shroff Bldg, Gamadia Clny, Tardeo, 400007; October 17
Nariman Nadirsha Rabadi (78), 21, Dubash Bldg, Khareghat Clny, Hughes Rd, 400007; October 17
Khorshed Phiroze Billimoria (64), 1/11, Somerset Hse, Off B. Desai Rd, 400026; October 18
Kaikhushru Kavasshah Dastur (89), Rajab Mhl, 144, M. Karve Rd, 400020; October 18
Cali Framji Madon (77), Roshan Mans, 664, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; October 18
Nariman Shapurji Sahiar (65), Brightway Anodise Ravi Ind Comp, Thane, 400601; October 18
Kersi Kershabhap Vajifdar 678, Divine Grace, 16th Rd, Khar, 400052; October 18
Piroja Nadirshah Lakdawalla (85), New Chinoy Bldg, Chikalwadi, 400007; October 19
Minocher Phirozshaw Lentin (81), 6, Gool Villa, Labumum Rd, Gamdevi, 400007; October 19
Homi Sheriar Irani (76), A/106, Nagina Hsg Soc, Jogeshwari; 400102; October 20
Goolbai Rattansha Sodawaterwala (91), Arsiwala Bldg, Near Novelty Cinema, 400007; October 20
Dina Framji Zaiwala (78), C/o K. F. Jassawalla, B/46, August Kranti Marg, 400036; October 20
Eruchsha Dhunjisha Daruwalla (76), Saidunnisa Bldg, Sleater Rd, 400007; October 21
Aban Minoo Sethna (51), Stone Ridge Central Avenue, Chembur, 400071; October 21
Hilla Keki Bilimoria (80), Eddie Hse, 3, Dr G. Deshmukh Marg, 400026; October 22

Alamai Jalejar Chawda (72), A/1, Dinbai Petit Bldg, Balaram St, 400007; October 22
Shavak Pallonji Gandhi (70), B/2, Cusrow Baug, S. B. Rd, 400039; October 22
Keki Hormasji Patel (53), B/7, Old Wadia Bldg, Chandanwadi, 400002; October 22
Minoo Nariman Vesuwalla (64), J/16, Cusrow Baug, S. B. Rd, 400039; October 22
Morvarize Sarosh Yazdani (88), Katie Ter, 7, Sleater Rd, 400007; October 22
Dinshaw Jahanbux Bulsara (69), Taher Bldg, Jalbhai St, Chami Rd Junction, 400004; October 23
Phiroze Hormusji Contractor (76), 795, Jame Jamshed Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; October 23
Roda Pestonji Damkevala (61), B-1/12, Tata Mills Co-op Hsg Soc, Parel, 400012; October 23
Fareed Jamshedji Motafram (83), 12, Peridot, 22-A, Perry Rd, Bandra, 400050; October 23
Jaloo Jimmy Virjee (69), 32, Silver Arch, 66/A, Nepean Sea Rd, 400036; October 23
Dinshaw Sorabji Buhariwala (81), Abbasi Bldg, 148, Grant Rd, 400008; October 25
Dhunmai Cawasji Dolly (83), Sakarbai Petit Bldg, Gilder Lane, 400008; October 25
Jamshed Shavakshaw Dubash (73), A/170, Mahurkh Mans, Lamington Rd, 400007; October 26
Khorshid Khodamorad Irani (73), A/3, Holland Hse, 10/18, S. B. Rd, 400039; October 27
Minoo Dinshaw Master (71), 112, Love Lane, Mazagaon, 400010; October 27
Ketty Ratan Merchant (62), B, Kanta Bldg, Grant Rd, 400007; October 27
Jal Ardeshir Lala (63), O, Dalal Est, Lamington Rd, 400008; October 28
Adi Jehangir Irani (56), 786, Khareghat Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; October 29
Nadirshah Cawasji Jamshedwala (84), Venus Bldg, Lamington Rd, 400007; October 29
Manekshaw Edulji Bhatena (82), 304, Zaveri Bldg, Grant Rd, 400007; October 30
Homi Burjorji Gazdar (87), West View, Uranwala St, Grant Rd, 400007; October 30

Eruch Manecksha Medhora (87), P/35, Cusrow Baug, S. B. Rd, 400039; October 30
Freny N. Wadia (70), D-9/106, Yogi Ngr, Eksar Rd, Borivli (W), 400092; October 30
Noshir Framroze Gagrati (76), K/7, Cusrow Baug, S. B. Rd, 400039; October 31

CALCUTTA

Born

A boy to **Hilla** and **Eruch Bhatena**; August 10
 A boy to **Mehroo** and **Percy Mahernosh**; October 2
 A boy to **Marina** and **Yezdi Engineer**; October 26
 A girl to **Sharmila** and **Sohrab Italia**; October 31

CHICAGO

Died

Mani Vania, mother of **Homi** and **Avi**; October 15

DAR-ES-SALAAM

Born

A girl, **Delna**, to **Purveen** and **Khusroo Poonevala**; September 23

JABALPUR

Born

A girl, **Binaz**, to **Gulshan** and **Jimmy Dossabhoy**; October 18

KARACHI

Died

Jehangirji Dhunjisha Sachinwala (86); September 2
Sarwar Khudabakht Namiranian (90); September 7
Sohrab Burjorji Vatcha (75); September 15
Noshirvan Edulji Sopariwala (69); September 23

NEW SOUTH WALES

Born

A boy to **Meena** and **Homi Mirza**; October 1

POONA

Married

Anahita Kersi Dastur and **Lalit Mishra**; October 2

Died

Hoshang Firozsha Mehta (74), 16, Green Fields, Fatima Ngr, 411013; October 9
Khorshed Dorabji Bhanja (70), 290, Amroliwala Bldg, Delisle Rd, Lower Parel, Bombay, 400013; October 10
Farokh Bomanji Irani (74), 161, Yeravada, 411006; October 15
Jivanji Jehangirji Khambatta (70), 595, Sachapir St, Camp, 411001; October 16
Hira Gustad Dalal (75), 953, Nana Peth, 411002; October 20
Keki Sorabji Ghati (74), 63, Universal Apts, East St, 411001; October 23
Dhunjishaw Fardoonji (68), 513, Sachapir St, 411001; October 25
Maneck Shapoorji Mehta (89), 315, Main St, 411001; October 30
Allan Ardeshir Talati (87), 23/2, Bund Garden Rd, 411001; October 30
Villoo Jehangir Limboowala (65), 5/7, Khan Est, Chhotani Rd, Mahim, Bombay, 400016; October 31

SHOLAPUR

Died

Dhunmai Eruchshaw Mistry (82), mother of **Diniyar**, **Banu**, **Yezdi** and **Nowzer**; October 7

Compiled by Roxana H. Kaka

THE PARSIANA BOOK OF IRANIAN NAMES

The Iranian names of boys and girls along with their meanings which originally appeared in Parsiana have now been reprinted in an attractive 24-page booklet.

The book, which is priced at Rs 15, is available on sale at:

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IN MEMORIAM

Died: Jamshed Khurshed Pavri, 72, community chronicler, long-term honorary secretary of the Zoroastrian Society of British Columbia and founder editor of its newsletter, of heart failure in Vancouver on October 14, 1989.

"Literally the 'father of the Zoroastrian community of British Columbia,'" Jamshed Pavri was a pioneer who had "not only presided over the birth of the nascent community but had nurtured its growth with tender solicitude, care and competence." Homi Gilan's (the Gilans were the first Zoroastrians in Vancouver) spontaneous tribute at the funeral of the late Pavri attested to the high regard in which his compatriots held him.

Busy with humanitarian tasks to the end of his life, Pavri was "the first port of call" for nearly every Zoroastrian who landed in British Columbia, said Gilan. The magic words, "I come from Jamshed," opened other doors as well, related Gilan.

Speaking at the Fifth World Zoroastrian Congress on behalf of the Zoroastrian Society of Ontario, its one-time president Minoo Treasurywalla recalled Pavri's "yeoman service in putting Zoroastrianism on the map in Canada." Unlike other parts of North America, "Parsis and Iranian Zoroastrians have a common society in British Columbia. It goes to the credit of Pavri who laid the foundation in that direction," attested Iranian philanthropist Meheraban Zartoshty in the course of an interview in Bombay. "I don't think anybody can replace him. He was so dedicated, so hardworking, he had such love for the community, ever helping, ever guiding... I feel lonely when I have trouble and need advice," he added.

Keen to start a local anjuman more than 30 years ago when there were barely a handful of Parsis, Pavri was able to make his dream a reality in 1968 with the relaxation of immigration restrictions in Canada. As soon as the local community population numbered 50, the Zoroastrian Society of British Columbia (ZSBC) was registered as a religious and charitable organization "with the usual legal and other formalities (cleared up) at almost negligible cost," recalled Gilan.

To Gilan's astonishment, Pavri pressed for a Zoroastrian cemetery as a top priority. "I found it difficult to contemplate death so soon after coming halfway round the world to start a new life (but) Jamshed insisted, 'A cemetery is all-important for a new Zoroastrian anjuman to take root. Besides, we will not get suitable lots en

Jamshed Pavri: The nurturing of a community

Arnavaz Mama

bloc if we delay, and certainly not at these bargain prices.' So this determined and farsighted community-building man established the first Zoroastrian cemetery in Canada, if not in North America, in 1969," recalls Gilan. In ZSBC's ninth annual report in 1977, Pavri, its honorary secretary and director since inception, had noted that the Society had paid off all outstandings towards the purchase of 73 burial plots: "Our Society is now a debt-free society and we do not owe anything to anybody." A later donation from an Iranian Zoroastrian funded a Fravahr die to mark the graves. Nor did Pavri's commitment end there. In an interview with *Parsiana* in Bombay in 1977 Pavri had related how he had arranged with the London anjuman to perform the muktads for those buried in the cemetery in Vancouver and had added, "For those 10 days I say the prayers for everyone (Zoroastrians who have died in Vancouver) in my (own) house. I think it is my duty to."

Pavri published the first directory of Zoroastrians overseas in the mid-1960s. An active correspondent, Pavri's newsletters from Vancouver were not only regular, but provided full-length articles on individuals and events in the community and had a mailing list at one time estimated at over 3,000. They kept the overseas community informed of its historical heritage in India and abroad. When the Society completed 10 years, Pavri suggested the publication of a 150-page history of the association "for the sake of our posterity." *The Zoroastrian Society of British Columbia 1968-78*, painstakingly compiled by Pavri, appeared at the end of 1979. Its 372 pages contained a wealth of information on the pioneering activities of the community in the new world. Its

wealth of detail included important minutes, annual reports, constitution and by-laws, details of membership, condolence messages on community deaths, roster of navjotes, as well as articles on Zoroastrianism and the calendars, the Shehenshahi calendar worked out to 2632 AC when it would correct itself, and more.

Pavri's personal library of Zoroastrian lore, including several rare books and manuscripts painstakingly accumulated over a lifetime, now lies with Prof John Hinneells of Manchester University.

In the *Parsiana* interview Pavri had indicated the difference between Indian Zoroastrians and those settled overseas — the latter are more outward-looking and more open-minded, he had stated candidly. "The bond that holds the community members overseas together is our freedom of thought. If we were as dogmatic as people here (in Bombay) we would probably end up fighting. We might disintegrate this way but there is a possibility also that we might preserve ourselves. Perhaps, the religion as practised today in India, and in Bombay in particular, has also become so diluted that the original message of the prophet is probably all lost..."

"We perform the navjote of a child irrespective of whether (one of) the parents is a non-Parsi or non-Zoroastrian; to us it is immaterial... I have found that the non-Parsi or non-Zarthosti spouses take greater interest in our activities than community members who are supposed to be Zarthostis and Parsis. In Vancouver, a Parsi is married to a Japanese lady. Last year we performed the navjote ceremony of their daughter and the prayers were taught to the daughter by her Japanese mother and not by her Parsi father."



Sanatorium as Ms Piroj Amroliya noted in her obsequial address. In 1939 he had started the Buzum-e-Ruz-e-Behram, an informal group to study Zoroastrian religion and history. The Far Eastern association was sundered by the Japanese invasion of Hongkong in 1941. Pavri was then visiting Bombay and was unable to return while his brother and friends were placed in concentration camps, informed Amroliya.

The enforced stay in Bombay was converted into a study period when Pavri enrolled in the Sir J. J. Madressa to study the Avesta, Pahlavi and Pazand languages as well as the scriptures under the august tutorship of scholars Behramgore Anklesaria and Irach Taraporewala. Swayed by the teachings of Gandhi, Pavri became an active member of the Congress party. To maintain contact with friends and families in Hongkong, Shanghai and Japan, Pavri started the Far East Club in Bombay and was instrumental in sending five shipments of medical supplies to Chungking, the headquarters of Mao Tse Tung, informs Amroliya. He was also actively associated with the Servants of India Society and a regular volunteer for many years at the Poona Mental Hospital and the Khen-dra Leprosarium.

Shortly after Pavri moved to Vancouver with his wife Roda and son Yezdi in 1958 he became a trustee of the Canadian Folk Society for three years, earning a merit plaque for his services and later a bronze medal for his work for the Centennial Ethnic Group Committee. In 1973, on the twenty-fifth anniversary of the signing of the Human Rights Charter, the Zoroastrian Society of British Columbia presented the province's Human Rights Council with a gold coin minted by the Iranian Government depicting the cylinder of Cyrus the Great which is now considered the first human rights charter.

Five heart attacks in a single year at the age of 58 left him, in his own words, "a disabled person." The subsequent pace was slower only by his own standards. By March 1986 when the ZSBC acquired the Arbab Rustam Guiv Darbe Mehr – Zoroastrian House ("A small church which looks more like an agiary in India" Pavri had described it) he functioned as its director and honorary secretary. Its upkeep devolved on the Society in 1988 and the Society began to work on establishing a maintenance fund, interest on which would service the Darbe Mehr. Predictably, the first donation came from the Pavri household.

Pavri was a "very spontaneous, very openhearted person with some very firm opinions," as Dara Marshall, Bombay University's professor emeritus of library science, remembers him since their school days. Marshall speaks of Pavri's intellectual curiosity and scholarly bent of mind which "would not accept a statement without a document to back it." He was so devoted to his religion that any conversation would "veer round to Zoroastrianism and the Parsis," says Marshall. Though genial of temperament – "*koini bi saathé mara mari nahi*" – Pavri "would not hesitate to say A is A and B is B even in arguments with people like Hinnells," notes Marshall.

Nor did failing health allow misinformation to go unchallenged. In 1984 Pavri had taken strong umbrage at Webster's *New World Thesaurus* wherein the synonyms to 'pagan' included "idolater, idolist, gentile, pantheist, heathen, Pyrrhonist, doubter, scoffer, heretic, unbeliever, infidel, paynim, Gheber, Philistine, Zoroastrian, animist, fireworshipper, freethinker, atheist, agnostic."

In his letter dated March 16, 1984 to William Collins Publishers Inc, Pavri wrote, "We are indeed distressed that Gheber, Zoroastrian and fireworshipper, appear (in this context) in an esteemed and respectable volume bearing the name of Noah Webster, the most respected American lexicographer..." Contesting the "arbitrary arrangement of the sense given in the entry for the word 'pagan,'" Pavri remonstrated, "A Zoroastrian is not a fireworshipper, an idolater, a pantheist, a doubter, an atheist, an agnostic and other definitions appearing in the *Thesaurus*. Zoroastrians are followers of the sublime religion propounded by prophet Zarathushtra (Zoroaster) in antiquity, the first monotheistic religion in the world.

"It is our request," urged Pavri, "that as and when a new revised edition of your *Thesaurus* appears, the words Gheber, Zoroastrian and fireworshipper be eliminated from the definition."

Always a friend of *Parsiana* and all those who helped the community to communicate, Gilan informed how earlier this year Pavri had "spent many hours sending appeals to anjumans in Canada, USA, Britain, indeed all over the world to send donations and to try to get new subscriptions to help (*Parsiana*) serve Parsis in the future."

The historian and community builder had noted that to maintain cohesion in the community "you must first of all take

Pavri had hoped for a federation of North American associations – a dream that was realized by the formation of the Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America (FEZANA) in 1987.

Pavri was also involved with other projects. He was one of those responsible for founding the India Club of British Columbia and later, the Gujarati Society of British Columbia and did much to establish friendly relations with the Ismaelitis who held him in high regard, attests Gilan. A scholar of Avesta-Pahlavi, Pavri was well-versed in comparative religions, says Gilan, and made it a point to organize interfaith activities. Member of the Royal Commonwealth Society for the Blind, he worked particularly hard to raise funds for "Operation Eyesight" which funded mobile eye clinics in India and elsewhere.

Mahatma Gandhi had been Pavri's hero and the latter did not rest in his self-imposed mission of installing Gandhi's bust in Vancouver despite repeated setbacks, content only when the Simon Fraser University accepted it in 1969.

One of the nine children of Bachubai and Khurshedji Pavri of Surat, Jamshed was born in Bombay and schooled at the Bharda New High School. Then, at the age of 17, Pavri went to Hongkong to work in his uncle's import-export firm, and developed an interest in the Far East which never deserted him. Indeed, the final years of his life were devoted to compiling a *History of the Parsis of the Far East*. (Though Pavri was unable to complete the remaining 20 percent of the work, Gilan informs that Jamshed's brother in Hongkong is arranging for its publication.) It was in Hongkong that he acquired initial training in communal and social work and became an active member of the Ruttonjee

everyone under your wing and the only way to do so is to communicate with the people... Ask for their views, opinions, ideas... You have to create and generate interest and then you must sustain that interest. Only then can you expect participation... To hold the community together there must be some cementing force..."

Pavri is survived by his wife Roda and son Yezdi.



Live wire of Burma

Died: Sam Erach Ruttonsha, about 75, leading manufacturer of electrical and electronic goods first in Burma and later in Poona, of cardiac complications on September 12, 1989.

His reputation for in-depth knowledge of electrical and electronic gadgets was officially recognized in Burma: Every ship calling at Rangoon port was required to have its telecommunications equipment

checked and certified by him. In addition the impressive clock on the Secretariat tower as well as numerous other public clocks bore his name, notes a written tribute highlighting his contribution to the Burma market. Sale of consumer goods as also supply of luminous road signs were undertaken in the company name of E. Ruttonsha (Burma) Ltd. Frequently, he would install decorative lights and public address systems at social functions not for any monetary returns but as a pastime, a hobby he enjoyed. And when he was at the pinnacle of his radio manufacturing business, producing Ekco radios in collaboration with E. K. Cole of UK, a new promulgation in Burma concerning the ownership of companies by foreigners "forced him out of Burma for the second and final time," informs his son Cyrus. Earlier it was during World War II that he, like other Indians, had perforce to leave the shores of Burma.

Burma was almost homeland to Ruttonsha; he had a rare affinity with the Burmese, he could speak Burmese fluently. But he refused to take up Burmese nationality merely for the sake of his business. He came to India and stayed for a while in Bombay before he settled down in

Poona where he started Serson Industries to manufacture electrolytic capacitors. He had envisaged this to be the first of the several electronic components he would manufacture but the Indian climate did not suit "the business genius of Ruttonsha," committed as he was to running his company "with strict honesty and almost minute compliance with the law," adds his son.

Graduate in arts and law from Rangoon University, Ruttonsha was working as a tutor in English at the University before he took to business. His interest in reading never waned. Though he never officially retired, in the latter years of his life he found greater pleasure in orchid cultivation.

The discipline that had been ingrained in him during his years with the Army in World War II where he served first as captain and later as acting major, helped him withstand many vagaries of fortune. And the perseverance that he learnt during his youth, when he was known to be an outstanding oarsman, stood him through life, as also the motto that he adopted: Row till you are dead.

Ruttonsha is survived by his wife Pheeroza and sons Cyrus, Zareer and Firdaus.

Parinaz Gandhi

PANCHGANI ANJUMAN... continued from page 33

is now settled in Panchgani. "The last wedding was about 10 years ago — my brother Noshir's and my own," says Khambatta. Panchgani does not have a hospital and hence in case of childbirth the residents of the town use the facilities at Vai, at the base of the valley, or go to Bombay or Poona; the age of midwives is past.

Assisting the trustees in their task is the young priest Dinyar Dastur who is retained by the Anjuman to look after the agiary and the religious needs of the Zoroastrians in the vicinity. A qualified B Com who has done a stint in Tehran with the Iranian subsidiary of AT&T, he also maintains the Anjuman's account books. Recently, he organized a contributory dinner-cum-get-together for the Zoroastrians of the town. For a community that has little contact through navjotes, weddings or other social functions, the get-together is significant; it shows that the Anjuman is reaching out.

"Panchgani is ideal for retirement; there is nothing for the young here," says Irani. Billimoria's advice to community members who might want to make Panchgani a permanent home is to consider teaching and education as a career. "Earlier we used to have a number of Parsi teachers on our staff, but now it appears that Parsis

don't fancy teaching as a profession," says Billimoria. Khambatta believes that the hill station also offers scope to young carpenters and electricians. "But tell me," he adds, "are young Parsis willing to work

**"Once you
surrender
possession of a
property it is almost
impossible
to get it back"**

with their hands? They are happy to be bank clerks."

Hoteliery is also a major industry in Panchgani but for Parsis the picture is not that bright. Earlier, Parsi-run establishments were in the majority but in recent times the community has contributed nothing to the sharp rise in the number of hotels, in fact a few have sold out to non-Parsis (see *Parsiana*, September 1989).

As reported, when Parsi hoteliers dominated the trade, they in fact strongly re-

sisted moves to establish a dharamshala in Panchgani as they figured that it would affect their business, says Irani. That was a time when Parsis constituted the main clientele for the hoteliers. Nevertheless Shavaksha Bhata, founder of Bhata High School, felt that the poorer members of the community would benefit from the hill station's bracing climate and built the Bhata Sanatorium which is still managed by the School.

Meanwhile Billimoria's father Navroji, founder of the Billimoria High School, was instrumental in giving Panchgani its agiary. He prevailed upon the noted philanthropist Nanabhoy Choksi to give the hill station a place of worship. Ever since, religious affairs has preoccupied the Anjuman. "It is true," concedes Billimoria, "that we are not doing anything for the Parsis besides caring for their religious needs." However, they would prefer to describe themselves as "an anjuman of the people."

Through the years, the Anjuman has succeeded in strengthening the bond between the land and the community. And in the case of Panchgani, a tourist and schooling town, it is not the residents alone who are attached to the land; the place is special to other members of the community too.

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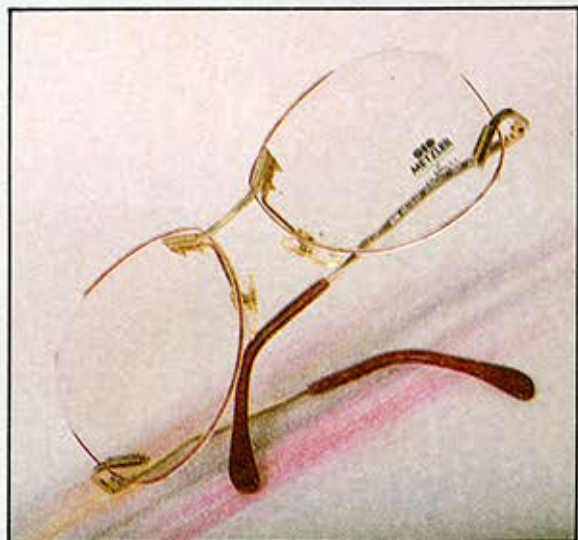
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