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Parsiana

May 1990
Volume 12 Number 11

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Cover: Portrait of Manekji Limji Hataria
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Readers' views are welcome on any subject of interest to the community and should be sent to the Editor, Readers' Forum, Parsiana, G.P.O. Box 892, Bombay 400001. Letters are subject to editing for reasons of space and clarity. Unsigned letters or those without an address will not be published.

"Shirdi ké Homi Baba"

Brig N. B. Grant's thought-provoking letter (Readers' Forum, *Parsiana*, February 1990), is not a day too soon. He asks, why are so many Parsis (so-called Zoroastrians) turning to Shirdi, when all over the world, specially in UK, USA, Iran, Zoroastrians are doing their utmost to revive our great religion.

In my humble thinking, here our emphasis has been on customs, rituals, which do not feed the soul and overshadow the true tenets of our great religion. If any fearless scholar or individual tries to practice or preach, or express the results of his/her learning which are not in accordance with outdated customs, then he/she is not only hounded but even threatened. Sadly, a fear complex, to avoid controversy, even at the cost of religion, has set into our community. The resulting void is turning community

members towards babas and gurus instead.

In Iran, USA, UK, our scholars, Parsi and non-Parsi, are fearless, the Zoroastrian laity is enlightened, and in search of truth. I may mention here, that in UK recently Parsis are experiencing some of the same difficulties we experience here, but kudos to the majority of our enlightened community, who carry on the profound teachings of our prophet with dedication and without fear.

We, in India, do have eminent scholars who are dedicated to their work and give correct guidance to us when asked. The editor asks, "why and how Zoroastrianism has failed to inspire its followers." Sir, Zoroastrianism has not failed. It is as valid and vibrant today, as it was when Zarathushtra gave it centuries ago to all humanity — if not more so. Our leadership has failed miserably. More than a hundred years ago, our great scholars, like Dadabhoy Naoroji, K. R. Cama, J. J. Modi and others, saw that the unessentials were taking over the essentials of our religion. They established the Rahnumae Mazdayasnan Sabha. They put before the community the fearless and honest results of their research, and a revival came. Today, do we have such leadership? We celebrate their anniversaries, shout loudly about their great service to the community, but refuse to support their scholarly findings! The result, "this exodus of faith" as the Brigadier rightly puts it. **M. HOMAI FRAMROZE BODE**

I fully endorse Brig Grant's views (Readers' Forum, *Parsiana*, February 1990). We talk of broadmindedness whenever we find others in our religion praying to another, but one salient fact we do not appreciate: that all other religions open their hearts and the doors of their places of worship to us but we refuse to do the same in the case of our religious places and ceremonies.

We are never refused the *prasad* (consecrated food) of other religions, but we do not like others to touch ours. So also in many places we are looked upon by our brethren with annoyance if we do not wipe off the ash we put on our forehead on leaving the fire-temple (this is done to avoid others eying it). High-flown explanations are offered but I only add that our own religious ceremonies today have included a lot of "Hindu" rituals after

we came into India. Then, our "forefathers" did not object to these, nor to the onset of intermarriage. Many of our surnames like Wallace, Govekar, Patel, etc have been accepted but still we consider ourselves pure.

Today the children of an *ervad* cannot become a priest because the mother may be a non-Zoroastrian even though, as per our own tenets, a child of a Parsi father is permitted to be a follower of our religion. Why? Because no *dastur* however educated, broadminded and sincere has the courage to take on the *navar* and *martab* ceremonies of such *athornan*'s children though their *navjotes* were done and they are allowed to worship in the fire-temple.

However, for every potential *athornan* who is not an *athornan* because of this error of parentage, I can show an *athornan* who is not fit to be an *athornan* though he is so ordained.

Maj NOSHIR F. MULLAN (Reid)

Zoroastrianism has no babas/gods to grant favors/solace/salvation though subsequent to Zoroaster's *Gathas*, some obviously outlandish priests/prayers/rituals have come about.

Gullible, weak-minded, ignorant, pseudo-Zoroastrians seek corporeal favors/solace/salvation from fake babas and imaginary gods who, like anyone else, are bound to be right half the time.

Zoroastrians seek, through the *Gathas*, excellence of knowledge, wisdom, strength to be righteous and to oppose the unrighteous.

Those with depth and width of vision of the universe migrate in order to have and to propagate good living with Zoroastrian values. **A. E. TARAFORE**

"Navjote by Choice..."

I have no desire to argue with anyone, least of all with an honored friend such as Dr Ali Jafarey (Readers' Forum, *Parsiana*, February 1990). All I wish to state is that, for centuries, practising Zoroastrians the world over have accepted the *Fravarané* prayer, recited in the *kusti* ritual, and the *Din-no-Kalmo* in *Pazend*, recited every night, as declarations of faith.

I am grateful to Dr Jafarey for his painstaking analysis of the word *fravarané*, but why has he left out the *var* of Yima, described in the *Vendidad* as a

"square enclosure?" Ahura Mazda commands Yima to build the *var*. Where is the choice? Surely, a word in any ancient text is translated according to the context in which it is used?

Dr Jafarey concludes that even if every Zoroastrian was conversant with "Avesta, Sanskrit, Pahlavi, Persian, linguistics and Indo-Iranian studies," a formidable list, there would still be a need for "scholars of high caliber...to firmly present the correct meaning and not interpretation of the scriptures..." May I ask if Dr Jafarey is happy with the scholarly translation of *geush urva* as "soul of the cow" or "ox-soul?" Consider the following translations of the last line of the opening verse of the *Gathas*:

- "...I will first ask of you all... the acts of the Holy Spirit, to satisfy the will of the Good Mind and the ox-soul" (Jacques Duchesne-Guillemin, *The Hymns of Zarathushtra*, 1952, p 85)

- "...whereby I may bring satisfaction both to the will of the Good Mind and to the soul of the cow" (Ileya Gershevitch, *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, 1964, Vol XXIII, p 14, n)

- "...for that through which Thou mayest satisfy the determination of (my) good thinking and the soul of the cow" (Stanley Insler, *The Gathas of Zarathushtra*, 1975, p 25)

One cannot help asking: Was Zarathushtra born to satisfy the soul of an ox or cow? Is this the "correct meaning" of the phrase *geush urva*? Or is it what Bode and Nanavutty make of it?

- "...Grant that I...acquire the wisdom of Vohu Mana, the Good Mind, so that I may illumine the very Soul of Creation" (*Songs of Zarathushtra, the Gathas*, 1952, p 43)

Scholars seem blissfully unaware of the incongruity of their literal translations. For instance, the last line of Ys 44.6 of the *Gathas* is translated as:

- "For whom hast thou created the pregnant, luck-bringing cow?" (Maria Wilkins Smith, *Studies in the Syntax of the Gathas of Zarathushtra*, 1929, p 109)

- "For what men hast thou fashioned the mother-cow, the source of good fortune?" (Duchesne-Guillemin, op cit p 67)

- "For whom has thou fashioned the joy-bringing, fertile cow?" (Insler, op cit p 67)

- "For whom hast Thou shaped this abundant, joy-giving creation?" (Bode and Nanavutty, op cit p 76)

Until the symbols and imagery used in our ancient texts are interpreted as they

were meant to be, all translations are liable to end up as absurdities. Philology and the historical perspective are essential. Yet the resulting translation should make sense, not nonsense.

What of the beauty, truth and wisdom embedded in our scriptures? Does any scholar express these in beautiful language? The followers of other religions are more fortunate in that their texts have been translated in language that is both moving and inspiring: the *Koran* translated into matchless English prose by the late Professor Reynold Nicholson of Cambridge University, England; Buddhist texts rendered into English by Edward Conze and Christmas Humphreys; selections from the *Vedas* and the *Upanishads* in the English translation of the Spanish scholar, Juan Mascaro. One could go on. Is it any wonder that many of our young turn away from their faith, sad and disillusioned, when even our basic prayers, the *Ashem Vohu* and the *Ahuna Vairya*, are reduced to the level of pieces of chewed string (see Helmut Humbach, "A Western Approach to Zarathushtra," *Journal of the K. R. Cama Oriental Institute*, 1984, No 51, p 48-54)?

Ms PILOO JUNGALWALLA

New Delhi

Tata International Airport?

The Union Government has decided to name Calcutta airport after Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose, the airports at Madras after Kamraj and Anna Durai, and the Sahar international airport, Bombay, after Jawaharlal Nehru.

No opposition is raised against proposed names for Calcutta and Madras airports, but a fierce controversy has been raging over the renaming of Sahar airport. The opponents want Sahar airport to be named either after Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj or after Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar. The Union Government has thus been placed in a dilemma.

To assuage the feelings and sentiments of the State, the Government should consider naming the Sahar international airport after J.R.D. Tata, the father of aviation in India. Mr J. R. D. Tata, as is well known, is the person who has put India on the air map of the world. It will be a fitting tribute to the pioneer of Indian aviation.

Objection may be raised about naming the airport after a living person but there is a precedent to go by. Indira Gandhi was also against the renaming of the famous Alexandra Dock of Bombay

after her, but she was persuaded and that dock came to be known as Indira Dock during her lifetime. The authorities may similarly ponder over renaming Sahar international airport after J. R. D. Tata.

BHIKHAJI M. ADENWALLA

Problems in perspective

As one who is involved in doing some public work fairly successfully, I cannot be a silent spectator to the controversies raging in the press. If all Parsis feel that solutions to their problems lie with the trustees of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP) then it is time they correct this erroneous impression.

Parsis in our housing colonies and bays are known to hoard more than one flat which they claim to have inherited under some pretext or another and keep these premises locked or hardly used under the cover of the Bombay Rent Act.

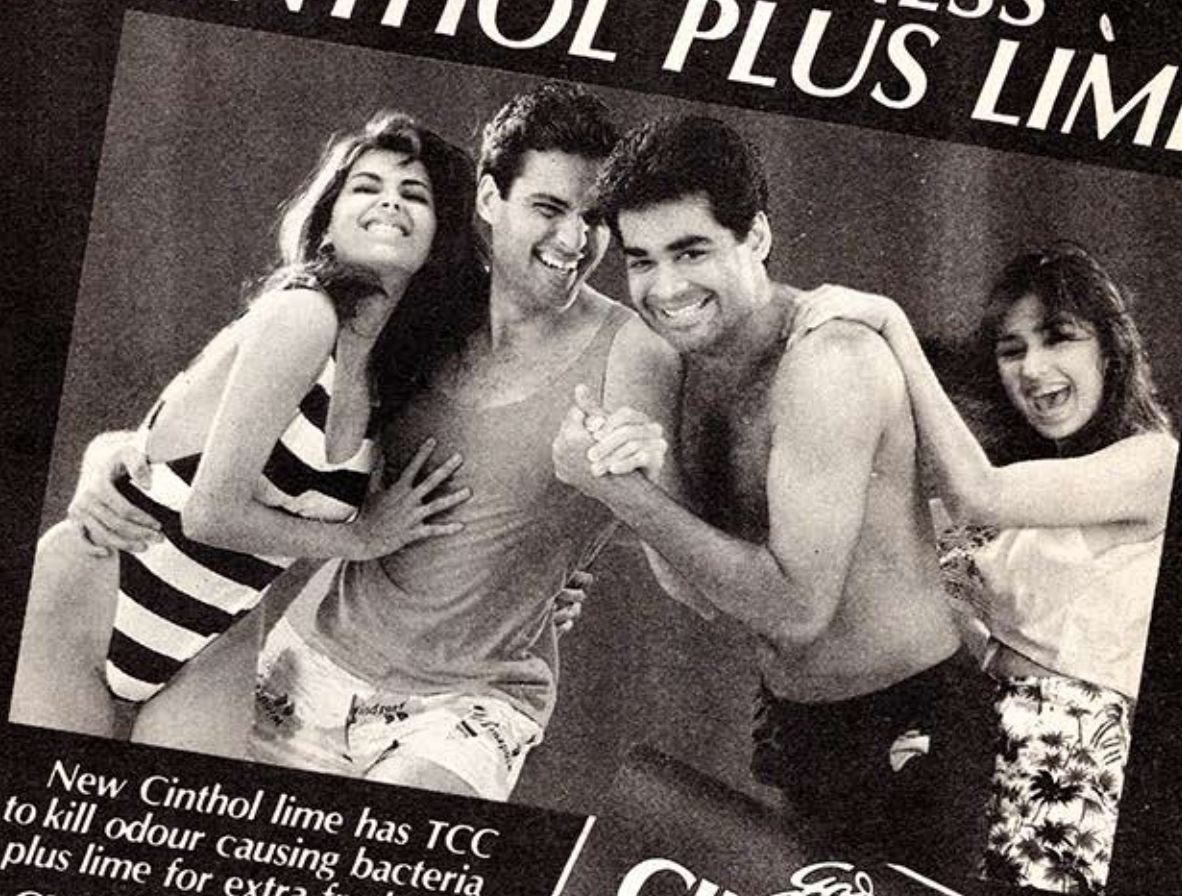
Our trustees also come in for some justified criticism in matters where, on the one hand, under wrong/misguided advice eviction suits have been filed against genuine people who are, in fact, family members of deceased tenants and have been living/occupying such premises for well over 15 to 20 years, and on the other hand not taking any action or compounding matters and allowing illegal trespassers and occupants to continue to reside. The trustees should... move the Government to exclude the Bombay Parsi Punchayet and other such charitable organizations from the relevant sections of the Rent Act for, as long as these continue, there is little or no hope of the trustees ever getting back vacant possession of premises.

Despite all our rents being pegged at rates prevailing several decades ago, it is creditable that apart from major repairs the Parsi Punchayet attends to repairs and replacements of lavatory flushing cisterns in individual homes, no doubt with costs shared by the tenant. Even in such cases tenants refuse to surrender the old tanks which are rightly the property of the Punchayet. The irony of the matter is that these very tenants who want the landlord to share costs even for internal repairs, themselves spend money lavishly on false ceilings, fancy bathroom and kitchen fittings, etc and carry out extensive renovations, major structural changes and interior decorations without even having the courtesy of informing the landlords in such matters.

It is pertinent to point out here that the trustees and the officials of the

NOW!

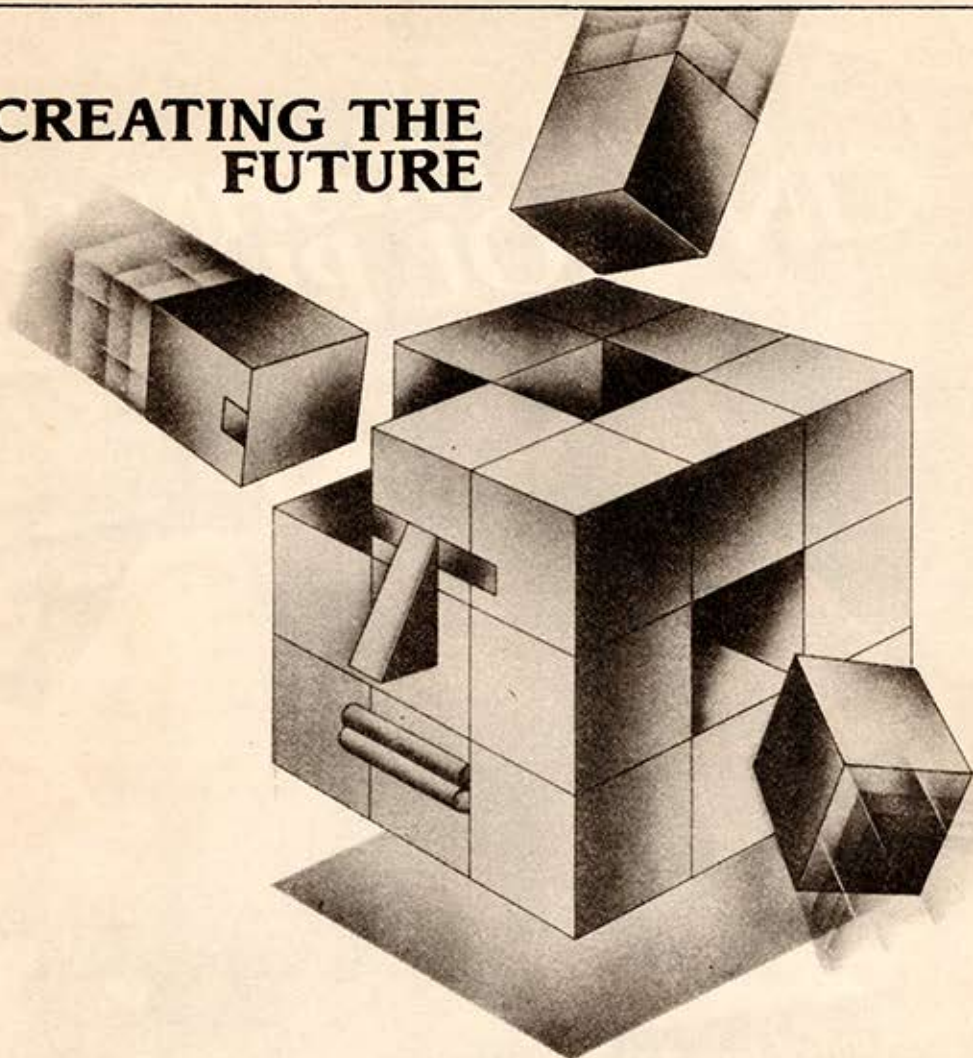
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Punchayet should respond in a prompt and positive manner when the law-abiding tenant does approach them for the necessary permission.

No institution which has an annual revenue from property of around Rs 32 lakhs against an annual expenditure of Rs 48 lakhs on the maintenance of these properties is ever going to be able to survive indefinitely.

If the constitution, the trust deed and the rules of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet so permit, it would be worthwhile if the trustees considered forming ownership co-operative societies from existing properties which involve high expenditure and create liabilities on the BPP funds. No doubt in doing so the original objectives of our forefathers in setting up the Punchayet may be defeated, but in view of the fact that hardly any vacant premises become available for the needy, it will be worth considering. Norms and guidelines could be framed keeping in mind the ultimate objective of alleviating the need for housing. In the meanwhile:

- All internal repairs within tenants' premises should be at the total cost of the tenant with an obligation that the tenant inform the Punchayet and the Punchayet

consent immediately for all such permissions sought if they are within the rules and no structural changes are involved. A fee of Rs 100 should be levied for inspection visit and report of the punchayet engineer.

- For essential services like water supply, electricity, lifts, etc the Punchayet should contribute 25 percent of the cost involved with the balance 75 percent coming from the users.

- For the maintenance and repair of common areas such as staircases, compounds, boundary walls, etc, the Punchayet could contribute 50 percent of the costs.

- External painting/whitewashing work should be allowed to be carried out by the tenants at their cost keeping uniformity in the color scheme.

- Services of watchmen/pump operators, sweepers, cleaners, gardeners should be paid for by the tenants or a separate service charge levied for the provision of such facilities.

- Enhancement of parking fees for two-wheelers and cars with immediate effect to mop up revenue as well as 100 percent additional fee for all commercial vehicles like taxis, tempos, jeeps, etc used for business purposes and parked within

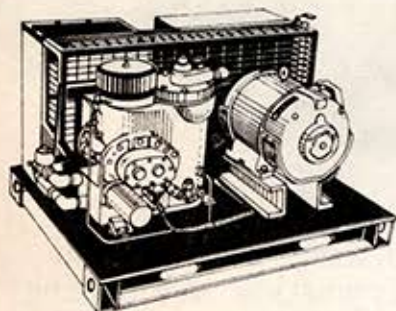
the colony compounds.

No doubt the above may adversely affect a few tenants whose financial conditions make it difficult for them to bear any additional burden. In such genuine cases the Punchayet could subsidize/reimburse such needy persons from their other funds.

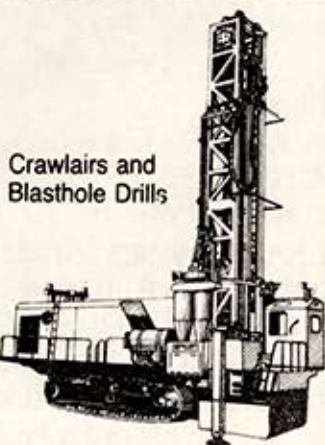
It would not be out of place here to appeal to the generosity of the Parsis in general to help the community on the housing front, especially as the community faces the problem of a declining population which is further aggravated by lack of accommodation for couples contemplating marriage. If each Parsi contributed one rupee (or more) per month to a separate fund which could be created for the purpose of housing needy Parsis, it would supplement the efforts made by the Parsi Punchayet. Accommodating the homeless from a minority community of 60,000 in Bombay will not be a difficult task if the community responds with one voice. To begin with, on behalf of my family members and myself, I pledge to donate a sum of Rs 5,001 to set the ball rolling.

PHIROZE AMROLIWALLA

Edited by Amavaz S. Manna



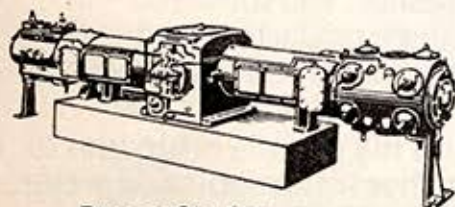
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Events and Personalities

Madressa Annexe opened

The Annexe building symbolizes "the culmination of a long-standing dream of principal Ervad Rustom Panthaki and (is) a living testimony to the magnanimity of the Parsi community," reads the souvenir brought out at the inauguration of Bombay's Athornan Boarding Madressa Annexe on April 21, 1990. It particularly embodies the achievements of Panthaki who during his tenure as principal for 24 years has been credited with having kept "pace with the changing times and (bringing) about considerable and noteworthy changes not only in the Madressa building but also in its financial condition, its students, staff and the entire pattern of education itself."

The souvenir carries a history of the 70-year-old Madressa, recounting the milestones in the institution's existence and the services of those who have played a leading role in promoting it. Messages from community stalwarts as also other letters of appreciation feature therein.

Since its inception the Madressa has been running on public donations, notes the brochure. "It has seen many ups and downs -- sometimes a lack of students, at others a non-availability of teachers, and often a paucity of funds." But through it all, it has continued to give priestly training to youngsters. The Madressa takes pride in announcing that it has given to the community, six dasturs, around 60 panthakies, 15 boiwallas of atash bahrams as also religious teachers and madressa principals. Besides, many of their ex-students who have opted for the professions have attained distinction in their respective careers, further states the brochure. In the last academic year 1989-90 there were 43 students in the six to 23 age-group.

About four years ago the Madressa trustees decided to construct the Annexe

so that the resident boys could get more space for their physical and extra-curricular activities. The foundation stone of the 12,731 sq foot building was laid in the backyard of the Madressa in December 1986. According to the planned layout, the first floor of the Annexe houses a multipurpose hall; a library along with a five-room dormitory for the students is on the second floor; and the third floor is reserved for accommodation for the staff members and their families. The ground floor is reserved for such utilities as kitchen, store, etc plus the functioning of the Behramji Medicare Centre where treatment will be offered to the ailing, free of charge once a week. Subsequently, the Annexe facilities are expected to be extended to other children, women, the aged and non-Zoroastrians too, as per an earlier announcement.

"The Annexe is not merely an addition of one more building to the Madressa complex. It is a monument to the spirit of cooperation with which the trustees of the Madressa, Ervad Panthaki and the donors...have worked in complete unison," writes Jehan Daruwala, editor of *The Bombay Samachar*, in the souvenir.



Mhow's landmark agiary

The one hundred and fiftieth year celebration of the fire-temple in Mhow, reportedly the only atash adarian in North India, was marked by "gaiety, pensiveness, reflection and fellowship," writes Gp Capt Dhunjishaw M. Marker, vice president of the Mhow Parsi Zoroastrian Anjuman.

Residents from Indore, Ratlam, Ujjain and Neemuch converged at the Dotiwalla Hall in Mhow for the fourth intercity meet of the Zoroastrians of Madhya Pradesh (MP) which coincided with the agiary function on March 18, 1990.

Presiding at the function was Dastur (Dr) Firoze Kotwal, high priest of Bombay's H. B. Wadia Atas Bahram who led the jashan and gave an informative speech on the blessings of the sacred fire.

A special felicitation was planned for Phiroze Illava, honorary treasurer of the Mhow Anjuman who had dedicated himself to the community over the years. On the occasion, Illava, who along with Na-



Right: Panthaki inaugurating the Madressa Annexe (left) as Mirza and Jalamai look on

val Cooper was credited with having planted babul trees near the dokhma, gave a talk on forestry, and Dr Behram Masani, honorary secretary of the Mhow Anjuman spoke on the need for creating a "proper organization and forum." The day's schedule also provided a time slot for the viewing of the popular TV serial *Mahabharat*.

In addition to addressing themselves to the problem of scarce kathi, the Mhow Anjuman has also taken steps to amend their constitution. Presently the Anjuman is managed by its president, Ms Homai B. Illava; vice president, Gp Capt Dhunjishaw M. Marker; honorary treasurer, Phiroze Illava; honorary secretary, Dr Behram M. Masani; joint honorary secretary, Eruch B. Merchant; and members-at-large Dr Jimmy E. Appoo, Jehangir N. Mehervaid, Homi B. Bhaya, Ms Katy M. Ghara, Ms Banoo E. Merchant and Firoze M. Virjee, further reads Marker's report.

Another activity planned for the Zoroastrians of MP was a trip to Udwada, Navsari and Surat, led by Tehmtan Anklesaria, president of the Ratlam Anjuman. The 27 pilgrims, who after nearly two decades got a chance to visit these fire-temples, were so impressed that they hope to make the tour a recurring feature, notes a press release from Ratlam.

ZYA in full form

First it was the Navroze function organized by the Zoroastrian Youth Association (ZYA) of Poona that drew a record crowd of over 1,500 people. Encouraged by the community's response, the youths then organized, reportedly for the first time in the history of Poona, a full day function on *Adar mah Adar roj*, jointly with the Kadmi and Shehenshahi Anjuman Dar-e-Meher, notes a press re-

lease. The day's function on April 29, 1990 included cooking and flower arrangement competitions in the morning. The evening's fare included a jashan, followed by a religious discourse by Dr (Ms) Meher Master-Moos, president of the Zoroastrian College and the Mazdayasnie Monasterie, and a question-answer session. The gathering then enjoyed Marazban Dorabjee's dinner and danced away till midnight at Khorshed-wadi, the venue of the function, the release further notes.

The enterprising youth group then proceeded with their plans to hold a summer sports camp for the ZYA members in the 5 to 40 age-group through the month of May. Another project is the compilation of a blood group directory, as per a circular of April 16, 1990.

Taking a key role in the organization of these functions is Rustom Anklesaria, the newly-elected president of the ZYA for 1990-91. Others working with him on the "dynamic and experienced team" are: Ms Binaifer Gagrati, vice president; Jehangir Postwala, joint vice president; Ms Farida Deboo, secretary; Ms Ferhiz Cooper, joint secretary; Ms Kamal Palia, treasurer; and Zubin Gagrati, Ms Anahita Irani, Farokh Irani and Phil Postwala, members-at-large, states the circular of February 5, 1990.



(Left) Dubash: received civilian decoration
(Right) Birdy: creating ad campaigns
Below: Poona youths participating in community functions



Peru honors Dubash

The Orden de Sol, considered the oldest Peruvian civilian decoration, was presented to Ardeshir B. K. Dubash, honorary consul of Peru in Bombay, notes a press release. This decoration, in recognition of Dubash's "valuable service to Peru and its citizens," was conferred on him by the secretary general of the Peruvian ministry of external affairs on March 20, 1990 in New Delhi.

Forty-six-year-old Dubash who has been the honorary consul for the past 17 years had earlier in 1981 been decorated with the Official de la Orden 'Al Merito Por Servicios Distinguidos' by the Peruvian government, notes his bio data.

A former councillor of the Bombay Municipal Corporation he had served the city's works committee and the law, revenue and general purposes committee in the mid '70s. He was associated with the International Cargo Handling Co-ordination Association as honorary secretary and managing committee member of its Indian chapter.

Presently he is on the directorial board of several companies and is also a trustee of different charitable institutions and trusts like MIND — The Research Society for the Care, Treatment and Training of Children in Need of Special Care, the

Indian Red Cross Society, etc.

His other interest is sports, particularly rugby, where he had represented the Indian team in various tournaments. In addition, he is chairman of the executive committee of the Maharashtra State Karate Association, further adds his bio data.

Copywriter of the Year

The Copywriter of the Year award went to Freddy D. Birdy of Trikaya Grey, notes the *Mid-Day* of March 4, 1990. His copy for *The Times of India*, Aristocrat, Flying Machine, Yves Saint Laurent and Mafco Fruit Fountain advertisement campaigns won him the coveted award.

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Besides winning the copywriter distinction, Birdy has, for the past three years, been the recipient of the Best Artist of the Year Award.

Intended to promote creative excellence in advertising, the Communication Arts Guild (CAG) awards, considered the most prestigious in the country, serve to encourage new talent, it is mentioned in the fortnightly magazine, *Bombay*, March 22-April 6, 1990.

Birdy's work involves writing advertisements for newspapers, magazines and

(Left) Iranpour: makes winning cakes
(Right) Dilshad (top) and Farhad
Billimoria: score in music



television. He has to his credit campaigns like Vadilal ice-cream, Chockles chocolate, Garden Sarees, Thril and Csango, writes the copywriter in a letter to *Parsiana*. According to Birdy, one must know good English, have a vivid imagination, a sense of humor and a knowledge of human behavior to make a successful advertisement that can influence people.

A commerce graduate from the Lala Lajpatrai College of Commerce and Economics, the copywriter had initially planned to be a chartered accountant before he opted for a career in advertising.

Four years ago Birdy started out as a trainee copywriter with Enterprise; he was then with Rediffusion for a few months before joining Trikeya, notes *Bombay*.

Three golds for the chef

The only chef to be honored with three

gold medals at the all-India Chef Culinary Competition in New Delhi was Nowzer M. Iranpour, in-charge of the pastry department at the Bombay Taj. His entries in the categories of wedding cake, dessert, and cake and pastry were declared the best, notes *The Bombay Samachar* of February 24, 1990.

Practising daily for two months prior to the event from January 24 to February 4, 1990 helped Iranpour win the medals, as also a free ticket to Khatmandu that was gifted by the Taj group. From among the 212 medals presented at the competition held under the aegis of the National Council of Hotel Management and Catering Technology, 79 were bagged by the Taj. The other participating teams were from Indian Tourism Council, Hyatt, Indian Tourism Development Corporation, etc.

An alumnus of the Institute of Hotel Management, Catering Technology and Applied Nutrition where he did a course in baking, Iranpour joined the Taj in 1972, notes his bio data. Eight years later he took over charge of the pastry department. The 38-year-old culinary expert opened the baking department at the Fort Aguada Hotel in Goa in '74. The next year he was deputed to the Swiss Flight Kitchen in Zurich for a three-month period. He has also trained in West Germany at the Intercontinental Hotel, Munich, reads his bio data.

Iranpour is now preparing for the next all-India competition to be held in New Delhi next year. He is also keen to take part in the Olympic culinary competition in Frankfurt and Singapore in 1992 where about 1,000 chefs from all over the world will participate.

Promising talent

Acclaimed as the "wonder boy of violin," in *Mid-day*, August 3, 1989, 18-year-old Farhad Bomi Billimoria was granted a four-year music scholarship by the Michigan State University School of Music, informed *The Times of India* of October 14, 1989. The scholarship was granted in recognition of his "musical ability and potential as a professional" in the field.

Farhad has twice participated in International Chambermusic Festivals held in Austria where he got an opportunity to perform and also receive intensive training in the violin.

Though the first instrument he learnt was the piano, at the age of 11 he switched to the violin under the tutorship of Ms Jini Dinshaw, co-founder of the

Bombay Chamber Orchestra (BCO). After three years of studying the instrument, Farhad was selected to join the BCO as its youngest member, notes a write-up. He has passed with distinction the different grade examinations of the Royal Schools of Music. Committed as he is to the violin, Farhad hopes to be a professional violinist.

His younger sister Dilshad, the principal flautist with the BCO has also made her mark in music. After her early training under Sanjoy Gupta and Ms Ernavaz Bharucha, Dilshad had to rely on books and workshops conducted by visiting flautists to further her knowledge of the flute, notes her bio data. Besides, she has benefited when playing under famous visiting conductors who have lauded her "talent and musical sensitivity."

Nearly two years ago, she participated in the Tenth International Chambermusic Festival where she received intensive training and performed with various chambermusic groups. She was also invited by the Stop-Gaps to perform for the Festival of Festive Music and has subsequently been recognized as a soloist in Bombay.

Dilshad too, like her brother, first started on the piano. Both of them received their inspiration from their parents, Anahita and Bomi, themselves accomplished pianists, reads a write-up.

Nagarvala's autobiography

The principal of the Dr (Mrs) Erin N. Nagarvala School in Poona was given a rare present on his eightieth birthday. The autobiography of the educationist entitled *Principal Nusserwanjee Dorab Nagarvala -- Life Sketch* was presented to him on October 8, 1989 at a function when ex-students and associates gathered to greet him, notes the Poona edition of the *Indian Express* dated October 10. This event made news in several local Marathi publications.

The octogenarian's life sketch, letters and sports activities are carried in the book compiled by his relative Ms Meher Nagarvala.

A science graduate from the Fergusson College, Poona, Nagarvala commenced his teaching career as a cricket coach at the Shivaji Military School on a monthly salary of Rs 75, notes a write-up in *Swarajya*, a Marathi fortnightly, of October 14-28, 1989. Subsequently, in 1947, he launched the National Model School which was later renamed the Dr (Mrs) Erin N. Nagarvala School. Despite

continued on page 36



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An assertion of independence

Arnavaz S. Mama

"The mobeds won't do something just because the community says 'do it'...If any changes (in religious practices) come about in North America, they will have to come from the mobeds," says Ervad Kobad Zarolia, chairman of the proposed North American Mobed Council (NAMC).

A voluntary mobed and president of the Zoroastrian Society of Ontario (ZSO) — the largest Zoroastrian anjuman in North America — Zarolia was candid about the problems that have been presented by the new environment in which Zoroastrianism is now required to be practiced and preserved. In an interview with *Parsiana* on January 18, 1990 Zarolia explained how the mobeds of North America are exposed to two fronts. On the one hand the Bombay priests do not provide the unified guidance and advice they seek. On the other, their decision to be independent of political pressures has created an ambivalent situation vis-a-vis the Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America (FEZANA): "FEZANA wanted us to be under them as a subcommittee, but the mobeds refused...FEZANA disliked this very much," says Zarolia.

"The Mobed Council wants some guidance from somewhere," continues Zarolia. Whenever any queries are addressed to the Bombay authorities, "The answers are so different from each other — whom do we follow?" he asks. When the parallel, one-year-old Council of Iranian Mobeds of North America refers any problem to Kankash-e-Mobedan, their elders in Tehran, "they get an answer...with one voice." As an example Zarolia relates how Ervad Jehan Bagli, one of the three secretaries of the Mobed Council and editor of the *FEZANA Journal*, wrote to the Kankash-e-Mobedan seeking certain clarifications so that the Iranian community could be served in the way in which it is accustomed. They responded with "lots of information about the rituals. It gave us an idea: the Iranians have a different con-

Religious life
in North America
should be governed
by the mobeds,
says Ervad
Kobad Zarolia



PHOTO: VARGHESE FERNANDEZ

cept of Zoroastrianism from what we have." There is a chance, according to Zarolia, that "we may affiliate ourselves with the Iranian body (in Tehran) if India does not do anything."

There is no clash between the two mobed organizations in North America, says Zarolia. The Council of Iranian Mobeds "was registered in California a year (ago). They have slightly different problems." The Iranian Council, Zarolia

explains, is very particular about the rights of mobed families. Their members include those who are not mobeds but belong to mobed families. In contrast, the NAMC includes only those actively volunteering their service to the North American community — about 55 to 60 individuals (of whom only 18 had attended the meeting in Montreal in March 1989 — perhaps due to the costs of travel, as notes Zarolia). No observers are permitted at meetings. Dr Ali Jafarey of the Zoroastrian Center in California, who had requested the status, was disallowed. The decision to eschew political links is based on the desire "to get away from what happened in Bombay (where mobeds) became second class citizens, never taken seriously. None of us are doing it (providing religious services) for money. It's a social service. We don't want political links with anybody. Our minutes go to every association in North America. Nothing is done behind closed doors," Zarolia adds.

"The mobeds are not willing to be emotionally battered because of certain (controversial) decisions," according to Zarolia who notes that the response rate for any survey in the North American community is "not more than five percent."

Though choosing to remain independent of FEZANA — the mobeds even declined FEZANA's offer to contribute towards the Council's expenses, according to the minutes of the March meeting — a close liaison will be maintained with the federal body, according to the NAMC constitution which was to be ratified at the next meeting in April 1990 and registered thereafter.

The 1990 meeting was scheduled to be held in Chicago over the Easter weekend but the Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Chicago (ZAC) registered their inability to hold the meeting when its mobeds withdrew from the NAMC (see "Rebuff to Mobed Council?" *Parsiana*, October 1989). ZAC head priest Ervad Kersey Antia did not attend a

meeting with Zarolia and four others, says Zarolia, adding, "He's put pressure (on ZAC) not to join. Twice we have invited him to discussions. (The ZAC priests) have given no reason (for the withdrawal). They say we're not able to achieve anything." (However, in *Parsiana's* discussions with some of the ZAC office bearers, no mention was made of any pressure from Antia, but rather of differences of opinion and approach between ZAC and the Council.) Zarolia who has been leading the North American mobeds since 1983 — "It's democratically done; every mobed has the chance to chair the meetings," he notes — would like to pass on the chairmanship to someone else now.

The mobed body would actively avoid any liberal/conservative casting when deliberating on controversial issues, says Zarolia. The draft constitution delineates its scope and aims:

- to expand and improve the understanding of... the theology, history, doctrines and rituals of the religion;
- to provide service by officiating at... navjotes, weddings, funerals, jashans and all other ceremonies to satisfy the needs of the community;
- to train young Zoroastrians for the navar and maratab ceremonies with an aim to ordaining priests;
- to encourage young mobeds in the performance of rituals by having them co-officiate at various ceremonies;
- to provide a complete list of prayers that must be recited on the occasion of navjote, marriage, funeral and jashan ceremonies together with a short meaning in English;
- to maintain an up-to-date list of all practicing mobeds who can officiate at various ceremonies;
- to assist their respective associations in maintaining records of all navjotes, marriages and death ceremonies performed on the North American continent;
- to make efforts to facilitate the performance of Iranian and Parsi Zoroastrian rituals and customs;
- to prepare booklets of prayers and ceremonies with English explanations (for general and regular use);
- to monitor and reject any changes to the original Zoroastrian prayers.

At the Montreal meeting the mobeds had decided that their involvement in the religious education of the laity would be in an advisory capacity only and that there was no scope for establishing a seminary or initiating priests in North

America. The question of uniform procedures to be followed in ceremonies involving non-Zoroastrian spouses and their children will feature again in future agendas as no decision was reached.

Estimating the North American community at approximately 10,000, Zarolia informs that in Toronto itself 60 to 70 percent of Iranians are not members of the association and are not listed in the directory. "In Ontario we changed the

"In future there may be two types of agiaries, two types of communities"

ghambars to the Fasli calendar. We thought this would really bring (the Iranians) in. But no!" Zarolia lists food, language and way of life as the three divisive forces between the two arms of the community but the youth might gell, he feels. The "two cultures should be a source of enhancement for the community. We hardly use the 'Parsi' or 'Irani' labels there — mainly its 'Zoroastrian.' We do it consciously."

Zarolia describes the North American community as "very active, very vibrant — both religion wise and community wise. They feel the need for getting together, the need for children to know the Zoroastrian way of life...If we do something and hurt the community, it's no use doing it. When we changed the ghambars to the Fasli calendar — the majority of the mini council of mobeds in Toronto had accepted the change — we got a lot of flak. Now after three years everyone accepts it...We accept non-Zoroastrian spouses at ceremonies. Only at muktad (they're) not allowed because a lot of people want to preserve the same atmosphere." Zarolia explains the discrepancy: "We feel (there should be) no non-Zoroastrians at muktad as the mobeds go through a lot of trouble to maintain that atmosphere...We maintain the fire continuously for five days, encourage Zoroastrian youth to clean the place. People donate flowers. There's humbandagi in the evenings. The ladies stay for five days and cook all the (traditional) food except for *darun* (traditional consecrated unleavened bread). Collective prayers are said and 350 names (intoned)...It all preserves the commu-

nity identity ... The volunteers take the trouble for themselves and fellow Zoroastrians...We might not be able to maintain (that atmosphere if non-Zoroastrians are present)."

In Toronto there is a strong Kooka-daru influence since about 1984-85 when the late Ervad Nadirsha Aibara visited on the invitation of community members. "It is a plus for Zoroastrians, not a minus...Aibara's nirangs have helped a lot of Parsis, given them peace of mind...The momentum is still strong. It takes a lot of time and dedication" of the gentleman who provides the service, says Zarolia. "We've offered (the use of) the community hall, but he prefers to do it at his home. Now there is celebration for Aibara also..."

Keen to set up an adarian in North America, Zarolia feels that the difficulties of maintaining it could be ironed out: "People (in India) should not assess a North American agiary by their own standards. It should suit the North American context...(For example) the burning of firewood...the pollution: do we need to cut so many forests to maintain our religion?...Ages back it was an open fire in the center of town. In India it became an organized building. Even in Bombay a lot of agiaries are not being maintained the way they should be...In future there may be two types of agiaries, two types of communities...(The question of) who can come and who can go (will have to be discussed)..."

"You (in India) can give us the money to build an agiary in North America — we need one," Zarolia reiterates. When it is pointed out that community assets in India are locked up in the properties of defunct and dwindling anjumans, Zarolia counters that a property swap with Christian churches could be arranged.

But once an adarian is established in North America, the links with Bombay may become more tenuous, feels Zarolia: "If Parsis in India want North American Zoroastrians to continue the link, they must organize themselves to give answers with one voice. Otherwise the link will break. Each North American community is self-sufficient, self-reliant. Once we establish fire-temples, the need will diminish." Commenting on the quizzical community behavior Zarolia notes, "When there is another body willing to lead, Bombay Parsis will blame it. But when they had the chance for so many years, they wouldn't take it."

Canada's open doors

"Recently, Canada has flung its doors wide open and many Parsis are arriving here," writes Sarosh Bharucha of Ontario. Having personally suffered the problem of insufficient information on immigration criteria, Bharucha has compiled a useful base for aspiring Parsiana readers.

"While Canada does establish worldwide targets for the number of immigrants it plans to accept, it does not set any national quotas," informs Bharucha. Applicants are divided into six classes:

- The "family class" of spouse, never-married children of any age, and parents, gains almost automatic entry subject to a medical examination, notes Bharucha.

- The "independent applicant" is required to score at least 70 points from a total of 100, subdivided into nine criteria: education (12 points) registers one point for each successful year of primary and secondary education; specific vocational preparation assigns 15 points for training of 10 years or more; two points are granted for each year of experience for specific vocational preparation of four years or more and decreases for

lesser time periods; 15 points are awarded on the basis of availability of occupation in the candidate's field — zero points under this head is an automatic bar to entry, but "in 1990 there are no jobs which have zero points," writes Bharucha; the candidate scores 10 points for an arranged job offer certified by the immigration ministry — if not, zero; for each year above or below the age range of 21 to 44 years, two points are subtracted from 10 points; fluency in written and spoken English and French can generate 15 points; 10 points are set aside for the candidate's personal suitability, assessed at the interview, and five points are reserved by the immigration minister under "levels control."

- Individual applicants who can claim to be "assisted relatives" with an undertaking of support from a Canadian citizen, are awarded an additional 10 points to their personal score as above.

- The domestic servant class allows a person to come to Canada on the sponsorship of a Canadian family and permits the filing of an application for immigration after two years from within the country.

- The entrepreneur and investor class are required to make a financial investment

of between \$ 50,000 and \$ 2,50,000.

- Refugees are judged on the basis of persecution in the country of origin.

While all children born in Canada automatically receive Canadian citizenship, students who complete their studies there are required to leave on the completion of their courses and file their applications for immigration from outside the country. Indian readers may seek an up-date on Bharucha's information from the immigration section of the Canadian High Commission at Shanti Path, Chanakyapuri, PO Box 5209, New Delhi 110021.

Parsi cricket circuit?

Parsi cricketers are entering a new phase of the game with teams crossing continents. This July, Ontario will host the UK eleven in a return match, informs ZSO president Kobad Zarolia. The Ontarians had begun the series with a visit to the UK some time ago.

And then there is an open invitation from hotelier and trustee Byram Avari of the Karachi Parsi Anjuman Trust Funds to play in Karachi in December, adds Zarolia.

Compiled by Amavaz S. Mama

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BREAKING THE SILENCE

After a communication break of over two years,
the Bombay Parsi Punchayet trustees restart the dialogue

Arnavaz S. Mama

There is a fair chance of the Anjuman Committee elections being held next year, inform Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP) trustees. Having run through five years of litigation, attempts to amend the existing electoral scheme now pend the resolution of a very narrow issue — whether or not those who contributed Rs 7,500 to BPP charities, under the order framed by Justice H. Suresh of the Bombay High Court, have the right to vote for trustees — according to the trustees.

The information was provided at a joint meeting of six trustees on March 14, 1990 which was attended by *Parsiana* at the BPP's invitation. *Parsiana* accepted the invitation on the understanding that the matter discussed could be used for publication and, in addition, sent a letter listing seven subjects on which they sought information. These questions were:

- In light of the population projections presented at the Fifth World Zoroastrian Congress (5WZC) are the BPP's priorities being reassessed and what are the new priorities?
- What is the position on election reforms? When will the next anjuman committee elections be held?
- Why has the BPP stopped the press conferences?
- Why has the BPP suspended the *Quarterly Review* pending the launch of the new newsletter?
- What is the position regarding WZO (World Zoroastrian Organisation)? What is the position regarding forming a new world body?

• What is the position on the Godrej Baug Agiary construction? When will it be consecrated?

• Attendance record of BPP trustees at fortnightly meetings for 1989?

The last general community press conference convened by the BPP was on January 30, 1988. The system was dropped in favor of the trustees meeting the representatives of one community publication at a time. Earlier in the year they had met the representatives of *The Bombay Samachar*.

Although the Punchayet has cooperated with *Parsiana* whenever specific information is sought, the compartmentalization of the Press, coupled with long lapses of silence, the suspension of all BPP publications and the absence of elections, leads to unhealthy speculation in the community, the trustees were informed. Though trustee Jamsheed Kanga countered, "Is there enough material to justify frequent meetings?" chairman Dr Aspi Golwalla noted that the board would consider *Parsiana's* suggestion to hold at least one general press conference, annually.

An aggravating factor is the suspension of the BPP's own newsletter since end 1987. The *BPP Quarterly Review* was expected to be replaced with a bimonthly newsletter in April 1988. *The Quarterly*, explained BPP chief executive Rustom Anklesaria, was considered to be "too prosaic." The four to six-page bimonthly will be published in April/May, assured Anklesaria and distributed to all 19,000 Parsis on the BPP's primary

election register. (The publication is yet to make its debut as this issue of *Parsiana* goes to press.)

Parsiana was concerned about reports that not all trustees attend meetings regularly, Dr (Ms) Mehroo Bengalee being particularly remiss because of her work pressure as vice-chancellor of Bombay University. She was not present for the trustees' meeting with *Parsiana* and has not attended any Federation meetings to date. Readers had even charged *Parsiana* and the Parsi Press in general with a "conspiracy of silence," on the reported absenteeism of the trustees, especially Bengalee, from the board meetings. While the Punchayet said they would not reveal records of individual attendance, they would provide *Parsiana* with the general data which formerly used to appear in the *BPP Quarterly Review*. The general data later revealed that there were only two meetings, of 26 in the whole year (April '89-March '90), when all seven trustees were present. At the time of their election each trustee had assured the Press of his/her willingness and ability to devote time to Punchayet work. Bengalee had stated, however, in an interview with *Parsiana* on October 18, 1986 (prior to becoming a trustee) that she did not feel "the need to attend all the board meetings" though she would put in "even more than 10 to 12 hours a week (on Punchayet work)." The records reveal the following picture: On five occasions there were only four trustees present; another eight meetings proceeded with five trustees attending.

There were 11 meetings when six trustees attended. This attendance record acquires greater relevance in terms of the prevailing Panchayet policy according to which all seven trustees regulate the allotment of flats.

Work on the Godrej Baug Agiary has been hampered by shortage of funds. Planned to accommodate two sacred fires and a hall, as noted Golwalla, the structure envisaged an outlay of 40 to 50

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were present**

lakh rupees, informed Kanga as versus 10 or 11 lakh rupees that the Doongaji clan may contribute in toto. So far five lakh rupees had been received, informed Golwalla. Hence the structure may rise in phases, initially being sufficient to house but a single sacred fire, as noted Kanga.

It may not be possible to successfully bore a well in the Agiary precincts due to the rocky nature of the terrain but only certain ceremonies like the vendidad and the ijashne require a well, assured Golwalla, quoting high priest Dastur (Dr) Hormazdyar Mirza of Udwarda. On the positive side, the Gujarat charity commissioner had granted permission for the shifting of the Doongaji Agiary fire from Bharuch. The sacred fire will initially be housed in the BPP's Godavara Agiary before being enthroned at Godrej Baug, informed Anklesaria.

The BPP, by a majority decision of four trustees to three, is seeking the intercession of the High Court to iron out the final wrinkle in its election scheme. This revolves round the right of donors, who contributed Rs 7,500 to BPP funds, to qualify on the donor register, explained Anklesaria. According to Justice H. Suresh's judgment of 1987, the minimum donation qualifying for membership of the donor register was raised from Rs 5,000 to Rs 7,500. This level having been subsequently raised to an agreed Rs 15,000, there were questions regarding the fate of the donors of Rs 7,500 — whether they should be considered on par with other donors or be asked to contri-

bute an additional Rs 7,500 to gain donor registration. Ex judge D. M. Rege of the Bombay High Court had opined, on consultation, that the Rs 15,000 rule would apply only to prospective donors and that those who had paid Rs 7,500, when that was the legally qualifying donation, should be considered as donor members of the BPP.

Housing continues as the BPP's number one bugbear. To meet the challenge of a dwindling population, the trustees say they have revised their merit rating scheme for flats so that 45 percent of all housing is earmarked for couples with wives within the childbearing age. Another 15 percent is reserved for any category with an annual family income of less than Rs 18,000.

The scheme has been under fire in the Press, especially when noted solicitor Rustomji Gagrati berated the Panchayet, holding up a particular case as an example. Gagrati had claimed that an applicant of long standing had found that according to the revised ratings he was disqualified because his income level was substantially higher than when he had first applied. Gagrati had claimed that the party was being victimized.

The BPP trustees were resolved that current levels of income mattered — not the level that prevailed when the application was made, perhaps seven or eight years ago. Asked Kanga pointedly, "Suppose (chairman of the State Bank of India Maneck) Goiporia had applied when he first joined the bank. Can he now be considered on those terms?" He reiterated that Godrej Baug land was released by the government for the use of the community's weaker sections (officially defined as an annual family income of less than Rs 18,000) and there should be no grounds for the government to feel that the community was misusing it. "Among Parsis, if someone makes a recommendation and we don't accept it, they take it personally... The merit of the system is that we display the ratings of the applicants on the notice boards. If anyone protests, we are willing to review it." Anklesaria noted that each case is being reviewed in light of the new norms but "no system can be 100 percent foolproof." Now all seven trustees decide on flat allocations by consensus in contrast to the earlier system where only one or two trustees were in charge, said Golwalla. The trustees were also discussing with software companies how best to com-

puterize the data on housing, informed the trustees.

Recounting the followup on the 5WZC, Congress chairman and BPP trustee Jamshed Guzder spoke of the proposed creation of the Interregional Zoroastrian Congress Council of 20 nominated members representing their respective regions. It was felt that such a body would enable the community from all parts of the world to coordinate various projects. There was a call for a central secretariat with costs to be shared by the regional bodies. The Iranian delegation had already given Rs 50,000 towards the project, said Guzder. The Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America (FEZANA) had also proposed a meeting in September/October 1990 to specifically address the question of forming a world body.

In terms of population projections presented at the 5WZC, apart from the earlier mentioned hike in housing reservation for couples in the reproductive age-group, Kanga said, "the area in which we shall be required to move (will be) to provide for old people's homes." BPP trustees Eruch Desai and Minoo Shroff were of the opinion that the small family norm, coupled with education and a high standard of living was a socioeconomic phenomenon which may be irreversible. On the other hand in light of the declining population, would we need more housing? Though 65 percent of Zoroastrians in Bombay already reside in community houses, "we can't plan on

**"Among Parsis, if
someone makes a
recommendation
and we don't accept
it, they take it
personally"**

the situation that 10 to 15 years hence there may be no need for flats," says Kanga. "Only a major cataclysm will create such a situation," seconds BPP trustee Homi Ranina.

The Panchayet was represented by trustees Dr Aspi Golwalla, Eruch Desai, Jamshed Kanga, Homi Ranina, Jamshed Guzder and Minoo Shroff, chief executive Rustom Anklesaria, joint secretaries Hormusji Kapadia and Ms Gool Tata and PRO Eruch Sethna.

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Tucked away in a narrow alley, miraculously untouched by the thronging crowds in the heart of Bombay's busiest commercial center, stands the Banaji Limji Agiary. The high compound walls of the Agiary are unmistakable as one branches off the Dadabhoy Naoroji Road at Flora Fountain and plunges into an undistinguished lane named after Banaji — the merchant prince and founder of the Agiary. The simple facade is unimposing, and bereft of pretensions but is said to enshrine the oldest sacred fire in Bombay.

The government is said to have recognized the institution as a historical monument of national importance, according to an unnamed press clipping reproduced by the *Calcutta Gavashni* (June-July 1989). The recognition, placing the Agiary on equal footing with the Prince of Wales Museum and the Victoria Terminus, is said to have been recorded in the relevant gazette but the trustees say they have not received any official intimation from the government.

The entire Agiary exudes an old-world charm combined with a tranquil and spiritual atmosphere. In the afternoons, save for the occasional chirping of birds and bleating of goats, one is engulfed in pin-drop silence.

According to Ervad Godrej Panthaky who has been associated with the Agiary since 1965 and has taken over as panthaky since 1984, the Agiary is quite self-sufficient. The funds are adequate and devotees keep donating. Very often on the occasion of a navjote or a wedding, donors contribute about 30-100 kgs of kathi. The staff too, according to the panthaky, is cooperative, peaceful and happy. While the corpus of the *nibhav* (maintenance) fund (as on March 31, 1989) was in the neighborhood of Rs 3,42,000 that of the gambhar fund was Rs 8,72,781.

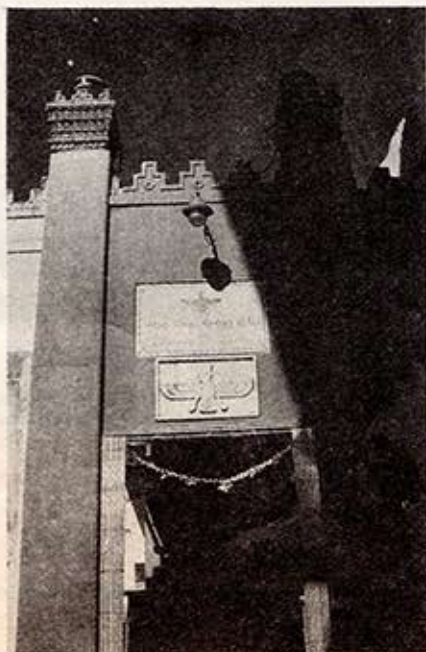
Over the years Panthaky has observed a certain fixed set of regular (almost daily) worshippers. The mornings usually attract about 30 devotees followed by 18 to 20 in the afternoons and 8 to 10 in the evenings. Most of them throng in from neighboring banks, and other commercial establishments. Between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. there are usually no visitors.

Muktads at the Agiary are observed for both 10 and 18 days with about 83 tables (79 separate family tables and four

BANAJI LIMJI AGIARY OLD WORLD CHARM

Noshir Dadrawala

The 145-year-old Agiary in Fort, Bombay, is said to enshrine the oldest consecrated fire in the city



of the anjuman) laid out. Ninety-nine percent of the devotees are office goers and this is amply borne out by the fact that on Sundays and bank holidays, even if it be New Year or Khordadsal, very few devotees turn up in the morning and the number is almost reduced to zero by afternoon and evening. While on ordinary days about 10-12 afringan ceremonies and six to seven frokshis are performed, on Fravardin roj, the number shoots up to 30 afringans and 25 frokshis, followed by 45 afringans and seven to eight frokshis on Behram roj.

The trustees, according to Panthaky, are very orthodox and will not permit any repairs except at the hands of a Parsi. Of the five trustees, three belong to the Banaji family: Dadi Banaji, an architect by profession, Burjor Banaji, the advertising manager of *The Bombay Sama-*



char, and his son Adi Banaji. In addition there are Bachamai Rustomji Wadia and Nani Daruwala of Ratan Mama and Company, chartered accountants. The running of the Agiary is smooth and apparently there are no rumblings. Dastur Meherji Meherjirana of Navsari and Rustom Patel are also associated with the Agiary, in that they are trustees of the Nanabhoy Banaji Yeshni and Gambhar Fund.

According to Dadi and Burjor Banaji, whom we met and interviewed at the former's plush office at Ali Chambers, the Agiary does not face any major administrative problems. The younger Dadi is keen to induct young, motivated Parsis and allow them to shoulder the responsibility of managing the institution. "We are all pressed for time," he bemoaned. "If young professionals can find the time and have the inclination, they should be given an opportunity." The more senior Burjor is cautious and pointed out a provision in the trust deed whereby only members of the Banaji family can become trustees.

Both Dadi and Burjor eulogized the services of former panthaky Framroz Panthaky who served the Agiary between 1944 and 1984. "He was a thorough professional in ceremonial work and brought glory to the Agiary," noted Dadi.

While Burjor's experience with the Agiary spans over a period of four decades that of Dadi's spans over one. Burjor looks after the religious department and Dadi, the legal, financial and administrative side of management.

Panthaky, a qualified lawyer having worked for Watcha and Company, Solicitors for 25 years, is assisted by six other full-time and seven part-time

mobeds. The seniormost, Maneck Jijina has served the Agiary for 40 years. The other mobeds include Rustom Sahiyar, Rusi Kanga, Tehmuras Panthaky, Soli Hozdar and Homiyar Karanjia.

The part-time mobeds include Farokh Balsara who is presently reading for his MCom, Cowas Gowadia who has retired from Hong Kong Bank, Ramiyar Gowadia a watch repairer, Ervad Desai who has retired from an insurance company, Dadi Pavri who serves in the Central Bank, Zarir Panthaky who is working with Nowrosjee Wadia and Sons and Mahiyar Panthaky who is serving in the New India Assurance Company.

The total number of chasniwalas is six with two of them engaged for kitchen work.

The full-time mobeds earn about Rs 1,000 per month with an additional income of about Rs 200. The part-time mobeds earn about Rs 650 to Rs 700 per month. The remaining employees earn about Rs 300 per month. All of them, including the panthaky, sleep on the wooden benches of the Agiary between ceremonies, when their presence is required in the Agiary.

"The Agiary does not have adequate space" bemoans Panthaky. "We have no quarters for the mobeds and except for the four goats in the compound, we cannot even keep a *varasyaji* (sacred white bull). Whenever the need arises, we bring the *varasyaji* from Nargol. Last year the *varasyaji* was here from January to May. If only we had the space," continued Panthaky, "we could maintain (one) on a permanent basis. There are plenty of volunteers willing to take care (of the animal) and there would be no end to the number of devotees who would love to provide for his food requirements." The goats, looking the very picture of good health, are often loaned to the neighboring Dadiseth Agiary for ceremonial purposes, he informs.

Again, for reasons of inadequate space, no lecture programs are held in the Agiary. The last lecture, recalled Panthaky, was given by the late Dastur Navrooz Minochehr-Homji some 10 to 12 years ago. However, according to a booklet published by the trustees of the Agiary in 1959 when the adarian completed 250 years, a large number of lec-



Far left: Main entrance to the Agiary
Left: Welter of furniture on the enclosed porch
Above left: Dadgah fire in the Urwisgah
Top: Ornamental, stained-glass fravashi
Photos: Yasmin Poonegar

tures on Ilm-e-Khshnoom were held in the Agiari premises during the time of Ervad Phiroze Masani and Jehangir Chiniwalla.

There is little information available regarding the early history of the Banaji Agiary, popularly known as the Kote ni Agiary or the Fort Agiary. However, we learn from the booklet that the Agiary was first consecrated on *roj Adar, mah Adar* 1078 Y.Z. i.e. June 25, 1709.

Soon after the Portuguese relinquished Bombay to the British in 1661, Surat lost its premiership and the Parsis migrated to the new sea port in large numbers. There is evidence that the Parsis had settled in Bombay even during the Portuguese period. Records indicate a reference to Dorabji Nanabhoy, a trader and agent of Bombay in the year 1640.

According to the *Gazetteer of Bombay City and Island* (Vol I, page 156) the total number of individuals inhabiting the island of Bombay in 1780 was 33,444. The Parsis numbered 3,087. By 1812 the number of Parsis quadrupled to 13,156.

The Agiary's founder, Banaji Limji (1654-1734), was the son of Limji Rustomji Aspandiyarji Asaji who, according to the *Parsi Prakash* (Vol 1, page 844-845) was an *akabar* (leader) of the Parsi

community in Surat. A man of adventurous spirit, Banaji left his native place, Bhagwa-Dandi in Surat district, and along with his younger brother Navroji Limji came to Bombay in the year 1690. As a businessman he flourished and, while the Parsi Punchayet in Bombay was still in its formative stage, he rose to the status of

"We have no
quarters for the
mobeds...we
cannot even keep
a *varasyaji*"

Davar (dispenser of justice). The first *Davar* amongst the Parsis in India had been Behdin Changasha bin Asha (1425-1520) of Navsari.

Banaji Limji died at the ripe old age of 80 (*roj Behram, mah Dae* 1103 Y.Z. i.e. July 30, 1734) having lived just long enough to celebrate the Agiary's silver jubilee. After Banaji's demise his eldest son Behramji (1681-1753) ascended the seat of *Davar*. However, on account of frequent absence from the country on

long and arduous voyages, he relinquished his seat in favor of his brother, Maneckji. After Maneckji's death in 1775 his son Cooverji (1725-1815) and grandson Dossabhai (1763-1835) managed the affairs of the Agiary. During Dossabhai's tenure as administrator, the Agiary reached the pinnacle of its glory. It gave the community some of the most learned and capable *yozdathregars* (full-fledged priests). Dasturji Jamshedji Edulji Bahmanji Jamaspasa (1788-1847) was the head priest of the Agiary and under him the Agiary almost became a *madressa* (seminary). Requests poured in from all over the country to depute pucca *yozdathregars* for consecrating fire-temple and dokhmas in places outside Bombay. In 1824 Sardar Bahadur Sorabji Ratanji Patel of Poona invited Jamaspji Edulji Bahmanji Jamaspasa of the Banaji Agiary, with the permission of the Parsi Punchayet, to consecrate an agiary and dokhma in Poona. He was later appointed head priest of Poona.

After Dossabhai's death, Hormusji Ratanji Maneckji Banaji (1784-1865) took charge. Under his leadership the cause of providing a new building to house the holy fire was espoused. We learn from the little booklet brought out

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by the trustees in 1959 that the great fire of 1803 had caused much damage to the Agiary and destroyed several important records of the Banaji family and the Agiary. The holy fire was temporarily shifted to the Bai Soonaiji Hirji Jivanji Readymoney Fire-temple at Gowalia Tank and funds for the Agiary were raised by contributions within the com-

Requests poured in to depute yozdathregars for consecrating fire-temples and dokhmas

munity and from members of the Banaji family. Approximately Rs 23,000 were collected. Among the list of contributors one finds the names of Framji Kavasji Behramji Banaji and Khurshedji Kavasji Banaji who contributed Rs 5,000 each;

Seth Rustomji Kavasji Banaji and Seth Dadabhai Rustomji Banaji who jointly contributed Rs 5,000; Maneckji Limji Kavasji Banaji and Seth Dinshaw Nanabhai Framji Davar (grandfather of Justice Sir Dinshaw Davar) who gave Rs 2,500 each; and Hormusji Ratanji Maneckji Banaji and Framji Nusserwanji Patel who contributed Rs 1,500 each.

But there were poorer sections of the community whose impoverished circumstances did not permit any substantial contributions in the form of money. Undaunted, they subscribed their mite in a novel manner by throwing into the foundation innumerable eggs and several hundreds of mugs of toddy. This was churned along with other construction material as an act of faith, to strengthen the foundation. The building was completed — it is the same one that stands there today — and was inaugurated on April 15, 1845 (*roj Behram, mah Meher* 1214 Y.Z.). Great festivity marked the day and the Banaji family was profusely thanked and feted. Seth Framji Kavasji Banaji (1768-1851), the patriarch of the

family, presented Hormusji Banaji with a rich shawl before the members of the Parsi anjuman.

According to Burjor Banaji the area surrounding and belonging to the Agiary at that time was vast. It stretched right up to what is today the end of Cowasji Patel Street. The sea was also just round the corner.

Even after construction, on which no pains or expenses were spared, there was a surplus of Rs 11,034 out of Rs 23,000 collected. This princely sum -- in those days it certainly must have been a treasure -- was deposited with the firm of Framji Kavasji Banaji. When Framji died in 1851, his widow Bachubai called a meeting of eminent Parsis and requested them to take charge of the money left in the name of the Agiary by her late husband who had been its sole custodian. It was then that the idea of forming a trust was mooted. The trust was eventually formed in 1901 and named Banaji Limji Agiary Fund. The Nanabhoy Banaji Yajeshni and Gambhar Trust Fund was endowed in 1875 for various religious and ceremonial purposes. Banaji Mansion, situated just opposite the Agiary, was donated by Sir D. M. Petit, first baronet, much later.

The bi-centenary of the Adarian was celebrated in 1909 with much gusto and Cooverji Nanabhoy Dhunjibhoy Banaji spent a lot of money repairing the existing structure. The credit for installing electric fittings including lights and fans at a cost of Rs 1,200 in 1930 goes to Seth Hormusji Nanabhoy Dhunjibhoy Banaji. The building is still fairly strong.

According to Burjor the holy fire was shifted once before 1900 — to the Langrana Agiary in order to facilitate repairs. "The time to repair the roof has come near and we might take the work in hand (in) 1990," noted Burjor. The fire will not have to be shifted.

As we walk out of the Agiary, we feel a strange force — like having our spiritual batteries recharged at the altar of Ahura Mazda. Next to the well two Parsis were performing the *kusti* (holy ablution) and while we bowed for the last time near the main gate, we eyed a non-Zoroastrian bowing his head in reverence. We were informed that this was not a solitary case. Like the regular set of Parsi devotees, there is an equally large set of non-Parsi devotees who bow their heads in prayer (some even seek boons and request Parsi friends to offer sandalwood) and offer their obeisance outside the high walls of the Agiary.

Hormusji is endowed with a strong zest for life. Yet, something has sapped his *joie de vivre*. What was this unspoken thing, often tangentially touched upon by him and his wife Piroja, but never openly discussed?

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Manekji Limji Hataria: Redeeming a community

Arnavaz S. Mama

Hataria injected the Iranian Zoroastrians with a new elan with which they seized the opportunities of the twentieth century

"*Hamé Irani chhaiyé. Manekji sahib ni mudud* (We are Iranis. Respected Manekji's help)..." Overcome by emotion, unable to continue coherently, the two elderly Iranis withdraw from the mike to quietly distribute 100 rupee notes as ashodad to each of the nearly 60 mobeds who joined Dastur (Dr) Firoze Kotwal, High Priest of the H. B. Wadia Atas Bahram, to perform a memorial jashan on the centenary of Manekji Limji Hataria's death under the aegis of 13 Zoroastrian institutions including the Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP), the Iran League and the Athornan Mandal. Dressed like an oriental potentate, armed like a brigand, the man who devoted nearly 35 years of his life to alleviate the wretchedness of his fellow Zoroastrians in Iran, looked through his portrait upon the gathering in the Atash Bahram's main hall with stern benevolence.

In an enlightening address in Gujarat after the jashan, Kotwal sought to place Hataria's achievements in the perspective of the misery of Iranian Zoroastrians who were then not accepted as "people of the Book;" contemptuously known as "guebers," they were systematically decimated, the Muslim laws of inheritance favoring the Islamic converts of Zoroastrian families; Zoroastrian books were periodically burnt and they were refused permission to renovate or restore agiaries or dokhmas; beautiful Zoroastrian girls were abducted... (see "A Story of Triumph," *Parsiana*, March 1990, page 43). The Zoroastrians' lowliness was embodied in their houses, the top

being necessarily within the reach of a Mussalman's outstretched arm, as wrote Napier Malcolm in *Five Years in a Persian Town*. Double doors and upper storeys were prohibited and only three windows were allowed, noted Malcolm, adding that they could build below road level, if they so wished! Crowning the public and private humiliations of their daily life was the hateful Jazia tax annually extorted from a people who could barely keep body and soul together. Bad as the situation was in normal times, that is when there was a strong ruler in Tehran, conditions deteriorated even further during the turmoils of the interregnums when mob rule and banditry prevailed.

Contact with the Zoroastrians of India had been fitful. The *Rivayats* attest to the written exchanges between the Parsis of Gujarat and the dasturs of Persia but the flourishing sea trade between Gujarat and the Persian Gulf notwithstanding, there is little record of secular contact between the two communities before the nineteenth century, writes Dr (Ms) Mary Boyce in a monograph on Hataria in the *K. R. Cama Oriental Institute Golden Jubilee Volume* published in 1969. Extreme provocation led particular individuals to resort to flight. Obviously, only the successful ones lived to tell the tale. Among them were Firoze and her sister who were entrusted to a German traveller by their parents who had been forcibly converted to Islam, Boyce quotes Hataria's manuscript in a footnote. Brought to Bombay, Firoze was

sheltered by Bhikhaji Behramji Panday, a respectable Parsi shopkeeper and married to Rustamji Dorabji Patel who carved his name into history by holding the island of Bombay for the British against Koli attacks in 1692.

The next celebrated arrival in Bombay was that of the beautiful Gulistan Banu. Fearing her abduction by the rich Muslim trader who desired her, Gulistan's father Kai Khosru-i-Yazdyar smuggled her to Bombay where father and daughter were befriended by the benevolent family of Edulji Dorabji Lashkari. Gulistan Velatan (Gulistan the foreigner) eventually married Framji Bhikhaji Panday and became "a well-loved member of the Bombay community, being as good as she was beautiful," writes Boyce. She inspired her husband to aid "'with body, mind and money' those Iranians who reached Bombay, and it is said that he earned the right to be called 'the father of the Irani Parsis,'" notes Boyce, quoting Hataria. The resourceful father, helped by his Indian hosts, made three trips to Iran to retrieve his entire family.

The fervor spread to Gulistan's sons: Burjorji, the eldest, started a fund to help the incoming fugitives. Twenty years later Meherwanji began a second fund to aid Iranian Zoroastrians in their own land and founded, along with others, the Society for the Amelioration of Conditions of the Zoroastrians in Persia which came to be known as the Amelioration Society. It was as an emissary of this Society that Hataria was despatched on March 31,



1854 with "explicit instructions to inquire into and report upon the social, political and intellectual conditions of the Zoroastrians in Persia," informs D. F. Karaka in his *History of the Parsis*.

The 41-year-old Hataria had been selected for the task as he had been functioning as a commercial agent for Jehangirji Nusserwanji (Jussawalla) Company in India over the past many years, his work requiring him to travel to Sind and other places. Why Hataria chose to leave Jehangirji Nusserwanji and opt to go to Iran is not known. Having earned his own livelihood since the age of 15, he was experienced, self-reliant and resourceful. His compact, sturdy physique was built to endure the prevalent rigors of life and travel. Such were his innate characteristics of honesty, adaptability, tact and patience in negotiation, and physical and moral courage which sustained him through the gruelling years, that by 1864, i.e. 10 years after his first advent thither, he could report that the Muslims of Tehran had abandoned their contempt for the non-Muslim and extended to him "kindness and love."

Concerned with the spiritual and physical welfare of the Zoroastrian community, one of the first tasks he accomplished was the repair and enlargement of the ancient Atash Bahram in Yazd — in the teeth of traditional Muslim opposition — within a year of his landing there, informs Boyce. By 1857 the Atash Bahram of Kerman had been rebuilt through Hataria's management and "the charitable gift of those endowed with liberality, the community of the Zoroastrians of India," Boyce quotes the inscription there. The village adarans of Qanat-ghesan near Kerman and Khorramshah near Yazd were similarly repaired. By 1864 he had new dokhmas erected at Yazd and Kerman, at Sahrifabad-i Ardekan-i Yazd and at Qanat-ghesan. These dokhmas replaced older ones and were a part of Hataria's work of preserving and restoring tradition, writes Boyce.

Much of this work was financed by the

Top: Iranian Zoroastrian family (circa 1904), contemptuously known as "guebbers" Photo: A.V.H. Jackson's Persia Past and Present

Below (from left): Davar, Ervad Fali Master of the Iran League and Kotwal at the commemoration Photo: Russy Davar



The Zoroastrian school in Tehran founded by Hataria and (below) its students circa 1904 Photos: A.V.H. Jackson's Persia Past and Present



Persian Amelioration Fund that was spontaneously established at the public meeting chaired by Sir Dinshaw Petit, first baronet, in 1855 when Hataria's report on the misery he witnessed around him was communicated to the Bombay community.

While these concrete manifestations of Hataria's presence sustained the morale of the local Zoroastrians, Hataria explored every avenue to reach the center of power in his determination to relieve the Zoroastrians from the bondage of the Jazia. Originally conceived as an equitable tax on non-Muslims who were exempt from military service, "in the hands of unscrupulous tax-farmers it became a harsh tool for exaction, brutality and forced conversion," says Boyce. In his diplomatic campaign Hataria conscripted the British Ambassador Sir Henry Rawlinson, the French Ambassador Comte A. de Gobineau (there is a letter from the BPP among Gobineau's papers at Strassbourg University, thanking him for his

help in the success of the mission) and a host of others including the stalwart Dadabhoi Naoroji, then a member of the British House of Commons. Petitions were forwarded to Shah Naseruddin Qajar from Bombay, London and other European capitals. Within two years of landing in Iran, Hataria had obtained an audience with the Shah who marginally reduced the total tax on the community, in deference to Hataria's persuasive rendition of the Zoroastrian cause. However, it took 25 years of sustained pressure for the tax to be abolished by Naseruddin's royal firman dated August 1882 which notes in part:

"Therefore, from beginning of the present auspicious year of the horse, we remit this sum (845 tomans) and absolve the Zoroastrians from its payment henceforward and forever... The present and future Governors of these provinces (of Yazd and Kerman) are to consider the claim for the payment of this tribute as now surrendered forever; and during the

present year and hereafter, should this sum or a part thereof be exacted, they will be held responsible and punished; and, in levying the tithes and assessments on water and landed property, all the trading dues etc the Zoroastrians must be dealt with in the same manner as our other subjects are treated."

"Although many persons, ambassadors, statesmen, merchants, scholars and philanthropists contributed to achieving this triumph, the Persian Zoroastrians firmly give the whole credit to Manekji," writes Boyce. During these years, until the Jazia was repealed, the Persian Amelioration Fund contributed Rs 1,09,564 towards the payment of the tax on behalf of downtrodden Zoroastrians.

Gobineau, in his *Trois Ans en Asie*, described Hataria as "a learned Parsi from Bombay" who had accomplished the task entrusted to him in Persia "with a

Some Parsis had urged Hataria to bring all surviving Zoroastrians to India

zeal and intelligence which do honor in the highest degree to himself and to his people with him." US ambassador S. G. W. Benjamin in his book *Persia and the Persians*, wrote, "The head of the Guebres in Persia is a very respectable old gentleman named Manookjee; he resides at Tehran and is in frequent communication with the Parsis of Bombay by whom it is said he is delegated to look after Guebre interests in Persia.. As an English subject he is free from annoyance and doubtless able to be of efficient service to his coreligionists."

That Hataria was a great man of action, there can be no doubt. But an equal or greater quality was his perceptiveness. He instinctively discerned the areas where his help would be most effective. "Education had been forbidden to Zoroastrians and most of the laity were, of necessity, illiterate," writes Boyce. In the teeth of general resentment and active opposition from orthodox Muslims, Hataria established schools for boys in

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Yazd and Kerman by 1857 — barely three years after his arrival. Enlisting support in Persia and India, he had established a boarding school in Tehran and, by 1882, there were 12 Zoroastrian schools in Iran. The first teachers in Tehran were Parsis from India, offering secular education in reading, writing and arithmetic. About the same time foreign missionaries had established one or two schools in Tehran which were attended by Muslim boys, informs Boyce. "But in the main, thanks to Manekji's wisdom and Parsi philanthropy, the Zoroastrians of Persia received a modern education before the Muslims, and it is largely due to this... that they made such swift progress in attaining position and wealth" when restrictions progressively lightened. By the first decade of the twentieth century, Zoroastrian men were almost universally literate, notes Boyce.

Hataria built a dharamshala in Tehran and his own presence there contributed to greater tolerance for Zoroastrians, leading to increased migration from the villages of Yazd and Kerman to the capital and to Bombay where they found freedom of worship and work, personal dignity and opportunities for education and advancement, writes Boyce. Indeed, some Parsis had urged Hataria to bring all surviving Zoroastrians to India "but Hataria recognized the Iranians' love for their country and their unwillingness to leave it, apart from the practical hurdles such an operation would entail.

Among Hataria's other achievements, was his personal involvement in the marriage and settlement of 100 poorer Zoroastrian girls, the reintroduction of the practice of ghambars and jashans, as notes his obituary in *Parsi Prakash*. When he returned for a brief 18 months after the first 10 years of his work in Iran, the Amelioration Society presented him with a purse of Rs 20,185 and a *manpatra* (scroll of honor) on behalf of the entire Parsi community, notes *Parsi Prakash*. He returned to Iran on August 3, 1865 where he is said to have held a position of honor in the Iranian court and carried on substantial trade. His talks in Bombay, based on his observations in Iran were published as a Gujarati book titled *Rishalé Ej Har Shiyaté Iran* in 1865.

British scholar E. G. Browne, in his *A Year Amongst The Persians*, has a humorous description of Hataria's initial arrival in 1854, and his mixed feelings for the Iranian traveller who befriended him.

The equivocation was aggravated by the ill-effects of Hataria's first Iranian meal — a mixture of curds and cucumber which, according to Browne, reacts unpleasantly if chased down with water. The thirsty Hataria did just that and almost convinced himself that his erstwhile friend had plotted to poison him!

More importantly, Browne refers to Hataria's interest in Bahaism: "The marked predilection towards the Babis (as the Bahais were then also known) displayed by Manekji, the late Zoroastrian agent in Tehran at whose instigation the *Tarikh-i-Jadid* or 'New History' of the Bab's 'Manifestations' was written, must

Firoze and her sister were entrusted to a German traveller by their forcibly converted parents

also have reacted powerfully on his Zoroastrian brethren." But Boyce refuses to believe "that Manekji ever wished to encourage an interest in Bahaism to the point of apostasies among his own community;... his predilection was presumably a manifestation of his natural intellectual curiosity, combined with a general interest in religion proper to one born and bred in India."

Despite his many achievements, Hataria was frustrated in his attempts to seek justice against those who assaulted Zoroastrians and had to parry several murderous attempts on his own life. As M. M. Murzban in *The Parsis in India* quotes Napier Malcolm: "Even after the Jazia was withdrawn, the law of inheritance (according to which an Islamic convert of a Zoroastrian family could claim the inheritance in precedence over other, natural successors) was not altered. Restrictions regarding dress and houses were remitted, but the rest of the firman remained a dead letter." Malcolm writes how Hataria successfully persuaded the Governor of Yazd to allow him to take to Tehran two ruffians who had killed one Zoroastrian and brutally assaulted another. In the capital the criminals were let off with just a few lashes. Islamic law did not consider the killing of an 'infidel' a major offence! Wrote Malcolm, "The great difficulty was not to get the law improved, but rather to

get it enforced." "There was no security in Iran for any Zoroastrian before Manekji's advent, and indeed, despite all his toil, security remained precarious until the era of the Pahlavi dynasty which came to power in 1925," notes Boyce.

Hataria's great great grandson Tehmtan Davar, executive manager of the New India Assurance Company, traces their family tree: Hataria had an only son Hormusji who had two daughters, by his wife Gulbai: Hirabai and Silla. While Silla never married, Hirabai's union with Navroji Fardunji Davar fructified in three sons — Maneckji, Hormusji and Framroze. Tehmtan Davar, Maneckji's third son, says that despite several attempts on his life, Arbab Manekji or Sant Mussafir as he was then affectionately known in Iran, survived to the age of 77. During his last days his son Hormusji was sent for. However, Hormusji landed in Bunder Abbas to get the news that his father had died in Tehran. Hormusji himself was murdered in Bunder Abbas, says Davar. Hataria's manuscripts and papers, originally sent to the Anjuman Atash Bahram in Bombay, now rest in the library of the K. R. Cama Oriental Institute, informs the Atash Bahram's High Priest, Dastur (Dr) Kaikhusroo JamaspAsa.

Referring to Hataria as "Savior of Iran," Meheraban Zartoshty, together with his brother Faridoon -- Iranian philanthropists who have contributed substantially to community causes all over the world -- has endowed a section of the research library at the Zoroastrian College premises in Sanjan, in Hataria's memory. The information regarding the Zartoshtys' donation of Rs 55,000 was issued in a press release by Ms Meher Master-Moos, president of Mazdayasnie Monasterie and the All India Shah Behram Baug Society, sponsors of the College.

"There is only one piece of modern Zoroastrian sculpture in Iran, and that is a fine bust of Manekji Limji Hataria set on a pedestal outside the Atash Bahram of Yazd," concludes Boyce. "(It) catches well his air of benevolent but sturdy intrepidity. Behind it is the stately brick building of the new fire-temple, set high in a garden. In front of it, across a broad metalled road, are the spacious modern houses of wealthy Zoroastrians. The scene would be wholly strange to Manekji, but with its air of tranquil security, very pleasing; a testimony in itself to the effectiveness of his life's work."

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The Privy Council Judgment: SAKLAT vs BELLA - 2

On Navroze, 75 years ago, Bella first stepped into the fire-temple at Rangoon, thereby triggering off a historic legal battle

Bella was the orphan daughter of a Goanese Christian father and a Parsi mother who was brought up in a Zoroastrian household of Rangoon from early infancy. After her navjote had been performed Bella was taken by her adoptive father, Shapurji Cowasji, to the Rangoon agiary 75 years ago on March 21, 1915. On March 31, three members of the Parsi community of Rangoon filed a suit against Bella and Shapurji Cowasji claiming that they had "not only wounded the religious feelings entertained by religiously inclined Parsis, but also caused the desecration of the said sacred temple," and praying for a declaration from the court restraining Bella from the use of the fire-temple and

Shapurji from taking her there.

Justice Young, who gave the preliminary judgment, dismissed the suit. The Chief Court of Lower Burma, on appeal, concurred with Young. The plaintiffs then appealed to the Privy Council where Lord Phillimore, Lord Blanesburgh and Sir John Edge heard the case, and upheld the appeal, namely that Bella "was not entitled as of right, to use the temple, or to attend or to participate in any of the religious ceremonies performed therein."

But the judges also noted that while the trustees "can treat her (Bella) as a trespasser...it does not follow that they are bound so to treat her." Thus the right of admission to converts could be decided by the trustees of the fire-temple.

(This presumes that the trust deed does not specify that only Parsi Zoroastrians can avail of the benefits. Where this clause exists, the trustees would have to approach a court of law to modify the trust deed. This could lead to litigation if those opposed to the change file their objection with the court.)

In order to acquaint the community with this, the second most historic judgment after the Parsi Punchayet Case, Parsiana publishes the second and final instalment of the Privy Council judgment as delivered by Lord Phillimore.

The first episode dwelt on Bella's background and her admission into the Zoroastrian faith, as also the nature and scope of a temple trust.

The origin of the temple, the right to worship at which is in dispute in the present case, is as follows: On November 24, 1868, the deputy commissioner at Rangoon, on behalf of Her Majesty's Government, granted to Bejunji Cowasji and Shapurji Hirji a parcel of land in the town of Rangoon of a certain size "upon trust to build and maintain upon the said parcel of land a temple for the use of Parsi population."

It was provided that the deputy commissioner might nominate new trustees, and that if a temple was not erected within a year, he might revoke the grant.

On August 14, 1882 — probably because there had been delay in building the temple — a re-grant was made to new trustees upon trust for the same intents and purposes as the old grant, with like powers to appoint new trustees and a

similar power of revocation if no temple was built within a year.

Previously on January 11, 1859, the then deputy commissioner had granted to two Parsi gentlemen another piece of land upon trust to maintain it "as a cemetery and to the free use of persons of the Parsi denomination." There was a similar power given to the deputy commissioner to appoint new trustees and a power of revocation in case the land was applied to other uses. This grant was again renewed also on August 14, 1882.

Some disputes having arisen as to the temple, a suit was brought to have a new trustee appointed, and scheme of management framed; and on March 20, 1889, the recorder appointed Bejunji Cowasji sole trustee and ordered a scheme to be framed.

About the same time, a similar suit had

been brought in respect of the burial ground, and by an order of the same date the same person was appointed trustee and a similar order to frame a scheme was made. The scheme in respect of the temple gave the trustee charge of the temple and its appurtenances with duty to manage and improve as funds permitted, and power to build a range of shops on parts of the trust lands, borrowing money for the purpose. After repayment of monies borrowed the rest was to be applied for the current expenses of the fire-temple and the Parsi burial ground. In this way and to this extent the two properties were brought together.

When the scheme for the burial ground was to be framed, there was a serious dispute with regard to children of Parsi fathers who died without having gone through the ceremonies of initiation, and

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eventually the scheme was framed in the following words:

"The burial ground shall be used for burying persons who shall at his or her death be actually professing the Zoroastrian religion and no other. Explanation: No one shall be taken to be actually professing the Zoroastrian religion who has not been duly invested with the sudreh and kusti in accordance with the rites prescribed by that religion, provided, nevertheless, that children born of fathers following the Zoroastrian religion and brought up in that faith and dying before the age of 14 years and three months without having been invested with the sudreh and kusti may be taken to be actually professing the Zoroastrian religion, but children dying after having attained that age without having been invested with the sudreh and kusti shall not be taken to have professed the Zoroastrian religion unless his or her investiture was prevented by unforeseen and unavoidable circumstances."

It is suggested for the defendants that this document shows that the stress of the matter was laid upon the religion and not upon the race.

One other document must be mentioned. Apparently it took a long time before the temple or at any rate the present temple was built, and on August 20, 1904, Bejunji Cowasji executed a deed of declaration of trust reciting that he and his brother had built at their charge a fire-temple upon the trust lands so that the same might form part of the said trusts and be for the use of the Parsi inhabitants of Rangoon, and purporting to declare for himself and his successors-in-office that he held the fire-temple "for the use of the Parsi inhabitants of Rangoon free and unrestricted but subject notwithstanding to the tenets of the pure Zoroastrian religion and to the scheme prescribed by the court."

The defendants at their lordships' bar contended that this was an attempt to alter the trust and as such should be rejected, but in their written statement they accepted it as a valid document. So far as it goes, it rather makes in the plaintiffs' favor, but their lordships are not disposed to attach grave importance to it.

The Chief Court — as already stated — considered that the effect of these documents was to impose a trust for the benefit of persons professing the Zoroastrian religion and no others.

Their lordships agree with the latter part of this proposition. Parsis who cease

to be Zoroastrians have, in their lordships' view, no claim. But upon the whole and after much consideration they think that the benefits are confined to persons who possess the double qualification of Zoroastrians and racial Parsis.

The judgment in the Bombay case travelled over much ground — indeed, in their lordships' opinion, much unnecessary ground — but both Judges came to the conclusion that the various trusts in the case must be construed as being confined to persons who were of the Zoroastrian religion and racial Parsis. There were several trusts, and the expressions in the deeds were different; but the word Parsi never appeared in them, and the word Zoroastrian or some equivalent religious word was used. Sometimes the trusts were for the members of the Zoroastrian community of Bombay; other phrases were similar. Nevertheless, both Judges came to the conclusion that they must be read as has been already stated.

Daver J thus expressed himself: "A juddin (that is a gentile) may become a Zoroastrian, but how he ever could possibly become a member of 'the Holy Zoroastrian Anjuman of Bombay' or be one of the members of 'the Zoroastrian Community of Bombay' or become one of 'the Anjuman of the Mazdiasni faith', passes my comprehension. A juddin converted to Zoroastrianism had never come into existence. Such a person could not possibly have been within the contemplation of the donors and founders; the possibility of such a being coming into existence would be so new and novel that if the donor ever conceived

**They can treat her
as a trespasser. But
it does not follow
that they are bound
to so treat her**

such an idea and intended to include him in his benefaction, he would certainly designate him separately and specially, and not include him in the general description of the community of his then existing coreligionists and their descendants."

Beaman J said: "That question is not, whether the Zoroastrian religion permits conversion, but whether, when these

trusts were founded, the founders contemplated and intended that converts should be admitted to participate in them."

In their lordships' view the same line of reasoning applies to the present case. The Parsi community had grown up to be such a distinct body, and admissions into it from outside had been so very rare, that at the time when these grants at Rangoon were made the Government must have intended that the temple should be for the benefit of professing members of the Parsi community i.e. racial Parsis or people deemed after a long lapse of ages to be racial Parsis.

But this does not exhaust the matters to be determined on the present appeal. It determines that the respondent Bella has no right of entering into the temple and may therefore be excluded or extruded from the temple by the trustees. They can treat her as a trespasser. But it does not follow that they are bound to so treat her. Still less does it follow that in an action to which the trustees are not parties, and in which therefore no indirect remedy can be obtained, a direct claim can be supported as if for a tort committed by Bella or her guardian.

When property is set apart for public or charitable uses, it will be a malversation to apply any of the funds for persons who are not objects of the trust. Those who are objects of the trust must have all the benefits they require; and if there is a surplus, it must be left to the courts to make a *cy pres* application of it. But when the subject matter of such a trust or charity is the rendering of some convenience or service of such a nature that it will not hurt the lawful recipients if others share with them, their lordships are aware of no case in which it has been held that the trustees are bound to exclude persons who have no legal title to share. They may do so; they may treat all such persons as trespassers and say: *Sic volo sic jubeo, stet pro ratione voluntas*. Thus I will thus I command, let it stand. But if they choose to admit to the benefit of some park or garden established for a particular district some persons from over the border or to admit to a public library destined for a particular municipality persons from outside, or what is perhaps a nearer analogy, admit to the hearing of a lecture by a university professor persons not members of the university, this of itself furnishes no ground of complaint. If the numbers admitted are too large or the persons are disorderly or unpleasant in their habits or

in any way substantially interfere with the convenience or benefit of those for whom the endowment was created, the trustees may be required to exclude them. But the mere claim of A that B shall not share in such a benefit because B is not within the terms of the foundation is not one that courts would encourage.

Many illustrations of this doctrine could be drawn from the history of English institutions. The great schools of Westminster, Eton and Winchester arose from small nuclei, namely, a fixed number of endowed and privileged scholars taught by appointed masters. They have become what they are because unprivileged boys in greater numbers have been allowed to benefit by the services of the appointed masters, and to use the school classrooms and playgrounds...

The intrusion of an unbeliever into a place of religious worship might well be a case of substantial interference with the devotions of worshippers. But the plaintiffs have failed to make out that Bella was not a Zoroastrian. They suggested indeed that her conversion was impossible, or at any rate that it had not been completed by due initiation, but their lordships agree with the Judge of first instance that this suggestion was not established; while, except in the evidence of one unsatisfactory witness, there was nothing to show that Bella's presence would be thought to cause desecration, if

once it was accepted that she was a Zoroastrian.

Also, if it were a question of caste and worshippers of a higher caste would be defiled by the presence of a lower caste, as in *Anandav Bhikaji Phadke vs Shankar Daji Charya*, this would be a serious disturbance. As was said in that case: "This right is one which the Courts must guard, as otherwise all high-caste Hindus would hold their sanctuaries, and perform their worship, only so far as those of the lower castes chose to allow them."

But this claim is again not established. Indeed, what may be called the quasi-caste claim is not even suggested in the pleadings. It was the wounding of religious feelings and the desecration of the temple which are put forward.

Their lordships have now to consider the relief which the plaintiffs have sought in this suit. They have not sought for a general declaration as to the persons who are objects of the trust. They have not sought for a construction of the scheme, or for any order to be made upon the trustee, nor have they made the trustee a party. For this they would probably have required the consent of the advocate-general. They pray in the plaint "for a declaration that the defendant Bella is not entitled to the use and benefits of the Parsi Fire Temple in Dalhousie Street known as 'Captain's

Agiary or Dhuraymair' or to the use and benefits of the buildings standing on the said trust land or to attend at or participate in any of the religious ceremonies performed therein."

Then they claim an injunction to restrain the defendant Bella from entering and the other defendant, now dead, from bringing her into the temple to attend the religious ceremonies. This is a claim for an injunction to prevent the repetition of an alleged trespass. It must, therefore, first be established that there was a trespass and one for which damages, though possible only nominal, could be recovered. But for trespass upon land the only person to bring the action is the person in possession of the land, that is the trustee. That a beneficiary or two or three beneficiaries of a trust for public purposes may bring a suit for trespass against an intruder is a novel principle of jurisprudence; and the case is not made stronger by the suggestion that several other beneficiaries agree with them.

It may be that in India it would be convenient in some cases to allow such a suit, and the judgment in *Anandav Bhikaji Phadke vs Shankar Daji Charya* may form a precedent. But, if so, the circumstances must be as powerful as in that case. It must be established that the juxtaposition of the two sets of persons is so repugnant to their habits of mind that the entrance of one set into the temple entails the departure of the other, so that it is as if it were trespass to the person.

As already stated no such case has been established, and therefore it is not necessary to discuss the principle on which the judgment in *Anandav Bhikaji Phadke vs Shankar Daji Charya* is founded and which was indeed accepted by the Judge of first instance in the present case. The facts do not warrant the claim, if it be a sound one, and no injunction can be granted.

But, upon the whole, their lordships feel that the plaintiffs have failed in the greater part of their suit, and that the giving to them of a declaration is an indulgence... Their lordships will humbly recommend His Majesty that this appeal be allowed, that the judgment of the Chief Court be varied, and that a declaration be made, namely, that Bella was not entitled as of right, to use the temple, or to attend or to participate in any of the religious ceremonies performed therein...
A. de M. Appeal allowed
Solicitor for appellants: A. M. Bramall.
Solicitors for respondents: Waterhouse & Co.

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EVENTS AND PERSONALITIES

continued from page 12

persistent odds, the School managed to play a significant role in the educational sector. Some of the pupils who have studied at this School have made it to the merit list of different competitive examinations and have later excelled in their respective careers, the article states.

It was not only in cricket that Nagarvala made his mark, playing for the Ranjit Trophy matches and officiating as umpire. He was equally interested in football, hockey, table tennis and athletics. Founder member of various sports organizations, Nagarvala is a well respected figure in the sports circle, further adds the *Express* report.

The sharp shooter

At the Thirty-third National Shooting Championships veteran Darius Marshall of Kerala bagged the gold medal in the .22 free rifle individual event, notes *The Hindu* of January 12, 1990. Marshall was representing the Calicut Rifle Club at the competition held in Madras from December 27, 1989 to January 12, '90. This is reportedly the second time that Marshall, a life member of the National Rifle Association, won a gold at the national level.

The managing trustee of the Calicut Parsi Anjuman and an executive committee member of the Calicut District Tourism Promotion Council, Marshall is an automobile engineer by profession.



Nagarvala (left): educative octogenarian
Marshall: taking aim

Besides being an active member of the Rotary and Jaycees, he is currently president of the Calicut Boat Club, notes his bio data.

FOZAWAC athletic meet

Ms Kamal Cooper was declared the best female and Burzin Mehta the best male athlete at the Eighth Zoroastrian Athletic Championships held under the auspices

of the Federation of Zoroastrian Associations for Welfare and Culture (FOZAWAC) in December last year, notes the *Jam-e-Jamshed* of January 28, 1990.

Among the 11 new meet records set was Cooper's mark of 22.96 m in the javelin throw event. She also came first in five other events: the 100 and 200 m sprint, long jump, shot put and discus throw.

Mehta, in the under-16 boys' category, came first in the 100 and 200 m sprint, 100 m hurdles and long jump besides finishing third in the discus throw. The individual championship for men went to Firdosh Mehta who won the 100, 200 and 800 m run, 110 m hurdles and finished second in the 400 m sprint and long jump, the paper informs.

There were many outstation athletes who participated in the meet. In addition to certificates, promising athletes were given cash prizes to undertake year-round training, further mentions *Jamé*.

Bajan third in rally

Adventure was what Firoza Baji Bajan of Nagpur sought when she opted to participate in the general category rather than the students or ladies category at the car rally organized by the Lions Club of Kamptee and the students of the Ramdeo Baba Engineering College, Nagpur.

During the course of the 400 km journey beginning at Nagpur and terminating at Kamptee, Bajan's car clutch broke, yet she succeeded in securing a third position, informs D. S. Variava of Nagpur. The Parsi Cricket Gymkhana of Nagpur held a function to felicitate Bajan's performance.

The adventure lover is doing her post graduate studies in commerce as also industrial relations and personnel management. Bajan's other interests are reading, debating, badminton and swimming where she has won prizes in local events, it is reported.

Daruwala, Pandole shine

Ace squash champion Meherwan Daruwala emerged the winner in the All-Gujarat Squash Championships held at Surat, reported the *Jam-e-Jamshed* of March 4, 1990.

This win, plus the silver medal that he won at the fourth South Asian Federation Games in Pakistan recently helped boost Daruwala's confidence: he had lost his national title to Adrian Ezra. For five consecutive years, from 1983-87, Daruwala had been the reigning national

squash champion. A purser with Air India, 25-year-old Daruwala is determined to wrest back the title from 18-year-old Ezra.

The Northern India title that he won in end '89 was also a significant win for Daruwala for he was able to overcome the opposition from Ravinder Malik at whose hands he had suffered defeat in the *India Today* finals.

Also in the limelight on the squash scene is the 15-year-old Bombay lad, Rishad Pandole, who defeated Rishad Billimoria to win the boys' under-16 title at the state meet, notes the *Jam-e-Jamshed* of December 31, 1989.

Though Pandole lost out in the first game, he went on to win the next three against Billimoria. Wristy stroke play and fighting qualities were however displayed by both of them.

Not so successful was Pandole's elder brother Jehangir who lost the boys' under-19 title to Ezra, further adds *Jamé*.

Social get-together

The active Bharucha Baug Youth Association at Andheri has plans to organize sports events in a big way. One of their aspirations is to build a floodlit volleyball court, hoping that the Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP) will sanction the project and donate 50 percent towards the cost. This was announced at the social evening organized by the Association on February 24, 1990 where annual prizes were distributed to those who had excelled at indoor and outdoor sports events conducted by the organization, notes a press release. A resume of the activities undertaken by the youth wing was provided by the president of the Youth Association, Vispi Irani.

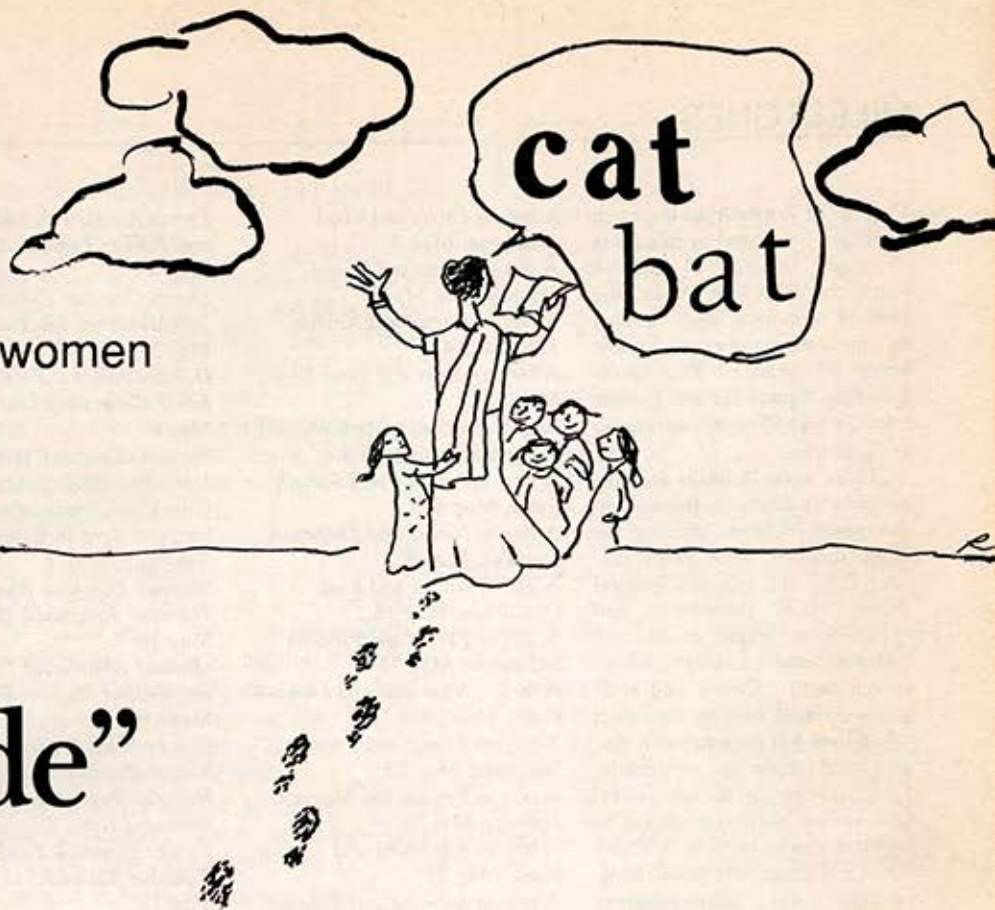
The evening's program included a fancy dress competition and a comedy titled *Quack Doctor* directed by Ms Gool Sethna. BPP trustee Jamshed Guzder who presided over the function encouraged the participants by donating prizes to the best actor and best actress, further adds the release.

SPOTLIGHT

Ms Ashrafi Jamshed Antia of Mt Carmel College was awarded two gold medals on December 8, 1989 for excelling in the Bachelor of Science (Home Science) exams conducted by the Bangalore University. Her early education was at the J. B. Petit School, Bombay and the Indian Central School, Muscat.

Compiled by Roxana H. Kaka.

On the demise of a favorite teacher, a whole generation of dedicated Zoroastrian women teachers receives a long overdue tribute



“She was on our side”

Whabiz D. Merchant

She was “Roshan Auntie” to three generations of kindergartners. A small, slim, erect figure dressed in a plain cotton sari worn Parsi-style, her hair in an old-fashioned roll, she was teacher and school incarnate for 30 lucky youngsters each year for 50 years. I was one of them, and so were my two younger sisters. Her patience, in a school full of patient teachers, was legendary. It was the most natural thing in the world for her to allow a shy or frightened child to cling to her hand for an entire day or an entire week. She taught us to read by reading aloud for hours each day. She taught us to write by writing “cat” and “bat” on the first line of each of our copybooks, which we then diligently rewrote five times on the lines underneath. I never heard her criticize any of our clumsy attempts. She would hold a pudgy little fist desperately clutching a pencil, and say mildly, “Don’t you think a ‘c’ looks better with a round tummy?” She also taught us how to thread a needle and pick out the outline of a drawing in wool.

She was an alumna of our school herself. As soon as she got her teaching certificate she came back and stayed at her post for half a century. Yet she never lost her girlish looks nor her girlish ways. I can still hear her high-pitched laugh. And she could sing *Baa-Baa Black Sheep* for the millionth time with all the delight

of having just invented it herself for our express benefit. We believed her totally when she said that one’s lies showed in one’s eyes, and that dead pets and children went to a very special flower garden.

She lived in a building right behind the school, and walked through a small iron gate that connected the two properties every school day. I’m quite certain she didn’t miss a single one. She considered it a privilege to have the opportunity to mold a child’s character and personality. What but absolute faith in her mission to educate would make an 18-year-old give up marriage and children of her own? Her standards were absolute; you were either good or naughty, right or wrong in her class, and I do not remember her ever punishing a miscreant. She could reason a belligerent child out of its anger, or calm an excited one with her soothing voice. Fear or pain usually elicited a hug from her. We knew she was on our side.

She ruled over a domain of pint-sized desks, rocking horses, jungle gyms, Mr Rooster and Ms Rabbit with gentle good humor, and when we left the ground floor to go to the first standard on the second floor, she walked with us to give us encouragement and reassurance. A lot of us went back to her for “tuition.” Every evening from six to almost 10 the

sitting-room of her home was full of girls of all ages struggling with their homework. She made even algebra look simple and fun. When we finally left school she tried to keep in touch with us. She wrote to me in the US to praise me for a trivial achievement. In her letter she said, “I have never regretted a single day of my 50 years’ service to the dear little angels who have been entrusted to my care. They have filled my heart with joy and kept me young in spirit and mind.”

A lot of us went on to win scholarships and honors abroad, and without exception we owe it to our teachers in that little school. All of them implicitly believed that an educated woman could do anything she wanted, and one educated by them could do anything superbly. These teachers did not merely teach us history, geography or mathematics: they inspired us to seek perfection and to do the honorable thing, always. Ever since I was a child I have never wanted to be anything else than a teacher. At home on weekends our favorite game was playing school. I did become a teacher, and I hope, by doing for my students what my teachers had done for me, I can repay some of my debts to these exceptional women. I pity my American students though. They never knew a Roshan Auntie.

MILESTONES

The age of Zoroastrian brides in Bombay -- as listed in this issue -- ranged between 21 and 44 years, the arithmetic mean (the total of individual ages divided by the total number of brides) being 27 years. The corresponding figures for the grooms were 24 and 55 years, averaging at 32 years.

There were 18 births as compared to 91 deaths in Bombay in the month of May. Among the killer diseases were heart disease (24), old age and general debility (12), pneumonia and hypertension (eight each), and diabetes and kidney failure (seven each). Cancer and accidents claimed five victims each while four fell prey to brain disease and three to septicemia. Lung disease took two lives. One person each succumbed to asthma, shock, bronchitis, Parkinson's disease, intestinal hemorrhage and atherosclerosis (deposition of fatty substances and fibrosis in the inner layers of the arteries). As compared to the highest age at death which was 95 years, the youngest to die was a two-month-old baby boy. A girl aged three was also lost to the community.

This month's death list for Bombay includes cremations at Chandanwadi between August 1989 and March 1990.

The data on births, marriages and deaths has been compiled from information supplied by various newsletters and anjuman in India and abroad, courts and hospitals. This information is not always complete or consistent. In the breakup of deaths according to illnesses, especially of the elderly, death is often due to a combination of several diseases.

If readers have any births/marriages/deaths 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 Lily and Percy Elavia on May 1, 1990

A boy to Thrity and Vispi Bhathena; May 2
A girl to Arnaz and Cawsi Dhanbhora; May 4
A boy to Kamal and Neville Tata; May 4
A boy to Aban and Jemi Jijina; May 7
A girl, Rashna, to Arnavaz and Temton Jehani; May 8
A boy to Armaity and Sarosh Patel; May 8
A boy to Navaz and Shahrukh Sanjana; May 9
A girl to Armin and Riaz Dadabhoy; May 18
A girl to Persis and Firdosh Subawala; May 21
A boy to Khurshid and Thretun Patel; May 24
A boy to Kamal and Prasun Sengupta; May 25
A boy to Feroza and Maneck Unwala; May 26
A boy to Kashmira and Sheriar Irani; May 27
A boy to Jasmine and Behram Siganporia; May 27
A girl to Shiraz and Darius Shroff; May 29
A boy to Manidjeh and Kersi Daruwalla; May 30
A girl to Zenobia and Percy Kaikobad; May 30

Married

Yasmin Dossu Paymaster and Percy Dali Maloo; April 14
Diana Phiroz Patel and Kerman Erach Kadva; April 15
Zarin Behram Mistry and Mahiar Parviz Rabady; April 22
Tanaz Dara Limboowalla and Kersi Nariman Deboo; April 29
Roshan Eruch Tarapore and Daneshvar Rashid Samya; April 30
Farida Soli Daruwalla of Poona and Shahrookh Phiroze Boomla; May 1
Zenobia Minoo Patel and Mehrooz Adi Ghadiali; May 1
Daisy Firoz Forbes and Berges Framroze Fiter; May 3
Khushnuwa Pirojsha Shroff and Pervaz Minocher Mistry; May 3
Hutokshi Gustadi Udawadia and Sam Padamji Patel; May 3
Jasmine Adi Aga and Darayus Dhunjishaw Cooper; May 4
Kashmira Dhunjishaw Karkaria and Kersi Dorabji Khambatta; May 4

Pervin Noshirwan Anklesaria and Parvez Tehmuras Sethna; May 4
Sheroo Sheriar Engineer and Soli Minocher Kheswalla; May 5
Dilnavaz Noshir Kolah and Kersi Mehervanji Daruvala; May 6
Pervana Shapur Cyrus and Dara Rusi Mistry; May 6
Gita Kaikhushroo Amooyan of Iran and Sohrab Behram Amooyan; May 8
Shernaz Dinshaw Bharucha and Tehmtan Jamshedji Dumasia; May 10
Mahnaz Allamurad Khushnami and Shapur Rustom Faroodi; May 10
Binoo Bomi Mistry and Homi Sohrab Parakh; May 10
Niloofer Rusi Talati and Hormazd Homi Cooper; May 11
Nilufer Dinshaw Engineer and Bahadur Ratansha Dastoor; May 13
Kashmira Jal Sarkari and Jal Feroz Daruwalla; May 18
Shahnaz Behram Bhanja and Shahrukh Rustom Irani; May 18
Shahnawaz Boman Bakhurdari and Xerxes Rustom Irani (Kolahi) of Dahanu; May 20
Binaifer Keki Shroff and Khushru Burjor Jijina; May 20
Meher Pesi Porbunderwala and Homiar Nariman Vakili; May 21
Dinaz Kaki Bulsara and Rohinton Dinshaw Amroli; May 27
Nilufer Behram Dotiwala and Ardeshtir Khurshid Gazder; May 27
Kermis Jamshed Irani and Behram Meherwan Irani; May 28

Died

Freny Narayan Menon (83), residing at 88/B, Dady Ter, Cumballa Hill Rd, 400036, August 8, 1989 (cremated)
Pilo Minoo Ghasvala (57), Gunder Hse, 45, Warden Rd, 400026; October 7 (cremated)
Bhroz Tehmuras Havelwalla (47), Yogita Co-op Hsg Soc, 6th Daulat Ngr, Borivli (E), 400066; November 12 (cremated)
Sorab Pestonji Patuck (79), 9, Hampton Court, Colaba, 400005; January 17, 1990 (cremated)

Khurshed Eruchshaw Katrak (58), B-6/A, United Chmbs, 400007; April 30
Mani Nadir Daruwalla (74), 1/C, Oyster Apts, Pilot Bunder Rd, Colaba, 400005; May 2
Piroja Jal Driver (79), F/20, Cusrow Baug, S. B. Rd, 400039; May 2
Pallon Homji Kavarana (33), Pallonji Mans, Cuffe Parade, 400005; May 2
Rustom Dinshaw Surti (77), Chothia Bldg, 275/C, Tardeo, 400007; May 2
Kersi Kekobad Bharucha (49), 275/U, New Master Bldg, Tardeo, 400007; May 3
Tehmina Jehangirji Gundevia (89), 660, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; May 3
Behram Shapoor Irani (72), Irani Mhl, 65, K. Khadge Marg, Jacob Circle, 400012; May 3
Dhunjishaw Jehangirji Mistry (65), Jer Bldg, 6th Khetwadi Lane, 400004; May 4
Coomi Rustomji Wadia (80), 608, Jame Jamshed Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; May 4
Shirin Jamshedji Doodhnal (88), M/19, Cusrow Baug, S. B. Rd, 400039; May 5
Nariman Ardeshtir Pochee (81), 628, Turel Ter, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; May 5
Alamai Pirojshaw Bajan (89), C/o Dr Dossibai Charity Trust, Byculla, 400027; May 6
Nozer Rustom Gunder (80), Block 2, Byramji Bldg, 1, Sholapur Rd, Poona, 411001; May 6
Homi Jehangirji Kumana (81), O/15, Shapurji Bharucha Baug, Andheri (W), 400058; May 6
Sheroo Manchershaw Maloo (70), 201, Jewel Tower, 49, St Paul's Rd, Bandra, 400050; May 6
Maneckbai Nariman Sahukar (87), 14/A, Hamabai Petit Bldg, Marazban Clny, 400008; May 6
Rusi Meherjibhoy Amroli (68), Mistry Bldg, Haji Ali, 400034; May 7
Hormusji Sorabji Randeria (82), B/3, Nowroz Baug, Lalbaug, 400012; May 7
Dina Keki Khan (62), 3/17, Mehta Bldg, Panthaki Baug, Andheri, 400069; May 8
Katy Homji Mehta (61), B/28, Godrej Baug, Nepean Sea Rd,

- 400026; May 8
Sorabji Merwanji Bacha (80),
 Bacha Villa, 78, Malcolm Baug,
 Jogeshwari, 400102; May 9
Merwan Boman Irani (72),
 Jaihind Restaurant, Poona Rd,
 Nasik, 422001; May 9
Goolbai Jahangir Nagarwala
 (83), T, Dalal Est, Lamington
 Rd, 400008; May 9
Minocher Manecksha Gandhi
 (94), Keesee Manzil, Bhabha Rd,
 Bandra, 400050; May 10
Bapai Framroze Patel (74), 7,
 Jinwalla Bldg, Captain Clny,
 Tardeo, 400034; May 10
Sorab Pirojshaw Vakharia (64),
 18, St James Court, Marine
 Drive, 400020; May 10
Amy Ardeshtir Kohiyar (85),
 Sealand, 41, Cuffe Parade,
 400005; May 11
Dara Kaikhusroo Raja (60),
 Amina Mans, Dadar, 400014;
 May 11
Allamai Maneck Shroff (90),
 Khurshed Hse, 604/D, Lady
 Jehangir Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar,
 400014; May 11
Aloo Noshir Dalal (49), 3/1,
 Wadia Baug, Parel Tank Rd,
 400033; May 12
- Commie Burjorji Marolia** (70),
 816, Widows' Chawl, Jame
 Jamshed Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar,
 400014; May 13
Freny Byramji Mistry (72), 265,
 Engineer Bldg, Princess St,
 400002; May 13
Cooma Dinshaw Wadia (80),
 11/12, Tata Clny, Sir Ratan
 Tata Rd, Tardeo, 400034;
 May 13
Behram Sorabji Cooper (78),
 C/10, Jer Baug, Dr Ambedkar
 Rd, Byculla, 400027; May 14
Perin Lowjee Hodiwala (67), 3,
 C. D. Sethna Bldg, Parcel,
 400012; May 14
Shirinbai Peshotan Tarapor-
wala (90), C/1, Godrej Baug,
 Off Nepean Sea Rd, 400026;
 May 14
Erach Edalji Madon (69), A/7,
 Ness Baug, Nana Chowk,
 400007; May 15
Jehangirji Hormusji Bhada
 (68), Edawalla Agiary, Trinity
 St, Dhobitalao, 400002; May 16
Shilla Behram Dubash (76),
 Joshi Hse, 16, Cumballa Hill,
 400036; May 16
Soli Behramji Irani (Kalantri)
 (65), Raghoji Bldg, Raghoji Rd,
 400036; May 16
Freny Dinshaw Lilenwala (86),
 Q/3, Cusrow Baug, S. B. Rd,
 400039; May 16
Banoobai Nariman Master (64),
 Jyoti Mhl, 13, Sleater Rd,
 400007; May 16
Nargish Merwan Patel (72),
 Patel St, Nargol, Dist Bulsar,
 396135; May 16
Daulat Ardeshtir Wadia (85),
 Rawat Compd, Behind State
 Bank of India, Igatpuri, 422403;
 May 16
Jal Maneckji Daruwalla (63), A,
 Vasaymal Bldg, 387, Grant Rd,
 400007; May 17
Jerbanu Kaikhushru Daruwalla
 (70), A, Vasaymal Bldg, 387,
 Grant Rd, 400007; May 17
Soonu Ratansha Contractor
 (65), Sir Ratan Tata Clny,
 Tardeo, 400034; May 18
Sorab Mancherji Cooper (82),
 Jaiji Ter, Sleater Rd, 400007;
 May 18
Rustom Darabshaw Dubash
 (95), 12/A, Atlas Apt, Narayan
 Dabholkar Rd, 400006; May 18
Mani Russy Mistry (71), 2,
 Boman Hse, Homji St, Fort,
 400001; May 18
- Mani Hime Behram** (67), H/34,
 Cusrow Baug, S. B. Rd,
 400039; May 19
Hormusji Dhunjishaw Colah
 (89), 651, Karanjia Bldg,
 Dhobitalao, 400002; May 19
Jer Eruchshaw Desai (54),
 Gamadia Clny, Tardeo, 400007;
 May 19
Shapurji Dadabhoy Wadia (83),
 Sanjana Bldg, Forjett Hill Rd,
 Tardeo, 400036; May 19
Jer Jamshedji Badshaw (78),
 A/3, Cusrow Baug, S. B. Rd,
 400039; May 20
Dina Nariman Ghadoiwala
 (64), 18, Daruwalla Bldg, 4,
 Dinbai Petit St, Grant Rd,
 400007; May 20
Jehangirji Sorabji Hilloo (77),
 Jamasp Tata Blocks, 38th Rd,
 Bandra, 400050; May 20
Nozer Naval Mistry (47), D/10,
 Malinee Apts, Mahakali Rd,
 Andheri (E), 400069; May 20
Kekobad Dhunjishaw Patel (77),
 Petit Parsi Sanatorium, August
 Kranti Marg, 400036; May 20
Firoze Rustomji Batliwala (67),
 Sohmag, Katrak Rd, Wadala,
 400031; May 21
Hirabai Munchershaw Gandhi

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(87), D/4, Imperial Mhl, Khodadad Circle, Dadar, 400014; May 21
Jer Burjor Ghaswalla (87), B/54, Sea Lord, Cuffe Parade 400005; May 21
Shirin Ardeshtir Mobedji (81), 1/30, A. H. Wadia Bldg, Parsi Tank Rd, 400033; May 21
Bhikhamai Dhunjishaw Jithra (80), Banaji Bldg, Gowalia Tank Rd, 400036; May 22
Savak Pirojshaw Pastakia (78), A/43, Twin Towers, Veer Savarkar Marg, Prabhadevi, 400025; May 22
Naoroze Sohrab Rashid (2 months), 26/B, Baharishthan Bldg, Vikhroli (W), 400083; May 22
Maki Jimmy Karanjia (70), G/9, Shapur Baug, V. P. Rd, 400004; May 23
Homi Rustom Moniri (69), 5, Hanvant Bhavan, 80/E, Nepean Sea Rd, 400006; May 23
Hoshang Kawasji Pardiwala (85), Chaman Chmbs, 1st Marine St, 400020; May 23
Khorshed Dara Kanga (78), Gemfrina, 630, Khareghat Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; May 24
Ratamai Cawasji Pithawala (80), F/7, Nowroz Baug, Lalbaug, 400012; May 24
Piroja Hirji Kanga (83), 327, Dr Dinshaw Master Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; May 25
Merwanjee Jahangirjee Patel (72), B/27, Room 416, Pratiksha Ngr, Sion, 400022; May 25
Homi Motasha Wadia (84), Sheroo Villa, Jaiprakash Rd, Andheri, 400058; May 25
Jehangir Jeevanjee Colabawalla (69), Satyam, Alub Rd, Vasai (Dist) Thane, 401201; May 26
Mani Dossabhai Daruwalla (85), T/10, Cusrow Baug, S. B. Rd, 400039; May 26
Dhan Dara Kakalia (84), A/6, Satya Bhama Niwas, Kasinath St, Tardeo, 400034; May 26
Jehangir Faramroze Mistry (64), Kerawala Bldg, 463, Chira Bazar, 400002; May 26
Sorabji Bhimjibhai Patel (86), Parsi Punchayet Staff Qtrs, Kemps Corner, 400026; May 26
Dara Cawasji Press (78), 609, Singapuri Bldg, Girgaum Rd, 400002; May 26
Gulamai Jehangirji Rai Rai (74), Petit Widows' Chawl,

113, Mody St, Fort, 400001; May 26
Phiroz Edulji Billimoria (83), P/25, Cusrow Baug, S. B. Rd, 400039; May 27
Tehmi Temurasp Divecha (68), 407, Mistry Chmbs, Opp Strand Cinema, Colaba, 400005; May 27
Manijeh Jamshedji Kathoke (83), Rati-Khush, 32, P. J. Nehru Rd, Santacruz (E), 400055; May 27
Behram Dorob Patel (84), Aziz Bldg, 137, Tardeo Rd, 400034; May 27
Roda Dadiba Engineer (82), 804/C, Rati Lodge, Dr Ambedkar Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; May 28
Mithannai Fardoonji Panthakee (87), 190/A, Presswalla Bldg, Lamington Rd, 400007; May 28
Zervina Mehernosh Bharucha (3), A/7, Central Bank Colleagues Co-op Hsg Soc, Vile Parle, 400057; May 29
Maneck Hirjibhai Vajifdar (60), Soona Bldg, Chikalwadi, Tardeo, 400007; May 30
Farook Sorabji Mulla (79), 67/G, Walkeshwar Rd, 400006; May 31

CALCUTTA

Died
Nergesh Wadia, wife of Erachshaw and mother of Dinaz How and Navaz; May 9

DEOLALI

Died
Mehra Rustom Masani (80); April 6

LUCKNOW

Died
Boman Jalejar Khodaiji (66), husband of Bapsy and father of Jal, Kayomarz and Freny; March 27

POONA

Born
 A girl, *Jahanin*, to *Farida* and *Cyrus Pajniagar*; March 23

Died

Sam Bomanisha Mugasheth (74), 3/B, Salisbury Park, 411001; May 1
Nariman Nusserwanji Marolia (83), 4, Central Apts, Convent St, 411001; May 4
Burjor Sorabji Sadri (80), E/15, Gita Soc, Synagogue St,

411001; May 12
Noshir Ardeshtir Irani (79), Rahim Hse, 14, Ambedkar Rd, 411001; May 19
Veera Russi Rupa (68), 71, Shastri Apts, Moledina Rd, 411001; May 20

UDWADA

Married
Parizad Dotiwala, daughter of Dossa and late Soli, and *Cyrus Randelia*, son of Jer and Nariman; May 7

VANCOUVER

Married
Rashna Buhariwala, daughter of Bapsy and Parvez, and *Shahrokh Kianipour*, son of Irandokht and Kaikhosrow; February 9

VICTORIA

Died
Bapsy Adenwalla; March 23

TOTALS (for this issue)

Born: Boys 11, Girls 8
 Married 32
 Died 106

Compiled by Roxana H. Kaka

1989: The telling figures

The year 1989 saw possibly the lowest ever birth figures (437) for the Zoroastrian community in Bombay. The number of deaths was 1,008 (figures supplied by the Bombay Parsi Punchayet and the Chandanwadi crematorium) which means an excess of 571 deaths over births for the year. The birth figures were obtained from the Bombay Municipal Corporation, courtesy Peshotan Nargolwala who at the Fifth World Zoroastrian Congress in January 1990 had estimated 550 births for the year. This means that the actual decline in community numbers could be 20 percent more than what was projected at the Congress.

Parsiana listed in the Milestones column 250 births in Bombay for the year 1989. Our information is gleaned from only some of the hospitals in south and central Bombay. While the births listed in *Parsiana* include offspring of intercommunity marriages irrespec-

tive of whether the father or the mother is a Zoroastrian, the Bombay Municipal Corporation may have listed only those where the birth certificate states that the child is a Parsi/Zoroastrian.

In regard to deaths, 1,001 had their bodies consigned to the Towers of Silence while seven opted for the Chandanwadi electric crematorium.

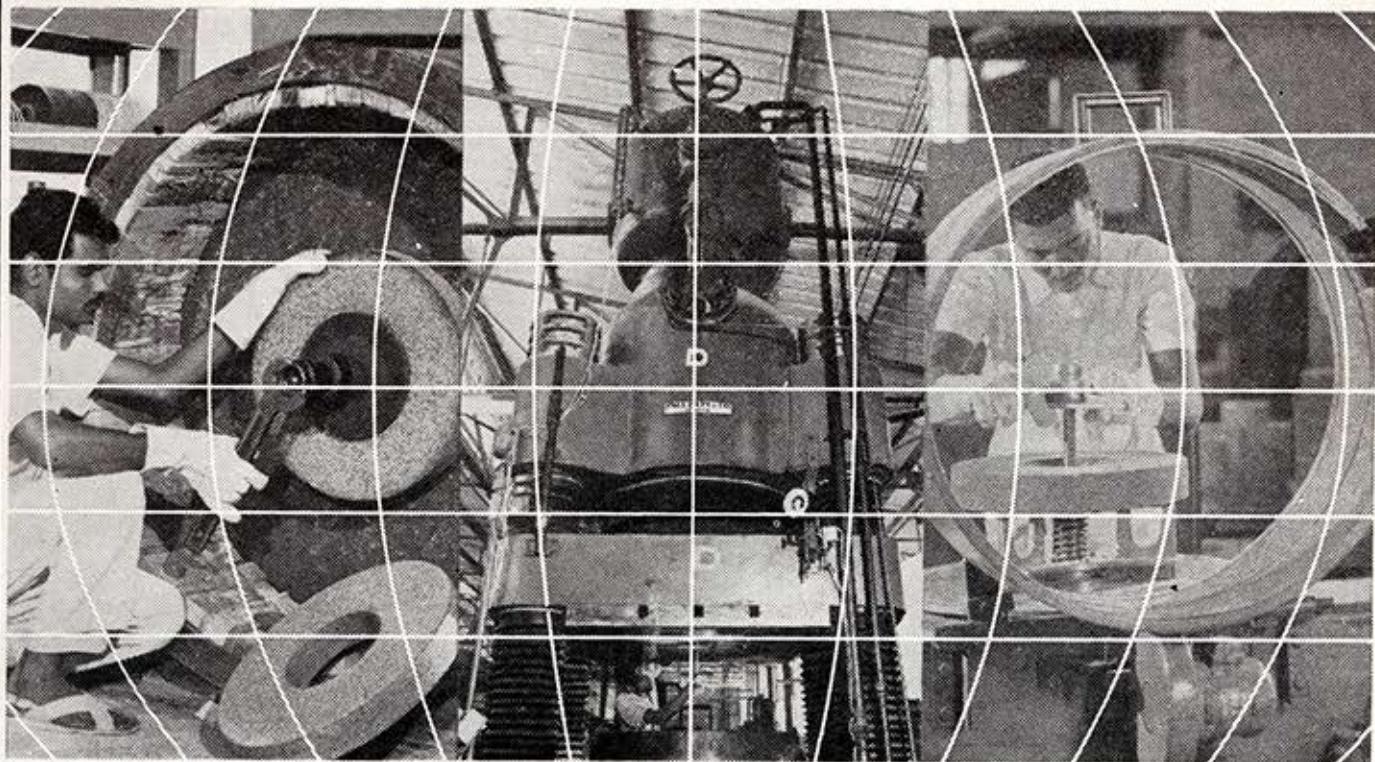
Of the 445 marriages that took place, 62 were to non-Zoroastrian spouses. This works out to 14 percent if the percentage is calculated as a ratio of intercommunity marriages to the total number of marriages (62:445). It works out to 16 percent if calculated as a ratio of intercommunity marriages to community marriages (62:383). For the period October 1987 to September 1988 the percentages were 12 and 14 respectively. Thus there has been a two percent increase in the number of intercommunity marriages.

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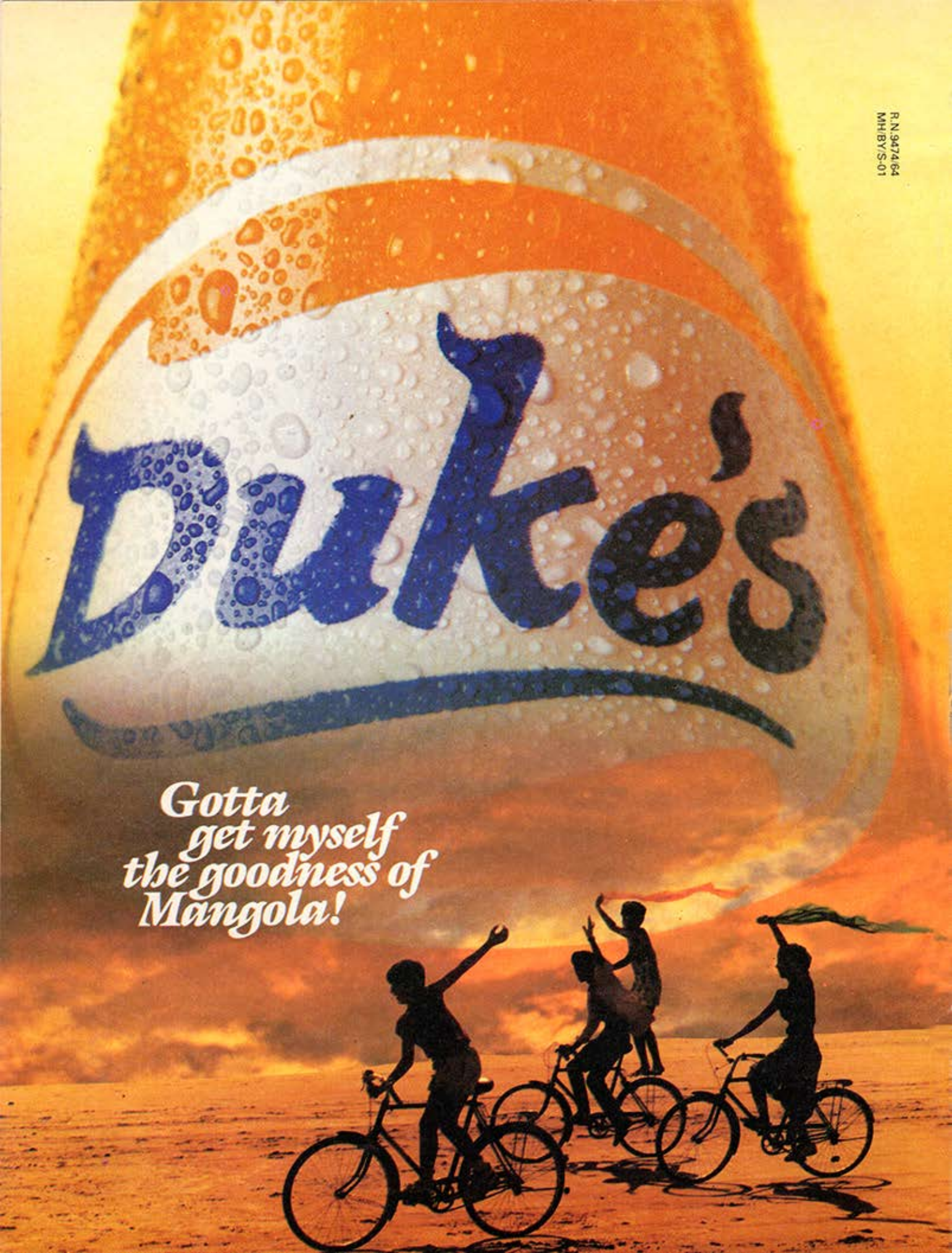
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