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Parsiana

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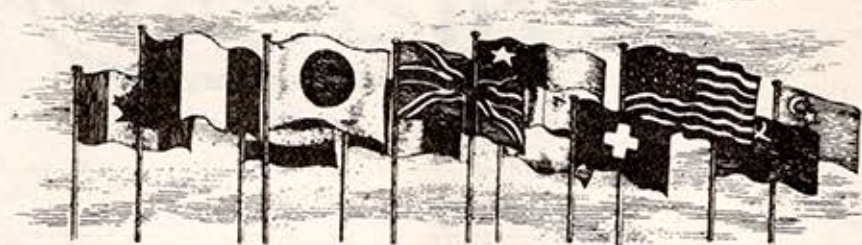
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"An injustice at..."

My condolences to the Shah and Nazir families on their loss and suffering ("An injustice at doongerwadi," *Parsiana*, August 1990).

As a practising Parsi married to a non-Parsi under the Special Marriage Act, I have never been stopped from entering any agiary, the Wadia Atash Bahram or the Atash Bahram at Udwarda at any time even though I have entered them with my mangalsutra on. And I think that it is only right for any man or woman practising a religion to have the right to peace to his or her soul through the last rites of the religion he or she believes in, and no human being has the right to interfere in a wish so personal.

I would like to ask Dastur Firoze Kotwal, Dr Aspi Golwalla and all the Zoroastrians who follow and believe in Dastur Kotwal's directions: Which one

of them is going to pay for a grave injustice done to a young girl who perhaps believed more in her religion than many Zoroastrians today?

If I may express my opinion, I think people like Dastur Kotwal who consider marrying out of the community "close to adultery" and deny a practising Zoroastrian her basic right to the last rites, should not rely on the *Vendidad*, which was written much after Zoroaster's time, to support their fanaticism but re-read the works of Zoroaster and realize that the essence of this religion is "to do no wrong to others."

I sincerely hope that the Parsi youth and the believers of justice fight for their rights and are successful.

Ms MEHER MATHIRANI

The Bombay Parsi Punchayet's distressing refusal to permit Roxan Shah's body to be consigned at doongerwadi ("An injustice at doongerwadi," *Parsiana*, August 1990) and the horrendous opinions of Dastur Firoze Kotwal on Parsi women married outside the community makes one wonder what faith such people really follow. Could it be something called "Parsism" or "Parsi-Punchayetism" or "Dastur Kotwalism?" Whatever it may be called, it certainly cannot be construed as Zoroastrianism for I recognize nothing of Zarathushtra's teachings in their beliefs and behavior. Indeed, their thinking is an affront to the Prophet himself — the antithesis of the pure and holy sublimity of Zarathushtra's exalted message as set down in the *Gathas*.

No one can dispute that the *Gathas* are the words of Zarathushtra himself. They are entirely spiritual in content, they speak of divine things. The Prophet's deep yearning to understand the nature of God, Ahura Mazda, and to disseminate the message of Truth for the benefit of humankind was all that concerned him. Why then do we, who call ourselves Zoroastrian, not obey his injunctions to uplift our thinking and understanding?

How many Parsis who think of themselves as Zoroastrian know or care to know what the *Gathas* contain? Indeed, how many Parsis have even bothered to read the *Gathas* let alone delved deeply into them? How many Zoroastrian families own a translation of the one and only

message of Zarathushtra? And how many Zoroastrian parents have even considered introducing or explaining the true religion to their children? Most Parsis equate the religion with priestcraft, ritual and rite, occasionally remembering to parrot good thoughts, good words, good deeds as an essential ingredient of the religion whether or not they actually demonstrate or understand the meaning of these precepts.

The truth is that most of us are abysmally ignorant of the true faith and, worse still, have no interest in discovering the sublimity contained in it. It is easier to be lazy, to make a fetish of outward form rather than endeavor to understand and follow the true substance — the spiritual content of our religion. This is how corruption sets in, probably true of any religion, but we are concerned only with ours. It is an awful kind of ignorance that makes people bigoted and intolerant and, tragically, they expound their erroneous beliefs in the name of noble Zoroastrianism. Such people never quote from the *Gathas* for Zarathushtra's words and commands do not coincide with their own.

What, then, is the answer if Zoroastrianism is not to disappear along with the community? Surely, it lies in the earnest search to go back to the source, to develop the essential ability to sift the wheat from the chaff.

All thinking parents keen enough to teach their children the truths of pristine Zoroastrianism must expose them to the sublime thoughts of Zarathushtra himself and every Parsi household must have a copy of the *Gathas* readily at hand.

There have been a great many scholars who have expounded on our religion but how many have combined inspired thinking and a humble yearning to search for the true spark of understanding alongside their scholarship? My personal experience was generally disappointing — and frustrating — until, some years ago, I came across the great scholar, Dr Irach Taraporewala's interpretation of the *Gathas* in his book, *The Religion of Zarathushtra*. It was for the first time that I truly caught glimpses of the meaning behind many hitherto abstruse aspects of my religion. Frequent readings make things more and more illuminating

and the more one studies these Gathic verses, the more one is struck by the sheer beauty and spiritual import of Zarathushtra's revelation.

I was concerned, however, to find that this gem of a book is not available in bookshops. I understand that it can only be had from his son, Mr B. I. Taraporewala at India House, Kemps Corner, August Kranti Marg, Bombay 400036. He has published the book himself, out of his own resources and I believe still has some copies available with him. Every Parsi family should be urged to own a copy of it as a first and important step to a truer understanding of our religion. Zoroastrians must ensure that this book is kept permanently in print for the benefit of future generations. Otherwise, it would not only be irresponsible of us but also an irreparable loss to the community, Zoroastrian scholars and seekers after the Truth everywhere.

Ms DINA NAYAR

The Parsees

For the first time British TV (Channel Four) had decided to make a documentary on the Parsis — *The Parsees: the Zoroastrians of Bombay*. Eagerly we waited for its showing. But we were to be greatly disappointed, for what we got was 52 minutes of incohesive, inconclusive patchwork! This, which went out on August 7, 1990, was to be a portrayal of our community. It was to inform the British people, to educate them about an ethnic/religious community in their midst that few of them had heard of. Those Parsis who appeared on the program were supposed to speak for all of us. They also represented Parsis everywhere. Therefore they should have shown a little more maturity, and a little more responsibility. But as it turned out, the program was less edifying, and more embarrassing than we expected or deserved.

To start with, the Parsis of Britain had to suffer listening to the derogatory remarks made by a Parsi woman about her own community in a most crude and vulgar language, amidst smiles and giggles. This was very unpleasant for us who watched in the company of non-Zoroastrian friends, who were left very confused, for they had never seen or heard anything like it before, where Parsis were concerned. I can well imagine the opinion the viewers must have been left with.

I am aware that we have faults as any one else, but I have never seen or heard a program, where those taking part deval-

ued and insulted their own, as was witnessed on this program. For centuries this community had been highly respected and trusted, not only by the British as she tried to imply, but by other Europeans — visitors and colonialists alike. And there came a time when we were respected and trusted by other Indian communities. Her unjust and mindless criticism of the older generations, her belittling of the qualities which had enabled them to be held in such high esteem was unwarranted and stupid: it came from a mind ignorant of facts. Why is it that on occasions such as these, it is the Parsis who are self-opinionated and arrogant on the one hand, or immature and irresponsible on the other, are the ones who capture the limelight?

Loyalty and gratitude are not to be mocked. They should not be confused with servility or dishonor, or humiliation. The opposite to loyalty and gratitude would be disloyalty and ingratitude. It was loyalty and gratitude which helped our ancestors, not only to survive and prosper, but to preserve their religion, and live with dignity. Without these qualities where would this woman be today? Maybe not existing at all: or, maybe, working as an ayah in the home of a Hindu or Muslim family.

I would like to draw the attention of such people to the year 1484 when the town of Sanjan was sacked by the Muslim general, Alaf Khan. At this time the loyalty of 1,400 Parsis cost them their lives — that of men, women and children — as they defended Sanjan alongside the descendants of the Raja of Sanjan who had given our ancestors sanctuary.

During the reign of Akbar, Parsis found favor with the Mughal Emperor, only to suffer again when he died. Yet, in the late seventeenth century, when the Hindu Marathas began a series of campaigns against the Mughals, during which Gujarat was ravaged, Rustam Manek, an "elder of Surat, fought valiantly on behalf of the Mughals." Ironically, Rustam Manek also paid the *jazia* — the tax exacted from non-Muslims — on behalf of poor Hindus as well as the Parsis, to save them from the tax-gatherers' harsh treatment.

There have been many such instances involving Hindus, Muslims and the British. They acted as they did, not only to survive. It was part of their everyday spiritual endeavor to obey the laws of Asha — the divine laws of Ahura Mazda — in order to fight evil wherever they found it. They did good and acted humanely, whenever the opportunity pre-

sented itself. They did not deplete their lives with bitter quarrels with their neighbors or among themselves. Prof Mary Boyce tells us "the travellers' accounts in general give the same sort of picture of the Parsis as the Iranis (in Iran), showing them to be a gentle, quiet, industrious race. They live, it was said, in great harmony among themselves, make common contribution for the aid of the poor, and suffer none of their number to ask alms from people of a different religion. Their universal kindness... leave(s) no man destitute of relief."

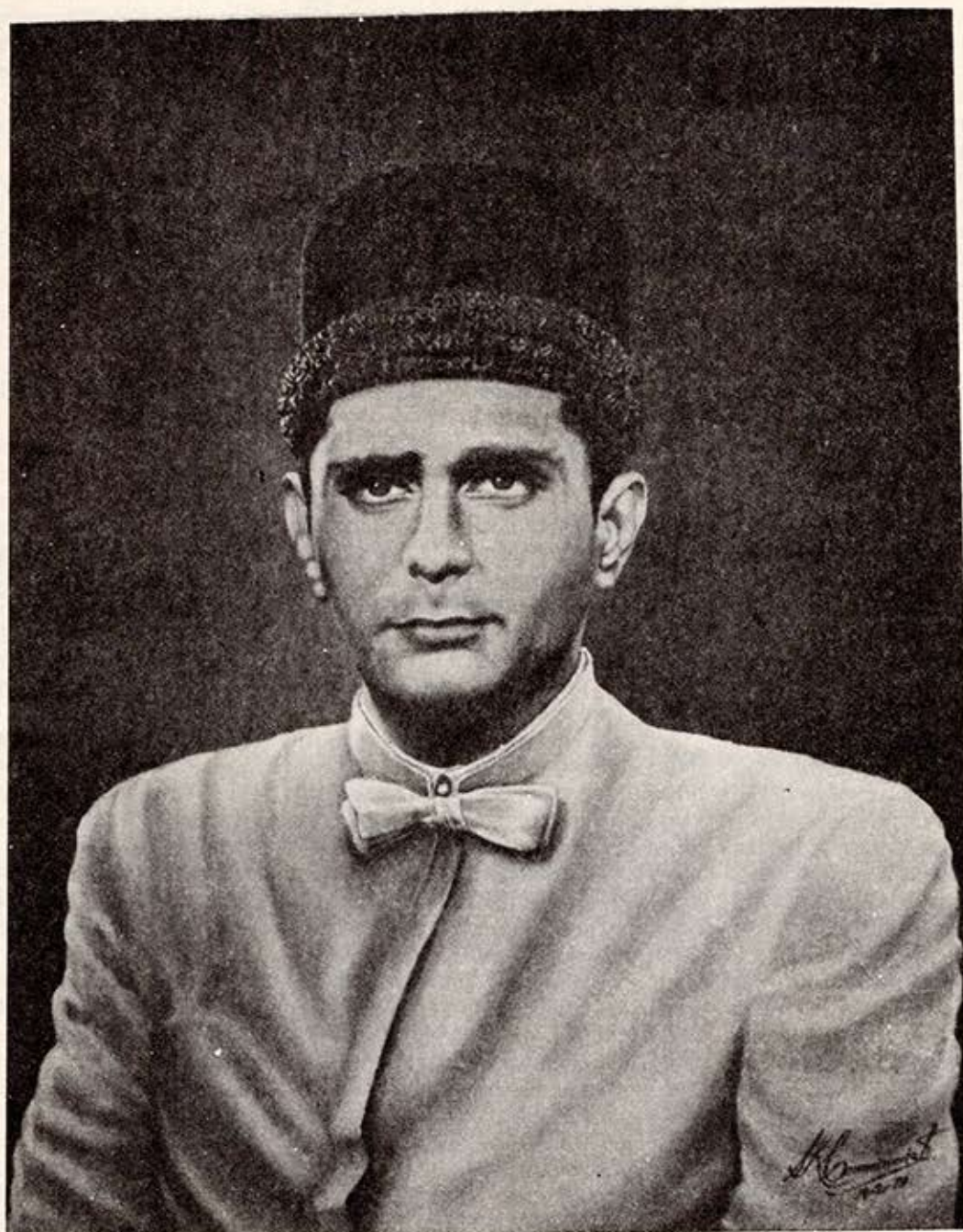
To get back to the documentary. The whole tone of it left me with the feeling of emptiness — of being presented with an empty shell, instead of a whole, living and dynamic organism; while all the time the narrator tried to convince the viewers that this community had been a vigorous, God-loving and united community. But now, as we watched, we were made aware of its disintegration — its parts at variance with each other, tearing the whole apart. Yes, this impression was also conveyed to the viewers, very clearly and very loudly.

Then there was the young man who kept harking back to the past achievements with a persistence which seemed to imply that there was nothing to be proud of today, except the material wealth of the few.

At first I told myself that this rather unbalanced presentation of the community was the result of bad editing. But as I pondered over what I had seen and heard, I had to admit that it revealed that which lay at the heart of the community: or it would be more correct to say, that which was missing from the heart of the community — the religious and spiritual truths and the real concern that engender unity of spirit and of purpose.

Every ethnic/religious program I have watched has conveyed a very definite, dignified and interesting impression. But this was a hotchpotch of rituals and customs, mixed with those of Hinduism, with Zoroastrian concepts rather disjointedly presented — together with a bit of history — in a way as to render the religious concepts unnoticeable, ineffectual, and the whole program without depth. The spiritual beauty and strength of our Zoroastrian faith were submerged in the flood of self-congratulatory fervor. The compliments could have been left for a non-Zoroastrian to make.

In fact, it may have been much better if the whole documentary had been left to



In Memoriam

Mr Fali Meherji Variava

Director

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non-Zoroastrians. To someone who really knew what Zoroastrianism was all about. Someone who was sensitive to our feelings, yet was not involved in all the bitter, and sometimes petty differences and painful squabbles which are causing a rift within the community — but was aware of them. In this way we might have had a better-balanced program, and a truer picture of the Parsis in Bombay, and a clearer presentation and interpretation of the religion we share; and the British viewers would have had a more dignified impression of the Parsis of Bombay: they would have learnt something more definite about our faith.

I could not help but feel that Zoroastrianism is desperately searching for a collective soul to express itself; and that the Parsis are in the process of losing their communal soul. It is time they came together again. But I most strongly and sincerely believe that orthodoxy will not be able to cement the breaches which have formed over the last four decades.

There were some glimpses of hope as we saw faint evidence, some vestige of the simple dignity, gentleness and piety of Zoroastrianism still clinging to the old and the elderly like Mr Homi Sethna.

The program also highlighted your problem concerning priests. Surely the wealth among the rich Bombay Parsis, and in the coffers held in trust, should be able to solve this problem by educating/training and paying priests a realistic and just salary, in keeping with Zoroastrian principles.

If you are truly concerned about your "profound" religion, as some so often claim, why not use some of that wealth held in trust so that all priests are able to devote their lives to the service of Ahura Mazda and the community, without having to suffer indignities and humiliation which financial hardships bring — both during their working lives and in old age?

If the laity really value the faith of their ancestors, they will respect and care for their priests; and the priests will make certain that they are worthy of respect and trust. High priests, and those more fortunately placed, should be willing to ensure an even distribution of the goodness and security of life so that none will be called upon to suffer poverty and destitution.

In the past there have been plenty of examples of Zoroastrian generosity, both within and outside the community. Yet, today you seem loath to part with funds

even for members of your own. I understand that the rules for the use of these funds are circumscribed. But these rules were made when circumstances were different. Now, in times of great hardships endured by priests and the laity, the heart and mind of the community should dictate new rules to reflect and meet the needs being experienced. Nothing is impossible if the heart and mind are functioning in accordance with the spirit of love and justice; with that of Asha. Is not this what being a Zoroastrian is really all about? Is it not about love, justice, order which bring about harmony and peace?

The spirit of Sraosha (obedience) and of Armaiti (devotion) cannot work if "legal" excuses are used to prevent alleviation of hardships and suffering. At such times it is the divine laws of Ahura Mazda which should have precedence over all other laws, and should be obeyed. Who knows, it may so happen that one day one of those holding the communal purse-strings may find his needs unmet, hampered by the same "legality" which prevented him from coming to the aid of others.

I can understand the grievances of those who have married outside the community, one of whom expressed her views on the program. Although I am proud of my ancestors, I cannot, and do not want to condone the treatment they, their spouses and children are receiving from the orthodox. This is not because I do not love and respect my religion. Quite the contrary, I know it is a faith which was meant to be a universal faith, because Ahura Mazda is universal. Our profound religion comes from a being who is eternal and infinite light, all-embracing, pervading all creation — that of matter and spirit — and there is only one of Him. He made us all; He belongs to all He has created.

Ms PERIN DIVECHIA
Kent, UK

Richard Harris, producer of The Parsees: the Zoroastrians of Bombay, replies

If and when they watch this program, I think that it is important for Parsis to remember that the target audience is the British television viewing public. It is the opinion of many who live in the UK that not only are the British an unreligious lot, but also that they find the whole subject of religion embarrassing and off-putting. In Britain today, to say that someone is a religious person can still mean s/he is good, honest and reliable; but more

often than not it has come to mean that they are narrow-minded and boring, that they are not good company, that they are no fun to be with, even sometimes, that they are mentally unstable. Secular British society seems to me to have cultivated a distaste for religion.

British TV programs about religion are therefore typically watched by only a minority of viewers. We felt it to be our duty to try to reach as big a section of that minority as possible. So we set out to make a program that was not only informative but also entertaining. Only in this way could we secure the maximum audience for the program. After all, a TV program serves no purpose whatsoever if no one watches it.

Every day the national daily quality newspapers preview their choice of the TV programs to be shown. *The Parsees* was previewed by, among others, *The Times*, *The Daily Telegraph*, *The Guardian*, *The Independent*, *The Daily Mail* and by all but one of the quality newspapers on the previous Sunday. In all cases the preview was positive. These respected journalists told their readers that the program was both informative and entertaining. Thus it was that *The Parsees* was seen by over one million of the estimated 18 million viewers at 9 o'clock on August 7. Most viewers were watching the main news of the evening on BBC1. (When the national institution 'The Last Night of the Proms' was broadcast this year, it was watched by 1.3 million people.)

It is fair to say that the average Briton could write everything s/he knows about Zoroastrianism on the back of a postage stamp and still have enough space to write down everything s/he knows about the history of Christianity. The program therefore set out to describe what is known of the history of Zoroastrianism and its followers and summarizes their basic beliefs. It describes how important Zoroastrianism has been in the formation of ethical and religious ideas that are now identified as part of 'western' civilization, through its direct and indirect influence on other major religions. We set out to give an impression of what a remarkable community the Parsis are and have been. We also included some issues that seem to be highly relevant to the chances of the community surviving far into the future. These issues included, what for the Parsis are by now the old chestnuts of conversion, intermarriage and the position of the

priests within the community.

If, in the course of trying to make a program that attempts to do these things and still remains entertaining and interesting for an English audience to watch, we have caused offence, then every Parsi has our most humble and sincere apologies; nothing could have been further from our intentions.

A word needs to be said about why we chose the interviewees that we did. We spent a long time talking to many Parsis that we met — men and women, old and young, rich and poor, great and small — about what it meant to them to be a Parsi and a Zoroastrian. Interviewees were selected, not because they were necessarily well-known, but because they spoke clearly, succinctly, entertainingly and representatively. In other words we tried to present the community as it actually appears to two genuinely interested outsiders: Jan Pester (the director) and myself.

I have of course read (Ms Divecha's) letter many times and I must confess that I still do not know whether she objects to our program because she believes that it misrepresents the community or whether, as she goes on to say, because "it revealed that which lay at the heart of the community."

(Ms Divecha) mentions a Parsi woman who talks "in a most crude and vulgar language amidst smiles and giggles" on her part. I am at a loss to see what it is that this woman does to cause such offence other than the use of the word 'bullshit' on one occasion. This woman (Hilla) was selected because she represents the widely held lack of reverence for 'orthodox' Zoroastrianism as it is found in Bombay today. She expresses the opinion that the religion is filled with mumbo-jumbo that is irrelevant to the modern Parsis. She finds it difficult to believe that Zoroaster would approve if he were alive today. That was included because it represents an opinion, heard from many Parsis, that Parsi belief is going astray, getting lost, is beginning no longer to represent the spirit of the message of Zoroaster.

I shall list all the other contributions that Hilla made because I find it difficult to see how she causes such offence.

- She comments that little or no explanation of the navjote ceremony is given and that this may contribute to the alienation some Parsis feel from their religion.

- She says that the Parsis had a reputation for honesty which the British liked, but also that the British may have been motivated in their relationship with the Parsis

by the fact that the Parsis are a small and therefore vulnerable community. She says that the British stood to gain by having Indian agents to deal with the other Indian communities.

- She says how proud she is that the Parsis have looked after their own community so effectively over the years. But she also comments that while the housing colonies are of such a high standard, the fact that they are colonies, physically isolated from the other communities, may have contributed to the Parsi "cliquish" mentality which she observes.

- She is surprised by the survival of the practice of women "sitting aside" during their periods. She finds her mother's attitude to this particularly irritating. "Otherwise," she says, "she's a very modern kind of a woman."

I read (Ms Divecha's) letter with some surprise. I still do not really understand how (Ms Divecha) concludes that Hilla is "unjust and mindless, self-opinionated and arrogant or immature and irresponsible or disloyal and ungrateful." To me her only "sin" appears to be that she represents forthright opinions that (Ms Divecha) must know are held by many Parsis.

The director and myself believe that Zoroastrianism is an important religion

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that has in the past contributed much to the spiritual development of the world. We feel that our program says this. We feel that the Parsis are a truly remarkable community whose contribution to the culture of the Indian subcontinent and indeed of the whole world, far exceeds anything one could expect of such a tiny community. We feel our program says this. We feel that the Golden Age of the Parsi community is on the wane and that complacency and divisions within the Parsi community are jeopardizing the future of Zoroaster's message to the world. We feel our program says this.

I am very pleased that (Ms Divecha) has picked up on the point of the plight of the priests. Any outsider who has any interest in Parsis and Zoroastrianism would quickly find out about the parlous, penniless state of the Zoroastrian priesthood. The Zoroastrian priests must surely represent the oldest continuous tradition in the world, many thousands of years old. The Parsis are among the more privileged communities of the world. There are some Parsis who claim to be trying to do something for the priests. But if you speak to most priests it would appear that whatever is being done is simply not enough to stop the rot. To an outsider it seems that the Parsis are prepared to stand by and watch this precious, irreplaceable resource just wither away for lack of funds. We feel our program says this. Is (Ms Divecha) advocating that we should have kept quiet about it? Surely not!

Before ending this by now quite lengthy comment, I would remind read-

ers of *Parsiana* that the viewer is that irreligious Briton. The parallels and commonalities between your tiny community and our relatively large one are many. In particular one can see that material progress has an effect upon the unity of a community and the integrity of its religion. In considering the condition of the Parsis, there is also food for thought for the English viewer.

The program inevitably provoked many letters and phone calls to this office. All were from people with names that suggest they are Parsis. Only one (which did not go into detail) expressed displeasure with the program; all the rest were complimentary and enthusiastic, mostly requesting to purchase video tapes to keep or give to relatives.

I know that the program is flawed — there is simply too much to say about the Parsis in 52 minutes. If and when you see the program, please remember that it was made with enormous affection for the Parsis.

Lastly, I would like to take the opportunity to thank all of those individuals and organizations, too numerous to mention, without whose help the program could not have been made, particularly the trustees of the Bombay Parsi Panchayet who were most helpful throughout.

"Membership rules"

I wish to clarify the controversy which has arisen regarding the membership rules of the Poona Parsee Panchayat, as reported in "Membership rules," (Readers' Forum, *Parsiana*, August 1990).

An English translation of the extract of the constitution of the Poona Parsee Panchayat reads, "Any Parsi or Irani male or female, following the Zoroastrian religion, can become a member of the Panchayat. However, if that Parsi Zoroastrian is married to a woman of another community, or who even has such a woman as his mistress, then, he, his mistress and his children are not eligible for membership."

Although the constitution does not specifically mention that a Zoroastrian male, who has a Zoroastrian keep or mistress will not be debarred from membership, by inference, it automatically signifies this. In any case, there is not a single case in Pune where such a man has ever been debarred, specially so in today's age, where a Zoroastrian male keeping a 'girl friend' or living with her, is a common occurrence, and both he, his Zoroas-

trian mistress and her children are all eligible for membership of the Anjuman.

Thus the contention of Cmdr L. S. Mehta is quite correct, when he says that, whereas a Zoroastrian, who has a Zoroastrian keep or *rakhat* and her children, are all made members of the Anjuman, he is prevented from membership, just because he is lawfully wedded to a non-Parsi woman. The tragedy is that the board of trustees are not willing to do anything about it, nor are they inclined to change this absurd clause in their constitution, in spite of the fact that even the orthodox Bombay Parsi Panchayet (BPP) has done so. Leave alone not debarbing a male, the BPP does not debar even a Zoroastrian female married to a non-Parsi male from becoming a member of its Anjuman.

The greater tragedy however is that the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India is not willing to get itself involved in this problem, and is afraid to touch it even with a barge pole, stating that this is not their problem. I want to know then whose problem is it? It is under these circumstances that I am appealing through *Parsiana* to all Zoroastrians in the country, to voice forcefully their opinion in this respect. The only other alternative is for Cdr Mehta to take the matter to the court, which will still further lower the prestige of the community in the country, which is already low because of the recent case of the late Roxan Shah, whose mortal remains were not admitted to the towers of silence. Let us stop becoming the butt of ridicule — the *bawajee* — of the entire nation.

Brig N. B. GRANT (Retd)
Pune

As an ex-trustee of the Poona Parsee Panchayat (PPP) who vacated his seat on the current board of trustees on transfer to Bombay, I was pained to read some of the vague charges levelled by Cmdr. L. S. Mehta, IN (Retd) not only in the columns of *Parsiana* ("Membership rules," Readers' Forum, *Parsiana*, August 1990) but also in one of the local papers of Pune. I understand this outburst is a result of the rejection of Cmdr Mehta's application for membership, and rightly so, by the trustees of the PPP.

Today, a vast majority of the custodians of our Parsi properties have acquired a lifetime right to rule over the destiny of the community and its properties without any accountability. On closer scrutiny of

continued on page 36

Fapers

Ladies' Tailors

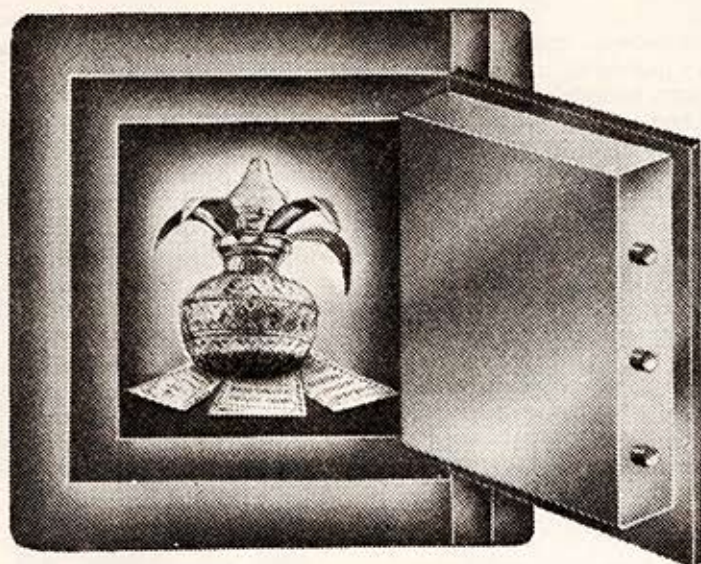
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Events and Personalities

Golwalla absolved

In his capacity as chairman of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP), Dr Aspi Golwalla successfully weathered yet another legal wrangle when the Bombay High Court rejected a criminal application filed by Rustom Navdar seeking leave to appeal against the judgement of the Metropolitan Magistrate at the twenty-third court at Esplanade. The Magistrate had acquitted Golwalla of the charge of defamation levelled against him by Navdar.

The case of Navdar, who had to shift to the Panday Sanatorium when his building collapsed in 1976, was cited by noted advocate Ardeshtir Katrak in a letter to *The Bombay Samachar* of April 15, 1984, informs a note from H. N. Vakil of Mulla and Mulla and Cragie, Blunt and Caroe. Katrak had alleged inequity in the allotment of Punchayet flats and noted that Navdar, who had registered on the BPP waiting list in 1952, had not yet been allotted a flat.

Responding to *The Samachar* on behalf of the Punchayet, Golwalla had explained that during the Punchayet's investigation of the case it had been alleged that Navdar had given up his old flat for a "fairly substantial consideration." Though Golwalla clarified that "this is verbal information which is not possible to verify and which has been desired by Mr Katrak," Navdar filed a case for defamation against Golwalla. Maintaining that the article was written not in a personal capacity but as chairman of the BPP and published in good faith for the public good, the Magistrate absolved Golwalla of the charge, notes Vakil's write-up.

Dismissing the application, Justice Dinshaw Mehta of the Bombay High Court held, "The letter has to be read as a whole. I do not think Navdar has been defamed in view of the clarification offered by Dr Aspi Golwalla. The matter therefore does not deserve to be admitted. This matter has been prolonged in the trial court for six long years and I

think it is time that the curtain was rung down on this unfortunate episode."

Madhu Patel and H. N. Vakil instructed by Mulla and Mulla appeared for Golwalla. S. J. Irani represented Navdar.

Madras dar-e-meher's 80

The eightieth anniversary of the Jal Phiroj Clubwala Dar-e-Meher in Madras was celebrated in the presence of the governor of Tamil Nadu Surjit Singh Barnala and the High Priest of Poona Dastur Hormazdiar Noshervan Dastur. The two-day celebrations on July 18 and 19, 1990 included a jashan ceremony, an elocution competition and an entertainment program. While the dinner on the first day was hosted by the Madras Parsi Zarhosti Anjuman on the second day it was the Madras Parsi Association that played host, according to the invitation.

by the President of India, the chief minister of Tamil Nadu and others. Stalwarts of the community who were associated with the agiary were commended: the Madras panthaky Hoshang Bhandara was presented a shawl as also Ms Freany Grant, the only surviving member who was present at the consecration ceremony of the Dar-e-Meher and Minoo Belgamvala, the chairman of the trust. Mani and Jehangir Clubwala were given a silver salver each in appreciation of their commitment to the Dar-e-Meher and the Madras Parsis.

While the ownership of the agiary vests with the Anjuman, as per the trust deed there are five trustees (two nominated from the Clubwala family and three from the Anjuman) managing its affairs.

The festivities were organized by the Jal Phiroj Clubwala Dar-e-Meher Eightieth Year Celebration Committee compris-



From left:
Bhandara,
Dastur, Barnala
and Belgamvala
at the eightieth
anniversary of
the Madras
Dar-e-Meher

The governor who was the chief guest on the first day released a souvenir specially brought out on the occasion. The souvenir featured a historical write-up on the agiary, the Madras Parsi Anjuman and the Madras Parsi Association in addition to an account of the celebrations planned. It also contained messages sent



ing Belgamvala, chairman; Dr Meherji M. Cooper, vice chairman; Ms Mani J. Clubwala and Pervez S. Mulla, honorary secretaries; Jamshed F. Madan, honorary treasurer; Ms Mehru M. Belgamvala, Ms Persis F. Dadabhoy, Ms Dhun D. Dalal, Ms D. B. Madan, Ms Dilla N. Nalladaroo, Ms K. D. Parakh, Ms Zavera K. Shahuna, Darius S. Bahadurji, Byramshaw P. Byramshaw, F. L. Dadabhoy, Russie K. Dastur, Soli J. Daruwala, Jimmy M. Gotla, Jamshed C. Patel, Noshir J. Ratnagar and Minoo N. Siganporia, members at large. The late Arjasp F. Taraporewala together with Dorab B. Madan, Keku D. Parakh, Jehangir K. Clubwala and Nariman F. Mogrelia, were the patrons on this occasion.

The first committee constituted to raise funds for the establishment of an atash adarian in Madras had made noteworthy efforts. But it was in 1900, when Phiroj Clubwala, in memory of his late son Jal, offered to provide a building on the main road in Royapuram for use as an agiary, that the project gained momentum. Clubwala also gifted to the Anjuman a block in the agiary compound for the resident priests, the souvenir mentions.

Taleyarkhan soldiers on

In recognition of his unwavering stand in the cause of national integration and communal harmony, Homi Taleyarkhan, member of the Government of India's Minorities Commission, was presented the Shiromani National Award at a special function at Madras' Chola Sheraton Hotel on August 25, 1990. The Tamil Nadu governor Surjit Singh Barnala presented the award and inaugurated the symposium on "National Integration, the need of the hour," where Taleyarkhan delivered the keynote address.

Highlighting the need to shore up the nation's moral fiber in terms of secularism, spirituality, integrity, courage, freedom within the self-imposed limitations of democracy, Taleyarkhan said these must be coupled with employment opportunities and economic satisfaction, literacy, education and general welfare in order to be meaningful. Above all, he stressed the need to bypass provocation in all its forms.

The Shiromani Award was instituted 20 years ago to honor eminent people from all walks of life. Among the earlier recipients were the former Vice President of India, Mohammad Hidayatullah, Mother Teresa and Field Marshal Sam

Manekshaw. The presentation ceremonies are conducted in different parts of India to stress the Award's national character.

An event that made up in warmth what it lacked in glitter, was the welcome address presented to Taleyarkhan by the Nilagiri Badaga Mahajana Sangha at Ootacamund on July 8, 1990. The Badagas — a Nilgiri tribe with a unique ethnic, linguistic, cultural background — were not listed among scheduled tribes until February this year. The citation presented to Taleyarkhan notes how he had realized their helpless condition and recommended to the Prime Minister in 1987 that they be included in the list. Accordingly, the Badagas submitted detailed memoranda to the President and the Prime Minister and to the chairman of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Commission. The president and office bearers of the Sangha recall Taleyarkhan's continuing efforts to help them achieve the goal. "You have become the godfather and the savior of the



Badaga community," notes the citation reverentially.

The Badagas have named a rice farm at Hasansur in Periyar district after Taleyarkhan and while he was there induced him to lay the foundation of several school buildings which Taleyarkhan says he agreed to do on the condition that the schools serve all other tribals in the area as well.

In the meanwhile, the Zoroastrian stalwart has not been silent on the needs of his own community. A press release issued by him on September 7, 1990 has been noted by the *Indian Express* of September 8. The *Express* report quotes Taleyarkhan to the effect that "in the cur-

rent moves for facilities for all economically weaker sections, the only officially recognized religious minority which was not included for consideration was the Zoroastrian community."

Contrary to popular impressions, the percentage of poor Parsis is quite considerable, notes Taleyarkhan's release. He has also referred to the plight of Parsi children who fail to get admission into professional colleges despite obtaining high marks at the HSC (Higher Secondary Certificate) examination and expressed the hope that in view of the community's long, pioneering tradition in India, its economic and educational needs will be attended to.

Ganjia's coveted honor

Inspector Feroze Sorabji Ganjia of the Detection of Crime Branch was presented the Indian Police Medal for Meritorious Service by the president of India R. Venkataraman on the eve of the country's independence day on August 15, 1990, notes a press release.

During his 22 years of association with the police force, Ganjia has succeeded in unravelling many crimes. Recently, he has been credited for: detecting the plan to assassinate noted industrialist Nusli Wadia, chairman of Bombay Dyeing and Manufacturing Company Limited; nabbing the culprits responsible for the murder of the national kabaddi



Taleyarkhan: improve moral fiber

Far left: Ganjia with wife Silloo and daughter Mahafirin

player Surendra Yerunkar; arresting a notorious gang leader from Lalbaug who was reportedly involved in a couple of murder cases... His seizures have included sophisticated fire arms and lethal weapons, contraband such as scotch whiskey and raw materials for 'killer brew' meant for bootleggers in Gujarat. He has succeeded in arresting shoplifters, a gang of Baluchi women involved in burglary and a couple of quack doctors who had set up a nursing home in Kalina, notes his bio data.

His efforts in detecting the gold mint robbery case in 1980 in which a goldsmith was robbed of gold bars worth Rs 3.5 lakhs won him the Best Police Offi-

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cer of the Month award. Later he was given two advance increments by the Commissioner of Police, Greater Bombay for detecting altogether 34 cases of property offences amounting to crores of rupees. So far the 45-year-old inspector has earned 104 good entries and cash rewards amounting to Rs 29,134, mentions his bio data.

He was reportedly the only candidate from Ahmednagar district to be selected for the 1968 batch of police sub-inspectors. He subsequently did a two-year course at the Police Training College. After his probationary period he has worked as detection officer, police inspector (crime) and later at the Detection of Crime Branch where he is presently serving.

In a letter to *Parsiana*, Ganjia acknowledges that he could perform his "arduous and irregular duties excellently" only because of his wife Silloo's "understanding and cooperation."

One of the remaining seven Parsi police officers in the entire state of Maharashtra, Ganjia adds, "I have always made it a point to give professional advice to needy Parsis on matters concerning police issues and tried my level best to redress their grievances," further reads his letter.

Moos news

The only Indian to have reportedly travelled to over 130 countries, Meher Heroyce Moos was given a special felicitation on the occasion of her completing 25 years with Air India, notes *The Afternoon Despatch and Courier* (The ADC) of August 16, 1990. Currently district sales manager — sales promotion (Western India) of the national carrier, Moos is considered the airline's most effective public relations officer. She has officiated as India's tourism representative in Italy, Greece and Malta.

Apart from the series of luncheons, dinners and cocktails that were lined up as part of the celebrations, the Dynasty Culture Club had organized shows — *Leisure Pleasure in Europe and UK* on September 9 and *This is Your Life, Meher Moos*. Apart from that, famous couturiers have even offered to dress her up, reports *The ADC* of August 2. Ensemble have designed a sari called Tree of Life; three pairs of shoes were created by Joy and the makeup touches will be provided by Touch of Joy. Also, the British Council Division invited her to present one of her slide shows titled *A Journey to the*

Moos (inset) as viewed by artist Mario Miranda.
Courtesy: The Afternoon Despatch and Courier



Antarctic, the paper reports.

Her sojourns in the Arctic circle, the three Laplands of Scandinavia, the Amazon jungles, Bolivia, Peru, Siberia, Mongolia, the Gobi desert, China, the Far East, Indonesia, Melanesia, Polynesia and all over the South Pacific have resulted in a lot of slides which she has been presenting to audiences for nearly 20 years.

The 45-year-old executive claims that she has managed to continue as a keen traveller because "her needs are few...I can do without food for 48 hours and more, I can also pack fast and move on."

Narrating her experiences in the far off regions, whether meeting pygmies or penguins, reformed cannibals or putting her hand in a shark's mouth, Moos enjoys relating the unusual foods she has eaten. The list includes monkey, porcupine, bush rat, dragonflies in New Guinea, camel meat in Mongolia, dog's meat in Nagaland and bees and wasps in Mizoram.

After schooling at St Joseph's Convent at Panchgani and completing her bachelor of arts from Bombay's Sophia College, Moos joined Air India as an air hostess and moved on to an administrative job later. Rather than travel the same routes to America and Singapore repeatedly, she preferred to go to exotic and forbidden places. "With my middle-class background I'd never have been able to travel as much as I've done if it hadn't been for (the) free passage from Air India," acknowledges the globetrotter in *The ADC* write-up.

Ushta-té's 'sweet' future

The Calcutta-based Dadina group's new venture Ushta-té Biotech Industries was due to start commercial production in end August, notes *BusinessWorld*, June 20-July 3, 1990. Fructose, glucose and dextrose compounds for food-related applications, and animal feed were to be manufactured at its plant in Cuddalore, Tamil Nadu at an estimated cost of 20 crore rupees, notes the write-up. Viewed as a major innovation in starch sweeteners, this product will be aimed at manufacturers of soft drinks, fruit-based drinks, bakery products, confectionery, pharmaceuticals and processed foods. Companies like Voltas, Lipton and Spic have already shown interest in Ushta-té's products, reports *BusinessWorld*.

The group's managing director Pesi N. Dadina, a specialist in organic and nuclear technology, considers tapioca, the raw material used in this production, to have immense possibilities. Often referred to as "the poor man's crop," tapioca happens to be one of the most important sources of starch, Dadina explains. Collaborators for this new venture will be Starcosa GmbH of West Germany which will supply Ushta-té the process knowhow.

The Dadina group which hitherto specialized in construction work is believed to have executed orders in the engineering field worth Rs 20 crores until March 1990.

Originally it was Pesi's brother Kersi who ran the construction company. When Kersi met with a fatal accident, Pesi, who had earlier joined him after working with ICI for eight years, took over the reins. Now having diversified into the biotech business Pesi feels he will be pursuing a goal which is more akin to his "own line."

Compiled by Roxana H. Kaka



Programmed to bind

Gustasp Irani

Dr Zareen Karani Lam has developed a unique masters degree program in intercultural relationships

Zareen Karani Lam, her hair and sari crisp, apologises for keeping you waiting; her flight into Poona from Delhi had been delayed the previous night. Later we learn that she had been to the capital on assignment for the US government. Her task? Briefing the US ambassador to India, Bill Clam, and his wife, Judit, on cross-cultural relations between the two countries. "I was helping them see some of the Indian values...helping them look at the US values they are tuned into and getting them to see how an Indian may see their style of functioning in an Indian cultural backdrop," says Karani Lam. She probably has the best qualifications to undertake such a task. The director of the International Studies Department of Lesley College, Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA, she has founded and developed there a unique masters degree program in intercultural relationships. "It is the only program of its kind in America that teaches people from all professions to deal with diverse people and cultures and promotes better communication and understanding... I plant the seed of what I deeply believe in," says Karani Lam.

The scope of the program, Karani Lam clarifies, goes beyond mere differences in nationality. "It covers differences in age, gender, ethics, culture... We help people develop tools to see that different points of view exist and (there are ways to bridge) these differences." The program draws doctors, lawyers,

engineers, authors, people from all walks of life and from 27 different nations. Karani Lam cites for instance how a doctor may benefit from the program. "We help him to see the patient's point of view. It's important that he tunes into the healing mechanism: the inputs that make a patient respond, the working of his mind... there is a cross-cultural understanding that is applicable in any situation."

UNIDO (United Nations Industrial Development Organization) in Vienna, like other world bodies, has recognized the value of Karani Lam's work and has invited her to conduct training programs for four groups of its senior managers on interpersonal and intercultural skills in management. DuPont, the giant US-based chemical company, has repeatedly drawn on her expertise. Two years ago when Gene Kreazberger and his wife came to take charge of operations in India, Karani Lam undertook their cross-cultural training. "They have been the most forward-looking couple I have worked with...and they value the Indian culture," she observes.

Not surprisingly, the dynamic Parsi lady has been elected president of the International Society for Intercultural Education, Training and Research, a professional organization of specialists from several countries working towards better communication between people of diverse cultures.

Giving us a peek into the nature of her

work, Karani Lam refers to different perceptions of life in the US and in India: "What we (Indians) might put across as respect, is viewed as submission in America. It is a respect which is instilled in us by Indian society, in our schools, at home ... it is something an American will not understand." Another aspect is time: "We (in the US) call it a monochromatic approach — a straight line. Time is seen as a commodity. You have to take it, catch it; if not, it is lost, wasted. There is a world back in the West that is regulated by this little thing on the hand — the wristwatch. In the East, there is a polychromatic approach to time. They view life differently. Many factors impinge on a situation and time is only one of them. So it is not a serious matter if you are late. In the West being late is seen as an insult..."

She shows us a sample of her training material, a collection of computer illustrated charts that take on significance only when she starts deciphering their meaning. "I am a very visual person," she confesses. Her vision goes beyond illustrations; she deals with ideas and ways of condensing them into reality. She recalls how the intercultural masters degree program came about: "A lot of students would come to me and ask where they could learn these skills (intercultural management). There were a lot of programs that one could suggest but no (single) program that pulled it all together." That was

till Karani Lam did the job. The masters degree program that she developed covers two years of study; the first devoted to the core courses, the second to areas of specialization. "It is not a program of only intellectual skills; it is a program of attitudes," says Karani Lam.

One regret that Karani Lam voices is that she has not had any Parsi students. "I am willing to help (Parsis enroll) in any way I can, but not with scholarships," she offers. According to her a student should be able to finance the first year of his studies which — her fingers fly over a calculator — works out to about Rs 3.5 lakhs. This, incidentally would apply for most graduate study programs in the US. By the second year the student should be able to land an internship which would generate enough finance to see him/her through to graduation. The pay off, Karani Lam assures us, is worth the investment of time and money. A good student could expect to earn about \$ 1,000 a day. Most others would earn in the range of \$ 300 to \$ 500 a day. "But, of course, you don't get assignments every day of the month," she clarifies.

An Indian student applying for the masters program should have at least 16 years of study behind him — the twelfth standard plus four years... an Indian master's degree, preferably. For those frightened by the Rs 3.5 lakh figure, Karani Lam has a word of advice: "Don't give up." What better example than her own exploits? "I was 33-years-old and with a son when I first went abroad. I applied

"We help people develop tools to see that different points of view exist"

to 60 different organizations and trusts and got scholarships from 23, enough to see me through my first nine months." The effort consumed a full year of her time, commuting up and down from Poona, where she lived, to Bombay, where most of the trusts were located.

In 1982, when her father Major General N. Karani (Retd) fell ill, his daughter returned to be beside him. "The Parsis

in America did not understand why I returned to India, but for three years I stayed with him. Then five years ago, I went back to the States and started all over again." From scratch she worked her way up to director of the International Studies Department of her College.

But that is only part of her story and achievements. She has conducted a number of high-level management workshops in India and abroad, particularly Sweden. In 1989 she was invited by the International Heart Transplant Surgeons to give the plenary address at their conference at Munich. And yes, she cherishes her membership of the Rotary Club of Cambridge, Massachusetts: "Once it was a men-only organization. To come back and address the local body was a thrill."

The list of her achievements is long but Karani Lam makes special mention of her work with the medical world. The Beth Israel Hospital and the Brigham and Women's Hospital, both in Boston, are mentioned as instances. "It is the influence of my father," she confirms. Major

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General Karani was the Commandant of the Armed Forces Medical College apart from other senior positions he held with the defence services of the country.

But the influence goes deeper. According to Karani Lam, she has been greatly influenced by her parents' way of life — the Zoroastrian way of life. The Zoroastrian religion, Karani Lam believes, is significant in the intercultural context too. She tells us of an occasion when one of her students asked her to explain the religion. After she had talked of its positive approach to life, its openness, its caring for the happiness of others, its charity, equality among the sexes and more, the student replied: "Your religion seems to reflect the intercultural philosophy; no wonder you are in this field." Adds Karani Lam: "This is particularly so when the *Gathas* tell us to keep our minds open to the context, to truth. I think Zoroastrianism ties into the intercultural value system very well. I think we Parsis have a blend of both the West and the East."

Yet, the community, according to Karani Lam, has its problems — the lack of dynamism in the Parsi male in particular. "It's sad to say it, but I think today the Parsi women show greater initiative. I can't help feeling that since the older generation was so successful intellectually and otherwise, the next generation sat back on its laurels. The males of the community do not have the same drive and the same social conscience. There is no longer the same commitment to charity which is really a commitment to social consciousness." There is the real problem of the rot being terminal for, according to Karani Lam, values are caught not taught. "Children get their values by emulating how their parents live."

Of her own son, Karani Lam is openly proud. "My constant inspiration has been my son," she declares and he apparently has 'caught' the values that matter. One of his aims, and to him it is important, is to marry a Zoroastrian girl from India. No, Karani Lam is not bigoted about the issue of girls marrying out of the community and the problems that follow. If anything, her stand on the matter is liberal. "It is a shame that we let them (children of non-Parsi fathers and Parsi mothers) go out of the community. My own belief is that you should welcome them into the fold."

Probing the issue of conversion further, Karani Lam adds: "The community needs to decide what is the essence of

being Zoroastrian. To me it is the religious values that are important, not the legal definitions. I don't see religion as an organization that gives you access to funds. If it is only trust funds that is holding the community together, then it is not worth it. If we want to survive as a community, then it is our pride in our values that must hold us together... I am sure that Zoroaster or Ahura Mazda did not mean us to close our doors to a way of life that is helpful to humanity. Our religion was given to us joyfully to share with others."

On the issue of intercommunity marriages Karani Lam holds the community responsible. According to her there are two factors that make Parsis look outside their community for life partners. One, the lack of role models in their own homes and two, the failure of parents to make the effort to get the young to interact with young members of their own community. "Even in America they have started matrimonial organizations, but more efforts are needed." Karani Lam is willing and ready to extend her expertise and assistance. Earlier she was the vice president of the Zoroastrian Association of Greater Boston Area (ZAGBA) but she feels that she can be of greater assistance to the community settled in the United States of America. There is the problem of the Iranian Zoroastrian and Parsi Zoroastrian divide in the USA that a little intercultural therapy can cure. "The basic problem is the rigidity of both sides which creates the infighting and rifts. If both could be able to see the other's point of view..."

Back in India too, she feels that she can be of help to the community. The Khoja community (Muslim followers of Aga Khan) recognizes her ability and has sought her assistance on a number of occasions to conduct counselling programs for their youth, be it preparing them mentally for their examinations, parenthood, marriage... "Other communities use my services better than my own," she laments.

Are the leaders of the community listening? Karani Lam is committed to her roots and it is a commitment that is expressed in deeds. For instance, every year she returns home to Poona to spend time with her parents. Her professional skills as an intercultural consultant she sees as an extension of the Zoroastrian values that she cherishes. There is a simple way of getting her to commit these skills to the community — ask.

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Chicago Zoroastrians

Bomi Damkevala leads the new board of directors of the Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Chicago (ZAC) for the 1990-92 term, informs their July newsletter. Elected at the annual general meeting on June 10, 1990 the team includes vice president Aspy Daboo, secretary Pesi Vazifdar, treasurer Ms Amavaz Elavia, assistant secretary Arda-E-Viraf Minocherhomji and assistant treasurer Behram Daboo. Ms Dilshad Antia, Shahroakh Bankwalla, Ms Aban Daboo, Ms Shireen Daboo, Ms Aban Grant, Cyrus Grant, Rumi Jamsetjee, Hosi Mehta, Keikhosrow Mobed, Dr (Ms) Mehroo Patel, Ms Roshan Patel, Minoo Press, Rohinton and Ms Roshan Rivetna are directors at large. High Priest Ervad (Dr) Kersey Antia and immediate past president Kayomars Mehta also continue on the board.

ZAC's membership has risen from 50 percent of the local community to 95 percent, informed Mehta in a message published in the June newsletter. Priding itself on its spirit of cooperation, not competition, ZAC has "demonstrated to the world that we have an association that works and works well," Mehta noted. In the May newsletter Mehta had urged the Zoroastrians of Chicago to fill in and return the mail ballot regarding the proposed ZAC constitutional amendment. Noting that the "current ZAC constitution is out of date and must be amended," Mehta had noted that the changes will incorporate "current practices and conditions with which ZAC has operated successfully for the last 12 years." The amendment will include a section for the Arbab Rustam Guiv Darbe Mehr and the cemetery lots which did not feature in the ZAC constitution hitherto.

"The Zoroastrian ethic of hard work and perseverance is alive and well among our brothers and sisters in the New World," notes the October newsletter detailing those honored at the Seventh North American Zoroastrian Congress with the investiture of the FEZANA (Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America) Community Awards — Ms Paridokh and Arbab Mehraban Zar-toshty for community service, Ms Sabar

Patel for humanitarian work, Zubin Mehta for lifetime achievement, Ms Roshan and Rohinton Rivetna as outstanding Zoroastrians, Meherwan Boyce for professional achievement, Neville Bilimoria for being an excellent student and Sarosh Kanga as an exceptional young Zoroastrian.

ZAC has collected \$ 8,452 in the kitty of the Gatha Translation Fund, announces the September newsletter. The project to translate the *Gathas* into modern Persian has been conceived by Iranians across North America — Dr Keikhosrow Harvesf of Florida, Dr Rostam Sarfeh of California and Dr Mehraban Sharvini of British Columbia. ZAC has been appointed custodian of its funds.

The prestigious North Side Real Estate Board (NSREB) — the biggest in Illinois — has appointed Rusi Gandhi, of Rusi Gandhi Realty, vice chairman of its political action/legislative/tax committee, notes the September newsletter. The announcement was made by president Susan Cooney of the NSREB on behalf of the organization which comprises 650 member firms and over 6,000 agents. Gandhi is the first Asian to be appointed vice chairman of this busy committee which monitors new and proposed legislation in terms of its likely impact on the buying, selling and owning of real estate and those in the profession. The committee liaises between its own body and the Chicago Association of Real Estate Boards, the mayor, aldermen and legislators while maintaining good public relations with people at large.

Porus Dadabhoy has been nominated the Democratic Party's treasurer of DuPage County. He is expected to face the polls to the county legislature in November 1990, informs the ZAC's October newsletter.

Farobag Cooper, music director of the Chicago Philharmonia and artistic director of the Chicago Prism Music Festival has been featured in two advertisements produced for television entitled "Live from Chicago — the American renaissance," notes a University of Chicago press release. Sponsored by the Illinois

Board of Tourism, the advertisements were scheduled for nationwide TV release.

Mandel Hall on October 6, 1990 was the venue for a concert, noted ZAC's October newsletter, with Cooper leading the University of Chicago Symphony Orchestra through its rendition of Barber's *Adagio for Strings*, Borodin's *Nocturne* and Tchaikovsky's *Serenade* and *Souvenir de Florence*.

Journalist Frank Kourt writing about Oak Park's Ethnic Festival in *Montage*, May 16, 1990 zooms in on Dr (Ms) Mehroo Patel as one of the key contributors to the Festival year after year. "She and her family have organized exhibits and food tasting experiences which reflect her Parsi Zoroastrian ethnicity," Patel told Kourt, "The Ethnic Festival helps me to project our ethnicity to the world we live in. It makes our children feel that they are not the odd ones out and it helps the community to learn about us."

Mehroo and Minu Patel moved to Oak Park 23 years ago. One result of the Festival, Patel told Kourt, is that it inspired her family — which includes daughter Deena and son Cyrus — to bring out a cookbook in 1988 titled *Parsee Culinary Artist -- The American Way*.

Other Zoroastrians in Oak Park area include Aban and Cyrus Grant — Cyrus teaches at Rosary College in River Forest — architect Kamal Katrak and Zarine Weil.

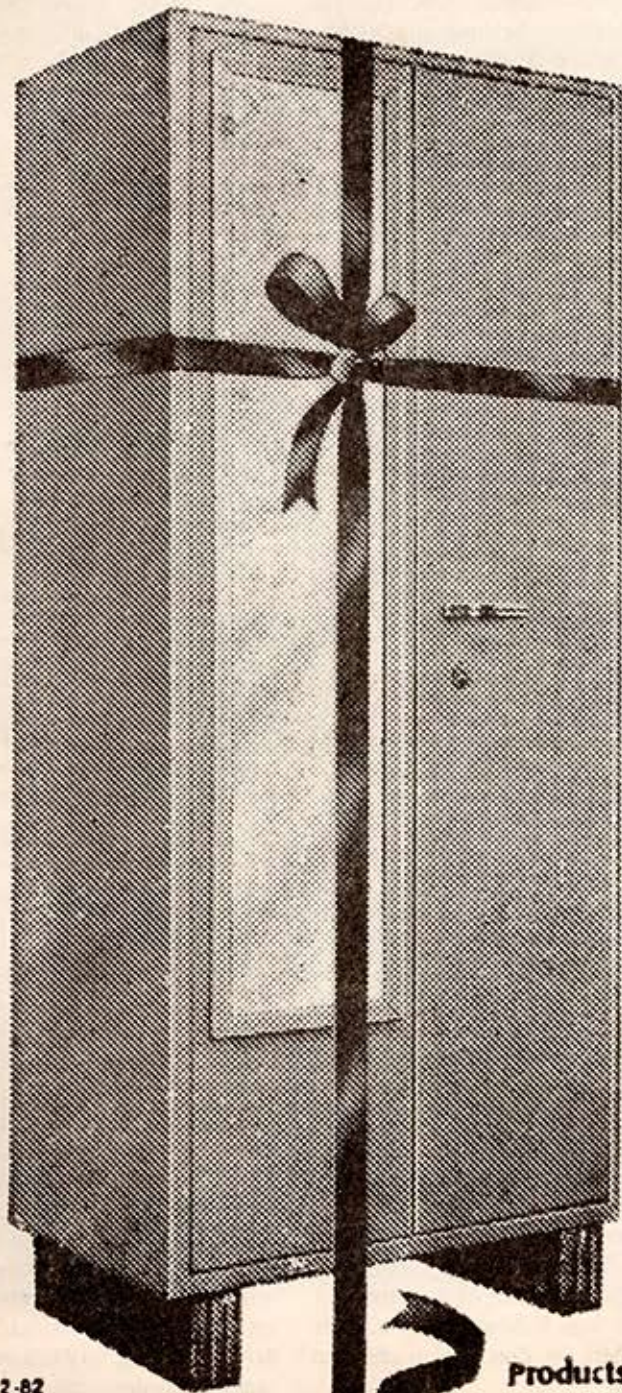
Temple to Zarathushtra

The peaks and plateaux that make up the 200 mile long, eight mile wide and one mile deep phenomenon known as the Grand Canyon in North America have been named after Hindu, Hebrew, Zoroastrian, Greek and Egyptian deities and are known as temples, informs management consultant Aspi Moddie in a letter to *Parsiana*.

The largest intrusive body of igneous rock exposed is the pink colored Zoroaster Granite, informs the book *Grand Canyon Perspectives — a guide to the Canyon scenery* by professor of geology W. Kenneth Hamblin and professor of zoology Joseph Murphy.

It took the imagination of Captain C. E. Dutton, a geologist of the 1870s and a

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A view of the Grand Canyon including
Brahma and Zoroaster Temples

Photo: Aspi Moddie

student of ancient religions, to name them thus, writes Moddie. A quote from Dutton describes the Canyon as a "great innovation in modern ideas of scenery," one that needs a special culture, devotion of time, patience and long familiarity for its appreciation.

Moddie describes his personal experience at the site: "Early (in the) morning I went again to drink it all in, in solitude. With not a soul around, I recited the *Ashem Vohu* and *Yatha Ahu Vairyo* several times. Then, sensing another presence, I turned to see I had company — a deer. Here was a moment of Eden, of time at the beginning, alone in the heart of bustling America: the deer and I, the spacious canyon and Zoroaster's temple in the sun. I later found that many Americans and Zoroastrians did not know of Zoroaster's temple in the Grand Canyon; fewer still in Asia and elsewhere, probably."

Volcanic upthrusts, soil and wind erosion over the ages "have carved this rock history going back two billion years," writes Moddie. The geological shapes — hills, towers, spires in red sandstone and light limestone — are said to unfold like great works of painting and architecture in sun and shadow.

The world's oldest exposed rocks are reportedly within the granite gorge of the Grand Canyon — of which one massive peak is known as the temple of Zoroaster. These rocks eroded to form a steep-walled, V-shaped gorge through which the Colorado River flows, explain Hamblin and Murphy.

Zoroaster's Granite is said to represent a period of igneous activity subsequent to the formation of the Brahma and Vishnu Schists but before the deposition of the rest of the Grand Canyon series. Erosion by tributary rivers has isolated segments of the main plateau to form detached mesas — isolated, flat headed elevations, smaller than plateaux. "As mesas diminish in size, they become small buttes which stand up above the surrounding surface in the form of a pyramid or temple," note the professors.

Facing the challenge

Four generations of a Parsi family have settled in Syracuse, USA, living within a 10 mile ambit, informs Aspi Moddie. The immigrants have settled there between the past 10 to 20 years branching into such varied careers as education, engineering, computers, film-making and travel agency business. The family has been growing in size and status with "inner Zoroastrian consciousness yet becoming a part of American society in work and social contexts," notes Moddie who terms their low profile steadfastness through hardship and stringency as "a micro response to the challenges of migration."

Remembering Hataria

The Arbab Rustom Guiv Dar-E-Meher of Los Angeles was filled to overflowing as more than 500 Zoroastrians gathered to witness a memorial jashan organized by the Council of Iranian Mobeds of North America (CIMNA) to commemorate the death centenary of Manekji Limji Hataria, the author of Zoroastrian amelioration in Iran, informs a press release. The ceremony was led by well-known Iranian philanthropist Meheraban Zartoshty who was elected the Council's president earlier this year. Eight Iranian mobeds joined Zartoshty in the performance of the ritual.

The jashan was followed by a navjote ceremony when six Zoroastrian children were initiated.

Apart from the speeches in Persian and English, CIMNA celebrated the first anni-

versary of its formation with the publication of a small bilingual book titled *Payk-e-Kankash-Mobedan* (The Messenger of the Mobeds' Council) containing a life sketch of Hataria and 100 points, one each to mark the 100 years since his death.

Mobed Firooz Azargashab's translation of the *Gathas* in Persian and English, published by CIMNA, was officially released that day, adds the release.

News from academia

By the age of 25, Ms Betty Dara Marchant has successfully taken the final professional examination conducted by the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales, notes a write-up from the family. Being also a law graduate from London University, Marchant has been absorbed as an income tax specialist in the well-known London firm Price Waterhouse.

Ms Farzana Sam Daroowalla of Akron, Ohio was acclaimed scholar of excellence and conferred a valedictory scholarship by the Kent State University where she is studying nursing. Earlier she had received the US Presidential award for academic excellence both at the junior and high school levels.

Daroowalla's activities are not confined to academic work. Her bio data attests that the 20-year-old has contributed to community welfare through the student council and the Red Cross and that she has danced to raise funds for social welfare projects.

Within six months of joining the University of Texas at Arlington, Ms Ayesha Naozer Aga was selected for inclusion on The National Dean's List of outstanding students, informs a news release forwarded to *Parsiana* by Iranian Anjuman president Jamshed Aga.

"Only one half of one percent of our nation's college students receive this award," notes the congratulatory letter from Paul Krouse, publisher of The National Dean's List. Her inclusion makes Aga eligible to compete for a \$ 1,000 scholarship and to use the student referral service which is valuable to those students applying to graduate school and/or seeking employment.

Compiled by Amavaz S. Mama

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The Spirit of Seva

Viceroy, governors, high ranking dignitaries... whenever the famous visited Bombay, a tour of the city was mandatory and invariably one of the scheduled stops would be at the Seva Sadan Society (SSS), a home for destitute women located at Nana Chowk. "Seva Sadan was a pioneer, others followed," says Ms Amy S. Pavri, long-standing committee member of the Society. Founded in 1908 by a Parsi, Behram M. Malabari, and his colleague Dewan Dayaram Gidumal, it was unique in many ways. For one, it was a conscious effort by Malabari, an educationist and journalist who championed the cause of womanhood in India, to translate his ideals into concrete, practical terms. "It was the founders' aim to provide a home for persecuted women in Indian society: the orphan girls, widows and deserted wives," says Pavri.

From a modest origin of a single room that sheltered a few women, the SSS grew over the years to become a multi-functional organization. Now, it has a full-fledged high school, senior college, catering department, laundry and more. The foundation of this growth, according to Pavri, was based on a simple concept: "Don't give money. Give service. Put the women on their feet."

"There was a logical sequence to the Seva Sadan's expansion," says Ms Jerbanoo J. Chinoy, president of the Society. Since the objective of the SSS was rehabilitation, the resident women were encouraged to learn a trade like cooking, laundry. Departments that started as training units grew into full-scale commercial units, run by the SSS, which provided gainful and meaningful employment to the inmates. A hosiery department used to supply socks and stockings to school children and adults. In addition, the SSS runs classes that teach typewriting and other practical skills to its inmates. Earlier, the SSS also trained their girls to be midwives, says Ms Bhanukutty Panicker who has managed the

offices of the Society for the last 40 years.

However, the pride of the SSS has been its education department. It was in the 1910s when, according to Panicker, the SSS started to train ladies to become primary teachers to meet the demand for qualified primary teachers. Inmates were sent to municipal schools, to learn, and later to teach there. Then in 1931, the SSS established its own primary girls' school. The school served a dual func-

Departments that
started as
training units grew
into full-scale
commercial units



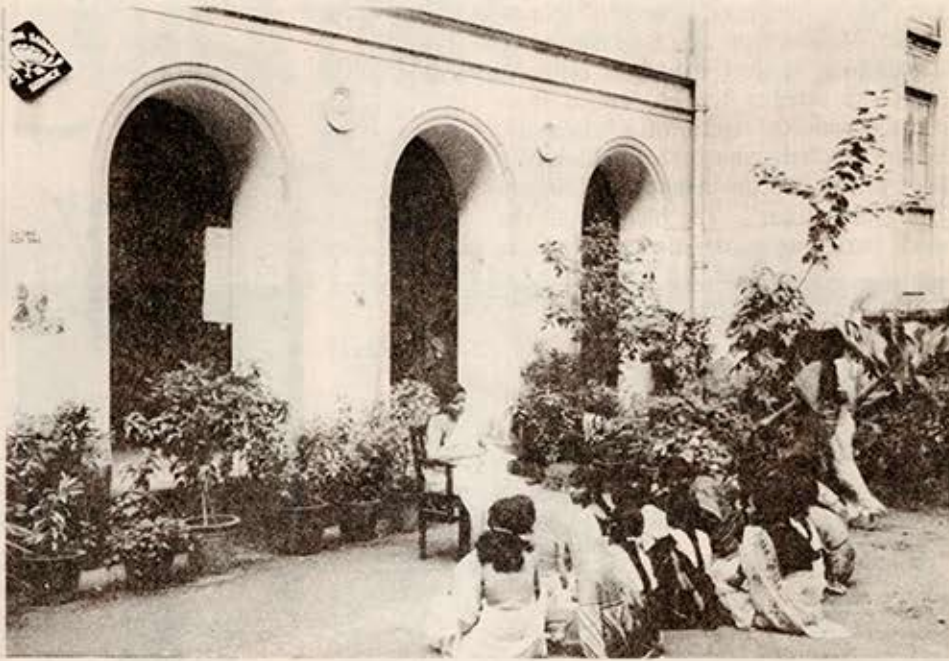
Top (left): A tailoring class in progress
(right): Teachers' training under way
Below (left): Ladies' hostel
(center): Cofounder Malabari (right): The school building

Photos: Varghese Fernandez

Sadan

Behram Malabari founded a home for the rehabilitation of persecuted women

Gustasp Irani



tion. It offered education up to the seventh standard to the children living in the area and, more important, the SSS was now able to train primary teachers in its own school. Later, in 1960, the school was upgraded to a full-fledged high school and thereafter they commenced the junior college where training is imparted to those interested in becoming primary teachers. "The medium of instruction is

Marathi and we have about 1,400 girls enrolled in our school," says Chinnoy.

Though originally built both for Parsi and Hindu destitute women, over the years the SSS has been increasingly serving the latter community. Today there is only one Parsi lady residing in the Parsi dormitory. Says Ms Makki Patel, committee member of the SSS: "When the

Seva Sadan was started there were enough organizations to look after Parsi women; there were very few for Hindu women though."

In the SSS, Malabari, the founder, combined his Parsi roots with his concern for the injustice that the Hindu society around him dished out to its womenfolk. Sirdar Jogendra Singh, in his book *B. M. Malabari, Rambles with the Pil-*

grim Reformer, writes of how Malabari forcefully championed reforms in a Hindu society that abused its women in the way they treated their widows, deserted wives and child brides. His voice was his publication, *The Indian Spectator*. His task was by no means easy, for as Singh observed: "In India, the spirit of reform is regarded with great mistrust. Hindus, Parsis and Muslims alike are apprehensive of reformers and ready to pronounce all reformers, heretics."

Piloo Jungalwalla (née Nanavutty), in her book *The Parsis*, documents Malabari's campaign against child marriage and enforced widowhood in Hindu society, of how he meticulously documented the evils of these customs in 1884 and distributed his writings to all leading citizens in the country. "Malabari lectured throughout India and met viceroys, governors, Indian princes, prominent Hindus and newspapermen. He made three trips to England to mobilize British public opinion. In 1891, the Age of Consent Bill was passed, raising the marriage age for

girls from 10 to 12 years," writes Jungalwalla. It was a small victory but a victory nevertheless.

Malabari's origins were humble. Born in Baroda of poor parents in 1853, he was orphaned by the age of 12. He came to Bombay to seek his fortune, first as a teacher and later as a journalist. He was no mean Gujarati poet and it was through his verse that he came in contact with prominent Christian missionaries including Rev Dr John Wilson who had come to India with a mission to convert the pagan fire-worshippers (Parsis). Singh quotes Malabari on his impressions of Christianity: "I feel bound to acknowledge the benefits I have derived from contact with the spirit of Christianity. But for that holy contact, I could scarcely have grown into the staunch and sincere Zoroastrian I am." The blend is all the more intriguing as we view the man as

Parsi women from Gujarat would learn a trade and step out



Top: Learning ironing at the laundry
Middle (left): A place to relax or study
(right): Cookery head Mistry
Below: Annexe building houses the primary school

the champion of Hindu womanhood.

The SSS epitomizes his spirit, a spirit that inspired many women, and some men too, who have monitored the progress and growth of the Society. Pavri recalls how one lady would come to committee meetings and declare: "Ajé mané kai karvuch, (Today, I want to do something)" and things would start happening. In contrast, there was this other lady who would religiously attend every meeting and sit right through them even though she did not understand a word of English — the language in which the meetings were conducted. In 1968, the SSS organized a four-function diamond jubilee celebration program and collected one and a

half lakh rupees during the year. Twenty years later in 1988, there were plans to celebrate the Society's eightieth anniversary but since the accounts were reportedly not up-to-date, the opportunity lapsed.

A disturbing feature of the SSS's present status is the gross underutilization of the Parsi dormitory. Earlier Parsi women from Gujarat would fill the beds, learn a trade and step out to construct meaningful lives for themselves. Now, even as the community faces a housing crisis of sorts, only one Parsi lives where 12 to 15 can be accommodated: head of cookery Ms Aimai Mistry. It is a catch 22 situation: "One must work at the Seva Sadan to stay in the dormitory; but then we pay so little," says Ms Bhicoo Kapadia, committee member.

The accommodation facilities for the other community are filled to capacity. Thirty women, college students and working girls pay a nominal monthly fee to use the facilities while 45 girls, orphans, widows and deserted wives are housed free in the Home for the Homeless which also functions on the Society's premises. Since the Parsi community has its own homes for widows and orphans, the Home for the Homeless is generally not used to house community members. However, there was a case when the SSS accepted three orphan girls aged two, six and 10 years of a Parsi father and a Hindu mother. "We even did their navjotes," says Pavri, "even though they mainly spoke Marathi."

"In India, the spirit of reform is regarded with great mistrust"

The navjotes were an exception; marriages are more common. "We get many of our girls married," says Chinoy, "and the husbands better watch out — they will have to deal with so many mothers-in-law." She is referring to the many women from all communities who constitute the committee of the SSS, women who take a personal interest in their wards. Yes, the SSS is more than an institution; it was conceived and nurtured on those unquantifiable qualities — caring and courage: caring for one's less fortunate fellow beings and courage to seek solutions to social injustice. The SSS has a heart.



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The Controversy Continues

The issue of religious rights of Parsi women married to non-Parsis continues to divide the community

Arnavaz S. Mama

Three months after Roxan Darshan Shah's tragic demise and enforced cremation [the Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP) refused to accept her body for consignment to doongerwadi because the trustees presumed that she had converted to Hinduism subsequent to her marriage under the Special Marriage Act of 1954 (SMA)], the controversy regarding the religious rights of Parsi women married to non-Parsis under the SMA is refusing to abate. The BPP, caught in the crossfire between the community's orthodox and liberal factions, is said to be trying to organize a combined meeting of the spokesmen of the two groups. In the meanwhile, the BPP has provided an affidavit form at doongerwadi to forestall any sad recurrence of the Roxan Shah episode. To be signed by the next of kin, the form furnishes the BPP with the necessary assurance that the deceased was married under the SMA and continued to profess the Zoroastrian faith.

"We all once again let you know, Sirs, that according to the holy dictates, texts, customs and traditions based on our religion, a lady married (to a non-Parsi under civil law) cannot be considered a Parsi Zoroastrian after such marriage, and hence she cannot take advantage or make use of any religious institution like the

fire-temple or tower of silence," notes a letter to the BPP trustees cosigned by the community's seven high priests — Dasturs Meherji Meherjirana of Navsari, Kaikhusroo JamaspAsa of the Anjuman Atash Bahram, Bombay, Firoze Kotwal of the H. B. Wadia Atash Bahram, Bombay, Kekobad Dastur and Hormazdyar Mirza of Udva, Noshirwan Dastur of Surat and Hormazdyar Noshirwan of Pune. The Gujarati letter was published in the *Jam-e-Jamshed* of November 4, 1990 and rendered into English for *Parsiana* by Dastur Kotwal.

The Dasturs' edict reportedly runs diagonally opposite to the opinion of retired Chief Justice of India Y. V. Chandrachud whom the Punchayet had consulted on the legal niceties arising from the situation. In his first draft Chandrachud is said to have opined that the trustees' presumption of Roxan's conversion to Hinduism was unjustified and that her marriage under the SMA entitled her to claim her rights to the use of community properties — in this case, the dokhma. A second draft prepared by Chandrachud on the BPP's request is said to be more favorable to the Punchayet but, to date, the BPP has issued no further clarification.

In the meanwhile, 32 Parsi ladies married to non-Zoroastrians have written to

the Punchayet requesting an assurance that, as they have married under the SMA and have continued to profess the Zoroastrian faith, on death they will be interred at doongerwadi without undue stress to their families. Claiming equal rights with Parsi men who are married to non-Parsis, the ladies have also asked that their children be permitted to witness the obsequies.

The BPP's reply is still awaited. In the meanwhile, CER (Committee for Economic Revival) leaders Fali Poncha, Dinshaw Mehta and Ms Mani Dalal have suggested, in their letter published in *The Bombay Samachar*, that all these ladies, who have cosigned the appeal to the Punchayet, register themselves on the BPP's electoral register by the right bestowed on them by the 1981 order of Justice Sawant of the Bombay High Court. The letter further suggests that a list of their names be maintained at doongerwadi to obviate "snap decisions."

Bucking at *The Bombay Samachar's* crusade in favor of equal rights for Parsi women married outside the fold — which included strident criticism of Dastur Firoze Kotwal's views on intermarriage by *The Samachar's* editor Jehan Daruwala, legal luminary Shiavax Vakil, as well as other individual letter writers --

the ultra orthodox Council of Vigilant Parsis (COVP) organized a public meeting to denounce the liberal lobby (see "The orthodox response," page 33). The conservatives' campaign is twofold. One objective is to pressurize the Punchayet to call a Samast Anjuman Meeting where the vociferous orthodox groups hope to appeal to sentiment to carry the day. Simultaneously, their selective rendition of legal case history is aimed at undermining the liberals' confidence that the courts would view the required changes in community customs as inevitable under India's secular constitution.

While the orthodox quote cases where the courts have maintained that the right to administer religious properties is not subject to the individual's civil rights, solicitor Rusi Sethna has cited instances where secular law is held above religious laws and customs.

And the Mahim-based Zoroastrian Cultural Welfare Association, led by its president Dr Syrus Darvish Irani, organized "a silent protest march" to the BPP and *The Samachar* from the H. B. Wadia Atash Bahram "to place a memorandum of protest against the insult to the tenets of Zoroastrianism in criticising Dasturji Firoze Kotwal," as noted the advertisement in *Jam-e-Jamshed* of September 9, 1990.

Zoroastrians and non-Zoroastrians wrote to *The Samachar* that Kotwal's reference to intercommunity marriages as being "next to adultery" and their progeny as "illegitimate," had besmirched the community's reputation for tolerance. A London-based Zoroastrian wondered why Dastur Kotwal stopped short of quoting the remaining part of the fire and brimstone reprisal on erring Zoroastrians prescribed by the *Vendidad*.

And, in Delhi, sparks flew when the subject was debated at the executive committee meeting of the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India where president Dr Aspi Golwalla, who had acquiesced to a short discussion, took objection to an Irani lady observer who was determined to voice her view supporting the rights of Zoroastrian ladies.

The Roxan Shah issue has been instrumental in patching up differences between the High Priests who had been divided over the establishment of the Athravan Educational Trust (AET). The unanimous firman of the seven High Priests, written in Gujarati, states, "We,

the present Dasturs connected with the Parsi anjumans since centuries and the places of worship and institutions established since decades on the holy land of Bharat, place before you, Sirs, the following representation.

"Since last July a controversy has been raging in our community whether or not the last remains of a departed Parsi Zoroastrian lady married to a non-Parsi male under the Civil Marriage Act be consigned to the towers of silence (dakhma) after performing the last rites.

"This question had also arisen in the past and the Parsi Zoroastrian community and its leading Dasturs, mobeds and the commoners had responded to this question emphatically in the negative, and in doing so they had presented sound reasons based on scriptures, commandments, practices, customs and traditions which are all on the records of your good-selves...

"We take this opportunity to remind you, respected Sirs, that as trustees of religious institutions it is your religious duty to let these institutions be utilized in

"The custom which now prevails is against the basic human rights of the Parsi mother"

accordance with the religious laws, practices and mandates of our religion.

"We hope that you will adhere to your decision of not giving the benefit and use of religious institutions to these ladies and give due respect to the religious beliefs and sentiments of the devout class representing the majority of the Parsi community. This is our sole request."

In contrast, Justice Chandrachud is said to have observed that in India it is a common occurrence for a couple professing different religions who marry under the SMA, to undergo another ceremony under the husband's religious prescription to satisfy the older members of his family. The ex chief justice reportedly notes that this does not indicate that the wife has rescinded her own religion. Chandrachud is also believed to have

stated in his first draft that if circumstances can lead to more than one inference, legal tradition requires that the inference selected is not one that is detrimental to a party's legal rights. Though the legal luminary reportedly absolved the BPP trustees of any dereliction of duty, he is said to have referred to earlier opinions of legal stalwarts like Sir Dinshaw Mulla as an adequate guideline for the Punchayet in future.

"We are advised that in law when a female Parsi marries a non-Parsi of her choice but insists on marrying under the Special Marriage Act, it would show her implicit faith in professing and continuing to profess the Parsi Zoroastrian religion rather than assuming wrongly... that she does not continue to follow the Zoroastrian religion," noted 32 Parsi ladies married to non-Parsis (see box) in their appeal, forwarded to the Punchayet by the redoubtable liberal lawyer Rustam A. Gagrati. "Because of our insistence that we are Zoroastrian by religion and want to follow the Zoroastrian faith... we are married under the SMA and which should be assumed in our favor. Therefore the trustees have no right or authority to presume against that. The statement of a near relative, the father or husband or brother or sister must be accepted by the trustees in good faith unless and until the trustees have any evidence to the contrary," continues the letter.

"We have therefore to request you to confirm that in the event of our death the members of our families are not subjected to the humiliation and distrust to which the members of the family of Ms Roxan Darshan Shah were put. We are informed that Messrs Zaiwalla are the solicitors of Dr Adi Nazir, the father of the deceased, and have taken up this matter and are pursuing it in the interest of females like us being not treated in the way the late Ms Roxan Darshan Shah was treated...

"In this connection, it may not be out of place to point out that when a male Parsi is married to a non-Parsi and dies, his children are permitted to attend his funeral and subsequent obsequial ceremonies, whilst in the case of a Parsi lady married to a non-Parsi under the same SMA her children are not allowed to attend her funeral and obsequial ceremonies and it is high time that this obnoxious and invidious custom, which now prevails and which is invalid and unconstitutional and against the basic human

"In the event of our death..."

Thirty-two ladies married under the Special Marriage Act of 1954 have appealed to the Bombay Parsi Punchayet seeking reassurance that their mortal remains would be accepted at the doongerwadi. The signatories are:

Hilla S. Maitra (née Hilla Maneck Powvala), Syloo Ravi Matthalai (née Syloo Maneck Powvala), Smita V. Crishna (née Smita Naoroji Godrej), Roshan N. Danani (née Roshan Hormusji Davierwalla), Khursheed M. Narang (née Khursheed Noshir Sidhva), Kerbanoo W. D'Rozario (née Kerbanoo Hormusdyar Sethna), Beroze M. Sabatia (née Beroze Rusi Kapadia), Roxanne Patel (née Roxanne Guzder), Vera A. Mahajan (née Vera Noshir Sidhva), Deena Ahmadullah (née Deena Kooka), Shanaz Diwan (née Shanaz Joshi), Dilnaar Ahmadullah (née Dilnaar Bejon Talati), Rukshaan Krishna (née Rukshaan Farnazi), Ayesha Dary-

anani (née Ayesha Homi Mehta), Gordhy Badami (née Gordhy Bamboat), Freney H. Ponda (née Freney K. Parekh), Deena S. Thacker (née Deena Dinshah Madon), Roda Sarin (née Roda Pattu), Roshan Shamim Dalvi (née Roshan Siganporia), Gaimai Sachdev (née Gaimai Adenwalla), Meher A. Pinto (née Meher Dady Katrak), Dinah Jain (née Dinah Zal Taleyarkhan), Avan N. Gidwani (née Avan Noshirwan Petigara), Amy S. Gandhi (née Amy Phiroze Dalal), Kamal I. Panju (née Kamal Shiamak Marshall), Ava A. Verna (née Ava Khushroo Captain), Tayunaz S. Merchant (née Tayunaz Cyrus Engineer), Anahita R. Chauhan (née Anahita Rusi Shroff), Zarin Minochehr-Homji Pinto (née Zarin Nowrooz Minochehr-Homji), Meher P. Amarsey (née Meher Hoshang Tata), Roshani Anand (née Roshani Bhappu), Dina Nayar (née Dina Rustom Suntook).

rights of the Parsi mother and the spirit of the Zoroastrian religion, is now put to an end by the trustees.

"We trust that the trustees will consider the matter after obtaining the opinion of independent religious scholars and eminent members of the legal profession so that never again such an unfortunate situation arises in our community," concludes the appeal.

In his covering letter to the BPP of September 20, 1990 the nonagenarian Gagrut wrote, "I would like to state that if a Parsi female insists on marrying a non-Parsi under the SMA... she is more keen to follow the Zoroastrian religion than any ordinary Parsi Zoroastrian and the presumption should be drawn in (her) favor rather than against (her). (The) representation signed by... ladies belonging to respectable families married to non-Parsis and confirming in their letter that long after their marriage they have been professing the Zoroastrian religion, attending fire-temples, funerals and other ceremonies at doongerwadi and/or agiaries of their friends and relations, which I request the trustees to take on file and pass appropriate resolutions and issue adequate instructions that on their death their families are not put to the trouble, shame and hu-

miliation to which the members of the family of Roxan were put."

Gagrut also recounted how in the case of the late Ms Zarine Ali Khan he had overcome the opposition of then BPP chairman, the late B. K. Boman-Behram and secretary Maneck Mistry who had arrived at doongerwadi to support the stand of the late Darvish Irani that Zarine's body could not be consigned to the dokhma. On their being adamant, Gagrut writes, "I told him (Boman-Behram) that in that event her body must be permitted to be kept at doongerwadi and the next morning I will apply to the court for the necessary orders. Thereafter Mr Boman-Behram had a discussion with Mr Maneck Mistry and came and told me that they would allow her body to be consigned to the towers of silence. At that time Mr Boman-Behram was obviously annoyed at me and told me to ask her Muslim husband and her Muslim parents-in-law, belonging to a very respectable family in Hyderabad, to leave the *bungli*. I told him that they were entitled to stay until the *sachkar* ceremony commenced... This incident happened in July 1962 and was well within the knowledge of all the trustees and the administrative officers of the Parsi Punchayet."

The COVP meeting held at the Sir Jivanji Modi Hall on October 12 was presided over by Dastur Firoze Kotwal. Kshnumist advocate Ervad K. N. Dastoor, the evening's prime speaker, as also Behram K. Mistry and Adi Doctor exhorted the listeners to express their belief that a Parsi lady married to a non-Parsi ceases to be a Parsi Zoroastrian.

The COVP contention that the "dokhmas are out of bounds for Zoroastrians marrying non-Zoroastrians" had earlier been spelt out in a four-page pamphlet published by Doctor: "In the welter of the so-called rights of defiant and hot-headed Parsi women marrying outside the community as well as the *jo-hookumi* (peremptory) attitude of their 75-year-old chivalrous Galahads (*The Bombay Samachar* editor Jehan Daruwala and Tata's legal advisor Shiavax Vakil), one important issue, namely the sanctity and piety of the dokhmas, is completely lost sight of or is wantonly swept under the carpet." The pamphlet asks, "Can anyone in his senses equate an electoral register with a consecrated religious institution like an agiary or a dokhma?" It then seeks to criticize the BPP lawyers' handling of the case before Justice Sawant in 1981: "Was even one single religious reason or evidence adduced before the judge by the defendants' counsel to show that Zoroastrianism forbids inter-religious marriages, and that a woman who flouts and defies this cardinal principle abdicates all her religious rights, particularly the one of entering a consecrated religious place, even after death?... In the last three or four decades, one weakness of the BPP trustees that has stood out is the gutlessness and a tendency to panic at the slightest turning of the worm, particularly if the worm happens to be a mere threat of legal notice." (But the pamphlet does not mention that for two or three of those decades, the BPP board was dominated by conservatives like the late Boman-Behram!)

The upsurge of liberal emotions following the publication of Dastur Firoze Kotwal's letter is exemplified by the statement of Homi Taleyarkhan, member of the Government of India's Minorities Commission, published in *The Samachar* of October 14, 1990: "Zoroastrianism has been one of the religions which has never been tarnished by bigotry. It has always taught and practiced tolerance and understanding, love and sympathy as most other religions do. It should not be

allowed to sink into the ditch of disrepute as such writings tend to drag it. Not only the law of the land is sought to be violated, but the higher law of humanity is at stake. To say such things as people marrying outside the community are committing near adultery — does the writer know what adultery means? — or that their children become illegitimate, is simply revolting.

"On the one hand we have got through laws in Parliament for the removal of discrimination between the sexes by having several laws affecting the Parsi community amended. On the other hand, by denying a Parsi woman, the wife of a non-Parsi, her right to the towers of silence on her death, we are perpetuating such discrimination..."

"If Kotwalji has 'congratulated' the trustees of the Parsi Punchayet for not allowing the body of Ms Shah in the towers of silence, I congratulate them for taking steps not to allow any such sad recurrence of it..."

On the legal plane, Sethna contended in the same issue of *The Samachar*, "Undoubtedly, where civil laws are not clear, it is permissible to resort to religious prescription to resolve a doubt — as

was done in the case of Sir Dinshaw M. Petit, Bart vs Sir Jamsetji Jejeebhoy, Bart (the Parsi Punchayet case). But where civil law is clear, religious prescriptions are immaterial. Thus for example Hindu

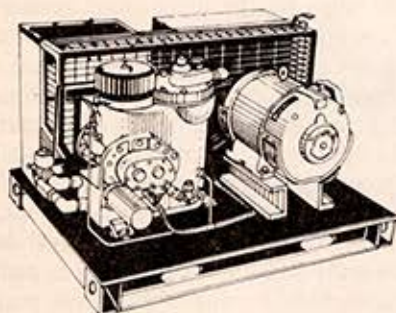
"Adhere to your decision of not giving the benefit of religious institutions to these ladies"

law as revealed in the *Shastras* advocates sati, prohibits a Hindu widow's remarriage and excludes females from inheritance to a man's estate. Civil law has now changed this. Can a Hindu still contend that the *Shastras* continue to prevail? Child marriage was practiced in various communities including ours. Can anyone contend that it is still legal? Parsis were polygamous until the law enjoined monogamy in the last century. Can a Parsi male still claim that he can have more

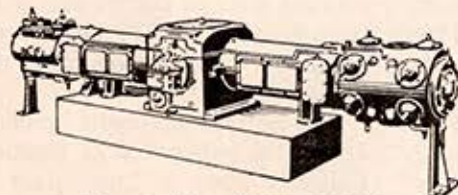
than one living wife? A priest is entitled to express his views and act by his beliefs but he has no right to foist them on others in defiance of civil law. A trustee cannot act contrary to civil law.

"Much has been said about the religious injunction against a non-Parsi Zoroastrian form of marriage in the *Vendidad*. Assuming that the *Vendidad* reveals our religion, this injunction must be read in the light of the prevailing conditions. In those days all marriages were in a religious form; the concept of a civil marriage was unknown. No wonder the *Vendidad* looked askance on persons marrying otherwise than in the Parsi Zoroastrian form and treated them as living in adultery. The injunction must have been intended to discourage second marriages with non-Parsi Zoroastrians."

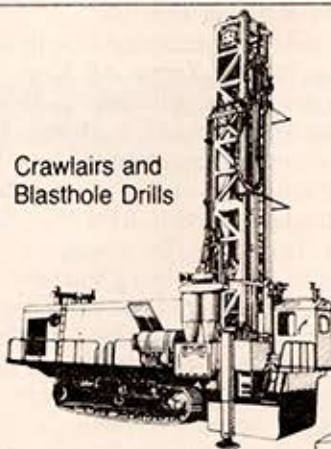
And, as a tail piece, this cheerful, unwittingly appropriate quote from Maneka Sanjay Gandhi (daughter-in-law of the late Prime Minister Indira Gandhi) reprinted in *The Daily* of November 4, 1990 from *The Telegraph* of Calcutta: "Everyone in India knows that I am secular. My son is one-fourth Parsi, one-fourth Kashmiri Brahmin, half Sikh and could well marry someone from another religion."



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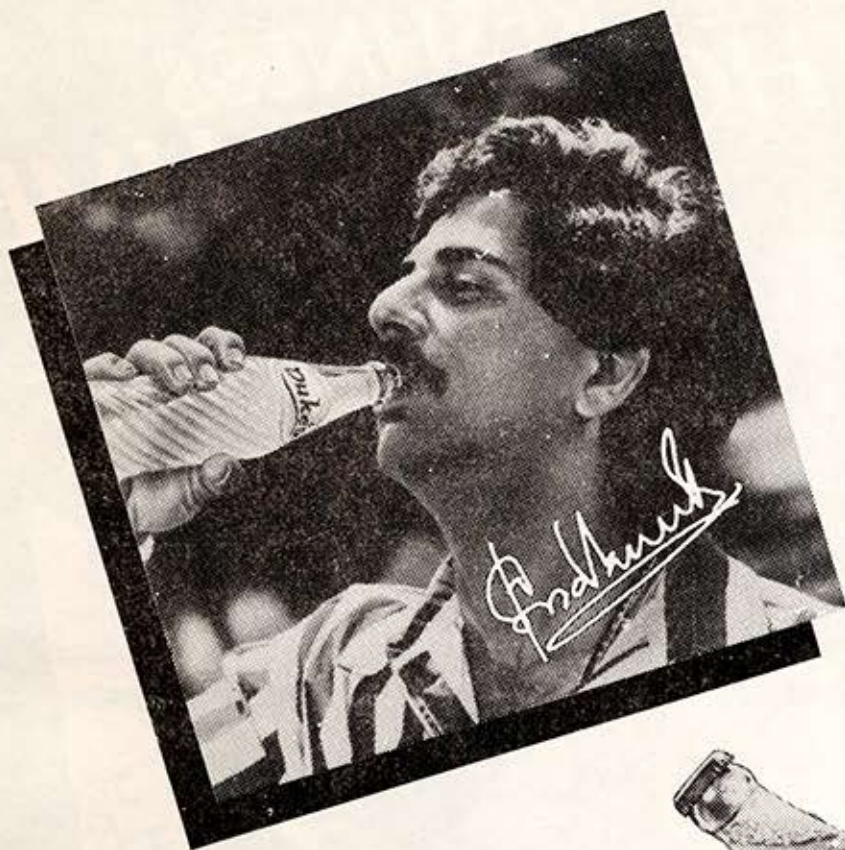
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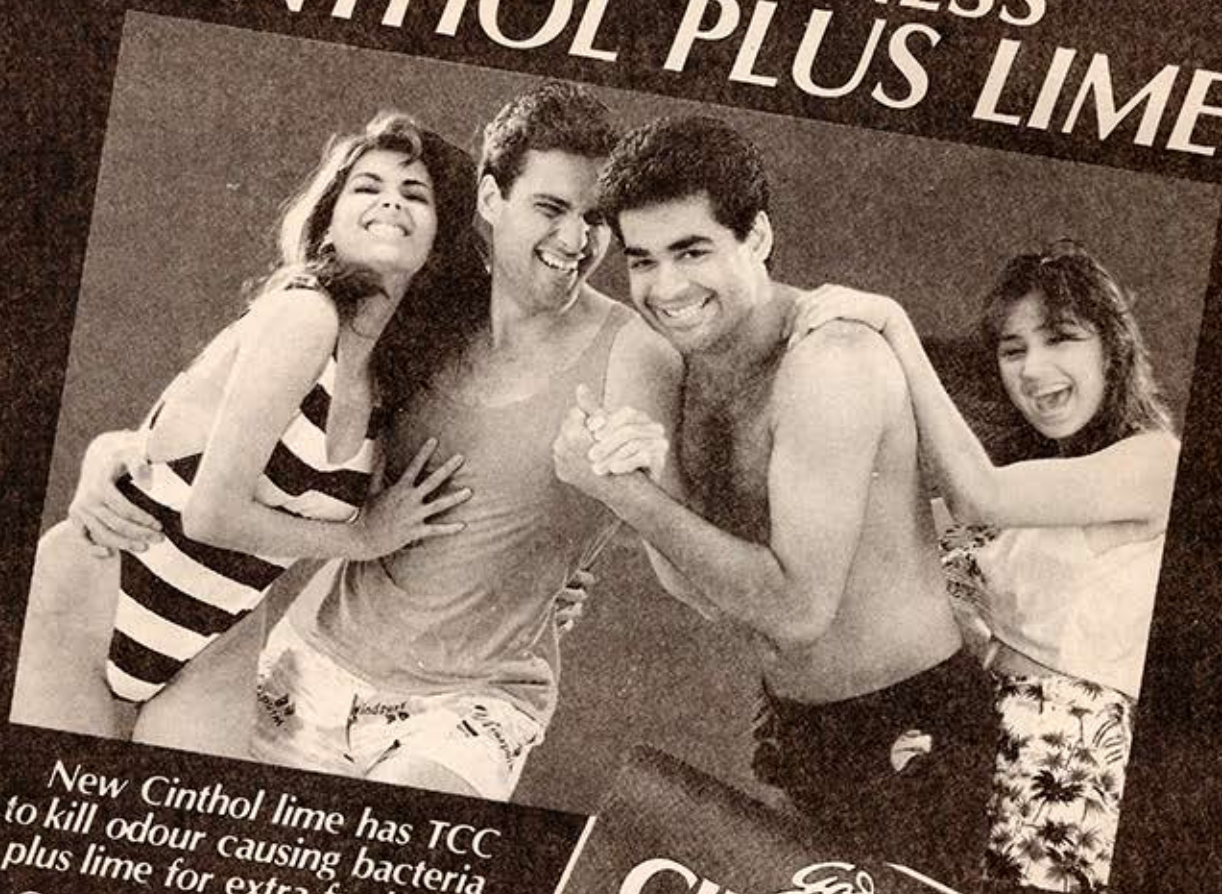
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"Dokhmenashini...for whom?" stated the handbill rallying the faithful to a meeting to state the orthodox point of view on the issue of religious versus civil laws. Convened by the reactivated Council of Vigilant Parsis (COVP) on October 12, 1990 at Sir Jivanji Modi Hall, the speakers lashed out at the Bombay Parsi Punchayet's (BPP) decision to permit Parsi women married to non-Parsi spouses the right to have their bodies interred in the towers of silence and especially at the liberal Gujarati daily *The Bombay Samachar* and former BPP trustee Shrivax Vakil.

"Write a few lines to the (Bombay Parsi) Punchayet when you go home... Express the belief that a Parsi woman married to a non-Parsi cannot be consigned to doongerwadi," exhorted the evening's first speaker B. K. Mistry. "These letters will be proof in court that Parsis believe in this tradition... The reformists are thinking that they've tolled the death knell. But for whom? The bell tolls for thee oh reformist! The bell tolls for thee!"

Dastur (Dr) Firoze Kotwal, High Priest of the H. B. Wadia Atash Bahram, who chaired the meet in place of Dastur Meherji Meherjirana of Navsari (whose absence was said to be due to ill health but from whom there was no message in absentia) claimed that the liberals' fondness for the *Gathas* was leading the community astray. "What is the nature of the *Gathas*?" he asked. "It is solemn poetry, metaphysics and high ideas, the doctrines of good and evil... Would you find geometry in a book of poetry?"

"I have not maligned the late young lady (the 25-year-old Roxan Shah, née Nazir, who perished in a car accident and whose body was refused consignment to doongerwadi) in any way," said Kotwal. "All my sympathy to the family. But my job is to protect the community. I have said that the same (strictures) apply to Parsi men marrying out."

Committing the bodies of Parsi women married to non-Parsis into the dokhma was tantamount to "calculated mischief to allow others to enter the community by stages," Kotwal said. "Public life has become filthy and dirty. I did not want to enter; but silence helps to augment the enemies of the community... Why did we come here? We left everything to preserve the *din* (faith)."



The orthodox response

Arnavaz S. Mama

Only the community has the right to decide who is a Parsi Zoroastrian, claimed the speakers at the COVP meeting



The audience in the packed hall voted almost unanimously (there were only two dissenters) in favor of "the expression of the opinion of the meeting...that a Parsi lady marrying a non-Parsi ceases to be a Parsi Zoroastrian and is not entitled to the use and benefit of Parsi Zoroastrian institutions like the dokhmas, fire-temples and public charitable funds, etc founded for the benefit of the Parsi community." The resolution, moved by the evening's prime speaker Ervad K. N. Dastoor, "will be produced when this matter goes to court," said Dastoor. "You cannot reform your religion out of existence or identity... This meeting deplores and censures attacks on Dastur Kotwal in *The Bombay Samachar*."

Terming *The Bombay Samachar* a "bharooti charchapatri (hired correspondent)" and the 32 women married to non-Parsis who have sent a letter to the BPP

stating that they were practicing Zoroastrians and had the right to be consigned to the dokhma "puppets on a string," speaker Adi Doctor noted, "They are caught in a web of their own making."

The surprise speaker for the evening was Ervad Darius Sethna, former member of the ZTFE (Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe) managing committee and one of the priests responsible for barring non-Parsi spouses from attending the muktad ceremony at Zoroastrian House in London. Sethna said, "Each and every Zoroastrian is a custodian of the faith and traditions and is bound to protect it and its sacrosanct places, even at the cost of life... No one is more guilty than misguided priests (who) knowing

From left: Mistry, Dastoor and Doctor: "Dokhmenashini... for whom?"

Kotwal: "My job is to protect the community"

that such marriages are not acceptable according to the basic tenets of the Zoroastrian religion," proceed to perform the navjote of their progeny. "Such mobeds should be exposed and excommunicated."

COVP stalwart and a prominent member of the erstwhile CUZ (Committee of United Zoroastrians), B. K. Mistry introduced the subject with irony and innuendo. Remarking on the community's weakness for trusting people, Mistry said that it had been taken for a ride by the CER (Committee for Electoral Rights subsequently renamed Committee for Economic Revival) since 1981. He was particularly riled by the decision of six Parsi ladies married to non-Parsis who had successfully sought the intervention of the High Court in getting the BPP to waive its discriminatory system of seeking affidavits before registering them on the D Register for election purposes. Mistry referred to this verdict of Justice Sawant of the High Court as "the first electoral reform" of the CER, adding, "At that time (*Parsiana* editor) Jehangir Patel was the joint secretary of the CER (and) the prime mover. He wrote to various papers to get girls who had married out of the community to contact him." Mistry said the CUZ's criticism in the *Jam-e-Jamshed* made the going "too hot" for the CER and "Jehangir Patel resigned from the CER because he was the main instigator regarding these ladies." (There were no office bearers of the CER at the time. It was an informal association of individuals. The office bearers were nominated much later and Patel was not one of them. The letter to the newspaper deplored the attitude of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet in denying the women their rights but no request was made to the women to contact Patel as far as he recollects. Patel was not the 'main instigator' but certainly supported the women's just cause -- Editor.)

Noting that "I was there every minute of the hearings," Mistry added that the hearing in Sawant's court being on the last date for nomination for the election, BPP chairman B. K. Boman-Behram wanted the case finished. In the event the case was not fully argued out and the via media suggested by Sawant was accepted. Being a consent order, it cannot



"I did not want to enter; but silence helps to augment the enemies of the community"

be appealed against, noted Mistry. But, said Mistry, the community is being "misinformed that Justice Sawant's (verdict) is the law of the land... the law of the land can only come from Parliament."

Mistry then shifted emphasis to gun down Dastur Kotwal's detractors: Solicitor Rusi Sethna's legal argument against Kotwal's use of the word adultery (the involvement of a third party was essential before the term adultery may be applied, Sethna had argued in *The Bombay Samachar*) was dismissed as "Rusi's sense of humor. I only hope he does not insist on a CBI inquiry against Dastur Kotwal."

Ridiculing the faith professed by Zoroastrian women married to non-Zoroastrians, Mistry said, "Most ladies say they prefer to be Zoroastrian because of their love for Zoroastrianism. I am an ignoramus as far as love affairs are concerned." Then, changing gears, he added that if they sought to eat the "forbidden fruit" they should be "prepared for the bitter taste... When they married they knew what was awaiting them." Referring to the 32 Zoroastrian ladies married to non-Zoroastrians who have written to the Punchayet asserting their desire to be interred in the dokhma on their demise, Mistry jested, "I won't be surprised if some day a board comes up signed by (Punchayet secretary) Ms Gool Tata stat-

ing, 'These paavis (slots for dead bodies in the dokhma) are reserved for ladies married under the Special Marriage Act.'"

Mistry saw the ladies' expressed desire that their children be permitted to attend their obsequies as "the thin edge of the wedge." The second step will be their navjote and then the conversion of the spouse, he speculated. "The last step will be that non-Parsis won't like to be eaten by vultures... with the result that doongerwadi will be in a mess — there may even be a crematorium there... Do you want your community to die?... Do you want your funds to be usurped by non-Parsis?"

Asserting that the reformists' ability to move the court (in an attempt to ensure equal rights to Parsi women) was no more than an empty threat to pressurize the Punchayet, he nonetheless urged the gathering to demand the summoning of a samast anjuman meeting by the BPP.

Kotwal's speech reiterated much of what was written in the letter and in the *Parsiana* interview ("The divine laws of God must prevail" and "If you want to come back, I want to stop you," *Parsiana*, September 1990) but he proceeded to provide yet another connotation to the term adultery: "You are kicking the community and going elsewhere."

"Kriya kam (rituals) is not given, sudreh kusti is not mentioned (in the *Gathas*)... does not mean that all these are unnecessary," noted Kotwal. The *Nirangistan* provides information on rituals; the *Vendidad* deals with laws of purity, he added. Kotwal read out sections of a letter, from Rustom Chothia to *The Bombay Samachar* criticizing the newspaper's abusive language against Kotwal, which the High Priest said had not yet been published by *The Samachar*.

Referring to the orthodox section of the community as its "collective conscience," Dastoor derided the reformists' emphasis on good thoughts, words and deeds by asking, "Which religion does not enjoin the same?" It is the religious observances and ceremonies that set Zoroastrians apart from the others, he added.

Dastoor's speech was divided into examining the rights accorded by the Special Marriage Act as against the constitutional right to freedom of religion under Articles 25 and 26 and the guarantees to various communities under their personal laws through judgements that elucidated

"If this is the belief
of the community...
a secular judge is bound
to accept that belief..."



the points he strove to make.

Unlike the Special Marriage Act of 1872 which required the contracting parties to formally renounce their religion, the 1954 version of the Act requires no such declaration. But there is no provision in the Act that entitles one to claim the right to enjoy the same privileges and benefits she enjoyed before the marriage, said Dastoor. Whether a woman who had married into another community could still be considered a Parsi Zoroastrian and thence be permitted to use the community's institutions, depends upon the personal law of the community based on its tenets, beliefs and precepts, insisted Dastoor.

In 1954, in its verdict on Ramanuj vs the State of Tamil Nadu, the Supreme Court had argued that the protection of Articles 25 and 26 of the Constitution is not restricted to the doctrines of the faith but covers such acts as rituals, observances, ceremonies and modes of worship performed in pursuance of such belief. Secondly, the court must needs regard certain acts and practices as sacrosanct if the community so regards them. "No outside authority has any right to say that these are not essential parts of religion and it is not open to the secular authority of the state to restrict or prohibit them in any manner." Justice B. K. Mukherji had reiterated and had quoted from an earlier (1912) verdict of Justice Davar in the Baj-



Rojgar case of Jamshedji vs Soonabai: "If this is the belief of the community — and it is proved undoubtedly to be the belief of the community — a secular judge is bound to accept that belief..."

Dastoor noted that in the 1962 case of Saiffudin vs the State of Bombay, the Supreme Court had upheld the right of the Mullah to excommunicate a member of the community (in contravention of the Bombay Excommunication Act of 1949 which had made excommunication illegal). The Supreme Court had observed that when an individual is excommunicated, his civil rights (especially the right to use denominational properties such as agiaris and dokhmas) are undermined. However, religious groups have been given the freedom to administer their trust properties according to the dictates of their religion and the wishes of the donor. According to Dastoor, the Supreme Court has held that this right, enshrined in the Constitution under Article 26b, supercedes individual civil rights.



Above: A view of the audience

Left (above): Curset Patel and Mistry: "This meeting deplores... attacks on Dastur Kotwal"

(Below): Sethna: "Separate institutions for reformists"

Dastoor went on to castigate *The Samachar's* "dishonest journalism" and wondered aloud if one must "cast doubt on the professional ability" of the liberal lawyers.

Dastoor recalled the similar stand taken by Dastur (Dr) Hormazdyar Mirza, Dastur (Dr) Kaikhusroo JamaspAsa and others in their written advice to the BPP in 1964, before baiting the liberals once more: "When (noted jurist) Nani Palkhivala goes to Hindu meetings, he conveys spiritual messages. But at Parsi community meetings he talks of freedom of choice!" Palkhivala likes to quote from Arvind Ghose (Aurobindo). But Arvind Ghose says human intellect is limited, it is a hurdle to the understanding of the universe."

Maintaining that religion is beyond the intellectual barrier, Dastoor noted how physicist David Bohr had said that humanity cannot see reality and proceeded to ask the familiar question, "Are we going to measure reality with a

footrule?... All of the *Vendidad* is ecological," he added and quoted from the United Nations Ecological Congress report of 1972: "Nature works on moral principles."

Harkening back to legal luminary and advisor to the Tatas, Shrivastav Vakil's attack on the use of the dokhmas (on grounds of the system being inappropriate under the prevalent circumstances) and his subsequent exit from the board of trustees of the BPP, Dastoor wondered why Vakil was now taking up in favor of Parsi women being consigned there.

"Do you have the right to destroy the community?" asked Dastoor. "It's your decision. If you don't accept this, the community will disintegrate."

"If Dastur Kotwal had not given this letter, it's possible that by now the controversy would have fizzled out," said Adi Doctor. The liberals' argument that Kotwal's use of the term adultery in the context of intercommunal marriages was a debasement and an insult to other communities, Doctor called "*vahiyat* (senseless)." What about notices outside agiaries and atash bahrams which say, "Non-Parsis not allowed," he asked. Even the *Kisse-e-Sanjan* speaks of the Parsis' desire that non-Parsis stay a certain distance away from the fire-temple precincts, he added.

Kotwal's critics fell into three main groups according to Doctor: The first group attacks on the basis that Kotwal had started it. "*Chor Kotwal né dandé* (a case of the thief accusing the law officer)." The second group invokes the law of the land and the third group believes that as the *Vendidad* is part of the later *Avesta* and, as there is no mention of the dokhmas in the *Gathas*, these must be discounted. And to all those who were worried lest they be saddled with a non-Zoroastrian son or daughter-in-law, he suggested the regular repetition of the prayer "*Chichrem buyat* (may the seed prevail)," better known as Atarpat Marespand's Setayash.

According to Sethna the solution to the problem is simple: The Parsis should emulate the orthodox Jews who provided their liberal counterparts with help to set up new synagogues and frame new rules for the exclusive use of the reformists. Sethna said that the two Jewish groups are united socially and economically. Sethna, in his turn, flayed *The Bombay Samachar* before declaring "*Bunyad pasbani* — preservation of our seed — is our motto! *Bunyad pasbani* is our survival!"

READERS' FORUM

continued from page 8

old records, one would discover that most of them are self-appointed and well past their age to either administer or infuse new ideas to carry our community into the twenty-first century. As compared to this, the working of the PPP over the past decade or so has undergone a sea-change with the revival, by a vigilant community, of the democratic functioning as prescribed in its constitution. Credit for this, must go to that great noble soul, the late Mr Burjor S. Sadri who, in spite of old age and health problems worked tirelessly to assert that the "voice of the anjuman was supreme on all issues affecting the community, and not that of any individual or set of trustees." Mr Sadri was instrumental in inspiring the author to mobilize a band of devoted Zoroastrians to not only dig out old records and protect some of the prime properties in Pune, but also to educate the Zoroastrians of Pune to exercise their franchise intelligently at the time of elections held once in five years. As a result of this, through a process of free and fair elections, the present board of devoted and young trustees have come to rule. If there are any trustees from a particular family, it is purely on their merits and not by birth. At this stage, I do not wish to stand in judgement over the performance of the existing board of trustees but would certainly advocate continued vigilance and enthusiasm within the Zoroastrian population of Pune.

Having made an indepth study of the constitution of the PPP, the correct position regarding Cmdr Mehta's rejection of membership could be highlighted as follows: Dr Kabraji and his pioneering co-trustees while establishing the constitution on December 30, 1951 had the foresight to define the term "Parsi" as applicable to the PPP. "A Parsi would mean any Parsi or Irani, man or woman who professes the Zoroastrian religion. But if any Parsi Zoroastrian or Irani Zoroastrian who is either married to an alien (juddin) or has kept her as a *rakhat*, also any Parsi Zoroastrian or Irani Zoroastrian woman married to an alien (juddin) or is his *rakhat*, then they and all their children shall not be eligible to enjoy the benefits of the funds and properties and religious affairs held under the auspices of the PPP."

The above is a literal translation from the original constitution in Gujarati. For any legal interpretation, the original ver-

sion would be applicable.

It is clear from the above that Cmdr Mehta is casting unnecessary aspersions on the honesty and integrity of the present as well as past trustees who had plenty of foresight to exclude even those Parsis who would not legally marry a juddin and still demand the rights of PPP by keeping her as a *rakhat*. The two so-called "enlightened trustees" referred to by Cmdr Mehta, besides being unethical in leaking out board discussions, are also unworthy of the chair they occupy. They are mere custodians bound by the constitution and have no right to thrust their personal views on the PPP and the remaining trustees. Cmdr Mehta's attempt at PPP membership is similar to an army deserter or a civilian insisting on membership of a club exclusively reserved for army officers.

Another illogical and ill-informed charge levelled by Cmdr Mehta is the exclusion of members of the Zoroastrian Youth Association (ZYA) from the board. No trustee has a right to appoint another trustee on the board. Any member of the ZYA has the freedom and right to stand for elections to the Anjuman Committee, and later the post of a trustee, provided he or she fulfils the requirement of age and membership as provided in the constitution. Being a staunch supporter of the ZYA myself, I could provide a list of energetic young ZYA members who are not only members of the PPP but are also elected members of the Anjuman Committee.

It is indeed a tragedy for the community that there are many Parsis who have of their own free will exercised the option of marrying a juddin without understanding the basic tenets of our religion. Although they have lost their right to be called Zoroastrian, their hearts bleed for their community by birth. My advice to all of them is to work from outside for the survival of our minuscule community and by their experience to impress upon the young of our community never to fall prey to the temptation of marrying outside the religion. This single act would be their greatest opportunity to salvage their souls and seek forgiveness from Lord Ahura Mazda even at this stage. Let those who have followed the righteous path laid down by Ahura Mazda and as prescribed by Prophet Zoroaster continue to prosper and live in peace without any further adulteration. PERVEZ K. AVARI

Edited by Amavaz S. Mama

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TRAVELS IN IRAN: 3

Rites of Passage

Simplicity remained the keynote
of Zoroastrian celebrations at birth, marriage or death

Manekji Limji Hatara

This is the third of six instalments of Manekji Limji Hatara's publication, Rishale Ej Har Shiyaate Iran. The Gujarati original, rendered into English by Jamshed M. Bilimoria, has been abridged, edited and recollated by Parsiana (courtesy K. R. Cama Oriental Institute to whom the translation manuscript was gifted).

The author went to Iran in 1854, at the behest of the Society for the Amelioration of the Conditions of the Zoroastrians of Persia (otherwise known as the Amelioration Society), to report the conditions prevailing there at first hand. He returned only once to India, for an 18-month spell, at the end of the first 10 years. The book is largely a publication of the speeches he then made to acquaint the Parsis in India with the wretchedness of their Iranian coreligionists and to seek help to further the cause of Zoroastrian amelioration in Iran. Having devoted the rest of his life to the task, Hatara died in Iran in 1890, mourned to this day by Iranian Zoroastrians who almost worshipped him as their savior (see "The redeeming of a community," Parsiana, May 1990).

In the earlier instalments Hatara focused on the ruins that attested to Iran's ancient glory and the miserable conditions in which the decimated Zoroastrian community survived after the Arab conquest of the country.

The Zoroastrians performed their religious rites also, but this they did in their closed houses. They performed jashans and even navjotes and wedding ceremonies

according to their traditional customs.

Every Parsi girl had to learn domestic duties such as cooking, sewing, working on the ancestral field, etc. A girl who was proficient in household duties and domestic affairs was always preferred for marriage. The marriageable age for girls was between 15 and 20 years. Nobody wanted to marry a girl who was beyond 20 years of age and who could not undertake household duties. She had to stitch and sew her own as well as her husband's clothes, cook for the family and do other odd jobs in the household. The marrying age for boys was between 20 and 30 years. Young boys and girls were free to select their own life partners, though the parents and elders were always ready to guide them and advise them on the right path.

Due to poverty in some families and adverse circumstances, many girls remained spinsters and boys bachelors up to a ripe, advanced age. The boy understood his responsibility and when he found himself able to stand on his own legs and run the whole household and maintain the family, then only he ventured to get married. Love marriages were also allowed. Parents only tried to trace the family history of the opposite family. The parents of the girl always saw what the boy was doing, what he was earning and how he conducted his daily life. They did not want to risk the life of their daughter in the hands of one who was unable to support her and make her happy. Before marriage both the parties always found out if there were any

diseases or other drawbacks in the girl as well as in the boy.

Mobeds were then consulted and if the boy and the girl were both willing and loved each other, the mobeds gave their consent. Thus the preliminary part of marriage was over.

Afterwards, two cones of sugar, some sweets, dried fruits, fresh fruits and such other things were sent from the bridegroom's parents to the bride's place. These articles were taken by nine ladies and nine gentlemen. One cone of sugar and sweets were given to the bride and the other cone and some sweets and other articles were given to her father. A small plant or pomegranate and some meva (dried fruits) were also given to the bride, not for her, but for her other near relatives. The visitors were entertained with sherbet or fruits or sometimes they were made to dine with their hosts.

Two weeks after this, the bride's parents sent a cap, a handkerchief, a knitted purse for keeping money and a pair of footwear for the bridegroom. At that time the girl gave to the boy and his relatives some sweets, sugar and dried fruits. Both the sides sent sweets to their neighbors, to the priests and to the head of the village. Thus the marriage was made known to the people of the place and this was called *Nam-e-Jadsood* — giving the name — or confirmation of marriage. This ceremony was held generally during springtime when fruits were aplenty. A few days after the above ceremony, on some festival day, the boy, accompanied by a number of his relatives, went to the girl's place and offered her a pomegran-

ate with seven to 23 rials (currency of Iran) inserted in it. (The value of one rial was about half a rupee.)

Men and women sat separately; the girl sat in one corner of the room and the boy personally went to the girl and gave her the coin-studded pomegranate and other presents. The boy's relatives (womenfolk) made the girl wear new shoes brought by the boy. When she put her feet into the shoes, it was confirmed that she had become the rightful life partner of that boy. The womenfolk announced this and the men shouted with joy. They say "*Haa baro, Haa baro*," meaning "well done." The above phrase appears to be the Persian equivalent of "Hurrah." This word seemed to have crept into Iran from the West, and the Persians construed it as "Be happy." Then they all dined together. That was the sign of unity between the two families.

Festivities were not compulsory and each one celebrated according to his economic status. Sumptuous dinners were given with wine, etc by well-to-do people; others, less fortunate, offered only fruits and sherbet. In the following winter the above ceremonies were repeated. The girl went up to the boy with her father and offered more presents to him. In this way nearly a year passed by so that the boy and the girl could understand each other well. When the elders found that there was nothing wrong and both got on well with each other, the marriage was fixed at a short notice of 15 to 20 days. Before getting married, the boy generally procured a house of his own and if he could not, then he stayed with his parents for some time till he owned a house of his own. No marriage was done during autumn (*Pnaiz*); if there was hurry, the marriage was performed during winter. But the most appropriate time was spring when the earth was covered with fresh verdure. Marriage was performed at the time of meeting of day and night, i.e. either in the morning at the time of sunrise or in the evening at the time of sunset.

At the time of marriage, the senior priest asked the girl very slowly and quietly whether she was willing to accept the boy as her husband. The girl did not answer at first, out of her modesty. The mobed repeated the question three times, the last very loudly saying that he was tired of asking and he wanted a reply. He requested the girl once again to tell

him whether she was willing to accept the proposed boy as her husband. She very softly and respectfully said "*Bali Bali*" meaning "Yes, Yes." The mobed then asked the guests present whether they heard her and whether they were witness to that ceremony. The menfolk again shouted "*Bali Bali*."

Then the mobed performed the wedding ceremony. The mobed instructed the bridegroom to pray the *Khorshed Niyayesh* and the *Meher Niyayesh* three

Due to poverty and adverse circumstances many girls remained spinsters and boys bachelors

times a day — morning, afternoon and evening — for prosperity and if he could not pray this much, he had to recite 135 *Yatha-ahu-vairyo* and five *Ashem*. On the days of *ghambars*, some food was to be distributed to friends and relatives and they all sat down and ate together.

The Zoroastrians were very religious minded and they invoked the blessings of the 33 *Fareshtas*. Fire was a very holy and honored element in every Zoroastrian's house. They burnt sandalwood or ordinary wood and nothing else. As fire was considered holy, nothing which emitted a foul or unpleasant smell was put on fire. Fire was revered as the son of Ahura Mazda.

Fire was considered so holy that when the wedded couple came home they turned round — circumambulated — the holy fire three times as a seal of their pledge of fidelity to each other. There was never any strife or quarrels between the daughter-in-law and the mother-in-law.

Marriages were not very expensive. They did everything in a simple way in keeping with their economic conditions. The couple was always happy and the husband took every care to see that his wife was happy in all respects. After marriage, the girl's parents had no right or control over her. She was her husband's property and it was her husband's obligation to maintain her and keep her happy.

The girl who married according to the rites mentioned above, was known and was called by the name of *Padshahajani*.

The girl whose marriage was arranged by her parents was entitled *Padshaha Janina*. The girl who married without her parents' consent, at her own free will, was called *Khod Rehi*. If a widow married again, she was called *Chakar Jani*. When she bore children, their names were connected with the name of her first husband.

If a wife could not get on with her husband or vice versa and lived separately for some time, she was obliged to have the *ashirwad* ceremony performed again when she rejoined her husband, as if she was getting married again.

Divorce cases were few and far between. When a couple quarrelled and could not live amicably, the relatives of both sides and the mobeds intervened and tried to bring about a settlement between them and if they failed in this and if the husband and wife could not agree yet, they were taken to the *atah bahram* where, after performing the *kusti* ceremony, the mobed reprimanded them, saying that they would have to answer for their behavior to Meher, Sarosh and Rashne Yazads. The mobed then brought them near each other, they kissed each other's hand for the last time and thus got separated and went to their respective homes. Separation between husband and wife was considered a sinful act.

There had been cases of bigamy — having two wives. When a man wanted to have another wife, he first opened his heart before his wife and she allowed him to do so. She had to make a confession in the presence of a mobed and her relatives that she had given him permission to bring another wife. The man, in his obligation, had to declare that after having the second wife he would not neglect the first one and both of them would be treated on equal footing. They lived together in one house and the children of both the wives were treated equally, as brothers and sisters. This practice of having two wives seemed to have been adopted from the Muslims, after the Arab occupation of Iran.

When a child was born to the newlyweds, he or she was to be trained in a proper way. Much importance was given to the building of the child's moral character. Before the age of 10 a boy was initiated into Zoroastrianism — i.e. his

navjote was performed. A girl's navjote was performed earlier, generally by the age of seven years.

When a girl who married had no brother she was entitled *Shuhoorjani*, and when she gave birth to the first boy child, the boy was considered his maternal grandfather's son and the boy's father had no right over his son. The Kayanian King Darab's name was attached to his maternal grandfather's name, Boman-shah; the Peshdadi King Minocher's name was attached to his maternal grandfather's name Erachshah and King Alexander's name was attached to his maternal grandfather's name, Filsuf.

A name was given to the newly born child on the tenth day after birth. For this purpose the parents, uncles, grandparents and other near relatives thought of a name but did not disclose it. On the tenth day after the birth of the child all relatives met together and each one gave out the name that he or she had thought of. Then the mother chose whichever name she liked out of all those and that name was given to the child. Generally a boy was given his grandfather's name

and a girl her grandmother's name. If a child was born posthumously, the father's name was given to the boy and the mother's name to the girl. Small children were made to sleep in small, comfortable cradles which were mostly hand-made.

A child was always fed on mother's

Marriage was performed at the meeting of day and night, at sunrise or sunset

milk. After giving birth to the child, the mother always took very nutritious food in order to be able to give more milk to her child. If a mother died while giving birth, the child was entrusted to a very near relative (woman) who could feed the child.

Though the Arabs forced the Iranians to give up their traditional dresses, they

retained the *sudreh* and *kusti* hidden under a loose garment like a robe. There was not much change in the woman's dress. Womenfolk put on colorful cotton or woolen garments under which they wore the *sudreh* and *kusti*. They wore an *eejaar* (pyjama) long enough to reach below the knee and always kept their heads covered with a handkerchief or a scarf. They wore light shoes on their feet. They kept their entire body covered; even over the face they wore the *burkha*. Modesty and self-respect were their most praiseworthy qualities. Feminine beauty was never exposed in public. During festivals and gatherings, men and women sat separately on two sides and did not mix much with each other.

On festive occasions, ladies put on colorful dresses. They covered their body with silk gowns and tied a handkerchief or a scarf on the head. They always kept their arms covered up to the elbows. There was no *burkha* system among the Parsis in Iran, but this became prevalent under the Arab rule. For ornaments they mostly used silver. Old silver coins were often joined together with chains and

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used as necklaces. They used flowers also for decorating their bodies. Sometimes, silver earrings were also used. The womenfolk did not wear glass bangles but sometimes they used beads of colored glass tied together round their wrists.

Periodic and seasonal jashans were performed. Crowds met together for jashans and when the mobed started to pray, the guests also prayed with the mobed. Praying from books was also allowed. It was compulsory for everyone present to pray along with the mobed. Ghambars were also held. Ghambars are seasonal feasts and the community met together at the festive board and partook of the same food. Ghambars were thanksgiving to God for his various bounties. Sitting together and eating together brought about unity and brotherhood among the people. Of course, on all such occasions, men and women did not mix with each other; they sat apart, either in separate chambers or on two opposite sides of the same room. The chief mobed — Dah-Mobed — was the most important personality at all religious ceremonies and festivals and was

much respected. In the early days, about two thousand jashans and ghambars were held in different towns and villages of Iran.

The custom of drinking wine was prevalent among the Iranians during festivals and ghambars. A socially appointed wine-bearer (known as *saki* in Persian) distributed wine to the guests. First he filled his own cup, said some prayers, wished well for the guests and drank it himself. Then he filled the cups of the guests and they all drank together giving blessings to each other.

The most important and most significant festival was the Jamshedi Nowroz, the Iranian New Year, when the sun enters the first house of the Zodiac. The last 10 days of the year were observed as days for remembering the dead. Those were days for prayers and visiting each other. No regular work was done. Those were the days of *muktad*. It is said that a Roman ambassador came to the court of King Darius of Iran during these *muktad* days. Darius refused to receive him but made arrangements for him to stay in comfort till the Nowroz day though the ambassador had come for some urgent and important work. King Darius met him in great pomp and dignity on the Nowroz Day and entertained him in the most fitting manner before doing any official work. This spring festival of Nowroz was observed throughout the length and breadth of the country by all, rich as well as poor.

Jashans were held when the name of the month and that of the day coincided, for example, Fravardin *mah* and Fravardin *roj*, Ardibehesht *mah* and Ardibehesht *roj*, Mehr *mah* and Mehr *roj*, etc. The womenfolk were proud to make various preparations for all these jashans and other festivals. They worked hard and believed in the dignity of labor. Their modesty was concealed in their simplicity of manners and bearings. Sweets and daroons were prepared only by wives of mobeds — i.e. *athornan* women. Non-*athornans* or *behdins* could not make these things.

During monthly sickness, the Iranian women observed strict rules of piety. They did not touch the articles of their daily use. A separate set of utensils were kept for use during this period. The woman kept aloof and did not mix or talk with other members of the household.

When a person died, a woman was bathed by womenfolk and the dead man was bathed by men. Then the *sachkar*

ceremony began and the mobeds prayed near the dead body till the time of *dokhmenashini* i.e. putting the dead body in the tower of silence.

Before putting the body in the tower of silence, a pair of mobeds performed the last rites — *geh sarna* — and the friends and relatives present at the ceremony paid their last homage to the departed one who was put in the *gehan* (bier). The *nassessalars* carried the dead

Separation between husband and wife was considered a sinful act

body to the *dokhma*. A number of people went up to the *dokhma* to pay their last respect; they went in the form of a procession, the son or brother of the departed leading the procession. They all walked in pairs of two holding a white handkerchief. Even womenfolk came up to the *dokhma* and stood there on one side. After the body was put in the *dokhma* the relatives all went back. Before entering their houses they always performed the *kusti* ceremony for acquiring piety for their body and soul. It was considered a sin to cry after the dead because they considered that after death the person went to a higher stage in life and life after death was a happy, heavenly life. The third day ceremony was really a consolation meeting: all friends and relatives of the departed one came and consoled the family members of the departed one. During this time the mobeds prayed with a view that the soul of the departed one might become free to move forward. The fourth day ceremony — the *chahrum* ceremony — was the most important one, as on the fourth day the soul of the departed one went beyond the orbit of the earth, crossed the Chinvat Bridge and proceeded further and further. The prayers in memory — really to help the soul in its further heavenly march — continued daily till the tenth day. Then on the day of death every month, the remembrance ceremony, *baaj* and *afarinagan*, were performed. It was believed that these prayers pleased the departed one and the soul of the departed one sent blessings to his dear ones on this earth. The ancients thought it necessary to perform the *baaj* ceremony every month for at least 30 years.

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The age of Zoroastrian brides (as listed in this issue) in Bombay ranged from 24 to 33 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 30 and 39 years, averaging at 35 years.

A scanning of the Chandanwadi electric crematorium register revealed 10 Parsi cremations for the six-month period of March to September 1990.

As per the figures available to Parsiana from four local hospitals there were 24 births as compared to 62 Parsis who died in Bombay in September. Heart disease claimed 15 patients while eight fell prey to pneumonia and lung disease. The other killers were cancer and diabetes (four each). Brain disease, old age and general debility, stroke and septicemia claimed three lives each. Two victims each succumbed to hypertension and liver disease. There were many isolated cases registered this month. They were: death due to choking, kidney failure, gastrointestinal hemorrhage, bronchitis, death due to hanging, nervous disorder, ulcer, intestinal obstruction, asthma, abdominal tumor and anemia. In the case of one death the medical report is still pending. A premature baby boy was lost to the community. The oldest to die was a 95-year-old lady as compared to the youngest age at death: 42 years.

The data on births, marriages and deaths has been compiled from information supplied by various newsletters and anjumans 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 boy to *Rashna and Viraf Munshi* on September 3, 1990
A boy to *Dhan and Nosheir Daruwalla*; September 4
A boy, *Sheroy*, to *Yasmin and Rumi Khan*; September 4
A girl to *Shiraz and Behram Asundaria*; September 5
A girl to *Gulshan and Khushro Tarapore*; September 7
A boy to *Daisy and Farhad Irani*; September 8
A boy to *Erzaan and Cyrus Patel*; September 8
A boy to *Shaheen and Pervaz Cooper*; September 9
A boy to *Nawaz and Kersasp Kallianwala*; September 11
A boy to *Pervina and Yazdi Khambatta*; September 11
A girl to *Homai and Noshir Irani*; September 12
A boy to *Pervin and Behram Irani*; September 14
A girl to *Daisy and Vispi Jokhi*; September 14
A boy, *Yazad*, to *Navaz and Jehangir Daruwalla*; September 17
A girl, *Mahafreen*, to *Nazneen and Jamshed Dumasia*; September 18
A girl to *Shernaz and Rohinton Bhot*; September 22
A boy to *Behnaz and Zarir Irani*; September 22
A boy to *Pervin and Zubin Dalal*; September 23
A boy to *Khorshed and Farokh Sidhwa*; September 24
A boy to *Jaloo and Prakash Shivdasani*; September 25
A girl to *Jasmine and Cyrus Vatcha*; September 28
A boy to *Armaity and Neville Wadia*; September 28
A boy to *Phiroza and Rustom Yazdgardian*; September 28
A girl to *Navaz and Jehangir Ginwala*; September 29
A boy to *Shireen and Jehan Sethna*; September 30

Married

Dilnaaz Naval Daruwalla and Vispi Minoo Bulsara; September 2
Firoza Shavak Daruwalla and Themton Aspandiyar Irani of Hyderabad; September 2
Gulshan Bamansa Bhagwagar of Kudian and *Mehernosh Jal Randelia*; September 9
Binaifer Mervan Mistry and

Billy Maneck Pochara; September 15
Maharukh Jamshed Tangri and Neville Cyrus Kermani; September 22
Homai Rashid Irani and Faredoon Jamash Irani; September 23

Died

Cawas Motabhoj Chinoy (71), residing at 8, Kalpana, Colaba, 400005; April 11 (cremated)
Maneck Sohrab Dordi (69), 241, Venus Apts, Cuffe Parade, 400005; May 21 (cremated)
Mehroo Jamshedji Gandhi (77), Mancherjee Sheth Bldg, 262, Tardeo Rd, 400007; June 1 (cremated)
Ardeshir Furdoonji Talyarkhan (92), Room 16, Cricket Club of India Limited, Brabourne Stadium, D. Wachha Rd, 400020; July 13 (cremated)
Bhikhaji Shapoorji Billimora (79), 21, Cuffe Parade, 400005; July 26 (cremated)
Roxan Darshan Shah (26), Raitan, Worli Seaface, 400018; July 27 (cremated)
Homi Rustamji Pardiwala (86), B. Amarchand Mans, M. Cama Rd, Colaba, 400039; August 14 (cremated)
Framroz Dinshawji Kotwal (76), Boyce-Malegaumwala Bldg, 669, Katrak Rd, Wadala, 400031; August 20 (cremated)
Soli Dossabhoj Framroze (75), Framroze Court, 205, Marine Drive, 400020; September 1
Dhunjishaw Bomanji Kapadia (87), Dina Lodge, 40, Garden Rd, Apollo Recl, 400039; September 4
Dhanmai Dadiba Damania (68), Dhan Abad, Zaba Bazar, Nani Daman, Via Vapi, 396201; September 5
Arnavaz Noshir Gazdar (68), 581, Shirin Abad, Jame Jamshed Rd, Matunga, 400019; September 5
Naju Phiroz Gazdar (67), 7, Uranwalla Mans, 255, Dr B. Ambedkar Rd, Parel, 400012; September 5
Perviz Sorab Karaka (72), 1, Sleater Hse, Sleater Rd, 400007, September 5
Dara Khurshedji Palkhiwala (53), 43, Snehsadan, Opp Colaba Post Office, 400005; September 5
Sohrab Manekshaw Bulsara

(66), 9, Church View, St Michael's Clny, Mahim, 400016; September 6
Jal Manekji Dalal (92), Jer Mans, Forjett St, 400036; September 6
Minoo Shapur Sethna (70), L/8, S. B. Bharucha Baug, S. V. Rd, Andheri (W), 400058; September 6
Jerbai Burjor Banajee (72), Jaijee Ter, 9, Sleater Rd, Grant Rd, 400007; September 7
Rashid Faredoon Goshtasbi (73), Mohamdi Minar, 14th Lane, Khetwadi, 400004; September 7
Maki Pestonji Kuka (80), Gole Links, Union Park, Pali Hill Rd, Khar, 400052; September 7
Minocher Rustomji Mistry (70), Hill View, Raghavji Rd, Cumballa Hill, 400036; September 7
Homi Kaikushru Khandalavala (71), Eddie Hse, Peddar Rd, 400026; September 8
Adi Framroze Postwala (48), 16/8, Sir Ratan Tata Bldg, Tardeo, 400034; September 8
Framroze Rustomji Rana (75), New Ambivali Hsg Soc, Veera Desai Rd, Andheri (W), 400058; September 8
Gool Keki Zaveri (65), 667, Lady Jehangir Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; September 9
Kety Eruch Buhariwala (48), 3, Homai Abad, 240, Linking Rd, Bandra (W), 400050; September 10
Cawas Rustomji Movdawala (84), 764/E, Umrigar Bldg, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; September 10
Minoo Cawasji Photographer (88), F. S. Parukh Dharam-shalla, 34, Hughes Rd, 400007; September 10
Kuma Rustom Antia (80), Chatriwalla Bldg, Wadia St, Tardeo, 400034; September 11
Dhunjisha Dadabhai Chawda (70), Soona Bldg, Chikalwadi, Grant Rd, 400007; September 11
Kekobad Darabsha Elavia (59), H-30, Cusrow Baug, S. B. Rd, 400039; September 11
Hilla Merwanji Dadina (76), Petit Bldg, 101, Sleater Rd, Nana Chowk, 400007; September 12
Dhanbai Rustomji Hathi (95), 13/4, Godrej Staff Qrts, Vikhroli (W), 400079;

September 12

Aspandiar Rashid Irani (85), 12, Monica Villa, Church Rd, Marol, Andheri (E), 400059; September 12
Sorabji Dadabhai Mody (70), G/23, Yogi Ngr, Borivali (W), 400092; September 12
Eruch Pirojshaw Sethna (43), 191/193, Bazargate St, Fort, 400001; September 12
Bhikaji Pirojshaw Sidhwa (76), M/28, Nowroz Baug, Lalbaug, 400012; September 12
Najamai Cawassa Contractor (86), Mehar Bldg, 1st Dadiseth Lane, 400007; September 14
Nariman Ruttonsha Bugwadia (71), 10, Colaba Court, S. B. Rd, Colaba, 400005; September 15
Freny Fali Pardiwala (60), Kamla Nivas, Proctor St, Grant Rd, 400007; September 15
Aloo Nariman Bharucha (92), Serene Villa, 16, Alexandra Rd, Gamdevi, 400007; September 16
Mani Jal Daruwalla (81), C/o Bachu Umrigar, Jal Kiran, Cuffe Parade, 400005; September 17 (cremated)
Alamai E'achshaw Kapadia (80), Todiwalla Bldg, Sopari Baug Rd, Parel, 400012; September 17
Firoze Pestonji Udawadia (74), 25, Sita Mhl, B. D. Petit Rd, 400036; September 17
Khorshed Nusswanji Batliwalla (80), 18/278 K, Meherbai Wadia Bldg, Chikalwadi, Tardeo Rd, 400007; September 18
Hoshang Dinshaji Bharucha (60), Muncher Manzil, 35/C, Jairajbhai St, 400008; September 18

Pirojsha Merwanji Chitalwala (85), 671, Boyce Bldg, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; September 18
Pesi Savak Bamboat (53), G1/2, Shapur Baug, V. P. Rd, 400004; September 19
Dara Jahangir Cama (85), Bacha Mans, Tardeo Rd, 400007; September 19 (cremated)
Shirin Dara Engineer (72), Room 8, Shirin Engineer Bldg, Tukiwad, Shahpore, Surat, 395003; September 19
Mehroo Darabshaw Khambatta (58), Jehangir Mans, Next to Metro Cinema, 400020; September 19
Nariman Burjorji Dhatigara (78), Pandey Sanatorium, Wodehouse Rd, Colaba, 400005; September 20
Pesi Nariman Olia (52), Meher Behram Bldg, 7th Khetwadi Lane, 400004; September 20
Naval Burjorji Vadiwala (53), 2/18, Mistry Ngr, 5, Shivaji Park Rd, 400016; September 20
Shirinbai Rustomji Jilla (86), 26, Parsi Punchayet Block, Khareghat Clny, Hughes Rd, 400007; September 21
Cooverbai Byramji Palkhiwalla (88), A/102, Avan Apts, Kandivli (W), 400067; September 21
Darabshaw Maneckshaw Patel (82), 155, Rajan Niwan, 30, Waterfield Rd, Bandra, 400050; September 21
Dolly Aspi Patel (42), 677, Katrak Rd, Wadala, 400031; September 21
Shirinbai Shapoorji Kotwal (76), Jamasji Todiwala Bldg, Sunmill Rd, Lower Parel, 400013; September 24

Alamai Manek Balsara (82), Wilson Bldg, Dadar T.T., 400014; September 25
Soli Dhanjibhoy Masani (78), Hormuz Mans, B. Desai Rd, 400026; September 25
Hosang Maneckshaw Nanji (54), 7, Panthaky Baug, Andheri (E), 400069; September 25
Khorshed Manek Purveyar (49), Mishra Bhavan, Wadia St, Tardeo, 400034; September 25
Homai Kaikhushru Dhalla (80), 11/9, Tata Clny, Tardeo, 400034; September 26
Male child of Shehnaz Merwan Irani (stillborn), Dina Mans, Balam St, 400007; September 26
Keki Faramroz Mistry (62), 18, Avabai Bldg, Lady Pochkhanawala Rd, 400007; September 26
Piloo Dinshaw Siodia (72), 54, Malcolm Baug, Jogeshwari (W), 400102; September 27
Zarina Faramroz Engineer (80), 14, Rustom Baug, Victoria Rd, Byculla, 400027; September 28
Rati Maneck Mistry (74), C/17, Nowroz Baug, Lalbaug, 400012; September 28

JAIPUR

Born

A boy, Zubin, to Dinaz and Kersi Mehta; July 15

POONA

Died

Chandanbai Erachshaw Chothia (92), Pudumji Park, Nanapeth, 411002; September 1
Phiroze Cooverji Dossabhoy (89), 3, Napier Rd, 411001; September 7
Cawasji Hormazji Taraporwala (90), 8/A, Mody Clny,

Synagogue St, 411001; September 17

SURAT

Died

Janshed Hormasji Baliwala (92), 12/1000, Bag-e-Parsi St, Maachli Pith, 395003; September 1
Alamai Ardeshir Patrawala (57), Opp Nariman Home and Infirmary, Shahpore, 395003; September 17
Tehemton Nadirsha Gazder (56), Nariman Home and Infirmary, Shahpore, 395003; September 22

BOSTON, Massachusetts

Born

A boy, Zal, to Roxana and Yezdi Dordi; August 26

KARACHI

Died

Najoo Behram Bhadar (76); August 3
Faramroz Jamshedji Petigara (79); August 10
Dhurjisha Manecksha Gorana (65); August 11
Minocher Sheriar Kavasji (75); August 18
Behram Rustam Patel (48); August 19
Nadir Maneckji Cooper (Umrigar) (65); August 25
Khuda Murad Asfendiar Irani (76); August 25

TOTALS (for this issue)

Births: Boys 18, Girls 8
Marriages: 6
Deaths: 84

Compiled by Roxana H. Kaka

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