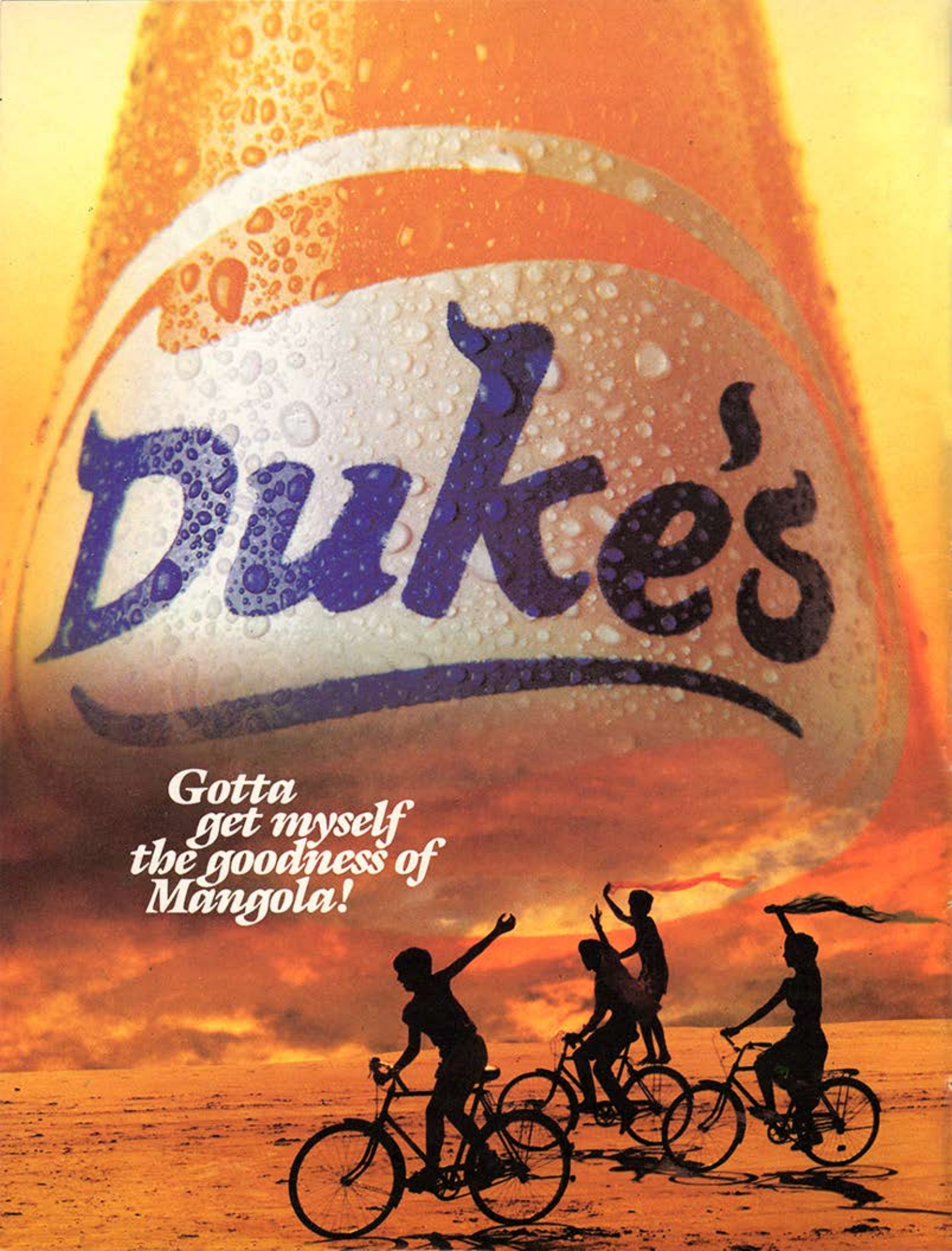


NOVEMBER 1990 Rs 8

Parasiana



Rasna's cool collection



Duke's

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get myself
the goodness of
Mangola!*



Parsiana

November 1990
Volume 13 Number 5

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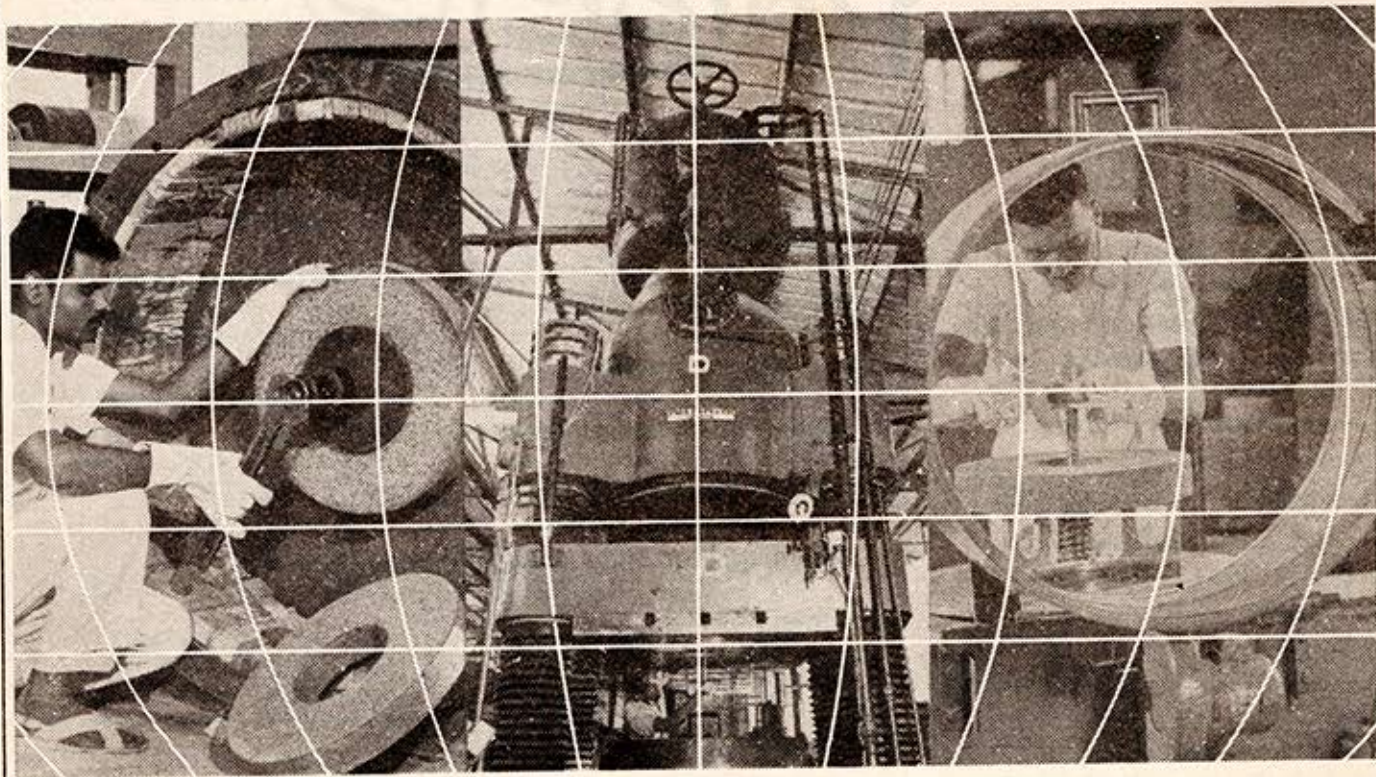
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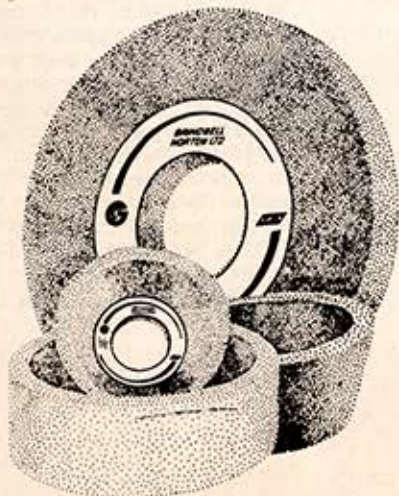
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Readers' views are welcome on any subject of interest to the community and should be sent to the Editor, Readers' Forum, Parsiana, G.P.O. Box 892, Bombay 400001. Letters are subject to editing for reasons of space and clarity. Unsigned letters or those without an address will not be published.

"An injustice at..."

This refers to "An injustice at doongerwadi" (*Parsiana*, August 1990). It is a crying shame that a Parsi should write such blasphemy. Even a 15-year-old girl like me knows that if you are foolish enough to marry outside your religion you do not remain a pure Parsi. Could Roxan have helped our dwindling community? The answer is 'no,' because even if her children do have their navjote ceremony performed, they are not pure Zoroastrians.

I am sure that it must have been quite sad for Roxan's family, but they should have expected it if they allowed her to marry outside the religion. To conclude I feel that if Ms Arnavaz Mama feels so strongly about it, she should start her own doongerwadi for Parsi women who have married outside our community.

There was no injustice at the doongerwadi... it was justice to our religion.

Ms VEERA K. DOONGRIWALLA

The shocking episode of denial meted out to young Roxan Shah, daughter of Dr Adi Nazir, is in keeping with our religious attitudes ("An injustice at doongerwadi," *Parsiana*, August 1990).

I have always been nauseated by the oft repeated comment heard when sanctimonious Parsis get together: "Apro dharam ketlo chokho chë (How very pure is our religion!)" Any group of people who propagate the concept that God is their private preserve and that their religion is better and cleaner than any other, have missed the essence of what the founders of their respective faiths have taught.

I do believe in the broad and all embracing avatatic concept that God comes again and again every time the wick of righteousness burns low, to give mankind a push, and to teach the same eternal message of love, always giving it a complexion to suit the times.

It stands to reason therefore that every religion in its pristine state is as pure and as clean as any other, and therefore any true member of one can never desecrate the ceremonials of another by his or her presence.

It is strange that basically most Parsis have an ingrained, almost genetic, sense of compassion for all living things, human and animal. How can we then be so bigoted and unkind to our fellow humans when it comes to religion?

As Aurobindo, in his profound wisdom, has said, "True theocracy is the kingdom of God in man, and not the kingdom of a pope, a priesthood or any sacerdotal class of any denomination."

The teachings of all the divine masters are full of universal compassion and love, devoid of any dogma or ceremonial laws. It is we humans who have "caged the bird" and given their teachings the garb of religion.

There was no greater iconoclast than Zoroaster when he strode this earth and walked into King Gustasp's court like a colossus, breaking every existing taboo. And now we, his followers, have turned into such hidebound conformists that we find it in us to deny a child her last rites and mortify her inconsolable parents, only because she married outside the community. If any Parsi believes this to be in keeping with his religion, then I would like to know what religion is all about.

Dr H S. ADENWALLA

Trichur

"1989: The telling figures"

In "1989: The telling figures" (Readers' Forum, *Parsiana*, August 1990) Dr P. D. Sunavala discusses the birth and death rates of the Parsi population. With aging of the population, the death rate for UK has shown a rise from 10.4 to 10.7. Same is the experience of all developed countries.

Low birth rate is a cause for concern. Migration of the young has its influence. But assuming all the babies born today and yesterday, continue living in India, their number is not adequate to replace the present number. It is important to note that the marriage and childbearing patterns will further reduce the number i.e. even when all those 'now born' opt to live in India. In keeping with the trend of Parsis' behavior, not all will marry and the children they will bear will be too few.

All this was discussed by me in a paper that the community is well aware of (*Survey of Parsi Population of Greater Bombay -- 1982* and a paper on Parsi demography presented to the Fourth World Zoroastrian Congress in 1985).

From my general observations I feel that the community must treat every pregnancy as 'most precious' i.e. each pregnant woman should be offered adequate medical and nutritional guidance and financial assistance, if necessary, till the child becomes five years old. Ms Aloo Mowdaval at Godrej, had an excellent program for the past few decades and there are virtually no infant deaths or instances of maternal mortality among the population under her program. Much more positive were the health effects.

This approach is essential since experience shows that it is the poor who were likely to go for pregnancy and births.

Dr (Ms) MALINI KARKAL

"The Place where..."

It was really interesting to note that Firoz, the father of the sizzler, started by selling mava cakes to the British soldiers bivouacked at the Worli sea face ("The Place where it sizzles," *Parsiana*, July 1990). His son forgets to mention that Firoz's second stop was the Friend's Cabin between the old Golwalla and Backbay Baths (swimming pools). It was a big cabin touching the sea when Backbay was still a bay. There was no Mantralaya or Sachivalaya or Oberoi Hotel. It was all sea, which literally used to lap the steps of the Cabin.

Here Firoz used to sell samosas and chicken sandwiches cut triangularly (for the first time in Bombay). The chicken rolls had not yet arrived on the scene.

Then on to Excelsior and Empire cinema stalls for the American style hot dogs and chicken rolls. He used to serve in a small garden in the old Excelsior cinema building. Firoz had picked up the idea on one of his trips to the USA.

At that time a Japanese performing troupe was performing at the old Regal cinema. Firoz joined them on their return journey to Japan and himself returned to Bombay with "The Sizzler" at the Excelsior cinema. Also, clay models of the various dishes he was going to serve, were displayed in the showcase at the entrance of the restaurant.

I have not tasted the likes of the sizzler pork chops and mixed grill he used to serve there, ever, anywhere again. Perhaps, I was younger and more voracious then.

Then he moved to Paradise, Colaba and then to the Isle of Mann (UK). Well, that's another story.

Z. M. ZEND

"Which way to 2000...?"

People over here could not miss observing that neither the Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe (ZTFE) nor their delegates were once referred to or mentioned in the body of the report on the Fifth World Zoroastrian Congress (*Parsiana*, January 1990).

We are the second largest stronghold of Zoroastrians outside India, and the oldest association in the western world. Whether one likes it or not, our community in Europe has a major role to play and will be a very great contributory factor in the formation of the world Zoroastrian stage in the future.

Your publication is very important to our community. Unless it's free from politics and prejudice it will not be able to serve our community, and if that happens then you would have missed a golden opportunity which Ahura Mazda has blessed you with to serve your community.

I consider factualness, frankness and fairness as the cardinal requisites of effective journalism.

Ervad ZAL SETHNA

London, UK

The Editor replies

There was no intention to willfully leave out the name of any association or individual. The only article in the issue where we could have referred to the

ZTFE was "Which way to 2000 and beyond?" by Ms Parinaz Gandhi, as the other pieces dealt with other issues. Since Gandhi's article compressed four days of talks into 3,000 words, this restriction implied that several associations other than the ZTFE also found no mention in the issue.

However, UK Parsis were referred to by the author in quoting Dr (Ms) Rashna Writer's considerable research on the UK community. Also, ZTFE president Zal Sethna and secretary Rusi Dalal found a pictorial place in the issue.

"Percy"

The film *Percy* is an obnoxious, unimaginative, unpalatable and incomprehensible caricature of the Parsis and their way of life. I entirely agree with the views expressed by Ms Gulistan Engineer on this film ("Percy," Readers' Forum, *Parsiana*, August 1990). I cannot accept the wishy-washy comments of the director Mr Pervez Merwanji and his defence of the film.

We are not disputing the many awards it won. Maybe, cinematically, it was good. What we are trying to say is that can we not have had a more sympathetic exposure as a community — the community which has done such a lot to improve social conditions for itself and other communities? Why should Percy have shown himself to be a mamma's boy who obviously despises his mother but cannot show his true feelings? His disgusting father is shown mouthing crude and vulgar language, implying that Parsis can only speak about such things openly and brazenly. He does not change after his mother dies — but fades away in the horizon.

Then what, may I ask, did the picture convey? If that was the story as Merwanji claims, he has made a wrong choice by filming it, apart from doing a great disservice to the Parsis. Our Maharashtrian, Muslim, Gujarati and other friends phoned me after viewing this film. Many were outright sarcastic and it was mortifying to hear what the others had to say.

And lastly, what is this nasty remark by Mr Merwanji about Parsis living in one-crore apartments and criticizing the poor? I strongly suspect a streak of vindictiveness coupled with chauvinism on his part as regards the lady! No, Mr Merwanji, the film was a bad reflection on our community, and not all the awards in the world can wipe out that stigma unless you make another film showing the Parsis as

they are — with human foibles yet gentle, understanding, lovable, charitable and affectionate, literate and socially conscious human beings. And yes, Mr Merwanji, you will have to arrange the finance for it yourself (not by Ms Engineer as suggested by you in your reply). Then, perhaps, you will be able to mitigate to a certain extent the wrong Percy has done to the Parsis. I wish you success in your venture!

Ms GOOLOO R. MEHTA

Subscriber blues

You state in your letter of reminder for subscription renewal, "Our issues are sometimes behind schedule due to limited editorial personnel and financial resources." This is a euphemism. You are always late, right from day one. You have enough staff to come out at the right moment, not only day. To say that your circulation drops because our numbers are dwindling is indeed a novel explanation. Perhaps you remember the days, way back in the 1960s, when I used to buy a dozen copies of your journal for free distribution.

The real reason is (that) you wish to cater to the upper class and to cajole whom you sometimes print rubbish — but your real subscribers live way down the line. Tell me factually, how many of the seven trustees (of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet) subscribe to your paper?

You are simply wasting good space when you give a list of a Freney marrying a Karsomali or a Cavas marrying a Christine. And then why lament the dwindling numbers? Despite all these factors, I still have two gift subscriptions to my account.

This is without malice and written because you asked for it. Perhaps you remember that I had given you the idea to combine issues e.g. October/November/December or else, as a novice you were posting the single issues so late that had the practice continued, we might have received the June '79 issue today. A fact's a fact any day.

There is, further, an insulting line thrown in gratuitously (the *Parsiana* subscription renewal form carries a money back guarantee for the balance period, if at any time the subscriber chooses to cancel his subscription).

Though chronologically I am 75 — and a BSc — I belong to all age-groups (but) how, as a seasoned journalist, could you forget the old adage, "Never ask a woman her age or a man his wage?" (An optional questionnaire, appended to the

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subscription renewal form, enquires about the readers' age, educational qualifications, income group, etc).

I run Spenta Engineering Co (Pvt) Ltd as its chairman and managing director, making scooter locks and, keep yourself awake, each lock carries a printed lifetime guarantee for replacement. This is the Zoroastrian virtue of excellence in every field which you are trying to destroy by advocating mixed marriages. When a thoroughbred mare is crossed with a donkey, the result is a mule, which has no pride of ancestry nor any hope of posterity. DINSHAW A. MERCHANT

Appeal for donations

The Mancherji Joshi Memorial Education Fund (MJMEF) was established and registered as a public trust in the year 1969. It aimed to commemorate the name of the great social worker and founder of the Dadar Parsi Colony, by giving educational aid to deserving and needy Parsi families.

As the cost of education is increasing day by day, it becomes more and more difficult for the parents from the lower income group or even for middle-class families, to bear the entire burden of the education of their children and, therefore, the demand for educational help from our Fund, is ever increasing.

We entirely depend upon philanthropic persons and institutions to give us generous donations enabling us to extend educational aid to many more deserving Parsi boys and girls, to further their studies and thus grow up to be worthy citizens of our community and the country. They can also bring happiness and prosperity to their families, as one single educated person of a family can change the destiny of his/her family.

Last year we received donations of over Rs 57,700 which enabled us to grant Rs 33,775 as educational aid to 111 deserving students.

We assure you that every rupee that you contribute will be utilized very discriminatingly. Cheques may be drawn in favor of the "Mancherji Joshi Memorial Education Fund" and addressed c/o the undersigned at 614, Jame Jamshed Road, Mancherji Joshi Parsi Colony, Dadar, Bombay, 400014.

JAL KHAN

Hon Treasurer, MJMEF

The Parsis as a minority

Mr Homi J. H. Taleyarkhan, member, Minorities Commission, Government of In-

dia, in a press release dated September 7, 1990 had pointed out that the Zoroastrians too had a sizable number of poor and economically weak sections and that some provision could be made by the Government so that their talent and ability was not lost.

The release continued that Parsi students, in spite of obtaining high marks in the Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) examinations, were unable to get admission in professional colleges. In view of their pioneering services — the Parsis, in true secular spirit, had helped in the development of the country and welfare of the people — Mr Taleyarkhan expressed hope that their economical and educational needs would be attended to.

On September 12, 1990, I forwarded a copy of the above release to Dr Aspi Golwalla, chairman, the Parsi Punchayet Funds and Properties, Bombay, and requested him to let the Parsi community know what a representative and authoritative body like the Parsi Punchayet thinks of Mr Taleyarkhan's recommendation. Dr Golwalla, whilst acknowledging my letter on October 5, 1990, stated that the matter was under consideration and the decision, when finally arrived at, would be conveyed to me in due course.

The contribution of the Parsis in the field of education is next to none. And yet, Parsi youth is sent from pillar to post for admission to academic institutions. Is anything wrong in urging the Government that for admission to academic institutions, as well as in jobs, the Parsis should have certain facilities?

It is a matter of regret that apart from Mr Homi Taleyarkhan, no other leader of our community has openly come forward.

BHIKHAJI M. ADENWALLA

The highway rider reports

My daughter and I started from Kanyakumari on November 1, 1990 on our moped after a touching send-off by the Lions Club of Kanyakumari whose members had gathered at the Samadhi of the Mahatma at 6 a.m. to see us off.

We had a tough time with incessant rain for three days and got wringing wet, so much so that I nearly decided to abort my mission at Salem, but Ahura Mazda guided us and we made the journey despite the daily downpour. It was only at Bangalore that we got some respite, with a shining sun.

In all other respects, the journey was comfortable, though very tiring as we did

not exceed 40 KMPH and drove from dawn to dusk, with halts in between.

I start at 6 a.m. on November 12 for the second phase of my journey touching Nagpur, Jhansi, Agra, Delhi and, if permitted, to Kashmir.

Petrol proved another handicap as everywhere the bunks would refuse to fill the five-liter tin which I carried, as the Champ's capacity is only three liters. However, my AASI (Automobile Association of Southern India) membership card did the trick and we were able to obtain our requirements.

Because of the present conditions, my expenditure has gone haywire and much beyond what I had expected. If some philanthropic Parsis could offer any monetary help, however small, it would mitigate some of the financial pinch.

D. C. PATELL

Secunderabad

To train trust managers

The Centre for Advancement of Philanthropy (CAP) set up since October 1986, provides professional advice and assistance to public charitable trusts, societies and nonprofit organizations in areas of trust law, management and taxation.

Now, the Centre has initiated a training program in trust management for volunteers interested or involved in social work through charitable trusts and societies. The curriculum includes an overview of the Bombay Public Trust Act, the Societies Registration Act, Income Tax Act and other legislation affecting charities. Brainstorming sessions on various aspects of fund raising, proposal writing, program selection and leadership development are included. The program will initially be spread over four Saturdays every month and participants will be awarded a certificate on successful completion of the course.

Due to paucity of space, only four participants will be enrolled every month on a first come, first served, basis. There are no registration or tuition fees. Participants must bring their own stationery and reference material prescribed by the Centre. Those interested may write to the undersigned at the Centre for Advancement of Philanthropy, C/o J. N. Marshall Ltd, Mistry Mansion, 4th floor, 107, M. G. Road, Fort, Bombay, 400023.

NOSHIR H. DADRAWALA

Executive Secretary, CAP

Edited by Amavaz S. Marna

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Events and Personalities

Thana land: an update

The litigation over the 80,000 square foot land on Eduljee Road at Chanrai belonging to the Cowasji Behramji Divecha Trust at Thana may be resolved shortly once the parties involved sign the consent terms, says Rustom Cursetji, president of the Thana Parsi Zoroastrian Anjuman.

While it had been agreed some months ago, on the intercession of Homi Taleyarkhan, member of the Government of India's Minorities Commission, that 33,000 square feet of the total built-up area would be reserved for the community and offered at Rs 550 per square foot as per a write-up in the *Jam-e-Jamshed* of June 10, 1990, the payment schedule had been a continuing source of disagreement, said Cursetji.

Now it has been agreed — though the consent terms remain to be ratified — that 15 percent of the amount would be payable on signing the agreement and 30 percent on the plinth being ready — a total of 45 percent within two months of signing the agreement, informs Cursetji whose involvement has thus saved a part of the plot for the benefit of the community.

It may be recalled that the Divecha Trust reportedly sold the property for Rs 1.30 crores to Radhika Properties Developments Private Limited in January 1988 with the charity commissioner's permission (see "Thana land sale dispute," *Parsiana*, January 1989). When the Thana Anjuman became aware of the commercial and non-Zoroastrian aspect of the arrangement, Cursetji, as president of the Anjuman, interceded with the charity commissioner to stay the deal. Alarmed by the brisk construction on the disputed land and repeated adjournments at the charity commissioner's court, the Anjuman moved the Bombay High Court. Simultaneously, the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrians Anjumans of India

sought permission to implead itself in support of the Anjuman. Armed with High Court orders in their favor staying further construction and instructing that the charity commissioner's hearings be expedited (see "Thana land development stayed," *Parsiana*, July 1989) the Anjuman was reportedly able to establish that the original sale price (Rs 170 per square foot) was much below the market rate (Rs 1,000 per square foot). On the assurance of the Godrej Foundation which agreed to build on a no profit no loss basis at Rs 160 per square foot, the Anjuman maintained that 300 flats would be absorbed by Parsis at the rate of Rs 450 per square foot.

The charity commissioner eventually

consent body... for trustees who are abdicating responsibility," and requested Taleyarkhan to intervene.

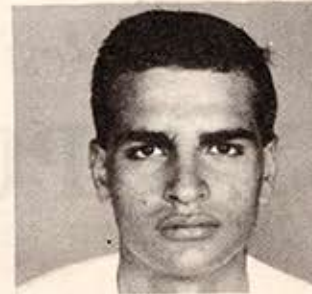
Accordingly, at a meeting of all the parties to the dispute, Taleyarkhan had reportedly succeeded in negotiating an increase in the area for the community from 25 percent to about 41 percent of the total.

There are still a couple of issues which remain. For example, to whom would additional benefit accrue in the event of a change by the municipality in the town's floor space index (FSI)? Also, how much of the ground area and amenities would be available for the use of the community? These questions are pertinent, informs Cursetji, in view of the likely combining of the disputed property with other property acquired by the builders.

Only if Mulla and Mulla, Craigie, Blunt and Caroe, solicitors to the Federation, accept the consent terms, will the Anjuman sign them. And when it does, the petition before the Bombay High Court will be withdrawn, Cursetji adds.

Amavaz S. Mama

Medal winning yachtsmen at the Asian Games: Motivala (above), Tarapore (below left) and Cama



ruled that 25 percent of the area be reserved for Parsis, as Cursetji reported to the executive council meeting of the Federation in Bombay in March 1990 (see "Does the Federation serve a purpose?" *Parsiana*, July 1990). On that occasion Cursetji had urged the Federation to create a surveillance machinery "a

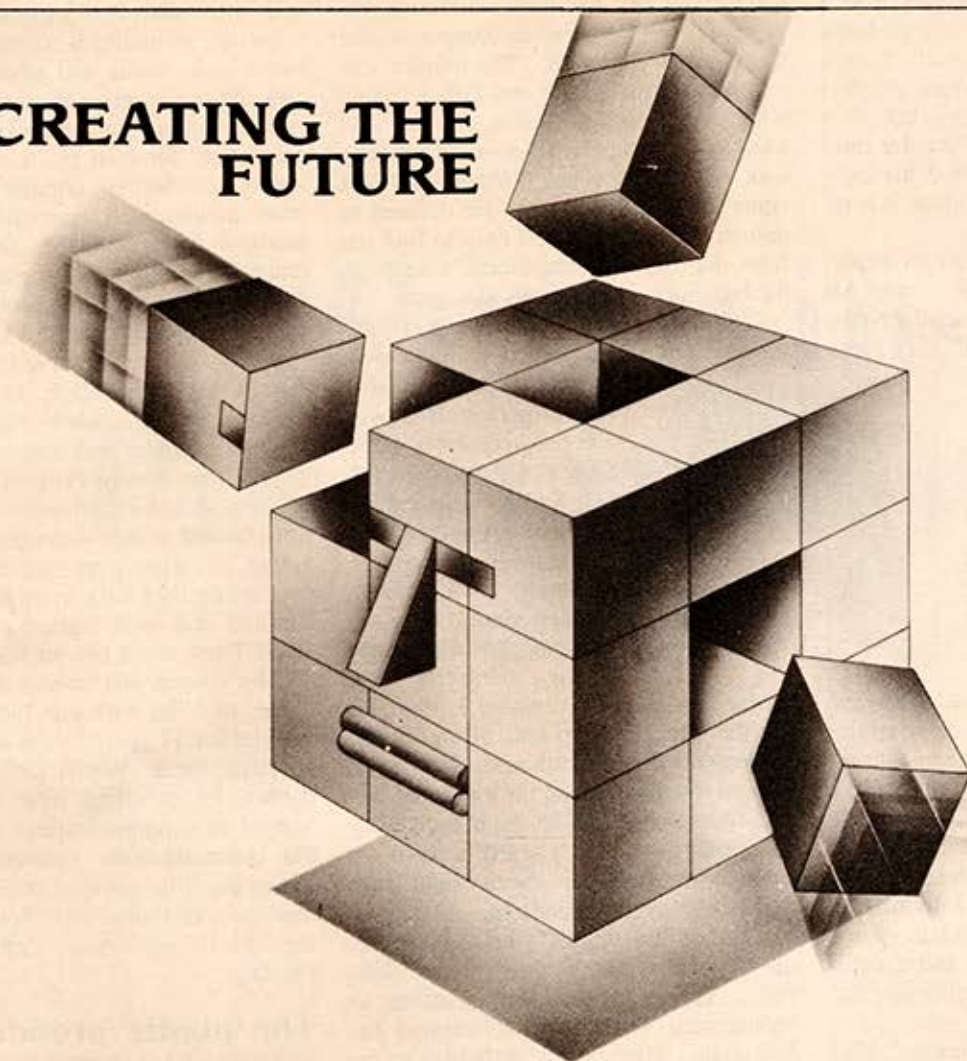
medals, notes a press release. Sprinter Ms Zenia Ayrton won a silver and yachtsmen Farokh Tarapore, Cyrus Cama and Homi Motivala helped increase India's medal tally by winning two bronze.

Ayrton was the first runner in the 4 x 100 mts women's relay team which won a silver medal. The Indian girls clocked

Asiad highlights

Of the six Zoroastrian participants representing India at the Asian Games held in Beijing in September 1990, four won

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44.99 seconds in the event.

Tarapore and his crew Cama won a bronze in the 470 class men's yachting event. In the seven races on seven days their performance differed from the first position to the fifth position, but their overall performance won them the third place. Similarly Motivala and his crew came third in the Enterprise class, it is reported.

Another Zoroastrian to play an important role in the Asian Games was Ms Arnava Damania, deputy chef-de-mission of the Indian contingent. Vice presi-



Representing India at the Asiad: Sprinter Ayrton (left) and deputy chef-de-mission Damania

dent of the Indian Olympic Association, Damania is presently the president of the Indian Women's Hockey Federation. Her responsibilities as deputy chef-de-mission involved organizing for the Indian team's clearance kits, travel details and coordinating with the Beijing organizing committee, adds the release.

Though she did visit camps and give encouraging talks to the participants, Damania was of the opinion that she "could not do justice" to her assignment because the appointment came at very short notice. "There is a lot of work involved... I feel that one should study all the disciplines and know the participants well. Hence the appointment should come at least three months in advance," said Damania.

Two muggings in Colaba

The insecurity of aging women who are sole occupants of flats came to the fore in August last. Within a span of eight days, two Parsi ladies were attacked in their flats at Colaba, South Bombay. While 82-year-old Ms Tehmina Vikaji Meher-Homji was murdered on August 19, Ms Freny Nanavati, aged 70, lived to tell her harrowing tale. The motive for both these assaults is believed to be robbery.

In MeherHomji's case, it was her domestic Mahesh Rambharose Valmiki who

strangled her to death with a rope after a quarrel, as per his own admission reported in *The Afternoon Despatch and Courier* of August 28. The murder was reported to the police by Zubin Mehta who stays across the street. Mehta who used to daily supply tiffin to the old lady was concerned when Valmiki did not come to fetch it that day. He decided to deliver the lunch himself only to find the front door open, MeherHomji's body on the bed and two cupboards also open.

Twenty-year-old Valmiki had absconded but was traced to his hometown in Uttar Pradesh by senior inspector Bhagwan and head constable G. A. Satam of the Colaba Police Station who are investigating the case, further notes the newspaper.

Barely a week later, another victim Nanavati was mugged in the same locality, informs the *Jam-e-Jamshed* of September 9, 1990. As per the write up, two lads offered to do carpentry work at her house. When she refused, the boys asked for a glass of water. When she went to fetch water they came into the house, gagged her and ran away with whatever jewelry and cash they could lay their hands on.

One of the youths who was subsequently nabbed in Vashi by the Colaba Police Station officers was identified as Mohammad Amiruddin Mohammad Zabeeruddin. His confession helped to recover some of the stolen jewelry, it was reported.

Mehta IAA president

Director of Blitz publications Karl Mehta was recently elected to the board of directors of the International Advertising Association (IAA). Subsequently he was elected president of the Association's Indian chapter, notes the *Financial Express* of October 7, 1990.

Mehta (left): advancement of advertising
Kharas: potentials of plastic



The IAA is a worldwide organization, with more than 2,300 members from 74 countries, providing a common forum for advertisers, media and advertising agencies and representing their common interests. The main aims of this non-profit organization, founded in 1938, are "to advance commercial communication free from unwarranted restrictions (and) to promote high standards of advertising practice" through self regulation, development of advertising codes and exchange of ideas, notes an IAA brochure.

Mehta had earlier served as vice president of this organization. He is a founder member of the Advertising Standards Council of India and was involved with the Bombay Master Printers Association. He is also associated with a number of professional bodies connected with marketing, advertising and publishing. He is on the board of Rifa Investments Private Limited and is a trustee of the Asian Book Trust, notes his curriculum vitae.

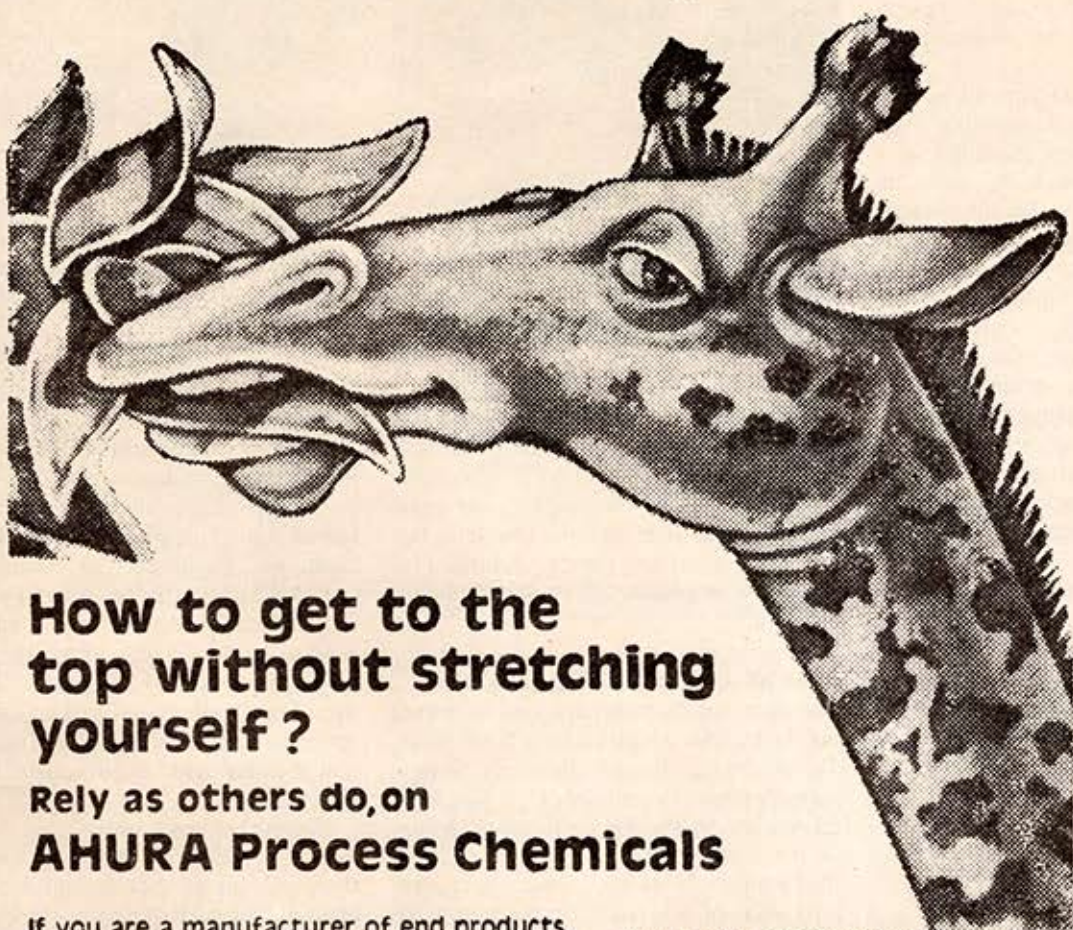
The 44-year-old executive started his career in 1966 with Air India where he worked for 11 years in the in-flight service department. Whilst with the national carrier, he qualified from the London School of Communications in mass media communication studies. He then joined the Blitz group of publications as a management trainee in '77, becoming its director 10 years later, further adds his bio data.

The 'plastic' president

Science-inclined Pheroze P. Kharas opted out of his responsible job with the Atomic Energy Commission and later at Union Carbide to pursue a business in plastics. This year he was elected president of the Organization of Plastic Processors of India (OPP), notes *The Economic Times* of September 1, 1990.

To improve "the image of plastics with the Government and the public and to highlight the potentials of plastic application and research" is what the OPP has





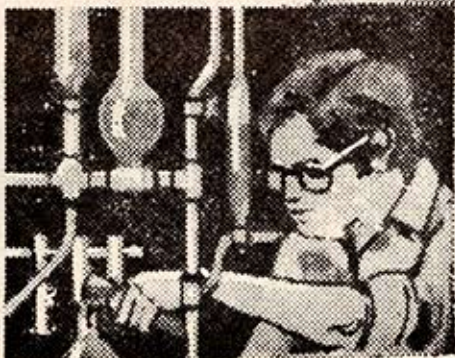
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been concentrating on. Kharas is himself the director of Ecoplast Private Limited, a seven-crore-rupee company that manufactures and sells plastic films for flexible packaging and other specialized applications, notes *Plastiscope*, the journal of the OPP.

A growth rate of 20 percent is projected for Ecoplast in the coming year. Since it is "easy to get outdated in a short time," the technocrat has plans for expansion in the field of flexible packaging. With flexible packaging costing nearly one-fifth of rigid packaging, there is a good demand for the Ecoplast products. Sometimes it is the clients' unusual demands (like in the case of a gentleman who wanted to make a specialized identity card sealed between two layers of thermoplastic) that result in unexpected innovations by the company. "In the future we want to broaden our market, preferably in the branch of engineering plastics," reiterates the plastic specialist.

A graduate in chemical engineering from the University of Technology, Loughborough, England, the entrepreneur's early education was at Bombay's Cathedral and John Connon High School and Wilson College. His years with the Atomic Energy Commission and Union Carbide helped him gain "in experience, confidence and contacts," he acknowledges.

Calcutta Taj's new GM

The newly appointed general manager of the Taj Bengal, Calcutta is Ms Shirin



Batliwala (left): climbing the hotel ladder and Bana: on informative tour

Batliwala, notes the *BusinessWorld* of August 1-14, 1990. During her 20 years of association with the Taj group she has gained experience in the food and beverages departments of different hotels in the Taj chain. For the last eight years she has been the food and beverages manager of



Boat race winner Ms Cyrene J. D. Bilimoria receiving the women's single trophy from Dr A. S. Anand, chief justice of the Madras High Court, in Ooty early this year

the Taj Mahal Hotel, Bombay.

The executive is a member of the Hotel Catering and Institutional Management Association in London. Her training was at Bombay from where she completed a three-year diploma course in hotel management and catering followed by a year's specialized course, mentions her bio data.

Davar for Sterling papers

The Sterling Newspapers Group which publishes five magazines — *Gentleman*, *TV & Video World*, *Business Computer*, *Technocrat* and *GFQ* — has been taken over by the Indian Express Group, as per a report in *The Economic Times* of October 2, 1990. The editor and publisher of the new venture will be Maneck Davar, who was formerly with the Blitz Group before he took to editing and publishing the law magazine *Lex Et Juris*.

With this shift in power the magazines will now have access to the editorial and marketing resources of India's largest newspaper house, notes *The Times*. Minhaz Merchant, the

founder editor and chairman of the Sterling Group will continue to function as director on the new board, it was stated.

US fellowship for Bana

Senior staff reporter of the *Indian Express* Sarosh Bana represented India at the Jefferson Fellowship program this year, notes a press release.

Along with six American electronic

and print media journalists and one each from Japan, Hong Kong, South Korea, Philippines and Australia, Bana — as the Indian representative — was first put onto a "rigorous schedule at the East-West Center's Institute of Culture and Communications," he informs. In addition to lectures by specialists on Asian-Pacific affairs, discussions, workshops and seminars were conducted where the fellows presented papers in their areas of expertise. Bana's presentation comprising two parts was on the "Political Transformation in India" and "Environmental Politics in India."

During his two months' stay, he visited different cities in America meeting a cross-section of experts and senior officials at Pearl Harbor, the Pentagon, the White House, the National Security Council, the State Department, the Johnson Space Center in Houston, the arms producing plant of General Dynamics Corporation and Bell Helicopter in Fort Worth, Texas, apart from a range of conservationist organizations, it is noted. He was also interviewed by some newspapers in Hawaii, by the Voice of America in Washington and by KERA Radio in Dallas.

This Fellowship program is sponsored each year where six American journalists undertake information-gathering tours of Asian countries of their choice. A senior journalist from each of these six chosen Asian states is offered a similar opportunity on the US mainland, reports Bana. India's turn comes once every five or six years. Bana was one of 30 applicants to be chosen from India this year on the basis of his professional experience, relevance of the fellowship to his future work and his capacity to contribute to the success of the program, notes the release.

Since his childhood Bana has been



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interested in ecology. After completing his inter-science from Bombay's Elphinstone College he pursued a course in organic agriculture and has completed a three-year program at the Institute of Plant Research in Switzerland and Germany. Now he is a guest lecturer on this subject at colleges in Bombay. The journalist has also given concerts in Hindustani classical music in which he holds a degree, further informs the release.

Select Tata scholars

Of the 96 Tata scholars for 1990 selected by the J. N. Tata Endowment for the Higher Education of Indians nearly one-seventh are Parsis. Nine of the 14 Parsi students are women showing that "once again women are to the fore," according to a press release sent by Dinshah Malegamvala, director of the Endowment Fund.

It is in the field of science that most of this year's Tata scholars propose to pursue their studies: Dr (Ms) Meher C. Dadachanji (training in neuro-radiology, Thomas Jefferson University Hospital, Philadelphia), Aspi D. Engineer (PhD in computer engineering, University of Delaware), Ms Shirin Rustom Khambata (master's/PhD in cell and development biology, Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey), Dr Sharukh S. Khajotia (master's in orthodontics, University of Southern California, Los Angeles), Dr (Ms) Tina Rustomjee (M Phil in veteri-

nary science, Cambridge), Ms Gulnar Aspi Surveyor (PhD in molecular biology, University of Texas Health Science Center, Houston), Zubin N. Taraporewala (master's in construction engineering and project management, University of Texas, Austin) and Kairas J. Vakharia (master's in engineering economic systems, Stanford University).

Students who have opted for other fields of specialization are: Ms Bakhtawar Aspi Elavia (master's in education psychology, University of Southern California), Ms Roxanne P. Hakim (MPhil in social anthropology with development, University of Cambridge, UK), Ms Huzan R. Kharas (PhD in sociological study on the Zoroastrian community, University of Manchester, UK), Ms Anahita F. Mehta (professional fine arts, training in theater, Herbert Bergh of Studio New York, USA), Khushroo Fredie Mehta (master's in public and private management, general management, Yale University) and Ms Nawas K. Parakh (PhD in economics).

"A few of them deserve special mention," says Malegamvala who highlights the achievements of Hakim, Kharas, and Vakharia.

Hakim, who plans to specialize in tribal development, was awarded an ODA (Overseas Development Association) scholarship to cover all her expenses at Cambridge University. A first-class graduate in arts from St Xavier's College,

she ranked first in anthropology in the University of Bombay. She then studied law at the Government Law College ranking first in the University in the first year LLB course. She has also enjoyed the privilege of doing practical work with tribes in India and East Africa. "These field experiences have made me realize more than ever the need to formalize and structure my interests," says Hakim who adds that she is determined to work for the cause of "the 52 million tribals in India (who) cannot be ignored."

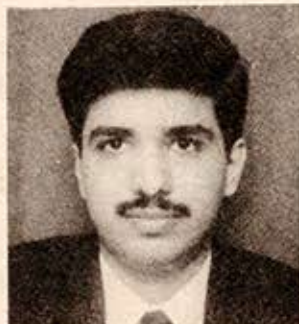
Kharas will continue her studies under Prof John Hinnells of the Department of Comparative Religion. For her master's degree in social work Kharas had done a study on the conditions of the Parsi priesthood on the basis of which an amelioration program was formulated by the controversial Athravan Educational Trust. She has also worked as a lecturer and senior examiner at the Bombay University.

Vakharia enjoys the distinction of being admitted to the "elite" University of Stanford for a master's in engineering economic systems, believed to be a new subject for Indians. Earlier he had graduated as a chemical engineer from Bombay University.

Immunology is a subject Khambata finds challenging. She stood first in the BSc examination in life sciences and chemistry at the University of Bombay. She subsequently completed her first year MSc course before proceeding to the States. She received several awards and scholarships including the departmental scholarship from the life sciences department of Bombay University, informs her bio data.

After completing his master's in management, Mehta has plans to do his master's in jurisprudence. He is a first-class graduate and postgraduate in commerce and a qualified chartered accountant.

With a master's degree in biotechnology from Pune University in hand, Surveyor will now concentrate on molecular biology and genetics. The University of Texas has given her a graduate school assistantship of \$ 12,000 per annum for five years. She has had experience working as a laboratory apprentice with the Svadeshi Mills Company Limited and training at



Founder J. N. Tata (in pheta) with 1990 Tata scholars (top row, from left): Surveyor and Khambata (Bottom row, from left): Hakim, Mehta and Kharas

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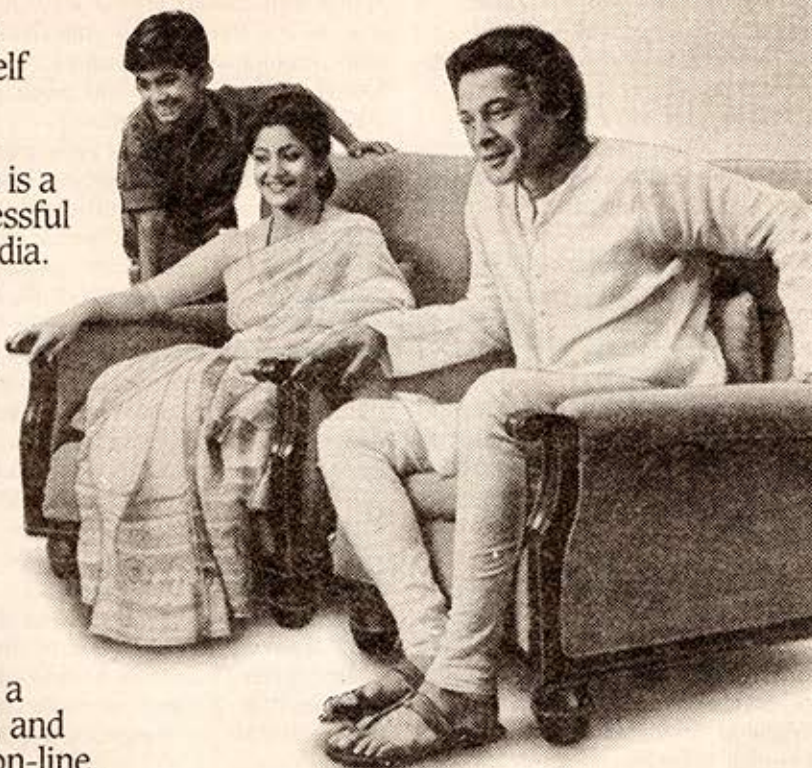
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the Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology, mentions her bio data.

Of the 96 new Tata scholars this year, 25 came from low-income groups with a monthly income of less than Rs 3,000, informs Malegamvala. The candidates had to undergo technical interviews and were examined by 28 separate technical committees to qualify as Tata scholars. This year a new category was introduced for professionals on sabbatical.

The Tata awards, which are loan scholarships, are repaid mostly in foreign currency. Since they are recycled, it has a "snowballing effect" on the funds made available to the Endowment for awarding fresh scholarships year after year, adds the director.

The J. N. Tata Endowment for the Higher Education of Indians was founded by the late Jamsetji Tata who believed in lifting up "the best and most gifted." Since its inception in 1892, the Endowment has awarded scholarships to the tune of nearly 3.50 crore rupees to 2,161 students who "occupy high positions in India and abroad," further writes Malegamvala.

The winning debut

The newly formed All-Parsis Sports Club which combines "the best talent of Parsi footballers from various baugs and colonies of Bombay," according to its secretary Mahiyar Dastoor, won the Musry Cup Football Tournament.

Winning six goals to five against Traffords Sports Club, this was reportedly the first time that a team won in the

first meet it participated in, thereby creating a history of sorts.

Led by captain Fareez Vasania, the main scorers for the all-Parsi team were Vasania, Farhad Irani, Neville Bhikaji, Naozer Dubash, Ruzbeh Engineer and Adil Driver, adds a report in *The Times of India* dated June 25, 1990.

The '90s will see "a revival of Parsi sports with various cricket festivals, athletic meets, football and volleyball tournaments, monsoon games and table tennis tournaments taking place and participation increasing," adds Dastoor.

Members of the All-Parsis team are students or employees sparing time and money to participate in different tournaments, informs Dastoor. Special mention is made of Adil Irani who invested the initial effort for the success of the sports programs. Though occasionally clubs may finance them, they look forward to sponsorship for the revival of sports activities within the community. Interested donors may contact Dastoor at the Dadar Parsi Colony Gymkhana (Telephone 4121114) or at his residence (Telephone 4138270).

Rail mishap averted

A major rail mishap was averted near Pune thanks to the presence of mind of engine driver Rustom N. Guzder and his assistant P. K. Vasan, reports the *Maharashtra Herald* of Pune dated July 29, 1990.

The clipping, forwarded to *Parsiana* by Kercy Karanjawala, informs that the Karjat Shuttle left Pune station on July 28

at 10.40 a.m. and had barely covered a few kilometers when its engine, a passenger bogie and a luggage van got derailed. On hearing a big noise Guzder pulled the chain to stop the train, according to the railway authorities. Alternate arrangements were made by the railways for the passengers to reach their destination soon thereafter.

No lagan-na-patras?

Can you enjoy *lagan-nu-bhonu* (wedding repast) without *patras* (banana leaves)? Bombay Parsis may soon have to settle for meals on festive occasions being served in plates instead of the traditional plantain leaves. The caterers complain that the cheapest they get their leaves are at Rs 35 for 100 and during winter the cost may go up to Re 1 per leaf, that is if the leaves are available, notes a report in *The Times of India* of July 18, 1990. Crockery on hire on the other hand comes cheaper with plates costing Rs 4.50 per dozen and glasses at Rs 3.60 per dozen.

Says a leading caterer Ms Freny Godiwalla, "Sometimes I wish that in all these 25 years I had never used banana leaves. The savings would have got me silver plates by now! Of course, banana leaves do not require washing and are easily disposable, but then in these days (with) the leaves costing so much, it's like throwing away money." A reason attributed for this escalation in costs is the ongoing urbanization in the Vasai and Nalla Sopara areas and the consequent degreening of these two tracts.

Another community said to be hit by this scarcity of banana leaves are the South Indians, *The Times* report notes. They use the darker green variety compared to the Parsis who use the light green variety for serving as also cooking *patra-ni-machhi* (fish coated with coconut chutney, wrapped in banana leaves and steamed). Both varieties can only be stored for four days after which they turn a patchy yellow, further notes *The Times*.

SPOTLIGHT

General manager of the Bank of India, Dara D. Avari, was recently appointed director of Credit Capital Venture Fund (I) Limited, the first private sector venture capital company in India, reports *The Economic Times* of September 8, 1990.

Compiled by Roxana H. Kaka

The newly formed All-Parsis Sports team make a kicking start



AZA victorious

The Australian Zoroastrian Association (AZA) of New South Wales (NSW) is jubilant. Its appeal against the Baulkham Hills Shire Council (BHSC) for use of AZA House has been fully upheld by the Assessor in the Land and Environment Court (LEC), informs the Association's newsletter, *Manashni* of October 1990. As soon as certain requirements — like building a driveway, parking spots, toilet block and sewerage tank system and planting of trees — are met, the Zoroastrians of NSW will be able to resume use of AZA House, writes AZA president Purviz Kolsawalla. The management committee has appointed a small subcommittee to ensure that the work proceeds in earnest.

Relieved of the doubt and suspense with which it was beset for over two years, the Association's priority now is to generate funds to meet what Kolsawalla refers to as "the crippling legal and engineering expenses."

In the final analysis, the victory was that of one man — AZA's immediate past president Noshir Irani who faced this problem throughout his two-year term and climaxed it with a solo performance in court. "For a day and a half (he) was cross-examined over and over again," writes *Manashni* editor Kersi Meher-Homji. "Never once pointing a finger at anyone, he explained briefly and succinctly how friendly and easily assimilable we Zoroastrians are, what our religion stands for and detailed our objectives and plans for AZA House."

As Irani recapitulates, the BHSC fielded eight witnesses including the chief town planner, chief engineer and six neighbors. The AZA's barrister countered with four — the town planner, the traffic engineer, the sewerage engineer and Irani. "Besides giving the background to our religion, history and the AZA's details, the significance of fire was demonstrated in the court with a small *afargani* and sandalwood." By lunchtime on the third day both sides had finished giving evidence. The same afternoon, the court visited AZA House and walked through some of the neighborhood properties on request. The next day, both barristers concluded the summing-

up. The following morning the judgment was delivered.

"The good news is that not only have we won the appeal, but all the conditions we wanted, as per our submissions, have been accepted. The Council tried to impose very restrictive conditions should the appeal be allowed; fortunately these were rejected. As per our plan, we have now to build the car park, toilet block and landscape. As soon as these works are completed, we can commence use of the AZA House as before," notes Irani with satisfaction, but impresses upon the community the need to prove itself a model neighbor.

The win reinforced the gut feeling of the community grassroots which had voted 175 to 40 to stay and fight the appeal at the extraordinary general meeting on November 12, 1989 when the committee members had been in favor of selling out and relocating. As Irani notes, "Once the majority voted to appeal, differences of opinion were set aside and, single-mindedly, work on the case commenced. This unity...we should be proud of and cherish always."

During the latter part of the prolonged litigation, which began when the AZA submitted plans for restructuring the property in line with its requirements, the Association was estopped from using the property in any way and even the mailing address had had to be changed. The decision of the BHSC had upheld the objections of AZA's neighbors in Annangrove, where the property is located, who claimed that the Zoroastrians were a source of noise pollution, traffic disturbances and sewerage problems. Thereafter, Sunday School functioned from the Thornleigh West Primary Public School premises and the Association's meetings — monthly, annual and extraordinary — all had to be held at hired venues.

Irani expects the cost of the appeal to escalate beyond the original estimate as the hearings covered five days instead of the anticipated three. "Although the financial status of the AZA is healthy — a profit of \$ 1,940 was achieved in 1989-90 — the funds are not sufficient to pay for all the legal and consultants' fees." In *Manashni*'s August issue Irani had in-

formed Association members that the cost estimates for the case were in the region of \$ 35,000 – 38,000, including legal fees, consultants' charges and other costs: "We have to engage a specialist firm of consulting engineers to study and prepare reports on traffic and waste disposal matters." Irani also wrote about a property at Arcadia, which was being considered under the earlier suggestion of relocating, where the AZA's development appeal had been formally approved by the Hornsby Council. The property, with a hall large enough to accommodate 200 people, and including a modern kitchen, three toilets and on-site parking for 40 cars plus plenty of off-street parking, covered a land area of half an acre.

Irani had presented two options to AZA members in his *Manashni* letter. One, that they pursue the Annangrove property appeal and forget about Arcadia. The other alternative was to retain Annangrove without going into appeal, rent it out for income while acquiring Arcadia for Sunday School and other activities of the Association. Either way, the Association faced a shortfall of resources.

The annual general meeting (AGM) on August 5, 1990 reaffirmed its earlier decision to push the appeal in the LEC — a decision they now have reason to celebrate. The AGM also constituted a group of volunteers to help Meher-Homji in the collection drive for \$ 15,000 which was the anticipated shortfall to the cost of the appeal. The AGM resolved on an increased membership fee (from \$ 25 to \$ 30) per family and an automatic increase of five percent per annum. A raffle drive got under way. The funds raised, totalled \$ 14,033, informs *Manashni* (November-December 1990).

The total bills received by the Association in connection with the appeal have amounted to \$ 43,209 of which \$ 34,345 have been met from AZA's income, savings and donations. After paying the deficit "our Association will have no liquid assets," warns Kolsawalla in his appeal for more donations.

The August 5, 1990 AGM voted in a new management committee. Assisting president Kolsawalla are vice president Burjor



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Sethna, secretary Khushroo Patel, treasurer Gustad Kadwa, and members at large Ms Arnavaz Minbatiwala, Ms Jer Rustomjee and Adil Sarkari.

The September *Manashni* notifies that the newsletter will now be published once in two months instead of the once a month frequency hitherto. Consistent losses led the management committee to consider a change of frequency as one way out of the problem. They had also increased advertising rates in an effort at self-sufficiency. If the advertisement drive or sponsorship picks up, the intention is to revert to the earlier, monthly, publishing routine.

Piano renditions from Rachmaninov and Beethoven by Cyrus Meher-Homji were scheduled on October 28, according to *Manashni*. Billed earlier as "the ever-smiling, ever-helping visitor from Perth," Meher-Homji has been in Sydney to groom under famous pianist Elizabeth Powell at the Conservatorium of Music, informs *Manashni*. It is expected that he will return to England next year to complete his PhD in music.

A Perth publication, quoted by *Manashni*, had earlier described the 25-year-old pianist as a musician who showed "true understanding."

Noshir Irani, the outgoing president, has arranged for a Zoroastrian youth exchange program between India and Australia. Zoroastrian families in Bombay, Delhi, Madras, Secunderabad, Jamshedpur and Ahmedabad have agreed to host young visitors, according to a write-up in *Manashni*, May 1990. Not only will the youth stay with families having young people of their own age, but sight-seeing excursions and get-togethers will be organized. This has been arranged in cooperation with the World Zoroastrian Organisation's India chapter, informs the report.

Parsis in Pak assemblies

The three cornered contest for the national assembly seat, at the recent national elections in Karachi, was won by hotelier Byram Avari. Incumbent Avari defeated Zoroastrian challengers Minoo Bhandara of Lahore and Yezedi Kaikobad of Rawalpindi to continue in the Pakistani parliament as the representative of the Parsi, Sikh, Buddhist, Bahai and Kalash communities, informs social worker Behram Rustomji of Karachi.

Hoshang Bharucha has been elected to

the equivalent seat in the Sind provincial assembly. Bharucha beat Ms Goshpi Byram Avari at the hustings. The corresponding seat in the Punjab legislative assembly has been occupied by Mr Pestonji, writes Rustomji.

In the meanwhile, Byram Avari has assumed chairmanship of the Karachi Parsi Anjuman Trust Funds (KPATF) — a position memorably filled by his father, the late Dinshaw Avari — on the retirement of philanthropist Dr Burjor Anklesaria who had donated Rs 25 lakhs to the KPATF.

Patel's friendly sympathy

A combination of hypnosis and psychotherapy is helping people overcome smoking, performance difficulties, stress and pain. Ms Tehmi Noshir Patel, a state registered children's nurse in the UK, tries to reach the hidden fears among female cancer patients. Those who have undergone mastectomy (the loss of a breast) are especially prone to worry about their imagined loss of femininity and anticipated rejection by their husbands. Patel leads them to speak out their fears. And in doing so, she helps them find their own answers, as notes an article received by *Parsiana*.

Patel's work is a part of Cancerkin — a program concerned with improving the quality of life of women afflicted with breast cancer — at the Royal Free Hospital. The project aims at research and looks at women's everyday lives. Former patients, trained as counsellors, visit breast cancer sufferers in their own homes.

Patel's association with Cancerkin is honorary. She works as a professional nurse at the premature baby unit in Kingston Hospital besides being a practising hypnotherapist. In the course of her work

at the baby unit, Patel found that she needed extra training to help bereaved parents. A three-year intensive course at the UK Training College of Hypnotherapy and Counselling followed. As a hypnotherapist she uses aids to relaxation such as deep breathing, the conscious relaxing of specific parts of the body and guided imagery. "To see yourself standing in a meadow, walking through trees to a brook, can have a calming effect," she says.

"The patients love her friendly sympathy and warm voice," notes the article. Besides, Patel is said to make no extravagant claims. "Get rid of physical tension and you become more positive. Positive thinking does not cure, but it can help the healing process," advises Patel.

An essay in goodwill

The unhappy Kanto earthquake of 1923 which flattened most of Yokohama, Japan's major port and industrial center, was commemorated in an unexpected context by the Hongkong and Shanghai Bank's housemagazine, sent to *Parsiana* by Ms Meher Nagarwalla of Ahmednagar. A letter from Hongkong businessman Bejan Rustomji Daver to the Bank's chairman, published in the magazine, related the aftermath of the quake on his father's personal life and how the Bank's inestimable support enabled the late Rustomji to emerge, phoenixlike, from the ashes.

Labelled "a paradigm of the successful client/bank relationship" in the editorial introduction, the story by Bejan Daver relates how Rustomji Daver established his firm R. E. Daver and Company in Yokohama in 1914 and prospered. The 1923 disaster destroyed the two-storeyed building which he then owned

continued on page 40

Gifts & Things

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Rasna

concentrate(d) success

Parinaz Gandhi

Popular flavors, economy and convenience have made Rasna the largest selling soft-drink concentrate

"Flavor science is like magic," says food technologist Areez Khambatta. "It's pure *nakkal* (imitation) but for that *nakkal* you require a lot of *akkal* (brains)," explains the specialist whose dual formula powder-liquid soft drink concentrate is reportedly the largest selling not only in India but in the world. Introduce him as the managing director of the Ahmedabad-based Pioma Industries but it will not trigger any salivary glands; as soon as you say the maker of Rasna soft drinks, a vision of red and yellow packets marked with distinct flavors and the popular advertising refrain will associate him with the refreshing drink.

Rasna has managed to capture 80-82 percent of the market in India in the non-carbonated soft drink sector and to retain its position too, claims Khambatta. In fact, multinationals like General Foods of USA who came out with Ju-C, and Corn Products with Trinka could not make a substantial dent in their holding. When asked to divulge their profits or sales figure, Khambatta prefers to cite the number of Rasna glasses consumed per year — 120 crores. "This means 1,200 millions," he reiterates. "One of the marketing successes of the eighties"

was the rating given to Rasna by *The Economic Times* last year which in a subsequent edition described the company as a "Rs 25-crore mini giant."

Just this August, Khambatta received the National Citizen's Award for outstanding contribution in the field of commerce at the hands of the Vice President of India Dr Shankar Dayal Sharma at a function at Parliament House Annexe, New Delhi. Ten days before this presentation, while passing through Bombay on August 20, 1990, he spoke to *Parsiana*. When we joined him for the interview, the tall, stocky-built businessman was having his parting words with the indentors who will be promoting the new products to be launched by Pioma. We notice his congenial countenance has a look of concealed mirth hidden behind his bushy moustache and thick glasses. Our meeting is sandwiched between two appointments: with his indentors, and a representative of Corn Products.

Content with the popularity of their soft drink concentrate which has as many as 11 flavors — the fruity tastes like orange, pineapple, lime, mango, grape and the assorted shahi gulab, kala khatta, kool khus, kesar elaichi, masala soda,

tooti fruiti — Khambatta asks whether we have sampled his favorites, lime and mango ripe. Our assurance not withstanding, he insists on proffering two boxes.

Besides plans to widen the range of flavors, he is gearing up for the manufacture of ready-to-serve non-aerated beverages in ceka packs. In *The Economic Times* report there was mention of Rasna diversifying into biscuits and confectionery but during the course of the interview Khambatta referred to their plans to bring out instant puddings, jams, jellies in fast-moving flavors. "This novel and unique concept requires no heating, no boiling..." Economy and convenience for the consumer is what Rasna believes in.

When Rasna was founded in 1978 it was mainly with the intention of providing an alternative and a cheaper thirst quencher at 30 paise per glass when aerated soft drinks and squashes were available at at least five times that price. Their first flavor was orange after which followed fresh lime, mango and the rest. The name Rasna was agreed upon so that the Indian consumers could equate it with *ras* which in Sanskrit stands for

Shankar Dayal Sharma
Vice-President of India
Delhi, August 30, 1990



Khambatta (right) receiving National Citizen's Award from Sharma

juice, mentions the flavorist. Prior to Rasna, his product — an orange drink — was called Jafe, named after the city in Israel famous for its oranges, the historical details are recounted for our benefit.

While production is Khambatta's domain, sales and marketing are looked after by Ashok Vithalani, the marketing manager who is credited with having made Rasna a household name. The extensive sales network that Vithalani oversees covers 1,600 towns and 1,50,000 retail outlets, says the newspaper report. The fact that Pioma has "steered clear of complicated management styles" and has opted instead for a structure without "too many intervening layers of authority (has made) the organization lean and fit, ensuring speed of decision-making and implementation," added the write-up. This strategy has enabled Khambatta, a keen student of consumer behavior, to gauge market trends and stay ahead of his competitors.

Presently Rasna is manufactured at

their fully automated factory at Kalol, about 40 km from Ahmedabad. Anticipating substantial consumer demand, they intend setting up a manufacturing plant in every state.

The credit for the popularity of Rasna, especially among children, should go to Mudra Communications which handles their media advertising. The child model in this advertisement captivates the audience with her mannerisms and lingo. And in her endearing way, when she ends her lines with 'I love you Rasna,' young viewers can associate themselves not only with the model but also with the drink. Recently, the complacency of the advertisers was considerably upset when, on another child model being engaged for Rasna, their competitors seized the opportunity to get the original model to promote their product.

Another occasion when Pioma had to review their approach was when they, along with some other leading soft drink manufacturers in India, were faulted for

using brominated vegetable oil (BVO) in production. Insists Khambatta, "It is useful in aerated drinks for weighing purposes. It is used all over the world. For us it was not even a necessity. When the government said, 'Use a substitute,' we replied, 'We don't even require a substitute.'" He further cautioned about far dangerous ingredients like charcoal, turpentine and petroleum that go into food production.

Largely, Indians make good buyers, according to Khambatta. "Brand loyalty is assured if consumers can be assured of economy and consistency in quality. They don't only go by advertisements. Quality consciousness is there." And as important as quality is the shelf life of the product.

"In the case of Rasna, it has an excellent taste plus a long shelf life," claims the owner. One packet of concentrate can make two bottles of syrup which, over a period of months, could serve 32 glasses. Undoubtedly, these factors have helped

Rasna pave inroads into the international market. Five to 10 percent of its production is exported: to the Middle East, Europe, Africa and the USA.

Before introducing new flavors to the general market, the manufacturers invariably try it out on a test sample. If the response is favorable, they present the same formula to the market. But occasionally they may need to make modifications so that it appeals to the largest numbers. The sensitive taste buds and olfactory nerves of the Parsis make them an ideal test market, reveals Khambatta.

Khambatta himself is known to enjoy experimenting with flavors, often reaching his factory at the crack of dawn trying out new permutations from 6.30 to 9.30 in the morning. This nature of his work he finds "thrilling and exciting but it also involves a lot of guts and hard work, a sixth sense... *wadhare bhanvu paré* (need to pray more) to get good results."

Today's younger generation is not inclined to put in as much effort. The preference for "*mauj-shauk* (merry making)" instead of hard work is responsible

for the low entrepreneurship in the community, observes the astute businessman. "Youngsters find banks have an easy job, easy money... The Tatas have spoilt them. Then come the Godrejs." Half the community in Ahmedabad is believed to be employed with Tata Mills.

Parsis are welcome to join the Rasna set-up "if they are as aggressive as we

"They don't only go by advertisements. Quality consciousness is there"

are. *Hamaaro aavaano ch time, javaano no time* (staff only have to report on time, there is no fixed time for going home). In this very seasonal business people have to work long hours unless there are genuine reasons like '*bhanva javanu* (go for prayers)'" when the management allows them flexible working hours. Presently at Rasna there are some Parsis on the marketing side but none on the manufacturing side besides Khambatta's son Piruz who is a science graduate and daughter Ruzan who is a final year BSc student aiming to be a flavorist. Elder daughter Delna is a commerce graduate helping with the sales and accounts while wife Persis manages the home affairs.

Every member of the Khambatta family is on the trust that manages the company. "Every one in the family is an in-

Rasna concentrate bottles (left) being produced at their factory (below)

come-tax payer," informs Khambatta. In fact, Pioma is believed to be one of the highest income-tax paying companies in Gujarat. "Unfortunately Parsis are not particular about tax planning," he adds. "When the industry is fine, it is lovely; but when it is slack, there are no resources to fall back on. Day by day, the value of the rupee is going down." Yet he perceives the climate in India to be conducive to business expansion: "That's why we are coming out with so many products. Strike when the iron is hot."

Flavor specialization is what his family is known for. His grandfather, after retiring from the army, started making liquor flavors. Then came aerated water followed by flavors for the aerated water because "a good aerated drink requires a good flavor... All the Bombay aerated water factories (many of them were Parsis — Duke's, Rogers, Premiers, Brandons, Pallonjis) were buying our flavors. And we had to make a distinctive flavor for each concern otherwise Rogers' lemon would have tasted like Turfs'." His father Pherozeshaw was equally involved in promoting the grandfather's business concern.

Karachi-born Areez was a witness to this business expansion in Ahmedabad during his school days at St Xavier's and while specializing in chemistry from the Gujarat College. After completing a course in flavor technology from the University of Minnesota he felt he had imbibed the necessary education, enough to experiment on his own. Initially he concentrated on securing orders for the family business. It was later that the concentrate concept originated and thereafter the 'instant' formulas.

He is a member of the Institute of Food Technologists of India and the USA. The community in Ahmedabad conferred on him a medallion for his successful enterprise and he was also chosen as the "Outstanding Parsi of Ahmedabad" by the Parsi Youth League of Ahmedabad.

For nearly a decade he has been a trustee of the Ahmedabad Parsi Panchayat, says Khambatta who, in addition to Rasna, was equally keen to talk of his other interests. (At one stage when the discussions predominantly concerned Rasna he enquired: "Have you come to interview me or the company?") With his business connections he was able to ensure that the monthly income of the Panchayat property — Chand Suraj — in

continued on page 40



Mistaken mission

Enespee

A humorous presentation that reflects the attitudes of Parsis when called upon to take major decisions

Pesu Sumjoo was in deep thought, saying to himself, "The entry has to be dramatic and as impressive as the landing in India 1,360 years ago."

The Parsis in India had received a cable which indicated the source as being Iran. The telegram read, "We the people hereby invite you Parsi Zoroastrians to take over in the best interest of all stop Please cable acceptance and date of arrival — People's President"

"Don't worry so much about it, otherwise you'll not enjoy your *dhansakh*. Everything will work out," assured Ms Banoobai Sumjoo on the Sunday afternoon when the urgent cable arrived.

"I must get in touch with Naslu and call an emergency general meeting of our Association," continued Pesu. "You can do that after your nap. Never work on a full stomach," advised Banoobai.

"You are the know-all; why do you want to call Naslu?"

"You are right," Pesu nodded. "I'll phone later. But Naslu knows a lot about politics and such matters. In any case an urgent meeting of all Parsis must be called. This cannot be confined to the Association only."

The meeting in progress

With Pesu presiding and all marching to the tune of *Sanjan March* and *Chaiyé Hamé Zarthosti*, the meeting settled down to the business of the day: whether or not to accept the invitation from Iran, and if yes, to work out the procedure to be adopted in fulfilling that objective.

Pesu invited discussions, questions and suggestions from the gathering but insisted that this should be in an orderly manner by raising hands and sending in advance the names of those who wanted to participate.

"My name is Kaikobad. How do we know that this is not a trap to call us and kill all the Zoroastrians, I mean Zarthostians?"

"I am Cyrus. Who will pay for the transport costs? Will the Wadias (former shipbuilding family) provide it free?"

"I am Rustom. Will the government's permission be required? Who will get it? And if we leave, what will happen to India? Will the Tatas and the Godrejs also come? And Zubin Mehta and Nani Palkhivala?"

"I am Sorab. Rustom's point is relevant. But can we not ask Rajivbhai to join us? Though, if he does, then there will not be even half-Parsis left to look after India. Can we have his navjote done?"

"I am Kaikhushrow. I object to Rajiv coming unless he agrees not to be the prime minister there. In fact I claim that post from now, as a pure Parsi Zarthostian. Will our non-Parsi spouses and children be allowed to come? Are we supposed to take all the Parsis? Even our present leaders? If so, I reserve my right to join you."

"Gentlemen, Kersas is my name. I am single but have a non-Parsi girlfriend. Can we forget our allegiance to India, the country which gave us shelter in our need? Can we not have navjotes done of all those who are not Zoroastrians but want to come? If so, we can take Birla and Ambani too."

"How dare Kersas suggest such a thing!" shouted Minocher Khopri. "I propose that we throw him out." But no one volunteered as Kersas was a wrestler and looked one too.

"WE WILL BE SORRY TO SEE YOU GO. WE'LL MISS YOUR INTEGRITY...YOUR SENSE OF HUMOUR...YOUR DEVOTION TO DUTY... YOUR 'LAGAN-NU-BHONU'..."



"I am Ms Bhicajee. Can we take our money and our sacred fire? We must form a shadow cabinet before starting from here so that there will be no problem about it on reaching there. I offer to be mistress for women's affairs. I know a lot about their affairs."

"I am one of your leaders," Kerawala interrupted. "I have experience in housing and estate management. I must be minister for housing and land development. There is also money in it — for all."

Pesu sensed trouble as the meeting started heating up. "I suggest," said Pesu, "we set up a committee of five to look into the points raised and any other



matter pertinent to the subject and to report to this general body their findings and recommendations within seven days from today when we all will meet here again. Who will volunteer?" All hands went up. "Let me as president nominate the five," Pesu settled the issue.

On the eighth day, the congregation met. Pesu began: "Ladies and gentlemen, order please. Here we have six reports of the committee which I place before you. And..."

"But with five members how can there be six reports?" interrupted Naslu.

"That's usual" explained Pesu. "One report is approved and signed by all. In the case of the five other reports, one each is from each of the members, signed individually and dissenting from the unanimous report. So we'll deal only with the unanimous report. I'll give the points only and not read the details," Pesu continued.

"We accept the invitation.

"We will leave in batches of 200 per boat which will be a replica of the one in

which we had arrived to our beloved India 1,360 years ago. Some of our trusts will subsidize the cost. The dress style should be the same as that worn when we landed in India.

"Government will permit the exodus

**"You can do that
after your nap.
Never work on a
full stomach"**

and even encourage it by giving grants and permitting your wealth to be taken; they say it will not affect their finances as we are too few and too poor — being too honest — for them to bother. Of course, they have expressed their sorrow to see us go, saying they will miss our integrity. They have also confirmed that no visa will be required if we wish to visit India occasionally."

"What about the navjotes that have

yet to be done?" "Will we be able to carry with us the original fire?" came the shouts.

"Fire, yes if we observe international marine rules for firefighting. As for those whose navjotes are not performed, such aspirants will have to follow later depending upon the Supreme Court's judgement in Parsi Akkal Vs Parsi Gap case."

"The other alternative is for such people to come as emigrants and get their navjotes performed there."

"No one will be permitted to carry weapons except one penknife each."

"Rajivbhai has not replied."

"I shall now read our reply cable."

Just then was brought to Pesu a letter from the post office stating: "Please refer to the urgent telegram delivered to you. Please read 'Iran' as 'Irao.' We regret the typing error."

"Where is Irao?" asked Cyrus.

"Who cares," replied Pesu looking very relieved, "Thank God."

The majlis was summarily terminated.

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TRAVELS IN IRAN: 4

When the Parsis intervened

Manekji Limji Hataria

Liberalism at the center was offset
by the greed and cruelty of local officers
and religious heads

This is the fourth of six instalments of Manekji Limji Hataria's publication, Rishale Ej Har Shiyate 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, Hataria 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 Hataria focused on the ruins that attested to Iran's ancient glory, the miserable conditions in which the decimated Zoroastrian community survived after the Arab conquest and the spirit in which it celebrated birth, marriage or death.

The Muslims of the Shia sect became very powerful in course of time and some of the petty officers, moulvies, mullahs and other religious heads imposed their laws upon the people with a total disregard for the rulers in the capital. Some of them posed as khalifa (suc-

cessors of Prophet Mohammed) and ruled with tyranny. The Zoroastrians were the worst affected and they suffered a lot. Still, hiding in caves and other secret places, they preserved their dear religion secretly.

The power of these petty officers and moulvies increased to such an extent that they dominated the country like kings, but there was a lurking fear that the subjects might rise or rebel against them. At that juncture, a petition was made to the rulers asking for redress for the Zoroastrians and requesting that they be exempted from Muslim codes. The rulers were considerate in many cases but their subordinates, other officers of the state and religious heads harassed the Zoroastrians and forced them to embrace Islam.

There was a very large population of the Jews in Iran during the great Iranian kings and they were all happy. With the advent of Arab rule, those Jews migrated from Iran in large numbers because they hated the tyranny of the Arabs and the Jewish population became almost extinct in Iran. Similarly, there were many other people such as Russians, Armenians, Turks, etc. They also fled from Iran like the Zoroastrians, to save their religion.

The Zoroastrians were everywhere — in every nook and corner of Iran. In the villages, round about Tehran only, there were more than 60,000 houses of Zoroastrians; immediately after the advent of the Muslims, about 6,000 houses could be counted. But this number dwindled in the course of time and those Zoroastrians who could not leave Iran like their other co-religionists, fled into the wilderness and mountains where they lived unknown to the outside world. They remained backward, their children could not get any education nor did they learn

the tenets of their own religion and passed a rustic life. There were 20,000 or more houses of Zoroastrians in Isfahan, but today there are hardly 400 houses there.

Foreigners like the Jews, Armenians, Russians and others had been very helpful to the country by way of trade and agriculture. When they fled due to Arab persecution, Iran suffered a great loss. As time passed, many Muslims also found it difficult to stay in Iran under the tyrannical rule of many impudent officers, and consequently they also fled. Due to the weak rule and lack of control from the rulers at the center, robbers and dacoits overran the country and harassed the people. Everyone's safety was at stake.

It was during such troubled times that the Parsis of India tried hard to save their co-religionists who were in Iran. There had been instances of people having been butchered for not accepting Islam; and the Muslim rulers maintained that it was not cruelty on the people: they were only doing their duty! The Parsis of India communicated to the Muslim rulers of Iran to improve their religious code and keep their hands off the Zoroastrians. Some relief was given to the Zoroastrians of Iran by the then rulers due to this intervention of the Parsis of India. Yet the Jazia tax continued to be collected from the Zoroastrians under the pretext that they received protection of their person and property by paying that tax. Those who refused to pay the Jazia tax were mercilessly killed and their properties and lands were taken away by the Muslims. Many a time, the Muslim officers who wield power in Iran went off the track of Islamic rules as taught to them by their Prophet Mohammed. Notwithstanding much opposition and protest, such lawless procedures went on

and the country was turned into a veritable hell. Those who paid the Jazia tax regularly and fully were respected irrespective of their caste and religion. This shows that the Muslim rulers of Iran were not so interested in their own religion as in exacting money from the people. The lawlessness prevailing in Iran gave boundless opportunities to unscrupulous people to carry on their nefarious activities of plunder, arson, rape and so on.

The *Koran* says that the person who does not cause any injury to others, who rejoices at the good of others, one who helps others in their troubles and looks upon all with a fraternal eye, he alone is true and faithful. This law was set aside by the cruel Muslim officers who did many wrongs. Of course the *Koran* says that people of other sects should be converted into Muslims at the earliest but the method of doing so is not clarified.

His Majesty King Humayun Naseruddin had promised to exempt the Zoroastrians from the Jazia tax; but after Naseruddin his orders and promises were set aside. So a petition was once again made to the Muslim rulers stating that many Jews, Armenians and Russians migrate from Iran under the pretext of trade and business. First they go to their native land but do not stay permanently there. They go away to India or China and settle there. This shows that they were not happy and satisfied in Iran.

The rulers were requested to safeguard the properties of the Zoroastrians and grant them some freedom in the matter of worship. It was also stated that the Zoroastrians — if granted some relief — would remain there as faithful subjects and would help the rulers and their government in times of need.

The petition was duly received by the then Muslim ruler and a suitable reply was received by the Parsis of India and the same was also published in Indian newspapers. The ruler Kulazakhan thus did much for the benefit of the Zoroastrians in Iran and since that day the ill-feeling of the Zoroastrians towards their Muslim rulers became much less. His Majesty, Shah Humayun gave liberal promises to the Parsis and those promises were faithfully observed.

At the instance of the above petition, His Majesty Hooshang Hazrat convened a conference of religious heads of Muslims and Zoroastrians and after much discussion and debate, decided to allow the Zoroastrians to follow their religion

unmolested. They were allowed to wear the sudreh and kusti and they were exempted from the Jazia tax. Of course, this order did not last long because the kings who ruled after Hooshang were again religious bigots and the religious tyranny continued. Whether legally allowed or not, the Zoroastrians continued to wear the sudreh and kusti secretly for hundreds of years and adhered to their religion.

Fortunately, there appeared a wise man in Iran. He was a blacksmith by pro-

Zoroastrians fled into the wilderness and mountains where they lived unknown to the outside world

fession but of a religious turn of mind. He sang the *Bhagavad Gita* in various tunes and won over the people. He became a very powerful and influential man and ruled over a small province. The Zoroastrians preferred to live under him as they got full religious freedom. There were oppositions to this movement but the opponents did not succeed in their efforts. A time came when it was decided to initiate every Zoroastrian born child into the Mazdayasni Zarthosti religion. A mass ceremony was held for this initiation and a large group of Zoroastrian children were given sudrehs and kustis and were taught our prayers. Thus an improvement came in the life of the Zoroastrians in Iran. These Zoroastrians children then came forward in society, got proper education and led a very useful and religious life. They learnt to follow the four-fold path of religion: the path of *Ashoi*, that is purity of body and soul; the preservation of fire and reverence for the sacred elements; *Tokhma-sarav*, i.e. love for humanity or brotherhood; and the Avesta prayers. They learnt that our Zoroastrian religion is not only a ritualistic religion, but a way of life.

Sudreh is a sign of purity as it is made of light white cloth. Kusti is tied in the middle part of the body; thus it teaches us to keep the middle path in everything, and live a temperate life. Sudreh and kusti are powerful weapons of defence on our body; they protect us from all evil spirits and give us courage to fight against

evil. Moreover, the kusti is made from the wool of lamb. The lamb is a meek creature. Thus kusti is a sign of meekness and it also teaches us to be meek and gentle like the lamb. A Zoroastrian is enjoined to pray five times a day — during each *gah*, as the day is divided into five parts — and each *gah* has its prayers. Today, sudreh and kusti are worn by almost every Zoroastrian staying in Iran. Those who have turned Muslims of their own accord are without sudreh and kusti and they are out of the creed, so to say.

One who is initiated into Zoroastrianism prays "*Dainyao, Vanghayao, Mazdayashnoish Astooatish*." The sudreh and kusti are to be kept on the body till the end of life. The sudreh must be clean and must be changed every two or three days at least.

The kusti is to be performed in the morning at the time of getting up from the bed; every time after visiting the toilet, to make us pure in body and soul; after attending a funeral ceremony; before every meal after washing hands and face, as a thanksgiving to God for the bounty He gives us; at the time of going to bed at night.

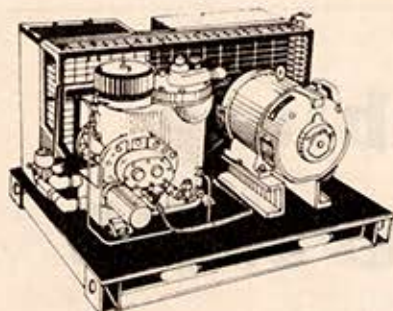
There is no stipulated number of times the kusti is to be performed during the day or night. We can do it as many times as we can during the 24 hours of the day.

After giving the sudreh and kusti to the Zoroastrian children in Iran, the Parsis of India tried to persuade the Iranian rulers to allow the Zoroastrians to perform their marriages according to the Zoroastrian rites. This request also was acceded to.

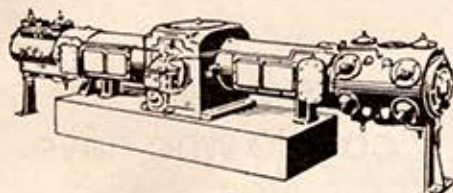
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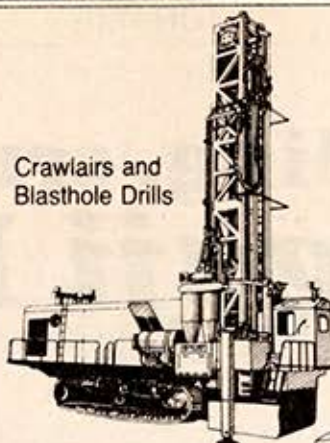
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Rumbling, crumbling *Doongaji House*

Gustasp Irani

Written by Cyrus Mistry and produced by Toni Patel, the play depicts an elderly couple who have chosen to shut reality out of their lives

His last flutter at reconstructing his shattered life has come unstuck; the last of his three children has announced her plans to abandon him; the lie he has lived with for 30 years has been exposed; outside, riots have paralysed the city; the world of Hormusji is beginning to crumble about him...

And from the floor above there is a rumbling — his 85-year-old neighbor, the only member of a family to survive a food poisoning tragedy, starts his daily skating routine. Insanity, like life, flows on.

Cyrus Mistry's play *Doongaji House*, a blend of humor, sentimentality and tragedy, transcends the farcical *natak* that is popularly associated with Parsi theater. That probably was its undoing, for though it won the Sultan Padamsee Award in 1978, it took 12 years to find an audience. The production had to be content with the cramped facilities of the Alliance Francaise premises at Bombay for its inaugural two performances on July 6 and 7, 1990. Directed by Ms Toni Patel, with the husband and wife team of Noshervan and Meher Jehangir in the title roles, the performance drew a standing ovation from the small and tightly packed audience, an ovation that made Noshervan's eyebrows twitch in surprise. He recovered and invited the director and playwright on the stage to share the audience appreciation.

The reason for Noshervan's surprise

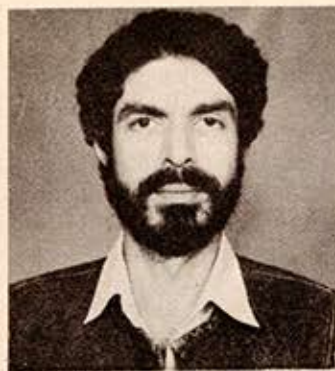
is not hard to find: the play, by Mistry's own admission, has structural flaws. The actors had to deal with five acts and multiple scenes, frequent breaks and shifting of emotional emphasis while carrying the audience with them to a dramatic climax. There were also lengthy monologues, the talking to the audience or the wall of the building, the narration of dreams... "Very frightening," says Noshervan who had to carry most of these scenes. "It can get boring for the audience listening to a guy going on and on... We often leave the action of the play behind in these monologues and start exploring what happened 40 years ago... The only reason it worked is that Cyrus has put something into the lines that allows us to hold the audience."

Mistry has put in tragedy and comedy and pathos and emotions but, most of all, he has put in living people. In *Doongaji House* he tells the story of an elderly Parsi couple. Once wealthy, they now claw through the twilight of their lives, almost paupers. One son is settled in America — his letters read like weather reports — another is a *matka* (gambling den) bookie married to a non-Parsi. The old couple ekes out a living on the earnings of their disgruntled daughter. Enter Cawas, son of Hormusji's half brother, and their daughter is ready to fly the coup. But worse, Cawas has laid bare the lie his uncle has been living for the last three decades. *Doongaji House*, the

building that Hormusji and Piroja live in, is symbolic of their lives — once grand and majestic, now dilapidated and crumbling.

Reviews in the Press have seen the play as a portrayal of an effete Parsi community. "It could be possible to read the text as a story of the Parsis but I think that would be a limited way of looking at it," says Mistry. Patel, the director, agrees: "*Doongaji House* is about an individual. I don't know if it stands for the Parsi community." As she sees it, the sentiments expressed in the play could be found in any community. "Do you realize that among the Hindus there are so many small sub-sects? They can't marry outsiders, they have their own social constraints... they feel claustrophobic in their own confines. It pervades our society." Even among the Goan Christians (Patel is one, married to doctor, poet, artist, playwright Gieve Patel) they have converts who are of Brahmin and non-Brahmin origin and these Christians of Brahmin origin are further divided into two sub-sects. The traits are "more noticeable among the Parsis because they stand out: their looks and the fact that in this small community there are so many outstanding personalities — lawyers, artists...

"I believe a good play is rooted in its own community but reaches out and is relevant to other communities too — its value lies in this," Patel adds. *Doongaji*



House, according to her, fulfils the substitution test. "If you ask me if there are Goan Christians like Hormusji and Piroja, I'd say yes. But their references are different."

The Parsi references in Mistry's play are sharp, sometimes brutal, especially in Hormusji's perception of the non-Parsis. He uses terms like "the bloody Hindu" when alluding to the Parsi-Hindu riots of 1921. The harshness of these images have drawn protests, but according to Patel the protestors were all Parsis.

Meher Jehangir who plays Piroja sees no harm in these references. "There is too much of a holier-than-thou attitude in our community," she says. "The strength of any community lies in coming to terms with its weaknesses rather than ignoring them. Everyone has weaknesses. What about Richard Attenborough? He made *Gandhi* and he could not have shown the British in a worse light." Then softening, as Piroja might, she adds: "You must see it from their (the older generation's) point of view. They thought they were doing something right; we see it as bigoted. Earlier, the Parsis had a sense of pride with the British around. Now they are just another community. They feel let down, neglected."

The portrait of the Parsis however, stops short of what Mistry calls cultural exhibitionism. "I find it quite offensive, this attitude which says 'Have a look at this quaint community, these are their

customs, their rituals.' If that's what you want to do, go into anthropology. I don't think that literature has to do much with that sort of exhibitionism. You can get as particular with details and effects as you want, but these details and effects should work towards creating a larger impact."

One area in which Mistry has taken pains over details is the use of language,

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bigotted"

in particular the translation of Parsi Gujarati into English. "I have avoided using Gujarati words but I have tried to create the rhythm of Gujarati. I have used phrases that have no Gujarati equivalents," says Mistry. To illustrate, he refers to Piroja reprimanding Hormusji: "Have you given your brains a scrubbing and put them out to dry?" That is not a translation of a Gujarati phrase but it sounds like it is. It's just my own invention."

There are moments in the play when Mistry has his characters reciting poetry. "I think it is justifiable because the emo-

Piroja and Hormusji (Meher and Noshewan Jehangir) -- clawing through the twilight years

(Left above) Mistry: "I find it easy to write about Parsis"

(Left below) Toni Patel: "a good play... is relevant to other communities too"

tional flavor of the moment permits it," says the playwright who adds, "At times I admit it fails." This technique is not uncommon, according to Meher. "It's deliberate, the use of poetic language. People don't speak that way but the writer wants to heighten the emotional impact... Shakespeare wrote his tragedies in verse, but not his comedies. When there is heightened emotional tragedy, verse is a much better medium of expressing it."

Invariably, when discussing Mistry's use of language, reference is made to Gieve Patel. He too wrote poetry into his plays. Like Mistry, he used that special blend of English that conveyed the impression of spoken Gujarati without slipping into pidgin English, bad grammar or using Gujarati words.

The comparison between Mistry and Patel runs deeper. Noshewan who also played the lead role in Patel's *Mr Behram* observes: "There are very significant echoes in the idioms they use. For example, there is this line..." he quotes extensively, for a brief moment slipping into the character of Hormusji who refers to a 'secret mind.' "This 'secret mind' line is in *Mr Behram* too. This is only one instance. Many times we find echoes even though the characters are totally different. Mr Behram was an able, kingpin kind of guy; hobnobbing with district collectors which you can't imagine Hormusji doing." Patel's play has a rural setting while in Mistry's, the setting is urban. Observes Noshewan: "I don't know if two writers of this caliber can be viewed as a whole body of work, but if they can be viewed as such, then I'd say that this kind of writing has come from nowhere and it has a great future."

Language, however, is not an end in itself; it's used by the playwright to paint portraits. As Meher testifies: "Piroja is one of the few roles — I can say the only role — which I felt I had totally grasped. Sometimes you feel that somewhere things are getting out of grasp; but with Piroja I felt I had total understanding and I think it showed... a lot of people who

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have seen me do different roles think that this is the best."

Likewise Noshervan's rendition of Hormusji was superb, despite the burden of carrying those 'frightening' monologues. "The frightening part was to stand and address the audience directly and involve them as characters in the play without making it seem as an artifice. It's a technique used in children's plays and also by Shakespeare," says Noshervan who is quick to add: "However good you are, if you get a shitty script you are screwed."

Toni recalls how the play, which had been around for a long time, finally got to be done. It was 1989, the planning stages of the Bombay Arts Festival, when Patel was asked to direct *Doongaji House*. The Festival was subsequently deferred to an undetermined date, but Patel was determined to go ahead with the project especially since she had got commitments from the two actors who would do the lead roles, Noshervan and Meher. "For me they were the only choice. I did not have to think of other possibilities. It was Noshervan and Meher, that's it."

The other characters found actors to portray them subsequently. Shereaz Rustomjee, Torak Pavri, Denzil Smith, Kashmira Patel, Liyakat Fruitwala and Rustom Warden filled in the other roles. And then there was Soli Marker's rendition of Darabsha, Hormusji's drinking companion and side-kick — beautifully underplayed.

But casting was only part of the problem. The financial viability of the undertaking was a more serious consideration. Patel took the plunge, under the patronage of her own Stage Two Theatre Society, a donation financed, non-profit trust, committed to promoting serious theater and other relevant activities. Naturally, the larger halls were out; the play was destined for the smaller experimental outfits like Alliance Francaise, Max Mueller Bhavan, and the like. Patel plans to stage two performances a month, "24 to 25 shows in all, if we are lucky. If we get a sponsor we will take it out of town."

Mistry is not unimpressed: "Given the very limited resources of time and money, I think that Toni has done a very good job. Everything has to be seen in context."

The context of the origins of *Doongaji House* are blurred in Mistry's mind. "I

don't think I can recall what gave me the idea of the play. I do recall setting out to write one." His motivation? The Rs 5,000 cash prize offered with the Sultan Padamsee Award for the best play in English. "It was quite a lot of money in 1978," says Mistry and money at that time was welcome.

The soft-spoken, bearded Mistry projects a certain air of frailty. Inside however is a rebel of sorts. In 1975 he had been rusticated from St Xavier's College, Bombay for his involvement in the student's movement. For three years he was adrift before buckling down to obtaining a BA from Wilson College in 1978. In between he did a stint as a journalist with *Fulcrum Magazine*. "The journalist in me is a bit of a flop. I don't seem to be able to hold my job for long," says Mistry. He cites his tenure of nine months with the *Indian Express* and the year (1983) with *Debonair* as examples. Presently he has a part time arrangement with *Debonair*.

Yet the years have not been unproductive. He has done a bit of freelance writing and has a collection of lengthy short stories published in various publications. One of these — *Percy* — was converted into a movie of the same name and for this he wrote the script. He also worked independently and jointly on scripts for other productions. In most of his writing the milieu is Parsi. "I find it easy to write about the Parsis." He can relate to them better, Mistry explains his bias.

However, his Parsi bias stops at his writing. He does not wear a sudreh or kusti. "I think that young people today want to come to grips with the world outside rather than the world inside. At that point the sudreh and kusti become unimportant," Mistry explains. Presently his religious reading is largely on Buddhism. "Is it just the Parsis who are looking to other religions for answers? Is it not that organized religion has failed? Christians, Hindus, Muslims, they too are looking outside. Being a fundamentalist is a form of re-looking at religion too," says Mistry.

And yet there is a paradox in his *Doongaji House*. It is a story about Parsis, written by a Parsi married to a non-Parsi, produced and directed by a non-Parsi married to a Parsi, and soon it is to be published by Adil Jussawalla — that's right, he too is a Parsi married to a non-Parsi. Indeed, the Parsi edifice is crumbling.

The Purifying Prescriptions

Dr Ali A. Jafarey

Purity and Pollution in Zoroastrianism, Triumph over Evil by Jamsheed K. Choksy. Published by University of Texas Press, Box 7819, Austin, Texas 78713-7819, USA. Pp: XXVII + 185. Price: \$ 22.50.

Ervad Shams-ul-Ulema Dr Sir Jivanji Jamshedji Modi wrote *The religious ceremonies and customs of the Parsees* in English in 1922, and mobed Ardeshir Azargoshasb published his *Marasem Mazhabī va Adab-e Zartoshtian* (Religious ceremonies and customs of Zoroastrians) and other relevant booklets in Persian between 1966 and 1973 in order to provide an account of Zoroastrian ceremonies with contemporary purity and pollution rituals. In addition to the two Zoroastrian priests, a number of Western scholars, including James Darmesteter in 1892 and Mary Boyce who continues to contribute, have, in spite of limited access to ritual practices, written much on the subject.

Now Jamsheed K. Choksy, Junior Fellow and PhD candidate at Harvard University, has come forward to describe and explain in very understandable language the details of purity rituals to counteract the "dearth of detailed studies on Zoroastrian doctrines and rites relating to purity and pollution in the field of Near Eastern history, religion and Iranian studies." This he has done very successfully because "he is a Zoroastrian, and for this work he has studied the relevant

texts in the languages in which they were written centuries ago, recorded contemporary practices and beliefs, and pursued a rigorous methodology in the study of religion, as well as philology, with commendable objectivity," as notes Prof Richard Frye in his foreword.

A feature generally neglected by other

All persons were
believed
to be tainted by
the impurities of birth
and mother's milk

writers is chronology. Choksy has "elucidated the elaboration and variation of purity laws and purification rites within a chronological framework that spans the faith's history," and has based his book "on the analysis of a chronological sequence of religious and secular writings and the correlation of written evidence with observations and participation in actual modern practices."

The author proceeds from an informative introduction on the study of rituals to the doctrinal basis of purity and pollution. In his brief preface, he expresses his gratitude to his scholarly guides and help-

ing hands. His introduction analyzes "Religious Beliefs and Ritual Practices," explains "Concepts of Purity and Pollution," and interprets "Purity and Pollution in Zoroastrianism."

The first chapter deals with "Laws of Purity and Pollution" on a doctrinal basis, the elaboration of purity laws, the protection of the material creations, the main causes of ritual impurity. The second chapter is devoted to the *barashnum i no sab* ritual — the purification of nine (days and) nights — the "original function (of which) was purification of Zoroastrians who had been rendered impure through contact with the most noxious pollutant: carrion."

The author then describes the medieval version to the rite "developed from gradual modifications of the ancient rite after the accession to power of the Sassanian dynasty in 224 CE (Christian Era i.e. AC)." Gradually, however the *barashnum* also came to function as a ceremony that conferred purity upon anyone who underwent it, even if the person had not been polluted. This resulted in variations within the ritual. While describing "the modern ritual," Choksy states that by the early modern period, the doctrine that every Zoroastrian should undergo at least one *barashnum i no sab* "merged with a belief that all persons were tainted by the impurities of birth and mother's milk." Married

persons were to undergo the rite "at least once after eight years... in order to purify the body from possible contamination caused by sexual intercourse... Furthermore, this purification became a prerequisite for...the clergy, a means of reestablishing the religious purity necessary for religious ceremonies... Because contact with non-Zoroastrians caused ritual impurity, Zoroastrians who associated with nonbelievers were required to undergo the nine-night purification... (However,) this rule is no longer obeyed by anyone other than priests... Converts to Zoroastrianism during the fourteenth to early nineteenth centuries were required to undergo this purification to attain socioritual purity..." But the rite "is no longer required" for recent converts in Iran and the United States.

Writing on "Vitiation of the Ritual," the author tells that "if any of ablutions were not correctly performed, then the entire ritual was vitiated... At present time, however, ablutions are usually performed less exactly without the ritual being regarded as vitiated."

In chapter three, Choksy describes the *padyab*, *nahn*, and *riman* rituals which "are much less arduous than the *barashnum i no sab* and can, therefore, be undergone more frequently to purify body, mind and soul." *Padyab* is washing

"the exposed parts of the body" and "must be performed before a Zoroastrian can engage in any religious activity and ensures ritual purity of the believer during these activities... The efficacy of the *padyab kusti* has to be renewed prior to engaging in each separate religious act and is vitiated by urination, nocturnal pollution, and glance of a woman in menses who is within 30 paces... The *sade nahn*, (which has) undergone considerable simplification among Parsi Zoroastrians...is presently performed...prior to the initiation ceremony, on the day of marriage, and occasionally on holy days." The *si-shuy* (30 washings) *nahn*, first mentioned in the Persian Rivayats, is taken "by any Zoroastrian who has been polluted through contact with carrion." Nevertheless, it was not considered "sufficiently efficacious to completely purify...until the *barashnum i no sab* had been conducted." The *riman* ritual, directly parallel to the *barashnum i no sab*, probably evolved only during the eighteenth or early nineteenth century CE when priests in India ceased to perform the purification of nine (days and) nights for the polluted Zoroastrians and simplified "by elimination of the nine days and night retreat."

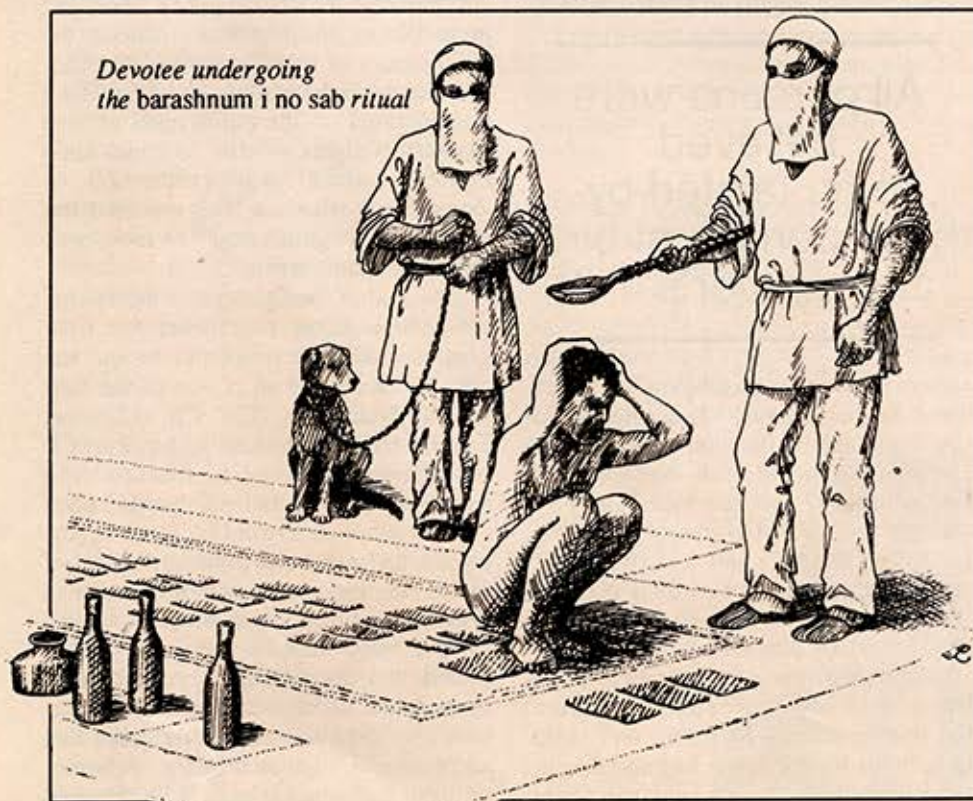
The chapter on "Purity in Daily Life" deals with hair and nails, breath and saliva, urine and feces, sex, semen, sexual

intercourse and nocturnal emission, blood, menstruation and childbirth — all considered to result in pollution. While hair and nails were ceremoniously buried, some excrements controlled from polluting the environment, and others washed with simple ablutions; menstruation, miscarriage and stillbirth had elaborate purificational rites.

"Menstruation was created (by the evil spirit) in order to render human beings unfit to engage in battle against evil." It defiles females and females, in turn, defile males. Choksy quotes the *Gathas* (*Yasna* 46.10) to show that man and woman enjoyed equal status and adds that it was later beliefs which resulted in "a tendency to consider women as the polluted allies of the evil spirit... Onset of menses, every woman donned garments reserved solely for these occasions... was required to withdraw...usually (in) a small building that had no windows and only a single entrance...(because her) gaze was believed to be capable of pollution as far as her eyes could see...even her voice was held to be capable of polluting a righteous person... and food would be served to her on a metal plate...from a distance... After the end of menstruation she usually had to pass one more day in retreat, recite certain (formulas) and wash her entire body three times." But times have changed and "most Parsi women now socialize during menses, wear no special clothing, and bathe directly with water. (However,) most (Zoroastrian) women do not visit fire-temples during menstruation, for it is still believed that their presence would defile the sacred fires and vitiate religious rituals." Childbirth also made women follow most of the rules "for isolation of menstruating women." Only this isolation lasted longer. "At present, Parsi women usually do not undergo the 40-day confinement, (and) even the generally conservative Irani Zoroastrians are now lax in the enforcement of the rules of purification after childbirth." Miscarriage and stillbirths had the menstruation rules and *barashnum i no sab* ritual combined to render the mother purified. The author, shows that Hindus, Muslims and Jews also have menstruation and childbirth laws.

Purity of dietary habits and personal property follow next. The author then takes up the "Corpse Bearers" and the purification laws that governed the lives

Devotee undergoing the *barashnum i no sab* ritual



of these carrion carriers. Times have, however, made the Zoroastrians relax social restrictions.

In the fifth and the last chapter on "Purity, Symbols, and Eschatology," Choksy links purity and pollution laws to "the spiritual and material aspects of the universe... Purification rituals are undergone to attain a symbolic religious state of purity and virtue in addition to simple physical cleanliness. This notion, whereby the meaning of purity and purification is linked to the need for spiritual and physical salvation, is the vital impetus and organizing power of Zoroastrian religious life." He gives a figure of the "Cosmic Homologies" and explains in detail the link between the Creator, divinity, macrocosm, microcosm, ritual substance and participant. "Hence, through the body and soul of a devotee who is undergoing purification, the entire universe fights evil and strives to attain perfection." Another figure supported by quotations from, and explanation of, relevant scriptural pieces shows how ritual, life and cosmic cycles take a person from the spiritual world into the polluted corporeal world and then through the combined ritual, life and cosmic processes returns him to the spiritual world and the Creator.

The author finalizes his discourse by stating that "despite the ambivalence toward evil and death expressed by some modern Zoroastrians and claims that the religion is simply a code of ethics, most followers have retained the faith's core belief and continue to practice simplified versions of the purification rites" and then quotes from the *Supplementary Texts to Sayest ne Sayest*, a Pahlavi work of the Sassanian period, to finish his book.

The appendix provides the reader with the translations of the Avesta and Pazend prayers recited in purification rituals. Useful "Notes," "Selected Glossary," 14 figures and six tables help the reader to better understand the book. The author supports his points of argument by frequently quoting certain scholars of high standing, mostly Western.

The book proves beyond doubt that it is not the Avestan and Pazend prayers alone that have the purifying power. It is bull's urine which is the most potent purifying agent. "Ritual purity is regained through one of several purification ritu-

als. The threefold process involved the recital of holy utterances in Avesta... an internal purification of soul and body through the drinking of consecrated bull's urine... and finally, cleansing of the entire body surface with unconsecrated bull's urine." In fact, the entire

"There was a tendency to consider women as the polluted allies of the evil spirit"

purification rite revolves round this particular purifying agent. This was the practice until the medieval times when "the final cleansing with unconsecrated bull's urine was often followed by cleansing with dust and then water, a practice continued to the present day."

This makes one wonder why none of the alien writers — Greeks, Romans, Syrian Christians, Armenians, Arab Muslims, some of whom had good inside information and some were quite prejudiced — have not alluded to this odd practice or to the pungent odor emitted by Zoroastrians, especially those of the Achaemenid period when bull's urine should have been the only purifying and washing agent; dust and water being introduced during the medieval times.

"Water, protected by the beneficent immortal Haurvatat," is not regarded by Zoroastrianism "as a primary purifying agent... The use of water to wash away dirt and impurities, or to purify a polluted body, is regarded as a heinous sin (pg 11)." Yet in contrast to these and other statements, the author quotes *Yasna* 68.10-12, 21 to say that "water is viewed as pure, purifying and health granting." He does not mention that in *Yasna* 65.2-4 and *Yasht* 5.2-5, Ardevisura Anahita, the maiden deity presiding over waters, "cleans all men's semen, cleans all women's womb for delivery, makes childbirth easy, and bestows them timely milk," that the waters running in rivers and streams and filling lakes and ponds are pure and good, and that there is no talk of impurity and pollution in the Avesta pieces outside the *Vendidad*.

This should reverse the statement to the effect that according to the *Yasna* and the *Yasht*, water is the purifying agent and not bull's urine. But it seems that nothing can, as far as the Vendidadic doctrine is concerned, dislodge bull's urine from its purifying position.

Choksy holds the *magi* (Old Persian *magu*, Persian and Gujarati *mohed*) to be responsible for making "the doctrine of purity... widespread." They "associated themselves with the worship of Ahura Mazda and other deities of the Zoroastrian pantheon after the faith gained adherents on the Iranian plateau and in the Achaemenid court... (They) elaborated and exploited ritual law to entrench themselves as indispensable." Perhaps that is why they do not feature in the Avestan texts composed by the *athravans*, texts which have nothing to offer for the purification rites advocated by the *Vendidad*, composed in the Parthian period (247 BCE — 224 CE), well after the Achaemenids and the lapse of the *athravans*. Paradoxically, it is the *athravans* who dominate in the *Vendidad*. The *magi* are absent.

True to his word, the author proceeds within his chronological framework and follows the development of the purity and pollution practice and in fact he mentions the *Gathas* four times, the *Yasna* six times, and the *Yashts* only once. These sources collectively comprise three-fourths of the extant *Avesta*. Yet, instead of quoting from them for purification rites and agents, he says that these scriptures "reveal few traces of purity laws and rites." In fact, he produces no concrete evidence concerning purification rites outside the *Vendidad*. The reason is obvious. There is nothing in them — no *nirang*, no *gaomez* (consecrated and unconsecrated bull's urine), and no barring of a woman in her menstruation, miscarriage, or after a stillbirth state from any of the prayers and ceremonies. His main Avestan source is the *Vendidad* (*Videvdad*). Other main sources of his information are the Pahlavi books, all of them written in the ninth century CE during the Islamic period, and the much later Persian *Rivayats*.

As stated, there is not a single instance outside the *Vendidad* in the entire extant Avestan scriptures, or even in the description given by the Pahlavi *Denkard* of the extinct Avestan scriptures, in

which bull's urine, so vital to purification rites, was mentioned. There is, however, one instance of purification in *Mehr Yasht* but the author does not mention it. Stanzas 120 to 122 concern the drinking of the "purified libation" by Mithra worshippers. There the worshippers have to "wash their bodies for three days and three nights (and) undergo a penance of 30 inflictions (strokes of the whip), (and) again wash their bodies for two days and two nights (and) undergo a penance of 20 inflictions before worshipping and praying to Mithra (*The Avestan Hymn to Mithra* by Ilya Gershevitch). This is a clear purification rite which differs from the *barashnum i no sab* and other purifications prescribed in the *Vendidad* and Pahlavi writings, all which never mention this particular, and should one say urine-free, rite. It appears to have been lost to medieval Zoroastrians.

But the big question is: Why does the "non-Vendidadic" *Avesta* not mention such a potent purifier as bull's urine? Avestan liturgies venerate with their resounding *yazamaide* every useful object — sun, moon, stars, earth, fire, water, seas, lakes, rivers, vegetation, pastures, watering places, roads, crossroads, human settlements, cattle, birds, Haoma plant and juice, water libation, *Barsam*, mortar, Gaokarena tree and many more. Why not bull's urine? Why, when the *Yashts* dedicated to Anahita, Mithra, Tishtrya and Verethraghna dictate that certain persons, clearly because of their polluted state, must not partake of the consecrated libations offered to them, a menstruating woman or one with a still-birth case is not mentioned?

The way bull's urine is shown vital to purification rites without which no religious ritual or ceremony could be performed and no one could live a pure life, one wonders why it was not deified like the Haoma plant, and why no *Yasht*, *Nyaish*, or the usual *yazamaide* sentence punctuating *Yasna* and *Visparad* passages is not present in the *Avesta*. The complete neglect by the *Yasna*, the *Yasht* and akin parts of the *Avesta* of such a reportedly potent potion cannot be easily put aside. Does it indicate that the *Vendidad* belongs to a separate school and the rest of the younger *Avesta* to another, one by the post-Achaemenid *magi* and the other by the pre-Achaemenid *athravans*?

One point not explained in the book is the contextual relevance of the "Prayers

for purification" and the purification procedure. A glance through the translations given in the appendix show them to be the usual *Khordeh Avesta* prayers. They are not related in particular to *barashnum i no sab* or any other purification rite. Usually the *Yasna* and the *Yasht* have sentences that show what rite the officiant is performing — spreading *Barsam* twigs, preparing water libation, pounding Haoma, extracting its juice, partaking it, venerating a particular Yazata, reciting the *Gathas*, or in other sentences as expelling and putting to flight evil spirits and male and female *daevas*. One is again at a loss

Most followers continue to practice simplified versions of the purification rites

as to why there exists no purification *mantra* (incantations) to state, for instance, that "with this bull's urine, or dust, or water, I, the officiant, am purifying so and so." There does not exist even a single sentence in Avestan, Pahlavi, Persian, Dari or Gujarati to show the beginning or the end of the ritual. Does this show that all the *magi* did was to put contextually irrelevant prayers and purification rites together? Should one recall the statement made by a High Priest of Iran, an outstanding scholar, that "one has to choose between the Gathic doctrine and the *Vendidad* rituals. The two stand poles apart." A similar statement was independently made by a much-respected Parsi mobed in North America some time ago. As stated above, Choksy too attributes the rituals to the *magi* and never to Zarathushtra. In fact, the religious-educated Zoroastrians in Iran do not consider *Vendidad* to be a religious scripture. Some even go further to say that the *Vendidad* belongs to an age when man had not discovered any herbal or chemical detergents. That is the main reason why no translation of it, done by a Zoroastrian scholar or a sympathiser, is available in Persian.

Regarding Zoroastrians in Iran, one must say that Choksy's information is not up-to-date. Although he says that "many Irani Zoroastrians, both recent immi-

grants and trainee-priests, whom I met in India provided valuable information on contemporary beliefs and practices in Iran," he cites Prof Mary Boyce more than anyone else. But he misses the point that her main stay and study in Iran was in Sharifabad as she describes in *A Persian Stronghold of Zoroastrianism*.

Had Choksy taken the trouble to read mobed Azargoshasb's *Marasem Mazhabi va Adab-e Zartoshtian* and the relevant booklets, he would have found that a dead body is "washed with warm water and soap" in Iran. He could have contacted Kankash-e Mobadan (the Iranian mobeds council in Tehran) or any of the outstanding mobed scholars in Tehran, or even the Iranian mobeds in North America who have recently formed their own Kankash to update himself that the use of bull's urine, consecrated or not, has practically disappeared in Iran. There may be a few exceptions who, it is reported, get (or got) their *nirang* brought in from Bombay by air! Navjote, marriage and other ceremonies which have washing as a prerequisite, have it in the simple form of a soap, shampoo and water bath. In fact, Irani Zoroastrian institutions do not have the white bull, and at present no one in Yazd has been reported to have approached a Muslim for bull's urine. In fact, the author of this review, knowing well how the orthodox Zoroastrians of Yazd villages held and in some places still hold the *drvands*, does not ascribe to the report that Muslim cattle owners were approached for bull's urine for purifying purposes. Residents of 60 years of age and under in other Iranian towns have hardly seen or experienced the potent purifier, and with the possible exception of a dwindling number of old women, hardly anyone appears to have undergone *si-shuy* and other purification baths. After the demise of Dastur Khodadad Naryosangi even Sharifabad is no longer a "stronghold," and young mobedyars (paramobeds) have taken his place.

Another feature of the book is its publication by the University of Texas Press in the United States and its price, \$ 22.50 (approx Rs 405). Both place it almost out of the reach of a common Zoroastrian in India, Iran and Pakistan. It will probably be used more by scholars and students of comparative religion in North America and Europe, and a few Zoroastrian scholars in India. It could also be used as an appropriate tool by some "clever" pester-

ing missionaries who, for possible conversion, knock at doors or invite young, westernized Zoroastrians to their religious gatherings.

One would have liked to see here the author compare contemporary purification rites in ancient Greece, Rome, Egypt and India as well as the rites practiced by

als," had provided his firsthand experience of undergoing any of the elaborate or *sadeh* purifying rituals. Photographic illustrations of the *barashnumgah*, a candidate in different stages of purification process, the sacred bull, and a few other purification scenes would have further enhanced the publication.

Moreover, a deeper study of Muslim purification laws, particularly the doctrinal treatises of the Shiite Mujtahids, would have shown that the *Vendidad*, enlarged and simplified, and freed from bull's urine and depending on "untinted, odor-free, tasteless" pure water, is a very living law of purification and pollution, particularly in Iran.

But these few shortcomings and a little lack of up-to-date information on the hard-to-reach Iran do not diminish the authenticity of the book. A perusal of the book proves a number of key points: That the *Gathas* of Zarathushtra have little on what is known as 'purification rites,' that other parts of the later *Avesta* have traces of it with no trace of bull's urine or the "pollutions" it purifies, and that it is with the late-edited *Vendidad* alone that the *barashnum i no sab* and other rites make their appearance. Here too the rites were

first confined to those who had physical contacts with carrion but with the passage of time, their practice was generalized and made more and more arduous, until the present times when the changes (in the way of life) have made Zoroastrians simplify some to suit their specific conditions and abandon some altogether.

With the rapid changes going on all over the Zoroastrian world, particularly in Iran and North America where larger and larger concentrations are anticipated, and the *Gatha* consciousness attracting the growing elite among Zoroastrians, Jamsheed K. Choksy's *Triumph over Evil* appears to be the last compact work on *Purity and Pollution in Zoroastrianism* as practiced in the past and somewhat at present. A good job, timely, and worth its publication.

It seems that nothing can dislodge bull's urine from its purifying position

Hindu, Buddhist, Jewish and Christian religions. It would not have presented Zoroastrianism as so stark a purification-ist order.

The book would have been more complete if the author, who was guided by a high priest of an *atah bahram* "through the intricacies of Zoroastrian rituals" and for whose "edification the priest and the students of the *athornan* boarding *madressa* repeatedly performed these ritu-



Jamsheed K. Choksy is Junior Fellow and PhD candidate at Harvard University. Familiar with the ancient Iranian scripts he has studied Zoroastrianism and authored papers on the religion and Persian history.

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MILESTONES

This month's marriage list includes seven civil marriages between Parsis as well as 36 inter-community marriages contracted by Parsis over the eight-month period January to August 1990. Cases of uncertainty, where the names could not be wholly identified as Parsi, have been omitted from the list. A scanning of the marriages list registered with the High Court revealed the age of Zoroastrian brides in Bombay — as listed in this issue — to be between 18 and 41 years, the arithmetic mean (the total of individual ages divided by the total number of brides) being 26 years. The corresponding figures for the grooms were 24 and 38 years, averaging at 29 years.

There were 86 deaths as compared to 30 births in October in Bombay. The major killers were heart disease claiming 23 victims while 12 succumbed to pneumonia and lung disease. Old age and general debility took 11 lives. Six patients fell prey to septicemia, five to kidney failure and four each to diabetes and brain disease. Hypertension claimed three while two victims each succumbed to atherosclerosis (deposition of fatty substances in the arteries) and paralytic stroke. Tuberculosis, cancer, meningitis, enteric fever, dehydration, haemorrhage, haematemesis (vomiting of blood), dysentery, head injury, urinary infection, nervous disorder and liver disease were the isolated cases registered this month. A 16-year-old boy and a 23-year-old girl were lost to the community. The highest age at death: 101 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 Yasmin and Hoshedar Carnac on October 1, 1990
A girl to Hilla and Byram Doongaji; October 2
A boy to Delna and Aspi Pooniwalla; October 2
A boy to Coolleen and Merzi Chinoy; October 4
A girl to Carol and Kersee Kharas; October 5
A girl to Zenobia and Neville Fulwadiwalla; October 7
A boy to Parizad and Xerkais Khambatta; October 8
A boy to Dilnawaz and Khushroo Patel; October 8
A girl to Niloufer and Jimmy Daruwalla; October 9
A boy to Dinaz and Sarosh Aibara; October 10
A girl to Maharukh and Bhicaji Davierwalla; October 10
A boy to Nawaz and Kersasp Kalianwalla; October 11
A boy to Hufreez and Aspi Shroff; October 11
A boy to Kashmiri and Yezdi Amroli; October 16
A boy to Arnavaz and Percy Buhariwalla; October 16
A boy to Mahrukh and Gushasp Forbes; October 16
A girl to Kashmiri and Darayus Panthaki; October 16
A girl to Pervin and Dinyar Dumasia; October 17
A boy to Binaifer and Vistasp Katrak; October 18
A girl to Shernaz and Sarosh Mehta; October 21
A boy to Aloo and Rohinton Tabelawalla; October 21
A boy to Armin and Neville Malegamwalla; October 23
A boy to Tehmina and Hormazd Irani; October 24
A boy to Farahnaz and Esfandiyar Yezdani; October 25
A boy to Benaifer and Khushru Dalal; October 26
A boy to Yasmin and Adil Commissariat; October 28
A girl to Nilofer and Maneck Daruwalla; October 28
A girl to Firoza and Atul Sinha; October 28
A boy to Jasmine and Darius

Buhariwalla; October 30
A boy to Arti and Bahram Vakil; October 30

Married

Kaynaaz R. Powvalla and Amarendra W. Todankar; January 11
Farah Nasrullah Khan and Aadil Eruch Bhoja; January 12
Perin S. Kolaporewala and Prabir Roy; January 15
Lalitaben Hirubhai Patel and Behram Shapur Irani; January 19
Aban Pesi Karkaria and Mehrwan Pirojsha Dastur; January 24
Irene Luya Alva and Gev Framroj Kakalia; January 30
Deepika Satyendranath Dhotre and Hoshi Dhunjisha Bhagwagar; February 1
Pervin Jehangir Hataria and Chirag Suryakant Mehta; February 2
Anahita Doctor and Jaffar Namazi; February 5
Kashmira Nariman Pardiwalla and Men Kong Tham; February 7
Khurshid Firoze Jilla and Prajakta Suresh Raut; February 10
Anahita Rustom Shroff and Rajesh Harilal Chauhan; February 10
Lata H. Rana and Yezdi D. Daruwalla; February 20
Tanaz Sarosh Bhabha and Mark Selwyn; March 9
Sharon M. Warner and Sohrab Homi Dhondy; March 18
Dhan Sahpur Jabber and Noshir Kaikhusroo Vesuna; March 26
Aneeta Minoo Ghasvala and Sanjeev Kumar Malhotra; March 29
Rashida Jal Cursetji and Raghuvir Mendu; April 6
Tina Sanjana and S. Padmanabhan; April 7
Mangala Vinayak Gadre and Neville Jijibhoy Mistry; April 12
Khurshid Sarosh Patel and Porus Behram Taraporewalla; April 17
Jesmine Eruch Baria and Nandan Manohar Golatkar; April 22
Parizad Pesi Vakil and Prashant C. Trikanad; April 22
Rina Mukherji and Rohinton

Homi Jamshedji; April 30
Roshan E. Tarapore and Daneshvar Samya; April 30
Rasika Bharat Narvekar and Noshir Pourus Tata; May 5
Khurshid Dastur and Kaushik K. Shah; May 17
Khorshed Dinshaw Mody and Jehangir Pochaji Munsiff; June 2
Prochy Mistry and Sanjay Saptarshi; June 2
Indu Khandu Pote and Phiroze A. Khabardar; June 4
Asmita Sadanand Mokul and Farokh Adi Mistry; June 4
Jasmin D. Bhathena and Jayaram H.; June 12
Zenobia Jal Buhariwalla and Ruzbe Rumi Bengali; June 19
Behnaaz S. Irani (Ferooz) and Darayush B. Irani; June 22
Sarita Hansraj Guglani and Jimmy Phiroze Mistry; June 29
Jeannie Persis Baliwalla and Cyrus S. Banker; July 9
Tinaz Homi Balsara and Shekhar Bhattachandra Wavikar; July 16
Celestine Thomas Mathais Sanctis and Bomi Hormusji Patel; July 26
Stella Homi Firozi and Mohammed Ismail; July 26
Vinita Sitaram Salvi and Kaizad Rusi Damania; August 4
Arnavaz Noshir Irani and Motilal Narsital Ahuja; August 9
Ganga Sariki and Gev B. Katrak; August 13
Jennifer James D'Souza and Cyrus Baji Kalwachia; August 26
Khorshed Shapoor Lakdawalla and Dadiba Kali Pundole; October 4
Bakhtaver Nader Mullan and Hoshang Keki Italia; October 7
Sanobar Rustom Irani and Hormaz Aspandiar Dasthi; October 9
Farida Farrokh Capadia of Thane and Ryan Rusi Irani; October 12
Shernaz Dhunjishaw Bharucha and Vaziyad Paul Nagarwalla; October 12
Zenobia Homi Mistry and Percy Keki Jasavala; October 19
Husnavaz Nozer Irani of Dahanu Rd and Farsheed Khodadad Irani of Dahanu Rd; October 21
Rita Jalejar Dharampuriwalla of

Navsari and Meher Tehmuras
Jagirdar of Navsari; October 21
Shahen Aspiandir Irani
(Jamasbi) and Feroz Rashid
Jubani; October 21
Arnavaz Manekji Havewala and
Cyrus Dady Dadabhoy (Sigan-
poria); October 23
Khorshed Percy Garda of
Deolali and Naushir Homi
Engineer; October 23
Kashmira Adi Bhungara and
Minoo Fali Titina; October 27
Gulcheher Bomi Shroff and
Ronni Fali Titina; October 27
Bakhtavar Samy Chichgar and
Hoshang Jamshed Karai;
October 30

Died

Jehangirji Barjorji Todywala
(90), residing at 19, Umbergaon
Bldg, Dr Ambedkar Rd, Parel,
400012; September 30
Ruzbeh Hoshi Beheramfram
(16), Pandit Mans, N. Petit St,
Grant Rd, 400007; October 1
Nariman Shavakshaw Dhalla
(84), Lakshmi Sadan, Dr
Ambedkar Rd, Dadar, 400014;
October 1
Tehmuras Dinshaw Irani (80),
Room no 6, Batliwalla Bldg,
Station Rd, Mahim, 400016;
October 1
Mani Pherozshah Mehta (76),
F. S. Parukh Dharamshalla, 34,
Hughes Rd, 400007; October 1
Rati Jimmy Mody (71), Bueno
Vista, Windy Hall Lane,
Colaba, 400005; October 1
Sheriar Ratansha Patel (69),
Minoo Mans, Dhuswadi, Dhobi
Talao, 400002; October 1
Banubai Munchershaw Sidhwa
(88), Dinsha Petit Bldg, Gilder
St, Lamington Rd, 400008;
October 1
Roda Jal Currawalla (85), 501,
Cumballa Crest, 42, Pedder Rd,
400026; October 2
Rustom Savaksha Fatakia (86),
F. S. Parukh Dharamshalla, 34,
Hughes Rd, 400007; October 2
Nasli Edulji Ghaswala (66),
Amarchand Mans, M. Cama
Rd, 400039; October 2
Banubai Aspiandir Irani (78),
24/A, Kailash, Dahanu
Kerwadi, M. G. Rd, Kandivli,
400067; October 2
Fali Bamanji Driver (60),
Rippon Bldg, Balaram St,
400007; October 3
Jalejar Shapurji Batki (83),
C/8, Rustom Baug, Victoria Rd,
Byculla, 400027; October 4

Rusi Sorabji Cooper (64),
3/4-A, Bhiwandiwala Ter,
Dhobi Talao, 400002;
October 4
Dhunjisha Sorabji Pithawala
(65), 11/12, Mishra Bhavan,
Wadia St, Tardeo, 400034;
October 4
Jamshed Framroze Printer (52),
Room no 2, S. R. Contractor
Bldg, Byculla, 400027;
October 4
Mehroo Ratanshah Bharucha
(71), Devidas Bldg, Dinbai Petit
St, Grant Rd, 400007; October 5
Manek Tehmuras Desai (77),
Shiv Sadan, 131, Marine Drive,
400020; October 6
Jehangir Hormusji Sidhwa (78),
Kashinath Bldg, Khetwadi Back
Rd, 400004; October 6
Dinabai Dinshaw Commesariat
(62), 44, Sai-Ashish, Peter Dias
Rd, Bandra, 400050; October 7
Rusi Jahangirji Mobedjina (57),
T/4, Dalal Est, Bombay Central,
400008; October 7
Piroja Darabsha Sidhwa (82),
347/C, United Chmbs, M. S.
Rd, 400007; October 7
Nargish Sorabji Bharucha (71),
Wagla Cooper Bldg, Khetwadi,
12th Lane, 400004; October 8
Meher Jamshed Bhuri (23),
Room no 8, 256, Dinath Bldg,
Pathe Bapurao Marg, 400004;
October 8
Keki Dara Daruwala (32), 53,
Panday Sanatorium, Panday Rd,
Colaba, 400005; October 8
Manijeh Nariman Lakdawalla
(76), B/15, Hill View, J. P. Rd,
Andheri (W), 400058;
October 8
Hormusji Dorabji Billimoria
(89), G/24, Cusrow Baug, S. B.
Rd, 400039; October 9
Alamai Hormusji Turner (86),
6/7, Sir Ratan Tata Blocks, Tata
Clny, Tardeo, 400034;
October 9
Soona Jehangir Irani (76),
Chawla Hse, 62, Wodehouse
Rd, Colaba, 400005; October 11
Eric Sorabji Kharas (79), 303,
Jupiter, Cuffe Parade, 400005;
October 11
Dhunmai Jehangir Eduljee (69),
D/2, Rustom Baug, Victoria Rd,
Byculla, 400027; October 12
Phirojshah Pestonji Dastoor
(90), 2/9, Tata Block, Tardeo,
400034; October 13
Jehangir Gustad Irani (57),
Auburn Hse, Forjett St, Gowalia
Tank, 400036; October 13
Jehanbux Framji Zaroliwala

(59), Municipal Qrts,
Bhandarwada Hill, Mazagaon,
400010; October 13
Mehelli Dinshaw Bilimoria (75),
6, Jehangir Mans, Marine St,
400020; October 15
Nargish Dinshaw Vazir (59),
Vidwa Chawl, Jame Jamshed
Bldg, Dadar, 400014;
October 15
Dina Kaikhushroo Daruwala
(68), Room no 21, Petit
Widows' Chawl, 225,
Thakurdwar, 400002;
October 16
Meherbai Pallonji Karanjia
(101), Ness Baug Annexe, 1/6,
Nana Chowk, 400007;
October 16
Hilla Kekobad Keshvalla (86),
F. S. Parukh Dharamshalla, 34,
Hughes Rd, 400007; October 16
Jehangir Pestonji Mugasheth
(88), 111, Monalisa, St John
Baptista Rd, Bandra, 400050;
October 16
Rusi Hormusji Umrigar (72),
808, Satya Bhama Nivas, Parsi
Clny, Dadar, 400014;
October 16
Rustom Pirojshah Billimoria
(76), Nargis Villa, Malcolm
Baug, Jogeshwari (W), 400102;
October 17
Soli Meherwanji Captain (90),
O/4, Palm Springs, Cuffe
Parade, Colaba, 400005;
October 17
Dinshaw Jahangir Hilloo (60),
Royal Theatre, Grant Rd,
400007; October 17
Soonamai Rustomji Pastakia
(85), 17/D, 38, Rustom Baug,
Victoria Rd, Byculla, 400027;
October 17
Rusi Bujourji Gazdar (76),
West View, Uranwalla St, Grant
Rd, 400007; October 18
Motabhooy Pallonji Ichhaporia
(68), 14, Tarachand Bldg,
Khareghat Clny, Hughes Rd,
400007; October 18
Minocher Kaikhushroo Jabulee
(79), B/75, Navyug Niwas,
Lamington Rd, 400007;
October 18
Dinaz Kaikhushroo
Jangbarwalla (66), A/4, New
Khareghat Clny, Hughes Rd,
400007; October 18
Roshan Rustomji Todiwalla
(67), 22-G, Sakewadi, Nawab
Tank Rd, Dockyard, 400010;
October 18
Aloo Shapurji Damania (77),
Golwalla Bldg, Khetwadi, 8th
Lane, 400004; October 19

Homi Irani (75), Asha Daan,
Sankli St, Byculla, 400008;
October 19
Shirin Jamshed Pourkhorsand
(58), Porbunder Rd, 3rd Pasta
Lane, Colaba, 400005;
October 19
Khorshed Cawasji Bardoliwala
(86), 403/B, Concord, Cross
Lane, Andheri (W), 400058;
October 20
Jamshedji Pestonji Bhatporia
(77), Room no 2, Mistry Bldg,
Sunmill Rd, Lower Parel,
400013; October 20
Rhoda Bomanji Siganporia (55),
Vincent Ct, Dr Ambedkar Rd,
Dadar, 400014; October 20
Rustom Pirojshah Talati (73),
5/6, Cusrow Baug, S. B. Rd,
400039; October 21
Zarbanoo Ardeshtir Irani (54),
Dadi Santok Hse, Dhobi Talao,
400002; October 22
Sunamai Behramsha Anklesaria
(85), F/5, Mistry Bldg, Captain
Clny, Tardeo, 400034;
October 23
Keki Rustomjee Engineer (68),
Wadia Bldg, Princess St,
400002; October 23
Burjor Rustomji Hawewala
(88), 530, Kachwala Mans,
Chira Bazar, 400002;
October 23
Phiroze Rustom Patel (73),
239/B, Botawalla Bldg, Tardeo,
400007; October 23
Khorshed Ratanshaw Motafam
(80), 599, Sharma Nivas, Jame
Jamshed Rd, Matunga, 400019;
October 24
Savak Maneckshaw Mehta (82),
22, Malegam Bldg, Khareghat
Clny, Hughes Rd, 400008;
October 24
Dara Dinshaw Sanjana (87),
Habib Hse, Grant Rd, 400007;
October 24
Jerbai Nadirsha Vatcha (90),
Naval Hse, Dr Ganti Rd, Parsi
Clny, Dadar, 400014;
October 25
Banu Rustom Broacha (95), C/o
Aspy R. Broacha, Satter Sea
View, Chowpatty Seaface,
400007; October 26
Shirin Darashah Sethna (84),
A/302, Sea Gull, Off Carter Rd,
Bandra, 400050; October 26
Bachamai Phirojshah
Wankadia (98), 202/C, Diago,
Sherley Rajan Rd, Bandra,
400050; October 26
Rustom Maneckji Dariwalla
(72), Atmaram Bldg, New
Charni Rd, 400004; October 27

Jamshed Jehangirji Jijina (61), Bode Bldg, Marzban Clny, Gilder Lane, 400008; October 27

Piroja Nusserwanji Khor (88), V/5, Dalal Est, Lamington Rd, 400008; October 27

Meherbai Sorabji Madan (94), Khurshed Mhl, 725, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; October 27

Farokh Faramroze Patel (35), B/36, Nowroz Baug, Lalbaug, 400012; October 27

Rashid Merwan Irani (76), Bana Bldg, 11th Khetwadi Lane, 400004; October 28

Pestonji Fardoonji Karkaria (85), E, Ginwalla Bldg, Captain Clny, Tardeo, 400034; October 28

Dhurnmai Manecksha Marker (98), 40, Pavwalla Bldg, New Charni Rd, 400004; October 28

Naval Nasarwanji Bhoot (77), Meher Mans, Tardeo Bridge, Tardeo, 400008; October 29

Goola Darabshaw Cooper (76), A, Bhiwandiwalla Ter, Girgam Rd, 400002; October 29

Bapai Dinshaw Mobedji (95),

E/24, Cusrow Baug, S. B. Rd, 400039; October 29

Homai Cawasji Warden (93), Jesia Bldg, 797, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; October 29

Perin Dhunjishaw Engineer (83), Block 6, Vijay-Niwas, Grant Rd, 400007; October 30

Katy Framroze Nallaseth (65), E/6, Jer Baug, Dr Ambedkar Rd, Byculla, 400027; October 30

Gool Homi Unwalla (75), 8, Hendery Bldg, Sleater Rd, 400007; October 30

Dinshaw Pirojshaw Hawaldar (75), Satyabhama Niwas, Kashinath Rd, Tardeo, 400034; October 31

CALCUTTA

Married

Dilber Jal Merchant and *Kaikobad Minocher Pandey* of Bombay; October 23

DELHI

Born

A girl, *Anahaita*, to *Nilufer* and *Navroze Dhondy*; May 23

POONA

Born

A boy to *Yasmin* and *Jamshid Mody*; October 27

Died

Sorab Ardeshtir Cama (89), 56/5, M. G. Rd, 411001; October 1

Sorab Sheriyar Irani (41), 484, Koregaon, Dist Poona, 415501; October 13

Daulat Rustom Hormazdi (56), 503, Pundol Apts, 160, Mahatma Gandhi Rd, 411001; October 29

Firoz Naval Siodia (41), 1012, Bottee St, 411001; October 29

Jal Jehangir Nanavaty (90), Napier Rd, 411001; October 30

SURAT

Died

Burjorji Nowroji Pithawala (92), Gam Suwali, Dist Surat, 395003; October 7

Nariman Meherwanji Tadiwala (72), Opp Nariman Home and Infirmary, Shahpore, 395003; October 7

Jehanbux Pirojsha Dallas (87),

Nariman Home and Infirmary, Shahpore, 395003; October 14

Nanubhai Faramroze Nava (66), Nariman Home and Infirmary, Shahpore, 395003; October 17

o o o

KARACHI

Died

Homai Jamshed Kavasji (72); August 31

Jal Dhunjisha Bhujwala (74); September 1

Kaitayun Darabshaw Shroff (87); September 3

Sohrabji Maneckji Bharucha (67); September 4

Pirozshaw R. Kavasji (87); September 9

Burjor Pirojsha Ghadiali (72); September 27

TOTALS (for this issue)

Births: Boys 21, Girls 11

Marriages: Parsi 22

Intercommunal: 36

Deaths: 101

Compiled by Roxana H. Kaka

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CHAVDA

line, rhythm and melody

The canvas is bare. A portrait of Sai Baba was to take shape there. But the temple in South India which had commissioned this piece was not destined to see it completed. The artist Shiavax Dhanjibhoy Chavda had just completed a miniature pencil sketch and was about to transfer his image onto the larger canvas when heart and liver complications led to his hospitalization and subsequent death on August 18, 1990 at the B. D. Petit Parsee General Hospital.

Ever since he was elected one of the "Nine Eminent Artists of India" by the prestigious Lalit Kala Akademi, awards by art bodies and government organizations have been regularly coming his way. He enjoyed the distinction of being made a fellow of the Akademi and having a book on contemporary Indian art titled *Chavda*, published by the Akademi as a tribute to his talent.

Only this year two more recognitions were added to 75-year-old Chavda's list of honors: He was declared "Artist of the Year 1990" by the Maharashtra Government and the Shiromani Institute of Delhi included him on their list of outstanding people of Maharashtra who have contributed to national integration through art.

He gave "character, stability and dignity to the art world of Bombay," credited his compeer Kekoo Gandhi of Chemould Art Gallery at the condolence meeting held in Chavda's honor on August 31, 1990 under the joint auspices of 12 art organizations and galleries. During the last 45 years that he established himself as an artist, Chavda's draftsmanship was considered unique, "which no Indian could surpass," noted artist Madhav Satavlekar at the condolence meet.

He was particularly known "for the sweeping contours of his dancers and the graceful outlines of his musicians," noted an earlier review by *The Times of India*. With rhythm depicted through his strong lines, and melody and mood conveyed through his colors, Chavda's early works were marked by these characteristics. "I don't know anyone in this country who

certs, he would enjoy sketching the performers in the dark auditorium with just a torch light for illumination, recalled one artist.

At a later phase he preferred to go into abstract art even though critics did not appreciate this change. Explains his wife, "Artists always want to move forward. He used to say, 'They will under-

stand me much later.'" In fact, when his son Pervez, who is into architecture and interior designing, used to regularly ask him to repeat a series of paintings on horses, he would say, "I have passed that phase." A family source mentions, however, that while in hospital he offered to comply with his son's request. "As a fine artist, he never wanted to reproduce the same painting, even if in demand. 'I'll be inspired to do another; I can't copy,'" was his conviction, remembers his wife.

His works feature in the collections of connoisseurs and dignitaries like the late president Sukarno of Indonesia, government bodies like the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre, Bombay, art centers like the Lalit Kala Akademi, museums in Baroda and Nagpur, business houses like Tata, Godrej, Mafatlal, Voltas, besides banks, airlines, etc. Among the landmark buildings that his murals adorn are the Parliament House in New Delhi, the Air India building in Washington, the National Centre for the Performing Arts (NCPA), Bombay...

Maintains Gandhi, "His murals at the NCPA are not a true reflection of his caliber. Perhaps, given the growing popularity of abstract art, he thought he wanted to keep pace with the new generation...Maybe that in aiming for versatility, he moved away from his forte, sketch-



could draw a dance movement so vibrantly as Chavda," said litterateur Dr Mulk Raj Anand. Chavda had contributed illustrations for two of Anand's publications: *Costumes of India* and *Wrestling*.

The inspiration for his Indian dance drawings came from his dancer wife Khurshid, while Indian classical music was a subject he himself had studied under renowned musicologists and vocalists and even had performances to his credit. When attending dance and music con-

ing...It was a pity really that in the later phase his work did not attract as much attention and enthusiasm as he deserved..."

One of the few Indians to have received direct tutelage under the great Russian master Valadimir Polunin, Chavda also got an opportunity to learn at the Academie de la Grande Chaumiere, Paris and the St Martin School of Art, London. Navsari-born Chavda had earlier graduated from the Sir J. J. School of Art in Bombay and upon receiving the Sir Ratan Tata Scholarship had proceeded to Europe to study under the great masters, finally getting a diploma from the Slade School of Fine Arts in London, notes his bio data.

On his return to India, he held his first one-man exhibition at the Princes Room of the Taj Mahal Hotel, his favorite venue for the subsequent exhibitions that he organized with "almost clockwork regularity." At nearly 40 exhibitions has he displayed his works, in cities like Bombay, Ahmedabad, Djakarta, Singapore, London, Paris, Zurich and New York. Besides, his works have been included in exhibitions on Indian art organ-

ized in foreign countries. From his intensive travels he got to learn of various cultures that came to be reflected in his art style, says one critic. He was also for some time a professor at the Sir J. J. School of Art. One of his outstanding students was the late Piloo Pochkhanawala who subsequently devoted her energies to sculpting.

Along with the Bombay group of painters like Hebbbar, Sadwelkar, Ara and Gaitonde, Chavda "rebelled against the established 'holies' in art to break fresh ground," noted *The Daily* of August 22. His art colleagues remember him as being kind, considerate, dignified, quiet and reticent.

The discipline and simplicity governing Chavda's work habits came through in his regular routine: Usually attired in a white flowing kurta and pyjama, he would climb two stories from his residence to the art studio twice a day, and in later days with the support of a stick, even when arthritis started troubling him. Working on an average for eight hours a day the master of the brush would either have music from his transistor keeping

him company or the sounds from across the partition where his wife or daughter Jeroo would be conducting the dance class.

Among the recent assignments that Chavda has worked on are a portrait of the late Naval Tata, commissioned for the Tata Agiary in Bandra and one of Ganpati. Some years before he had been commissioned to do a portrait of Zarathushtra for the dar-e-meher at Chicago.

During his lifetime he had gifted many paintings, the sale proceeds of which were utilized for different causes like welfare of the blind. To perpetuate his memory after death, Anand suggested setting up of a trust in his name. He further recommended that an exhibition and sale of his works be organized and the amount used to infuse fresh life in the Artists' Centre of which he was a founder member. Thereby his own talent as also that of the next generation could be kept alive. "Artists don't die..." maintained Anand.

Chavda is survived by his wife Khurshid, son Pervez and daughter Jeroo.

Written by Parinaz Gandhi

ZOROASTRIANS ABROAD

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and which incorporated his godown full of silks, offices and residence. By a quirk of fate the whole family escaped unhurt, the wife and children being away on vacation while Rustomji, seeing off a friend sailing to the US, was left standing on the part of the jetty which did not collapse.

A French vessel, which picked up 2,000 survivors from the waters, carried Rustomji to Kobe with the shirt on his back as his sole asset.

Daver's main bankers in Yokohama had been the Hongkong Bank and so he sought out its Kobe branch where he was received with courtesy and presented a cheque book with the assurance that "every cheque he wrote would be honored immediately," writes Bejan, now the sole surviving son.

The Bank's instant response enabled a confident Rustomji to successfully reestablish himself in Kobe. Today the firm, known as R. E. Daver KK, is located in Tokyo with Rustomji's grandson as president and Bejan as chairman. A fourth generation of the family has joined the firm, informs Bejan.

Compiled by Arnavaz S. Manna

RASNA : CONCENTRATE(D)...

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Ahmedabad increased from Rs 9,000 to 50,000, according to the *Panchayat Patrika*. But Khambatta preferred to pass on the credit for this success to Edulji Turel, chairman of the Bombay Mercantile Bank which is a tenant of the Panchayat property. On the occasion of the golden jubilee of the agiary in Ahmedabad, Khambatta personally spent nearly Rs 3,00,000 towards the cost of renovation. Religiously inclined, Khambatta maintains, "Your faith in God helps you in business." Actually he regrets that he did not qualify as a navar considering that his great grandfather was the head priest in Ahmedabad.

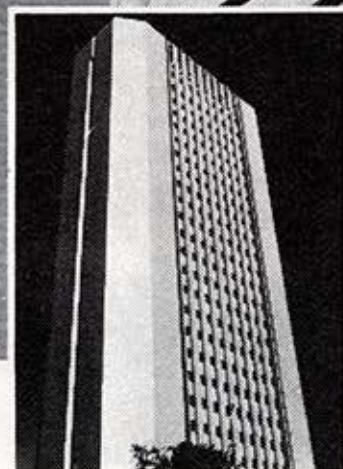
His commitment to national, social, and sports causes has persisted over the years. He was the chief commandant of the Ahmedabad Home Guards for over 15 years. His association with the Home Guards and Civil Defence has won him awards like Samar Seva Star, Sangram Medal, Paschmi Star and the President's Gold Medal. Having represented his college team in hockey and table tennis, Khambatta retains his interest in sports, continuing with his membership of the

Gujarat Sports Club and the Ahmedabad Rifle Association.

He is associated with the Entrepreneurship Development Institute (EDI) of India where he frequently lectures, and also finds time to speak to the students of the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad. He is particularly perturbed with the comments he has heard from his colleagues at the EDI who have opined that entrepreneurship is lacking among Parsi boys. "We should have special entrepreneurship courses for Parsi boys and girls at the EDI," he recommends, urging those interested to get in touch with him at Rasna House, Panchwati, Ahmedabad, 380006 or the Panchayat at Parsi Agiary, Bukhara Mohalla, Khamasa Gate, Ahmedabad, 380001.

How many will avail of his offer? "We tend to bask on past glory," lamented the entrepreneur. "Our Parsi boys have to become bold, dashing... the distinguishing mark (of the community of yore)." To dissuade Parsi boys from opting for salaried service and luring them into business spheres instead, the enterprising Khambatta reasoned, "In a job what are you finally going to get? After all business is business."

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