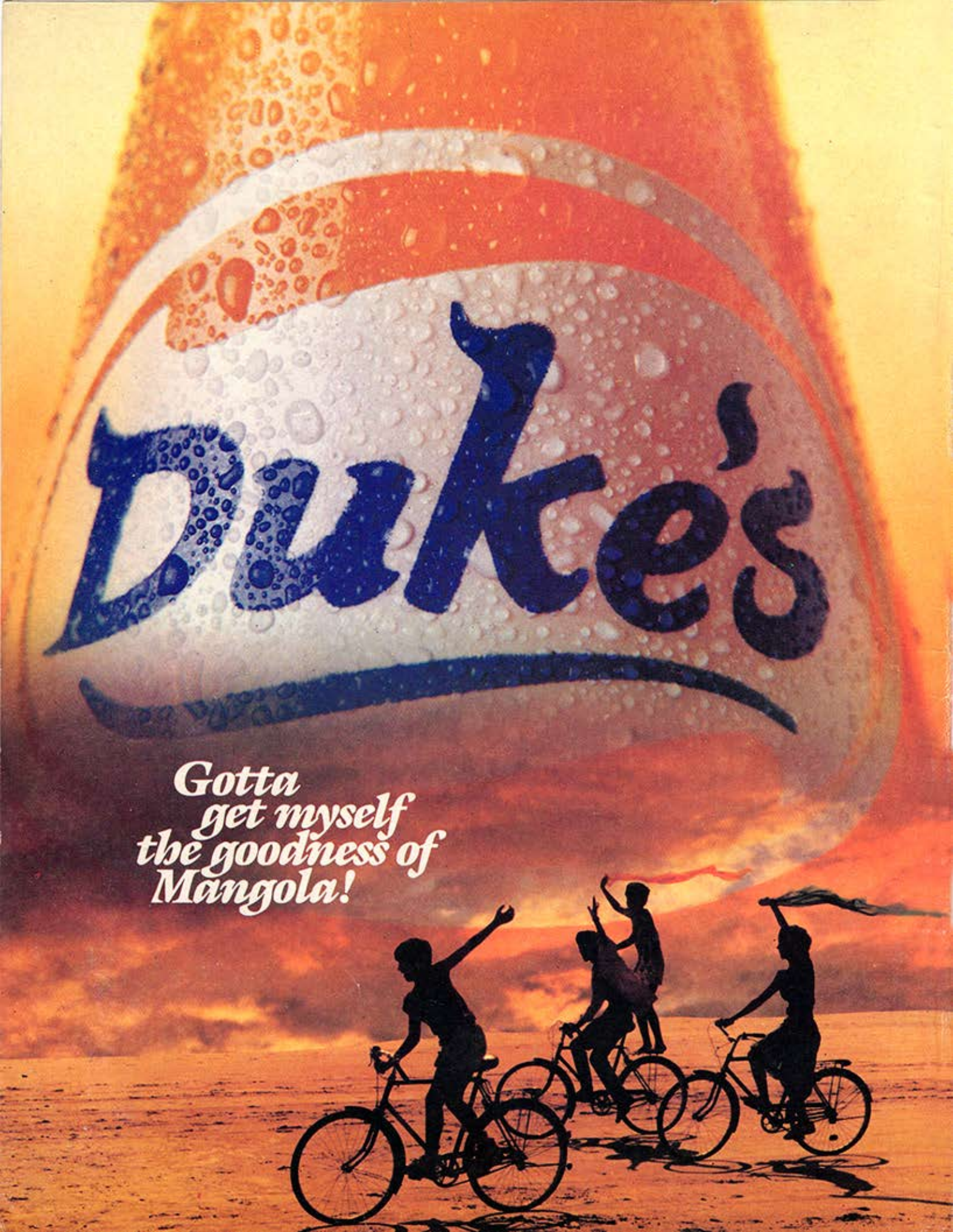


bang tradition

Parsiāna





Duke's

*Gotta
get myself
the goodness of
Mangola!*



Parsiana

January 1991
Volume 13 Number 7

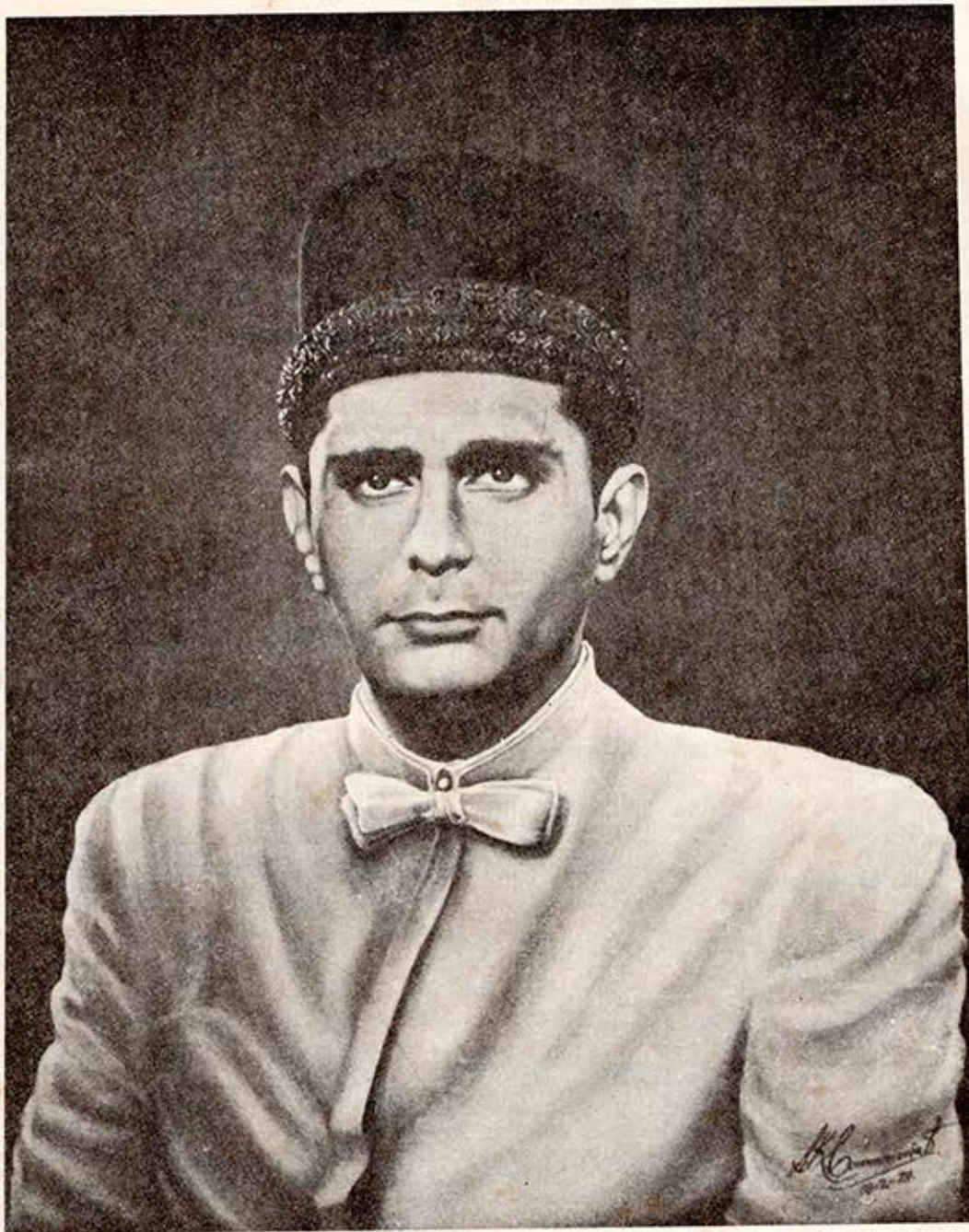
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In Memoriam

Mr Fali Meherji Variava

Director

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"The divine laws of..."

I refer to the article "The divine laws of God must prevail" by, and the interview "If you want to come back, I want to stop you" with, Dastur Firoze Kotwal, published in *Parsiana*, September 1990.

In view of the furore created on the subject, I would like that there should be clarity of thought in respect of the aspects involved.

There is, first, the purely religious aspect. We must acknowledge that, in this, there are few better qualified than Dastur Kotwal. He is also correct in stating that no secular law or judgment can override religious tenets.

There is, however, another aspect: the management of religious and trust properties. This is a secular matter, governed by the law of the land, and no trustee

can ignore such law on the ground of religious belief.

My personal view is that while no priest can be compelled to perform religious ceremonies against his conscience, the trustees of community funds and properties can exclude the claims of those Parsi Zoroastrians, who have married outside the community without renouncing their faith, only at their legal peril.

Dr B. M. MASANI

Mhow

"Whither good...?"

Congratulations for hitting the nail on the head, through your excellent editorial, "Whither goods thoughts, words, and deeds?" (*Parsiana*, September 1990). Today, when Muslim fanaticism, and now Hindu fundamentalism, is raging like wildfire, devouring all sane thinking, I would have thought that Zoroastrianism, the most simple and least complicated of all faiths, would have shone out like a beacon for all religions of the world to look up to and follow. I am afraid, not only have we miserably failed in this, but have today become the butt of ridicule, and the joker *bawaji* (a term derisively used by non-Parsis to refer to Parsis) of the whole nation, if not of the world.

The Prophet's message is so simple and easy to comprehend. This is the only religion, which I know of, which has no rituals, no dogmas, no penance and no fasting. Any rituals and dogmas which the Parsis observe in India, are only those of the country which gave us shelter.

Secondly, it is a religion of happiness and laughter, which expects its followers to eat, drink, make love, create wealth, and always be merry. However, it enjoins that, all the above must be enjoyed on the three pillars of good thoughts, good words and good deeds, bound together with a band which stipulates that happiness comes only to those who give happiness to others.

Lastly, the Zoroastrian religion is a faith of the living, by the living, and for the living. It therefore stipulates that its tenets were made to serve the living man, but that man was not created to serve its doctrines. Zoroastrian doctrine therefore is expected to bend to accommodate the needs of man, as such; there is no need for the latter to sacrifice his worldly interests

to serve religion, as long as he serves man. Unfortunately, so far, all our attempts have been for it to serve the dead.

Brig N. B. GRANT (Retd)

Pune

The Parsi Punchayet trustees not allowing the traditional funeral rites at doongerwadi for the late Roxan Shah has upset a section of the community. The trustees would have faced similar criticism from a different section of the community if they had allowed such ceremonies to be performed. To the best of my knowledge none of the present trustees is a religious scholar and therefore the board of trustees has to depend on advice tendered to them. Their action should be castigated only if malafide can be attributed.

All religious controversies cannot and should not be resolved through legalistic measures. The secular nature of our constitution and the laws of this country give total freedom and liberty in the practise of any religion, its customs and traditions.

Every religious group, in the practise of its rites and customs should have no interference whatsoever from others. Possibly there are those who think that there should be a change with the changing times; and there may be others for whom tradition and existing customs are sacrosanct. It is, therefore, absolutely necessary and feasible, considering that we are a microscopic minority, that the leaders of our community have a referendum on this and related issues. Before holding such a referendum the community should be given all the necessary and relevant information, knowledge and opinions of religious scholars so that the laity are educated on these matters and therefore able to cast their choice as they deem fit. The results of this referendum should then be adopted as a guideline for all future decisions.

PHIROZE AMROLIWALLA

"Whither Parsiana?"

This is in response to Aspi Moddie's directive ("Making good, clear choices," *Parsiana*, March 1990) and Roni Khan's appeal ("Whither Parsiana," Readers' Forum, *Parsiana*, April 1990), that some form of religious education be imparted, in small doses, by *Parsiana*.

May I make two modest suggestions?

Could *Parsiana* see its way to printing brief articles, not more than a single page, on Zoroastrian concepts, in a series entitled 'Know your religion?' Basic concepts, such as the Amesha Spenta, Sraosha, Daena, Ashi Vanghui, etc should be described, and the article should un-failingly conclude by showing their application in daily life.

Secondly, to complement the above, there should be selections from our texts illustrating the articles. This page could be entitled: 'Our Beautiful Prayers.' I stress the adjective, beautiful, for it is essential that beautiful renderings of our prayers be made to match Bahai, Christian, Hindu and Muslim prayers. How often have the young come to me and said: "How beautiful the Bahai prayers are. Why can't our prayers be translated in the same way so that we can respond with a feeling of devotion because we understand what we are praying?" Unless this genuine need of our young is fulfilled, there is bound to be a longing to seek out other religions or follow the saints of other faiths rather than our own.

A far more fundamental reform would be for each anjuman to start *Avesta* classes for old and young, teach them how to chant the prayers in the original, and side by side, have the beautiful translations to inspire the learners. We still have our madressas which are teaching seven-year-old children the *Avesta* script and grammar. They would be happy to advise anjuman at home and Zoroastrian associations abroad regarding such classes. Then the various trusts could help in the printing of *Avestan* grammar books and texts, starting with our daily prayers. Gradually, our *Khordeh Avesta* would be printed in *Avestan* script rather than in Gujarati or English transliteration.

Irani Zoroastrians still keep up with their mother tongue, Persian/Farsi, no matter where they settle, so they can follow the prayers in Pahlavi very easily. Many also know *Avesta* and Pahlavi, so we should learn from them.

Finally, let us note the reason why the Jewish community is so well integrated. Conversions are very rare, if any, because from the age of five years children are taught Hebrew and learn their prayers in the original. Most important of all, they know the meaning of what they are praying. Without such an understanding of our scriptures, we are lost.

Ms PILLOO JUNGALWALLA

New Delhi

I am very sorry to hear that our community, once so very well-known for its charities, is now not able to support its institutions. Its downfall is mainly attributed to being a leaderless community. It can be compared to a ship in mid-sea, drifting captainless at sea.

I remember in the good old days we used to have leaders like Kabraji, Pijam, Hirjibehdin, Vimadlal and others who had great influence on the community. I wish that *Parsiana* takes a leading role in selecting a good leader. I am quite sure you will have full-hearted support from the community.

N. S. MARKAR

New Delhi

"Navjote by choice..."

I fear my dear friend Piloo Jungalwalla has inadvertently knocked against well-intentioned, responsible scholarship ("Navjote by choice..." Readers' Forum, *Parsiana*, May 1990). I know her to be deeply involved in the religious instruction of the young amongst whom she has successfully achieved an enormous amount for the propagation of our noble universalist faith.

Translations of texts in ancient, cryptic languages are at diverse levels. Learned journals will carry only those which go back to fundamentals of linguistics and tend to be incomprehensible to all but philologists. Less highbrow publications aim at coherence and wide appeal at the expense of close adhesion to the letter — actually paraphrases-cum-commentaries — arousing controversy when interpretations are challenged on their particular line or direction. Popular journals and magazines come off worst with free-for-all, irresponsible thoughts on heavy subjects, ensuing in endless and futile debate precisely because they lack depth and substance.

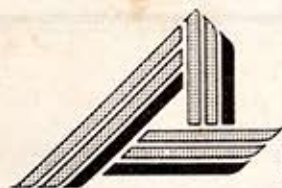
Constant probing into the very origin of certain technical words and religious terms which defy precision arouses greater uncertainties than ever for the layman. "When I use a word, it means just what I choose it to mean — neither more nor less" — and there's the rub! So why not let *fravarane* happily rest at "I profess," cumbersome as it appears? Or should we favor "I declare forth," "I opt for," "I assert," "I affirm?" *Var* undoubtedly has its roots in choice. The *fra* prefix is "forth," "pro" (as in pro-claim, profess); note *fravakshya*, "I proclaim." I consider it more important to be *mazdayasno Zarathushtrish* in thought,

word and deed than in frequent empty proclamations to that effect, for mere intonation of this confessional clause does not of itself make one so. Piloo's little book — doing very well! — amply bears out my assertion. Homi Rogers' retrospective glance ("Navjote by Choice, not Chance," *Parsiana*, May 1989) at Piloo's four enchanting children's books (including *The Navjote*) has rather hastily, I feel, downgraded their inherent value. They are an enduring and popular success. Certainly we have nothing quite like these in our London Zoroastrian House Library.

A long-running sore with Piloo is the vexing question of *geush urva*. Why cannot early pastoral man's preoccupation with and wonder at this most precious material possession — domesticated cattle — backed by millennia of rich Indo-Iranian, indeed Indo-European, mythology, be allowed expression of lofty cosmic concepts at the same time as deep respect for the tragically oppressed bovine at a very earthly level? Zarathushtra's time and milieu easily accounts for his Mazda-inspired verses giving allegorical shape to his spiritual and social ideas through pastoral imagery. His *Gathas* sing and, yes, proclaim his compassion and assurance towards the meek-spirited human as much as the brutally treated bovine. Why should this gentle vehicle of his powerful universal message be regarded as inadequate or as somehow belittling his grand vision for the inner transformation of all of mankind to achieve a perfected world? It appears incongruous just because it is, literally, direct!

Some "translations" read easily and entice the unwary reader away from this sublime visionary's teachings and towards the dangerous fantasies of occultists and theosophists. They engender the most distressingly bizarre confusion in the unprepared mind, and would have bemused Zarathushtra himself. Dare I paraphrase the poet who punned that a translation is like a woman: it is seldom faithful if it is in the least attractive, and — as corollary — unattractive were it to be faithful. It should be noted that beautiful, moving and occasionally inspiring translations conferred upon the texts of other religions are not wholly acceptable to the followers of those systems. Thus the Muslim theologians fiercely contest Nicholson, ditto for the Buddhists (though perhaps not fiercely!) and Mas-

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caro (who I much admire) has irreverently been dubbed *maskeri*! To my dear franco-phone friend I have to recommend yet another string-chew: the latest, astonishing, offering by Kellens and Pirart, *Les Textes Vieil-avestiques*, completed now with grammar and extensive philological commentaries. Our sacred texts by their very nature are destined for "dry" treatment; it is left for theologians, philosophers and moralists to unravel the inherent profundities for future generations.

We should not be disheartened at our inability to discover a scholar with total mastery over the entire Indo-Iranian field. Such a one will only come about in the person of the Saoshyant who will, alack and alas, expound the full majesty of Ahura's wisdom long after the only surviving Parsi has gasped his last, for, one should be reminded, statisticians have assured us only five more generations of Parsis. However, I have one in the eye for these ruthless calculators — Zoroastrianism will win out right up to the Frashokereti; in the meanwhile let us not forever quibble over the brush-strokes and instead learn to fully appreciate the grandeur of Zarathushtra's visionary painting!

FARROKH VAJIFDAR
London, UK

Save the Parsis

Most people have heard the beautiful legend about the first arrival of the Parsis on the west coast of India many centuries ago. The ruler of the territories sent them a bowl filled to the brim with milk: there was no place in the bowl for anything more, and no place in his land for any more people. The Parsis put some sugar into the milk, and sent it back to the ruler who accepted the sweetened milk and the Parsis. Whether true or not, the legend is certainly symbolic — the newcomers refused to take no for an answer.

The Parsi community has enriched Indian life in all sectors. The religious tradition which they brought with them was a signal contribution that enriched the spiritual and philosophical heritage of India. Quite apart from their business acumen which has been a national asset, some of the most illustrious names in our freedom struggle were those of Parsis. Let it never be forgotten that when the British, with their divide and rule policies, tried to get Parsis to accept separate representations in the political confabulations, their offers were firmly rejected by the community. The House of Tata alone has done more for this country, than one could almost say all the governments

of free India put together.

The Parsis are a happy mixture of East and West, naturally and easily at home everywhere. But — and here is the sad part — in this land of exploding population, the Parsis are actually decreasing in numbers. Many of them are emigrating for the same reason for which many others emigrate — because the stifling atmosphere in this country denies opportunities and is a constraint on creativity and enterprise. That outflow aggravates the basic problem; that there is not much of a natural increase. The problem is compounded by an old Indian tradition — the non-acceptance into the fold of people who marry outside their community, especially the women. With this steady decrease this country is in imminent danger of losing the Parsi entity, its ethos and all that it has stood for.

To an extent it is essential that with greater national mobility and the breaking up, not only of castes but distinctive communities, increasing intermarriage, loss of tradition through loss of contact with a geographical base, the smaller communities of India are at risk.

But the Parsi community seems to be shrinking before our very eyes at an



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K. WADIA

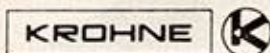
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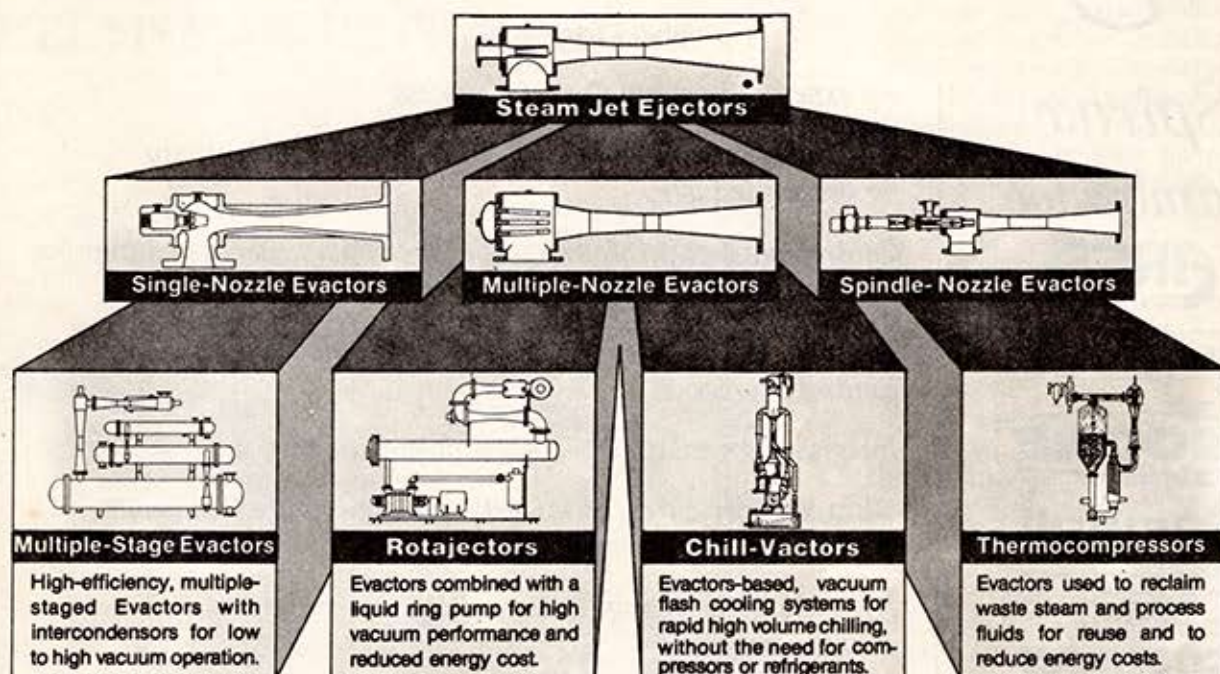
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alarming rate. Their high profile on the national scene probably blinds people to this fact. Whether they manage to preserve their identity in countries like Canada or USA is not clear. But in this country they are an endangered species.

The trouble with trying to preserve the cultural identity of a human community is that it is such a complex business, because human freedom includes freedom to go in ways that lead to extinction.

A new formula has to be found to reconcile the intermingling of peoples with their preservation of culture and identities. The Parsis who have pioneered so much and achieved so much, will perhaps find a solution to this problem too which is increasingly becoming a global problem.

Ms C. B. MUTHAMMA, IFS (Retd)

New Delhi

As our community dwindles, the solution lies in giving incentive to Parsi families who have three or more children, to be accommodated in a bigger house of three rooms plus kitchen at a concessional rent and other necessities of life, like a medical insurance scheme etc. Their one room plus kitchen could be given to a

young couple who wish to settle down in life.

SHIAWAKR MISTRY

I would exhort Parsis to:

- Be a Parsi: buy/use Parsi goods and services. All Parsis should patronize, wherever available, goods and services, manufactured, marketed and provided by Parsi firms and Parsi managed companies. Similarly, all Parsis should patronize Parsi managed schools and other institutions.

- Adopt a poor Parsi family. There is no dearth of organized Parsi charities and large numbers of needy Parsis are being benefitted. However, such help is largely, inevitably, impersonal. I feel that many Parsi families who are comparatively well off — not necessarily very rich — would like to adopt a poor family and seek to provide all their needs — monetary as well as emotional. The adoptive family will feel a sense of parental obligation being fulfilled and the adopted family would feel a sense of being wanted and cared for. Readers who feel that the above are good ideas and can be made workable with suitable modifications/refinements, are requested to send in their

views with their names and addresses to the undersigned at Ratan Mansion, Forjett Street, Bombay 400036 so that we may get together to formalize a concrete plan of action.

D. T. MARFATIA

Touring Iran?

While appreciating the love and enthusiasm of Parsis for their *madar vatan* (motherland) I feel it my duty to warn them to make proper enquiries before booking their tour to Iran.

When I landed at the Tehran airport in May 1990, I was ordered to convert US \$ 150 into Iranian tomans. This is compulsory under the Iranian Government's latest regulation for all foreigners. The bank at the airport gave me only seven tomans for each US dollar whereas in the open market in Tehran, Isfahan and other major cities of Iran one can easily get a rate of 140 tomans per US dollar.

In the interest of the community let me also point out that our Indian Government also levys tax at 15 percent on foreign currency purchased by us in India

PARVEZ J. KATRAK

Edited by Amavaz S. Mama

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Events and Personalities

Long-lived Samachar

Furdoonjee Murzbanjee may never have imagined his small leaflet *Mumbai na Samachar*, announcing the arrival of ships from China 168 years ago, would be so honored.

Before a grand gathering of Bombay's elite at the Tejpal Auditorium on January 7, 1991 rich tributes were paid to *The Bombay Samachar*, its present owners, the Cama family and the editor Jehan Daruwala. The function was organized by the Abhivadan Trust.

The fourth oldest daily newspaper in the world and the oldest outside of Great Britain, "*The Samachar* combines longevity with a degree of decorum and

years old), then *The Times* (of London, 205 years old) followed by *The Samachar* (168 years), *The Times of India* (154 years), *The Statesman*, Calcutta (115 years), *The Washington Post* (113 years), *The Herald Tribune* — now *The International Herald Tribune* — (103 years) and the *Wall Street Journal* (101 years).

"A newspaper has the heart, soul and mind of its owner," said Palkhivala praising Noshir and Rustom Cama, the two brothers who along with their families own and manage the legendary institution. He noted that *The Samachar* followed a code of conduct which was similar to what the British papers had conceived and followed for many years: that

people's privacy had to be respected unless overriding public purposes were at stake; that the people written about had a right of rebuttal; that the paper would not pander to the baser instincts of the public by references to religion, color, race, etc; and would not give coverage to the sleazy, seamy side of life to gain readers.

Under the editorship of Daruwala, Palkhivala said *The Samachar* would go from strength to strength. "The first 168 years of a newspaper are the most difficult," he said jocularly, "after that it's easy." Palkhivala noted that a suggestion had been received from a trustee of the Abhivadan Trust that a postage stamp be issued by the government commemorating *The Bombay Samachar*.

Bombay mayor Chhagan Bhujbal stated he was proud to be the mayor of a city in which *The Mumbai Samachar* was born. He noted that the Bombay Municipal Corporation (BMC) had honored the paper by naming a road after it. Speaking in Hindi he told the gathering that the BMC gave all sorts of names to all kinds of roads but he was glad that they had honored *The Samachar* along the way. He said people trusted *The Mumbai Samachar* but added that that did not mean that the other papers were dishonest. News should be presented as news, he said; editorial comment should be reserved for the editorial/opinion pages or columns. He lamented the tendency to add "*mirch masala* (spice)" to news stories.

The Shiv Sena mayor also noted that when the controversy arose whether the city should be referred to as Mumbai instead of Bombay, he had stated that the oldest paper of the city was named *Mumbai Samachar* and not *Bombay Samachar*.

Not to be outdone by the Bombay mayor, Gujarat's Chimanbhai Patel commented that though *The Bombay Samachar* was born in Bombay of which Bhujbal was the mayor, the paper was published in Gujarati, the official language of Gujarat of which he was the chief minister! (Laughter.) He referred to



At the function to felicitate *The Mumbai Samachar's* existence (from left): Daruwala, Noshir Cama, Gandhi, Rustom Cama and Palkhivala
Below: Noshir Cama with Patel



decency...rarely found amongst journalists," said chief guest Nani Palkhivala, the eminent jurist. Palkhivala had researched the age of the various newspapers and told the gathering that the *Aberdeen Journal* in Scotland was the oldest daily newspaper in the world (245 years old); next came the *Glasgow Herald* (208

the *triputi* (trinity) of the two Cama brothers and Daruwala that had made the paper indispensable to the public. Speaking in Gujarati he noted that "Many families don't drink their morning cup of tea without *The Bombay Samachar*. He also referred to the prevailing disquieting media trend of owners' views being pushed on to the readers, citing specifically the case of the Narmada controversy in which he had been attacked by several publications.

The Samachar had supported the Narmada project, the audience was informed. In the name of investigative journalism, newspapers print what should not be printed. He said he had preempted the Abhivadan Trust, having already requested the government to issue a stamp honoring *The Samachar*.

Presiding over the function, Pravinchandra Gandhi, managing trustee of the Saurashtra Trust that manages the Janmabhoomi group of publications, recalled that he was in Bharda High School with the Cama brothers and that Rustom was his benchmark. Noshir was one year senior. While he refrained from narrating all the pranks they played in school, he said that in the newspaper business, as far as finance and administration goes, "Rusi is my guru." Noshir, he said, was a technocrat and Gandhi sought his advice when selecting machinery. Daruwala followed in the tradition of editors Syed Brelvi and Benjamin Horniman. He could modulate the tone of his writing to suit the occasion. Gandhi recalled that when he was the managing director of the Dena Bank at which the Camas had their account, his only complaint was that the brothers never used the overdraft facility, such was their financial prowess. Gandhi had suggested Rustom Cama's name as vice president of the prestigious Indian Newspaper Society and thereafter Rustom became the president of the all-India body. In turn Rustom proposed Gandhi's name for the same posts.

Speaking on behalf of the family, Noshir Cama referred to the occasion as a "great day in the history of *The Bombay Samachar*...so many people who matter have gathered here," he said. "Furdoonjee Murzbanjee could have had no idea that his paper would one day be the premier Gujarati newspaper of Bombay. All the members of the staff are responsible for what the paper is today."

Recalling the humble origins of the paper, Cama said Murzbanjee started the paper to help traders who wanted to



(Left) Dastur: handling nerves
Adajania: goodwill for boxing

know what cargo was to be discharged from the ships plying the Bombay-China route. "He thought if he printed a leaflet giving this information it would be helpful to the trade. It was originally called *Mumbai na Samachar*. He asked the audience not to forget the second oldest paper in the country also founded by Murzbanjee, the *Jam-e-Jamshed*. Though now a weekly, Cama hoped it would become a daily once again.

"Running a newspaper is no easy task," he added. Stating that the newspaper's editorial policy was laid down by its proprietors, Cama noted that "our editor is our friend...he helps in making decisions."

He added that *The Times of India* was not as old as its owners claimed as it had a different name when started.

Daruwala, while thanking the trustees of the Abhivadan Trust for honoring the paper, said every person connected with the paper "would walk out (of the hall that day) taller than they entered." He praised the work being done by the Abhivadan Trust, a charitable organization that annually expends five to six lakh rupees promoting the cause of artists and other public figures who have excelled in their respective fields. Through felicitation functions, or grants of monetary aid to the once famous but now destitute personalities, the Abhivadan Trust confers recognition on the talented.

Distinguished neuropath

On the list of 39 "Neuropathologists of the Twentieth Century" features Dr Darab K. Dastur's name. This distinction came to Dastur in September last at the International Congress of Neuropathology in Kyoto, Japan, when Prof H. M. Zimmerman, believed to be the oldest living neuropathologist, shortlisted the few outstanding of whom only 22 are reportedly alive, notes a press release.

Barely two months thereafter, Dastur, who is director of neuropathology and

applied biology at the Bombay Hospital and honorary consultant in neuropathology at the Grant Medical College and the J. J. Group of Hospitals, was conferred the eleventh national award of The Birla Smarak Kosh. This award for 1990-91, presented for outstanding research in medical or related fields, comprises a memento, citation and a cash purse of one lakh rupees, reports the *Indian Express* of November 20, 1990.

In the field of neurological and neuromuscular disorders, Dastur has made signal contributions relating to: cerebral blood flow and metabolism in human aging; nutritional disorders of the nervous system; intracranial and intraspinal tumors; allergic and viral encephalitis; brain and spinal cord in tuberculous meningitis; and many such areas.

The 66-year-old doctor has published about 180 scientific papers, presented around 40 research papers at nearly 30 international conferences and delivered about 70 guest lectures on his field of specialization. He is co-editor of one book each on leprosy, neurotuberculosis and neurological sciences. Among the notable institutions of which he has been made fellow are: the Indian National Science Academy, National Academy of Medical Sciences and Royal College of Pathologists, London, reads his curriculum vitae.

The neuropath's education was at the New Era School and later at the Wilson College, Grant Medical College and the J. J. Hospitals. As a Rockefeller Foundation fellow and visiting scientist at the National Institutes of Health, Bethesda, USA, Dastur pursued his studies on brain metabolism. For nearly two decades Dastur has been associated with the Bombay University, teaching neurology, pathology and neurosurgery at the postgraduate level, further informs his bio data.

Boxing official honored

The first Indian to be appointed technical delegate to the boxing championships at the Olympics is Capt Aspi Adajania, president of the Indian Amateur Boxing Federation (IABF), notes *The Daily of October 14, 1990*. Adajania has officiated at international meets since his election in 1984 to the executive committee of the Association Internationale de Boxe Amateur (AIBA). His earlier experience as recounted in *The Afternoon Despatch and Courier* of September 19, 1990 was as member of the jury at four World Cups, two Olympics and four

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Aga (left) corporate performer
Mody: advisor on politics



Asian Games which should help him discharge his duties at the 1992 Olympics scheduled to be held in Barcelona, Spain.

Additionally, Adajania, who has been credited with bringing "the World Cup to Bombay," played an important role at the Sixth World Cup Boxing Tournament held in November '90 at the Bombay Gymkhana, notes *The Afternoon*.

Besides officiating at bouts as a technical man, referee and judge, Adajania himself has been involved with the game as a participant and a live wire organizer. The Vivek Chakra Award for "The Best Sports Organizer of the Year" was awarded to Adajania last October by Vivek Varta, a Calcutta-based organization, reads the *Jam-e-Jamshed* of November 18. His present ambition is to get more youngsters interested in boxing by creating a goodwill for the game, reads *The Afternoon* write-up.

Outstanding industrialist

The Outstanding Industrialist of the Year award went to Rohinton Aga, chairman and managing director of the Poona-based Thermax Limited, notes a write-up in *The Afternoon Despatch and Courier* dated October 9, 1990.

The award instituted by the Indian Institution of Industrial Engineers (IIIE) came to him for being "an exemplary corporate performer, a committed patron of industrial engineering and for his contribution to human resources development." Over 100 institutional members from different countries and about 10,000 members are affiliated to the IIIE, notes a press release.

The Thermax company which Aga heads records an annual turnover of Rs 217 crores, 20 percent of which constitutes exports. Making a beginning 23 years ago, today the group with a work force of 2,500 people, is recognized as

a leader in boilers, pollution control equipment, water treatment plants, special chemicals, energy conservation equipment and surface-coating technology. Of late it has branched into electronics and computer systems.

Besides being a member of the national committee of the Confederation of Engineering Industry, Aga also chairs the Maharashtra chapter of the Quality Circle Forum of India. Since his training in management development at the Harvard Business School, Aga is a much sought after visiting faculty member on senior management programs, further reads the release. Before launching Thermax as a small company making packaged boilers, Aga was with Burmah Shell, and later Duncans where he got his initial work experience soon after completing his economics tripos from Cambridge, informs the release.

Mody elected arts dean

The new dean of the arts faculty at the University of Bombay is Dr (Ms) Nawaz B. Mody who won the elections by securing 74 of the total 104 votes cast, notes *The Daily* dated September 29, 1990. Besides being a member of the Academic Council and Senate, she is also on the Board of University Teaching and Research.

For the last eight years she has been a reader with the Bombay University's Department of Civics and Politics. Prior to that she was a lecturer at the Elphinstone and Sophia Colleges. Early last year she was invited to the Advisory Council in Politics to frame the syllabi for a university in Nasik, reads her curriculum vitae. The ministry of home affairs has, since 1982, appointed the educationist as a guest lecturer at the Internal Security Academy of the Central Reserve Police Force in Mount Abu. Forty-three-year-old Mody is invited by several educational, political and security organizations to lecture on subjects in

which she specializes: government and politics of India, South East Asia, China and Japan.

Mody is conversant with several languages including German and Bahasa (Indonesian). Actually, an in-depth study of Indonesia under Suharto was the subject for her doctorate studies in '82, further informs her bio data. On two occasions was she invited to Indonesia to participate in ventures there.

A first-class student throughout her academic career, Mody had stood first among politics students at the University examinations at the BA and MA levels. She was awarded a Fulbright Scholarship for a year's doctoral study at the Southeast Asia program, Cornell University, Ithaca. Thereafter she was selected to participate at the annual conference of the Association of Asian Studies at Los Angeles where she presented a paper to the special committee outlining the course of future research and study in Indonesia and Malaysia.

Not only has Mody been academically inclined. While studying at the Elphinstone College, she captained the College's basketball and hockey teams, further reads her bio data.

Bombay's loss, Delhi's gain

Scribes Swaminathan and Ms Shahnaz Anklesaria Aiyar, along with their two-year-old adopted son Rustom moved to Delhi on a new posting where Swaminathan took up associate editorship of *The Times of India* (The TOI) and assumed responsibility of its editorial page. Earlier they were in Bombay where Swaminathan resigned as editor of the *Financial Express* to accept his new job in Delhi. Shahnaz, a special correspondent, will continue to work with the *Indian Express*, reads the column by Dilip Thakore in the *BusinessWorld* dated August 1-14, 1990.

While Swaminathan was keen to work on his new assignment in Delhi, Shahnaz was not as enthusiastic, believing "there is too much harassment of women in the north. It makes my blood boil."

In the field of journalism for over a decade, Shahnaz started out with *Himmat* before she moved on to *The Statesman* and later the Express group. Husband Swaminathan has worked for the *Express*, *The TOI*, the World Bank and the London-based *Economist* during his 20 years in the writing profession, adds *BusinessWorld*.

Compiled by Roxana H. Kaka

TRAVELS IN IRAN: 6

Education for amelioration

Manekji Limji Hataria

The best hope for the community's revival lay
in the education of the youth

This is the sixth and last instalment 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.

In the earlier instalments Hataria described the ruins that attested to Iran's ancient glory, the miserable conditions in which the Zoroastrians survived after the Arab conquest, the spirit in which they celebrated the milestones of their personal lives, the political and economic impact of the intervention of Indian Parsis with the Iranian administration and the contributions of outstanding individual philanthropists.

Hardly two to three percent of the Parsis of Iran are in a somewhat better state than the rest. A majority lived in misery and poverty in mountain caves and forests for fear of Arab tyranny and having known only broken Darri language they were unable to carry on trade and communication with people of other parts of Iran. Most of them were farmers and it was not difficult to realize their sorry plight as they worked in the winter without sufficient clothes.

After the Arab occupation, education had suffered. The Arabs were semi-barbaric tribes who had no culture of their own and did not know the value of education. Old madressas, teaching Avesta, Pahlavi and Persian, were destroyed by the invaders. Consequently the Zoroastrians who remained in Iran had no scope for education; their children could not learn Avesta or Pahlavi and Persian languages and consequently their religious knowledge was wanting. They were forced to learn Arabic instead.

Consequently, the Zoroastrian children of Iran remained uncultured and uneducated and, being uneducated, they became aggressive. It is, therefore, necessary to provide some education — I mean useful education — to the children. Languages like Avesta, Pahlavi and Persian need to be revived.

For want of education, many evil customs entered into the community. Zoroastrians were forced to embrace Is-

lam, girls were forced to marry Arabs and Muslims and so on. Many Zarthushti girls remained unmarried through life either due to poverty or some other reasons. Zoroastrians took to vices and led an evil life in keeping with the customs of the wild Arabs.

The dokhma of Yazd was in a ruinous condition. A new dokhma on the top of the hill was constructed by the efforts of the Zoroastrian Anjuman of Bombay; but still the mobeds of the old school prefer to use the old dokhma, saying the new one was constructed in modern style and thus was not in keeping with our religion. As the new one is constructed with stone walls and the old one has muddy walls, the uneducated mobeds believe that the real dokhma must have muddy walls only. Stone walls are modern, adopted from western countries, and thus they are unfit for a dokhma. This wrong belief is due to want of education.

There was a row and controversy between the supporters of the old dokhma and the upholders of the new one. As the mobeds remained uneducated, they could not guide the behdins on the right lines in religious matters. They often believed in superstitious elements and introduced superstition into the religion. Thus the real tenets of our good religion were set aside and false beliefs crept in.

Even in India today, it is quite necessary for Zoroastrian children to learn Persian and Avesta in order to acquire



Tehran's Zoroastrian school which Hataria established and the 1904 batch of Zoroastrian students Photos: A.V.H. Jackson's *Persia Past and Present*

perfect knowledge of religion. It is foolish to abandon our own language (Persian) and culture and adopt those of others.

The great philanthropist Peshotan Marker has set up an orphanage in Yazd at his own expense and hundreds of Zoroastrian boys in Iran benefit from it.

There was a recommendation to start a boarding school in Tehran for Zoroastrian children residing in Tehran, Yazd and Kerman. This was supposed to be the only way to inculcate Zoroastrian children in religious matters. A study of *Avesta* and religious rituals was recom-

mended so that the Zoroastrian children may not be attracted towards Islam but would follow with zeal the religion taught to us by our prophet.

Let us take the example of Russia. There were no schools in Russia in the past yet education was imparted to the children in different ways and young men were prepared for army, navy, technology, theology, etc. Later they found that they could get efficient men for certain jobs. Then schools were started and Russia took a great stride in education. In other countries of the West, all over the continent of Europe, very useful and job-

oriented education was given to the children even in very early times.

Considering all this, it was decided to start a boarding school so that the Zoroastrian children of Kerman, Yazd, Tehran and other provinces of Iran could live together and learn their own scriptures. Thirty-six Zoroastrian orphans were collected from different villages in Iran. Some of them were nourished and education was given to them by charitably

The uneducated mobeds believe that the real dokhma must have muddy walls only

disposed persons and it was found that they were really educated and useful members of the community. When schools were established in Russia, it was found that not a child in the whole country remained illiterate. Education was sound and useful. Everyone learnt a means of livelihood and there was no unemployment. Iran wanted to follow the example of Russia. It was strongly recommended to start a boarding school in Iran for the benefit of the Zoroastrian children. Scholars of the western countries were also consulted in this matter and they all approved the idea. A building was donated by a Zoroastrian of Tehran to house the proposed boarding school. On October 30, 1860, a petition was sent to the Parsi Anjuman of Bombay wherein the proposal for a boarding school in Tehran was put. The petition dated October 7, 1860, written and signed by the donor of the above-said building, runs:

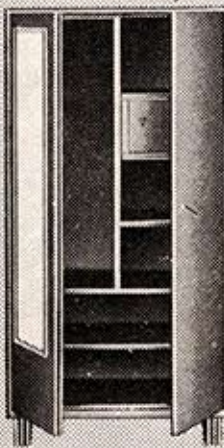
"I declare that I am a Zoroastrian inhabitant of Tehran and the house that I propose to donate for housing the proposed orphanage has been purchased by me from a Muslim lady Imam Murteja for 1,000 tomans. I donate this building and the ground on which it stands to the orphanage with my own free will and accord, under the following conditions:

- Myself and my son and successor will live in this house so long as it is not used for the orphanage and we will pay three tomans per month to the Parsi Anjuman.
- As there has been a need for starting a Zoroastrian boarding school in Tehran,



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the same building can be used for that purpose and the organizers/owners of the said orphanage should pay to the Parsi Anjuman a rental of three tomans per month, which amount would be used by the Anjuman for the maintenance of the orphanage.

• So long as the house is not used for the orphanage, it could be used by Zoroastrians even as a godown for storing foodgrains and the utilizers must pay to the Anjuman a rental of three tomans per month.

• I have been using this house at present but in my will I shall direct that the whole property together with the plot of land be handed over to the Anjuman after my lifetime. And if the house is rented, the rental should be 150 tomans per annum."

The author went to Baghdad for some urgent work and from there he sent a copy of the above document to Bombay to Seth Merwanji Framji Panday. Seth Merwanji Panday forwarded the same immediately to Seth Cowasjee Jehangir Readymoney, but unfortunately Seth Readymoney did not pay heed to it and the orphanage did not materialize for some time.

The author came back to Bombay and on March 1, 1864 he contacted the people concerned including Seth Cowasjee Jehangir. He expressed his great desire to set up an orphanage at Tehran and appealed to the philanthropists here for necessary help and donations. It was not possible for him to go to Iran immediately; so the matter was prolonged.

On November 16, 1864, a meeting was held in Bombay by the Parsis to finalize the venue and other details about the boarding school to be established in Iran. They had to decide where the school should be set up, what subjects to be taught, how to impart religious education, etc.

The necessary fund was created by the Parsis of Bombay for the purpose of improving the conditions of the Zoroastrians in Iran wherein the greatest contribution was made by Seth Maneck Noshirwanji Petit. Then Seth Bomanji Framji Cama donated Rs 5,000 in sacred memory of his late daughter. This amount was specifically to be used for the construction of the proposed orphanage. The work was started and was carried on with zeal and enthusiasm.

A boarding school was established in the capital city of Tehran and Zoroastrian

children between the ages of 10 and 15 were admitted from neighboring towns and villages. The timetable of the school functioned as under:

Of the 24 hours of the day, nine hours were kept for sleep. Of the remaining 15 hours, specified times was allotted to various activities, including education, religious instruction, gymnastics, rest, games, etc.

After getting up early in the morning, boys were required to take a bath and then say their prayers. Then there was time

"We must weep over this Anjuman which does not listen to our complaint"

enough for breakfast and tea. The regular work of the school starts afterwards. Books printed in Persian only are used; and Persian is the medium of instruction. Boys are taught to put into practice what they learn in books. Much attention is paid to handwriting. There is fixed time in the evening for games and recreation so that boys can become fresh after the whole day's work.

There are special classes for science and mathematics. Besides, boys are taught arts and crafts like carpentry, smithy, cane work, masonry, mechanics, etc. The aptitudes of the students are found out by special tests and boys are given training to develop their abilities so that they can become useful citizens and stand on their own feet. The education imparted in the school is job-oriented.

Every month, Hormuzd *roz*, Khorshed *roz* and Ram *roz* are days when the regular timetable does not apply. Instead, the boys do work like washing, cleaning, ironing clothes, etc.

A register showing the record of work of each student is maintained.

For improving the conditions of the Zoroastrians of Iran, a meeting was convened at the bungalow at Mazagaon of Seth Merwanji Framji Panday on March 20, 1864 at 2.30 p.m. Sir Jamsetji Jejeebhoy, Baronet, was in the chair.

Seth Manekji Limji Hooshang Hataria, who had lived in Iran for 10 years, had studied the miserable plight of

the Zoroastrians there. He said that the charity given by some of the well-to-do Parsis of India covered the Jazia Tax imposed upon the Zoroastrians in Iran; but there were still many difficulties which remained to be solved.

The writer carried on a long correspondence with the various Zoroastrian bodies in India regarding improving the conditions of the Zoroastrians in Iran. Large amounts of money were sent for their betterment and the task of improving their conditions was a Himalayan one. Some people argued that instead of spending large amounts like that, why not bring those Zoroastrians to India and make them settle down here. Here they can follow any vocation and earn their living. The question is, who would sponsor the travel of all the Zoroastrians from Iran to India. At present there are about 1,000 Zoroastrian houses in Iran, housing about 7,000 to 8,000 souls. Are they all willing to leave their ancestral houses and lands forever and come to India? Is there any guarantee that they would get livelihood in India? Lastly, will the Government of Iran allow all of them to migrate from that country? The Iranis, who currently come to India, leave their country in some disguise under the pretext of going for Haj or for trade. Then only they get permission to leave the country. If the Zoroastrians of Iran want to come to Bombay, they must dispose of their house and property in Iran. But the Muslims there are not willing to buy and pay full value of the property to the Zoroastrians. There are many other problems that baffle any definite solution.

The Iranis who have come to Bombay are in the restaurant line and some are doing well; but if all the Irani Zoroastrians come down to Bombay there is no guarantee that they will all get employment, apart from getting accommodation. After coming to Bombay, many become homesick and go back to Iran as they cannot bear to be away from the ancestral land and lose touch with it.

The best help for the Iranian Zoroastrians is to send money to help and run schools for them in Iran so that the children can get proper education and become good citizens wherever they stay and earn their livelihood.

The writer (traveller) has collected ancient manuscripts and books in Persian, Khila Roki script, in Hindi, Gujarati, Urdu, English, German and

many other languages both from Iran and from India, studied them well and preserved them. Besides, he has collected ancient coins of gold, silver and copper, vessels of various metals, pictures, photos of inscriptions on mountains, etc after a labor of 40 years.

The value of the whole collection at that time was estimated to be about Rs 30,000 and many European scholars and research workers were willing to buy the whole collection. But the author handed over the whole collection to the Zoroastrian Anjuman along with Rs 20,000 cash, with instructions to preserve them in a fitting place and augment it by the research work of other scholars so that the collection may be a permanent and everlasting treasure.

In Europe there are many such collections of ancient articles, both public as well as private, in the houses of lords and nobles. The people appreciate these things and study them. The same spirit must be here among the Parsis of today. Such a collection of ancient articles is a source of encouragement to scholars and

research workers.

When the author (traveller) felt his health failing, he made his will in which also he had mentioned that the treasure mentioned above should be kept in such a place and in such a way that it is available to scholars and research workers whenever they needed the same. To this effect he had written to Seth Merwanji Framji Panday to take charge of the whole collection on behalf of the Anjuman and keep it as stated above for the use of scholars and learned men who are interested in ancient studies. He had written to the Anjuman for the same but as he did not get any reply from the Anjuman, he raised a voice, saying, "*Bareen Anjuman Bayad jaaragis/ ke" nadaanad fariad rash kiat* (We must weep over this Anjuman who does not know who is the listener of our complaints)."

The Anjuman did not take any interest in the subject. By this time the then governor's brother, the Hon'ble Freare came to know of this great treasure and sent for the author (traveller). Hon'ble Freare

examined some of the ancient coins and appreciated them and made a very handsome offer to buy the whole collection to be kept in a separate room in the Victoria Museum. The author did not like this idea and kept the collection with him for some time more. By this time he got a reply from the Anjuman that they could not do anything in the matter.

Different parties and organizations offered to take the collection and keep the same in their museums or libraries or create a separate museum for the same. The author found that those institutions already had some old books which were in a neglected state; so he realized what would be the fate of his precious articles. He declined their offers.

He made several requests to the Anjuman but in vain. He wanted his collection to be useful to Zoroastrian scholars and research workers. He also showed his desire that if the Anjuman could not accede to his request he would like to create a new museum to preserve that untold treasure, as is done in many European countries.

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Reaching for the Sky



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The stage is decorated with flora and fauna: the lighting is soft, save the glaring video lights; the band is all set to play, "Here comes the bride" and at the toran-decked gates, the omnipresent *fooggawalo* (balloon vendor) proffers his assortment of colorful balloons. In the *rahnni* (kitchen) the chutney for the *patra ni machhi* (steamed fish in banana leaves) and the masala for the *sali ma murghi* (chicken with potato straw) are being given the finishing touches.

The backdrop is more or less the same for the Parsi functions — whether lagan, navjote, birthday or a wedding anniversary — from Sethna, Dadiseth, Saher and Jeejeebhoy Dadabhoy Agiaries to Cama and Allbless Baugs in South Bombay. If it is a *mohité gher nu mohtu* gathering (a large gathering from an affluent household) it's got to be Allbless Baug or Jeejeebhoy Dadabhoy Agiary. The distinguishing features of these different venues — with their plus and minus points — come across in our discussions with trustees/managers administering these baugs.

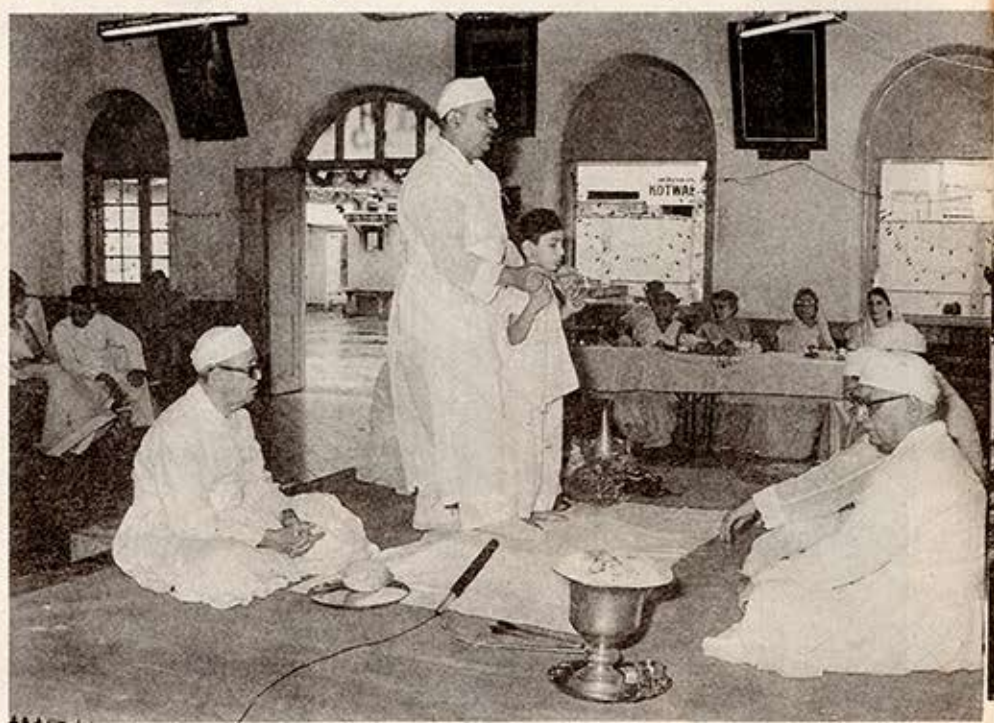
Allbless Baug

Going alphabetically we begin with Allbless Baug. We met the frail and aging Eduljee Bejanji Allbless, the great grand-

son of Eduljee Framjee Allbless in whose memory the Baug stands, at the administrative office in Ali Chambers, Fort. We were told earlier by the secretary that he has been visiting this office every Monday-Wednesday-Friday from 10.00 a.m. to 11 a.m. for the past 40 years. Deaf

with age, our queries were understood with difficulty. However once the subject matter was known, Eduljee opened for us his records and files.

Allbless Baug, an institution of immense social and religious utility to the Parsi community, was publicly declared



BLESSINGS AT THE BAUG

Noshir Dadrawala

Despite the multiple options in a megapolis, Parsi baugs remain the most popular venues for weddings and navjotes in Bombay



open on October 13, 1868. Eduljee Framjee Allbless, in whose memory his five sons (Maneckji, Dhunjibhoy, Bomanji, Dadabhoy and Hormusji) built the Baug to fulfill the wish of the deceased to do something for the benefit of the Parsi community, was born on April

28, 1785. His father Framjee came to Bombay from Surat in 1780. Eduljee's was a rags to riches story. Beginning with almost nothing except a spirit of adventure, he went on to become the owner of two ships *Sir Jamsetji Jeejeebhoy* and the *Earl of Clare* which dropped

June 11, 1865 at the ripe age of 80. On his uthamna ceremony, his five sons announced that, to perpetuate his memory, they had set aside a sum of Rs 1,00,000 for the benefit of Parsis. They purchased a plot of land at Girgaum, measuring 4,772 sq yds at a cost of Rs 55,000 and erected two separate buildings and equipped them with furniture, utensils and other necessities at a cost of Rs 80,000. At the opening ceremony on October 13, 1868, his five sons donated a further sum of Rs 15,000 towards creating an endowment fund.

The opening ceremony was short but impressive. A jashan was performed by about 50 priests and after the ceremony a paper was read by the sons of the merchant prince declaring that the building was being handed over in trust for the use of the Parsi community.

In 1889, Eduljee's sons carried out major alterations to the two buildings at a total cost of Rs 75,000. In the early 1960s, a permanent stage was constructed on the grounds between the two buildings at a cost of nearly Rs 16,000 which eliminated the trouble and expense of erecting a different stage on every occasion. Later the whole garden floor was paved in concrete for over Rs 15,000 and a band stage erected for about Rs 5,000.

The atash dadgah at Allbless Baug was consecrated on *roj Govad mah* Fravardin YZ 1238 (October 13, 1868) by Dr Jamasji Minocher Jamaspasa. It is tended today by Ervad Bahadur Panthaky who is also the Baug's manager. The trustees for the last 122 years have been members of the Allbless family. The present board includes, besides Eduljee Bejanji Allbless, Ms Pilloo Jehangir Poncha, Ms Roshen Jehangir Lentin and Dr Eruch E. Modi.

According to records at Ali Chambers, on an average the Baug remains occupied for about 250 days a year. In the months of December and January there is hardly a day when the Baug does not echo with the chanting of prayers for either the navjote or wedding ceremony.

Technically the trustees divide the Baug in two parts, the west side or the sea side where navjotes/weddings are



Above: Grounds of the Jeejeebhoy Dadabhoy Agiary

Below: Entrance to the Saher Agiary

Photo: Rashid Bamanbehram

(Facing page)

Top: The Cama Baug big otla hall

Photo: Homiyar Mistry

Middle: At the Cama Baug small otla

Photo: Naozer Dubash

Bottom: The Allbless Baug stage

Photo: Rashid Bamanbehram

anchor at various ports.

The wealthier he grew, the more generous he became. And in the twilight of his life, thought of building a baug — a kind of Parsi community center which could be made available at nominal cost for navjotes and other religious functions. But death does not wait for wishes to be fulfilled, and Eduljee passed away on



usually performed and the east side hall where jashans are normally performed. Usually wedding and navjote ceremonies involve the use of the whole Baug for a day for a fee of Rs 400. Nearly 3,000 people at a time can be accommodated in the Baug. However one is free to opt for only the west side for a fee of Rs 250 or in case of a jashan, the east side for a nominal charge of Rs 75. Weddings and navjotes on the east side however attract a fee of Rs 150. According to Eduljee, lighting charges range from Rs 930 to Rs 3,500 depending on the glitter you require.

At all times one has to book the Baug six months in advance. Those requiring the Baug on say December 25 must come to Ali Chambers on June 25 and wait patiently till 11.00 a.m. Those really keen stand in queue from 5 or 6 in the morning so that they may be among the first to draw lots. If no one else turns up for booking the hall you are blessed and considered lucky. If there are more, those in queue get to pick slips until the favored one reads a "yes" written on one of those. If you happen to be among the unfortunate and disappointed ones, the whole cycle has to be repeated on another suitable day. There is no knowing how many trips you will need to make until luck favors you. If you find over a dozen Parsis at Ali Chambers waiting for a Behram roj, do not be surprised.

If Jeejeebhoy Dadabhoy Agiary is considered the king of baugs by the local Parsi community, Allbless is certainly the prince. Its easy accessibility cuts a neat edge over the former. However, under the shimmering halo there are also a few pock marks. The men's room leaves much to be desired. Cracked mirrors, damaged wash basins and not so clean urinals leave behind unpleasant memories. A short visit to the kitchen could make you think twice before tucking into a chicken *farcha* (fried chicken) or a *patra ni machhi*.

We interviewed a family who had enjoyed the facility of this Baug last January. They believed "it was a great place" to perform the navjote. The dotting mother in her early forties exclaimed, "Jeevta rahya to baba na lagan bhi aheej karsoo (if we are alive we will also perform the child's wedding here). Pun (but) we wish they would improve some of the basic facilities," she continued. We talked to two other families and the com-



plaint was consistent.

A little man in shorts brings one, just one, bucket of hot water from the kitchen to the dressing room splashing much of it over the 50 meters distance. For the *nahn* (ritual purification preceding the religious ceremony) the bride or bridegroom has to use this precious liquid as sparingly as possible for if any more is needed, there would be none available. The women in particular complained about the sofas being in a perpetual state of uncleanness. The male members of the family however dismissed the complaint, attributing it to the fastidious nature of Parsi women. Another complaint we repeatedly heard was regarding the lights on stage being switched on only after 6.30 p.m. "*Kétloo avaradoo lagé* (how inauspicious it looks)," quipped an elderly member of the bride's family. The fans too are switched off the moment the priests leave the stage, leaving relatives and friends drenched in perspiration during summer.

We asked Eduljee regarding these inconveniences but he felt everything at Allbless Baug was in order. "We carry out major repairs every year. The kitchen

At the Rustom Baug pavilion grounds

is painted and this year we even carried out tiling work," he noted. "The charges are reasonable," he continued, and they are putting in every effort to see that the original wishes of the founders are not defeated.

Pointing out a couple of clauses in the trust deed, he noted that the indenture was quite rigid and prohibited any commercial exploitation beyond the objectives of the trust. He admitted that a number of builders and developers had approached him with lucrative offers only to be turned away by him. His neighbor at Ali Chambers, solicitor Rustom Gagrut too had offered to work on a plan of development, but Allbless flatly refused.

Cama Baug

Ensnared amid the cacophony and tumult of Central Bombay's Khetwadi area, this staid hall of the community has been the venue of innumerable feasts for the past 121 years.

By an indenture executed on June 5, 1869 Pallonji Cursetji Cama — a successful businessman of Bombay — dedicated

the Agiary and community center in his name for the use of the members of the Parsi community. It appears from the trust deed that the property originally admeasured 5,116 sq yds and the settlor had intended that the Baug be utilized by the members of the community absolutely free of charge. We learn from a souvenir brought out by the trustees on the occasion of the one hundred and eleventh anniversary that nominal fees were charged for the use of the hall only from the year 1922.

While the small *otla* (wing) situated at the north end has the capacity to accommodate about a hundred people, the big *otla* at the south end of the property can accommodate twice the number.

The charges, according to Eruchsha Wellington who has served as manager of the Baug for the last 18 years, are very reasonable. Rs 100 for the big *otla* and just Rs 30 for the small *otla* if booked two months in advance. However, if booked over two months in advance, the bigger hall attracts a fee of Rs 500 and the smaller hall Rs 50. The upper hall, which according to Wellington is a blessing for up-country and suburban Parsis, attracts a

nominal fee of Rs 50 per day. In addition to up-country Parsis, even Parsis staying in small one room-kitchen flats in Bombay find it convenient to host a function at the Baug by staying there overnight and avoiding inconvenience at home.

The big *otla*, according to the manager, is in use almost 250 days a year, the small *otla* following close behind with an average of 200 days per annum. The months between June-September are lean, but attract birthday celebrations, jashans and other festivities. The trustees of the Baug include chairman Jamshed Guzder, managing trustee Burjor Antia and Ratan Nanabhoy, Sam Rao, Eruch Desai, Cowasji Dinshaw (Adenwala) and Hoshang Wania.

The managing trustee claims to visit the Agiary and Baug every Sunday morning to look into the problems and difficulties faced by the staff. We interviewed him at his solicitors' firm in Fort. According to Antia, "The trustees are putting in every effort to offer the best facilities at minimum cost." By way of example he pointed out that a new permanent stage has been erected at a cost of Rs 10,000, the garden around the Agiary has been

"We have a complaint box but we have hardly received any complaints," Antia noted. We pointed out a few pertaining to the toilet and dressing room facilities that needed improvement, the illkempt kitchen and the stage in the compound without a permanent covering which lays it open to bird droppings especially since there is a huge tree looming over it. While the roof is repaired every year, plumbing and sanitation work is a regular expenditure. The toilet facilities have also been improved, said Antia.

We wondered if all this expenditure also meant higher rates for booking the hall. The answer was in the affirmative. Antia however hastened to add that the charges would not be exorbitant. "The whole charitable object would be defeated otherwise," he emphasized. "Ours is not a poor trust," he clarified. "No hall in Bombay can claim to be poor. They all generate money. In our case we divert the surplus income for maintaining the Agiary and the Baug." The trust, according to Antia, is also applying to the court for permission to apply the income cy pres for the uplift of mobeds. "We are a forward-looking team of trustees and do not believe in lying dormant," he confirmed. "Our object is to serve the poor," he emphasized for the third time.

"We are open to any scheme for development," Antia noted. "However, there are inbuilt difficulties. Any plan for development would lead to a sizable chunk of property being lost in setback." Antia also pointed out that presently the Baug enjoys the luxury of open air. Any new modern structure would be an assault on the aesthetic sensibilities of the community. He repeated however that the trust's architects were examining the various possibilities. Wellington recalled that in the year 1973, legal luminary S. R. Vakil had also worked on a scheme for development but for various reasons the plans fell through.

Dadiseth Atash Bahram (Fanaswadi)

Built in the latter half of the eighteenth century — September 20, 1783 to be precise — the Dadiseth Atash Bahram's founder trustees included Dadi Nusserwanji Dadiseth, Framji Dorabji Panday, Hormusji Mancherji Cama, Sorabji Cursetji Dadiseth, Khursetji Nowroji Sahiar and Ardeshtir Hirji Dadyseth. Besides this scanty piece of information, the present board of trustees — Eruch A.



improved, new neon lights have added luster and painting work, estimated at around one and a half lakh rupees, is on hand.

Above: At the Allbless Baug hall

Photo: T. G. Panchal

Bottom: Entrance to the Jeejeebhoy Dadabhai Agiary

Dastur, Muncherji J. Cama and Kerfegar K. Billimoria — were unable to throw any light on the history of the Atash Bahram, the adjoining property or the founders. The trustees sent their assistant secretary Behram A. Merchant with some of the details we had earlier requested. Merchant, a retired employee of Tata Textiles, has been connected with the Dadiseth Trust for only about a year.

The baug, according to Merchant, was gifted to the Dadiseth Trust by the Kadmi Gambhar Fund. The year in which the gift was executed was unknown.

With a capacity to accommodate as many as 500-800 people, the baug adjoining the Atash Bahram is barely used for 50-75 days a year. The fee for booking the Baug is a mere Rs 60 and like Cama Baug, facilities for staying overnight are provided within the complex for an additional fee of Rs 30 per day.

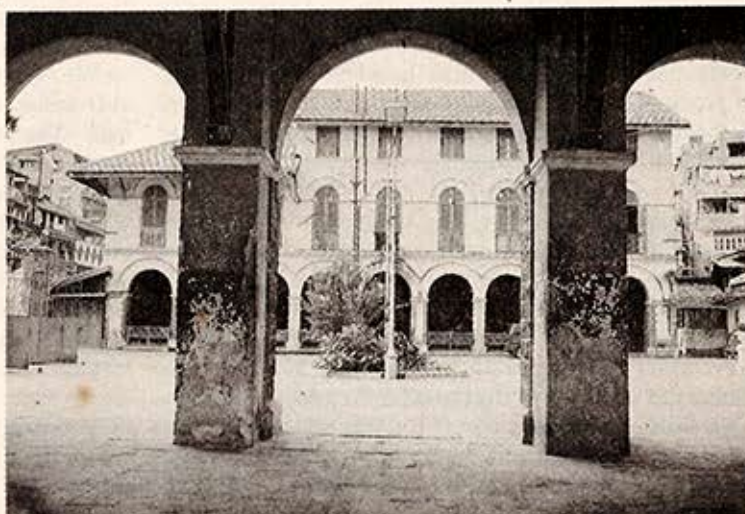
Snooty Bombayites would not think much of this place but there are families in Surat who come all the way to Bombay to perform their children's weddings and navjotes at the Dadiseth Atash Bahram. Merchant claims there are families whose weddings and navjotes have been performed at this Dadiseth Atash Bahram for three generations. There is a belief among the Parsis of Surat that a wedding performed at the Atash Bahram assures a happy married life with many children.

The baug however is in a total state of disrepair. The Trust has received a notice from the Bombay Municipal Corporation to carry out necessary repairs. The walls have not seen a coat of paint in many years. The kitchen, according to Merchant, threatens to cave in any moment. There is no parking facility and the premises stand surrounded by *matka* (gambling) and opium dens.

Unlike all the other Parsi baugs we visited, this was the only one incurring a loss. "There is an excess of expenditure over income," notes Merchant, "and the trustees are contemplating extensive repairs and renovation." The use of the baug for religious functions, including weddings and navjotes, was to be suspended for a period of at least two years starting November 1, 1990. Merchant

feels an amount of at least 10 lakh rupees will be involved in repairing the Atash Bahram building and compound which includes the two *otlas*. Merchant lamented the loss of the late Jehangir Dadiseth, the last managing trustee and direct descendant of the Dadiseth family who was totally dedicated to the affairs of the trust and spent two hours every day at the trust office.

Patrons generally feel the baug's overall appearance could be made more ap-



Dadyseth Atash Bahram and the adjoining baug Photo: Homiyar Mistry

pealing. However there are others who feel the baug exudes an old-world charm. We met a devotee at the Atash Bahram who coaxed us to close our eyes and feel the atmosphere. "Can't you sense it? The atmosphere is charged with spiritual energy," he pressed us. We closed our eyes and, strangely, we did experience a sense of tranquility.

Jeejeebhoy Dadabhoi Agiary

Unlike Allbless Baug and Cama Baug, Jeejeebhoy Dadabhoi Agiary is tucked away in a remote yet elite corner of South Bombay, within the naval complex just off Pilot Bunder Road. Offering the panorama and freshness of the Arabian Sea, the Agiary's prime locale is unmatched. We met the chairman, Nanabhoi Jeejeebhoy, bent almost at right angles with age, yet one who could recall historical data from memory and seemed to be a living encyclopaedia on historical data and geographical records.

The place where the Agiary stands today was then the "Old Woman's Island." There was the Arabian Sea between what is today's Regal Cinema and the Colaba Post Office. Parsis of Old Woman's Is-

land, according to Nanabhoi Jeejeebhoy, were mainly fishermen and made their living by the net. The elders of about 125 Parsi families residing on Old Woman's Island, appealed to Seth Jeejeebhoy Dadabhoi to build an agiary on the island, thereby obviating the necessity of moving to the mainland by boat to meet their religious requirements. Seth Jeejeebhoy, a resident of Parel, paid a visit to Old Woman's Island and personally purchased a large piece of land for the purpose of an agiary and a community center. Additionally he also purchased an adjoining property to house the agiary's panthaky. The house was occupied for many years thereafter by the illustrious (Dr) Sir Jivanji Modi.

The Agiary and community center was thrown open to the community on *roj Sarosh, mah Shehrevat* 1205 YZ (March 15, 1836). Jeejeebhoy not only used to visit the Agiary from time to time but also stayed there during the days of muktad. The trust's secretary Nariman Neralwala, who has been in the service of the trust for the past 48 years, eagerly showed

us Jeejeebhoy's antique furniture at the Agiary and in particular the rosewood table where he played cards with friends.

In the early years the facility of the Agiary and baug was predominantly availed of by the residents of Colaba. However, in today's small world the Agiary's remoteness is no deterrent. The baug, according to Nanabhoi, is in use almost 200 days a year. Even during the monsoons there are several jashans and religious ceremonies performed in the baug.

The baug, informs Neralwala, is given on a purely first come first served basis. Parsis residing abroad book the baug almost 18 months in advance. It can accommodate about 800 people with ease and the capacity can be comfortably stretched to 2,500 when the first floor room and terrace are also utilized, says the trust's secretary.

According to Nanabhoi, the baug offers one of the finest facilities in town. "It is even better than a five-star hotel," adds Ms Jer Dhondy, a long time associate of Nanabhoi and director of *Jam-e-Jamshed*. Repairs are carried out from time to time and the baug can boast of one of the

most well-maintained kitchens and toilet facilities. The office of the trust was originally housed in Alice Building, Fort, and had to be shifted to Colaba in 1973 after the fire which gutted that entire ill-fated complex.

The present trustees of the Agiary and baug besides chairman Nanabhoy include: Jamshedji Rustomji Jeejeebhoy, Dossabhoy Jamshedji Jeejeebhoy and Russi Ardeshir Jeejeebhoy. The trustees from the time of inception have been members of the Jeejeebhoy family. The trustees, says Nanabhoy, hold more than six meetings a year.

Development and commercial exploitation of the property is a near impossibility. Situated in a defence services area on a "quit and ground rent" basis, Nanabhoy claims builders and developers have never bothered him.

Financially the trust is rich. The baug generates enough income to maintain the Agiary, support educational institutions, and extend medical and financial assistance to poor and deserving Zoroastrians. According to Neralwala, last year the trust spent over a lakh of rupees on educational and medical assistance.

Yet the trust foresees difficult times ahead. It may have to undertake major repairs and carry out reinforcement work. "The saline air does our health a lot of good but also corrodes the iron beams and general infrastructure," bemoans Neralwala. To provide for this foreseeable expenditure the trustees, with a lot of hesitation and constraint, have recently raised the donation for booking the baug to Rs 5,000. This has ruffled a few feathers. "We might as well throw a reception at The Taj," sighed a family we know. "We have to pay additionally for the bus arrangement between the Agiary and Churchgate (the nearest railway station, for the convenience of guests), pay for the lighting which ranges between Rs 2,300 and Rs 3,500 and even the caterers quote a fatter estimate," the family continued. We were intrigued by the last statement and decided to probe deeper. But were happily informed that the caterers' rates from Cama and Allbless Baugs to Jeejeebhoy Agiary were uniform. We stood by the sea near the east end of the baug savoring the saline air. It was about 12 noon, the baug was empty and silent save the chirping of birds and swaying of palm trees.

Saher Agiary

Situated on a hillock just off Bombay's

elite Bhulabhai Desai Road, Saher Agiary enjoys a unique distinction. Not many Parsis are even aware of its existence. However, those who do, experience a strange force of attraction. The greenery and geographic elevation provide one almost with an out-of-town feeling.

Built about 145 years ago by Hormusji Dadabhoy Saher, the Agiary's affairs today are managed by Naoroji Gamadia (managing trustee), Muncherji Cama, Sir Jamsetji Jeejeebhoy, Rustom Jeejeebhoy and Phiroze Bookbinder.

According to Gamadia, awareness of the Agiary is on the increase as is evident from the number of devotees patronizing the Agiary and availing the facility of the compound for weddings and navjotes. There is no regular kitchen and guests enjoy their dinner amid the lush greenery and canopy of stars. The compound can accommodate about 350 people comfortably and records indicate that on an average it is in use about 125 days a year.

According to Gamadia, the compound facility is offered to the members of the community for a donation of Rs 700 and above. Repairs to the Agiary and compound are carried out regularly. The trust has a good income and the trustees propose to provide patrons with still further facilities.

Gamadia believes the property has no further FSI (floor space index) for development and even if there was any, the trustees would hate to put up any other structure that would come in the way of the Agiary's aesthetic grandeur.

The trustees are presently contemplating an increase in the minimum donation requested for the use of the Agiary compound. "After all we are providing and will provide one of the best and most unique wedding-navjote facilities in town," explains Gamadia.

Sethna Agiary

Somebody asked the other day what Tardeo Road's highest common factor was, and without a moment's hesitation the response was — Parsi fire-temples. Four of them, and that too, all fairly well-patronized. The focus of our study however was not fire-temples but wedding-navjote venues. Our eyes therefore turned to Sethna Agiary situated at the junction of Tardeo Road and Forjett Hill.

The Agiary's managing trustee Jal Vakil talked to us for over an hour and thrice during the period he corrected us for referring to the Agiary as Sethna Agiary. "It should correctly be called

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the Muncherji Sett Agiary," he admonished.

In the eighteenth century the majority of Parsis were residents of "Cote" (Fort locality). It was Sohrabji Muncherji Sett (who after adoption by his uncle became Sohrabji Maneckji Sett) who induced Parsis to settle in "Bahar Cote" (outside Fort). Sohrabji, states Vakil, owned vast fields around what is today's Sheik Menon Street and as an act of charity and benevolence gifted plots of land for residential purposes to Parsis at a nominal rent of eight annas per annum. A dadgah, better known as Khara Kuvani Agiary, was consecrated on November 24, 1796 (*roj Sarosh, mah Ardibehsht*) to meet the religious requirements of Parsis of Bahar Cote. In the meantime, the Parsis of Cote enjoyed the benefit of the Maneckji Sett Dar-e-Meher.

With the passage of time the Parsi population of Bahar Cote flourished and the dadgah was raised to the status of an adarian on November 24, 1822. A deed of settlement was executed on April 1,

1874. By 1896 the building was in such a dilapidated condition that it had to be razed to the ground. A new structure was built and thrown open to the community on October 31, 1896.

However, around the second decade of this century, Parsis began to sell their

If no one else turns up for booking the hall you are considered lucky

property around the Agiary to non-Parsis and the Agiary was left with little or no patronage. It was then that the trustees decided to purchase a plot of land belonging to Adamji Peerbhoy at Jaifal Wadi and relocate the adarian saheb. After permission to sell the old property was obtained in 1923 from the Advocate General, it was sold in 1927 for a sum of Rs 4,75,000. The property at Jaifal Wadi

along with Jaifal Terrace was purchased for a sum of Rs 3,11,000. Rs 1,50,000 were spent on the construction of a new structure at Jaifal Wadi that would house the fire. The holy fire during that period was kept at Thuthi Agiary on Malabar Hill.

The Agiary at Jaifal Wadi, with the additional facility of a wedding-navjote hall, was thrown open to the members of the community on March 27, 1927 (*roj Behram, mah Meher*). "Thus we observe two *salgrehs* (anniversaries)," noted Vakil, one of the building, and one of the holy fire. The affairs of the Agiary and hall today are managed by Vakil and his colleagues Dinshawji Maneckji Mistry and Minoo Rustomji Sethna, all three being descendants of the Sett family whose founder was the illustrious Rustom Maneck (1635-1721), a broker in Surat who founded and developed the Rustom-pura locality there, and who is particularly remembered for his efforts to free the community from Mughal oppression.

Vakil claims his was the very first

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navjote to be performed at the Sethna (oops! Muncherji Sett) Agiary hall. The hire of the hall, which has a capacity to accommodate around 300 people, also entitles the user to the benefit of a fairly spacious terrace and a little garden which, according to Vakil, is hardly used. "I would strongly encourage the use of the garden but Parsis seem to have an aversion," bemoans Vakil.

For a nominal fee of Rs 150 plus an additional sum of Rs 150 to cover the cost of electricity, the hall is in use for almost 150-200 days a year. The facility is offered on a purely first come, first served basis.

We asked Vakil about the maintenance and he seemed to take some pride in mentioning that the Agiary and hall recently received a new coat of paint. "We have also arranged for some new tube lights and additional fans," he added. "We have a very fine ladies dressing room and until recently I personally used to supervise the cleanliness," Vakil said.

If there is a sore point it is mainly

with the music arrangement. Most patrons complain about the quality of recorded music provided by Sam Poonawala — the hall's one and only official and approved contractor. "It leaves much to be desired," noted a family whose child's navjote was recently performed at the hall. "We have no choice. The trustees insist Poonawala is the only official music contractor for the hall," added the parents of a child whose

first birthday was recently celebrated at the hall. Vakil, on the other hand, felt that besides bringing in Rs 20,000 annually for the trust, Poonawala was doing his best. "And there is nothing to stop any one from having a live band from Nellie's to Hijackers," he continued.

The other complaints concern lighting. "But nothing serious. Parsis of course can be quite demanding," Vakil

continued on page 30

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The Brazen Betrothal

Disregarding the Panchayet resolution, the son of a mobed decided to get married to a behdin girl

Dosabhai Framji Karaka

While everyone knows the orthodox priests' aversion to intercommunity marriages, many may not be aware that the athornans many years ago similarly frowned on their daughters marrying behdins. In fact, the priests passed an ordinance in the 1700s that they would not permit their female relations to marry lay Parsis.

In his 1884 publication *History of The Parsis including their Manners, Customs, Religion and Present Position*, Dosabhai Framji Karaka narrates the altercation that took place between the priests and laity in the last quarter of the 1700s. Parsiana carries the pertinent extract.

The Panchayet was the court of justice, and its decisions, being invariably given after great deliberation, and without fear or favor, were never disputed by the contending parties. Any one refusing to obey the decision of that tribunal was excommunicated from the caste, and his coreligionists held no further intercourse with him. He was not invited to their feasts, religious ceremonies or marriage festivals.

He could not attend either funeral processions or the fire-temple; nor, if he died while in this state of disgrace, could he receive the rites of Parsi burial. Priests were prohibited from performing any religious ceremonies in his family. In fact all intercourse between the person excommunicated and his countrymen was completely broken off. So great, therefore, was the penalty of excommunication that

the Parsis seldom failed to accept without demur the decision of their governing body.

This state of affairs seems to have continued until about the middle of the eighteenth century when the Panchayet of Bombay found that it could no longer rule the Parsi community with its old authority. Under the earlier system offenders were punished by being beaten with a shoe; but it was found almost impossible to enforce this mode of punishment when the Parsis passed under British rule. The

dered government interference necessary. The altercation sprang out of a regulation or ordinance made by the Panchayet of Bombay, with the consent of its community, in the year 1777, which prohibited the behdins from giving their daughters in marriage to the mobeds. The Panchayet took this step in order to counteract the effect of an ordinance, which the priests had passed among themselves, to the effect that they would continue to receive in marriage the daughters of behdins, but that they would not allow their own female relatives to marry with the laity. The Panchayet, therefore, prohibited the giving of daughters in marriage to the priests, and thus sought to deprive them of the unfair privilege they had claimed.

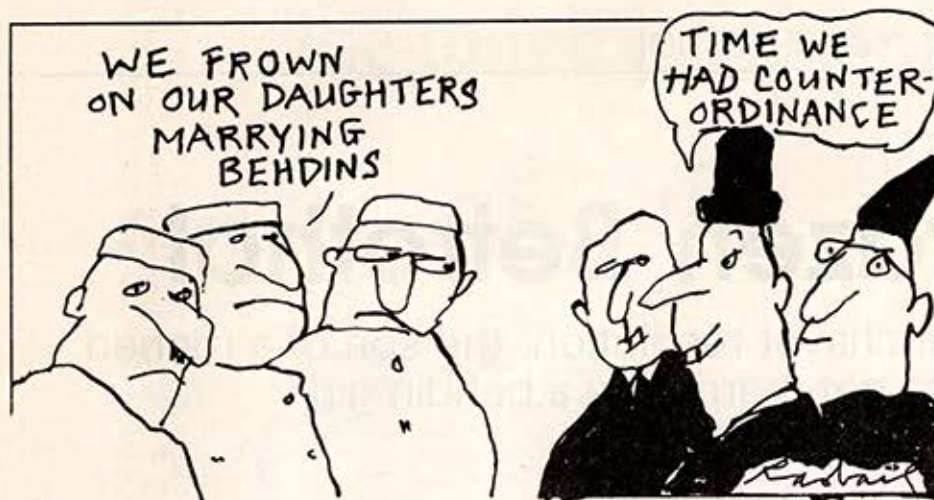
The quarrel owed its immediate origin to a mobed having married or betrothed his son to the daughter of a behdin, in defiance of the regulation passed by the Panchayet. So great was the excitement that the government was compelled to take notice of the event, and a committee, composed of

three European gentlemen, was appointed to investigate the causes of the dispute, and to report upon the best mode of bringing about a satisfactory settlement. After considerable inquiry the commissioners gave it as their opinion that the *bandobast* or ordinance, made by the mobeds, was unfair, and fully justified the behdins in refusing to give their daughters in marriage. They also declared that the

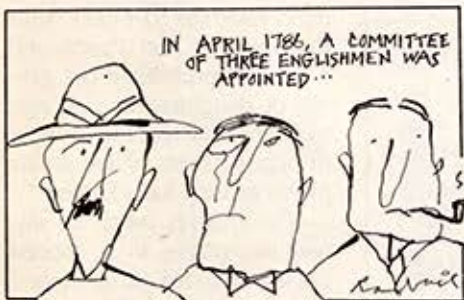


Panchayet therefore, about the year 1778, petitioned the governor of the time, Mr William Hornby, for legal authority to inflict this punishment. The prayer was granted, and the Panchayet, for the first time we believe, exercised this power with the sanction of the government.

About eight years after this circumstance a violent dispute arose between the mobeds and the behdins which again ren-



resolution passed by the former was calculated to enrich and aggrandise their own sect, for as the behdins were excluded from marrying in turn the daughters of priests, their own women and property were carried into the clerical class without any reciprocal advantages being gained by the laity. On these grounds the commissioners observed that the behdins had every right to put a stop to this unequal intercourse by any means in their power, and that consequently their resolution of 1777 was fully justified.



Before these commissioners the Parsi behdins asserted that the priests made this regulation during their term of power at Surat, while the latter contended that it was the original law of their own religion, and not a modern innovation. On this point the commissioners reported that there formerly existed a mutual intercourse of marriage between the two classes, and the priests themselves were forced to admit that there had been many cases of intermarriage. The commissioners further reported that the resolution of 1777, which was the immediate cause of the dispute, was equitable in principle, and no blame whatever could with justice be attached to the Punchayet, but that the

fault lay rather with the priesthood whose selfish designs had necessitated the adoption of such a resolution.

In order to prevent the recurrence of these disputes, and to preserve peace and good order for the future, the commissioners recommended that the Punchayet should be formed upon a more equitable basis, and that its authority, which seemed to them to have been rather assumed than conferred, should be defined by government, which would thus invest it with a formal sanction. In order to effect this, they recommended that some instrument should be expressly drawn up which would have the effect of giving more weight and efficacy to the decisions of the Punchayet. They further advised that the Punchayet, thus constituted on a new basis, should have powers given to it for settling petty disputes and matters of religious form and ceremony. But they likewise gave it as their opinion that the power of punishing with the shoe, which the Punchayet had exercised by special permission, was objectionable, and recommended that it should be withdrawn.

With the general tenor of this report the Governor in Council concurred. It was decided that the Punchayet, or general assembly of the Parsis, had a right to make regulations for the common benefit and good of the community, as is customary with the races of every denomination living under the protection of the British Government.

Dosabhai Framji Karaka, a scholar and author, was also chairman of the Municipal Corporation and sheriff of Bombay. He was a presidency magistrate and chairman of Her Majesty's Bench of Justices, Bombay.

BLESSINGS AT THE BAUG *continued from page 28*

added. We asked him if, from his long association with the Agiary, he could recount any memorable experiences. He remembered one occasion when on a surprise visit to the hall he found a large number of Hindu guests. Investigations revealed it was the wedding anniversary of a Parsi girl married to a Hindu. The girl however had surreptitiously booked the hall in her maiden name. The girl apologised and Vakil, not desiring to create unpleasantness, let her off with a warning.

Before departing we asked if there was scope for development and further improvement of facilities. He replied, "We mainly have to safeguard what our forefathers have left for us. Property after property is being lost to the community. We must remain alert and stay on guard."

Having started our journey with All-bless Baug and ended with Muncherji Sett Agiary, we reflected for a while: A community of barely 50,000 in Bombay and six venues for weddings, navjotes, and other celebrations in just central and south Bombay. And we have not taken into account the Dadar Parsi Colony Gymkhana grounds with a capacity of nearly 2,000, rented at Rs 5,000 to non-members and free of cost to members, as per Gymkhana secretary Mahiyar Dastoor's statement. All however have to pay an additional amount to Chitrajan and Company, the contractors for the mandap erection and lighting, plus for the floral decoration of their choice. The Sorab Palamkote Hall, also at Dadar, rents its ground floor hall with a seating capacity of about 400 for Rs 2,000 inclusive of chairs and electricity, and its first floor hall with a capacity of 200 for Rs 1,200, according to Jimmy Unvala the manager there. The pavilion grounds at Rustom Baug have begun to be used for similar functions. Booking is routed through the R. N. Wadia trust secretary Adi Khan or assistant secretary Keki Udawadia. In the more distant suburbs, serving community needs are the Patel Agiary in Andheri and the agiary in Malcolm Baug, Jogeshwari.

What will become of these properties in 2000 AD and beyond, time alone will tell. Till then, *khushithi jamva chalo ji* (welcome to the dinner)!

The age of Zoroastrian brides (as listed in this issue) in Bombay ranged from 19 to 37 years, the arithmetic mean — the total number of individual ages divided by the total number of brides — being 25 years. The corresponding figures for the grooms were 24 and 41 years, averaging at 29 years.

Among the 86 Zoroastrians who died in Bombay in December, 20 succumbed to heart disease. The next major killers were cancer claiming 12 victims, pneumonia and lung disease claiming eight and old age and general debility, seven. While six patients fell prey to diabetes, three succumbed to hypertension. Septicemia, liver and brain diseases and bronchitis claimed two lives each. Two victims perished in accidents. Isolated cases registered this month: Parkinson's disease, dementia, ulcer, uremia, arthritis, sereoma abdomer, kidney failure, motor neuron disease, malnutrition, respiratory failure, stroke, nervous disorder, arterial fibrillation (contraction of the muscle fibres of the heart), diarrhoea, tuberculosis, myos-
themia gravis and bronchiectasis (dilatation of the bronchial tubes following infection). Three baby boys (one premature and two stillborn) were lost to the community. The eldest and youngest to die in December were both males, aged 93 and 32 years respectively.

The data on births, marriages and deaths has been compiled from information supplied by various newsletters and anjuman in India and abroad, courts and hospitals. This information is not always complete or consistent. In this 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 *Kashmira* and *Jahangir Doodha* on December 1, 1990
A girl to *Rukshana* and *Jimmy Colabewala*; December 2
A girl to *Jasmine* and *Aspandiar Kharas*; December 2
A boy to *Benaifer* and *Rattan Toddywalla*; December 2
A boy to *Jasmine* and *Hafez Katgara*; December 4
A girl to *Ferzin* and *Mehernosh Colsawala*; December 6
A boy to *Dilshad* and *Dinshaw Patel*; December 6
A boy to *Zarin* and *Farrokh Bharucha*; December 12
A boy to *Nergis* and *Mehernosh Bhagwagar*; December 15
A girl to *Rashna* and *Dicky Contractor*; December 16
A girl to *Mahrook* and *Firoz Jamshedji*; December 19
A boy to *Kermin* and *Dinyar Balaporia*; December 21
A girl, *Khushnam*, to *Yasmine* and *Nozer Mirza*; December 21
A boy to *Farida* and *Hoshang Jal*; December 22
A girl to *Kashmira* and *Homi Kotwal*; December 22
A girl to *Jasmine* and *Neville Bharucha*; December 23
A boy to *Annahita* and *Pesi Sidhwa*; December 24
A girl to *Manjula* and *Farhad Patel*; December 26
A boy to *Hutokshi* and *Hoshi Rao*; December 28

Married

Shernaz Merwanji Shroff and *Kerman Homi Gagrai*; October 27
Diana Soli Daruwalla and *Homyar Burjor Goiporia*; November 22
Zubina Faredoon Aga and *Zubin Pervez Mehta*; November 23
Roshan Hoshang Zaiwala and *Rohinton Framroze Patel*; November 23
Maharukh Minoo Irani and *Adil Percy Ania*; November 25
Nazneen Dara Daruwalla of Kanpur and *Mozam Khushru Daruwalla*; November 25
Thirity Maneck Elavia and *Nozer Tehmurasp Mistry*; November 26
Gulshan Nariman Guard and

Porus Phiroze Daruwalla; November 27
Parizad Jehanbux Pesuna and *Adil Dara Elchidana*; December 3
Parveen Homi Messman and *Rohinton Phiroze Kerawala*; December 3
Rukshana Keki Viccaji and *Mehernosh Noshir Patel*; December 4
Huffrish Pervez Dordi of Thana and *Ruzbeh Dhun Patel* of Nasik; December 4
Armin Jehangir Zaiwala of Ahmedabad and *Dinyar Pesi Deboo*; December 6
Anahita Naval Brass and *Homi Farrokh Kaka*; December 6
Zarin Tehmuras Jangbarwalla and *Farrokh Pheroze Munsiff*; December 7
Khusmede Jal Balsara and *Manecksha Adi Patel*; December 7
Kashmira Minocher Billimoria and *Khurshed Jehanbux Gandhi*; December 8
Hufri Maneck Patel and *Cyrus Minoo Poonawalla*; December 8
Khorshed Rustomji Hathadaru and *Jimmy Hoshang Patel*; December 11
Mehernavaz Baji Maloo and *Rustom Cyrus Vesavevala*; December 11
Ayesha Dhunji Dhunjibhoy and *Mahiar Bomi Mehta*; December 12
Pervin Nariman Umrigar and *Vistasp Burjor Sopariwalla*; December 14
Kashmira Minoo Daruwalla and *Rayomand Phiroze Darooowalla*; December 16
Parizad Behram Billimoria and *Kaikhushru Maneck Kutar*; December 18
Yenisha Rashid Irani and *Furokh Tehmurasp Santoke*; December 18
Yasmine Cawas Behramji and *Hooshman Behram Irani*; December 20
Armin Rusi Randelia and *Hector Gustad Kharadi*; December 23
Bakhtawar Burjorji Moudawalla and *Adeel Kekobad Medhora*; December 23
Rukshana Behram Gandhi and *Zaheer Hosi Mistry*;

December 23
Dilshad Minocher Irani and *Mehraban Rustam Yazdani Buicki*; December 25
Maharukh Dinshaw Master and *Viraf Shariyar Vajifdar*; December 25
Perveen Keki Pithawalla and *Mehernosh Mahervanji Elavia*; December 27
Hamshad Cawas Bharucha and *Sheri Framroz Bamboat*; December 30
Erine Behram Vatchha and *Jimmy Savak Shroff*; December 30

Died

Tehmina Faredoon Master (70), residing at Dadachanji Bldg, Marzban Clny, A. R. Nair Rd, 400011; December 1
Rustomji Bejonji Allbless (92), Homi Mans, Oomer Park, B. D. Rd, 400036; December 2
Meherbai Nadirshah Daruwalla (90), 15, Walchand Ter, Tardeo, 400034; December 2
Pestonji Menabhai Desai (94), Bacha Manor, 600, Jame Jamshed Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar 400014; December 2
Freny Cawasji Bengali (84), Dubash Bldg, 627 Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; December 3
Nariman Hormasji Bulsara (89), 16, Khareghat Clny, 34, Hughes Rd, 400007; December 3
Kaikobad Shiavaksha Delvadavala (67), Gulistan, 802, Dr Ambedkar Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; December 3
Khorshed Dinshawji Kadodwala (66), Kudiya Bldg, 679, Katrak Rd, Wadala, 400031; December 3
Homi Jamshed Pavri (67), B/8, Cusrow Baug, S. B. Rd, 400039; December 3
Minoo Pestonji Dastur (60), 2, Mehta Bldg, Panthaki Baug, Andheri, 400069; December 5
Dinyar Jal Dubash (40), 38, Sai Ashish, Peter Dias Rd, Bandra, 400050; December 5
Minocher Ardisher Mama (81), 693, Dinshaw Master Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; December 5
Daisy Naoroze Baria (73), 3, Perry Cross Rd, Bandra, 400050; December 6

Kaikhshru Framroze Bharucha (72), A/7, Shapur Baug, V. P. Rd, 400004; December 6
Peroza Pervaz Engineer (60), Fairy Manor, R. Sidhwa Marg, Fort, 400001; December 6
Minocher Bomanshaw Minocher-Homji (78), A/1, Bakhtavar, Opp Colaba Post Office, 400005; December 6
Baby boy of Dilnavaz V. Shroff (stillborn), Jer Mans, Gazder St, J. S. Rd, 400002; December 6
Khorshed Dinsha Dastur (85), Kaiser-E-Hind, Ballard Est, 400038; December 7
Najamai Bapuji Gohwalla (85), B/32, Nowroz Baug, Lalbaug, 400012; December 7
Aloo Jimmy Mody (81), 16/17, Jyoti Mhl, 13, Noshir Bharucha Marg, 400007; December 7
Maki Sorabji Doctor (90), 216, Shalimar, Marine Drive, 400020; December 8
Siloo Firoze Fraser (69), 35, Gopal Mans, Guru Nanak Rd, Bandra, 400050; December 8
Behram Gustad Irani (49), C/2, Jer Baug, Dr Ambedkar Rd, Byculla, 400027; December 8
Najamai Minocher Bhagat (83), 228, Shirin Mans, J. Dadaji Marg, Tardeo, 400007; December 9
Pestonji Maneckji Cooper (85), A/18, Usha Sadan, S. B. Rd, Colaba, 400005; December 9
Framroze Dhunjisha Wadia (76), G/19, Nowroz Baug, Lalbaug, 400012; December 9
Khorshed Noshir Green (63), 14, Gautam Darshan, 7 Bglws, Versova, Andheri (W), 400058; December 10
Tehmi Ruttonshaw Madan (82), Sun-Shine, R. Patel Rd, Off B. Desai Rd, 400026; December 11
Nanu Ardeshir Bharoocha (67), West View, 952, Nana Peth, Pune, 411002; December 12
Darab Cooverji Lelinwalla (87), A/33, Bharat Ngr, Grant Rd, 400007; December 12
Farokh Sorabji Todiwalla (42), B-15/104, Vaishali Ngr, Jogeshwari (W), 400102; December 12
Khorshed Darabsha Arjani (84), 22, Arshiyana, Nepean Sea Rd, 400026; December 13
Behram Ardesher Irani (71), 9, Patel Bldg, Gamadia Clny, Tardeo, 400007; December 13
Fali Rustomjee Karaka (71), Chotani Bldg, Proctor St, Grant Rd, 400007; December 13
Minocher Hormusji Mistry (89), 19, New Municipal Bldg, Nana

Chowk, 400007; December 13
Jer Jehangir Rustom (70), Arsiwalla Bldg, 61, Wodehouse Rd, Colaba, 400005; December 13
Perin Dorabji Bagwadia (77), B, Empire Ter, N. Petit St, Lamington Cross Rd, 400007; December 14
Maneck P. Sorabjee Tavadia (88), B/2, Mandar Hsg Soc, Raut Lane, Juhu, 400049; December 14
Rati Rustomji Wadia (83), 29, Sethna Bldg, Naorji Seth St, Thakurdwar, 400002; December 14
Soli Cawasji Jeejeebhoy (88), Flat no 11, 4-A, New Dubash Bldg, Gamadia Clny, Tardeo, 400007; December 15
Frenay Ratanshaw Dubash (53), 3/4, Sir Ratan Tata Bldg, S. V. Rd, Bandra, 400050; December 16
Freni Temurash Manekshana (60), Mota Parsivad, Valsad, 396001; December 16
Zarine Burjor Dhondy (65), 13, Halima Manzel, Forjett St Cross Lane, 400036; December 17
Goolbai Minoo Irani (72), Darshan Apts, V. K. High School Rd, Panvel, Dist Raigad, 410206; December 17
Behramji Cawasji Umrigar (91), 71, Ferena, 25, Arther Bunder Cross Rd, Colaba, 400005; December 17
Nilouffer Dinyar Jamshedji (39), 4, Vakil Bglw, Jitendra Lane, Juhu Tara Rd, 400049; December 18
Noshir Manekji Mahwa (72), B, Adam Mhl, Wadia St, Tardeo, 400034; December 18
Gool Jamshed Balaporia (69), 32/C, Meherzin, Colaba, 400005; December 19
Minocher Maneckji Cooper (76), E/15, Jer Baug, Dr Ambedkar Rd, Byculla, 400027; December 19
Homi M. Mehenti (74), 1-B/38, Tata Mills Hsg Soc, Elphinston Rd, 400012; December 19
Homi Darabji Palsetia (73), 54, Ocean Crest, 85, Warden Rd, 400026; December 19
Dhunjisha Rustomji Bhagwagar (78), Adenwalla Bldg, Pauwalla St, Grant Rd, 400004; December 20
Ferdoon Behram Irani (66), Zarin Manzil, Mather Pakady Rd, Mazagaon, 400010; December 20
Framroze Ardeshir Jassawalla

(80), 7/A, Sea Face Park, Warden Rd, 400026; December 20
Baby boy of Sunnu Sam Modi (stillborn) Ratan Mans, Forjett St, 400007; December 20
Shahpour Kaikhshroo Yezdagardi (32), Sailor Bldg, 373, Dr D. N. Rd, 400001; December 20
Lulu Behram Dastoor (56), 4, Grovenor Hse, Peddar Rd, 400026; December 21
Sorabji Bejoni Engineer (Amroli) (85), Pushpavati Bldg, Chira Bazar, 400002; December 21
Nergish Ratansha Siganporia (60), E/13, Nowroz Baug, Lalbaug, 400012; December 21
Perin Nadir Bulsara (78), 8/11, Rustom Baug, Victoria Rd, Byculla, 400027; December 22
Khusroo Jehangir Irani (35), Nanabhai Chmbs, Gunbow St, Fort, 400001; December 22
Minoo Jehangir Karaka (85), Worli Sea Face Co-op Soc, Abdul Gopar Rd, 400018; December 22
Sorab Navalsha Cooper (71), Ruluns Apts, Setalvad Lane, 30, Nepean Sea Rd, 400006; December 23
Eddi Nawroji Darukhanawalla (62), C/618, Bhiwandiwalla Ter, Girgaum Rd, 400002; December 23
Hiraji Bapuji Medhora (73), Sethna Bldg, Wadia St, Tardeo, 400034; December 23
Banoobai Jehangir Mistry (85), 28, Daruwalla Hse, Dhobitalao Lane, 400002; December 23
Meherbai Nusserwanji Toddywalla (90), Nusserwanji Hse, 13/15, Dhuswadi, Dhobitalao, 400002; December 23
Dinbai Erachshaw Gandhi (92), E/12, Nowroz Baug, Lalbaug, 400012; December 24
Pesi Nariman Karkaria (77), N/9, Dalal Est, Lamington Rd, 400008; December 24
Aloo Bahadur Khan (90), 2, Kharegat Bldg, Gamadia Clny, Tardeo, 400007; December 24
Jal Pestonjee Cooper (88), 139, Khushnum, Dr B. Ambedkar Rd, Dadar T. T., 400014; December 25
Savakshaw Meherwanji Jassawalla (92), 47, Jassawalla Court, B. Desai Rd, 400026; December 25
Baby boy of Mona Nevil Mistry (2 hrs), Chikalwadi, Tardeo Rd, 400007; December 26

Jehangir Darasa Desai (81), 15, Malabari Bldg, New Khareghat Clny, 34, Hughes Rd, 400007; December 27
Dara Bomansha Mehta (70), 29, Kerelwadi, Thakurdwar, 400002; December 27
Dolly Pestonji Panthaky (52), 25, Cremorne Rd, London, S. W. 10; December 27
Amy Meherjibhoy Dubash (65), Room no 28, Jame Jamshed Bldg, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; December 28
Parvez Kaikhshru Engineer (51), E/16, Ginwalla Bldg, Captain Clny, Tardeo, 400034; December 28
Dinshaw Hormasji Tachakra (78), 106, Valentina, N. Gamadia Rd, 400026; December 28
Mehroo Jehangir Madon (88), Room no. 22, Irani Dharamsalla, Gamdevi, 400007; December 29
Dinshaw Khurshedji Panthaky (62), 595, J. S. S. Rd, 400002; December 29
Rustom Homi Cooper (77), 51, Sonarica, 33/A, Peddar Rd, 400026; December 30
Rusi Behramji Gilder (63), Gilder Villa, Perry Cross Rd, Bandra, 400050; December 30
Daizy Jamshed Treasuryvala (72), 6, Marine Mans, Byramji Jijibhoy Rd, Bandra, 400050; December 30
Jamshed Rustom Lilaowalla (63), R/32, S. B. Bharucha Baug, Andheri (W), 400058; December 31
Phiroshaw Edulji Mistry (93), Lady Bomanji Bldg, 24, A. B. Nawab Tank Rd, Mazagaon, 400010; December 31

POONA Died

Homai Sarosh Mody (70), 23/2, Bundgarden, 411001; November 4
Banoobai Kaikhushroo Doctor (90), 480, Rasta Peth, 411011; November 10
Homi Kaikhushroo Todiwalla (56), Kapadia Bldg, 873, D. M. Rd, 411001; November 13
Sheranaaz Purcy Mistry (30), 232, Khadki Bazaar, 411003; November 21
Alloo Jamshed Karbhari (70), 832, Guruwar Peth, 411002; November 26

SURAT Died

Shera Bapuji Pithawala (75),

Gam Suwali, Taluka Choriyasi,
395003; December 9
Shirinbai Cawasji
Amalsadiwala (90), GEB
Qrs, Nawagam, 395003;
December 10
Cawasji Meherwanji Bharucha
(82), Gam Suwali, Taluka
Choriyasi, 395003;
December 10
Edulji Cawasji Fatakia (78),
Farampura, Rustompura,
395002; December 11

☆☆☆

BRITISH COLUMBIA

Born

A boy, *Shaqil*, to Mr and Mrs
Dehnani; July 1
A boy, *Reza*, to *Hutosky* and
Darius Driver; July 16

BROSSARD, QUEBEC

Married

Golanaz Gulshah and Shahjehan
Sotoodian;
September 18

CALIFORNIA

Born

A boy, *Neal Cawas*, to *Gulnar*
and *Percy Irani*; December 4

Married

Anita Malbari, daughter of
Perviz and Bejan and *Jamshid*
Karanjia, son of Aimee and
Jehangir; August 26

TORONTO

Born

A girl, *Alison*, to *Anna* and
Jamshed Boyce; October 2

Married

Lilly Patell, daughter of Sooni
and Bahadur and *Terry Lee*
Creamer, son of Marion and
Lionel; September 29

Died

Darius Golwala, husband of
Marge, son of Arnavaaz and
Burjor and brother of Armaity
Jussavala and Zarine Patel;
October 18

TOTALS (for this issue)

Births: Boys 12, Girls 11
Marriages: Parsi 36
Intercommunal 1
Deaths: 96

Compiled by Roxana H. Kaka

MATRIMONIAL

Correspondence invited from
tall, well-qualified,
well-settled young men
of amiable disposition, aged
between 28 and 35 years for
our daughter, tall (5'6"),
well-educated, well-versed in
household pursuits, teaching
in school, and of a sociable
disposition — willing to
settle abroad. Please reply
with a photograph (will be
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Write to:

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IN MEMORIAM

Naoroji Godrej

HELMSMAN EXTRAORDINARY

Arnavaz S. Mama



He was the managing director of the largest closely held company in India. Under his stewardship Godrej and Boyce burgeoned from a respected manufacturer of locks, safes and steel furniture into India's first and leading producer of refrigerators; typewriters and forklifts, computers, machines for atomic reactors and other sci-fi products followed, without sacrificing its reputation for integrity, reliability. Accounts, marketing, production, delivery, all departments were said to be handled by Naoroji.

His ideals, imbibed from his uncle Ardeshir, the founder of the House of Godrej, and father Pirojsha and conveyed to his heirs, ensure that the families of over 10,000 Godrej workers enjoy the fruits of their labor in terms of housing, health, education, security — Gandhian ideals of trusteeship of wealth for the benefit of all.

A former trustee of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP), Naoroji Godrej had helped to found and stabilize the Indian machine tools industry. The Pirojsha Godrej Foundation, the Soonabai Godrej Trust, the Pirojsha Godrej Garden Township at Vikhroli, Godrej Baug — the new residential colony for Zoroastrians off Nepean Sea Road that the Godrej Foundation developed jointly with the BPP, the Foundation for Research in Community Health... attested to his passionate interest in the welfare of people — all provided for from company profits. "I do not know how to ask," he had once confided to Housing Development and Finance Corporation (HDFC) chairman H. T. Parekh. "I have only given."

Small-built, soft-spoken, low-key, everything about Naoroji seemed in reverse proportion to his achievements. Few who interacted with the self-effacing 73-year-old on the go, escaped the imprint of his charismatic smile, the honesty of his responses, the simplicity of dress and demeanor. A professed liberal in religious terms, Naoroji Godrej abjured the trappings of Zoroastrianism to practice the ideals propounded by the Prophet — courage, charity, kindness... When death claimed him on August 8, 1990 (after a long illness that doctors felt was related to the many blood transfusions in the aftermath of the assassination attempt on him in 1979 by a disgruntled ex-employee owing allegiance to



the militant trade union of Dr Datta Samant) the tributes poured in in a seemingly ceaseless fount in the press, on TV, at the condolence meetings summoned by the BPP and the then sheriff of Bombay Nana Chudasama. Attesting to Naoroji's wealth of virtues were a former vice president of India, fellow industrialists, educationists, scientists, financiers, BPP trustees and eminent citizens.

"When the British quit India, and it fell to Indians to build a nation comparable to the rest of the world, Naoroji was one of the men who helped to build it. Doubt if in the history of India, without the share capital of outsiders, any family has done even half of what the Godrej family has done," commented legal luminary Nani Palkhivala. "Plain living and high thinking never had a more dedicated exponent," continued Palkhivala recalling the small car Naoroji always drove: "Not for him the posh cars in which lesser mortals move." Indeed, during his days as BPP trustee, Naoroji "would walk (from his downtown office in Godrej Bhavan) to the Panchayet office, scan the papers and state his decisions on the spot" instead of having everything sent home to him as is the normal practice, attested BPP trustee Eruch Desai.

To his workers, "Naoroji bordered on the level of the mythical and the legendary," noted Godrej and Boyce vice president Phiroze Lam. "He was never our employer but our friend, philosopher, guide, father, mother... He believed in us and taught us to believe in ourselves."

"The workers so loved him, they would not believe any unhappy decision could be taken by Naoroji," added his personal secretary of 30 years, Chandrasen Raje. "Old workers believed they were Naoroji's buddies because they had helped him to set up his empire," noted Bezun Dittia, president of the Parsi Zoroastrian Anjuman of Secunderabad and Hyderabad and a former chairman of Allwyn — the competitor Godrej left behind.

As his men retired, he tried to find them alternate accommodation, said BPP trustee Jamsheed Kanga, and even those who resigned were helped to set up for themselves, as noted Naoroji's wife, Soonu. Social worker Ms Perviz Dotivala recalled how Naoroji had employed a qualified but inexperienced engineer, depressed because two years of search had failed to find him a job, on a four-figure salary after one brief interview; Lam presented the case of the destitute widow of a Godrej worker who died on the shop floor, his nomination papers unsigned. Moved by her plight, Naoroji not only authorized that all the provident fund, etc be made over to her, accepting total legal responsibility, but permitted her to continue living in the company's quarters and schooling her children in the Godrej school at Vikhroli.

Brother Burjor, managing director of Godrej Soaps, recalls that Ardeshir, Pirojsha and Naval (as Naoroji was known to family and friends), faced great difficulty in the early days. There was discrimination against Indian goods. Speak-

ing of the way Naoroji succeeded, Burjor says, "you have got to be a little aggressive, even a little autocratic, to get on in life. Otherwise you fall by the wayside!"

No matter how important the matter at hand, Naoroji's decisions were very quick, says Raje. "He thoroughly knew each and every product that the company made. Every machine that was bought he'd inspect, see it unpacked and installed in his presence. Earlier he knew each and every worker in the factory, many by name... He knew the strength and deficiency of his workers and... forgave genuine mistakes."

During World War II, machine tools like sheet metal working machinery were not available. So Naoroji started to make them at the Godrej factory in Lalbaug,



Naoroji at the Goti Agiary celebrations, Surat (Photo: Homiyar Mistry) Top: At home with grandchildren (from left) Navroze Godrej, Freyan Crishna, Raika Godrej and Nyrika Crishna

"Because he designed and made them, he had a love and understanding for machines. He felt there was a lot of capability in the country and not enough was being done to show it off. It was his decision to start the Indian machine tools exhibitions (IMTEX)," says Naoroji's son Jamshyd, tracing the history of IMTEX which Godrej hosted at Vikhroli seven times. The first exhibition, circa 1965, had about 10 exhibitors. The last one had 400 participants and occupied an area of

55,000 square meters. "A permanent industrial exhibition center (with a minimum of 30 to 40 acres for parking, recreation and an auditorium) was one of his dreams," says Jamshyd. When IMTEX began, there was no exhibition ground in India. The Pragati Maidan in Delhi came up in the 1970s. Every two or three years when a new Godrej shed was ready, an IMTEX would be held before putting it to Godrej's own use. The layout, the choice of exhibitors, "everything was completely done by him. Our people provided the entire infrastructure." Raje recalls how Naoroji would even help to move the furniture!

Naoroji had a great love for planning things out in grand style. "The entire layout, landscaping (of the Vikhroli township) was planned by Dad. Even for designing the flats he would personally sit with the architects. The many years' experience at Vikhroli was helpful in planning Godrej Baug," says Jamshyd.

An abiding source of satisfaction for Naoroji was welfare work when people really did benefit, says Soonu. Also, when he wanted to start something new and it got going. And he liked doing things to help children of schooling age. It is said that if he had a little time to spare

while in Vikhroli, he would drop in on the company's school.

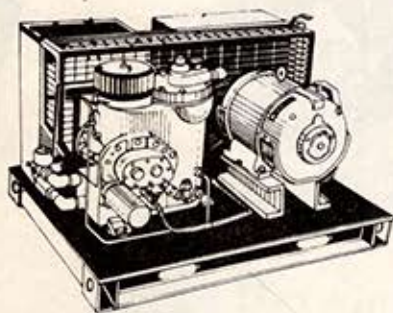
Of the two Godrej trusts, the Pirojsha Godrej Foundation, in memory of his father, is a general purpose charity for education, health, travel associated with education, etc. The Soonabai Godrej Foundation, named after his mother, is endowed with the Godrej land in Vikhroli and is concerned with low cost housing, informs Soonu.

Godrej's Udyachal School at Vikhroli includes preprimary, primary and secondary sections, three media of instruction — Marathi, Gujarati and English — and is housed in three buildings. Its current strength of about 4,000 students, with 100 percent results at the Secondary School Certificate (SSC) examinations, costs the company two crore rupees a year, says Jamshyd. There is no screening, but only the first three children of each family are accommodated, he informs. Yet Soonu remembers the time when they started with seven or eight children in an old grain warehouse in the early 1950s. "We had to go from house to house to get them to send the children," she recalls.

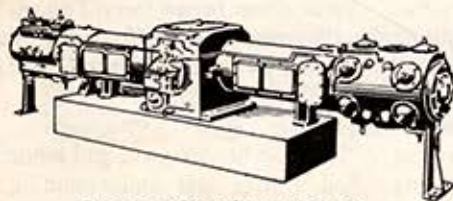
"Naoroji's concept of charity was not just handouts but help that would put people on their feet." With that aim

Godrej was involved in two projects with noted plastic surgeon Dr Noshir Antia. One is the Foundation for Medical Research which Godrej jointly sponsored with Vasant Sheth of Great Eastern Shipping, a leprosy project aimed at finding ways of diagnosing it fast enough.

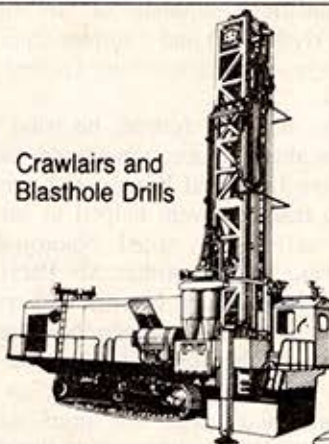
Invited to the Godrej shack in Mandwa, Antia said he walked over the surrounding region and a new concept developed: "How people coped and survived was shocking." Recognising the rural folk's practical competence, Antia wondered, "Could we teach them to help themselves?" Naval's financial support was assured and Antia started out on what became the Mandwa project -- with one young doctor from the J. J. Hospital, and one young graduate from the Tata Institute of Social Sciences — which eventually had repercussions on the government's health policy, he says. Groping to establish links with the rural community that would serve as a channel for transmitting knowledge at the grass roots and enable them to maintain better health in their own surroundings, the project ultimately trained a woman from each of 20 to 30 villages grounded in poverty. The education was imparted by trained nurses in the local dialect and eventually these



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ladies were able to give injections, vaccinations, diagnose the diseases that needed modern drugs and ensured that the medicines were administered to the patients in their villages. The training was given once a week under the trees and Naval would come and sit quietly on the ground like the rest of them, recalls Antia.

The Mandwa project, carried out under the banner of the Foundation for Research in Community Health, even acquired a center designed by Jal Gobhai. Eventually, however, the project had to be disbanded because the village bigwigs resented the importance that the women got. They "started squeezing Godrej, making demands," informs Antia. When these were rejected, there was violence and finally a shutdown. "Naval and I were adamant; but he was very disappointed. He was interested in people, in looking after them. We worked for 10 years, spent nearly 20 lakh rupees, but no one knew about it — that's the difference!" Soonu remembers how when a doctor had mentioned that a woman needed a cesarian operation but there was not enough light above the table, Naoroji had immediately interjected, "Why didn't you call me? I'd have held the light up for you!"

Brought up in a Gandhian and nationalistic atmosphere (uncle Ardeshtir was a friend of Mahatma Gandhi), Naoroji couldn't stand ostentation or a false sense of importance, say Naoroji's brother Sorab and Soonu. The children's and grandchildren's navjotes were performed at home. When the BPP sought to honor outstanding members of the community, Naoroji refused to accept the accolade, noting that Sorab was more eligible, informed Kanga who also commented on Naoroji's "impeccable record of attendance" as BPP trustee. Revealing how much the Punchayet's Godrej Baug project owed to Naoroji's dedication, Desai noted, "A few days before his death he rang up enquiring about a problem and was happy to be informed that it had been solved." "A true democrat, Naoroji never threw his weight around with the staff, never raised quarrels," noted BPP chief executive Rustom Anklesaria. Though a man of few words, he "never minced words when necessary" and could be "fearlessly frank."

Although Godrej's contribution to Zoroastrian welfare was immense — over 1,000 Parsis have found employment there, the vast Godrej Baug, developed on Punchayet land, will eventually house about 5,000 families — Naoroji's one-

and-a-half-year foray into the Punchayet was less than happy. He had wanted to computerize accounts; to introduce an open house policy where all seven trustees as well as the main administrative officers would be available on certain days of the month to face and answer whatever

**"He told me
how he had been
misunderstood,
deliberately
misunderstood"**

charges or requests the community chose to make; to institute a regular system of overhauling the Punchayet's residential properties to obviate ad hoc repair; to appoint a truly good administrator and give him enough rein to do the job... None of it came to pass, largely perhaps because he resigned over the issue of collecting about Rs 40,000 in donations from those whom he recommended for allotment of flats from the 50 percent donor quota in buildings constructed by Godrej in Godrej Baug. As he had told *Parsiana* in an interview after the event, if recipients of BPP scholarships worth Rs 5,000 could be asked to contribute to the BPP's building fund, why shouldn't beneficiaries of flats worth Rs 3.5 lakhs each, be similarly requested? "Where can you get such a place for Rs 40,000?" he had queried, adding, "I have done this openly... whatever money comes in is given back to the BPP" for further construction.

"The amount of time he spent on that project was incredible," says his son Jamshyd. From the time of ground breaking he was known to go every Saturday to review the progress. Right through his long illness, on his way to hospitalization and on discharge, he desired to drive through Godrej Baug, remembers Jamshyd, adding "He was hurt that (his cotrustees) didn't back him up." Noted Palkhivala at the condolence meeting, "He considered housing as a major problem facing the community. He told me how he had been misunderstood, deliberately misunderstood. He was ensuring that the work would carry on. (The approach) was so obvious, so sensible. Human beings have a tendency to stand by and see a good man reviled. Let us say to the memory of the great man what we lacked the courage to say earlier..." Soonu remarked how Naoroji found him-

self unable to function. "He joined to help the community. When he realized that he couldn't do much, he withdrew. He never was interested in holding on to a chair."

Naoroji's backing of the controversial Athravan Educational Trust (AET) is an example of his sturdy independence. Unmindful of all that was said against it, Naoroji not only accepted trusteeship of the body but provided space for its functioning in Godrej Bhavan. His ability to assess a situation for himself, undeterred by extraneous pressures, was also evident in his decision regarding the BPP's membership of the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India. Prior to his joining the Punchayet, the BPP had resumed membership of the Federation by a majority decision of four to three of its seven-member board of trustees. With the retirement of businessman Jamshed Guzder, opinion on the matter was evenly divided with Naoroji holding the fate of the Federation in the balance. Despite persuasion to the contrary, Godrej decided to attend a two-day meeting of the Federation and see for himself. As records the November 1990 issue of the *Federation Newsletter* in its tribute to "The Savior," "Just before the end of the meeting he spoke in his usual gentle tone about the apprehension of others that Bombay, which had more Zoroastrians than the rest of India put together, might be forced to accept the viewpoint of other anjumans whose total voting power in the Federation's executive committee was greater than that of the BPP." To overcome this problem Godrej suggested that the Federation's unwritten code, ensuring the autonomy of member anjumans, be embodied in its constitution together with a proviso that the body would make no representation to the government without the approval of the BPP. The Federation willingly accepted Godrej's terms and the issue was settled agreeably.

Naoroji never took long holidays but he'd be loth to miss a weekend from Mandwa. "Sailing was the only sport he enjoyed and it gave him a lot of satisfaction," says Jamshyd. "Whatever he did, he wanted to get the best out of it and enjoy it. Because of his enthusiasm I grew up sailing," says Jamshyd who was commodore of the Royal Bombay Yacht Club. In the early days Naoroji was interested in yacht racing, in the technical aspects. Every Saturday there would be a race. He enjoyed cruising down the coast to Goa, the Laccadives, Karachi, says Jamshyd. Naoroji's yacht *Tir* was

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built according to his own plan at the Alcock Ashdown yard. *Tir* had two predecessors — the *Wyvern* and the *Sagitta*. *Tir* was designed and built when the *Sagitta* struck a sandbank near Cochin in the course of a cruise to Colombo. He had planned to make the trip but had had to change his plans at the last minute.

Sorab Godrej, the eldest of the three brothers and chairman of the House of Godrej, remembers Naval as an average student. They went to St Mary's and then to St Xavier's School because father Pirojsha wanted his sons to intermingle with all classes of people, not only the elite, says Sorab. Though Versova-born Naoroji was the youngest and most robust of the three, he had an acute skin problem and hence was put on a vegetarian diet. Like his father and uncle Ardeshir, Naoroji remained a vegetarian all his life. When he was three, his mother Soonabai had died of pneumonia while on a holiday in Mussoorie where she is buried, says Soonu. The Soonabai Godrej Dance Academy Theatre at the National Centre for the Performing Arts has been gifted by Godrej in her memory.

Quick-tempered — a trait he later controlled so effectively his secretary de-

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scribed him as "calm like the sea" — but friendly and cooperative, Naoroji was not allowed to go to college because their father wanted him to start working, says Sorab. At the age of 17, in blue overalls on the shop floor, he learned to handle machines, and files in the office, learning by experience, a self-taught engineer who could solve any problem. Thus, in later years, even when he interviewed people, he did not pay much heed to their degrees but to the way a man reacted, says Soonu.

According to Burjor, Naoroji and Pirojsha were temperamentally on the same wavelength: "Naval was father's favorite from the beginning. He was mechanically minded (and) the partnership with father was ideal. Father needed such a person, otherwise he would have been very lonely." "The only time his father is said to have hit him was when he cheated in a game of cards and father saw," Soonu recalls stories of Naoroji's youth. "My father was very close to his father Pirojsha, imbibed his taste for simple living from him," corroborates Naoroji's daughter Smita Crishna. "Pirojsha was very disciplined in his personal life, very nationalistic in his outlook." Smita also recalls that father and son often had very intense and excitable discussions on the business of the day.

Literature and poetry were Naoroji's favorite reading and the J. N. Petit his favorite library, remembers Soonu. A Zoroastrian to the core, Naoroji never believed in the accoutrements of the religion, says Soonu: "He didn't believe in rituals, said, 'It's all in your own heart and in your own mind...'" Some rituals, like the segregation of menstruating women, was to him a way of keeping women down, she added.

"In our whole life father never forced anything. He'd state his views but never insisted," informs Smita. "He encouraged us to think and work things out for ourselves, take our own decisions. Religion to him was a way of life. He was very fair in all his actions. If we were wrong he wouldn't take our side. His actions spoke a lot... He never complained, right through the miserable final months. He would say, 'Soo thayoo? Jara haso ni (What's wrong? Why don't you smile a little)!'"

Until Smita was 13 or 14 the family holidayed together. "Our holidays were always trekking," she states. In later years the family gathered together at the Godrej shack in Mandwa on weekends. "We were brought up with openness in

everything," continues Smita. "I looked upon him as a true friend. He was interested in all our activities, even those of our friends. He was so full of fun, so optimistic..."

"It was with some trepidation I accepted his invitation to leave my previous job some months after our marriage to help run a family-owned company" reminisces son-in-law Vijay Crishna. "To my

"Even for designing the flats he would personally sit with the architects"

amazement, in the years that followed, he offered advice and support but left me completely free to run the unit totally. Such a practical demonstration of trust and confidence naturally inspired the best from me.

"He always displayed an active interest in my hobbies. Amateur theatre has been important in my life, and he used to come sometimes to watch my plays. He followed a recent play of mine, *Royal Hunt of the Sun*, from his sick-bed. He was keenly interested in the ancient Inca civilization of Peru and the Spanish conquest with which the play dealt. We often talked about Shakespeare, Bombay productions and his fondness for the Parsi *nataks* and the annual show performed by Bombay's Parsi doctors!" recalls Vijay.

"He was not just a father-in-law, he was a great friend of mine. What can you say about the loss of a friend?" asks Naoroji's daughter-in-law Pheroza. Highlighting his simple ways, Pheroza adds, "It was always difficult to find a present for Dad, his needs were so few! A basket of strawberries? Some juice? Some good pickle?"

An affectionate man, he loved to have his four grandchildren around him. He was perhaps "more liberal with them than with us... a great one for enthusing them to do things, but if they were wrong, he'd tell them." Extremely fond of gardens, animals, especially dogs, a Labrador named Tuka was a member of the household for many years. He had been named after a film Naoroji had seen, recalls Smita, though he was not a great film watcher. She remembers going to a Satyajit Ray film on the Bengal famine with him. They left midway because

Naoroji couldn't bear to watch further: "have to jowatu nahi."

"In discussions, the most important thing that came through was his concern for others," says Jamshyd. "He had this great love for doing things for others, even to the extent of being put to personal discomfort. Even on long drives he would insist on driving half the time. There were innumerable instances when he'd leave the nicer thing for somebody else. Always gave the credit to somebody else even if he had done it. Those who had worked with him for years and years had a very close feeling. They would literally do anything for him. But he was very hurt if somebody whom he trusted didn't come up to his expectations in terms of honesty or if his trust was broken..."

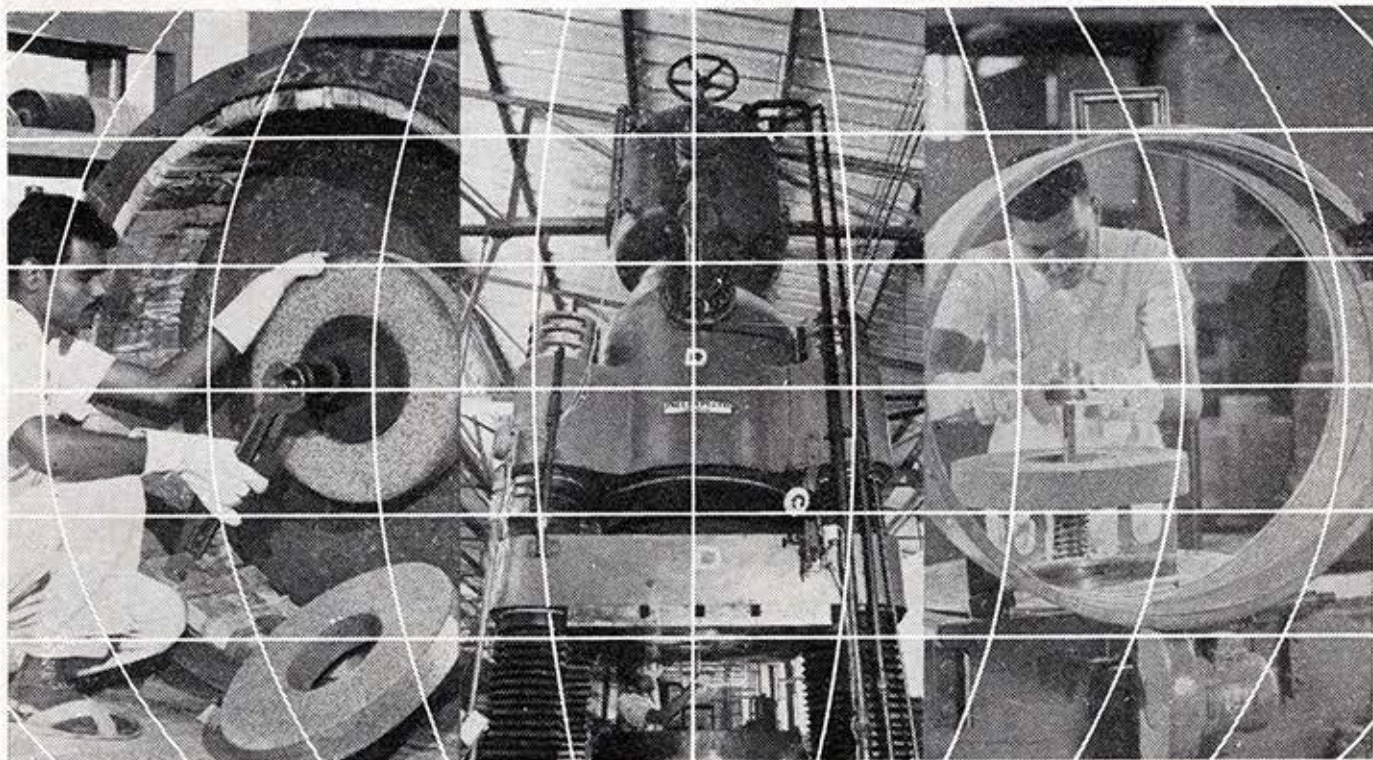
That such a man was the victim of an assassination attempt was one of life's ironies. "There was no security because Naval felt we had no enemies," says Sorab. "Our father felt that if there was tension in employer-employee relations, we must leave all else and concentrate on that. We always took a firm and fair stand, did not believe in giving in. Naval was courageous, clearheaded. Because he was handling the negotiations, he was attacked. There was a lot of propaganda. Even the union minister for labor said it was a political matter, not employer-employee relations. What is most remarkable is that it happened and it was over. He took it in his stride and never referred to it," says Sorab. "Never said workers did this to him," adds Raje. After the stabbing he was rushed directly to the Breach Candy Hospital where Doctors Farokh Udwadia, Fardoon Soonawalla, Kersi Dastur worked on him for nearly two months. The excellent treatment saved his life, acknowledges his son.

"So when the government required that the Breach Candy Hospital have a charity wing, they approached Dad... He gave 20 lakh rupees to found the Pirojsha Godrej Memorial Wing" and an annual contribution towards its upkeep, says Jamshyd.

Referring to his support to the AET, the tribute in the Zoroastrian Studies newsletter, *Ushia*, noted, "When no one believed in us, he believed in us and above all he gave us the strength to believe in ourselves." "He instilled confidence in everybody. It was his biggest asset," remarked Soonu.

Naoroji is survived by his wife Soonu, son Jamshyd and daughter Smita Crishna.

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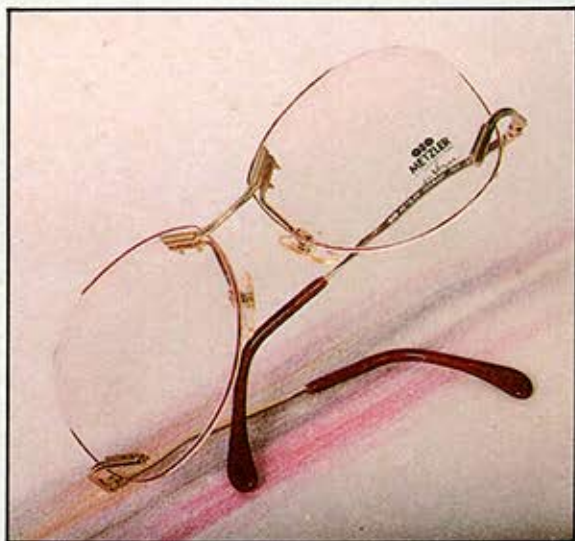
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