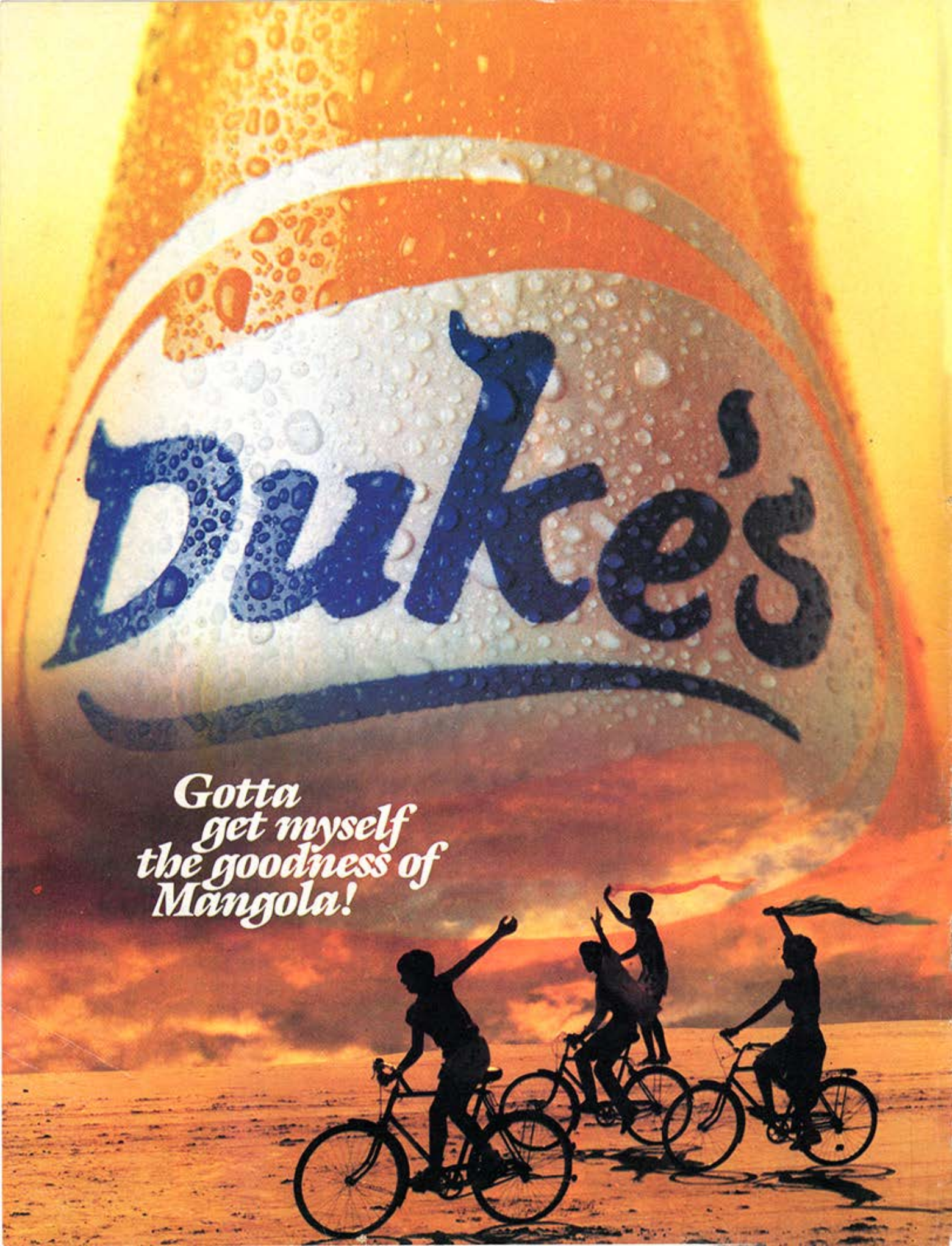


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Parsiana

May 1991
Volume 13 Number 11

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"Family figures"

What do you mean by "The five older children...were born to Phiroz's brother Rohinton and his Maharashtrian wife Hemlata ("Family figures," Events and Personalities, *Parsiana*, February 1991)? Aren't Dolly and Phiroze Palkhiwala Maharashtrians too?

Don't blame someone if he/she says Parsis do not belong to India.

Ms MALINI KARKAL

The editor replies

Parsis living in Maharashtra are Maharashtrians. The reason we referred to Hemlata as a Maharashtrian was because that is how the information we received described her. The other option was to refer to her as a non-Parsi which we felt was a negative way of stating a person's identity.

• • •

This pertains to "Family figures" (Events and Personalities, *Parsiana*, February 1991), a write-up on the Palkhiwala family of Forjett Hill.

Inadvertently, the name of the school that their sons attend has appeared as Cowasjee Jehangir School at Tardeo instead of the Byramjee Jeejeebhoy Parsi Charitable Institution (BJPCI) at Charni Road. I apologise to the BJPCI for this slip-up (in conveying the information to *Parsiana*).

HOMI BAGWALA

"Blessings at the Baug"

Noted radio and sound engineer Mr Sam Poonawala has taken umbrage to my article "Blessings at the Baug" (*Parsiana*, January 1991). Poonawala was hurt at being portrayed in poor light and claims that as against the two disillusioned patrons I had interviewed he can obtain letters from over 200 satisfied clients.

Poonawala further claims that the acoustics at the Sethna Agiary hall is not good and the hall, being situated in close proximity to the Bhatia General Hospital, the sound output has to be controlled. Poonawala also claims there have been police raids at Cama Baug and Allbless Baug but never at Sethna Agiary. Also while music stops playing at 9.30 p.m. in other baugs, he plays music at Sethna Agiary till 10.30 p.m.

Mr Poonawala visited me at my office on April 16, 1991 to put forth his point of view and clear his image which, according to him, has been damaged by the article. On my part I hasten to offer my apologies for not having interviewed him earlier to incorporate his point of view in the article.

NOSHER H. DADRAWALA

"The divine laws of God..."

It is Dr Kotwal's contention that the "liberals' fondness for the *Gathas* was leading the community astray," ("The orthodox response," *Parsiana*, October, 1990). "What is the nature of the *Gathas*?" asks the High Priest. "It is solemn poetry, metaphysics and high ideas, the doctrines of good and evil." He continues: "Would you find geometry in a book of poetry?"

Deriding the reformists' emphasis on good thoughts, good words and good deeds the Dastur asks: "Which religion does not enjoin the same?" He is convinced that it is the religious observances and ceremonies which set Zoroastrianism apart.

Having read "The orthodox response" and "The divine laws of God must prevail" (*Parsiana*, September 1990) and other such comments made by the orthodox, it seems to me that these "devout priests" regard Asho Zarathushtra as a mystic poet — in the same category as John Milton or George Herbert, William Blake or Gerard Manley Hopkins — rather than the founder of a monotheistic religion at a time when, except for Judaism, all others were pagan.

Ahura Mazda, through Zarathushtra, made man aware of his own spirituality and immortality. Ahura Mazda also revealed the divine laws of Asha by which the whole of His divine world — of spirit and matter — was governed.

The *Gathas* raised all mankind to the level of physical-spiritual beings, with the ability to think, to judge and to choose; beings with responsibilities, both spiritual and physical, for themselves and for others. Not only priests but every man, woman and child was made responsible for the welfare of the world and all in it. The *Gathas* opened paradise to all mankind, not only to the nobility and the clergy: all must work towards making our world a better, a kinder and more harmonious place.

Of course, our ceremonies and observances are different. All religions which illustrate or interpret part of their worship through ceremonies and observances are different. There are differences within a religion, which has different sects or denominations.

If priests are unable to differentiate between the real substance and that which is symbolic; if they cannot distinguish between that which is mere outward appearance and things spiritual, then true Zoroastrianism for the Parsis of India, and maybe of Britain, will surely decline still further.

If the clergy had cherished and nurtured the teachings of the holy Prophet half as much as they have labored to uphold the customs and traditions, ceremonies and observances; if they had made certain that the truths of the *Gathas* had been kept alive among themselves and the laity, there would have been no need for the deep concern felt today for the continuation or survival of the priesthood and for our religion.

There have been intermarriages among all religions, and all nations and races, but

none — race, nation or religion — is on the verge of extinction like we are. Why is it so difficult for these priests to see the real cause of what has happened, and is still happening, to our community? Outward appearances of a religion are not enough to strengthen the spiritual fiber of a community or a nation.

Who or what was Zarathushtra seeking? Who was calling him, drawing him, wanting to reveal himself to him? Wanting to reveal many truths not yet known to man? What made him risk his life and suffer the hardships of perilous journeys? Observances and ceremonies? I hardly think so. He already had plenty of those.

It may be a slight over-simplification to say that all spiritual truths and religious concepts are embodied in or can be explained only by the oft-repeated "good thoughts, good words and good deeds." But these were to be the foundations on which the religion of Asha — righteousness, justice, truth, order — was to be based.

In Nask Tahura, when Ahura Mazda is asked: "In what fashion is manifest Thy Law, O great Creator?" Ahura Mazda makes reply: "By good thought, in perfect unity with reason, O Zarathushtra. Taking all good things that is the offspring of good Asha."

Ardibehst Yasht reminds us that Asha governs the material world and the spiritual world. It heals the illnesses of body and mind. Before it flee all illnesses of the world, including such evils as daevas and death, scorn and pride, discord, lies and falsehood.

I ask myself, where has fled the strength and vigor of Zoroastrianism? What has really weakened the Zoroastrian community? Have we as a community deliberately misinterpreted the holy Prophet's original message, or misunderstood it?

Not once have these "devout priests"

mentioned the divine laws of Asha in all the arguments they have put forth in defence of their version of Zoroastrianism. Divinity belongs to God alone, and things divine come from Him alone. Some laws are made by man when they are deemed necessary, but when man-made laws undermine God's laws, and are passed off as being divinely inspired, man creates confusion and chaos, laying up a great deal of trouble and suffering for our world. Such men follow their own laws; they seek to accomplish their own will, and say they do it for God.

According to Asho Zarathushtra's teachings there are two kinds of people; those who wilfully disobey the divine laws, and those who try to live according to them:

Yasna 31.20: "Heavenly glory shall be the future of him who comes (to the help of) the just man. A long life of darkness, foul food, the crying of woe... to the existence, O wicked ones, your inner self shall lead you by her actions." (Mary Boyce, *Scriptural Texts for the Study of Zoroastrianism*).

Yasna 48.4: "He who makes better or worse his thought, O Mazda, he by act and word (makes better or worse) his inner self; she follows his leanings, wishes and likings." (Mary Boyce, *Scriptural Texts...*)

Yasna 49: "Truly in my lifetime I have been condemned as the greatest defiler, I who seek to satisfy with truth those who are poorly protected, O Mazda. With good apportioning of gifts come to me, support me... Those who with ill purpose increased with their tongues (and I may add, with their pens) fury and cruelty, they, the non-pastors among pastors for whom evil deeds prevailed, they having no good deeds they serve the daevas, which is the religion of the wicked man. But he, O Mazda, is himself the sacrifice and the oblation

who has allied his inner self with good purpose. Whoever belongs to devotion is of the same good lineage as truth, and as all those in thy dominion (Khshathra) Lord." (Mary Boyce, *Scriptural Texts...*)

I am not advocating or suggesting that we should do away with all customs, traditions, observances and ceremonies. It is obvious that Ms Roxan Shah respected and desired those customs and ceremonies which really mattered to her and which, according to the true divine laws of Asha, she had every right to expect from her community and her priests.

Ceremonies and rituals have a purpose; they are means to something which lies beyond them. They are like a bridge to the unseen. There are ceremonies for happy and for sad occasions, and nothing holds a family or a community together more strongly than joys and sorrows which are shared. There may be times however when the most elaborate and expensive ceremonies will leave the human heart and mind void and desolate, because they lack sincerity and purity of purpose.

Grief follows death, and grief itself is a part of the ritual the bereaved go through for their departed loved ones, whether the grieving is done openly or quietly within ourselves. The prayers said by the non-Zoroastrians are as pure and sincere as those of Zoroastrians — purer and more sincere if they have loved more sincerely. Much depends on the kind of relationship there was between the individuals concerned.

I agree with Dr Kotwal that the court cannot and should not dictate to a religious community on religious matters. But the heart of the matter in cases such as Roxan Shah's is that the court is in perfect accord with the teachings of Asho Zarathushtra, and it is Dr Kotwal and the other "devout priests" who are out of accord with the divine laws of Asha.

There is only one court which should concern all human beings. There is only one question each of us will have to answer: "What did I do to relieve the pain and suffering of the world, of my neighbor, of my brother, of my sister? What did I do to bring peace and harmony to the soul of the universe of which I claim to be a part?" How can the answer be pleasing to Ahura Mazda if we fail to bring peace and harmony to members of our own community? Ms PERIN DIVECHA

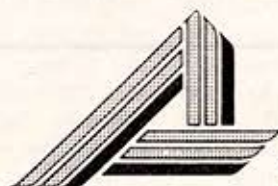
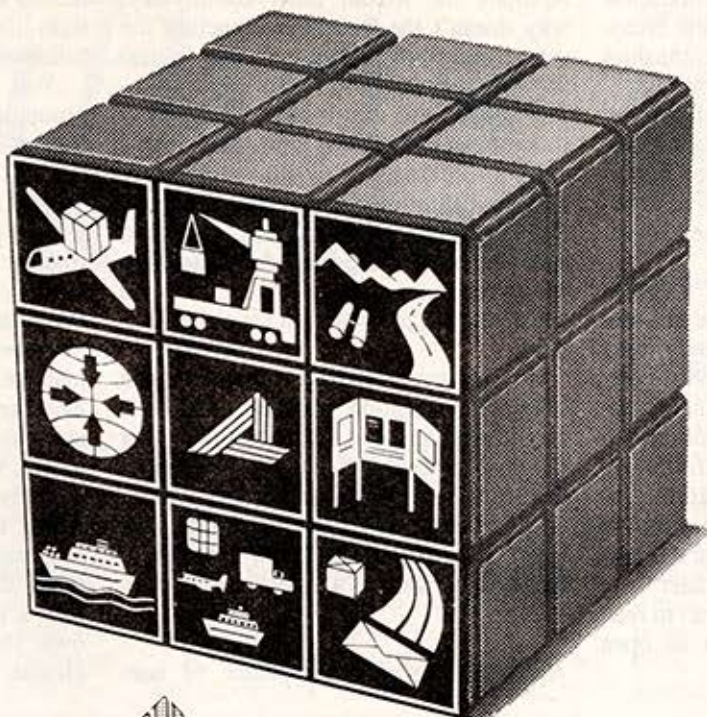
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"The Controversy..."

Mr Asfandiyar Sohrab suffers under some great misapprehension regarding our religion (Readers' Forum, *Parsiana*, February 1991). Where, pray, does it say that "Zoroastrianism forbids interreligious marriages?" This is downright nonsense made up by certain priests and the orthodoxy in the name of holy Zarathushtra who was nothing if not totally spiritual.

• Where does it say that Zoroastrians are "patriarchal" (whatever that might mean to people like Sohrab)? Indeed, Zarathushtra treated men and women as absolute equals — a reading of the *Gathas* should make that amply clear.

• We do not need human leaders "to guide us and to keep us informed of the true tenets" of our religion. Unfortunately, they are too full of their own flaws and we certainly do not need a Parsi Khomeini dictating to us. The very word Zoroastrian means coming from and following Zoroaster. Therefore, the *Gathas*, the divine revelation of the Prophet himself, is all that is necessary for any true Zoroastrian to accept as his/her "leader." I would urge people like Mr Sohrab to read them in all humility and with an open mind.

Bigotry has no part in any religion, more particularly in the Zoroastrian religion. It is, alas, human beings who have in their bigotry and ignorance polluted the purity of our noble religion.

G. PATEL

Apropos the Roxan Shah controversy, why doesn't the Panchayet sanction the use of one dokhma (not currently in use) for the usage of those Parsis, male or female, who have married out of the community, but still profess their faith? In this way our community would not lose out and the feelings and sentiments of many a Parsi would be spared the hurt, anger and humiliation of being denied the last rites of the religion he or she is born into and has continued to profess in his or her lifetime.

If a person is barred from using one religious institution (dokhma) the rule should also apply to the use of our other religious places. But the use of agiaris and atash bahrams by such Parsis continues (showing a desire to cherish their religion) and so denying them the use of the doongerwadi is a hypocrisy!

Ms K. H. RANJI

Acceptance or non-acceptance of non-

Parsis into the fold of the Parsi community remains a hotly-debated question in issue after issue of *Parsiana*.

Prophet Zarathushtra's purpose was to create good Zoroastrians. Anyone who prays from the *Khordeh Avesta*, follows the do's and don'ts and lives a Zoroastrian life has all the right to call himself a follower of Zoroastrianism.

We, Parsis, are a community — a group of ex-Iranian refugees in India who follow Zoroastrianism. Parsis, as a sect, did not exist in Zarathushtra's time, so there is no way He could have granted us a monopoly over the practice of Zoroastrianism. His is a religion given to mankind by Ahura Mazda; we, Parsis, enjoy the good fortune of being born into it.

Nevertheless, we have every right to manage, preserve and defend our communal charities and property such as agiaris, atash bahrams, dokhmas, baugs, etc which were built by Parsis for Parsis. Nobody who is not a Parsi must be allowed to trespass into Parsi community property if we do not want him to. Non-Parsi Zoroastrians ought to form their own separate community and create their own institutions from which, if they choose, they may logically exclude Parsis

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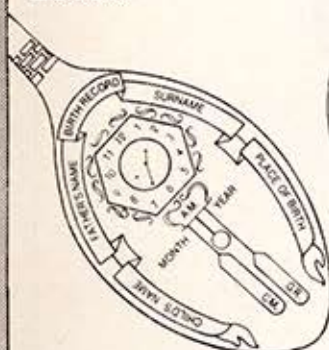
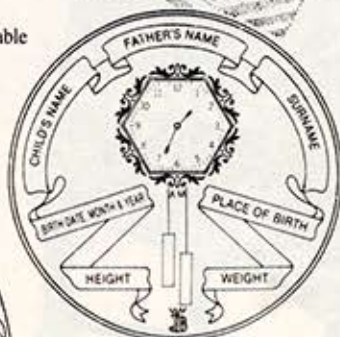
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This focuses on the need to define a "Parsi." Personally, I believe that a true Parsi is one who is born of both Parsi parents. But, in fact, children of non-Parsi mothers and Parsi fathers presently enjoy the option of admission into the community fold. Until the High Court judgement which granted this option is successfully challenged one way or another and reversed by a higher judicial authority, a Parsi can be any one who has a Parsi father.

The recent doongerwadi episode raises another vital question: when does a born Parsi cease to remain one? The answer is logical and does not depend on whether the marriage between a Parsi and a non-Parsi was done under the Special Marriage Act or under any other religious rite. If a Parsi man marries a non-Parsi woman his child is admitted as a Parsi: by this it is acknowledged that he has remained a Parsi. On the other hand, the child of a Parsi woman married to a non-Parsi man is not admitted as a Parsi: by this it is acknowledged that she does not remain a Parsi.

Although this position is perhaps discriminatory, it devolves from the law of the land where we live and we can do nothing but uphold the High Court decision until it gets overruled. There are other biases in our laws with which we are forced to live as well. Of course, the case law would obviously apply to Parsis living in India only.

KHURSHED PASTAKIA

Gujarati translations

Eleven years ago, illustrated children's books on our religion — Book I, *Zarathushtra*; Book II, *The Navjote*; Book III, *The Kusti Prayers*; and Book IV, *Ahura Mazda and the Creation* — were first published by the Delhi Parsi Anjuman. Since then, activity books matching the readers were published for the first three books.

The series has now broken new ground. Ms Dinaz Choksi, who runs a school for Parsi children in Gujarat, has requested Ms Pareen Lalkaka to prepare simple, Gujarati translations of the readers. These translations will help both the children and the teachers to follow the English of the original.

Xerox copies of the Gujarati translations will be sold, for a nominal price, with the readers, and many Parsi children living in the rural areas of Gujarat and in the provincial towns will benefit. The

expense for this work is being borne by Ms Pareen Lalkaka.

Each generation adds something new and fresh to the previous one. May the little farohars, our children, grow wings and fly to heights their parents and grandparents never achieved. May the divine flame of our ancient faith never die. Amen.

Ms PILOO JUNGALWALLA
New Delhi

Jhansi Anjuman's appeal

The Parsi Anjuman, Jhansi, needs help urgently to repair its dharamshala and renew electric connections, etc which require an estimated outlay of one lakh rupees.

Additionally, the boundary walls of the aramgah are in a deplorable state and certain graves need immediate repairs. A new electric connection also needs to be installed at the aramgah. The estimated expenditure is in the region of Rs 30,000 to 45,000.

We appeal to all Zoroastrian associations, anjumans and individuals to help us by donating generously. Your valued bank draft or cheque may be drawn in favor of the Jhansi Parsi Anjuman and addressed to the undersigned c/o Ms F. P. Boyce, 118, Civil Lines, Jhansi, U.P. 284001.

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Kanpur Dare-Meher repair

The B. N. Javeri Dare-Meher established at 63/5, Mahatma Gandhi Marg, Kanpur, 208001 in 1930, is one of the only two functioning agiaries in Uttar Pradesh. Parsis from adjoining districts such as Lucknow and Jhansi also visit it frequently.

The building, including the mobed quarters and some blocks for poor Parsis built in 1910, needs immediate repairs. We do not have sufficient funds to meet this expense as well as regular expenses of the agiary such as payments for kathi.

We therefore appeal to the Parsi community to help us with generous donations enabling us to maintain our Dare-Meher.

A. K. MERCHANT,
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Edited by Arnavaz S. Mama

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Events and Personalities

Parsis and public premises

Parsi contribution to Indian law is prodigious and continues to be so. The furore over the draconian Public Premises (Eviction of Unauthorised Occupants) Act 1971 is a case in point. The black Act which permits government bodies to evict tenants by a notice and an internal hearing by a nominee of the body issuing the eviction notice, has been fought in the courts since its inception.

But the main battle took place before a divisional bench of the Bombay High Court comprising Justice Sam P. Bhargava and Justice B. N. Srikrishna. Fighting on the tenants' behalf was the renowned constitutional jurist Hormusji M. Seervai assisted by a battery of lawyers including his son Navroze, Aspi P. Chinoy, and solicitors E. J. Balsara of Payne and Company and Homa D. Petit of Gagrut and Company. The plaintiff in the lead case was Minoo Framroze Balsara, the main defendant being the Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd, a government of India body. The lawyers appearing on the various government bodies (like the Life Insurance Corporation of India, the National Textile Corporation, Air India, Dena Bank, etc) included K. S. Cooper, his two sons, Soli and Tushar, Bomi R. Zaiwalla, and Ms Zia Mody assisted by solicitors from the firm of Mulla and Mulla and Cragie Blunt and Caroe. Unfortunately due to an earlier Supreme Court ruling the learned Judges felt obliged to uphold the Act and give their decision against the tenants in February this year.

The Public Premises Tenants' Association which spearheaded the tenants opposition to the Act is headed by lawyer Merzi Chinoy (with Ranjit Mahadevi and his daughter Ajithia mobilizing public support and collecting information) while another group called the Public Premises Tenants Action Committee was founded by Phiroze and Rati Jhaveri.

The public meeting at Patkar Hall on

April 2, convened by the Indian Merchants Chamber jointly with four other organizations which decided to champion the cause, had as its primary speaker noted jurist Nani Palkhivala who launched a broadside at the Act and the people who framed it. A resolution was passed at the meeting authorizing a delegation led by Pravinchandra Gandhi, managing trustee of the Saurashtra Trust that manages the Janmabhoomi group of publications, and former chairman of Dena Bank, to be taken to the Prime Minister and the President. They urged for a stay on the implementation of the Act till a new government could come to office and then amend the draconian provisions of the Act. About 10 days later the Prime Minister's office issued instructions to certain ministries to stay all further action under the Act till October 1991.

Gujarat's youngest judge

At 43 years, Behram Jehanbux Sethna becomes the youngest judge in the Gujarat High Court, reports the *Jam-e-Jamshed* of December 2, 1990. He was appointed judge by the President of India. R. Venkataraman in December last.

He is the second Parsi to be appointed to this bench, the earlier Parsi incumbent holding this office 22 years ago, according to the write-up.

Sethna's legal career commenced as an advocate of the High Court, appearing for cases dealing with food adulteration, constitutional law, etc. Before pursuing a career in law, he had worked in the accounts department of *The Bombay Samachar*, the *Jamé* further reads.

All-Parsi TT match

Sixteen teams from Surat, Navsari, Baroda, Poona, Ahmednagar, Secunderabad, Jamshedpur and Bombay participated in the Second All-India All-Parsis Table Tennis Tournament in Bombay in De-

cember last, notes a write-up in the *Jam-e-Jamshed* of January 27, 1991.

The team championship was won by the Malcolm Baug Parsee Gymkhana. While the men's singles title went to Poona's Cyrus Jokhi, Ms Anahita Davar of Secunderabad won the women's singles title. Kaizad Khandadia won the junior singles title and was declared "the most sporting player," while Neville Irani, won the sub-junior singles title and was adjudged "the most promising junior." Zubin Panthaky and Percy Mehta beat Zarkis Khandadia and Rohinton Toddywalla to emerge winners in the men's doubles category. Panthaky along with Ms Spenta Patel however lost out to mixed doubles champions Jokhi and Ms Meher Hodiwalla, the *Jamé* reports. The Champion of Champions Trophy was awarded to the 42-year-old veteran Zarkis Khandadia of Bombay.

The four-day tournament was co-sponsored by Associated Breweries and Bombay Parsi Punchayet trustee Jamshed Guzder. The host team, Mahim Association, arranged for the participants' stay, accommodating them at the Petit Sanatorium and Panday Dharamshala, the paper further adds.

Cricket in Calcutta

"Memories of...games lost and friendships won" stayed with the participants at the end of the Quadrangular (Jiji Irani Cricket Competition) played by teams from Calcutta, Jamshedpur, Nagpur and Secunderabad, writes convenor Numi Mehta. The host team, Calcutta, lost to Secunderabad in the finals played at the Calcutta Parsee Club during the Christmas week, 1990. The Calcutta team "ended their chase some 20 odd runs short" of Secunderabad's 183. "A spate of dropped catches and a riot of misfielding cost the Calcutta Parsis dear," writes Numi.

Noshir Mehta of Secunderabad was declared "Man of the Match" while the

"Man of the Series" title went to Perseed Jall of Nagpur "who was as miserly in bowling as he was prolific in batting." A special prize for "incredible performance in the previous year" was given to Jamshedpur's Roomi Battliwalla. Another player who was substantially in the limelight was Homiyar Dustoor of Secunderabad who, despite a broken ankle just four weeks before the tournament and a severe bout of gastroenteritis en route to Calcutta, played for two of his team's three matches, the write-up informs.

Off the field "the pace was equally hectic" with the teams being invited to dinners hosted by the Rabadis and Gimis, the dinner-dance on Christmas eve, and the campfire show which was the finale, Numi further informs.

Cycling wizards

Two medals, a silver and a bronze, were won by Bombay's Ms Sheraz Palkhiwalla (16) at the 23rd Junior National Cycling Championships at New Delhi in December 1990, while elder brother Aastad won a bronze at the same meet, notes a press release. Sheraz won a silver in the 1,000 m individual pursuit and a bronze in the 500 m time trials for girls under 16. Seventeen-year-old Aastad came third in the 1,000 m sprint for boys under 18, the release informs.

Setting meet records in the past at different cycling competitions, Aastad presently holds the title of the Fastest Man in the State of Maharashtra on Two Wheels while Sheraz has been declared the Fastest Girl in the State of Maharashtra on Two Wheels.

Bemedalled cyclists Sheraz and Aastad Palkhiwalla. (Right) Dady and Yadley Patell: on goodwill journey



Bettering their performances at each successive meet, the inspiration for the duo's achievements comes from their parents Zarin and Mehli who have been champion cyclists themselves, according to a feature in *Debonair*, January 1991. A rigorous training schedule for the junior Palkhiwallas starts months ahead of the actual event. Their day begins at three in the morning when the siblings set out on the highway. After an initial 10 to 15 km warm-up session they head for a 30 km sprint and paced high speed pedalling goaded by their father who accompanies them on his scooter. At such sessions, Aastad is said to have recorded a speed of over 60 kmph, according to Mehli.

A collection of eight racing bicycles, preserved clothing and other racing equipment handed down from the parents have given the Palkhiwalla children an edge over other competitors since sponsorship of cyclists is limited, notes the *Debonair* article.

A striking victory

Representing the Maharashtra team, Ms Monaz Rusi Cooper was declared the girls' champion at the Junior National and Interstate Carrom Championships, reports *The Afternoon Despatch and Courier* of December 19, 1990. She defeated her contender B. Jyothi of Hyderabad in two straight games (25-4; 25-0) in



the finals at the Life Insurance Corporation-sponsored event played in New Delhi from December 11-14, 1990.

The others on the Maharashtra team included Monaz's sister Dilshad, Ms Manisha Nagaonkar, Ms Shubhangi Kale, Ms Mansi Paradkar and Ms Meghna Kedari. Their collective performance won them the team championship in the junior girls' event.

A student of Sydenham College, earlier it was at the Maharashtra State Senior Carrom Championships where Monaz shared the mixed doubles title with Harji Boricha, reports the *Jam-e-Jamshed* of February 10, 1991.

Patell's moped odyssey

"I am journeying not for breaking any records but for the joy of it," maintained Dady Cowasha Patell who, at the age of 67, traversed the road route from Kanyakumari to Delhi on his TVS Champ moped in November last. Even though his appeal for sponsorship did not evoke any response, the retired engineer formerly in the service of the Andhra Pradesh government set out on his 3,031 km journey in good earnest, reads a letter from Patell to *Parsiana*.

On the journey from Kanyakumari to Secunderabad, Patell had the company of his daughter Yadley. Regardless of the incessant rains, the father and daughter team covered about 50-55 km every day. After reaching their hometown, Secunderabad, Patell journeyed alone.

Along the way the Nagpur anjuman felicitated him with a cash purse. Among the memorable experiences Patell reported were a major blockage on the road with about 200 bullock carts on one side and 50 trucks on the other making it impossible for him to progress. "The truck drivers lifted my machine and placed it on an embankment 10 feet high and I drove to the other side over a narrow ridge where friendly truck drivers placed it on the highway again," reports Patell. He encountered similar consideration in other regions also.

Save for one accident which left him with a few bruises and a sprained finger, the rest of the course was a straight ride although he did have to maneuver over neglected roads. Originally he had intended under-

taking his goodwill mission right up to Kashmir. But finally he had to abandon the idea because of political unrest in that state, Patell informs.

In '88 Patell had undertaken a similar road mission on a two-wheeler from Secunderabad to Pune.

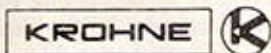
BOI's first lady GM

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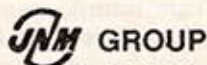
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manager of the Bank of India (BOI) is Ms Nergish J. Khambatta, reads a press release. With a legal background behind her, Khambatta joined the BOI in 1962 as an officer in the legal department. Before taking over as the general manager she served as deputy general manager for five years, the release informs. At 55 years, Khambatta is said to be the youngest general manager of the Bank.

A former advocate registered with the Bombay High Court, during her tenure with the Bank she has served on the legal committee of the Indian Banks' Association and was additionally selected to represent commercial banks on various committees of the Reserve Bank of India, her bio data informs.

She is a guest lecturer at the Bankers' Training College of the RBI and the Management Development Institute. Her own academic background includes degrees in science and law before she proceeded to complete her articles with M/s Gagrut and Company, further reads her bio data.

Central Bank's GM

His past experience in international banking and foreign exchange, personnel and credit favored Jimmy N. Chinoy's appointment as general manager, Central Bank of India in January this year, notes a press release from the Bank. His previous appointment was as deputy general manager, international and personnel, according to the press release.

During his association with the Bank for over three decades he has been on special deputation to the UAE, UK and USA. While abroad he had benefitted from advanced training in foreign exchange, his bio data informs. He had won the Kings' College, University of London prize for standing first among the Commonwealth students at the Gilber Lectures in Banking. He is also an active member of trade bodies like The Transport Committee of the Indian Banks' Association and the Foreign Exchange Dealers' Association of India, adds the bio data.

New post for Master

His appointment as visiting professor of homoeopathy at the Hahnemann College in Santa Monica, California makes Dr

Farokh Jamshed Master one of the youngest professors on the institution's academic staff, notes a press release. During a recent three-week visit to the USA, Master featured in an hour long program on Channel 63, telecast live from New York.

An author of 14 books on homoeopathy and medical subjects, Master has sev-



(Above)
Bankers
Khambatta
(left) and
Chinoy:
gaining credit.
(Below)
Master:
spreading
homoeopathic
knowledge

eral scientific research papers to his credit, his bio data informs.

Master received his education at the Bharda New High School, K. C. College and the Bombay Homoeopathic Medical College. He is presently attached to the Homoeopathic Hospital in Vile Parle as its honorary homoeopathic physician. Additionally, he offers his honorary services to the outpatients' department at the Saifee, Bombay and the King Edward Memorial (KEM) Hospitals, besides other medical institutions in Udwada and Navsari, the bio data further reads.

Rare concern rewarded

Rare concern shown to a distraught passenger of Singapore Airlines who had missed her flight earned customer services officer Aspi Jasawalla the Managing Director's Award for Outstanding Service on the Ground notes the Airlines' publication, *Outlook* of January 1991.

It was in '89 that Jasawalla and one of his helpers found an elderly Punjabi lady in tears at Bombay's Sahar Airport. Since the lady only spoke Punjabi, it was

with great difficulty that they were able to ascertain the cause of her distress: missing her flight (SQ 23) to Singapore and with no possible way of communicating this information to her relatives. Since the next flight to her destination was only the following day and since the lady refused to spend the night in a hotel, Jasawalla and his colleague offered to take her to her residence which she could only vaguely identify as being located on a farm in Andheri.

After a futile search around Andheri for four hours, enquiring with more than a dozen dairy farms and stables, they finally traced her residence at Jogeshwari. On the subsequent day the lady was flown to Singapore, according to the report in *Outlook*.

Decreasing world figures?

Everyone knows that fewer children being born results in decreasing population. But to what extent is best illustrated by the following item by Ms Jessica Mathews, vice president of the World Resources Institute, published in *The Washington Post*: "A young woman today who bears three children instead of the six her mother may have borne will have 27 great-grandchildren instead of 216."

The item was reproduced in the *World Development Forum*, a twice-monthly publication of The Hunger Project.

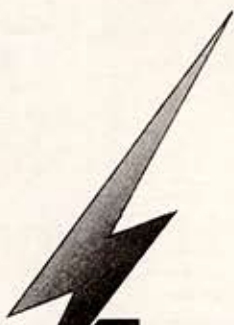
SPOTLIGHT

After the Maharashtra Day Parade on May 1, 1991 the Governor of Maharashtra C. Subramaniam presented the President's Awards to Inspector Feroze Sorabji Ganjia of the Detection of Crime Branch, Commandant Minoo Fardoonji Devlaliwalla, Director, Special Services, Home Guards and Ms Siloo Dotiwala of the women's wing of the Home Guards, notes *The Bombay Samachar* of May 5, 1991.

Mehli Lalkaka has been appointed general manager, western India of Airfreight Limited, notes the *Indian Express* of February 24, 1991.

Justice D. R. Dhanuka presented a shield of merit instituted by the Special Executive Magistrates' Society to Rusi N. Engineer, managing director of Industrial Boilers, notes a press release.

Compiled by Roxana H. Kaka



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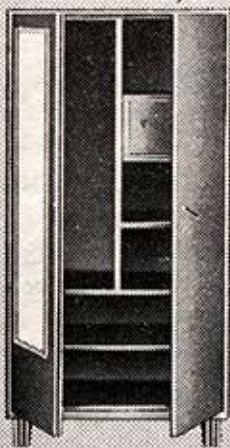
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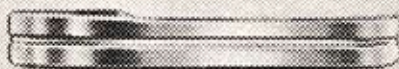
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A difference of OPINION?

Two opposing legal views in two different drafts are offered by noted jurist Y. V. Chandrachud on the Roxan Shah controversy

Faced with the barrage of conflicting and vociferous viewpoints in the controversy following the death of Ms Roxan Darshan Shah and the subsequent refusal to permit her body to be consigned to the Towers of Silence, the Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP) trustees sought the opinion of the former Chief Justice of India Y. V. Chandrachud on the subject.

Chandrachud reportedly prepared two drafts.

The first draft states that "In the Indian society it is a common phenomenon that a man and woman belonging to different religions go through yet another ceremony of marriage, generally in conformity with the husband's religion, in order to satisfy the sentiments of the elders in the husband's family... Ms Roxan Nazir could not be said to have renounced the Zoroastrian faith by reason of her marriage to Mr Darshan Shah under the Hindu Marriage Act, whether that marriage is valid or invalid."

After the Punchayet reportedly briefed Chandrachud further, his second draft stated the following: "The very fact that (a Parsi female) went through a form of marriage under the Hindu Marriage Act would raise a reasonable prima facie inference that she renounced the Zoroastrian religion while so marrying... It is then no answer to say that she married under the Hindu Marriage Act because she wanted to appease or assuage the sentiments of her Hindu husband or the elders in his family..."

Parsiana publishes extracts from the two drafts.

First draft

It is beyond the realm of doubt or dispute that persons belonging to any faith or religion can marry under the Special Marriage Act, 1954, without being required to renounce their faith or religion. It must follow that Ms Roxan Nazir was not required to renounce the Zoroastrian religion to which she belonged while marrying Mr Darshan Shah under the Special Marriage Act. It is equally important that not only was she not required to renounce her religion but no inference can at all arise by reason of her marriage under the Special Marriage Act with Mr Darshan Shah that she renounced the Zoroastrian religion.

The question which then arises for consideration is whether Ms Roxan Shah can be said to have renounced the Zoroastrian religion by reason of the fact that she married Mr Darshan Shah under the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955. Section 2(1) of that Act provides, in so far as relevant, that the Act applies (a) to any person who is a Hindu by religion, (b) to any person who is a Buddhist, Jain or Sikh by religion, and (c) to any other person who is not a Muslim, Christian, Parsi or Jew by religion. Section 5 of that Act provides that "A marriage may be solemnized between any two Hindus," if certain conditions are fulfilled, one of which is that "neither party has a spouse living at the time of marriage."

Since Ms Roxan Nazir was not a Hindu when she purported to marry Mr Darshan Shah under the Hindu Marriage Act, her marriage with him could not be solemnized under that Act. Under

that Act, a marriage can be solemnized only between two Hindus. That is to say, both the man and the woman must be Hindus in order to be able to solemnize their marriage under the Hindu Marriage Act.

Secondly, neither Ms Roxan Nazir nor Mr Darshan Shah could have solemnized their marriage under the Hindu Marriage Act when they purported to do so because, one of the main conditions mentioned in Section 5 of that Act is that neither party should have a spouse living at the time of marriage under that Act. Ms Roxan Nazir and Mr Darshan Shah had already gone through a form of marriage under the Special Marriage Act, 1954 and had become husband and wife. Therefore, both of them had a spouse living at the time when they purported to have their marriage solemnized under the Hindu Marriage Act. Assuming therefore, that they had their marriage solemnized under the Hindu Marriage Act, that marriage will be void and would have no existence in the eyes of law. A void marriage cannot create any legal rights, obligations or disabilities. The fact that Ms Roxan Nazir and Mr Darshan Shah had their marriage solemnized under the Hindu Marriage Act would have to be totally ignored as having no legal effect whatsoever which would affect their status in the matter of religion or in regard to any other matter.

The result of the aforesaid discussion is that Ms Roxan Nazir and Mr Darshan Shah can only be regarded as having undergone a form of marriage under the Special Marriage Act, 1954. Since mar-

riages under that Act can be solemnized regardless of religious affiliation, Ms Roxan Nazir did not cease to be a Parsi Zoroastrian by reason of her marriage under that Act with a Hindu. She continued to be a Parsi Zoroastrian after her marriage with Mr Darshan Shah under the Special Marriage Act, 1954, and that position remains unaffected by their purported or so-called marriage under the Hindu Marriage Act. I use the expressions 'purported' or 'so-called' because one of the parties not being a Hindu and each having a spouse living at the time of marriage under the Hindu Marriage Act, they could not have their marriage solemnized under that Act.

It is a farfetched inference to draw that Ms Roxan Nazir attempted to marry under the Hindu Marriage Act because she wanted to renounce the Zoroastrian faith to which she belonged. Even if her marriage under the Hindu Marriage Act were to be valid, no inference could have been drawn that she married under that Act because she wanted to renounce her religion. In the Indian society, it is a common phenomenon that a man and woman belonging to different religions go through yet another ceremony of marriage, generally in conformity with the husband's religion, in order to satisfy the sentiments of the elders in the husband's family. It is more than likely that Ms Roxan Nazir having already become Ms Roxan Shah by reason of her marriage with Mr Darshan Shah under the Special Marriage Act, agreed to have her marriage solemnized under the Hindu Marriage Act to satisfy the sentiments of the elders in Mr Shah's family. It is a well established position in law that if more than one inference arises from a set of facts, one ought not to draw or choose an inference which is calculated to cause prejudice to the person concerned in the matter of his or her legal status or rights.

My answer to question (a) therefore is that Ms Roxan Nazir could not be said to have renounced the Zoroastrian faith by reason of her marriage with Mr Darshan Shah under the Hindu Marriage Act, whether that marriage is valid or invalid...

The parents of Ms Roxan Shah were entitled to have her dead body consigned to the Tower of Silence. She was a Parsi Zoroastrian and nothing which happened after her birth can be regarded as having affected that religious status or affiliation.

In view of the fact that Ms Roxan Shah

had not renounced the Zoroastrian religion until her death, the trustees were not justified in refusing the permission sought by her parents for consigning her body to the Tower of Silence...

The conclusion that a Parsi has renounced Zoroastrianism should not be reached by a process of inference espe-

The parents of Ms Roxan Shah were entitled to have her dead body consigned to the Tower of Silence

cially when, more than one inference can arise out of a given set of facts. In appropriate cases, the trustees may ask for a written assurance, not necessarily on affidavit, from the person concerned or from close relatives in cases like the present, that he or she has not or had not renounced the Zoroastrian religion. In the suit filed against the trustees of the Parsi Punchayet by Ms Roshan Iqbal Chagla and five other ladies who have married non-Parsis, for registration as (voters) in an election (for the Anjuman Committee) of the Punchayet, a realistic view of the matter was taken by Mr Justice P. B. Sawant of the Bombay High Court. The plaintiffs' counsel made a statement at the bar that the plaintiffs "have continued and continue to profess the Zoroastrian religion" in spite of their marriage outside the community. The plaintiffs' attorneys agreed to send a letter to the same effect to the trustees. Upon this, the learned judge directed that the plaintiffs should be registered as voters in the election, with all consequential rights like the right to contest the election.

Second draft

If a Parsi Zoroastrian female marries or purports to marry a Hindu male under the Hindu Marriage Act, the marriage may be invalid. But, the very fact that she went through a form of marriage under the Hindu Marriage Act would raise a reasonable prima facie inference that she re-

nounced the Zoroastrian religion while so marrying. If she wanted to retain her religious affiliation to Zoroastrianism, she could have married the non-Zoroastrian male under the Special Marriage Act. It is then no answer to say that she married under the Hindu Marriage Act because she wanted to appease or assuage the sentiments of her Hindu husband or the elders in his family. The decision to marry under the Hindu Marriage Act is her own and must be regarded as such, though she may have taken that decision under the persuasive influence of her husband and his relatives. Implicit in her marriage under the Hindu Marriage Act is the prima facie inference that she renounced the Zoroastrian religion.

This position would hold good and the same consideration will apply to cases in which a Parsi Zoroastrian female marries a non-Zoroastrian male, first under the Special Marriage Act and then under the Hindu Marriage Act. Her marriage or purported marriage under the Hindu Marriage Act will in either case raise the same reasonable prima facie inference that in deciding to go through a form of marriage under the Hindu Marriage Act, she renounced the Zoroastrian religion. The question which one must ask oneself is: Did the Parsi Zoroastrian female marry under the Hindu Marriage Act? If the answer to the question is in the affirmative, it makes no difference, in principle, whether she first married the non-Zoroastrian male under the Special Marriage Act and married him again under the Hindu Marriage Act or whether her marriage under the Hindu Marriage Act is invalid...

If a Parsi Zoroastrian female has married out of the community, that is to say, if she has married a non-Zoroastrian male, the trustees are under a duty and an obligation to satisfy themselves that she has not renounced the Zoroastrian religion. They are therefore entitled to ask her or, in the event of her death, her closest surviving relatives, as to the form of marriage she had gone through and the law under which she married. If the answer is that she married under the Special Marriage Act, and only under that Act, no further question can arise because marriage under that Act does not require or result in the renunciation of one's own religion. The trustees are also entitled to inquire and satisfy themselves whether, after marrying under the Special Marriage Act, she had gone through a form of mar-

riage under any other law like the Hindu Marriage Act, the Mohammedan Law or the Indian Christian Marriage Act. If the answer to this query is in the affirmative, the trustees would be justified in drawing a prima facie inference that, in so marrying, she had renounced the Zoroastrian faith.

If a Parsi Zoroastrian female marries straightaway under the Hindu Law or the Mohammedan Law or the Indian Christian Marriage Act, the trustees would be justified in drawing the inference that she has renounced the Zoroastrian religion. That is a stronger case to draw the particular inference than a case in which she marries under the Special Marriage Act and marries the same person again under any of those other laws.

The trustees are entitled to ask for credible evidence on their points of inquiry because a bald answer one way or the other may fail to carry conviction. They may, therefore, call for an answer on affidavit so that some sanctity can be attached to the answer. There are, however, cases and cases, and the requirement that the information sought for by the trustees should be furnished on affidavit may be relaxed in appropriate cases, depending upon the exigencies

of a given situation.

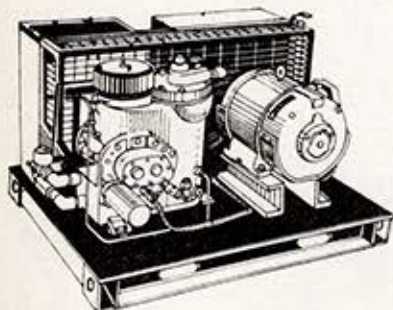
The prima facie inference which the trustees are entitled to raise on the facts stated above may be open to be rebutted by the concerned female or her close relatives by stating on affidavit that despite her marriage under any of the other religious laws, she did not intend to and did not, in fact, renounce the Zoroastrian religion.

Finally, the decision of the trustees that a certain Parsi Zoroastrian female who has married out of the community has not renounced or did not renounce the Zoroastrian religion may not necessarily bind the high priests of the community. They cannot be compelled by law to perform the religious ceremonies either during the lifetime of such a person or thereafter. In fact, no priest can be compelled to perform religious ceremonies by a court of law. It would be advisable for the trustees to publish to the community at large that their decision, that a female who has married out of the community has not renounced the Zoroastrian religion, will not necessarily bind the high priests who will be free to take their own decision in the matter in the light of their understanding and interpretation of the religious texts...

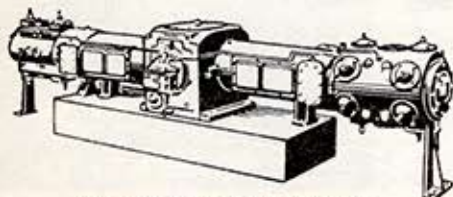
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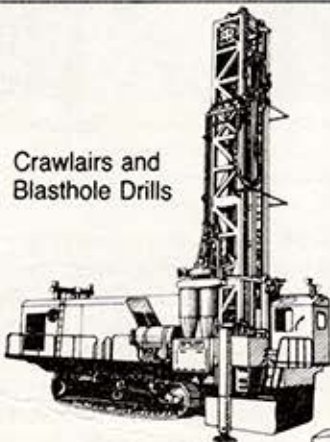
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The Poonawalla Group of Farms are reputed for producing the largest number of classic winners from amongst the stud farms in India

Gustasp Irani

An air of tranquility pervades the stud farm. In an enclosed paddock amble a cluster of dams, their blossoming pregnancies attesting to the success of the farm. "They are Canadian imports," our escort Dr S. R. Gandhe, vet and farm nutritionist, informs us. In the neighboring paddock, carpeted with lush green grass, a mare nuzzles her foal which is amazingly steady on its day-old, spindly legs. In another dry paddock, while a few hungry yearlings sniff the empty feeding bays, others stroll over to the trough to lap water. The silver-grey stallion however, does not share his enclosure. The resident prima donna — the stud — moves with springs in his feet, the muscles of his powerful haunches rippling with each stride. We move on to the maternity ward, sprinklers drizzling water across our path.

The calm and idyllic setting is deceptive. Spread as the farm is across 200 acres of land comprising three farms at Hadapsar, Manjri and Theur (near Poona), it is almost a factory producing high-precision racing machines — thoroughbred horses. At the Poonawalla Group of Farms, the produce is one of the very best in the country. "To date the progeny of our Farms have won over 100 classics, the largest number of classic winners from any farm in India," says Dr Cyrus S. Poonawalla, senior steward and former chairman of the Royal Western India Turf Club (RWITC) and one of India's leading racing personalities. These include four consecutive wins (1988, 1989, 1990 and 1991) in the country's preeminent race — the Indian Derby.

The fame of the Farms, owned by the Poonawalla brothers Cyrus and Zavaray,

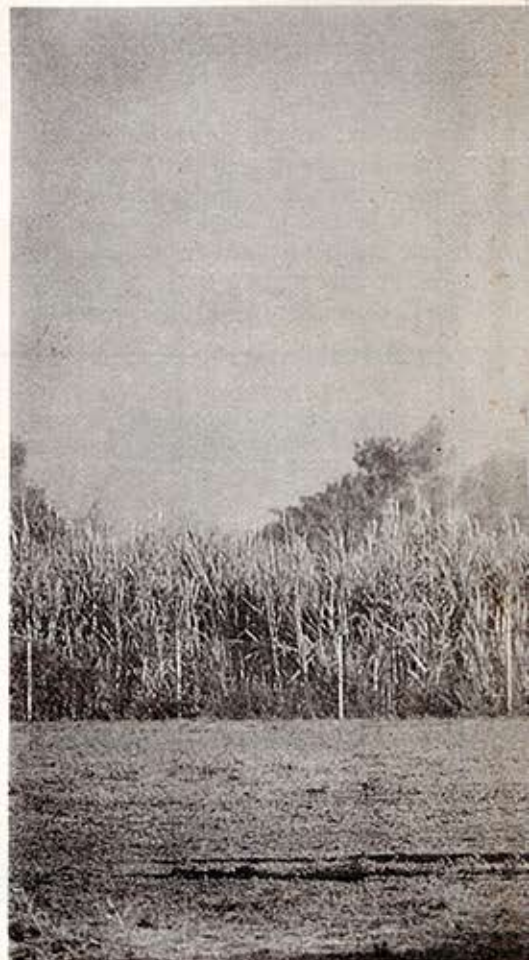


Cyrus (left) and Zavaray Poonawalla deliberating before a race

Photo: Yasmin D. Poonegar

has since been scaling new heights. The Poonawallas' romance with the Indian Derby began with a flirtation in 1946 when the first crop of horses bred by their father Soli Poonawalla graced the race-tracks and one of his horses lost the race by a short head. It was the closest they came to winning the Derby in 42 years, even though their horses won almost every other classic race in the country. Then, in 1988, the jinx snapped, and it was four wins in a row!

In keeping with their high profile image, the Poonawallas sponsored in 1990 and 1991 the richest race in the country — the Poonawalla Breeders' Million — which guaranteed a winner's purse of a million rupees. They will be sponsoring the race for the first five years. "The race is the brainchild of Indian breeders and modeled on the lines of the world famous Cartier Million and Piaget Million. It was very doubtful whether the race would



have enough entries and it appeared that the likely sponsor would need to fill in a big gap. Someone had to take the lead," said Zavaray at a press conference, explaining how the Poonawallas decided to sponsor the race.

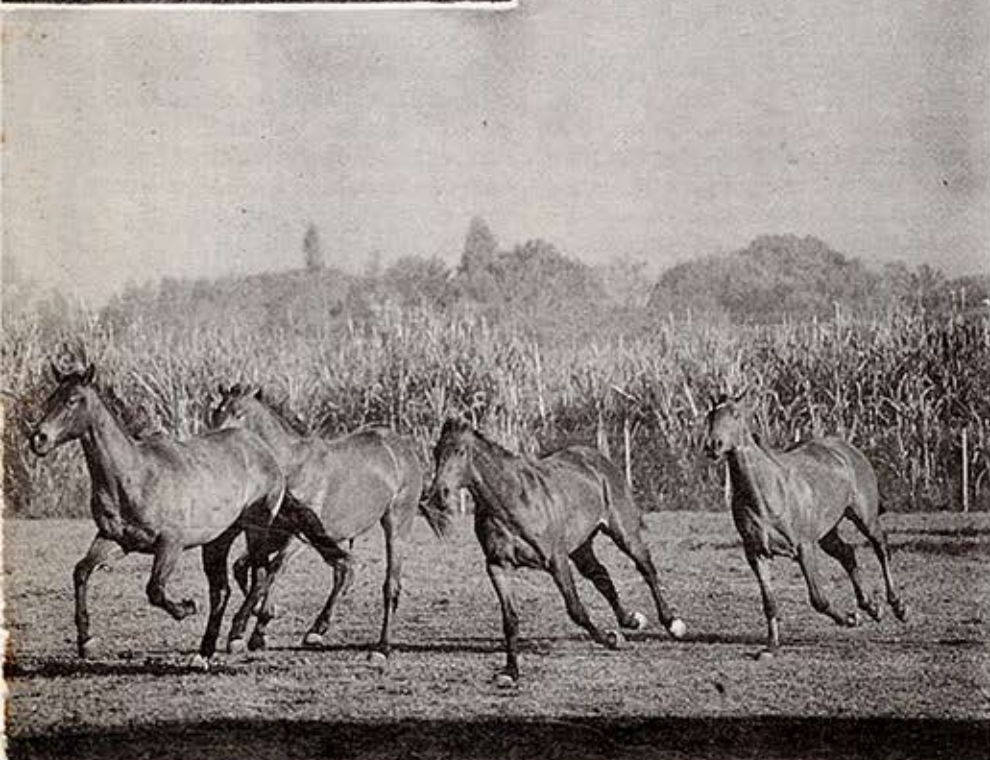
For sport and for business

The brothers have successfully struck a balance between racing and breeding.



At the Poonawalla Group of Farms, the unbridled horses get space to exercise their legs. Photos: Pramod Mistry (Right) Horses in action at the McDowell's Derby 1991

Photo: Yasmin D. Poonegar



"Racing is for sport, for the glory of winning. Breeding, however, is half sport and half business," says Cyrus. He adds: "We run quite a lot of our own horses for the joy of the sport and don't only breed to make money." Breeding, according to him, is a full-time commitment like any other business venture. It involves property, labor, investment... "and heartaches," adds Zavaray. He informs us that

only the previous night they had lost a foal from one of their prized dams. "It is a disaster both financially and emotionally. But that's all part of the game. There is a lot of frustration and tragedy on the one hand, and on the other, a lot of thrills, glory and money."

With four stallions and 110 brood mares, it is one of the biggest breeding establishments in the country. Many of

the 167 odd stud farms spread across the length and breadth of India are small outfits, with a handful of brood mares and no resident stallion. According to Cyrus, only about 100 of these could be recognized as proper stud farms. "Ten years ago, the number," he states, "was less than 50. The figures reflect the upswing in the breeding industry, particularly so in the last three years. There is a lot of upgrading of stock. Breeders are plowing back profits into importing good stallions as well as improving their infrastructure."

Yet Cyrus has a word of caution for new entrants: "A stud farm won't pay today unless you have ancestral family land worth crores of rupees." However, the determined aspirant need not be discouraged. "He could buy a mare or two and place them at an existing farm and get a kick out of it. He will probably make more money this way, than by racing horses," says Cyrus.

Land, or rather land ceilings, is the bane of Indian stud farms. Thoroughbreds need acres and acres of it to grow into champions. Says Zavaray: "Here 20-acre farms are considered small and 200-acre farms, big. In the West, 200-acre farms are considered small, while the big ones can cover over 2,000 acres." Adds Cyrus: "We would be able to produce better race horses if we had three times the amount of land we have."

Nevertheless, champion horses keep rolling out of the Poonawalla stud farms

every year. The two brothers attribute their success to a number of factors. "The fact that our group consists of three farms gives us certain strengths which make us different from other farms. For instance, we have a half mile racetrack to train our young stock," says Cyrus. The mini turf racetrack, according to Zavaray, is unique as it is the only one to be found in a stud farm in Asia. "It gives our youngsters a feel of the racetracks they will compete on, as adults," says Zavaray. Since the young stock do not carry riders, they are given a free run around the circuit, always under the personal supervision of one of the brothers.

As part of the toughening up process, the young horses are left in open paddocks. "Rain or shine, they are out there in the open," says Zavaray. On the other hand, they are nursed with loving care, for after all they are still babies. And like babies they, too, suffer from colic which is fatal for the horse.

There are other diseases too that the blood stock has to be protected against. Half a dozen vets, an orthopedist, gynecologist, pediatrician, nutritionist and general surgeon work around the clock caring for the Poonawalla wards. Yes, all of 24 hours, and to help them in the task, the Farm is floodlit at night. "The floodlights are for our convenience, not the horses," Cyrus clarifies.

In all other matters, however, the animals come first. Medical checkups are routine during which the limbs, diet, weight and general progress of the youngsters are scientifically monitored. "Our horses are all muscle and no fat; they may not sparkle and shine as fat horses do, but they fare well on the racetracks," says Zavaray. Medical backup systems, like the sterilized physiotherapy units, assist the vets. The incubator has a glass wall so that the mother can see that her baby is well looked after.

But the greatest backup system at the Poonawalla stud farms is the sister concern Serum Institute of India Ltd (SII). "We are in the field of manufacturing biological products. The farm gets the backup of our pathological and blood transfusion labs and other disease analysis and testing facilities," says Cyrus. The SII makes a significant contribution to the medical needs of the country. Here, for the first time in India, measles vaccines are manufactured as also other life saving drugs like anti-snake venom serum, tetanus antitoxin and more, according to the company's literature.

The Thoroughbred

The thoroughbred is not a product of natural evolution but the result of selective breeding. Peter Willette, in his book *An Introduction to the Thoroughbred*, writes that the "intensive evolution" of the animal took place from the middle of the 17th century to the first quarter of the 19th century. "In the course of this evolutionary process, the average height of the race horse increased by about six inches and there was a corresponding increase in overall size and physical scope, strength, length of stride and speed."

The source of all horses acknowledged as thoroughbreds in all countries in which the sport of horse racing flourishes, can be traced to the British thoroughbred, according to Willette. The origins of the British thoroughbred, however, are shrouded in mystery. Yet if one traces back the pedigree of all thoroughbreds far enough, somewhere along the line will appear the names of three Arabian stallions — the Darley Arabian, the Byerley Turk and the Godolphin Arabian.

The main objective of the centuries of selective breeding has been speed and stamina alone. By definition, however, a thoroughbred is any horse that can trace its ancestry back to eight generations and is registered with the Stud Book Authorities (SBA) of any country, according to

Major S. Nargolkar, understudy registrar of the SBA of India which is the registering authority of all thoroughbreds in the country. At present the *Indian Stud Book* which lists all Indian bred thoroughbreds is in its 10th volume. The first *Stud Book* was published in the UK in the early 19th century, and is now in its 41st volume. Records of all thoroughbreds through the years are preserved in these tomes.

The Stud Book Authorities the world over have consciously let modern technology pass them by — artificial insemination is taboo. The problem with artificial insemination, according to Cyrus Poonawalla, is more serious than what appears at first glance. Years of meticulous pedigree records would be thrown into shambles by the mere changing of labels on test tubes. Only physical mating is permitted. There are no shortcuts for the stallions.

To add to their labor of love, the stallions must compress a full year's work into six months as all foaling must be completed by June. This is because, according to the thoroughbred calendar, all horses, regardless of when they were born, age one year on January 1. A horse born on December 31 will be treated as a one-year-old on the very next day — a disaster for a racing animal.

The non-quantifiable factors

There are the non-quantifiable factors of experience and dedication that add speed to the feet of the young stock that is bred in the Poonawalla stud farms. "We have a vast reserve of experience spanning three decades. We are constantly visiting all the leading farms abroad and learning from the best in the field. We also invite leading vets from America, the UK, France and Australia to advise us from time to time. This ensures that our technology is suitably upgraded to keep up with the latest developments," says Cyrus. And talking of dedication: "We are the only stud farm owners who personally do a rectal examination on our mares to determine if they are ready for mating," says Cyrus.

Sex: it's what a stud farm is all about and here the stallion is all important. "If your stallion is not a success, your stud farm suffers a setback," observes Zavaray. However, he clarifies that a good stallion does not necessarily mean success. "Put a good stallion in a misman-

aged farm and he is not likely to produce champions." In Malvado and Riyahi, the Poonawallas have a winning combination — outstanding stallions and an outstanding farm. The bloodlines of both the stallions, according to Cyrus, trace back to Nearco, the world's greatest progenitor.

Malvado, according to Zavaray, has created history of sorts in India — 22 of his progeny won in a single year, winning in that period total prize money of over Rs 50 lakh. He is also the sire of 28 classic winners. The other imported stallion at the Poonawalla Farms is Sovereign Silver who produced the 1990 Bangalore Derby winner. Some time back, Exhilaration, probably one of the finest race horses seen in India, joined the team of stallions at the Farms. Exhilaration was the first Poonawalla owned horse to win the Indian Derby. Says Zavaray: "Exhilaration brought us all the fame and glory. We wish to reward him with 25 girlfriends!"

Exhilaration is one of the few Indian bred horses to find a good stud farm willing to keep him as a resident stallion.

Most farms import their resident stud. Current government policy allows one imported stallion for each stud farm and permits the release of foreign exchange up to Rs 10 lakh for its purchase which, in the international market, amounts to little. Zavaray puts the equation in perspective. "The covering or mating fee of a top class stallion abroad would be about Rs 25 lakh which is two and a half times what we pay for importing a horse."

The results are reflected in the progeny. When asked how a champion Indian bred horse would compare internationally, Cyrus replied: "Nowhere. At best they will win a few races." However, he hastens to add that during his recent visit to Turkey to attend the Asian Racing Conference held there, the Indian thoroughbred could easily take on the Turkish thoroughbred. We met E. J. (Teddy) Beckett of the British Bloodstock Agency Plc who was in Bombay recently. He hedged against making comparisons: "It's not a fair comparison, the bloodlines available abroad, the facilities..." Pushed, he finally commits himself: "An exceptionally good Derby winner like Exhilaration would be middle-class in Europe... high middle-class at best."

The Indian stud farm has to make do with what is available. The Poonawalla Farms reject the make-do attitude — they push their resources to bring out the best. It all started in the mid-1940s, when Soli Poonawalla, established the Poona Stud Farm Pvt Ltd. Hardly had the stud farm established itself, when it suffered a setback. In the early 1950s, Morarji Desai was chief minister of Bombay State and he was committed to abolishing racing. According to Cyrus, the pall that had set

on the entire industry lifted in the 1960s. Around this time, Cyrus and Zavaray set up the Poonawalla Estates and Agricultural Farm. As they grew in size and expertise, they felt the need to add to their holdings and, in the 1970s, they acquired the Green Acres Estates and Agricultural Farms. "These three farms are what we call the Poonawalla Group of Stud Farms," says Cyrus.

But breeding is only part of the Poonawalla brothers' story; their commitment to racing runs deeper. In the racing fraternity they are highly respected as leading owners and senior office bearers in the administration of the sport in the country. Cyrus believes the racing sport will benefit if it is made open. "Let children in," he says, referring to the government policy that prohibits entry to persons under 18. "Make it a family affair. Let parents bring along their kids and make a picnic of it and at the same time enjoy the sport." As examples he cites racing centers in the West where it is a carnival of sorts. By contrast, in India, racing is largely a "sport for punters."

The rewards of their efforts invested in the establishment are on display in Cyrus' impressive office. Prominently placed are many Derby and Invitation Cup trophies. Their hunger for victory is generally insatiable. Horse owners recognize this, and come early to pick up the best of their crop. More of the youngsters are now sold in private deals and fewer animals reach the auction ring for two-year-olds.

Cyrus believes that private deals benefit both the breeder and the buyer. "In the ring, it is a split second decision with the hammer hanging over your head. In a private deal, you sit around and come to a negotiated deal. There are different types of trade-offs: buy-back options, part ownership..." The top price paid for a horse in the auction ring is Rs 3.5 lakh though cer-

tain from the defective lots may be picked up for as little as Rs 15,000. On an average, the ring price works out to around Rs 80,000 a horse. In private sales? No one volunteers any figures, though most will agree that the better horses are traded outside the ring.

The horse trading over, the young horses graduate from the stud farms to the racetracks. Here, their mettle will be truly tested: they have been bred and reared with an exclusive purpose — to run and run fast. The Poonawallas can do no more for their babies now: the trainers, the jockeys take over.

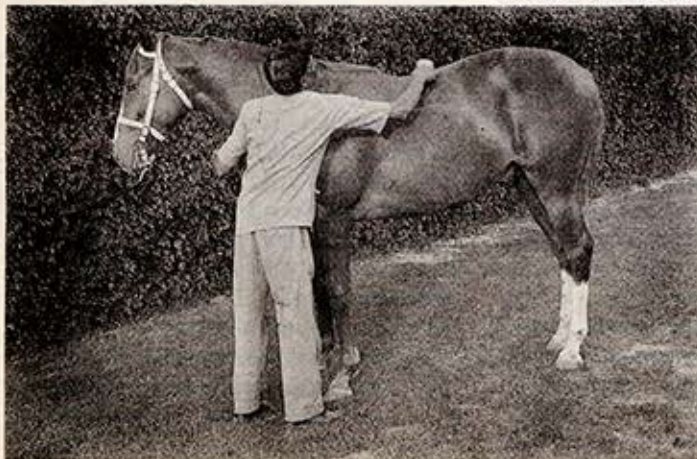
Cyrus and Zavaray take pride in their Parsi roots. "Parsis are still highly respected," says Cyrus who is optimistic about the future of the community. "I believe that children of Parsi women married to non-Parsis should be accepted as Parsis if both parents have no objections," says the ace breeder. However, Cyrus believes that in order not to confuse the community identity, such children who opt to follow their mother's religion (Zoroastrianism) should adopt their mother's Parsi surname rather than their father's non-Parsi one. Legally it (changing the name) is possible," he assures us.

The family portrait of the Poonawalla brothers includes Cyrus' wife Viloo and son Adar, and Zavaray's wife Behroz, son Yohan and daughters Delna and Simonil.

From the stands, the Poonawallas watch the horses they have bred face the starter's orders...and they are off, thundering down a carpet of turf. They swing around the bend, past stands infested with screaming crowds, jockeys slashing at their haunches with wicked whips, urging them to give a stride more than their best as they flash past the winning post. Also-rans are losers. Winning is the name of the game.

Horses handled with care and respect at the Poonawalla stud farms

Photos: Pramod Mistry



Shades of Purity

Depending on one's understanding of the religion, physical and ritual or mental and moral purity assume importance

Kaikhosrov D. Irani

The concept of purity is frequently cited as an important element in the Zoroastrian religion, and many implications seem to emerge therefrom. But it is quite difficult to indicate how, and at what period in its history, the idea of purity enters in the theology as an aspect of ritual.

However, before one considers these problems, the concept of purity itself needs to be clearly defined. The concept is an ambiguous one. There are three clear senses of the word in Zoroastrian theology:

- Physical purity, which refers to the cleansing of an object which has been subjected to physical contamination. Physical pollution in Zoroastrianism is not just adulteration of a pure substance or object, it is an adulteration which defiles the object and makes it harmful or injurious. Therefore, the physically pure is contrasted with the physically polluted, the latter capable of causing illness and disease.

- Mental purity, which refers to a state of mind that is free of confusion or error, one which is capable of clear, rational thought. The opposite of mental purity is irrational, confused, or obscurantist thinking. This idea is contained in the notion of Vohu-mana.

- Moral or spiritual purity, which refers to the goodness and authenticity of one's goals and aspirations which become the motives of one's actions. Impurity of this kind may result even when one does something which is justifiable, e.g. reporting a crime, on the ground that it is the right thing to do, if the action emerged from the desire to harm the alleged criminal. The motive for an exter-

nally right action may emerge from desires contaminated by hatred. Thus the opposite of moral or spiritual purity is the contamination of one's consciousness with hidden perversity. The requirement to do the right thing because it is right, i.e. the sanctity of benevolence in our motives, is contained in the notion of Spenta-Armaiti.

There is no doubt that these three conceptions of purity perform significant functions in the theology of Zarathushtra. However, there are other conceptions of purity which have been offered as important in the tradition. One such concept is ritual purity.

The notion of ritual purity is not a clear one. The prescriptions for achieving it are quite precise, as also the conditions for losing it. But the state of ritual purity, i.e. its content, is unclear. It is not just physical purity, but it is achieved through certain recitations and cleansings. What else is it supposed to be?

To explore the origins we must consider the stages of religious consciousness. The earliest form of religiosity, archaic religion, centered on the power of rituals, usually performed by shamans or witch-doctors. These practices were explicitly magical, that is, they were intended to produce effects through the working of mysterious forces. The shaman, or magician, had to be in a state of preparation for the performance of such operations and had to be purified of interfering contaminants.

In a later form of religiosity, which may be called ancient organized religion, the essence of religiosity is taken to be an interaction between two separate domains, the natural and the supernatural.

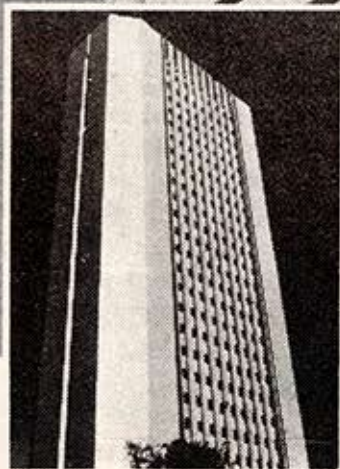
The interaction is a kind of social communication carried out in a ritualistic form by priests. In this framework, the priests were required to undergo ritual purification to be prepared to enter into an interaction with the divinities of the supernatural realm. The goal of religious life, in this context, is to establish a proper relationship with the supernatural world.

In many religious traditions there arises a still later form of religiosity, which we may call reflective religion. It is a fusion of a view of the world with a way of life. The religious act on the part of the believer is an acceptance of the view and a commitment to live by its way of life. This comes through reflection, acceptance and dedication within the consciousness of the believer. It calls for mental and moral purity as an essential requirement of religiosity.

It is perfectly clear that Zarathushtra's vision in the *Gathas* was a reflective religion. It was so understood by those who accepted it, and those in the ancient world who came to learn about it. At this juncture one might be inclined to ask how the concept of physical purity came to loom so large in the later Zoroastrian tradition.

I would suggest the following surmise as the most probable. In the lives of the early Iranian tribes on the steppes of Central and Western Asia, as well as in Northern Iran, the requirement of cleanliness in a nomadic existence with marked shortage of water, generated a series of practices evolved by its intellectual group, viz the priests. These practices successfully prevented the diseases of infection, and created a healthier and better physical and social environment.

Reaching for the Sky



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These practices were codified by the magi, the priestly group of the tribe of the Medes.

When these tribes became Zoroastrianized, they combined the practices of purification with an aspect of Zoroastrianism. The evil spirit in Zoroastrian theology was not just limited to moral perversion, it was also destructive of life and the environment. Thus the spread of disease was attributed to its nefarious activities. Clearly, operations which prevented diseases, particularly epidemics, came to be considered religiously worthy. Thus physical purity came to have a legitimate role in Zoroastrian practice.

But then, over many centuries, the practices of physical purification became fixed as ritual requirements. And such operations were either justified as necessities for priestly preparation, thus becoming purely ritual, or they were justified as physical operations which magically produced spiritual effects. The former, an aspect of ancient organized religion; the latter, one of archaic religion.

In the framework of the theological views of Zarathushtra, mental purity and moral purity are fundamental elements. Physical purity can be seen to be incor-

porated in its extended theology. But ritual purity finds no place and performs no function. Only when the reflective religion of Zarathushtra is gradually transformed back into the earlier modes of religious consciousness does the concept of ritual purity acquire some meaning and role.

Ritual purity as a religious concept did play a role in the later priestly extension of the tradition, particularly in the Sassanian period, and became consolidated as orthopraxy (the continuation of old practices just because they were customary) by the Zoroastrian community trying to maintain its identity in Islamic Iran and later in India. For those to whom maintenance of the historical tradition becomes a religious obligation, the continuance would be a reasonable religious practice. And others, for whom religion tends to be doctrinal commitment and ethical striving, need raise no clamor for rejection.

But in the interest of truth and genuine religious understanding, the practices of ritual purification should be seen to be what they are: as products of religious visions, radically different from the religious vision of Zarathushtra, they were incorporated into the tradition for various

historical reasons, centuries after the advent of the Prophet.

These remarks should not be taken to imply the rejection of ritual. Indeed, every religion has a ritualist dimension. And the Zoroastrian ritual recitations of affirmation of faith, of memorialization, of collective worship at ghambars, are very much in accord with the doctrine. It is rituals which are quasi-magical, or blood-sacrificial that can be seen to be irrelevant to the Prophet's vision, and some even incompatible with it.

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What heritage must we preserve?

Chapter and verse from the scriptures are cited to refute the orthodox view on intermarriage

Dina G. McIntyre

The communal uproar surrounding the events following the death of Ms Roxan Darshan Shah has found its way across the Atlantic. Dastur (Dr) Firoze Kotwal's letter to the Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP) trustees was privately circulated, but not publicly addressed, at the Seventh North American Zoroastrian Congress in Houston, August-September 1990. And copies of letters to *The Bombay Samachar*, and *Parsiana* articles are now being circulated here. It is impossible to doubt the sincerity of Kotwal's efforts to keep alive his idea of what is a Zoroastrian ("The divine laws of God must prevail," *Parsiana*, September 1990). I am sure that he and the other high priests believe that what they are doing is right. But I think they are dead wrong.

Questions have been raised about whether secular laws should take precedence over religious laws or vice versa. In the United States, the free exercise of religion is guaranteed by the Constitution, but the right is not unqualified. In the case of *Bob-Jones University vs United States*, 461 US 574 (1983), the United States Supreme Court denied tax-exempt status to a university which taught and promoted the belief that marriage between different races was prohibited by the laws of God. The Supreme Court held that regardless of their good faith and sincerity, this teaching amounted to racial discrimination which is against the fundamental laws of the land. In *Bob-Jones*, the right to promote the belief was not at issue, just the tax-

exempt status of the university. In *Employment Division Department of Human Resources vs Smith*, 110 S. Ct. 1595 (1990), a private drug rehabilitation organization fired two counselors who had used a mind-altering drug as part of their religious ceremonies. Reversing the Supreme Court of Oregon, the United States Supreme Court upheld the denial of unemployment compensation benefits to the two counselors on the grounds that their use of the drug was a felony under state law. The Court held that the religious motivation behind the act of taking the drugs did not place the two counselors beyond the reach of a law that was generally applicable to everyone.

But, in Roxan's case the argument over which takes precedence, secular law or religious law, overlooks one crucial fact: There is no Zoroastrian religious law which authorizes any priest to deprive any Zoroastrian — man or woman — of the right to practice his or her religion because he or she has married a non-Zoroastrian. The fact that certain high priests in India say it is so doesn't make it so. They have to come up with chapter and verse. This, to date, they have not done.

While factually there is a difference between excommunicating a born Zoroastrian who has married outside the faith, and prohibiting a non-Zoroastrian from entering in, the motivation which underlies both actions is the same. A person who has married a non-Zoroastrian might wish his child to be Zoroastrian. If the children are allowed in, why

not the spouse? And if a non-Zoroastrian spouse is allowed in, why not any person who wishes to be a Zoroastrian? Thus an interfaith marriage is seen as a threat to communal identity.

But the things that generate the feeling of "community" that we all so cherish are a state of mind and shared experiences.

One has only to look around a roomful of Parsis to appreciate that we could not possibly all have come from one racial stock. In color, bone structure, and physiognomy, we are too diverse. The same racial diversity is apparent in the friezes at Persepolis and Susa, and, hundreds of years later, in the proselytizing traditions of the *Aerpatistan* where, for example, it is written: "When a slave professing any other creed comes over to the Good Religion he then becomes a direct subject of the King of Kings who shall give his price..." (*Aerpatistan and Nirangistan*, chapter IV, verse 29, pg 38 of the S. J. Bulsara translation, published by the Bombay Parsi Punchayet, 1915).

Kotwal's view is that racial exclusivity has been a Zoroastrian religious practice since time immemorial. But, with due respect, this is not correct. Not only is the *Aerpatistan* evidence to the contrary, but the Council of Mobeds of Tehran also have announced a different view. In an official opinion in May 1983 (see box), the Council responded to a request for guidance from Mobed Shahzadi of the United States.

Kotwal does not refer to the Prophet's words to support his conclusions. Instead

he attempts to justify his views by referring to the unknown authors of the *Vendidad*. He states that the *Vendidad* (chapter 18, paragraph 62) "prohibits union between a Mazdayasni and a non-Mazdayasni." But according to Darmesteter's translation of the *Vendidad* which appears in *Sacred Books of the East* (SBE — Motilal Banarsidas reprint) that, with due respect, is not entirely accurate. The verse in question states that Ahura Mazda is caused pain by a courtesan regardless of whether she sleeps with the faithful or with the unfaithful. And the commentary, which appears in a footnote, states that whether she gives her favors to the faithful or to the unfaithful, there is no difference. When she has been with three men, she is guilty of death. In short, the verse cited by Kotwal in support of his position has nothing to do with interfaith marriages. (The *Vendidad*, with its typically one-sided perspective, doesn't say what punishment should be paid by the fellows who enjoyed the courtesan's favors. But that is another story.)

Most religions do not approve of interfaith marriages. Some prohibit it. And there are passages in the post-Gathic Zoroastrian writings, as in the writings of other cultures, which show a pride of ancestry. But so far as excommunication is concerned, there is nothing in the *Vendidad* that authorizes excommunication for marriage to a non-Zoroastrian.

Kotwal cites no authority in support of his alleged "tradition" that a "a girl upon her marriage...is also deemed to have embraced (her husband's) religion." Any such "tradition" cannot be a Zarathushtrian tradition (regardless of whether promoted by Zoroastrians) because it is contrary to Zarathushtra's teaching that each person must make spiritual choices for himself or herself after reflecting with a clear mind (*Yasna* 30.2). Similarly, in *Vohu Xshathra Gatha* we are told that God's good rule must be chosen (*Yasna* 51.1).

If God himself gives us the freedom to choose, what human authority can take it away from us?

In addition to the *Gathas*, later Zoroastrian writings also are contrary to Kotwal's contention that a girl upon marriage is deemed to have embraced her husband's religion. The Council of Mobeds notes in its opinion that in *Aerpatistan*, Book I, chapter 5, verses 4 and 5: "...a non-Zoroastrian embracing the Good Religion is advised not to force

his wife into it."

Thus, later Zoroastrian tradition also respected a woman's right to make religious choices for herself. It is only fair to note that according to Bulsara's translation, the *Aerpatistan* also says that so long as the wife of a convert refuses to convert to the Good Religion, the converted husband should not sleep with her (Book I, chapter V, verse 5). Though I do

The Hindu husband of Roxan Shah comes from the same stock as our ancestors

not agree with this part of the *Aerpatistan*, it's clear that the overall objective was to bring about the conversion of the non-Zoroastrian spouse, not the excommunication of the spouse who was committed to Zoroastrianism.

While the *Shah Namah* may be more legend than history, some of our most famous ancestral heroes were the children of "mixed" marriages. The saintly King Kai-Khosrov's mother was an alien, as was Rudabeh, the mother of Rustom, the quintessential Persian champion (Surti translation, Volume II, pg 194-197, 252, 259; Volume I, pg 11, 43, 61-62). The grace and civility with which Sam treated Rudabeh and her parents makes a remarkable contrast to the conduct of the BPP and Kotwal. And just imagine what Rustom's reaction would have been if his local priest had been improvident enough to call his mother an "adulteress," his father an "adulterer" and Rustom himself "illegitimate." WHAM! Total annihilation. If the position of Kotwal and the high priests is correct, King Kai-Khosrov and Rustom (among others) would not have belonged to the community of our ancestors.

In those ancient (pre-Sassanian) days women too were treated with a greater measure of equality than in later times. We are told that Banoogoshasp, Rustom's daughter, was a renowned warrior in her own right and (although the granddaughter of a non-Persian) there is not even a hint that she was not considered a part of the community. Like her father, in times of need the community called

upon her to do battle in its behalf against its enemies.

In short, whether you look to Zoroastrian scripture, or to our ancient traditions, legends or history, there is no authority whatever to support the idea that Zoroastrians marrying outside the community cannot continue to be Zoroastrians or members of the community. In terms of the long history of Zoroastrianism, such practices are of comparatively recent origin. Under the common law, a custom does not acquire the force of law unless it has uniformly been observed "since the mind of man runneth not to the contrary." Kotwal's alleged "tradition" does not meet that test.

What I find unforgivable about the conduct of the BPP and the high priests is that in their attempt to preserve Parsi ethnicity and deter interfaith marriages (a matter of social engineering, not religion), they have reduced Zarathushtra's magnificent concept of divinity to that of a tribal god. If the God we worship is the God of the universe, how can it be wrong to ask His blessing on any human by mentioning his name in prayer? How did we sink from the high nobility of Zarathushtra's thought to such a narrow view? The name "Kotwal" itself is not an Avestan name. And what about Zoroastrians who are called "Lily" and "Natasha" and "Neville" and "Zubin?"

Equally troubling is Kotwal's reference to the *Vendidad* as religious authority. If the *Vendidad* is religious authority (as distinguished from a historical footnote) we should be following all its injunctions. But we don't. For example, the *Vendidad* regards a person who has handled or touched a dead body as unclean. In some instances, the uncleanness (according to the *Vendidad*) can never be removed [*SBE* Fargard III, verses 14(44) through 21(71)]. In other cases such uncleanness must be removed through an elaborate purification procedure before such a person can rejoin the community. Yet our community is full of doctors who are required to perform autopsies to get their medical degrees, who have delivered stillborn babies, whose patients have, on occasion, died during surgery, who have unsuccessfully tried to resuscitate a patient with internal heart massage, CPR, external heart massage, or other methods, who have tried without success to find a pulse in a patient who has expired, and who have otherwise touched death in the

Opinion of the Council of Mobeds, Tehran

Esteemed brother Bahram Shahzadi:

We have received your letter of April 20, 1983. It beautifully describes in detail how Mr Joseph Peterson, a Christian, studied books on Mazdayasna, realized the truth of the Zoroastrian religion without any person preaching it to him, became a Zoroastrian on his own accord and later had his navjote performed at the Darbe-Mehr of New York; also the opposition shown by certain persons on the occasion as well as the fact that certain parents have alienated their sons and daughters who have married non-Zoroastrians. The Council discussed the contents of your letter at an official meeting.

You have, in your detailed letter, asked the opinion of the Council regarding the acceptance of people into Zoroastrianism. Let us glimpse through Zoroastrian scriptures and find an answer to it.

We begin with the *Gathas* of Asho Zarathushtra to see if our great Prophet has reserved this religion for a particular caste or people and has forbidden the acceptance of aliens into it or that he has kept the Zoroastrian religion open to all:

"Hear the best with your ears
And ponder with a bright mind!
Then discriminate for yourself
The two doctrines (of truth and lie).
Let each man and woman, for his/her own self
Select the way before the Last Day ushers in." (*Yasna* 30.2)

"Whoso, with his speech or mind
Takes action against the follower of lie
Or leads him to tread the Path of Good
Pleases Ahura Mazda for good."
(*Yasna* 33.2)

"If a wise man, follower of Righteous Doctrine
Succeeds in winning over a follower of lie
So that he gives up his old doctrine;
He should, after satisfying himself,

Inform a religious leader

So that he is safe from harm by others."
(*Yasna* 46.5)

The above stanzas show that Asho Zarathushtra does not advocate force to spread the religion, but has kept it open for all. He has laid down certain rules and regulations for the propagation and promotion of the religion as well as for the acceptance of non-Zoroastrians. He has never reserved it for the Aryans or for a particular caste of people. *Yasna* 46.12 shows that the religion had spread into the Turanian lands during Asho Zarathushtra's lifetime, because he praises Frayana, a Turanian chief who supported Mazdayasna.

In addition to the *Gathas*, other scriptures also advocate acceptance. One may refer to *Hom Yasht* (24), *Dinkard* IX-4 and 14 and *Dadistan Dinik*, chapter 42. Also to *Aerpatistan* 1-5- 4 and 5 in which a non-Zoroastrian embracing the Good Religion is advised not to force his wife into it. Also refer to the same scripture 1-4-16.

The above citations show that the propagation and promotion of the religion is a meritorious deed. If we look at other religions, we shall observe that they also do their best in promoting their cause.

If we Zoroastrians believe that our religion is one of the great living religions of the world and that it is beneficial to all the peoples of the world, we must persevere to propagate it. We must accept persons who want to embrace the Zoroastrian religion. In fact we should follow those who set us an example.

With greetings, per pro the Council of Mobeds, Tehran

Ardeshir Azargoshasp

No 466, May 24, 1983

The original letter in Farsi was rendered into English by Dr Ali A. Jafarey.

course of their medical practices. Yet the high priests and the BPP don't deny our doctors admittance to fire-temples or to the Towers of Silence.

The *Vendidad* states that to permit any hair to drop to the ground without protective rituals is "the most deadly deed" and a person guilty of such conduct shall pay for it with his life [*SBE* Fargard XVII, verses 1 to 11(30)]. Fortu-

nately, our priests no longer have the power of life and death over us. But access to religious facilities has not been denied to Zoroastrians who patronize barber shops and hair dressing salons, on the grounds that they have violated the "religious" laws of the *Vendidad*.

The *Vendidad* prohibits anyone from throwing any bit of clothing on a dead body "even so much as a maid lets fall in

spinning [Fargard V, verses 61(171) to 62(174)]." Yet we cover the dead on the way to the doongerwadi.

The *Vendidad* exacts a penalty of 800 lashes if a person who has inadvertently touched a corpse merely passes by a tree (without touching it) before he has been purified. Yet a letter in *The Bombay Samachar* states that the doongerwadi in Bombay is planted with more than 6,000 trees. While I like the idea of trees on the doongerwadi property, it clearly violates the mandate of the *Vendidad*.

I was amazed to read letters in *The Bombay Samachar* which referred to the dokhma property as "sacred" and "hallowed" the implication being that the admittance of certain persons into its "sacred" precincts would somehow pollute its sanctity. Actually, the *Vendidad* considers a dokhma to be one of the most unclean, demon-inhabited places on the face of the earth. It requires that dokhmas be pulled down every 50 years, and promises that a person who pulls down a dokhma will have all his sins forgiven — a very un-Zarathushtrian concept [*SBE* Fargard III, verses 9(20) to 11(34), and footnote 4; Fargard VII verses 49(126) to 58(143)].

Ervad K. N. Dastoor is quoted in *Parsiana* as deriding the "reformist" emphasis on good thoughts, words and deeds, and stating that the Zoroastrian religion is its rituals. But the *Hormuzd Yasht* teaches something quite different. In the very first verse, Ahura Mazda is asked: "What... holy word is the strongest?" and He replies: "Our name, O Spitama Zarathushtra! who are the Amesha Spentas, that is the strongest part of the holy word..." The Amesha Spentas are, of course, the divine values of truth, good thinking, et cetera, which are the core of the Gathic teaching.

We know that the *Vendidad* was written by various unknown authors over a period of time, many hundreds of years after Zarathushtra (*SBE* Darmesteter Introduction, pgs xxx to xxxiv). Anyone who takes the trouble to read the *Vendidad* will quickly become aware that it is very far removed from Zarathushtra's original teachings, and that not even 10 percent of its rules are followed to the letter by a single Zoroastrian today, however "orthodox" he may be. Which surely demonstrates our good sense. Why then do we continue to refer to it as "religious" authority?

The *Vendidad* was never applied to the Persian nation as a whole under the

Achaemenians. Parts of it are believed to have been a code of the *Magi*, a tribe from Medea, who functioned as priests to the ancient Persians. We know that under the Achaemenians, the dead (including the royal dead) were buried, whereas the *Vendidad* prohibits burial of the dead — no exceptions. The Achaemenian kings were not *Magi* or students of the *Magi*, and at one time fought a war to put down a *Magi* rebellion. The Sassanian kings, who were of the *Magi*, attempted to enforce the *Vendidad* over more of the nation than just the priesthood (*SBE* Volume 4, Darmesteter Introduction, pgs xliii to lii; Moulton, *Early Zoroastrianism*, Lecture VI). The *Epistles of Minochehr* indicate that they were not entirely successful in so doing.

We also know that in Sassanian times the extraordinarily high number of lashes by which certain offences were punishable in the *Vendidad*, could be converted, at the priests' discretion, into a cash fine (*SBE* Volume 4, Darmesteter Introduction, pg xciv) — an innovative, revenue-raising system for the priesthood, and one which undoubtedly gave them great power.

No one really knows whether or not Zarathushtra was a *Magi*. His language was Gathic, an ancient form of the Avestan language which is believed to have been the language of the *Magi*, though no one knows for sure. But it is important to remember that he was persecuted and ostracized for speaking out against the tyranny of the priests and rulers of his country, and had to flee to another country entirely: "To what land to flee? Where shall I go to flee? They exclude me from my family and from my clan

If God himself gives us freedom to choose, who can take it away?

(*Ushnavaiti Gatha, Yasna 46.1*). Zarathushtra fled to the kingdom of King Vishtaspa, and was successful in converting the royal family and the people of this new land to his vision of religion.

The *Vendidad*, in addition to prohibiting various specified pollutions, prescribes punishments for assault, battery, manslaughter and other crimes. It addresses child support, breach of contract, the support and care of certain animals, the practice of medicine, and sets the amount of physician's fees (for healing a priest, the fee was a blessing, for healing others, more substantial fees were allowed).

Strange as many of its injunctions may seem today, they are not more strange than other early instances of human beings trying to enforce secular views in the name of religion. The early Catholic church mandated as an article of faith that the sun revolved around the earth, as Gallileo discovered to his sorrow. In medieval times the cell and the scourge were considered an aid to achieving Christian spirituality. And the inhumane punishments of the *Vendidad* pale in comparison to the inhumanity of the Spanish Inquisition.

Christian leaders have long since abandoned such early practices and beliefs, and now regard them as having only historical and not religious significance. Our "leaders" however continue to cite the *Vendidad* as religious authority each time they want to secure obedience to some unjust or irrational practice, even though in many other respects these writings are not followed at all. This is not right.

The "orthodox" say that they wish to preserve our heritage. I too have that desire. But I question: What is the "heritage" that the "orthodox" wish to preserve?

- It couldn't be the words of our Prophet, because they don't accord the *Gathas* much weight (mere "poetry," just "ethics");

- It couldn't be the *Vendidad* or the many traditions described in the later Pahlavi

works, because they don't follow to the letter 90 percent of those traditions either;

- It couldn't be a race. Not only are present-day Zoroastrians an amalgamation of ancient races (just as the present-day English are an amalgamation of Angles, Saxons, Jutes, Danes, Normans, Celts and others) but the Hindu husband of Roxan Darshan Shah comes from the same original stock as our most ancient ancestors. Everyone knows that Vedic and Gathic are sister languages and that Zarathushtra's people and the people of the Vedas shared a common ancestry.

- If it is the rituals, it should be remembered that we do not know for sure what rituals were practiced by Zarathushtrians in Zarathushtra's day. We do know that large portions of the prayers which we say today are in languages that did not exist until hundreds of years after Zarathushtra's time. Therefore a large portion of the rituals which we practice today could not have existed in their present form in Zarathushtra's time. We know from the linguistic evidence that they were created in Sassanian times.

In conclusion, our Prophet exalts benevolence, knowledge and reason as divine values (see also *Hormuzd Yasht*: "My sixth name is Understanding... My eighth name is Knowledge... My thirteenth name is the most Beneficent..."). Our community is full of vigorous, intelligent, kind-hearted and well-educated people. Yet we find ourselves sinking into the quicksands of the superstitious, the irrational and the small-minded.

The problems that confront us in this century cannot be solved by citing the *Vendidad*. They can be addressed by using our minds to search for the truth and what's right, with benevolence, and by making those good thoughts a reality with our words and actions — the Prophet's formula for a good life. Our rituals too can enrich our lives, if they are used to inspire and not injure. We don't have to succumb to paranoia. The choice is ours.

A practising lawyer in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania since 1963, Dina G. McIntyre is a science graduate from the Carnegie Institute of Technology and a Juris Doctor from the University of Pittsburgh School of Law. Since the past seven years she has been studying the Gathas on her own and in 1989-90 edited and published a series of 12 essays, An introduction to the Gathas of Zarathushtra, to promote the knowledge of the Gathas based on scholarly translations and rational interpretations, distributed free of cost to interested readers around the world.

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"Where there was opportunity, there was a Parsi"

Chairman of the Central Bank of India Noshir Mistry bemoans the complacency now affecting the Parsi community

Gustasp Irani



The romance of the Parsi community with the Central Bank of India (CBI) continues despite its nationalization in 1969. Noshir M. Mistry's appointment last year as chairman and managing director of the Bank makes him the third Parsi to be entrusted with the stewardship of the institution after the government took over its operations. Mistry's appointment is a vindication of his hard work, dedication and that extra ounce of commitment. "I've even had run-ins with the Mafia," he recalls.

This occurred way back in 1969 when Mistry was sent to conduct an internal audit of the London branch of the Bank. His investigations led to the exposure of a fraud of 20,00,000 DM. A Parsi called Sami Patel was the main accused. As chief investigating officer Mistry was the principal witness in the criminal trial which led to all the three accused being convicted and sentenced to long prison terms. The story might have ended there but for the fact that one of the convicted persons was linked to the Mafia. They sought to get even with Mistry. "For three years they hounded me," he states. A flying squad raided his flat and slapped false charges against him. But the British police department responded; they snared and exposed the corrupt cops in their ranks. Mistry was cleared of all charges but only after the intercession of the Bank of England which has jurisdic-

tion over all foreign currency matters in the city... It might have happened in a book; it all happened to Mistry. Years later he looks back at the events and shrugs them off: "It was a job and I had to do it."

If London provided the drama in his career, it also provided him with his specialized training in banking. Mistry pinpoints the three years between 1959 and 1962 when he was deputed to the London office of the CBI and Barclays Bank, London for training in foreign exchange and foreign business operations. Over the years his assignments exposed him to all the nooks and corners of the country and to different aspects of banking. Yet that stint in London was to be the cornerstone of his career. "My strengths are foreign exchange, advance management and... shouting," he says, and a hearty laugh cracks his stern countenance.

"Write that," prompts his wife Kati, deputy general manager, law, CBI, as she looks up from the school project she is working on with their 12-year-old son Danesh. Their Doberman sees it as an opportune moment to try and lure us away from the interview and earns a fabled shout for his efforts.

Probably the Parsi community too merits a shout. Mistry is distressed about the general impression that banking and bank jobs are synonymous with complacency in the community today. There

was a time when the Parsi link with banking was welded by the community's reputation for enterprise, integrity and honesty and the CBI and its founding father Sir Sorabji Pochkhanawala epitomized this spirit. Pochkhanawala left his job at the Chartered Bank to shepherd the operations of the newly established Bank of India. However when the European management of the Bank superseded Pochkhanawala by the appointment of Europeans as manager and assistant manager, he resigned in protest and started his own bank, Central Bank of India Ltd with Sir Pherozeshah M. Mehta as the chairman of the board of directors. The Bank survived two world wars, international and domestic economic depressions that saw the collapse of many financial institutions, and grew to become one of the largest banks in the country.

"Why do you call it a Parsi bank?" Mistry protests. "Its operations were and are nationwide. Its shareholders before nationalization were from all communities and there were few Parsis on the board of directors." According to Mistry, if it did show a bias for Parsis in its employment policy then so did most other banks in Bombay. "Parsis were employed in all banks, especially in the cash department. Most banks, particularly the foreign ones, had Parsis as cashiers and this was because Parsis could be trusted, because they were honest." Re-

recruitment policies of banks have changed considerably after nationalization. Now vacancies are filled by a central recruitment board.

The bank clerk job is prized, not only by Parsis but by all. The reasons are apparent for, according to Mistry, "it involves relatively less work, the emoluments are good, the perks are good: 30 days privilege leave, 30 days sick leave, 12 days casual leave, festival allowance, leave travel allowance... It breeds complacency." But for one driven by ambition and a sense of purpose there is more to the job — promotion and the opportunity to move up in the organization and in life. Here, according to Mistry, the average Parsi boy comes out second best compared to members of other communities or even Parsi girls. "They do not like transfers."

Transfer is the name of the banking game. There are two kinds of transfers, all-India and regional. Mistry classifies them as the fast track and the slow track. "You hardly find any Parsi boys opting for the fast track. They would rather stay in the slow track even if it means a lower chance for promotion and advancement. All they want is to stay close to home,

stay in Bombay." Parsi girls, by contrast, are more willing to venture out.

Mistry refers to innumerable instances to illustrate his point. Like the time a trustee of a Parsi punchayet in Gujarat wrote to him requesting him to stay the transfer of a Parsi boy from one branch to another — and here's the catch — in the

The bank clerk job is prized because it involves less work, good emoluments, good perks

same city! Or the time a Parsi lad shed real tears in his office because he was transferred from the Fountain branch to the Dadar branch. His problem: his wife suffered from cancer and he had to be close to her in case of an emergency when she might need to be rushed to hospital. When Mistry, out of concern, made inquiries to see how he could help the unfortunate lady, it turned out to be a big lie. "Imagine, that boy could say

such things about his own wife," Mistry shakes his head in dismay. On another occasion, on one of his postings, Mistry had a Parsi and a Gujarati working under him. The Parsi boy would brush aside Mistry's goading to improve his chances for promotion with: "*Kai mathu foru* (Why should I break my head?)" while the Gujarati lad would keep pestering Mistry for more work. "It is a question of attitudes," Mistry observes.

The attitude of the average Parsi boy in the banking community is only a reflection of the rot that is eating into the community as a whole, Mistry believes. "Earlier a lot of the travelling salesmen were Parsis; wherever there was opportunity there was a Parsi. The drive and enterprise which the community had is now missing. Young Parsi boys today lack the will to work hard; they are always trying to find an easy way out," says Mistry. Illustrating the point he observes: "Earlier Parsis were known for their craftsmanship. Cabinet-makers for instance. Where have these crafts gone? The problem is that young Parsis think it is below their dignity and status to be carpenters or plumbers even though they might earn much more in



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those professions than they currently do."

The general apathy of the community is even reflected on the sports fields. Mistry points out that previously Azad Maidan used to be ringed with tents belonging to Parsi clubs that actively participated in cricket and other sports. Now the only activity of most of these clubs is playing cards.

Mistry traces the cause of the changing value base in the community to the emergence of pseudo Westend culture — "Not Western," he clarifies — that has blurred the qualities of dedication and dignity in hard work that once made the community a progressive one. The pseudo Westend culture, according to Mistry, has also led to a decline in their knowledge of the religion — Zoroastrianism. "I don't just mean the ritualistic aspect of the religion, I mean the message of the Prophet," adds Mistry. "When young parents cherish the wrong values and know very little about their religion, what do you expect them to teach their children?" he asks.

For the community to survive Mistry believes that it is not only a game of reversing the declining numbers but one of

attitudes; the community must rediscover its enterprise and ability for hard work. There is opportunity enough in the country. Banks finance a number of development projects like the establishment of small scale industrial units which supply components to the large corporate manu-

"Young parents cherish the wrong values and know very little about their religion"

facturing houses. "It is hard work," Mistry warns. "You are a marketing manager, production manager, personnel manager, finance manager — all rolled into one." Another area is farming. After nationalization of the banks, special emphasis has been given to the agricultural sector. There are a number of schemes around, like rearing goats for meat or piggeries...

Mistry is distressed by the number of rural Parsis in Gujarat who are selling

out their holdings and migrating to Bombay. He believes that they should avail of the liberal agricultural policy of the government and improve the output of their farms. Parsi punchayet trustees in these areas ought to take more initiative and guide and advise the rural Parsis, he maintains. Bank loans can be arranged, not because they are Parsis but because they are Indians participating in the growth of the nation, he assures. And, of course, there is the possibility that the government may write off these agricultural loans. But Mistry refrains from commenting on this aspect of banking — it is beyond his purview.

Not all banks can offer social support systems or economic independence. Yes, admits Mistry, there are some sick nationalized banks but they have reached this sorry state more as a result of bad operations in foreign currencies and bad funds management. The CBI is not on the sick list. It is a living organism that needs to be nurtured and guided, very much like the Parsi community that also needs to be nursed and directed. While the CBI has Mistry at the helm, the community drifts rudderless.

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The Gathas restated

Noshir Vajifdar

The Gathas, Our Guide translated by Ali A. Jafarey. First edition published in September 1989 by Ushta Inc, P.O. Box 1260, Cypress, California, USA 90630. Pp: 124.

Zarathushtra's *Gathas* have greatly fascinated religious scholars for centuries because of their antiquity and profound spiritual content. Numerous translations have emerged and will undoubtedly continue to surface in the future. One of the latest is the one by Dr Ali A. Jafarey under the banner of Ushta Publications.

The *Gathas* are in the form of songs which were composed when writing had not been invented and the only way to present literature was to convert it into songs which could be sung and remembered. This is how the *Gathas* have been preserved, having passed from mouth to mouth, until they could be put into writing. In the process, they may have suffered some alterations from the original.

In the introduction, the author outlines 21 salient points which the *Gathas* establish. The message of the *Gathas* is universal — "it applies to all peoples and to all times, and is above regional and temporal differences." The author is wholly absorbed by the ultimate ideal of perfection which the *Gathas* reveal.

As Jafarey admits, the *Gathas* are most difficult to translate because they are in an ancient and dead language, and the meaning of many a word and phrase is unintelligible. Further, being songs with a definite meter, the language is not grammatical. Also, there may even be some passages which are missing. No two translations are therefore alike, though the underlying sense is preserved.

The *Gathas* are a part of a larger col-

lection of 72 chapters or *has* known as the *Yasna*. Jafarey calls the *has* "songs," which they originally were, and has numbered them differently. To help those who are used to referring to them as *has* of the *Yasna*, he has given in Appendix III the *ha* equivalent of the song.

He describes Song 2 (*Ha* 29) as "an interesting play" which provides the reason why Zarathushtra was chosen as the Lord and the leader exclusively on the basis of his righteousness and competence. He further says: "The play is not only the oldest Indo-Iranian play on record (approximately 3,700 years old), but one can even go further to state that it is the oldest dramatic poem in the world which survives," in the very words of the author, "the hero of the play — Zarathushtra Spitama." He then proceeds to the *Ahunavar*, on which the first *Gatha* is based, and describes it as "the principle of choice." He translates the *Ahunavar* as follows: "Both the Lord and the leader are to be chosen because of their righteousness. These two appointments are made with good mind, so that the acts of life are done for the Wise One, and the dominion of God is well established, in which the chosen person becomes the rehabilitator of the rightful who are oppressed."

Dr Irach Taraporewala, on page 4 of his book *The Gathas of Zarathushtra* says: "In the course of my own studies, I have read nearly 50 different versions (of the *Ahunavar*) made by as many scholars." This trend has continued even in the translations by some recent exponents of Zoroastrianism, such as Ms Mary Boyce, Khojeste Mistree and Jatindra Mohan Chatterjee who all differ from

one another. Do scholars differ for the sake of differing, like change for the sake of change? It will be a great day when a uniform interpretation of this holiest of our *manthras* is accepted by all.

The second equally holy *manthra*, *Ashem Vohu*, which extols righteousness if practised for the pure love of it, is translated by the author as follows: "Righteousness is the best good. It is radiant happiness. Radiant happiness comes to the person to whom righteousness is for the sake of the best righteousness alone."

The words "Asha" and "Righteousness" tend to be used as synonyms though in Appendix II of this book, Asha is described as "the universal law of righteous precision," one of the main "primal principles of life." Dr Taraporewala's exposition is more comprehensive when he describes Asha as "the changeless eternal Law of God, His First Plan according to which this universe has come into being and obeying which it is progressing towards its destined fulfilment." The best definition of this, I feel, is contained in the last inspired stanza of Lord Tennyson's *In Memoriam*:

"That God which ever lives and loves,
One God, one Law, one element,
And one far-off divine event
To which the whole creation moves."

The book under review comes to life in the Gists, which have been given suitable titles, and the two that appeal to me are "Answering Questions" (in the form of rhetorical questions posed by Zarathushtra to God) and "From Suffering to Success." For a better appreciation of the translations, the Gists should have preceded each song.

Reading through Jafarey's book, one cannot but appreciate how wholly and completely he has been overwhelmed by the *Gathas* which have inspired and guided him in life. He derives "a divine pleasure by reciting the songs in their original form." Unfortunately, the original text is not available to readers in this smaller edition so that a reference cannot be made to the actual words used by the Prophet.

The author describes his translation as "easy reading with a poetic touch." The bibliography at the end shows the large number of translations he has consulted. However, there are occasions when the author's assertion comes into question. To quote just two examples, the author

translates Song 4-8 or *Ha* 31-8:

"Wise One, I realized You as the first and the last, and the patron of good mind, when I grasped You in my vision as the true Creator of righteousness and the Lord of life's actions."

D. J. Irani's version of this is as follows:

"When I conceived of Thee, O Mazda,
As the very First and the Last,
As the Most Adorable One,
As the Father of Good Thought,
As the veritable Creator of Truth and Right,
As the Lord Judge of our actions in Life,
Then I made a place for Thee in my very eyes."

Song 8-10 or *Ha* 43-10 as translated by Jafarey:

"So, show me righteousness which I continue to invoke. I am well accompanied by serenity. Ask us what we want to ask you. An inquiry by you amounts to an inquiry by the strong, because the Ruler makes one strong and powerful through you (the enlightenment)."

Dr Taraporewala translates this thus:

"So guide me to Thy As(h)a, I have yearned

For Him: loyal to Armaiti I come;

Question us now, and test us that we prove

Our Faith; Thy testing shall sort out the brave;

These Leaders, true and strong, by Thee inspired

Shall lead the faithful and fulfil Thy plan."

Translations can never have the beauty and effect of the original but the use of

The message of the *Gathas* applies to all peoples and to all times

blank verse by Irani and Dr Taraporewala has heightened the effect.

The preface to the book is interesting and tells us that the author hails from Kerman (Iran), then found his way to Karachi where he studied Avesta under Dr Manek Pithawalla and Dastur (Dr) M. N. Dhalla, published a *Gatha* translation in Persian in 1981 (with text), and has now published its English equivalent (without text) from California, USA, where he has

settled. He has issued a larger edition with the Gathic text for those who would like to recite the songs. He has written four other books on our religion and/or the Prophet and the fifth one was due.

At the end of the book is a Glossary of Gathic terms which is illuminative. Under *gaetha* — to live, he states that "Zarathushtra is the first person to clearly envision the interrelatedness of all life on earth. He is the world's concerned environmentalist."

The word *karapan* is explained as "one who arranges and performs rituals" — also one "who murmurs and moans." "It has been translated as 'the murmuring priest,' because that is what Zarathushtra found them to be." The author devotes a separate page for English renderings of Avestan terms.

Finally, there is an index to the various terms used in the book which is called Gathic Concordance, compiled with great effort and precision.

This is an elevating book even though it calls for patience and time in going through its 124 pages of deep thought and spiritual content. The author's labor and love of the *Gathas* are praiseworthy.

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Awakening to a new order

Piloo Jungalwalla

The New System: A New Way of Life and Civilization by Rostam Parwin. Third edition printed in 1989 by The Foundation and Trust for the New System. Inquiries may be addressed to Dr Rostam Parwin, 443 Barclay Road, Rosemont, Pennsylvania 19010, USA. Pp: 404.

We are living in an age of great scientific discoveries in quantum physics, astronomy, medicine and technology. Religions, fossilized within institutions, are falling apart. The young are challenging rituals and dogmas that have little bearing on our daily life. New Age movements, of the most varied kinds, are sprouting up all over the world. The Space Age artist has come into his own, as we can see from the work of painters like Diana Vandenburg, a Jewish artist of Dutch origin, who depicts in exquisite colors such themes as the Shekinah (the feminine, creative essence of Jahveh) flowering in the birth of souls; while the Frenchman, Christian Pouard, living in seclusion as a Buddhist tantric monk, paints the awakening of the *kundalini* in man with a directness, simplicity and beauty which are deeply moving. Electronic meditation music, available on tape, is being widely used in healing the sick and relaxing those working under stress. New Age religious centers, such as Findhorn, Beshara and the Krishnamurti Centre in England, are flourishing, but the Space Age prophet has yet to declare himself.

Within this framework of a new awareness towards the problems of life Dr Rostam Parwin, an Iranian medical doctor settled in the USA, has labored to establish a Foundation and Trust for the New System. It is the third edition, revised and enlarged, of *The New System*, 1989, which is under review. In this voluminous study of 400 odd pages Dr Parwin lists seven aims of the New Religion. These are:

- establishing permanent, universal peace;
- continuous revision of ethical standards;
- happiness as a human experience in this world;
- well-being and well-living here and now;
- cultivation of benevolence towards

Man and Nature;

- a satisfactory resolution of life's problems taking into consideration human limitations;
- constant evaluation of values (p. 141)

The above laudable objectives have had only a modicum of success "because of false values and methods" asserts Dr Parwin. His approach is essentially pragmatic. He dismisses the major religions in the world today as mytho-religions "confined to the ideas of sin and salvation, fear of God, totem and tabu, blessing and beatitude, mystic plunges into truths, and a preoccupation with celestial, transcendental and imaginary things beyond perception and verification" (p. 27-28). He would have mankind live only by "scientific rationality," distrusting the emotions and the secret promptings of the heart. But this divides man into two opposing halves warring against one another. Our Sasanian ancestors advocated *paiman*, balance and harmony between the nine parts of the human personality. Reconciliation of opposites should be of paramount concern to the nations today for, in our war-torn world, where wilful destruction of the environment is proceeding almost unchecked, unless our greed for power and wealth is diverted into creative channels for the good of every man, there is the stark likelihood of Planet Earth, and ourselves in it, ceasing to exist.

Dr Parwin points out, however, that some of the major religions have themselves been responsible for the so-called Holy Wars in which thousands have been needlessly killed, as in the Crusades, for example. Moreover, fundamentalism in the adherents of the same religion is causing havoc among the people: Roman Catholics against Protestants in Ireland; Shias against Sunnis in the Islamic countries. Hierarchy in religious institutions parallel the development in society as we see from the classic, R. H. Tawney's *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*.

To counteract this trend, Dr Parwin follows other New Age movements in suggesting that nation states should be

dissolved and instead be split up into various regions governed by a world parliament. But such a monolithic structure could itself become corrupt and lead to the tyranny of the few over the many. The crux of the problem lies in William Blake's pithy saying: "One Law for the Lion and the Ox is Oppression." Every individual is unique, and differs from every other individual. His growth depends on the freedom to develop according to his genius, leading to unity in diversity, the link being our common humanity.

Laboriously, Dr Parwin makes the reader plow through page upon page of critical analysis of ancient legal systems, cultures and civilizations. Each chapter is divided into sections, and each section bristles with 40-50 footnotes leaving the exhausted reader with mental indigestion. Having dismissed the testimony of the saints and sages of all religions, Dr Parwin is left with the dry bones of material existence. Yet he grudgingly acknowledges the importance of prayer in daily living. Towards the end of the book are a few brief prayers, composed by the author, for all occasions. Here is a typical example, Prayer XXVI:

"O Wise Creator! Today's Religion for Today's Humanity is Your New Religion that implies a new birth and a new life for those who embrace it and for those who do not embrace it; because You are like an infinite Sun that casts the effulgence of mercy, impartial justice, and compassion upon all the creation. The New Religion is like a spiritual birth into good principles, virtues and ideal values of a blessed life. O Wise Creator! lead us to this new spiritual birth and new life (p. 373)."

Compare this prayer with a passage from our *Atash Nyaesh* which I quote from Dr Irach J. S. Taraporewala's beautiful translation, altering only one word to give its root meaning:

"Grant unto me, O Fire, Son of Ahura Mazda, immediate enlightenment (translated welfare), immediate sustenance, immediate living; full enlightenment, full sustenance, full living; fervour and insight, a tongue to convince and understanding of the soul, and above all, Divine

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Wisdom, all-comprehending, exalted and imperishable (Zoroastrian Daily Prayers, Hukhta Foundation, Bombay, fourth edition, 1986)."

The difference between the two prayers is the emphasis on divine wisdom by the author of the *Atash Nyaesh*, whereas Dr Parwin seems to feel it is more important for modern man to acquire scientific knowledge, master his environment and then seek virtue and benevolence. But this is putting the cart before the horse, for pride and arrogance in man prevent him from realizing that he did not create the universe, nor himself!

The prophets of all religions of the world have been emphatic in asserting that man's purpose in life is to gain wisdom. "May we become one like Thee, O Mazda, resplendent in holy wisdom," cries Zarathushtra in the *Ushtavaiti Gatha* (Ys. 43.3). "Wisdom is the robe of truth," says the Indian Sufi, Hazrat Inayat Khan (d. 1927). "Wisdom is the brightness of everlasting light, the unspotted mirror of the power of God, and the image of His Goodness," reads a sentence from the *Book of Wisdom* in the Jewish *Apocrypha*, though it could as easily have been borrowed from one of our own texts, the *Minoi-Khirad*, the Spirit of Wisdom. Today, we ignore the "learning of the imagination" and are ignorant of the beauty, truth and wisdom embodied in myth and symbol in the religious literature of the world. Comparative religion is not studied in order to widen our consciousness, but to find fault with one another's doctrines. Very few take the trouble to read such key studies as C. G. Jung's *The Structure and Dynamics of the Psyche* (Bollingen Series, second edition, 1969) or that epoch-making volume, Erich Neumann's *The Origins and History of Consciousness* (1954) as valid today as when it was first published.

Children are not taught how to experience religious truth, but merely to objectify and quantify it. Nor are such classics as William James' *Varieties of Religious Experience* discussed in family circles. The result is that both the young and the old are clutching at every straw to satisfy the hunger of the spirit which only the wisdom "which passeth all understanding" can assuage.

In conclusion, one could say that this book will appeal to those who have not been brought up in any religion yet are seeking for some lost truth of their own being, and to those who are rebelling against narrow and dogmatic creeds.

MILESTONES

The age of Zoroastrian brides in Bombay (as listed in this issue) ranged between 18 and 38 years, the arithmetic mean (the total number of individual ages divided by the total number of brides) being 26 years. The corresponding figures for the grooms were 22 years and 42 years, averaging at 30.

A scanning of the Chandanwadi crematorium registers revealed 11 cremations during the eight-month period of August 1990-March 1991.

From among the 83 Zoroastrians who died in Bombay as listed in this issue, 32 fell prey to heart disease (14 of them being above the age of 80). The next killers were lung disease and pneumonia claiming 11 victims, old age and general debility, nine, and diabetes, seven. Cancer took five lives whereas four patients succumbed to brain disease, three to septicemia and two to kidney failure. Isolated cases registered last month: Tuberculosis, anemia, bronchitis, accident, hypertension, Parkinson's disease, gastroenteritis, liver disease and asthma. A stillborn baby boy was also lost to the community. Ninety-four was the highest age recorded at death.

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

If readers have any births/marriages/deaths they would like published, some proof to ensure the veracity of the report would be required. We are sure our readers would appreciate this requirement and cooperate with us.

BOMBAY

Born

A boy to Meher and Naushir Mistry on April 3, 1991
A boy to Mehroo and Daney Gundevia; April 6

A girl to Aimee and Sarosh Nari-man; April 6

A girl, Khushnuma, to Parizad and Cyrus Randelia; April 8

A girl to Dinoo and Noshir Shethna; April 8

A boy to Shiraz and Percy Bharucha; April 9

A boy to Kamal and Hoshang Mistry; April 9

A girl to Armaity and Yezdi Bhagwagar; April 12

Twins (boy and girl) to Aban and Mehernosh Unwala; April 13

A boy to Jasmine and Dhanjee Hansotia; April 14

A girl to Thrity and Burzin Wadia; April 17

A girl to Kermis and Behram Irani; April 21

A girl to Shiraz and Hosheder Tampal; April 22

A girl to Daulat and Anand Kumar; April 26

A girl to Manek and Aspi Deboo; April 27

A girl to Mehroo and Darius Shroff; April 27

A boy to Gulshan and Homi Gae; April 28

A girl to Yasmin and Homiar Parakh; April 30

A girl to Parizad and Prashant Trikanad; April 30

A girl to Parizad and Prashant Trikanad; April 30

Married

Phiroza Adil Screwvalla and Cherag Khurshed Cama;

March 20, 1991

Armin Kersi Irani and Narioshang Nariman Nava;

March 21

Aban Sheriar Anklesaria and Falee Homi Bilimoria;

March 24

Zinobiy Nadarsha Icewala and Adi Burjorji Patel; March 25

Veera Rusi Bharucha and Percy Yezdi Pundol; March 28

Nergish Minocher Pochkhanawala and Kersi Phiroze Choksy; March 30

Behroze Keki Sumariwala and Kersi Pirojshaw Nazer;

March 31

Rukshana Khushru Shroff and Percy Homi Jokhi; April 1

Maharukh Kaikhushroo Mistry and Kersi Gustadji Gyara of Calcutta; April 4

Hutoxi Noshirwan Guzder and Rustom Meherwanji Irani;

April 6

Firoza Ardeshir Demehri and

Shahin Jamshed Meher Shahi; April 6

Shiraz Dinshaw Mistry and Noshir Meherjee Dastoor of Navsari; April 7

Hufrish Rusi Daruwalla and Rohinton Peshotan Javat;

April 7

Kashmira Nariman Patel and Kersi Phiroze Karkaria of Kalyan; April 7

Azarmineh Jehangir Bharucha and Darius Bhimji Patel; April 10

Parveen Dhun Pardiwalla and Porus Bomanshaw Pardiwalla;

April 11

Dilshad Jehangir Rabadi and Dinyar Manek Vajifdar;

April 13

Pervin Behram Irani and Percy Dadabhoy Wadia; April 13

Kashmira Dara Bhagwagar and Soli Dadabhoy Wadia; April 13

Maharukh Dhanji Bhivandiwalla and Hoshi Farokh Jassawalla;

April 15

Beenaifer Hoshi Daruwalla and Neville Soli Bilimoria; April 18

Veera Minocher Choquri and Malkam Jehangir Engineer;

April 18

Shehnaz Ardeshir Mirza and Farshid Askander Goorabian;

April 18

Shiraz Cyrus Havewala and Khurshed Fredy Vazifdar;

April 21

Sanobar Jal Khambatta and Homiyar Hoshang Merchant;

April 22

Viloo Sam Bhagwagar and Homi Dhunjishaw Bhagwagar;

April 23

Shiraz Pervez Mistry and Jal Nadarsha Mandviwalla;

April 25

Farzin Rustomji Vinadatal of Ankleshwar, Bharuch and Zarir Hector Sholapurwala of Bangalore; April 26

Silloo Khodadad Irani and Aspi Namdar Irani; April 28

Farida Minoo Pastakia and Aresh Aspandiar Irani; April 29

Shanaz Naval Engineer and Homiyar Hoshang Limbuvala;

April 30

Dilnavaz Phiroze Tantra of Nagpur and Yazdi Minoo Patel;

April 30

Died

Shera Ardeshir Munshi (83), residing at Botawala Bldg,

Raghavji Rd, 400036; August

10, 1990 (cremated)

Minoo Rustom Billimoria (96), 6, Gordon Bldg, Proctor St,

Grant Rd, 400007; November 4 (cremated)

Naju James Boniface (73), Ratan Mans, 35, Forjett St,

400036; November 29 (cremated)

Mani Jamsu Patel (65), Kothari Mans, 13, Parekh St, Girgaum,

400004; November 30 (cremated)

Poonam Berjis Desai (37), 22, Kartar Bhavan, Colaba, 400005;

December 16 (cremated)

S.M.H. Aga (about 55); January 23, 1991 (cremated)

Framroze Kaikobad Nariman (80), 29, Ridge Rd, Malabar Hill, 400006; January 30 (cremated)

Rustum Framroze Rustumji (83), 4, Jenkin Hse, Henry Rd, Colaba, 400005; February 10 (cremated)

Khorshed Kaikhushroo (Karl) Kheswala (64), Silverene, Altamount Rd, 400026; February 15 (cremated)

Mehru Rusi Bilimoria (72), 9, Battery Hse, B. Desai Rd, 400026; February 18 (cremated)

Dinshah Jehangir Gazdar (78), 89, Nepean Sea Rd, 400006; March 5 (cremated)

Cooverbai Rustom Ichhaporiya (91), Irani Bldg, 286/C, Supari Baug Rd, Parel, 400012; March 31

Homi Rustomji Shroff (80), K Block, Walchand Hirachand Marg, Fort, 400001; March 31

Kaikhushroo Sorabji Writer (94), Central Bldg No 1, Kalbadevi Post Office, Dhobitalao, 400002; March 31

Homai Eruch Fanibanda (60), 1, Uranwalla Mans, Dr Ambedkar Rd, Parel, 400012; April 1

Shapur Jehangir Irani (51), Shirin Mans, Sleater Rd, Opp Grant Rd Stn, 400007; April 1

Homi Jal Patel (52), Todiwalla Bldg, Sunmill Rd, Lower Parel (W), 400012; April 1

Aimai Dhunjishaw Sukheswala (89), 5, R. J. Cottage, Jehangir Daji Lane, Grant Rd (W), 400007; April 1

Amy Jehangir Tavadia (77), 3/22, A. H. Wadia Baug, Parel Tank Rd, 400033; April 1

Homai Rustomji Velati (64),

Pirojbai Mahalaxmiwala Bldg, 19, Sleater Rd, Grant Rd, 400007; April 1
Jerro Sam Hirananeck (54), G-1/7, Shapur Baug, V. P. Rd, 400004; April 2
Phiroja Faramroze Karani (90), 302, Cumballa Crest, 42, Peddar Rd, 400026; April 2
Tehmi Keki Motashaw (67), 5, Jai Sudharma Co-op Hsg Soc, Kalina, Santa Cruz (E), 400029; April 2
Barjor Rustamji Bhathena (83), B/41, Bina Apts, Sir M. V. Rd, Andheri (E), 400069; April 3
Sorabjee Pestonjee Eranee (79), Ram Mans, 4, Napean Sea Rd, 400006; April 3
Jehangirji Jivanji Patel (84), 275/V, New Master Bldg, Zoroastrian Clny, Chikalwadi, Grant Rd, 400007; April 3
Banoo Gustad Sethna (77), Mama Chmbs, Gowalia Tank Rd, 400036; April 3
Rusi Jal Tata (66), 22/C, Sakarwadi, Nawab Tank Rd, 400010; April 3
Ruttie Kavas Sethna (86), Kismet, Opp Sasson Dock, Colaba, 400005; April 4
Rutti Homi Guard (85), Sethna Bldg, 216, Princess St, 400002; April 5
Pestonji Rustomji Karanjia (86), M/30, Nowroz Baug, Lalbaug, 400012; April 5
Behram Jijibhoy Patel (74), Bode Bldg, Marzban Clny, Gilder Lane, Lamington Rd, 400008; April 5
Villy Gustad Taraporewalla (59), 2/301, Panna Bhavan, Gopeharpada, Virar (E), Thane, 401303; April 5
Khorshed Meherwanji Bardi (81), Ben Nevis, B. Desai Rd, 400036; April 6
Hoshang Dinshawji Doctor (75), A/4, Cusrow Baug, S. B. Rd, 400039; April 6
Kobad Hormusji Madon (65), 23/A, Rosary Hse, Gunpowder Rd, Mazagaon, 400010; April 6
Edalji Rustomji Bengali (85), Glass Bglw, Chikalwadi, Tardeo, 400007; April 7
Alamai Sorab Postwalla (68), Heena Bldg, Andheri (W), 400061; April 7
Aloo Dara Gandhi (63), 808, Asha Hse, Dr Ambedkar Rd, Dadar, 400014; April 8
Dina Farokh Hirjika (76), Naju Manor, 14, Oliver Rd, Apollo Recl, 400039; April 8
Najamai Nusserwanji Kotwal (83), A, Kuka Bldg, Grant Rd,

400008; April 8
Darab Pallonji Marolia (79), Empress Bldg, 13, N. Petit St, Grant Rd, 400007; April 8
Eduji Meherwanji Mody (76), D, Ness Baug, Nana Chowk, 400007; April 8
Nariman Nadirshah Nargolwala (55), 80/745, C.I.S. Clny, Wadala, 400031; April 8
Tehmina Jehangir Banker (83), 614, Girgaum Rd, Dhobitalao, 400002; April 9
Rustom Bomanji Daruwalla (76), 62, Bakhtavar Annexe, N. Dabholkar Rd, Off Napean Sea Rd, 400006; April 9
Minoo Nadir Tata (72), Maskat, Corner, Altamount Rd, 400026; April 9
Rustomji Nassarwanji Antia (78), 515/B, Ratan Mans, R. P. Masani Rd, Matunga, 400019; April 10
Banoo Jehangir Bhagalia (77), G/28, Munsif Bldg, Captain Clny, Tardeo, 400034; April 10
Adi Behramsha Karma (90), Lady Ratan Tata Bldg, 3/9, Turner Rd, Bandra, 400050; April 10
Freny Nadirshaw Taraporewala (77), C/o 8/B, Jeevan Asha, 60/A, Peddar Rd, 400026; April 10
Noshir Meherwanji Harda (83), 14/A/22, Manish Vihar Soc, Off J. P. Rd, Andheri (W), 400058; April 11
Nadirshah Faridunjee Roowalla (82), 3/A, Panchasheel, Raheja Township, Malad (E), 400097; April 11
Jaroo Temes Mehta (40), 12/A/3, Panthaki Baug, Andheri (E), 400069; April 12
Jal Jehangir Mistry (77), Bona Casa Bldg, Sir P. Mehta Rd, Fort, 400001; April 12
Ratanbai Darabsha Panday (88), 4, Mistry Bldg, Mehila Patel Agiary Lane, Grant Rd, 400007; April 13
Nasserwanji Hormusji Surty (92), 16, United Chmbs, 400007; April 13
Soli (Sohrab) Nadir Daruwalla (48), Widows' Chawl, 133, Mody St, Fort, 400001; April 14
Freny Jehangir Ghodawalla (63), G/3, Nowroz Baug, Lalbaug, 400012; April 14
Khorshedbanu Kaikhushrow Patel (92), Avillion, Little Gibbs Rd, Malabar Hill, 400006; April 14
Rati Jimmy Wadia (75), F/11, Nowroz Baug, Lalbaug, 400012; April 14
Khorshed Noshirwan Mavji (87),

5, Wagla Cooper Bldg, Khetwadi, 12th Lane, 400004; April 17
Coomi Dhanjishaw Pithawala (79), Dinshaw Hse, 732, J. Vimadlal Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; April 17
Homai Minocher Bharucha (63), Adajania Hse, 803/B, Dr Ambedkar Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; April 18
Ratanbai Dhunjishaw Bulsara (90), 14, Petit Widows' Chawl, 225, Thakurdwar, 400002; April 18
Burjor Ardeshar Daruwalla (83), M/8, Cusrow Baug, S. B. Rd, 400039; April 19
Minoo Jamshedji Gowadia (57), C/61, Meghdoot, State Bank of India Co-op Soc, Andheri (E), 400069; April 19
Hoshang Kaiyoz Mirza (78), C/41, Pandyrang Wadi, A. B. Nair Rd, Juhu, 400049; April 19
Dara Bejonji Godiwalla (64), E/18, Jer Baug, Dr Ambedkar Rd, Byculia, 400027; April 20
Dossibai Sorabji Mistry (85), F. S. Parukh Dharamshala, 34, Hughes Rd, 400007; April 20
Ruttonshaw Dinshaw Dungor (88), Jehangir Mans, 1st Marine St, 400020; April 21
Jalejar Sorabji Gazdar (89), 9, Gool-Dhun-Abad, S. V. Rd, Jogeshwari (W), 400102; April 21
Soona Ardeshir Mehta (65), Hormuzd Bldg, Kashinath Rd, Tardeo, 400034; April 21
Baby boy of Roshni Aspi Davierwalla (stillborn), 10, Wadia Bldg, Malcolm Baug, Jogeshwari (W), 400102; April 22
Rusi Burjorji Tata (66), 3, Kings Apts, Juhu Tara Rd, Juhu, 400049; April 22
Jerbanoo Dhunjishaw Daroo-walla (87), 74, Trinity St, Dhobitalao, 400002; April 23
Hoshang Rustom Bagli (71), 13, Vakil Blocks, Old Khareghat Clny, 34, Hughes Rd, 400007; April 24
Khorshed Rusi Daruwalla (78), J/10, Cusrow Baug, S. B. Rd, 400039; April 24
Ardesher Framji Dudha (84), 72, Dev-Chhaya, Haji Ali, Tardeo, 400034; April 24
Dhurnmai Jehangirji Homavazir (94), A/3, Nowroz Baug, Lalbaug, 400012; April 24
Gool Khodadad Irani (65), 11, Bomanji Hse, Dockyard Rd, 400010; April 24

Piroja Nusserwanji Bharucha (86), 9, Auburn Hse, Forjett St, 400036; April 25
Pervez Cavasji Daruwalla (55), Minoo Mans, 799, Jame Jamshed Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; April 25
Keki Ardeshir Gandhi (70), Banoo Hse, 764/A, Dr Ghanti Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; April 25
Behram Aflatoon Irani (42), 27/2, Khareghat Clny, 34, Hughes Rd, 400007; April 25
Framroze Khodadad Irani (66), 5, Dina Bldg, Chira Bazar, 2nd Sonapur Cross Lane, 400002; April 25
Dhun Bomanji Gorimar (82), B/76, Empire Est, August Kranti Marg, 400036; April 26
Cooverji Maneckji Patel (81), D/18, Godrej Baug, Off Napean Sea Rd, 400026; April 26
Nadirsha Dadabhai Sethna (70), 9/E, Jinwala Bldg, Captain Clny, Tardeo, 400034; April 27
Ardeshir Hormusji Bhiwandiwala (78), Hatfield, 61-61A, Pali Hill, Bandra, 400050; April 28
Ardeshir Pirojshaw Hawaldar (75), Tarachand Bldg, 275/Q, Tardeo Rd, 400007; April 28
Khorshed Kharshedji Sidhwa (72), Widows' Chawl, Lalbaug, 400012; April 28
Hilla (Hira) Ratanshaw Bodhanwalla (67), C/o 11, Sneh Kunj, 11th Rd, Santacruz (E), 400055; April 29
Bachan Hiraji Wadia (91), 1, Mody Bldg, Golanji Hill, Parel Village, 400012; April 29

SURAT Died

Noshir Dhanjishaw Tadiwala (63), Dehalla Mohalla, Rustompura, 395002; April 1
Najamai Ardeshir Bhoj (75), Parsi Wad, Gopipura, 395001; April 10

...

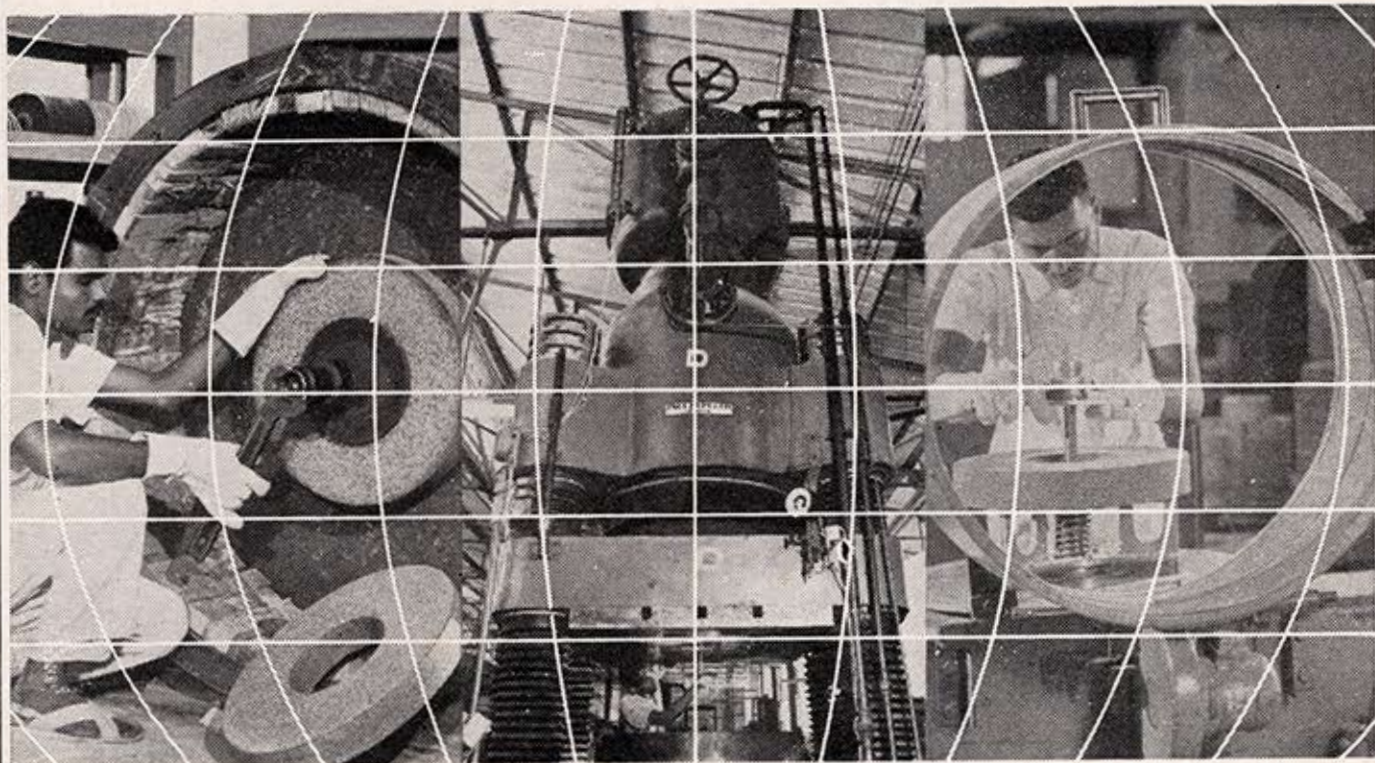
ALBANY, NEW YORK Born

A boy, *Phiroze*, to *Yasmine* and *Adi Irani*, brother to *Jasmine* and *Tanaz*; March 1

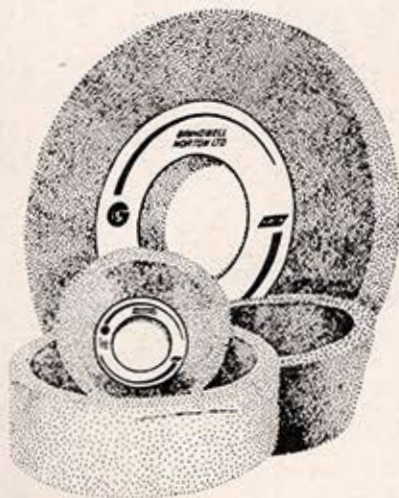
TOTALS (for this issue)
 Births: Boys 8, Girls 14
 Marriages: 32
 Deaths: 101

Compiled by Roxana H. Kaka

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