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Parsiana

September 1991
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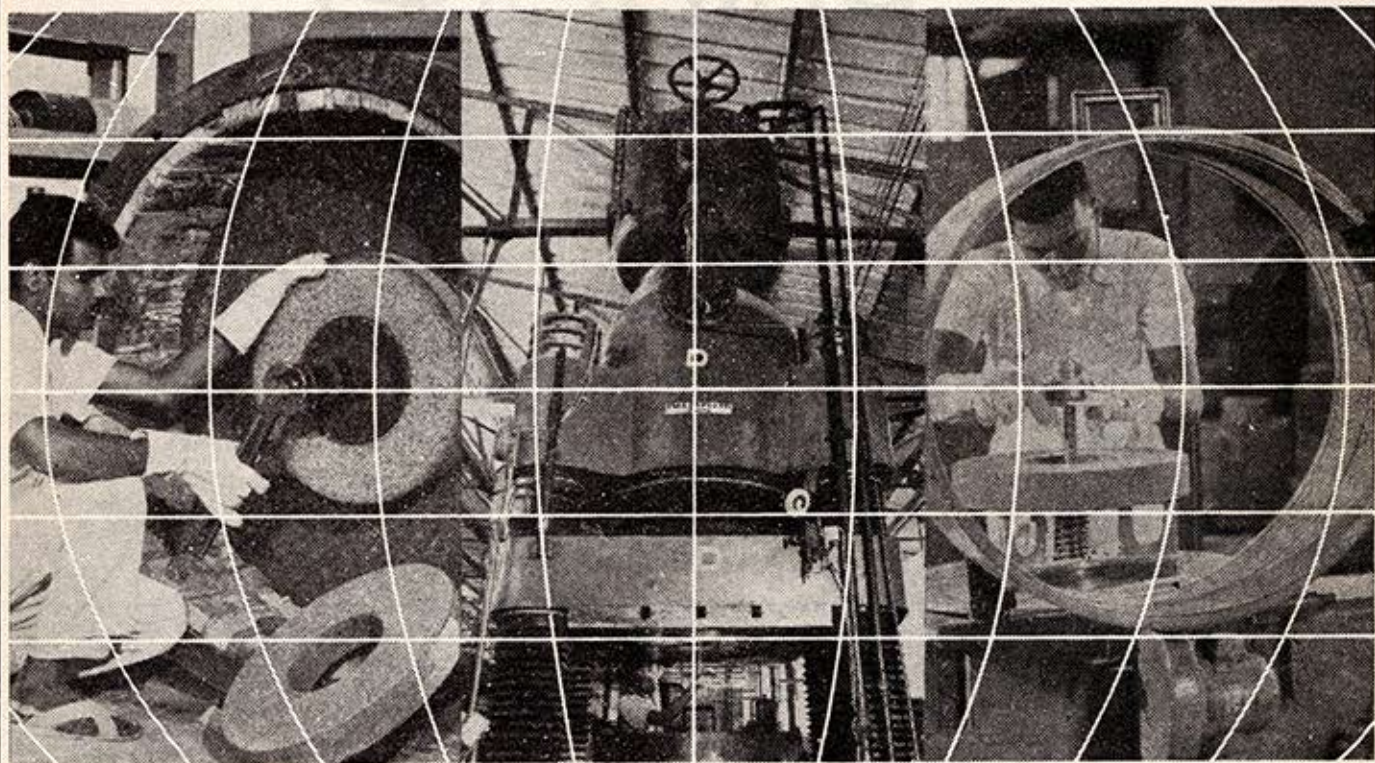
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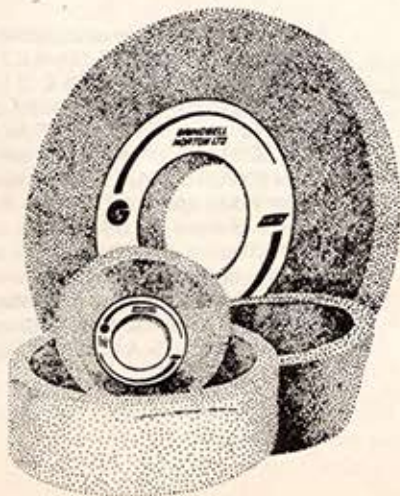
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Readers' views are welcome on any subject of interest to the community and should be sent to the Editor, Readers' Forum, Parsiana, G.P.O. Box 892, Bombay 400001. Letters are subject to editing for reasons of space and clarity. Unsigned letters or those without an address will not be published.

"Karachi: The..."

To anyone who has spent any significant length of time in both India and Pakistan, the article "Karachi: The cross-cultural bind" (*Parsiana*, September 1990) by Parinaz Gandhi has obvious fallacies.

The first paragraph begins "Have you reported to the police?..." Their intention is not to make you feel like a criminal but to remind you that you are now in Pakistan..." To begin with, all Indian and Pakistani nationals have to report to the police within 24 hours of their arrival. Furthermore, when Indian nationals arrive in Pakistan they are at least not hassled as much as Pakistanis are in India. I myself have been to India several times and have had to do the same there as all Indians do in Pakistan. However, I have had to wait for at least four hours each time before my number has been called. And to add insult to injury, even after the long wait the police inspector has openly asked for a 100-rupee bribe for stamping

each passport. This makes you feel like a "criminal."

Ms Gandhi's second paragraph tells of the public transportation system. I acknowledge the fact that the transportation system is not of top-notch quality. However, Ms Gandhi blatantly skews the facts and arrives at a totally illogical, and moreover invalid, conclusion: "It is not surprising that most Parsi families there own at least one car." The fact of the matter is that the Parsis of Karachi have done relatively well for themselves. They can afford the higher standard of living that many Bombay Parsis cannot. Therefore, the Parsis of Karachi have not bought cars solely because the transportation system is inadequate (although obviously that does have some bearing on the matter), but rather because it is a luxury they can afford.

Yet another alarmingly distorted fact is concerning the medium of instruction. During the days of Zia, there was considerable pressure on the two Parsi schools to switch the medium of instruction to Urdu. Yet neither of the two major schools mentioned, Bai Virbaiji Parsi Boys School or Mama Parsi Girls School, changed the medium for even one day. To further skew the facts, Ms Gandhi writes, "Zoroastrian children could not be taught their own religion in the two Parsi schools... where the only option offered was Islamiyat or civics." Let me assure you, religious studies in Mama and BVS Parsi Schools are conducted, without exception, on a regular basis and have been for many decades. Every hamkara, all the Parsi boys and girls pray in front of the fire. Special jashans and lectures by Ervad Godrej Sidhwa are held on a regular basis. I would, quite honestly, have expected Ms Gandhi to check into the validity of statements she indiscriminately puts into print, quoted or not quoted!

I could quote many statements in this article that are either blatant untruths or convenient omissions of the truth, which result in the same. An example: "The shutters of the sagri at the Farvardian are drawn; there is no full-time attendant there." The reason there is no full-time attendant at the Farvardian is simple: there are not enough deaths in the community to warrant a full-time staff like the one in Bombay that caters to a much, much larger population.

I do realize, as I am sure does Ms Gandhi, that there are problems within all communities, all over the world. But such biased journalism does not do credit to an established magazine like *Parsiana*. More importantly, instead of creating peace and understanding between the Parsis of India and Pakistan, Ms Gandhi has instead, advertently or inadvertently, widened the rift between us. AFSHAD M. MISTRI
Santa Clara, California, USA

Parinaz Gandhi replies

This article was not intended to be another episode in the India vs Pakistan series as Mr Mistri's comments would have us believe.

Mr Mistri has obviously spent a significant amount of time both in India and Pakistan while the writer had only seven days to research the article. So if there are any errors or omissions, they are not a result of biased journalism, blatant skewing or distortion of facts, and so on.

As regards the medium of instruction and religious education imparted in Parsi schools, we had sought a clarification from Ervad Godrej Sidhwa on receiving Mr Mistri's letter. Ervad Sidhwa puts the statements in perspective:

"The (Parsi) schools were allowed to delay conversion to Urdu medium but were informed that with effect from the school year beginning 1989, they would have to convert to Urdu medium of education. When Mr Byram D. Avari fought the elections in 1988, he had put in his manifesto that he would ensure that the medium of education of both the Parsi schools would be maintained in English. He obtained this confirmation from the Government that the medium would remain in English (on May 2, 1989).

"In the same manifesto, he has referred to Zoroastrian religious instruction being allowed as a part of the curriculum in the same way as I taught the Zoroastrian children in the schools and colleges so that when the board exams for matric and the university exams for the colleges were held, religious education was a part of the curriculum. It is correct that the Zoroastrian religion is being taught "privately" by the B. V. S. School but this is officially not a subject of the curriculum as the curriculum specifies that they will be marked only for the matric exams and the college/university exams

in Islamiat or civics.

"Byram Avari is at present using his good offices as a Member of Parliament and strenuously endeavoring to re-introduce Zoroastrian theology for Parsi students as a subject in the curriculum."

"The Purifying..."

Under the caption "The Purifying...", Ervad Darius N. Sethna in his letter (*Parsiana*, April 1991), not only criticizes Dr Ali A. Jafarey's article "The Purifying Prescriptions," (*Parsiana*, November 1990), but makes out a case for the nirangdin ceremony being, as he puts it, "the foundation of all the holy institutions of the Zoroastrian religion."

I do not wish to contradict or otherwise, the purifying (disinfective in today's terminology) qualities of the consecrated bull's urine, as I have so far never seen a pathological report on it. However, what I fail to understand is that although in the olden days, for want of a better disinfectant or a blood purifier, the bull's urine might have been a voodoo substitute, why should anyone advocate using it in the 20th century age of powerful disinfectants like Dettol and Listerine, and the various medically tested blood

purifiers available in the market?

Ervad Sethna also states that, without drinking the bull's urine, any ceremony like a navjote or a marriage has no meaning and is not sacrosanct. At the navjote of my granddaughter and the wedding of my son last year, instead of the bull's urine, they both drank a glass of filtered water prayed over by my old mother. I wish to ask Ervad Sethna, which of these two liquids would be considered to be the more consecrated drink?

Lastly, Ervad Sethna concludes that "if a man's body is as black as coal, it will shine like the sun if he drinks the consecrated gaomez," and I presume thereby becomes white and pure. To begin with, he must be a true believer in apartheid, if he associates all black men with impurity. Secondly, does he not realize that the only way a man can purify himself is by following the everlasting Zoroastrian tenets of good words, good thoughts and good deeds? Any other purifying agent is pure bull, consecrated or otherwise. Let it not be said that the Parsis who started off by being wrongly called the fire worshippers, have ended up by being now called bull worshippers.

Brig N. B. GRANT (Retd)
Pune

"An injustice at..."

With reference to the letters written by J. R. Paymaster and Noshirwan F. Cowasjee ("An injustice at doongerwadi," Readers' Forum, *Parsiana*, April 1991) I would like to state that no Parsi/Irani Zoroastrian has any right to go against the very logical and rational views expressed by the seven high priests of our community. Neither the BPP trustees nor the ordinary laymen have any authority to impose their own arbitrary rulings on a community that still believes that people who marry outside are not entitled to use the fire-temples, dharamshalas, dokhmas and other Parsi Zoroastrian trust properties.

If Mr Cowasjee thinks that "this is the time to establish the fundamental right by taking very firm action in the Supreme Court of India," I ask him, what about the fundamental rights of the silent majority of devoted Zarathushtrians who have married within the community and in accordance with Mazdayasni law and tradition? Through force of tradition, secular law and religious injunctions, a person (male or female) who has married a non-Zoroastrian has been and will be considered ipso facto to have renounced the Mazdayasni Zarathushti religion.



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We have slowly ruined our own community by discreetly allowing marriages outside the Zarathushtrian fold and this ruination is going to be worse than the Arab invasion that took place in the seventh century A.D.

The ashirwad ceremony forms the most vital link in solemnizing both legally and spiritually the Parsi Zarathushtrian marriage. An ashirwad ceremony with nirangdin purification and *Avesta* manthras is not performed by any conscientious mobed if any one of the partners is a non-Zoroastrian. Our entire marriage ceremony is based on *Awar dad o ayin-i-din-i-Mazdayasni* (laws and customs of the Mazdayasni religion).

DHUN FRAM BILLIMORIA

Apropos of Mr Roni Khan's Brotherhood ("An injustice at..." Readers' Forum, *Parsiana*, March 1991), the only thing "well-known" about *maga* — (there is a ninth mention in the *Gathas*!) is that it remains problematic and obscure. The formerly potlatch-like institution, wasteful and excessive, was spiritualized by Zarathushtra through his great ethical triad of good thoughts, words and deeds towards

mankind's transfiguration. This reformed exchange mechanism — to turn a current phrase — was utilized by our Prophet towards man's progress and the glory of Ahura Mazda: the one being from whom this three-fold injunction emanates and to whom it must be offered in return through actualization (see especially *Yasna* 29.11, *maga ehma.ratoish*).

The early tendency to see exclusive brotherhoods and secret societies was fostered by no less a giant among turn-of-century professing scholars than Christian Bartholomae of Worterbuch and Verspredigten fame. Dr Irach Taraporewala was his apt short-term pupil and much of his literal translation was influenced by his wonderful teacher.

However, *Parsiana* readers should note that Dr Taraporewala has provided his own emphases and commentaries to accompany and support his brilliant metaphor. Nowhere do these tally with Mr Khan's "well-known," "self-evident and unmistakable," "objective and dispassionate" findings.

Our loyalty and gratitude to our greatest Parsi Avestan student should not, however, divert us from the fresh insights of

more recent ongoing scholarship which is essential for the deepening of our appreciation and understanding of these most difficult texts. The *maga*-concept has been further elucidated using the Vedic cognates *magha* and *maghavan* where it refers to "gift," "gift-exchange" and those liberal patrons or participants of this old pre-Zarathushtra Indo-Iranian institution. Later translators accordingly use "covenant," "struggle (against all-pervading evil)," "task," "sacrament," "enterprise," rightly elevating it from its older connotation of socioeconomic exchange to Zarathushtra's sublimely specialized usage. *Maga* nevertheless remains just beyond reach of a single-word rendition.

The Indo-Iranian societal units became the *khvaetu*-, *verezena*-, *airyaman*-, and *dahyu*- of Zarathushtra's *Gathas*. They refer to, respectively, family, community, clan/tribe and nation as *the whole society of Truth-seekers*.

FARROKH VAJIFDAR
London, England

So much has been said and written about the men and women who marry outside our community — but what about the
continued on page 32

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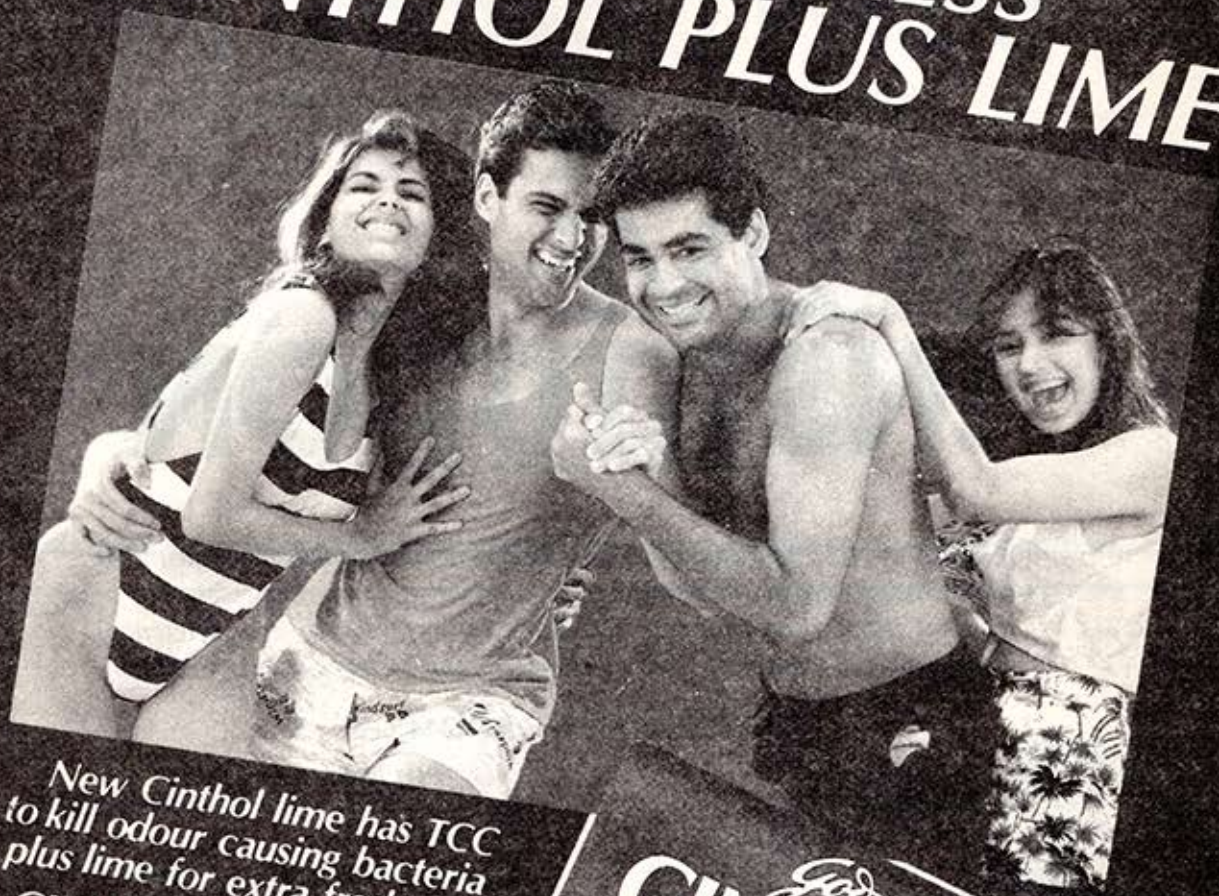


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Events and Personalities

Godrej Memorial Lecture

"A Russian translation of the *Avesta* sold like hot cakes in Tadjikistan," says Prof Dr Richard Frye who is a guest lecturer in Iranian studies at the University of Tadjikistan and was recently conferred its honorary doctorate.

Frye was delivering the first Naoroji Pirojsha Godrej Memorial Lecture at the Bombay House Auditorium on August 7, 1991 — the eve of the first death anniversary of the late Naoroji — under the auspices of the Athravan Educational Trust (AET).

Iranian culture and civilization — whether ancient, medieval or present — covers much more than the land of Iran, says Frye, now Aga Khan professor emeritus of Iranian Studies at Harvard University after a stint of 35 years in the post. "Scratch a Russian and you'll find a Tartar; scratch further and you'll find an Iranian," Frye jestingly illustrates the basic underlay of Eurasian culture.

The theme of Frye's lecture on Zoroastrianism in Central Asia was that the Iranian civilization had spread from Mesopotamia in the west to the eastern boundaries of China and comprised the vast central Eurasian plateau including Bactria (or North Afghanistan), and the (hitherto) Soviet republics of Tadjikistan, Uzbekistan, Sogdia, Kazakhstan, etc. Certain Zoroastrian practices and beliefs have continued in many of these areas, though not in the form in which Zoroastrianism was practiced in Sassanian Iran which the Parsis brought with them to India. Generally, what prevailed was a blend of Zoroastrianism with Buddhism, Christianity, Manichaeism and other creeds, the syncretic mixture differing from area to area. The outlawing of religion until recently in the USSR led to many of the beliefs and customs being wiped out of younger minds. Yet, many a name is Iranian, in some places the Zoroastrian calendar is still followed, fire altars abound (though cautioned

Frye, fire altars were not restricted to Zoroastrians alone). There are also dokhmas and astodans. The people there are now curious to know more about their own background. From this continuing interest Frye concludes, "Zoroastrianism is not by any means dead. It's not going to die. (It has a) rich past and a rich future."

What is Zoroastrianism? According to Frye, "It's not just a religion, it's a cul-

ture for 52 years. "Naval was one of the finest men one can come across — gentle, smiling, helping," said Hidayatullah and added that a Naoroji Pirojsha Godrej chair for Iranian studies was likely to be instituted at the Hyderabad University. The University, in a gesture of appreciation for Godrej's gift of Rs 1.5 lakh towards its library, was likely to install Naval's portrait there, said Hidayatullah.

Sorab Godrej, chairman of Godrej and

Boyce and the eldest of the brothers, recalled how his brother "believed in living religion, not only talking and discussing about it." Godrej spoke of how Naoroji always dwelt on positive aspects, on unity in diversity and his concern

for the survival of the religion, the community and the mobeds, "the need for periodic assessments in terms of the widechanging world... (Be) pragmatic, cultivate the right values... self restraint is good for everybody, whether Zoroastrian or not," Godrej urged the gathering that included mobeds and community bigwigs. "(We must) ensure that Zoroastrianism survives and spreads... Use persuasion to get people together, consolidate." Referring to the AET's *raison d'être* — to create a more enlightened Zoroastrian clergy — Godrej noted that he "looked forward to an enlightened and effective clergy which would win over people and not waste time on trivialities."

Earlier, AET trustee Homi Ranina gave a brief recap of the organization which was founded in 1985 and noted that Naoroji's place on the AET board was now occupied by his daughter-in-law Ms Pheroza Godrej. (Naoroji's backing had sustained the AET through pro-



At the commemoration of the first death anniversary of Naoroji Godrej (right), Frye (left) spoke of traces of Zoroastrianism in Central Asia

ture, a way of life" that's much more than a simple form of religion. It's "what's in peoples' hearts and what they want their children and children's children to be..."

Introducing the American born lecturer of Scandinavian descent who speaks a dozen languages, Zoroastrian Studies (ZS) founder and AET trustee Khojeste Mistree narrated how Frye had chanced upon a copy of Charles Lamb's *Tamerlane* in his youth which aroused his interest in Central Asia. Stationed in Kabul for two years during World War II, Frye used the opportunity to do his PhD thesis, *History of Bokhara*.

Chief guest that August evening was Mohammed Hidayatullah, ex Vice President of India, who had known Naoroji

longed community criticism. The AET classes are held at Godrej Bhavan.) The AET's objective is to make the Naoroji Godrej lecture into a series for which the trust intends to develop a corpus of one million rupees, Ranina said.

Arnavaz S. Mama

ZS religious score

"When you're feeling low and blue,
When your troubles stick like glue,
Let your sudreh kushti shield and protect
you..."

These lyrics, set to a lilting melody, feature in the two-volume cassette *It's Navjote Time — Songs 'N Prayers*. On

ing becomes much easier," notes an introduction on the inlay of the audio cassette produced by Zoroastrian Studies (ZS) for the benefit of youngsters.

Another cassette which is also the effort of ZS is *Khushali Na Geet Ne Garba — Songs for Festive Occasions* where "the joyous sounds of traditional Parsi music" are recaptured. The entertaining lyrics therein reflect the life and times of 19th century Parsis, as notes a press release.

The cassettes were brought to life at a special function to mark their release on August 18, 1991. A religious tableau depicted the navjote and marriage ceremonies,



At the function organized by Zoroastrian Studies: Mehta (left) releasing the music cassettes while Mistree looks on; (Top) A presentation on the cassette theme

the first volume are recorded 14 songs through which a step-by-step account of the navjote ceremony is provided; while the second has some of the daily prayers with brief explanations to them.

"A simple though effective way of communication is through music. Most children have an innate love for rhythm and so when the music gets going, learn-

ing becomes much easier," notes an introduction on the inlay of the audio cassette produced by Zoroastrian Studies (ZS) for the benefit of youngsters.

Among those involved in the production of these two cassettes is Ms Shehnaz Mun-

shi whose "religious knowledge and musical creativeness in adapting English melodies to Zoroastrian themes" has been acknowledged. The sponsors of the project are Khodadad and Aban Irani. The credits for the music go to Ms Frey Dalal-Paghdwala and her Crystal Choral, Navroze Mehta, Zubin Ballaporia and Kaizad Bhabha. Shashi and Kalpana Gopal of Magnasound provided technical advice and expertise.

The two-volume navjote cassettes priced at Rs 95 and *Khushali Na Geet Ne Garba* including the all-time popular

composition *Chhaiye Ame Zarhosti* at Rs 55, can be bought at the ZS office, K. R. Cama Oriental Institute Building, 136, Bombay Samachar Marg, Bombay 400023. Included in this price is the booklet accompanying each cassette which carries a written version of the lyrics together with an explanation to enable the listener to better appreciate the cassettes.

These two new cassettes are a sequel to the first cassette brought out by ZS in 1988, titled *I Am Proud To Be A Zoroastrian*, which gave a brief insight into the life of Zarathushtra and the prayers and festivals observed by the community.

Twin cities' directory

Names of 480 families feature in the *Directory of Zoroastrians* published by the Parsi Zoroastrian Anjuman of Secunderabad and Hyderabad (PZASH) in 1990, according to a jointly signed introduction by then PZASH president Bazun Dittia and honorary secretary Noshir Nagarwala. The 54-page (unnumbered) *Directory* "will be useful for maintaining contact and easy communication amongst members of our community," they note.

Access to the name, age, sex, occupation and blood group of 1,320 residents of the twin cities can be had through the *Directory*. Additionally there is given a brief outline of other Zoroastrian establishments/institutions in Secunderabad and Hyderabad.

A list of Parsi dharamshalas throughout India would interest those planning to tour other parts of the country. Likewise, a synopsis of places of tourist interest around Hyderabad and Secunderabad would induce Zoroastrians from other regions to visit this area.

Edited by the husband-wife team of Jehangir and Hoofrish Bisney, the data for the book was compiled by Ms Mehernavaz S. Parakh, Ms Tanaz Keki Wadia and Ms Fashutana Rohinton Debara with the assistance of Ms Gulbanoo Yadgar Chenoy, Noshir F. Nagarwala and Jehangir M. Hormusjee.

Suburbs socialize

When the members evince a diminishing interest in community activities, many office bearers get demotivated. Not so the people in charge of the Borivli and Suburban Zoroastrian Association who, with a view to inducing interaction with members of neighboring anjuman — the Malcolm Baug Zoroastrian Association and the Andheri Zoroastrian Association, will be conducting joint programs and activi-

ties, informs the May 1991 issue of the Borivli Association's newsletter.

Vocational guidance for children and a social evening were among the first joint programs scheduled by the three anjumans. In future they also hope to undertake other activities like conducting cooking classes, promoting religious activities, forming a matrimonial bureau and organizing an entertainment program.

But "unless a spontaneous participation of the members is forthcoming in our programs, we (will be) deterred from arranging more activities," notes the honorary secretary of the Borivli Association, N. G. Paghdwalla.

Youthful proficiency

All the 110 seats at the NCPA's (National Centre for the Performing Arts) Little Theatre were occupied. And before long, so were the carpeted steps along both aisles. The audience had responded to the invitation of Nariman Khursedji, trustee of The Hilla Khursedji Memorial Trust, to listen to the fine performances of three young musicians on July 31, 1991.

Pianists Ms Preethi Mahadeviah and Rohit Menezes, prizewinners at the competitions organized by the Trust in 1986 and 1990 respectively, received their trophy and awards from trustee Sorab Godrej after the show. As notes the NCPA program summary for July, Menezes (19) has studied with Ms Barbara Thomas and from 1989 with Ms Gita Chacko in Bangalore. He gave delightful renditions from Schubert, Mozart, Brahms and Ravel. Mahadeviah (18), who had been a student of Chacko in Bangalore and had also briefly studied under Bernice Goldman in New York, played a Brahms rhapsody, a Bach prelude and Debussy's *Pour le Piano*, her pleasure and aplomb radiating to the audience.

Beethoven's *Serenade Op 8 for Flute and Piano* interleaved the piano recitals, flautist Ms Dilshad Billimoria and pianist Pervez Mody receiving an enthusiastic response from the audience. Billimoria had scored the highest marks at the 1990 examination conducted by the visiting examiner of the Royal Schools of Music, London, as informed Ms Jer Khursedji. Mody, whom the evening's compere Dr (Ms) Jerroo Lam, secretary of the Time and Talents Club, described as a major musical find of the 1980s, is currently studying at the Moscow Conservatoire.

The Hilla Khursedji Memorial Trust was set up to commemorate the interna-



(Above) International concert pianist, the late Hilla Khursedji

(Right) Pocha in Israel with Levy (left)

tional concert pianist whose death at peak career had stunned the music world in 1983. Formed under the chairmanship of legal luminary Nani Palkhivala, the Trust helps deserving applicants by way of music education, scholarships, medical and educational aid, etc. The Hilla Khursedji Memorial Trophy and Award were donated by the Trust in 1984 to the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music, London. Its visiting examiner nominates the "most gifted candidate in piano-forte from grade five to the LRSM (Licentiate of Royal School of Music)," as noted Lam. A.S.M.

Hope for the hostages

"Only after I reached Srinagar, did the enormity of the situation dawn on me. I was put in an Ambassador car with two sten gun-toting guards sitting on either side. Another armed guard sat beside the driver. Two army jeeps, one in front of the Ambassador and the second at the rear, formed a convoy that went speeding from the airport to the hospital." Dr Nusly Pocha recounted the experiences of the "most adventurous" period in his life, when he was deputed by the Israeli consulate in Bombay to supervise the medical treatment provided to the Israeli tourists who had been taken hostage by militants in Jammu and Kashmir, to *The Daily* of July 14, 1991.

On reading of the ill-treatment meted out to the Israeli tourists, Pocha, a Bombay practitioner, just made a courtesy call to the Israeli consulate in Bombay

with which he has been associated for nearly a decade. The consulate promptly accepted his offer of service and asked him to proceed to Srinagar.

It was on reaching Srinagar that Pocha got a full perspective of the situation. Eight Israelis and a Dutch woman were kidnapped by a group of terrorists from their houseboat on the Dal Lake. While two Israeli women and the lone Dutch woman were freed, the six men were lined up and were about to be shot dead when a scuffle ensued. As a result one Israeli and one militant died; three Israelis were seriously injured; one who tried to escape was taken captive by an-



other militant group; leaving one Israeli who was fortunately unharmed to take command of the situation and transport his colleagues to the Army Hospital after the militants had fled from the scene, *The Daily* write-up informs.

Pocha found the victims at the Army Hospital receiving good treatment. So the next duty for the doctor, who is considered an expert in aviation medicine, was to accompany them to Israel.

At the Tel Aviv airport they were given "a rousing reception with even (David Levy) the foreign minister who is also the deputy prime minister, present at the airport" to receive them. The news of the event had travelled wide and according to *The Daily*, the doctor was treated like a hero wherever he went.

Recluse Moos

A year after his death his house was converted into a museum. This was the same house in Chalisgaon (300 kms from Bombay) from which the talented yet "eccen-



Shiromani award winners (from left): Dotivala, Chatterjee and Wadia

tric" photographer Keki Manekji Moos did not venture out for 40 years, notes Vidyadhar Date in *The Times of India* of March 24, 1991. His house was noted for its collection of photographs, antiques and paintings. And since Moos would never leave his abode, those interested in his works, including eminent personages like Jawaharlal Nehru and Bal Gandharva, are said to have visited his house to see the contents therein.

Working indoors, his subjects were naturally set up in the house. Among his most popular works was his winter scene which he devised on a table top, using table salt, dry twigs and water colors. In 1980, the Maharashtra State Board for Literature and Culture had brought out a catalogue of Moos' works. The trust which manages the museum was set up on his death by a band of admirers who named it after his mother, Ms Piroja Manekji Moos. The Rajwade History and Research Centre also assisted in the setting up of the museum, *The Times* notes.

Born in Bombay and educated in England, Moos opted to live the life of a recluse. A towering figure over six feet tall with a long white mane, most local people reportedly feared and avoided him. As per the write-up, he was to them "a spirit whose ways they couldn't understand."

Shiromani awards for three

President of the Family Planning Association of India (FPAI) Ms Avabai B. Wadia, promoter of tourism and youth welfare Ms Perviz Feroze Dotivala and playback singer Ms Behroze Sapankumar Chatterjee were among the 28 women chosen to receive the Mahila Shiromani Awards for 1990, reads a write-up in the Delhi edition of the *Statesman*, of April 15, 1991. The awards were presented by Lok Sabha speaker Rabi Ray in New Delhi on April 19.

Founder member and former president of the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF), Wadia has been concentrating on finding solutions to the population question through education and research, reads her bio data.

In addition to receiving national awards like the Padma Bhushan, Wadia has also got international recognition for heading the IPPF. Whether assisting on governmental bodies like the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and the Ministry of Education, or on voluntary bodies like the Indian Society for the Study of Reproduction and Fertility, Wadia has participated in several national and international meets on women and child welfare, further informs her bio data.

Founder of the International Tourism Council and presently its vice president, Dotivala is active organizing conferences, seminars and tours in India and abroad. She started the Youth Hostels Association of India movement in Maharashtra, and has built it up to its present capacity of over 5,000 members, notes her curriculum vitae.

For the youth in particular Dotivala organizes different projects: helping them with admissions to schools and colleges, providing them scholarship grants, offering them employment opportunities and business incentives, assisting them with accommodation and molding their personality development. For the last 22 years she has been guiding the youth in the rural areas, further reads her curriculum vitae.

Singer Chatterjee has been acclaimed for her ghazals, geets, bhajans and folk songs in 21 different languages, and already has three albums to her credit. Recording songs for films like *Tohfa Mohabbat Ka*, *Andaz Apna Apna* and *Dil Hai Tumhara*, Chatterjee's ambition is to cut one album every year. In addition to

her vocal talent she is also at ease on instruments like the tabla, piano, organ and the key boards.

A Sangeet Prabhakar degree holder in Indian classical vocal music, Chatterjee has had an occasion to sing with veterans like the late Kishor Kumar, Ms Asha Bhosle, Anup Jalota, Nitin Mukesh and others, her bio data reads.

Tennis talent

At several all-India tennis tournaments in 1991, Bombay's Navroz Udwadia emerged winner in the under-18 age-group: He won the Delhi State Championship, the Gujarat State Cup and the Bagpiper Gold Tennis World India Tournament; and was the runner up at the Karnataka State Tennis Championship and the Western India Open Tennis Tournament.

When playing in any tournament, Udwadia always sports the logo of the Indian Tennis Academy with which he has signed a bond that does not permit him to represent any club except theirs. The Academy in turn, sponsored by the Indian Tobacco Company, bears all the expenses connected with his training and



Udwadia: aiming for a career through sports

competition. Additionally this year, he received a scholarship of Rs 2,500 which is meant to "support myself as well as help me to further my career. (But just) the racquet which we use costs about Rs 3,000. We have to be equipped with

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at least four such racquets," informs Udwadia.

Playing tennis from the age of eight, Udwadia's first win was at an interschool tournament where he represented his school — The Cathedral and John Connon High School — in the under-10 age-group. Thereafter he trained with the Maharashtra State Lawn Tennis Association until he was 15, before he joined the Indian Tennis Academy where he is presently coached by Mayur Vasant.

His day commences at six in the morning, doing physical training until 8.30 a.m., followed by an hour of weight training, after which he goes to college (Sydenham College of Commerce) though "not very regular," he admits. From 1.30 p.m. to 7.30 p.m. he practises tennis.

"Since a long time my only motive behind playing tennis is to gain an entry into one of those famous universities... Harvard/Oxford on the strength of my performance; to gain a scholarship and study over there," notes the tennis star. He may also consider pursuing tennis abroad "and if things move well, make it a career."

Researched by Ruzbeh N. Bharucha

On the creditable track

From among 3,50,000 employees of the Central Railway, Nagpur's Khushroo Adi Poacha was selected for the General Manager's Silver Medal for the year 1990-91, writes Ms Shernaz Daver from Nagpur.

His study of computer applications resulting in streamlining of manual work, particularly in electrical billing, drivers' performance analysis, pension and accounts settlement cases, won the 23-year-old Poacha the medal and a commendation certificate.

Poacha also makes time for community activities, assisting in the organization of different programs of the Forum of Young Zoroastrians, mentions Daver.

A cure for leprosy?

Leprosy infection is a subject widely researched by Dr (Ms) Jolly Sarosh Doctor. Beginning with her PhD study on the subject of leprosy in 1985 and her subsequent association as post doctoral fellow with the Foundation for Medical Research, Doctor has been trying to identify a component that would serve as a vaccine for leprosy, notes a write-up.

She was conferred the Young Scientist of the Year (1990) award which carried a cash prize of Rs 10,000 and prior to



Doctor (left):
in quest of a
leprosy
vaccine.
Panthaki:
international
collaboration
on business
venture.

that had won the AMI-Alembic award. Thirty-one-year-old Doctor has graduated in chemistry and done her post graduation in bio-chemistry, notes a press release.

Cooling news

With technical collaboration from Mitsubishi of Japan, Geev Panthaki's company Aircommand (India) Limited was to launch a new range of air conditioners, according to a news item in *Business India*, November 12-25, 1990.

"If you believe, you can." With this attitude Panthaki is believed to have patiently waited for four years for the deal to come through and is now confident that he will be able to take on competition from established brands like Voltas, Fedders Lloyd, Onida and Videocon. The estimated 10-crore rupee project was to commence production with 3,600 split air conditioners in the first year.

A decade back Panthaki was an air conditioner salesman with Blue Star, informs the write-up.

Preserve Bombay's past

As part of its efforts "to retain Bombay's glorious past and to preserve it for posterity," the urban development department of the Government of Maharashtra will be conserving certain historic landmarks in the city. Of the 600 buildings, institutions and localities listed in the gazette, there are some which are Parsi-owned, founded by Parsis or named after Parsis, according to a write-up in *The Times of India* dated March 18, 1991.

Most of these precincts are located in south Bombay. Included in the list is the Banaji Limji Agiary, the first Parsi fire-temple in Bombay, constructed in 1709 and later rebuilt in 1845. In the same Fort area are located the newspaper offices of *The Bombay Samachar* and the *Jam-e-Jamshed* which will be accorded protection. Jer Mahal at Dhobi Ta-

lao with its wooden balconies and trellises at the ceiling level has gained significance because it "epitomizes the chawl system that was prevalent at the end of the last century," the write-up reads. The Dadabhoy Naoroji Road also gets a mention in this list and so also does the J. J. Group of Hospitals, according to the report.

In the case of these old buildings, the owners would neither be allowed to tamper with the facades nor the interiors without the prior sanction of the heritage conservation committee headed by Jamshed E. Kanga, former municipal commissioner of Bombay.

Loots continue

Two thieves reportedly responsible for the robbery of valuables worth Rs 80,000 from the residence of Hoshang Panthaky (see "A spate of house breaks," *Parsiana*, April 1991) were arrested by the police. But not before the burglars joined hands with one other criminal to loot 65-year-old Minoo Noshir Panthaki of Rs 87,000, notes a report in the *Jam-e-Jamshed* of April 14, 1991. This was the third incidence of robbery in the Tardeo locality this year.

When Minoo Panthaki who runs the petrol pump adjacent to the Bhatia Hospital was on his way to the Union Bank of India next door to deposit cash, he was accosted by three men who threatened him with knives and absconded with the loot in a cab, the report notes.

Yet another incident of housebreak was at the residence of Rayomand Soli Faramroze staying at Rashid Mansion in Colaba. Thirty-six-year-old Faramroze was out of Bombay when robbers broke into his house through the windows and stole valuables in silver and gold, and a cash amount of Rs 50,000, reads a write-up in the *Jamé* of September 1.

Compiled by Roxana H. Kaka

Zoroastrian Tadjiks?

Seventy years of official atheism came to an end with the lifting of the embargo on religion in the USSR in 1985 said Akbar Tursanzad, director of the Institute of Oriental Studies, Tadjikistan Academy of Sciences and Jamshid Parvona, dean of the College of Letters and Humanities, State University of Tadjikistan in the course of their talk on the history and cultural background of Zoroastrians in Tadjikistan on March 3, 1991 at the Arbab Rustom Guiv Darbe Mehr at New Rochelle, New York, informs the April newsletter of the Zoroastrian Association of Greater New York (ZAGNY). Their lecture tour of other North American cities included Chicago, Seattle, Los Angeles, Boston and Washington, DC, adds *Spenta* (June-July 1991), the newsletter of The Zarathushtrian Assembly. The speakers, who had been sponsored by the Foundation of Iranian Studies of Washington, DC, spoke to university audiences as well as the Zoroastrian community on the revival of Iranian national sentiments among the Tadjik and the remnant Zoroastrian elements in remote valleys of the Pamir mountains, informs *Spenta*. According to Parvona, ruined dokhmas and atash kadehs dot the Pamir region.

Enabled to choose their own religion, the people demonstrated a lot of interest in Zoroastrianism which used to be practiced in the area earlier, the professors noted. They are said to be attempting to develop a section on Zoroastrian Studies at Tadjikistan University and need outside Zoroastrians to help them at the task, as notes a letter from Ms Farangiz Shahrokh in the *FEZANA Journal* (August 1991). Shahrokh suggests sending two or three Persian speaking persons competent in religious and anthropological fields to Tadjikistan on a two to four-week fact finding trip. "Their report would enable us to plan future action in Tadjikistan and other parts of Soviet Central Asia," she notes.

The New York meet had been organized by Mehrborzin Soroushian who introduced the speakers and helped to translate Farsi into English. Dr Jehan Bagli, editor of *Gavashni*, the newsletter of the Zoroastrian Association of Quebec,

opened the meeting with a prayer followed by its translation, informed the ZAGNY newsletter.

A conference on Zoroastrianism is scheduled for 1992 in Dushnabe, Tadjikistan, notes the *FEZANA Journal* quoting a letter from the multilingual Parvona who, according to *Spenta*, is of Zarthoshti lineage. The *Journal* notes that FEZANA may consider coordinating attendance at the conference with a tour of Iran if sufficient interest is displayed by the North American community.

A center in Victoria

For the second time Ms Arnavaz Chubb heads the Zoroastrian Association of Victoria (ZAV), Australia. Her team includes vice president Dr Minoo Patel, secretary Ms Shirin Mistry, treasurer Naval Billimoria, youth representative Farnoosh Noushi and members at large Dr Katy Mistry, Ms Veera Madon, Jimmy Jamasji and Shahryar Noushi.

With the goal of a home for the ZAV in the near future (three to five years) a subcommittee has been formed with Patel as convener. Aiding him in drafting a constitutional base to the Building Project Committee are Jimmy Billimoria, Pervaz Dubash, Dr Faroukh Sanjana, Dr Katy Mistry, Noushi and Jamasji.

So as not to strain ZAV resources, the project will be financed through donations, local and international, plus separate fund raising projects, informs *Rathaeshtr*, the ZAV newsletter (August 1991).

Dastur Kutar Fund

Dr (Ms) Shirinbanoo Kutar, chairperson of the World Zoroastrian Organization (WZO), has contributed the initial donation of £ 3,000 to the Dasturji Sohrabji Hormusji Kutar Fund for Navars/Mahtabs. The trust has been founded by the Zoroastrian Association of Greater New York (ZAGNY) at the request of the WZO, notes the Association's newsletters of February and April 1991. The Fund commemorates the liberal high priest of the UK whose benedictions had included the families of all Zoroastrians in the western world. Income from the donation is earmarked for defraying the expenses

of sons of athornan families in North America proceeding to India for navar/martab initiation.

Journal's new look

The *FEZANA Journal* with its professional looking (24-page) format is now being edited by Dr Rustom Kevala, chairperson of FEZANA's Information Receiving and Dissemination (Journal) Committee. Assisting him are Adel Engineer, in charge of articles and letters, Ms Dolly Dastoor and Shahriar Shahriati who handle FEZANA and youth reports respectively. Ms Roshan Rivetna is the publisher while Dr Hooman Sotoodeh combines the roles of publisher and marketing manager. Kavas Mody is in charge of the printing.

For the first three years of publication, the *Journal's* team had comprised Dr Jehan Bagli, editor, with Ms Dolly Dastoor, Ms Sabar Balsara, Aspy Deboo and Dr Ali Jafarey as associate editors. Shavak Katrak had been the committee member on its board and finance had been the purview of Gev Karkaria. In the December 1990 issue Bagli bade his readers "au revoir" stating that "the time has come to yield and inject some fresh thought and input into this periodical."

With the aim of developing reliable and complete records pertaining to Zoroastrians in North America, FEZANA's Information Receiving and Dissemination Committee urges readers to provide information on births, navjotes, weddings, deaths, graduations, navar and martab ceremonies and other honors to community members "since the days of the earliest known Zoroastrian settlers on this continent."

Full-time mobeds in NA?

Ervad Jamshed Ravji, an immigrant from Mombasa, may be North America's first full-time mobed. Ravji will be supporting various religious activities of the Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Chicago (ZAC), informs the *FEZANA Journal*.

Mobed Mehraban Firouzgary has come from Iran to Houston, Texas. A member of the Kankash-e-Mobedan, Firouzgary will offer religious services in

and around Texas. Conversant in English and Farsi, Firouzgary has authored a book, *Zarathusti — Now You Are One of Us*, that includes navjote prayers, their meaning, explanations on the Farohar, the concept of God, sudreh-kusti, etc.

The Council of Iranian Mobeds is seeking a sponsor to help with an initial printing of 1,000 copies to be distributed to all young persons about to be initiated into Zoroastrianism. Firouzgary is already occupied with writing a second book on the religion, states the *Journal*.

North American titbits

Phiroze Rivetna and Behram Deboo are the presidents of the Zoroastrian Association of Arizona (ZAAZ) and the Zoroastrian Society of Washington State (ZSWS) respectively, informs the *FEZANA Journal*. The two newly formed associations have applied for FEZANA membership.

In light of the increasing number of inter-faith gatherings in North America wherein Zoroastrians participate, FEZANA president Rohinton Rivetna invites *Journal* readers to suggest ideas for a Zoroastrian symbol of identification. "At these events, most other faiths bring a 'banner' that identifies their faith. Traditionally Zoroastrians have not had a banner, but we do have a variety of symbols that could serve as motifs," notes Rivetna in a letter.

The Ravinia Music Festival near Chicago — North America's oldest and most diverse summer festival of the performing arts, featuring both classical and popular music and dance, as notes the *FEZANA Journal* — has a new executive director: Zarin Mehta, conductor Zubin's brother.

The *Opus Clavicembalisticum* has found its way into the *Guinness Book of World Records* as the longest playing (2 hours 45 mins) non-repetitive piece ever composed for the piano, informs the *Journal*. Its composer, the late Kaikhosru Shapurji Sorabji, had lived and died a recluse in the UK.

Dinyar Contractor, the jovial impressario, led a Bombay cast to stage *Pakardao* in Los Angeles on July 13, 1991. This was the first time that a Parsi *natak* with an Indian cast had been sponsored in the USA, notes the *Journal*.

Zoroastrians in China

The main feature articles of the *FEZANA Journal* (August 1991) explore the Zoroastrian connections to the east of Iran, more specifically in China. "Prof Zaehner (*Dawn and Twilight of Zoroastrianism*) and Dr (Ms) Mary Boyce (*History of Zoroastrianism and Zoroastrians*) both essentially conclude that the people of Pars became Zoroastrians hundreds of years after Zarathushtra preached and that the religion first spread across the Asian steppes before it was accepted as the religion of the Persian empires," notes Adi Davar in an article titled "Zoroastrians in China through the centuries." Davar believes that the religion spread along the famous silk route thanks to Zoroastrian Sogdians who were great traders, traversing the Asian steppes from Northern Afghanistan (Bactria) where Zarathushtra found his first powerful disciple — King Vishtaspa — to Tartary and Mongolia and eventually to Ch'ang-an (the modern Xian) in China.

Davar refers to Dr A. Forouhy's article "Zoroastrianism in China" in *Le Journal de Tehran* (September 1937) wherein he refers to "the oldest book in Chinese which specifically mentions Zoroastrianism is *Se. I. Pien. Pao* written in the reign of Emperor Ling Wang (571-545 BC) of the Chou dynasty; this reflected the spread of that religion in the years predating Confucianism (in the 6th century BC) and which survived until the middle ages. One can only ask oneself how the faith was born in that part of the world, several centuries before the rise of the Achaemenians in ancient Iran."

There is a tendency to skip several centuries until around 386-495 AC when there were believed to be so many Zoroastrians in China that its emperors were initiated into the faith and had ministers for Zoroastrian affairs, writes Davar. There was also a considerable influence of Manichaeism in these areas and Davar cautions against a likely bunching together of the followers of Zoroaster and Mani by western commentators. Also, the references are generally second hand and need to be confirmed through painstaking historical and social research. An irreplaceable resource would be a knowledge of local languages.

Tailpiece

The ZAGNY youth newsletter of February features an article by Murzban Morris

titled "What is Zoroastrianism?" The conclusion of the young man with an outstanding academic record (see "A true citizen," Zoroastrians Abroad, *Parsiana*, July 1991) is a denunciation of community attitudes worldwide:

"Even though I may be one crazy kid, with a wild idea, I always wondered what would happen if everybody could just try to live through that little piece of Zoroastrianism in us all. If we all just had mutual understanding and respect for each other. If we all just tried to stop and see that many times we are arguing for no reason at all. If we all just opened our minds. If we all just tried to find an agreement rather than say, 'I'm right, you're wrong.' If we all just had enough pride to care enough for others instead of just ourselves. And if we all just tried to open ourselves up a little and give a little of ourselves to take a little of someone else in, wouldn't this place be so much better? I don't know, it was just a thought. But as long as there is hatred, belligerence, ignorance, egos and lust, I guess we'll never know. Or will we?"

Compiled by Amavaz S. Mama

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Flourishing in Florida?

Maintaining religious and ethnic links, Florida-based Zoroastrians demonstrate changing attitudes that respond to current needs

Meher Marker Noshirwani

This study of the Zoroastrians in West Central Florida, is part of a larger project entitled, "A Religious History of Tampa Bay," conducted by the University of South Florida's Department of Religious Studies, and the National Conference of Christians and Jews. It is sponsored by the Florida Endowment for the Humanities. The objectives of this study are: to document the history of the community, to appreciate the distinctive contributions each community has made to the area, to provide information to historians, the media, government officials and civic leaders regarding the religious heritage of each community and to encourage interfaith understanding between different religious groups.

The Zoroastrians are recent settlers in West Central Florida. It is a very small community with a total of 45 adults within 25 families, scattered between Tampa Bay, St Petersburg, Orlando, and its environs. This survey of the Zoroastrians was conducted through 45 questionnaires sent, to be answered by each individual adult in a family. The focus of the questionnaire was to collect socioeconomic information, as well as to ascertain attitudes towards certain issues confronting the Zoroastrian community.

Although the Parsis have adapted and integrated extremely well into their host societies, this success is not devoid of problems and contemporary immigrant communities are dealing with such issues. The Zoroastrian population in the United States today is approximately 10,000 [Minocher-Homji, H., *Zoroastrians in North America — Their Demogra-*

phy, Identity, Unification and Survival Under Contemporary Situation, the Seventh North American Zoroastrian Congress, Houston (August 31 — September 3, 1990)]. The number of Parsis in different cities varies a great deal. New York, Houston, Los Angeles and Chicago have large communities, whereas the one in West Central Florida is comparatively small.

Personal data

Out of a total of 19 respondents, 10 were male and nine female, the average age range being 25 to 35 years with one or two respondents in the older age groups.

Almost all respondents were married, the majority to Parsi or Iranian Zoroastrians and a few to non-Parsis, i.e. Hindus and Christians.

In general most Parsi families have few children. Twelve families surveyed averaged two adults and two children per family. In three cases the couple had only one child, and in one case three children were reported. The absence of an extended family is evident, but this is an obvious phenomenon for an immigrant community. Grandparents and other relatives are absent from the community here. The typical trend of late marriages among the Parsis is reflected in the immigrant community in West Central Florida.

Regarding employment, all the Parsi men were employed, with the exception of one student. Careers include business management, and professions such as doctors, engineers, computer analysts, etc. Most of the women were also employed, the remaining few being home-

makers. Careers included business, professors at universities, or involved in academic research.

Migration

The majority of male respondents had arrived in the United States in the 1970s and 1980s, although one person had migrated in the late 1960s. They arrived in Florida a few years later, while some came directly from Bombay (India) and Karachi (Pakistan). The females' arrival in the United States was also during the 1970s and 1980s, although a few had been here from the mid 1960s. The movement to Florida occurred during the 1980s, and again some came directly from Bombay, and others from different places in the United States.

Adaptation and integration into another society is not always an easy process. The male respondents seemed to feel they had no problems, or "it was a relatively smooth transition," or "I never felt I was from a country miles and miles away, the people are wonderful, kind and friendly." For the females integration was, "not very difficult, since I come from Bombay, a westernized and cosmopolitan city." Others took a long time, and still hadn't adapted completely. These responses indicate a slight difference between males and females. Most men seemed to have few or no problems in the early years, or in adapting to American society. For the women, family ties, being homesick, and certain cultural differences were problems they had to face, but neither males nor females indicated any regret for migrating. In fact all of

them said they had achieved their reasons for migrating to the United States.

The Parsi community appears to be well settled in Florida. Most of the families have no intention of returning to their countries of origin. The circumstances that initially brought them here, their integration and economic achievements have been successful. Visits to India and Pakistan are regular, most men visiting their native countries every five years, and most women every two or three years. Similarly both males and females maintain regular contact by mail or telephone with family, friends, and relatives in Pakistan and India.

The question of identity is usually ambiguous in immigrant communities. While specific terms like citizen or nationality are tangible, identity is more elusive. Who do immigrants identify themselves with? And how do they describe themselves? According to the Parsi community in West Central Florida, the majority of males described themselves as Zoroastrian, i.e. according to religion, and not nationality or citizenship. A few said Pakistani or Indian, and some said Zoroastrian, Indian, and American. The response from females was Zoroastrian/Indian or Pakistani, i.e. according to religion and native country. In both cases the respondents predominantly identified themselves with their religion, and then with their country of origin, indicating the importance of religion to the Parsis. Identification with their native countries reinforced ethnicity, and maintains social and cultural links within the community.

Religious practices

For an immigrant community it is often difficult to maintain certain religious practices in a different country, but as the results of the survey indicated, the Parsi community tries hard to maintain as many practices as possible. For example, a picture of Prophet Zarathustra is always visible in Parsi homes, and every respondent said they keep a picture of the Prophet in their houses no matter where they live. Similarly, an oil lamp is often kept burning, especially on auspicious occasions. Quite a few families also keep a separate prayer table, where only prayers are conducted. In addition to religious practices, certain customs are also observed, one of which is to hang a row of flowers above the front door of the house. Another custom is the practice of drawing designs outside an entrance in white chalk. This is meant to keep evil spirits away, and so is performed on all

happy occasions. Customs such as these are also observed by all the families surveyed.

According to the survey results most male and female respondents pray at least once or twice a day and teach the prayers to their children. The majority wore their sudreh and kusti regularly, but, there were a few respondents who said they wore it sometimes or only on religious occasions. Almost every male and female said the only ritual they have had to give up, and the one they missed the most, is going to the agiary.

Whenever possible, the Parsis meet to celebrate religious events. For example, the new year is celebrated with prayers and festivity and the community makes an effort to involve all its members. In St Petersburg (Florida) for one new year celebration special arrangements were made for a Parsi priest to attend the festivities, so that the community and its children could reinforce the religious element felt on these occasions.

Issues

The majority of respondents said they would "accept" intermarriage, though some said they would "accept intermarriage reluctantly," and only a small minority said they would "welcome intermarriage." However when this does occur, the majority of respondents said priests should perform the ceremony, the non-Zoroastrian spouses may be initiated if so desired, and the children of either parent should have a right to be a Zoroastrian. Only a few individuals had a negative response. Also almost every family had some relative who had married outside the community.

Most respondents said that non-Parsis should be allowed to enter agiaries and attend religious ceremonies. This indicates a change in attitude among certain

Parsis, and may eventually lead to a change in rules followed by the community.

All respondents agreed that priests are essential to Zoroastrianism, and that it is necessary to train priests in the United States to cater to the needs of the community.

The immigrant community in the survey stated that the main dangers confronting the community are a falling birth rate, intermarriage, apathy and lack of religious education among the younger generation which results in a shift away from the religion. In response to what they considered the main hopes for the religion they said, the religion's strong ethical values would insure its continuity, Zoroastrianism has a strong record of survival, and the community's general affluence and prosperity would contribute to its development and progress. But in reality much more is needed to ensure the growth of the community.

There are no Zoroastrian organizations in the Tampa Bay area yet, but the community has expressed the desire to form a small group. In fact the Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America (FEZANA) had approached certain individuals to begin a small informal organization under its umbrella. This has not yet started, but may materialise in the future. The community meets once a month and maintains social contact with each other. They have adapted to their host culture and environment, enjoy being in America, continue with their traditions, and maintain their ethnicity.

Meher Marker Noshirwani works as a sociologist on women and development issues in Pakistan. Based in Florida for a short time in 1990, she conducted this survey on behalf of the religious studies department of the University of South Florida.

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The Reluctant Sheriff

Former chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission, Dr Homi Sethna lends prestige to a post generally considered as a figurehead

Gustasp Irani

"I did not want the post (of sheriff of Bombay). I have enough on my plate," says Dr Homi N. Sethna, former chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission of India and currently chairman of nine of the 20 companies on whose directorial board he sits. In addition he has been a member of numerous national and international organizations, including some bodies constituted by the United Nations. Among the awards he has received are the three 'Padmas' the nation confers on its most outstanding citizens — Padma Shri (1959), Padma Bhushan (1966) and Padma Vibhushan (1975). He is also a trustee of... The list is long.

Dressed casually in a short-sleeved shirt, 68-year-old Sethna fills the sheriff's office, probably the only plush room in the cluttered Bombay Civil Court building, with the ease of a man used to high office. Articulate and precise, he does not hesitate to reserve his opinion on certain matters or, in others, calling a spade a spade.

Explaining the role of a sheriff he states: "We don't carry guns or stuff like that... (It) is not as you have it in the US." Here, "the office has no authority of its own. We are officials of the High

Court. We come under the jurisdiction of the Chief Justice. We only do what we are told." He illustrates with an example: If the court orders that a ship be impounded and its cargo auctioned, the sheriff's office will act as directed; the deputy sheriff, more often than not, doing all the paperwork and going through the formalities.

In the old days, he informs us, the sheriff of Bombay collected a percentage on whatever he auctioned. "That was his income then. Now the post is purely honorary. He does not collect a penny; more often he is out of pocket..."

"The sheriff has no authority or role to play in maintaining law and order," briefs Sethna. But, he clarifies, he does hear the grievances of the

people, call condolence meetings on the death of prominent personalities and occasionally goes to the airport to receive VVIPs. Rather than getting to deal with the problems of the city he gets a lot of people who come to him with personal problems. These he directs to various authorities that are in a position to help — the Chief Minister's Fund, for instance, or charity trusts. Even as he explains, a man

comes for medical aid and is directed to approach a Tata and a Wadia trust. "The sheriff helps the common man. In his own capacity he can't do anything. He can only act as a catalyst; write letters, recommend applications," says Sethna.

Parsis do come for help, but their needs are often of a different nature — school and college admissions and of course, accommodation in Parsi charity blocks. "I have signed a hell of a lot of letters," continues Sethna. Does his signature carry weight with the Bombay Parsi Panchayet (BPP) in its allotment of housing? "I don't know. People don't come back to me. What happens there (at the BPP office) I don't know and I don't want to get involved." On the housing problem he believes that the BPP slept over the matter for too long; they did not make use of their land and resources at the opportune time. No, he would not like to say more on the matter.

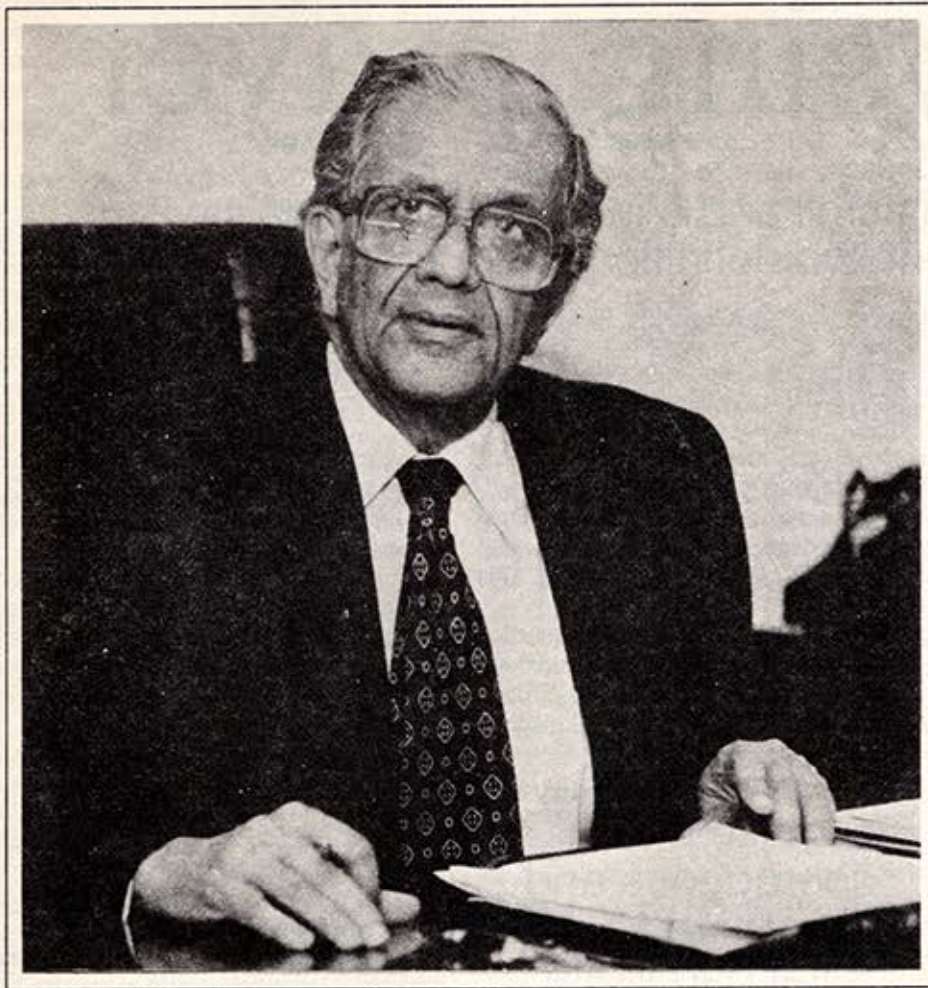
In matters directly relating to his work he is ready to respond but rather than ramble he prefers to be precise. "Don't ask me to comment on anything. Ask me questions and I'll answer them," he states.

As ex chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission he strongly defends the decision to explode an atomic device in 1974 during his tenure. "Yes, it was necessary. It was part of our program," he states emphatically. At that time research done in the Soviet Union had shown how artificial lakes could be created by controlled atomic explosions while through similar experiments the United States was able to stimulate greater oil and gas production. Sethna cites these as examples to illustrate how atomic power could be used for peaceful purposes.

Explosions aside, Sethna sees nuclear power becoming increasingly important in the country's energy equation. "We just don't have enough hydroelectric power," he says and he should know for he is the chairman of three Tata power companies — Tata Hydro Electric Power Supply Company Limited, Andhra Valley Power Supply Company Limited and Tata Power Company Limited.

What about the safety factor in nuclear power plants? "If you design and run it (the reactor) properly it is safe, so long as you don't monkey around with it," says Sethna. Referring to the Chernobyl disaster in the USSR (the accidental explosion of the nuclear reactor on April 26, 1986 killed many and triggered

**Nuclear
power
in
India
is
safe**



off radioactive contamination that spread as far as Italy and Wales, UK, tainting food resources) he blames it on poor instrumentation and human error. Similarly the accident at the Three Miles Island power plant in the USA (the worst accident in the history of commercial nuclear power generation in the US on March 28, 1979 near Middletown, Pennsylvania, required the plant to be shut down and people in the vicinity to be evacuated) he blames on the lack of properly trained technical personnel supervising the plant at the time of the disaster. "They had high school graduates manning it during the midnight graveyard shift," he states.

In India, three fully qualified and competent persons are on duty every shift; here we have the proper backup and expertise to deal with any situation. Nuclear power in India, as Sethna sees it, is safe. Yet he has reservations about the path the Atomic Commission in the country has chosen to furrow at present. In his opinion, things are not going according to plan

for a variety of reasons. He believes that more emphasis should be placed on the engineering sector. "They have some very good people and some worthless ones. You find that in every organization, but it is a question of ratios." For the present, Sethna has decided to tone down his criticism. "Some day I shall make my views known. For now, let's give them a chance," he says.

The Parsi connection in the country's atomic program is well-known. Dr Homi Bhabha was one of the pioneers of the movement and apart from him and Sethna, three other Parsis contributed their bit to the organization: Dr Minocher Karkhanawalla, Dinshaw Batliwalla and Dr Keki Mistry. The first died in an accident in 1979 (*Parsiana*, March-April 1980) while the other two have retired. "I don't know if there have been other Parsis since I retired in 1983," says Sethna. On the nuclear program as a career prospect for Parsis, Sethna reserves his opinion. "I have my views. Some

day I shall give them," he states.

He takes umbrage at the suggestion that the community's youth lack ambition and drive, and are satisfied with a bank clerk's job. He points out that since the nationalization of banks the Parsis do not enjoy any special privileges. "I don't see anything wrong (with a bank job). Parsis also have to sit for a competitive exam and if more get in, so much the better."

He does not view the community as a whole as lacking in enterprise. "You must realize that if from our community of 80,000 even if 10 do well, then we are doing well as a community. If there are 50 Parsi doctors in our community of 80,000 it compares favorably with 20,000 doctors in a population of 800,000,000. It is a question of percentages, of relative terms," says Sethna.

Parsis, according to Sethna, are doing well. Where they fail is in their inability to stem the decline in their numbers. "It is a result of various reasons. It is a complex social issue. I am not competent to comment. I don't like to comment on what I am not competent." On the issue of conversion he is once again brief. "I don't believe in what the Parsis say (about not accepting converts). All religions started with conversion; Zoroastrianism too. You can't suddenly decide that the religion will accept no more converts," he observes and then adds: "To me religion is an intensely personal thing. It has nothing to do with anybody else. I'm sorry."

In the sheriff's room an official hovers around impatiently. Important matters have to be attended to, particularly so since Sethna can spare only a day (Friday) in his busy week to attend to the sheriff's duties. Sethna gives us another five minutes of interview time.

Has anyone influenced him significantly? He shrugs. "No one in particular," he responds, then adds, "my father (Nusserwanji Sethna, a lawyer) gave me a free hand. He encouraged me in whatever I did." And what, we ask, were the significant landmarks in his life? His response is spontaneous. Rather than single out the milestones in his career, the awards and recognition he has won along the way, he selects events that are private and intimate: "When I got married (to Gooloo, a medical practitioner). When I got my children (Rustam and Meher and the late Noshirwan). These are all important parts of life."

Analysing prayer

Khusro Rustamji and Minoo Treasurywala
present two definitions of prayer

A scientific explanation of prayer

The subject of religion was on my mind when the question occurred to me: Why has prayer appeared in every religion from the earliest times? Prayer has two ingredients: A reposing of faith in some person, heavenly body or abstract idea and asking that symbol for a favor, for protection, or improvement of some sort in one's condition.

Is this wish to improve and survive a basic principle of life? Is it present in all animate life, in the vegetable and animal kingdoms? The more I thought about it, the closer I came to believe that the prayers of man are only an expression of the universal desire of life to seek improvement, and in the process some vital spark occurs which activates the progression of life, called evolution.

The theory of evolution is based on the premise that all life is seeking change, evolving, developing, improving itself. The very development, specific to one set of natural conditions, may spell the doom of a species when those conditions change, or when a catastrophe occurs, as in the case of the dinosaurs.

The most important changes that have occurred in animal life — as for instance the move of fishes to live on land or of reptiles to fly — are clearly indicative of a massive will to improve, to accept and change conditions, to adapt to a new habitat, a new way of living, which Darwin called the struggle for existence.

Every change for adaptation has been gradual in the animal kingdom. No fish suddenly walked on land, no reptile suddenly took off into the air. From the marshes that began to dry up, fishes began to adjust to breathing outside water. In the jungles some reptiles may have found it easier to glide than fly. Each ad-

aptation may have taken millions of years. In each process hundreds of species may have been wiped out. Only those survived that had the determination, the will, the desire to survive. That is prayer.

Which brings us to the vital question — Could such animals have desired for change, and an ability to accept difficult conditions? For the vegetable kingdom,

Prayer which says
'make me fit,
courageous and
discerning,' has a
vital part in life

the process of change depended on chromosomal rearrangement in reproduction. All vegetable life produces limitless successors, and the best, the hardiest, the most suitable survive and take the species forward.

The theory that acquired characteristics cannot be transmitted to the offspring may have to be modified only in one small degree, that while the parents do not transmit the experience or the adaptations that they have made, they probably do transmit or pass on the will to survive, the location which on land or sea helped survival, and above all, the desire to improve which seems to be the basic ingredient of all life.

We come back to the vital question: Does every living thing want to improve, and if it is so, what is it that activates the process? Obviously a desire for change arises in the brain. So it must be something that activates the brain. It may be some internal mechanism, like the genes

that control growth, or some type of auto suggestion or it may be some outside signal that comes from the sun, the stars, or something in the environment.

Perhaps it may be caused by a number of agencies, but the nodal part of change has got to be in the brain, which means that prayers or even the involuntary longing for survival would prepare it for change.

So it does seem that prayer, which I have derided all my life, may have a vital part to play in man's life. But it is not the prayer which asks for good jobs; it is the prayer which says 'I want change; I want to build myself up for change; make me fit, courageous and discerning.' That is undoubtedly a message to the brain. And perhaps a repetition would make one act in such a way that one would be progressing towards the objective.

Khusro Rustamji

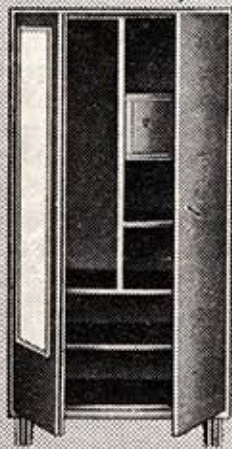
How should we pray?

Why do we need any religion? Let me remind you of a proverb, "Man cannot live by bread alone." It implies that beyond our material wants, there is within us a feeling of something missing. Material pleasures do not satisfy the soul which needs to be fed and nourished in a different manner. Love, devotion, knowledge, selfless service, courage, patience and other virtues are the sources of spiritual sustenance. In this world there are many things which are invisible and intangible. Our five senses cannot penetrate beyond a certain limit, so we need help to understand such matters. I have often been asked, "Why do we pray?" To me it appears that one prays or one needs to pray to thank God for providing all our necessities: air, food, water, health, intel-



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ligence, etc. Second, to thank God for his protection. We get spiritual strength and consolation through Him during our difficult times. And another reason, to offer Him our determination to burn the dross in our habits and to be on the path of truth, righteousness and justice.

Devotion is the first requisite then. In Persian, prayer is *bandagi* from the word *banda* meaning servant. So *bandagi* is to serve our master, God. In Persian there is a beautiful saying, "*Zindagi barrae bandagist; zindagi, bi-bandagi, shar-mandagist.*" The broad translation of it means, "Life is given so that we can serve God; one should feel ashamed of life led without rendering service." Prayer can be service, selfless service: "He prayeth well who serveth well both man and bird and beast." A prayer can be to admire God's creations; to pay homage to them is a prayer as well. A prayer should contain the wish for happiness for all. True prayers should not be a petition for favors, nor should it be a directive to the Omniscient.

True prayer is not an ostentatious display of our feelings, but a silent communion with God. God listens to every prayer. He is just. Remember that one must deserve before he desires. The proverb, "As you sow, so shall you reap" should be studied before one complains. The universal Law of Karma must be obeyed.

Finally, the mode of prayer. Men differ from each other in tastes and tendencies. Some seek God through the head: intellectual search, science, philosophy, etc. Some seek God within, through devotion of their heart: prayers, hymns, choirs, music, etc. Some need suitable activity and discipline to serve God: rituals, rites and ceremonies. But the average man needs the mixture of all three mentioned above.

To pray, to contemplate, to meditate is simply to realize and accept God's presence in us. It is therefore not a special way of life reserved for those who get away from the world and dwell in deserts or mountain tops. Contemplation and prayer ought to be the very breath of every human being.

I can see three stages of the method of praying. The first stage is merely reciting and chanting of words audibly. The mind will be distracted and may move at its own pace. But one would recite with

respect and a real longing for the grace of God. The next stage is to say the prayers in his thoughts: the prayers are whispered gently with his thoughts following what he is saying. The prayer now receives thoughtful attention. There is now considerable mental attention to the meaning of what one prays. The third supreme and difficult stage is when the prayer comes from the heart. There is no longer any movement of the lips or even, at its best, any movement of the eyes, but there is a

(If) you ask wrongly,
selfishly and
unrepentantly,
your prayers cannot
be answered"

devoted concentration. Not only is the mind now completely quiet, but all desires too have been transformed, have been passed over in the sole desire for being in the presence of God, the desire to contemplate God's glory and to merge oneself into it. Thus one's whole being, body and soul, sense and mind as well, are taken up into the prayer. That is what is called, at least to my understanding, complete meditation.

I heard a friend say, "I am a religious person and I do pray and God has not granted my prayers." My reply to him is: "You ask wrongly, selfishly and unrepentantly and so your prayers cannot be answered." Only people utterly blind to God's nature could demand that He give them what they ask for. True prayer begins with the willingness to learn God's will and a readiness to have our hearts remade by Him. If we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.

The essence of prayer is not to get what we want out of God, but to be so changed by God that we come to ask what He wants from us. Our prayer is not writing out a cheque for God to honor but an act of submission for that which can only be granted by the giver of every good and perfect gift.

People need to be taught how to pray. For one's own happiness one should learn

to pray properly. For no man is happy till he is at peace with himself and his Creator. The words, "More things are wrought by prayer that the world dreams of" is so true even today in this age of scientific knowledge.

Prayer is intended for one's own self, to draw upon its own resources. One asks God to grant him strength to surmount his difficulties and so it is for him an anchor in his troubled seas and times of difficulties. And it is through this self hypnosis, this self direction, that he draws upon his own resources to overcome his difficulties. It is a great external source of strength and so it is essential that one understands how to pray, not to beg but to ask God to improve one's own self. And so it is in this direction that the prayer achieves the goal for one who prays devoutly.

Prayer helps us to stay together even in this day and age when family life is fragmenting and breaking apart. The famous Lebanese philosopher Kahlil Gibran has written, "No man can reveal to you aught but that which already lies half asleep in the dawning of your knowledge." And so prayer helps one to get to the wellsprings of his knowledge from within to acquire enough strength, enough courage to grow into a better person.

The early history of man upon earth shows evidence that in some manner or other he has offered prayers to the supernatural. Prayer to early man was concerned with placating God, averting His capricious, unpredictable and terrible anger by performing the correct rituals at the correct time, in the correct way and so earning God's favour. So, much of the activities of the early human beings in pleasing their gods had little to do with the practical, social relationships between themselves and their fellows. Somewhere at this time of man's development in history, prophets have appeared on the scene and propounded and put forward their theologies for our consideration that the worship of God is bound up with service to society and our fellow human beings. And, therefore, prayer shows a way of life expressing love, admiration for creation and trust in God: "He serveth God that serveth man." And so blood sacrifice has been gradually transformed by various prophets and their teachings to self-sacrifice for the service of human beings.

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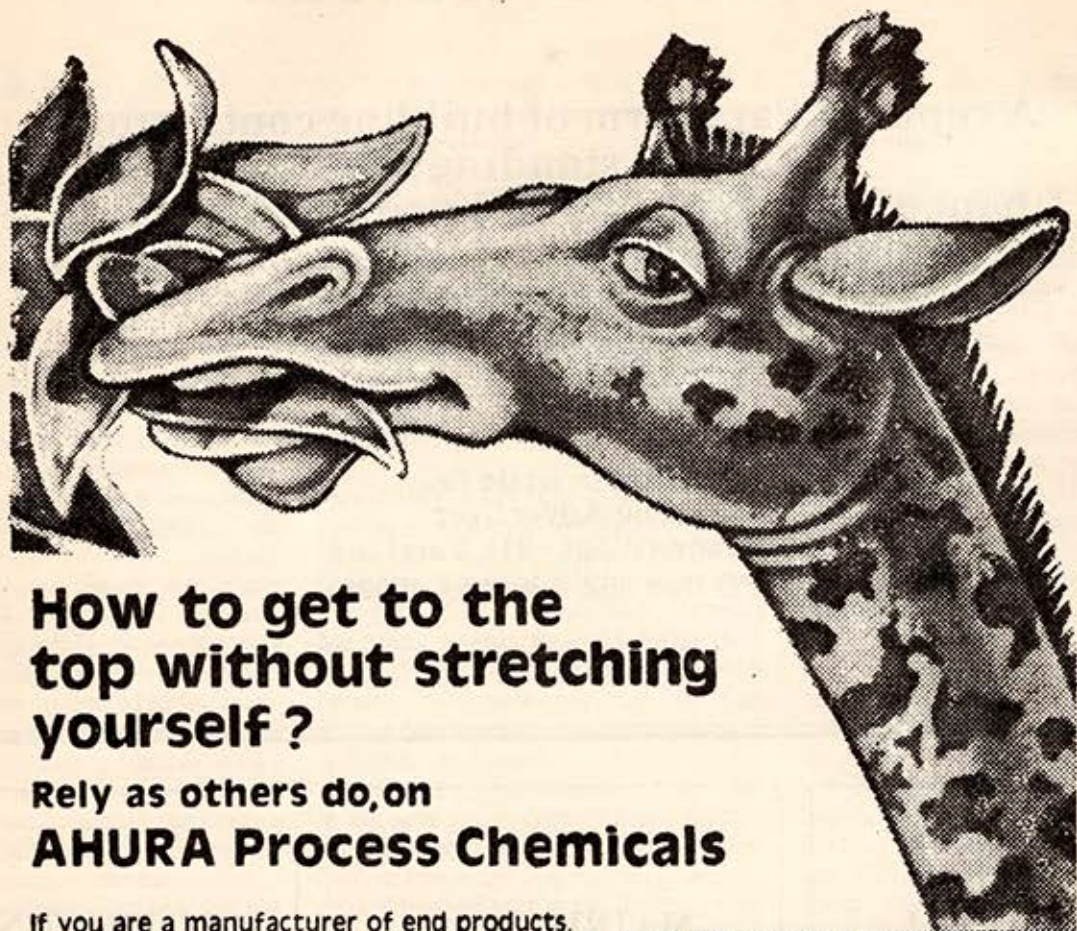
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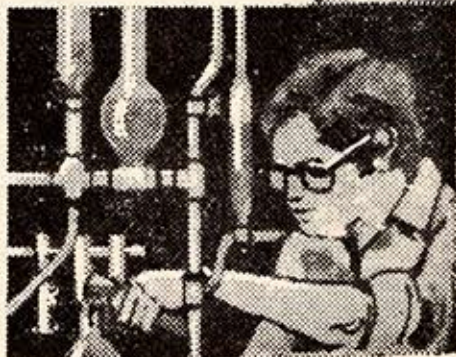
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PARSI DAIRY FARM

The 75-Year Milk Run



Two generations of the Nariman family strive to ensure milk products of consistent quality

Gustasp Irani

Come human or natural disaster, the Parsi Dairy Farm (PDF) milk run continues uninterrupted. In the recent past, all commercial activity in Bombay came to a grinding halt when, first, the former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi was assassinated and then when the city was flooded as a result of a record breaking downpour. Yet the Parsi Dairy milk was delivered on both days. "We made 99.9 percent (of home) deliveries on these days," says Dinshaw Nariman who, along with his brothers Merwan, Naval and Rustom and sister Jeroo, as the senior executive directors of PDF, is responsible for the smooth running of the enterprise.

Yes, those *bhaiyas*, the 300 strong 'fleet' of PDF, with their muscled, hairy legs, khaki shorts and blue shirts, carrying large metal milk containers like additional oversized heads, have become a familiar and integral part of the city's tapestry. They fan out to all parts of the city, from the southern tip of Colaba to the suburbs of Jogeshwari and Andheri in the west and Ghatkopar and Vikhroli in the east, delivering over 5,000 liters of rich buffalo milk each day. They advertise PDF like no hoarding can.

But there is more to PDF, now in its platinum jubilee year, than buffalo milk. They manufacture and retail milk products: *paneer*, *ghee*, *dahi*, butter...; they are into Indian sweets: *jalébee*, *sutarfeni*, *malai na khaja*, *barfis*... and *kulfi*. Apart from their headquarters at Princess Street,

known to any ardent dairy product consumer, they have three milk distribution centers at Lalbaug, Parel and Dadar, and have recently opened a retail outlet for all their products at Dadar at the foot of Tilak Bridge near Khodadad Circle. They have a 300-acre farm — Dairyland — at Varvada in Maharashtra, 150 km from Bombay near the Gujarat border. In addition to the 400 buffaloes and cows on the farm, they are into agriculture and forestry, and catering too. A vegetarian restaurant has been opened on the farm for travellers on the national highway. Other little

known facts about PDF are that they also supply cow milk; they have distribution networks in Surat, Navsari and Valsad in Gujarat; the Zoroastrian Dairy and Mazda Dairy are part of the family concern; that...

But these are the physical parameters

of the organization. The essence of PDF, as all members of the Nariman family take pains to emphasize, is summed up in three words: rich, pure and wholesome. "Not all that glitters is gold. Not all that is white is milk. I can't speak for others, but when you buy Parsi Dairy milk you can be sure that you are buying rich, wholesome and pure milk. Our name is our guarantee," says Naval.

Protectors of this guarantee are the members of the Nariman family, one of whom is always present at the main shop during its working hours from 5 a.m. when they open to 11 p.m., manning the cash box. Even before 5 a.m. when the milk run starts, there is a family member present, checking to see that the milk is properly pasteurized and tested for its purity before it is filled into cans which are sealed to prevent contamination or dilution along the way. "One of us brothers or our sister or our wives or children; someone is always present on the premises," says Rustom. Included in the Nariman family is Dinshaw, his wife Roshan and daughters Shernaz and Meher; Naval,



Ardeshtir Nariman



*When his children gathered
on his deathbed, he reprimanded them:
"But who is at the shop?"*

his wife Taz, son Urvaksh and daughter Rukshana; Rustom, his wife Silloo and daughter Binifer; Merwan and Jeroo. The five children constitute the junior executive directors of PDF.

But for this very quality they ensure, they have a price to pay in today's health conscious, calorie counting society. "People gorge on the *dhansakh* and when it comes to the sweet and dessert they suddenly become calorie conscious," says Urvaksh Nariman, a US qualified MBA and chairman of the junior executive directors. "The problem is not one of calories, but the general decrease of activity. Instead of increasing their activity, people find it easier to cut down on their intake," he continues. Conscious of the changing dietary habits of its clientele, PDF has introduced low calorie items in its product mix — low calorie yogurt in 12 flavors, low-fat and no-fat milk. "The calories may be reduced, not the quality," Urvaksh reminds us.

As part of the tight control, all items sold by PDF are manufactured within the organization itself at units in Bombay and at Dairyland. Here too traditions die hard: *Sutarfeni* is deep fried in pure Parsi Dairy *ghee* the same way it was done years and years ago, over the same fire hearth, in the same large *tava* or frying pan by the grandchildren of those who worked here in those early days. Indeed, we are informed, PDF is a family concern at all levels of activity.

One item that the Narimans have relinquished control of, partly at least, is the source of the milk itself. Earlier the PDF had 1,500 buffaloes of its own, stabled in the suburbs around Bombay. Then about 10 years ago they sold all their Bombay-based animals. "It was becoming increasingly difficult to look after both the animals and the distribution," Dinshaw explains the reason behind the decision. An important condition of the sale however, was that milk from these buffaloes and their progeny be supplied to PDF only. "In a way we are getting milk from our own animals," says Jeroo. But then again, she clarifies, that is not good enough for PDF; each batch is tested for its purity before it is accepted.

Supplementing this milk is the milk that comes from PDF's own farm where

around 400 animals — 200 buffaloes and 200 Fresian cows — are bred from livestock imported from Cornwall, England in 1978.

The farm includes more than just buffaloes and cows. Part of the 300 acres is tilled for fodder for the animals while the rest is committed to forestry; rows and rows of eucalyptus, Burma teak, cashew and mango trees. The reason for selecting these trees is: one, cattle do not graze on the saplings, allowing them to grow into adult trees; and two, they need minimum care, the yearly monsoon rain is water enough. And, of course, they have commercial value.

Also on the farm is a vegetarian restaurant where weary travellers may stop for a cool glass of wholesome *lassi* (buttermilk) or a *thali* (vegetarian meal comprising of several items), or maybe pick up a few Indian sweets for the children and *ghee* for the wife.

The development of the farm and activities around it have grown largely through the efforts of Naval who has also invested his time and expertise in the establishment of DOLCOS (Dairy Ownership League Co-operative Society, a co-operative of dairy owners. But he is quick to add: "It is only because my brothers and sister are holding the fort back in Bombay that I can do all this. Of course, when I am in Bombay, I too sit at the shop."

Back to the farm and Naval informs us that it was originally a salvage unit when

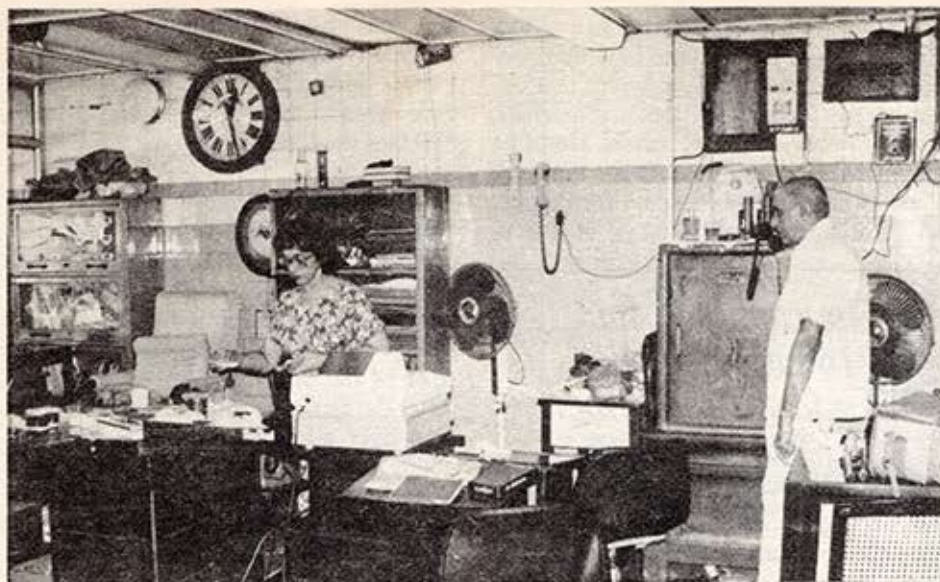
the PDF owned their own stable of buffaloes in Bombay. Because of the high cost of maintaining animals in the city, buffaloes that went dry or stopped producing milk were sent to the farm where they stayed till they regained their productivity and were despatched to Bombay once again. When the city stables were sold, Naval saw it as an opportune time to diversify and expand the activities of the farm.

In the true Nariman tradition, the personal control and supervision is very much in evidence at the farm too. Equally apparent is their concern for the staff at all levels of the organization, at the farm and at Bombay. We are introduced to M. C. Kalsi, general manager of Dairyland, Bhujanga V. Shetty who does the PDF distribution in Ghatkopar and the eastern suburbs of Bombay, and K. Gopalkrishnan, their chief executive in Bombay. On each occasion the Nariman brothers take pains to emphasize the executive's contribution to the organization.



*Where traditions die hard:
The expertise and toil of different
generations associated with the
Parsi Dairy Farm contribute to the
success of the labor intensive
Indian sweets manufacturing unit*

Photos: Yasmin Poonegar



It is more than gracious platitudes for, in the 75 years of operations with a staff of over 500, there has never been any labor problem at PDF. It is also one reason why PDF has kept mechanization to a minimum. Milking is manual, and the milk product and Indian sweets units are largely labor intensive. "It's pointless having mechanization for mechanization's sake, especially in a country like India with its large population and unemployment problem. Here at the farm we are able to provide employment to about 100 adivasi (tribal) families," says Kalsi.

In addition to employment, Dairyland also provides free education to the tribal children regardless of whether their parents work with PDF or not. To encourage the children to attend the school on their premises they provide them with a free afternoon meal. A line of little children in uniforms, khaki shorts and green shirts, greet us cheerily as they march off to

Invariably a member of the Nariman family handles the cash box at the shop

wash their soiled utensils. Also free to all adivasis in the area are the services of Dairyland's medical unit. Non-adivasis and people connected with the mushrooming industrial units in the region, also use these facilities, for a price naturally. Likewise their children attend the Dairyland school managed by Ms Uma Kalsi, wife of the general manager.

PDF has come a long way from its humble origin when, in 1916, Ardeshir Nariman, son of a central government employee with no dairy or agricultural background, started retailing milk from an outlet at Princess Street. To guarantee the purity of his milk he soon bought his own buffalo, and then another and another. The herd grew, so did business and the reputation of PDF. Milk products were introduced and in 1928



he started the Indian sweets division.

Ardeshir encouraged all his progeny, from their childhood days, to participate in the business with financial incentives — their pocket money was linked to the number of hours they put in at the shop. He believed that at the helm of a business was the cash box and it had to be manned by a family member at all times. Naval recalls when, on the father's deathbed, all his children had gathered to be with him, he reprimanded them: "But who is at the shop?"

His children uphold the family business tradition; they guide the fortunes of PDF as a team. "We have our differences of opinions but everyone falls in line when it comes to the interest of PDF," says Dinshaw. "We are not doing anyone any favors; we recognize that united we stand, divided we fall," adds Naval.

It is a family tradition that the third generation has also been inducted into as junior executive directors. "We are like two clenched fists," says Urvaksh, stressing the point with a demonstration. "The senior executive directors, our parents, are four males and one female. With us, the junior executive directors, it is the other way around. We are one male and four females."

Change, however, is inevitable. At PDF, computers and professional management systems are inching their way into the organization. "It will mean better control systems," says Dinshaw. The objective of this development, he clarifies, is



not to displace but to complement family controls. Amplifies Urvaksh: the junior executive directors' desk could have been placed anywhere on the premises but he chose to locate it next to the cash box. "The clients can see me, us, and know that I, we, are the guarantors of quality in the future."

The spirit of PDF is enshrined in its motto: Truth is Light. Originally, the symbol of PDF was an illustration of Dadabhai Naoroji before it was replaced by the now familiar drawing of the swollen uddered buffalo. The bust of Naoroji, we learn, was sacrificed at the altar of secularism. The establishment's name continues to have the word 'Parsi,' "but from the start we have always been secular. Our customers come from all communities," says Dinshaw. Cow milk, in particular, because of its religious significance, is snapped up by a select Gujarati clientele who know that since it comes from the PDF it will be unadulterated. In fact, in recent times, there has been a decline in Parsi patronage and the reason is not hard to find. "They cannot afford our high prices. Few Parsis can now afford to pay Rs 16 per liter of milk," says Rustom. It is a reflection of the declining

prosperity of the community as a whole.

And yet, PDF is probably the only large, well-known establishment that caters to the Parsi sweet tooth. *Sutarfeni*, *Parsi jalébee*, *mava ni machi*, *malai na khaja*, Merwan points out, are typically Parsi sweets and the demand for them is so great on the festive days of Pateti,

*The cash box had
to be manned
by a family member
at all times*

Navroz and Khordad Sal that they have to stop taking orders after a point. Interestingly enough, according to him, Parsi sweets are not very different from Indian sweets, it is the adaptation and presentation that make them distinct: like the large size of the *jalébee*, or the molding of *mava* into a fish. *Malai na khaja* is perhaps the most distinctly Parsi creation.

Then there are the Indian sweets, the *barfis*, the *pedas* and more for people of all communities to indulge in and celebrate with. And there are the milk prod-

ucts, and milk and there is the guarantee of quality upon which the 75-year-old PDF is built. To sum up the impact that their organization makes, Naval says, "We are small people in a big way."

The cow and the pugree

Not only at the Parsi Dairy Farm are the cows and buffaloes valued. The cow has been given special respect by the community ever since the forefathers reached the shores of Sanjan. Their meeting with the ruler of the land is a well-known story. After the symbolic milk and sugar act that won over all those present at the royal court, the king laid down a set of conditions he expected the new settlers to observe. Agreed, said the Parsis. And as they were leaving the court to start out on a new life, the king called out: "And respect our cow: it's sacred to us." "Done," replied the Parsis, "not only that but we will wear it on our heads as a mark of respect." And thus was fashioned the pugree.

"Look at the pugree," urges Naval as he convincingly elaborates on the theme: "It is very much like the inverted hoof of a cow." Does it look familiar now?



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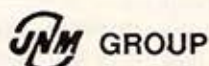
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men and women who commit adultery and lead a permissive life? There is no restriction on their entry into the sacred precincts of our religious institutions.

And what about the children of these liaisons? If of Parsi parentage can their navjotes be performed? Can these children be termed legitimate by our "learned" High Priest Dasturji Sahib Kotwal? The children of legally married parents are dubbed illegitimate by him.

As I am a Parsi lady (practising my faith) married to a non-Parsi, I have been denied entry into our agiary, but I find that the abovementioned are allowed free use of the sacred precincts. Isn't it about time that the so-called "defenders" of our faith sit up and take notice and take action against those who violate the laws of man and God? Or is ours a very tolerant society that shuts its eyes to adultery and permissiveness?

Ms V. L. RAO
Bangalore

J. K. Pavri Memorial Fund

Yezdi and I take this opportunity to sincerely thank all those kind-hearted individuals and families who have generously contributed to the Jamshed K. Pavri Memorial Fund, endowed with the Vancouver Foundation.

The contributions came from Canada, USA, Europe, Hong Kong, Japan and Aden. The total funds as of today collected by the Vancouver Foundation amount to Canadian \$ 54,000. In the letter mailed out to community members in May 1990, details of the yearly distribution of the income earned had been described. The first such distribution will be made in November 1991. Any community member who wishes to have a copy of the same letter along with the donation card may phone us at (604) 738-1214, or write to us at #104, 1575 Balsam Street, Vancouver, B.C. V6K 3L7, Canada, and we shall mail the required material to you.

October 14, 1991 will mark our beloved Jamshed's second death anniversary. Community members who wish to make contributions to the Jamshed K. Pavri Memorial Fund, can send in their donations directly to the Vancouver Foundation, Suite 230, 505 Burrard Street, One Bentall Centre, Vancouver, B.C. V7X 1M3, Canada.

May Ahura Mazda bless all these kind hearted donors who, believing in Asho

Zarathushtra's teachings, care to share their wealth with the needy and depressed, and to promote Zoroastrianism by education. The contributions to the fund help to perpetuate the memory of our beloved Jamshed, who lived his life as a true Zoroastrian, always helping humanitarian causes and devoting his life to the service of the community.

Ms RODA J. PAVRI

YEZDI J. PAVRI
Vancouver, Canada

Whither Parsiana?

I have been reading your magazine for the past two years and most of the issues have been devoted to the very unseemly controversy on the Roxan Shah case; and the views/opinions of the self-styled Zoroastrian theologians, waxing eloquent over what the *Gathas* and the *Avesta* have to say or mean to say. The majority of the community and I are no theologians, and as such all this is of no consequence to us. We are embroiled in the day-to-day struggle for existence and a precarious living. You have never once considered the feelings of Roxan's family and friends. Her parents, her husband, her parents-in-law and the friends who have been grieved, first at the passing away of a dear one, next at the crude and nauseatingly sanctimonious behavior at her last rites.

Another thing is that in your magazine all importance and all coverage is given to the members of the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India or the punchayet trustees who have become the royals of the community. How the common members of the community in far-flung areas are living and contributing to the national life, how a Parsi can and should amalgamate in the mainstream of the country, doesn't seem to be on your agenda. Those living in foreign lands are pontificating on the issues that we face, having cleverly left for greener pastures. The need of the hour is guidance to the majority who are living in the land of our adoption and birth, and how we can further strengthen and sweeten it. Talk of purity of the race died with Hitler. God is no one's private preserve or property.

Do you realize that *Parsiana* may also be read by a handful of non-Parsis just out of curiosity or by chance? What will be their reaction? "*Sala, Bawaji apné aap ko kya samajta hai* (Who does the Bawaji think he is?)" and all the goodwill accumulated by the community over the centuries comes tumbling down.

Have you ever tried to find out whether the Parsis, settled in miniscule groups all over India, are still prospering or eking out a living? Zoroastrians in Neemuch, Ajmer, Indore, Mhow have difficulty in maintaining their agiaries and dokhmas. There are families in Ratlam, Jaipur, Udaipur, Jodhpur who are living isolated on family properties or have you not heard about these towns of India? You see, your reporting is all copied from the *Jam-e-Jamshed*, *The Bombay Samachar*, or *The Times of India*. There's nothing original.

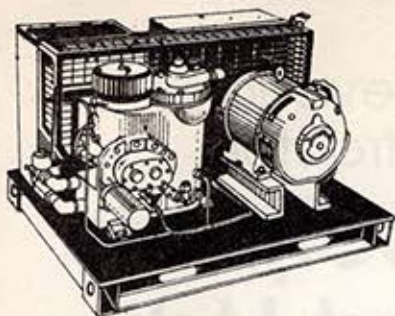
Your June 1991 issue is at hand. You have a special chapter for Zoroastrians Abroad. Why not one for Zoroastrians 'at home,' or are they not worth talking about? Have you heard about Ms Shirin Darasha, principal, J. B. Petit High School for Girls, Ms Coomi Wadia, conductor, Paranjoti Choir, (*The Times of India* has given flattering reviews to both), Tehmtan Anklesaria, Anklesaria and Co., Ratlam (MP), Dr (Ms) Dhun Anklesaria, Lal Darwaja, Ahmedabad, the late Dr Sarosh Anklesaria son, of the late Behromgore Anklesaria, Xerses Satarawalla, chief engineer, Rajasthan Electricity Board, Bhilwara and many more who are spread all over the country?

Young Parsi boys living in far-flung areas are being forced to marry non-Parsis (this is my personal experience) because no Parsi girl is willing to settle in Neemuch or Udaipur. The latter is on the international tourist map, leave alone being a very beautiful university town.

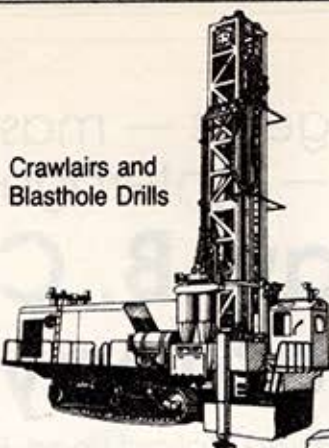
In the June 1991 issue, readers Yezdi P. F. Panthaki and Rostam Rostami have already fired salvos regarding readership. The 'death wish' as Dr H. S. Adenwalla has noted is very real. Now the Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP) trustees are at the receiving end. If we go on in this way, *Doongaji House* will come tumbling down, rather crumbling down. Another year of mutual recriminations? No thank you. I am one of those who are proud to be an Indian, proud to be a Parsi and very proud of the non-Parsi friends we have around us.

The community magazine should guide, instruct, inform, co-ordinate. That takes largeness of heart and depth of character. Talk of purity of the race only intensifies hatred. May wiser counsel prevail.

Ms SOONU JAL
Neemuch



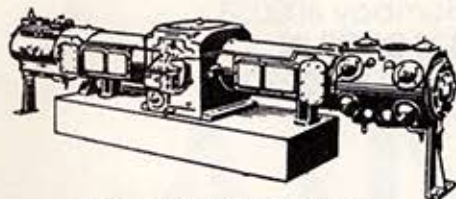
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"Army officers need not apply"

Matrimonial prospects of service officers suffer as their managerial potential is not recognized

Brig Noshir Grant

"Wanted, for a fair and educated Parsi girl from a well-to-do business family, an intelligent Zoroastrian groom who is capable of taking over the family business later on. Army officers need not apply." Thus read a matrimonial column in one of the national papers.

Even after 40 years of independence, the civilian businessman in our country in general, and the Parsi community in particular, firmly believes that the serviceman is unfit for a managerial career in industry and that he will only make a good security officer and nothing else. Unlike what happens in the western democracies, and for that matter even in Pakistan, where industries queue up to grab the service officer as soon as he is released from the army, in our country the industrialist has grave reservations regarding a soldier's capability of managing his business. Perhaps some experience from Operation Desert Storm may help to dispel this belief.

Universities in the USA offering courses in business management, like those of the famous Harvard and Stanford business schools, have already started introducing examples from Operation Desert Storm as applicable to corporate studies. Corporate executives in the US have been heard to say — "Why can't the businessmen be as assertive and lucid at our board meetings as Generals Colin Powell and Norman Schwarzkopf who were so successful at their news briefings?" Management consultants have already started using military terminology, such as 'flanking strategies' and 'frontal attack,' to dress up the obvious business platitudes.

In the coming months, corporate US business expects to see everything from new business school courses using the Gulf War as a case study to management books that try to analyse, for example, the secrets of the military joint command structure. In this respect a few doctrines stand out. Firstly, while the military still remains hierarchical, it has yet given greater decision making power to lower ranks. In this, the well-known Harvard business professor D. Quinn Mills notes how units behind Iraqi lines were allowed to call in their own air support without reference to higher command. Whereas the corporate world has long talked about granting 'empowerment' to rank and file, this has remained lip service. Secondly, Schwarzkopf built enormous loyalty with such management techniques as giving generous credit to subordinates, displaying concern for the troops' safety and mingling with them freely. Lastly, the Gulf War has made it clear that plans, no matter how good, last only until the engagement starts, and thereafter have to be constantly revamped.

Unfortunately in India, there still exists a belief with many industrialists in general, and the Parsi business houses in particular, that the average service officer is a *buddhoo* (dumb), who can only carry out slavishly orders given to him by his superiors, and that he does not understand anything about management, organization, administration, finance, motivation and a host of other disciplines which are necessary in business life. In this respect even today the Indian civilian businessman's idea of a military officer is

one who drinks, gambles, plays polo, has a round of golf, and in between his leisure periods attends office for a couple of hours as a diversion.

What the civilian industrialist fails to understand is that the modern army is the most complicated and sophisticated organization to manage. More money and time is spent in the military in training officers in management, than is ever done in industry. Besides, it is not generally known that the army were the pioneers of such management studies as operational research, linear programming, systems analysis, etc., to which the civil industry is only now catching on.

Consider for a moment. In any great city — Bombay, if you like — day and night, an immense variety of activities, public and private, go on. Hundreds of thousands of people are fed, clothed, housed, moved, educated and entertained; vast quantities of materials are transported; large scale construction, manufacture and maintenance carried out; police, public health, water and communication services provided. Temples are active, law courts function, the output of newspapers and the radio is ceaseless. A thousand other needs of a modern community are met. Yet there is no activity among all these that is not daily carried on also in the army — and carried on often under conditions far more difficult than any municipality or industry has to grapple with.

What industrial corporation in the world has the ability to move 5,00,000 soldiers and tons of munitions and supplies into the Gulf theater at the speed and management efficiency that was achieved

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during Operation Desert Storm? Which industrial corporation even in this country has attempted an enterprise comparable in extent, complication or difficulty with the various campaigns in Kashmir, Sri Lanka and the Maldives, or with any of the operations of the last two conflicts with Pakistan? Yet our generals, and special mention must be made of Parsi generals like Sam Manekshaw, Minoo Engineer, Adi Sethna, etc, planned, organized, coordinated and carried out those vast undertakings. They managed them and, on the whole, managed them very successfully. Why shouldn't they? After all, soldiers were the first to practise — and what is more, to study — organization and management. They should, after the many years they have been practising management and passing or failing their tests in it, have learnt something about it.

Although the training and the work of a soldier makes him a very efficient manager for industry, they do not in the army normally talk of 'management,' but of 'leadership.' Managers are necessary, but leaders are essential. When we talk of leaders in the army what sort of men do we picture? Not the explosive old generals of the comic strips whose complexions were indicative of blood pressure and of the consumption of port — both high; whose conversation was limited to reminiscences of The Poona Club, of blood sports and the Cantonment Gymkhana races; whose only solution to any political or social problem was — "Damn it, sir, shoot 'em." If these generals ever existed in real life, they were well on the way out before I joined the army. No, the first things we require in a leader are character, and an alert mind. Of course, it will be a military mind. Every profession produces its own type of mind which shows itself in its trained approach to any given question whether it be in the army or industry.

For example, Schwarzkopf was tough but caring, upfront but decisive, willing to take risks but also to take full responsibility for failures and give credit to subordinates for success. On the other hand, we see scores of corporate managers operate on the indecisive wishy-washy horizon, dodging responsibility, and inspiring about as much confidence in their own ability as an Iraqi fighter plane did in the Desert.

It is not for one moment being advocated that all army officers will make

good industrial managers, and that as soon as they leave the service, they can be employed as managing directors of some firm — far from it. All that this article is trying to bring out is, as brought out in Operation Desert Storm, that by the nature of his training and work in the army, the service officer is more than aptly suited for an industrial career with a little adjustment. In this respect he has a distinct advantage over his civilian counterpart in that whereas he has the qualities of leadership and management ingrained in him throughout his army career till it becomes an integral part of his mental makeup, the civilian has to pick this up himself as he goes along.

The raw material of leadership is already there, and the Indian worker, properly led, is as good as any and more intelligent than most. But the words 'properly led' are vital. Indian industry deserves and will need leaders, not just efficient managers. In industry one will never have to ask men to do the stark things demanded of soldiers, but the men they employ are the same men. Instead of rifles they handle tools; instead of guns they serve machines. They have changed their khaki and jungle-green for workshop overalls and civvy suits. But they are the same men, and they will respond to leadership of the right kind as they have always done. The soldier manager will infuse our industrial management with leadership; then he will be able to show his mettle in the workshop, as he has always done on the battlefield. Corporate life will never be as ordered and efficient as Operation Desert Storm, but it's nice to dream that it could be.

Let us hope that in future, matrimonial columns will state — "Wanted a Zoroastrian boy for a beautiful and educated Parsi girl of an industrial family. Everything else being equal, military officers will be preferred."

A retired brigadier of the Indian Army, one of Noshir Grant's achievements was to oversee the construction of the road through the Banihal Pass which ensured continuing sup-



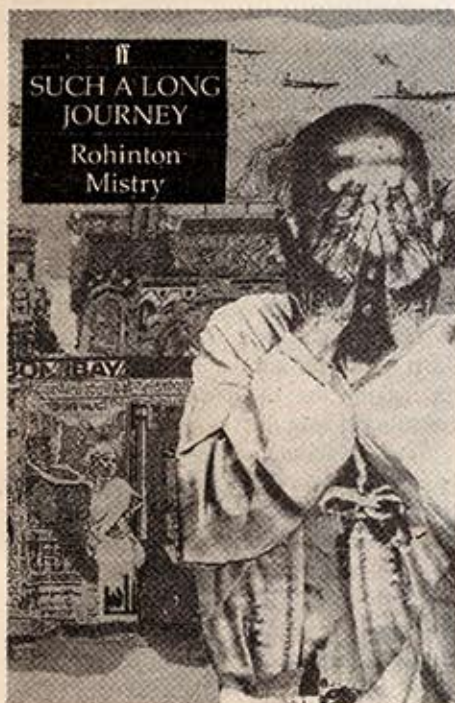
plies to Indian forces fighting Pakistan in Jammu and Kashmir in 1948. Through letters, articles and personal liaison, Grant has been trying to propagate the advantages of careers in the Armed Forces to Zoroastrian youth.

Along the way...

Gustasp Irani

Such a Long Journey by Rohinton Mistry. Published in 1991 by Faber and Faber Limited, 3 Queen Square, London WC1N 3AU. Pp: 339. Price: UK £ 13.99.

Rohinton Mistry's first novel, *Such a Long Journey*, is indeed a long passage; a journey the Canadian-based author embarks upon to explore his Bombay and Parsi roots. It is a journey on a passenger train and Mistry jumps out at all the stops to explore the area before proceeding. Crawford Market, the red light district, the Parsi General Hospital, doonger-



wadi and more, even far-off Matheran. But more than just places, he has undertaken a cultural voyage. Mistry's images are sharp, and as he etches the nuances and ethos, the characters emerge, wholesome, vibrant and credible. They, along with the reader, are Mistry's fellow travellers.

Gustad Noble is the central character, middle-aged, once affluent, now middle-class who can't afford Parsi Dairy's wholesome creamy milk, a bank clerk,

married and father of three children. He looks at the past with pride and regret, and at the future with hope. But he is more than a dreamer. While he may rave and rant at life's injustices, he is also a man of action who will do his bit to protect and cultivate his home turf, be it preserving the compound wall or helping a friend.

Mistry has lovingly sketched Gustad, idiosyncracies included. We meet him at a time when West Pakistan is raping its eastern half and war clouds gather over the subcontinent. Then, just as suddenly and silently as his friend Major Jimmy Bilimoria had walked out of his neighborhood and life, he reappears — in a letter. He needs help and despite Gustad's misgivings, his loyalties are too strong to ignore a friend. As he is drawn deeper, he finds himself caught in a web of intrigue, involving the notorious Research and Analysis Wing of which Bilimoria is an agent: Rs 60 lakhs withdrawn from a nationalized bank supposedly to finance the Bangladesh freedom fighters but channeled instead into the Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's coffers and her son's car plant. Bilimoria is the sacrificial lamb when the scandal breaks.

On the domestic front there are heartaches too. His eldest son betrays his hopes when he walks out of his father's house and also on an opportunity of joining the Indian Institute of Technology. The youngest daughter is stricken by a crippling illness and the middle son gets entangled with the neighbor's fat daughter and her protective father ("the dog-walla idiot"). Woven into the tapestry are the other tenants of Khodadad Building. There is Tehmul, the retarded cripple with a grown man's desires and a child's brain (masturbating with a doll), the elderly spinster, Kutpitia, a prisoner of her tragic past which she has enshrined in a web of superstition and spells (she uses the thrashing tail of a lizard as a wick); Cavasji ranting at an unjust God ("No other place you could find?

Here only all the trouble, always?... Why not the Tata Palace?"); Inspector Bamji, a non-committal spectator ("Too good bossie, too good").

Then there are others like friend and colleague Dinshawji at the bank, the master of the one-liner; Mr Madon, the bank manager. At the red light district we hear the exploits of Lokhundi Lund or Mr Iron Cock who with the assistance of *palang-tode* (bed breaking) *paan* (special betel nut preparation with aphrodisiac properties) wrought havoc on the leading establishment in the area.

Mistry compromises on grammar in direct speech while trying to evoke the flavor of Parsi Gujarati. "Please, *khali-pili* don't do acting... What idiotic-lunatic talk is this?... *Khabardaar*." He does not stop to translate all the italicized words. And if crudity is necessary to evoke atmosphere, Mistry does not stop short; it is more an offshoot of his eye for detail rather than an attempt to shock.

It is the same eye that notices the sign in a restaurant that reads: 'Trust in God — Rice plate always ready,' or the bottle of red ink on the desk only to be used on important occasions. There is humor, there is pathos, there is also the absurd but only because it is a reflection of the ever changing mood of the characters.

We saw the same skill in play in Mistry's first book *Tales from Firozsha Baag*, a collection of short stories. In *Such a Long Journey*, he shows greater confidence. He presumes that the reader knows what a *kusti* and *Ashem Vohu* and *Yatha Ahu Vairyo* prayers are. With the emergence of what may be termed as a 'Parsi' novel, the quaint little customs of this quaint little community do not have to be explained. Mistry is a skilled craftsman with words and his novel in that context is an important station on this long journey that Parsi writers in English have embarked upon.

Rohinton Mistry was born in 1952. He emigrated to Canada in 1975 and began working in a bank. He started writing stories in 1983. While at the University of Toronto he won two Hart House literary prizes and in 1985 he won a Canadian Fiction Contributors' Prize. The same year he left the bank to devote himself full-time to his writing.



The secret vaults of womanhood

The Pakistani Bride by Bapsi Sidhwa. Published in 1990 by Penguin Books India Ltd, 72-B, Himalaya House, 23 Kasturba Gandhi Marg, New Delhi 110001. First published in 1983 by Jonathan Cape. Pp: 245. Price: Rs 65.

In the northern reaches of Pakistan, in the folds of the Himalayan mountains, live the hardy, handsome Pathans. In *The Pakistani Bride*, Bapsi Sidhwa ventures into their terrain. She explores the hostile and majestic landscape, the harsh code of honor and pride that rule the lives of this fierce race. They evoke romantic images but then we see the myth explode in cruelty — a cruel land peopled by cruel tribes. The victims in Sidhwa's book are the womenfolk, the brides of the land.

In fact, there are two brides — one from balmy California, USA, and the other from Punjab — who venture into this land. Zaitoon is plucked by her adopted father from urban Lahore and pledged as a bride to a kinsman in the mountains. Carol comes with her Pakistani husband as the guest of the army that patrols the outposts of the country. The two meet for a fleeting moment. "In the instant their eyes met, the green and black of their irises fused in an age-old communion — an understanding they shared of their vulnerability as women." Then they drift apart, to be torn by the petty jealousy and pride of the men around them.

Zaitoon, the coy bride, travels into the barren mountains to meet her faceless husband. Within a month she flees even though she knows that by the tribal code her punishment, if caught, will be death. She is the victim of raw brutality, as naked as the mountains around her. But Sidhwa's book is more than a story about Pathans; it is a story about the entire country where the defects are more muted and camouflaged. It was Carol's lot to peel off the disguise: "... layer by layer stripped of their guard, she had glimpsed in the recesses of those eyes the horror of generations of cloistered womanhood... It was like peering into the secret vaults of a particular lineage or tumbling through a kaleidoscope of images created by the history of a race."

Aah! The language. Sidhwa uses

words like clay to compress the mountain range within the covers of her book: "...she surveyed the sterile landscape. Not a trace of life: not even the droppings of a mountain-goat. No sound but that of the cold breeze swooshing up from the deep shadows of the cleft and from concealed channels and gullies... Inexplicably the wind had ceased. The immense quiet of the empty world brooded around her... Far above, a slice of pale sky silhouetted the torn edges of the ravine..." Images leap out from the pages. Similarly her etching of the tribals is sharp. When Zaitoon's husband, Sakhi, finds out that his wife has fled he breaks down: "It was not strange that Sakhi cried, for men here wept as copiously as women. In this land where subtle expressions of grief were misconstrued, men, dominant in all spheres, were jealous of their supremacy in sorrow. They lamented loudest."

The blemishes of these people are more telling for in the earlier parts of the book Sidhwa fed the romantic images that they inspire. She relates the instance when Zaitoon met her adopted father Qasim after the two had survived the brutal massacre of Muslims fleeing to the newly created state of Pakistan. Qasim's first instinct was to still her sobs by slitting her throat so as not to draw the attention of the murderous hordes prowling around in the black night. But as "she leaned against him, trembling... a great tenderness swept over him. A simple man from a primitive, warring tribe, his impulses were as direct and concentrated as pinpoints of heat. No subtle concessions to reason or consequence tempered his fierce capacity to love or hate, to lavish loyalty or pity. Each emotion arose spontaneously and without complication, and was reinforced by racial tradition, tribal honor and superstition. Generations had carried it that way in his volatile Kohistani (Pathan) blood."

Yet Sidhwa, like many Indians and Pakistanis writing in English, indulges in a degree of exhibitionism: for instance when Qasim, accompanied by a friend, visits the *mujras* (dancing girls). It creates atmosphere, adds dimensions to the character portrayal, tells of the exploita-

tion of the female sex and yet invites the reader to look at "our quaint little customs."

The story starts with the marriage of 10-year-old Qasim to a 15-year-old girl his father got for him in settlement of a debt. Smallpox wrenches his family away from him and he moves to Jullundur in the plains where he works as a watchman. But the creation of Pakistan wrecks his life once again. As he flees to Lahore, the train is attacked. He survives the massacre and amid the blood and gore of that night he forges a bond with little Zaitoon whom he adopts as his daughter. Slowly the two reconstruct their lives in Lahore till that fateful day Qasim gives Zaitoon to a kinsman's son in marriage...

When Sidhwa deals with the tragedy of the Partition she gives us a glimpse of the Pakistani and Muslim side of the crisis. And yes, Jinnah is the father of that country. It is after his death that the political rot and corruption set in. But Sidhwa's writing goes beyond regional moorings. She enriches the English language...

Sidhwa, a Parsi, evokes the Muslim ethos with sensitivity and a touch of humor. There is only one reference to a Parsi — a well-known and nameless doctor whom the main characters do not consult anyway.

For the Indian reader there are parallels — the corrupt politicians and power brokers across the border are not very different from the ones on this side. What is more revealing to the Indian reader is probably the perception of Pakistan by the Pakistanis themselves. To them it is not a chunk of land carved out of the subcontinent but a country with a distinct identity of its own.

Gustasp Irani

Bapsi Sidhwa was born in Karachi and brought up in Lahore. An active social worker among



Asian women, she represented Pakistan at the Asian Women's Congress held in 1975. She has published two other novels, *The Crow Eaters* and *The Ice-Candy-Man*. Sidhwa divides her time between the United States, where she teaches and Pakistan.

MILESTONES

The age of Zoroastrian brides in Bombay (as listed in this issue) ranged between 23 and 28 years, the arithmetic mean (the total number of individual ages divided by the total number of brides) being 25 years. The corresponding figures for the grooms were 26 and 33 years, averaging at 29.

From data available to *Parsiana* from four hospitals in Bombay, there were 21 births in the month of August. From among the seventy-eight Zoroastrians who died in Bombay in August, 24 succumbed to heart disease of whom seven were above the age of 80. The next major killer was pneumonia and lung disease claiming 12. Old age and general debility accounted for seven deaths. Stroke, diabetes and septicemia felled four victims each while cancer, kidney failure and haemorrhage took three lives each. The other killers were dehydration, asthma and hypertension (two each). Nervous disorder, anemia, bronchitis, blood disease, gangrene, Parkinson's disease and hernia were the isolated cases registered last month. In the case of one death, the coroner's report was still pending. A still-born baby and a three-year-old boy were lost to the community. The highest age recorded at death was 94.

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 break-up of deaths according to illnesses, especially of the elderly, death is often due to a combination of several diseases.

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

BOMBAY

Born

A girl to *Hutoxi and Hormazed Bhesania* on July 27, 1991

A girl to *Nergish and Porus Tata*; July 27

A boy, *Sheriyar*, to *Dilber and Kaikobad Pandey*; July 28

A girl to *Khurshid and Yazdi Motiwala*; August 2

A girl to *Tanaz and Hoshang Jalejar*; August 3

A boy to *Bakhtawar and Darayus Bhathena*; August 4

A boy to *Persis and Freddy Turel*; August 8

A boy to *Rupi and Viraf Chinoy*; August 10

A boy to *Rashna and Purvez Patel*; August 10

A girl to *Firuz and Adi Balliwala*; August 11

A boy to *Derina and Kersi Dalal*; August 11

A boy to *Manreez and Zaraius Dastur*, brother to *Zareez*; August 14

A girl to *Kashmira and Meher-nosh Mavalwala*; August 14

A girl to *Navaz and Jimmy Pochkhanawalla*; August 14

A boy to *Polly and Neville Damania*; August 18

A boy to *Roshni and Bejan Minocher*; August 19

A girl to *Hufiz and Adi Soonawalla*; August 21

A girl to *Deena and Zaigham Haque*; August 23

A boy to *Dinaz and Shiraz Mehta*; August 23

A girl to *Anahita and Kurus Sethna*; August 23

A girl to *Arnavaz and Hoshie Mevawala*; August 25

A boy to *Mahtab and Fariborz Yazdani*; August 27

A girl, *Zian*, to *Dilnaaz and Pervaz Zaiwala*; August 28

A girl to *Kamal and Rusi Rustomjee*; August 29

Married

Gool Minoo Chothia and *Paurushashp Bomanshah Balsara*; August 2

Afrid Homi Bulsara and *Farhad Jehanbux Bhadha*; August 4

Died

Mani Framroze Maurice (79), residing at 66/C, Motiwala Mans, Gowalia Tank, 400036; July 31

Jehangir Phirozsha Bacha (60), 3/4, Jassawala Hut, Jehangir Baug, Juhu, 400049; August 2

Tehmina Sorabji Contractor (76), H/24, Nowroz Baug, Lalbaug, 400012; August 2

Behram Edalji Daruwalla (78), Dubash Bldg, 22, Wadia St, Tardeo, 400034; August 2

Najamai Shapurji Karanjia (89), 39, New Khan Bldg, Chikalwadi, Tardeo, 400007; August 2

Homai Rustomji Mehta (82), Cooper Bldg, Khetwadi, 12 th Cross Lane, Grant Rd, 400004; August 2

Kolamai Rustomji Mistry (67), Boyce Bldg, Chikalwadi, Grant Rd, 400008; August 2

Kavas Coverji Patel (70), 286/C, Pherozi Irani Chawl, Parel, 400012; August 2

Piloo Rustomji Dadachanji (72), 5/8, Khan Est, M. M. C. Rd, Mahim, 400016; August 3

Rusi Behramji Dadachanji (76), B/1, Motta Mans, Bai Motibai St, Nana Chowk, 400007; August 3

Dadabhoy Naoroji Daruwalla (75), Room no 1, Dr Dadina Bldg, Sleater Rd, 400007; August 3

Silloo Sam Gabba (52), E/33, Cusrow Baug, S. B. Rd, 400039; August 3

Cooverje Cawasji Umrigar (94), 6, Trikram Saheb Apt, Marol Village, Andheri (E), 400069; August 3

Piroja Jehangirji Contractor (81), K/1, Cusrow Baug, S. B. Rd, 400039; August 4

Banoo Savakshaw Umrigar (78), 7, Jijibhoy Bldg, Gamadia Clny, Tardeo, 400007; August 4

Jerbai Framroze Balsara (65), 2, Mithaiwala Bldg, Ropa Lane, Chandanwadi, 400002; August 5

Aloo Minocher Engineer (73), C/5, Shanti Niketan Hsg Soc, L. B. S. Marg, Ghatkopar (W), 400086; August 6

Jer Khurshed Modi (75), 1/B, Dolphin Apts, Pilot Bunder Rd, Colaba, 400005; August 6

Minoo Framroze Patel (80), C/o Mr Khurshed Golwala, 63, Jame Jamshed Bldg, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; August 7

Arnavaz Nariman Variava (82), 11, Rocky Hill, Narayan Dhabolkar Rd, 400006; August 7

Jamshedji Merwanji Irani (77), A/73, Anand Ngr, C. S. Rd, Dahisar (E), 400068; August 8

Ardeshtir Nusserwanji Palia (92), 7/C, Wadia St, Tardeo, 400034; August 8

Aloo Meher Pavri (84), 27, Old Khareghat Clny, Hughes Rd, 400007; August 8

Shavaksha Dosabhai Turner (90), B/1, Rustom Baug, Victoria Rd, Byculla, 400027; August 8

Ardeshtir Rustom Bastani (81), 3/18, A. H. Wadia Baug, Parel Tank Rd, 400033; August 9

Eruchshaw Ardeshtir Driver (71), 3, Dubash Bldg, Cassinath Rd, 400034; August 9

Noshir Nariman Gandhi (81), 681/C, Khareghat Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; August 9

Burjorji Jamshedji Kapadia (78), Gordhan Bldg, Proctor St, Grant Rd, 400007; August 9

Eruch Jamshed Khambata (75), Sherri Hse, Cawasji St, Fort, 400001; August 10

Baby of Kashmira Mahiyar Medhora (stillborn), 155, Sethna Mans, 10th Khetwadi Back Rd, 400004; August 10

Piroj Khurshedji Patel (68), Sethna Bhabha Bldg, Banaji Atash Behram Comp, Thakurdwar, 400004; August 10

Jolly Khurshedji Shroff (81), 19/C, United Chmbs, 347, M. Shaukat Ali Rd, 400007; August 10

Ardeshtir Faramroze Mody (77), Dhanabad, Warden Rd, 400026; August 11

Bhikhu Meherji Satha (73), 80, Maheshwari Co-op Soc, R. A. Kidwai Rd, Wadala, 400031; August 11

Homi Darabshaw Baliwala (60), 155, Old Bazar, Kirkee, Poona, 411003; August 12

Motibai (Sherbanoo) Eruchshaw Khansaheb (82), Jehangir Mans, 1st Marine St, 400020; August 12

Dolly Jal Menesse (78), Jyoti Mhl, Sleater Rd, 400007; August 12

Dina Jehangir Akolawalla (65), 3, Niamat Manzil, N. Petit St, Grant Rd, 400007; August 13

Homai Jamshedji Bharucha (86), Sukhia Bldg, Cawasji Patel St, Fort, 400001; August 13

Tehmina Nowroji Patel (82), 3, P. B. Modi Bldg, Zoroastrian Comp, Parel Tank Rd, 400012; August 13

Rohinton Pirojshaw Taraporewala (48), 46, Bapai Mans, Old Vijay-Wadi, Chira Bazar,

400002; August 13
Dhun Rustomji Cavasmanek (82), 802/D, Pitro Ashish, Dr B. Ambedkar Rd, Dadar, 400014; August 14
Dinabai Pestonji Cooper (76), Wagha Cooper Bldg, Khetwadi 12th Lane, 400004; August 14
Roshan Khurshedji Thanewala (62), Pearl Mans, M. Karve Rd, Marine Lines, 400020; August 14
Noshir Marzban Wadia (59), Oswal Park, Bhayander (E), 401105; August 14
Savaksha Pallonji Bodhanwalla (73), Family Hse, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; August 15
Shirinbai Marzban Rajkotwalla (88), B/11, Nowroz Baug, Lalbaug, 400012; August 15
Bhikamaji Jehangir Mistry (81), 10, Kanchan Mrg, Coal Dongri, Sahar Rd, Andheri (E), 400069; August 17
Phiroze Sorabji Patel (81), A-3/30, New Khareghat Clny, Hughes Rd, 400007; August 18
Sirin Nariman Bardi (76), A/2, Kalumal Est, Juhu, 400049; August 19
Katie Rattan Bharucha (64), D/2, Amarchand Mans, 16, Madam Cama Rd, Museum, 400039; August 19
Freny Framroz Pithawalla (56), 689/22, Sethna Bldg, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; August 19
Nergish Rusi Adarian (66), B/26, Nowroz Baug, Lalbaug, 400012; August 20
Mani Erach Chhori (72), Atur Apts, Opp Fariyas Hotel, Colaba, 400005; August 20
Frany Boman Mehta (57), 104, Aderbad, 34, Hughes Rd, 400007; August 20
Gool Dadabhai Umwalla (78), B/45, Pipewalla Bldg, 4th Pasta Lane, Colaba, 400005; August 20
Ratan Jal Aibara (80), D/70, Shanti Mhl, S. V. Rd, Borivli (W), 400092; August 23
Jemi Jehangir Contractor (80), Nicolson Bldg, Wadia St, Tardeo, 400034; August 24
Phiroze Rustomji Degamwalla (73), E/79, Block no 47, Manish Ngr, Andheri (W), 400058; August 24
Zane Darius Vajifdar (3), II Plazzo, Ridge Rd, 400006; August 24
Kati Sorabji Dastur (66), E/25, Jer Baug, Dr Ambedkar Rd, Byculla, 400027; August 25
Keki Rashid Irani (66), 194, Talaty Bldg, Khetwadi Back Rd,

400004; August 25
Tehmina Eruch Mistry (63), 16, Jeevan Dhara, Dr Ambedkar Rd, Bandra, 400050; August 25
Aloo Nowroji Baria (71), Dhun Mhl, Garden Rd, 400039; August 26
Homi Jahabux Irani (85), 68, Dadi Santok Hse, Dhobi Talao, 400002; August 27
Dosibai Pestonji Sethna (86), 13/8, Khareghat Clny, Hughes Rd, 400007; August 27
Goolan Nadirsha Delvadavala (90), 20, Heera-Meher, Wodehouse Rd, Colaba, 400005; August 28
Framroze Edulji Madan (84), 10/A, Jeevan Asha, 68, Peddar Rd, 400026; August 28
Hillan Jamshed Master (76), 8, Hendre Bldg, Sleater Rd, 400007; August 28
Najoo Minoo Wadia (58), 13/6, Khira Ngr, Santa Cruz (W), 400054; August 28
Dosan Pestonjee Billimoria (90), Naju Mans, Nawab Tank Rd, Mazgaon, 400010; August 29
Banoobai Dinshaw Mundroina (69), Minerva Mans, Next to Super Cinema, Grant Rd, 400007; August 29
Banoobai Burjorji Shroff (92), F/44, Cusrow Baug, S. B. Rd, 400039; August 29
Hoshang Ratanasha Billimoria (57), 7/C, Old Wadia Bldg, Chandanwadi, 400002; August 30
Dinbai Dosabhai Kanga (87), 23, Police Court Lane, Behind Handloom Hse, Fort, 400001; August 30
Minocher Burjorji Karkaria (84), 764/D, Muncherji Joshi Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; August 30
Rustomjee Burjorjee Mistry (79), G/3, Fariyas, 143, A. K. Marg, 400036; August 30
Jamshed Framji Pagdiwalla (80), 3/1, Lady Ratan Tata Bldg, S. V. Rd, Bandra, 400050; August 30
Tehmi Boman Billimoria (63), B, Jamshed Mans, Tardeo Rd, 400007; August 31

CALCUTTA
Married
Barnali Banerjee and Zal Manek Vania; July 28

Died
Kuka Dorab Mogrelia; July 12
Meherbanu Peshotan Kutar,

mother of Homi and late Rati Manekshana; August 23

POONA
Died
Meherban Khodadad Rostomi (83), 956, Sachapir St, 411001; August 15
Shirin Framroze Boocha (78), 19/B, M. G. Rd, 411001; August 19
Phiroze Pestonji Mehta (70), 186, M. G. Rd, 411001; August 23
Freny Behram Dabur (70), Khuroshi, Taluka Indapur, Dist Poona, 411001; August 24
Sorab F. Dariashah (72), Sanolay Apt, Salisbury Park, 411001; August 31

SECUNDERABAD
Born
A boy, *Rustom*, to Anita and *Burjor Francis*; March 20

Died
Meherji C. Bastawalla (80); March 13
Behman Sohraab Surti (74); March 21
Dady B. Vasaigara (68); April 11
Rati Daver (75); April 12
Mani S. Parakh (72); April 18
Mani N. Vakil (58), May 18
Tehmina T. Guzdar (91); May 26
Soonamai J. Engineer (91); June 16
Meherwanji C. Cooper (74); June 20
Jamshed R. Kavarana (74); July 10
Noshir A. Mehta (86); July 26
Burjorji N. Hansotia (78); August 3

SURAT
Died
Phirojsha Behramji Dumasia (75), Nariman Home and Infirmary, Shahpore, 395003; August 12
Mazve Rohinton Dastur (eight days), Lam Agiary, Kanpith, 395003; August 17
Eruchsha Dhunjisha Pithawalla, Gam Suwali, Taluka Charpasi, 395003; August 23
Cawasji Rustomji Mehta (77), Chowki Mohallo, Nanpura, 395001; August 25

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ILLINOIS
Married
Yasmeen Sultana Saleem and

Malcolm Bilimoria, son of Bachi and Maherji; May 4

KARACHI
Born
A girl, *Parinaz*, to *Meher and Maneck Solan*, sister to Kaivan; June 20

Died
Rati Homi Mama (72); July 3
Jer Maneckji Dastur (82); July 6
Ardeshtir Jamshedji Irani (75); July 20
Khorshed Darabsha Kolah (68); July 21

LOS ANGELES
Born
A boy, *Anoushak*, to *Goolrukh and Cyrus Khavarian*; April 5

TORONTO
Born
A boy, *Cyrus*, to *Katy and Dara Panthakee*; February 14

UK
Married
Nergish Wadia, daughter of Homaye and Minoo and *Jehangir Austin*, son of Neelam and Eruch of Calgary, Canada; May 26

Died
Begal Poonawalla (65), 19, Kingsley Rd, Hounslow, Middlesex; April 15
Mani Keki Billimoria (79), Glasmurphy Hse, Victoria, London, SW; April 27
Dina Dossabhoj Shroff (61), 24, Albany Park Rd, Leatherhead, Surrey, KT22 7PA; May 27
Banu Eruch Gundevia (85), 277, Pickhurst Rise, West Wickham, Kent, BR4 0AB; June 14

VANCOUVER, B.C.
Died
Bahram Kavoosi; February 16

VIRGINIA
Born
A boy, *Faranak*, to *Linda and Farhad Shahryari*; February 11

TOTALS (for this issue)
Births: Boys 15, Girls 14
Marriages: Parsi 3
Intercommunal 2
Deaths: 111

Compiled by Roxana H. Kaka



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