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Parsiana

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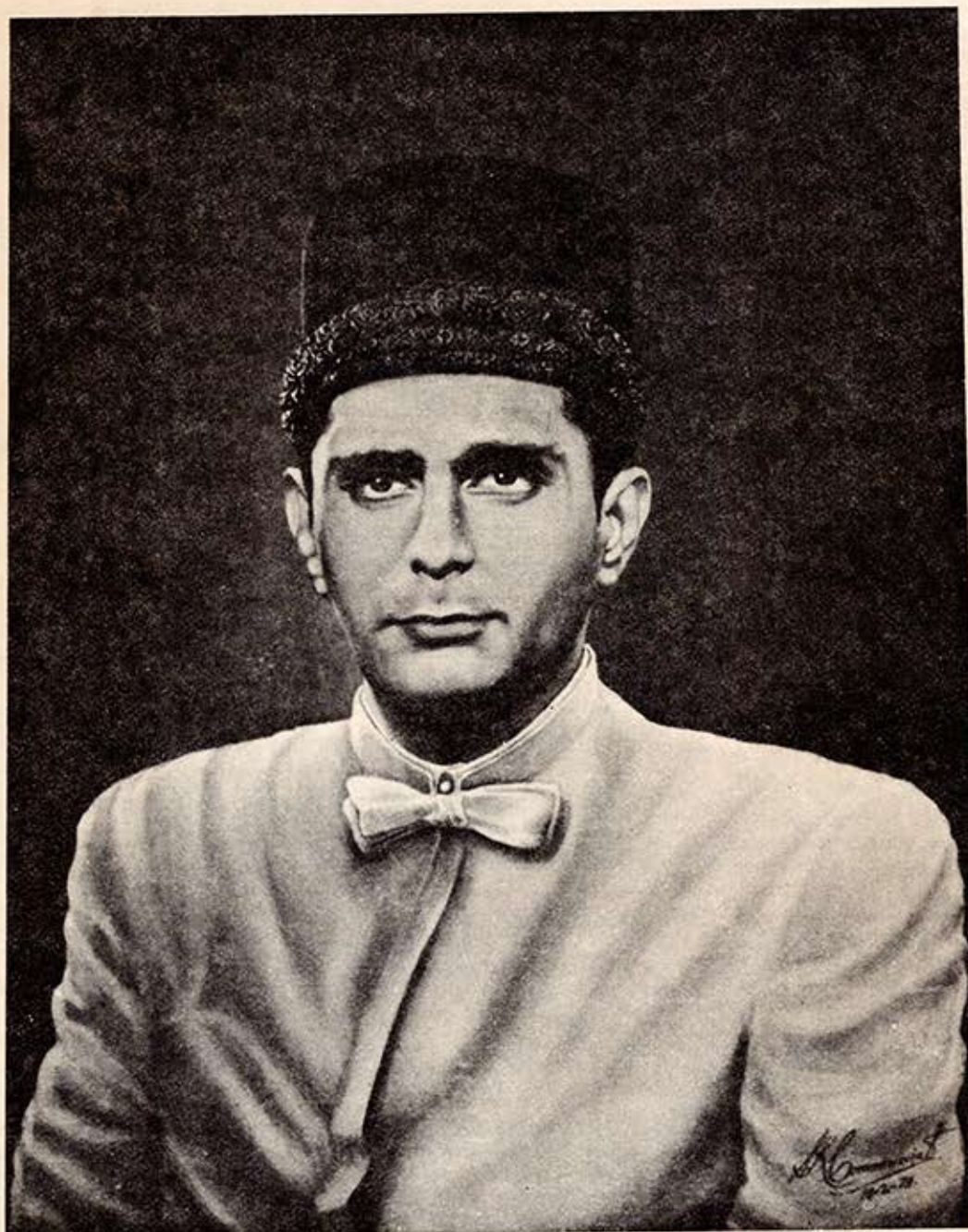
106 Books

110 Milestones

Cover: Nelly Sethna's woven wall hanging (6'x9', enlarged from a Rajput miniature) commissioned by Air India

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In Memoriam

Mr Fali Meherji Variava

Director

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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 Unsigned letters or those without an address will not be published.

"The Federation at..."

Your report on the executive council meeting of the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India last September ("The Federation at Calicut," *Parsiana*, December 1991) refers to the discussion on what was to be done if priests refused to perform the funeral rites at the doongerwadi over the body of a Zoroastrian woman married to a non-Zoroastrian. Capt Dandiwalla asked if the trustees would allow the body to rot, and Mr Eruch Desai retorted: "Do you expect the trustees to wear the pugree and do the ceremonies?"

The answer to Mr Desai's question was given by the behdins of Navsari and Surat 260 years ago. In 1733 the Bhagaria priests of Navsari raised their fees for performing the various ceremonies. This so enraged the laity that they resolved that they would pay the priests only according to the rates fixed in 1686.

If a priest refused to perform, or tried to prevent, a ceremony, then it would be carried out without the priests. Thus, for a wedding the behdins would say a *tan-darosti*; for a *baj*, they would put *loban* and do the *chasni*; if the priests refused to do the ceremony for the dead, then the behdins would pray the *Sarosh baj*, the *nyayish* and the *patet* and carry the body to the dokhma. The trouble also spread to Surat, and on many occasions the Parsis of both places defied the priests and performed the ceremonies themselves.

What is significant here is that all this happened in Navsari 260 years ago, when Parsis were more orthodox and religious-minded.

Here, in the Nilgiris, we have no agiary, dokhma, priests or even navars. On the occasion of a death two men of the community say the prayers and the other men carry the coffin to the burial ground. We are sure the soul of the deceased is none the worse off for the lack of priestly ministrations.

HOMI E. EDULJEE
Ootacamund

The project to rehabilitate the poor Zoroastrian farmers of south Gujarat was discussed at the meeting of the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India held at Calicut (*Parsiana*, December 1991).

•It has been mentioned in your report that "just the freight, clearance and inland transport costs...would have depleted the resources of the subcommittee had not the good offices of Airfreight and Kermani been put to use" to clear the 101 cartons of old clothes that were shipped by the World Zoroastrian Organisation (WZO), London.

I would like to clarify that whilst WZO is deeply appreciative of M/s Airfreight who have cleared the consignment from the docks and M/s Kermani Transport Service who transported the cartons from Bombay to Surat, free of charge, the freight for shipping the consignment from London to Bombay was borne by a Zoroastrian of UK.

This consignment was exempted from customs duty in view of the efforts of Mr H. J. H. Taleyarkhan, chairman of the executive committee of WZO-India.

•It has also been mentioned that the WZO video documentary *Unbelievable* was not approved by all and some were wonder-

ing whether there was any sense in projecting such an image abroad.

It has to be clarified that this documentary has been screened in London, New York, Chicago, Detroit, Washington, Toronto, London (Ontario), Singapore, Sydney and Hong Kong. Members of the managing committee of the WZO have given talks at the screenings and answered questions that have been asked. It is as a result of these efforts on behalf of and by WZO that funds for this project are pouring in from all parts of the world and awareness has been created.

With due respect to the opinion of some members of the Federation who wondered whether there is any sense in projecting such an image abroad, the WZO London committee feels that it is very important to project facts as they exist. The WZO remains committed to projecting this grim picture in all parts of the world where Zoroastrians reside.

It may also be mentioned that pursuant to the documentary *Unbelievable*, a second part has also been shot in the villages in February 1991 to show Zoroastrians throughout the world the progress made.

The third edition has also been shot recently (in January 1992) when committee members of WZO from UK, Australia, accompanied by donors from UK and Malaysia visited the villages to review the work done. This edition of the video is expected to be ready shortly and thereafter the same will be screened worldwide.

•It has been mentioned that some participants in the meeting wanted to know whether the recipients were genuinely Zoroastrians.

It may be clarified that each and every Zoroastrian shot in the documentary *Unbelievable*, was at that time working in an atash bahram or agiary at Bombay or Navsari. The conclusion is obvious.

Happily, since the documentary was shot in August 1990, three of the individuals featured in the film have left their menial jobs in the atash bahrams and agiaries in view of rehabilitation measures provided and are now tending their lands and beginning to live with self-respect.

DINSHAW K. TAMBOLY
Member, Managing Committee, WZO

"Remembering Aibara"

I fully agree with Ms N. K. Plumber's thoughtful, sincere suggestions on re-

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membering Ervad Aibara (Readers' Forum, *Parsiana*, December 1991).

The Ervad saheb has done yeoman service to thousands in our community. He was a sincere soft-spoken man whose heart bled to see his community suffering. I, for one, was given prayers by him which I recite daily, and have found great strength by doing so.

As Ms Plumber has suggested, his name should be added near to that of his Saheb's, Dastur Jamshed Kookadar, in our prayers.

Ms SHIRIN MEHER COOPER
Secunderabad

"Mobed shortage"

The problem of mobed shortage according to Ervad P. D. Magol of Karachi, Pakistan is purely monetary (Readers' Forum, *Parsiana*, November 1991) and not the unwillingness on the part of young mobeds to lead a hard and disciplined life as pointed out by this writer (Readers' Forum, *Parsiana*, April 1991).

Ervad Magol argues in support of his view, that the full-time mobed is not assured of regular work load and since the mobed is paid on inadequate piece-rate basis, it is not economically viable for a full-time mobed to survive in this day and age.

It has been pointed out in my earlier write-up (April 1991) that very few mobeds are capable of performing *pav-mahal* (higher liturgical) ceremonies, with the result that the laity finds it almost impossible to arrange for these ceremonies on all important occasions and particularly during four days after death when these ceremonies are considered most important and till recently these ceremonies used to be performed invariably in Udwada, Navsari or Surat, if not at the place of death, on payment of charges levied by the mobed. There is no dearth of work of performing other ceremonies that could be entrusted to them. Thus a full-time mobed can earn a very decent income if he is prepared to lead a regulated disciplined life and the charge that they do not earn adequate income is totally baseless.

The Bombay Parsi Punchayet pays a monthly stipend of Rs 100 to mobeds working full-time in atash bahrams and agiaries in Bombay and not serving anywhere else. Payment of this stipend and the stipend of Rs 150 to Rs 100 to Udwada mobeds has not induced them to perform *pav-mahal* ceremonies.

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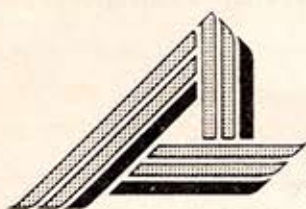
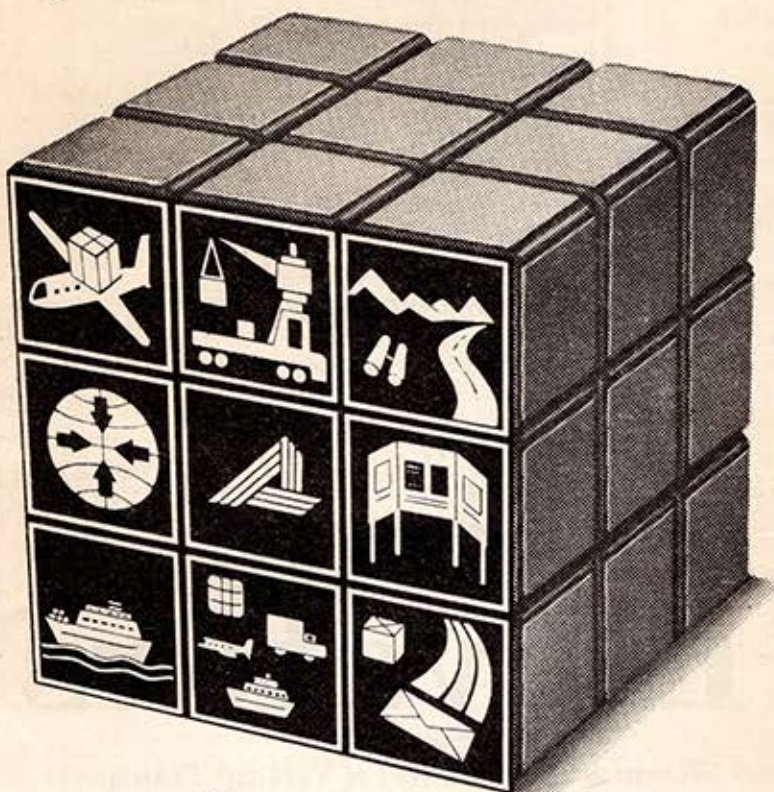
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not a commodity available at a price. It has to be inculcated from the very childhood for which the right type of atmosphere must prevail in the household of the mobed which unfortunately does not exist with our present life-style. Hence despite the incentives offered by the trustees of the Cama Athornan Madressa at Andheri and the efforts made by the Athravan Educational Trust, the community has been unable to get mobeds of yaozdathregar category. Creation of funds for supplementing income of mobeds is not likely to induce them to take to this hard disciplined life. The late Mr Jehangir S. Chinivala often used to say that the profession of a mobed enables one to earn one's livelihood as well as spiritual development. Today we have become so materialistic that we have no time to pay heed to such lofty ideals.

Being a behdin the writer has no axe to grind with athravans; but having been brought up in a staunchly orthodox family he is conversant with the problems of athravans and has always tried to encourage young mobeds capable of working in the yaozdathregar category but has not met with success so far.

SOHRAB NAVALSHAW PATWA

Donations received

The Surat Parsi Panchayat publicly thanks its munificent donors:

- The executors of the estate of Bai Jaloo Darukhanawala who have donated two lakh rupees towards Nariman Home and Infirmary in memory of Bai Jaloo and Seth Jassi Hormusji Darukhanawala;
- Adi Sorabji (Poonawala), an ex-inmate of our Surat Parsi Orphanage and his wife Perin who have donated two lakh rupees, the interest whereof will be utilized for maintaining a boy scholar in our Boys' Orphanage and a girl scholar in our Nariman Girls' Orphanage. (We are so proud of Adi, and greatly appreciate his kind concern for his alma mater);
- The Narielwala Trust, through the World Zoroastrian Organisation (WZO) for two lakh rupees to be utilized towards the ongoing project for the amelioration of rural Parsis in south Gujarat jointly undertaken by the Bombay and Surat Parsi Panchayets, the WZO and the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India;
- The WZO which donated about one lakh rupees for taking boys and girls of our orphanages on tours. The boys have just returned after visiting historical places like Delhi, Agra, etc and the girls from

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Hyderabad and Secunderabad. The girls have submitted a detailed report of their tour wherein they speak of the love and affection showered on them by the Parsis of the twin cities. We are so thankful to all those who were so kind to our boys and girls.

Under the auspices of our Zoroastrian Club the Parsi Cricket Team of Surat participated in the cricket tournament recently held at Hyderabad-Secunderabad.

We have also received several donations of lesser amounts and fully appreciate the kind thoughts of the ladies and gentlemen concerned.

Dr. SAM S. BHACCA
President, Parsi Panchayat, Surat

Who is a Zoroastrian?

This question needs to be answered in clear terms. It assumes urgency in view of the fast dwindling Parsi Zoroastrian population on the one hand and a resurgence of personal faith in Zoroastrianism among many non-Zoroastrians, particularly Iranians.

When Asho Zarathushtra proclaimed his vision of a perfecting world, he did not pick and choose his listeners or followers on the basis of their current faith,

caste, color or racial descent. He accepted whoever was intelligently ready, by choice, to pursue his vision of one God, Ahura Mazda, and the path of Asha, and was willing to discard his/her existing beliefs and faith. Thus he accepted Iranians of all shades and even Turanians, the traditional enemies of Iran, and to some extent even Brahmins from India (e.g. Chandra Ghachha). This broad outlook was tinged by subsequent political exigencies, recurrent forays from other concurrent faiths, as well as a strong ecclesiastical reversion towards pre-Zoroastrian rituals. New ceremonial impositions continued simultaneously through Achaemenian and Sasanian times but it never stopped the inclusion within the religion of numerous subjugated races of a variety of faiths; nor did it stop the royalty from marrying princesses of different races. In fact we even sent missionaries abroad, to spread our religion in China and the southern states of the USSR. On their return we honored these missionaries as heroes and even today we continue to pray: *Daad deen beh Mazdayasnan aghahi ravai goafaranghani baad: hafta keshvar zamine, aidoon baad — man ano*

avaid shudan.

When Parsis left Iran for India and found themselves within a non-Zoroastrian milieu, they started building social walls for protection from the overwhelming Hindu and Muslim masses, lest they be absorbed and lose their identity in the subcontinental culture. With the Partition of India and a general acceptance of secularism and freedom of religious practices for the minorities, this fear is now extinct; yet we keep our guard up, allow no 'acceptance' within the religion but continue to pray for its spread over the seven regions!

Despite these social walls, young Parsis are marrying out into other religions at a prolific rate and we are fast losing our demographic count, since conversely we will not accept spouses from other religions.

Orthodoxy is so sanguine and well entrenched in India that, as is usual with Parsis, it will not change till it is too late. They have the backing of the priestly class, which survives on orthodoxy and the practice of rituals, ignoring the pure ethical message of the Prophet, which is Asha and a minimum of rituals. In an-

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swering the question "Who is a Zoroastrian?" the orthodox will continue to state "born of both Zoroastrian parents with due performance of a navjote in the traditional sense." They will continue to ignore the many initiates who flout all Zoroastrian principles in life and revere sadhus, saints and shrines, some even encouraging the practice of black magic, yet occasionally visiting the agiary, indicative of double standards.

The enlightened liberals will 'accept' children born of mixed marriages, where one parent is a Zoroastrian (preferably father) and followed by a regular navjote; but will not accept the non-Zoroastrian spouse. That can only generate dissension within the family and perhaps loss of affinity. Nor will it substantially solve the problem of demography or faith.

The Iranian Zoroastrians have already advanced to the stage of 'accepting' those historically pedigreed Zoroastrians who wish to revert to our faith, based on certain guidelines, selective rules and requirement of ethical standards in line with what Zarathushtra has prescribed. This method is good and creditable and saves us from a drastic demographic decline.

But to really save ourselves from this predicament, we have to take bolder measures and drastic reforms, now, before it is too late. That is the function of the radical reformist to whom a Zoroastrian is an individual who:

- believes in one God, Ahura Mazda the Lord of life and wisdom
- intelligently and by choice accepts the religion propounded by Prophet Zarathushtra and enshrined in the *Gathas* and renounces all other religions and beliefs
- undergoes the sudreh-pushin ceremony to publicly announce his acceptance of, and obligations to, the Zoroastrian religion
- throughout life follows the principles of Asha
- to that purpose works towards perfecting the universal society by actively advancing good thoughts, words and deeds and actively resisting all forms of evil
- believes in the divine judgment of one's actions in this life, which will guide his/her destiny in life hereafter.

HOMI B. MINOCHER HOMJI
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Our share in world chaos

Nineteen-year-old Ms Sanaea Antia of Patiala seems to feel that we should accept the views and dictates of the ortho-

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dox without question, because they are not as severe in their demands and their dealings with the Parsi community as are the demands made by the leaders of other religions, e.g. the Sikhs in the Punjab and the Muslims of Iran ("An injustice at..." Readers' Forum, *Parsiana*, July 1991).

Must we deny ourselves the principal teachings of our holy prophet: the call for nobility of mind, a pure conscience and good purpose? Must we deny ourselves the spiritual strength which enables a human being to choose the path of righteousness, because others have denied these to their coreligionists?

When Sikhism was first founded, it drew to itself followers from the two warring communities of Hindus and Muslims. They began as "a fellowship of devotees whose goal was a sense of union with God, through worship and meditation." Eventually this peaceful religious community was forced to take up arms against aggressive neighbors in order to protect themselves, and thus become a military force with military symbolism.

Fanaticism of any kind only results in more evil, and religious fanaticism is the worst kind. Man loses his power of rea-

son and his capacity for compassion. Justice, honor and mercy have no place in such situations — only cruelty and shame.

During the war sparked off by Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, there were services and prayers for peace all over Britain, in churches, temples and gurdwaras. There were interfaith services in churches where Christians, Jews and Muslims, as well as Zoroastrians came together to pray for peace. During the service held in Westminster Abbey the reading for peace and harmony was entrusted to Ervad Zal Sethna, the brother of Ervad Darius Sethna. The Sethnas' voices are constantly raised against the non-Zoroastrians' participation in our prayers — even when these non-Zoroastrians are praying for their Zoroastrian loved ones, their husbands and fathers. Believing as he does, how could Ervad Zal Sethna have allowed himself to be persuaded to participate on this occasion? How could he have risked the contamination of his pure prayers by the presence of the druj?

In a letter criticizing Dr Ali Jafarey ("Zarathusti: My Past..." *Parsiana*, July 1991) Ervad Darius Sethna writes of the

Zoroastrians of North America becoming a global attraction "as the world wonders who these 'UFOs' are and what they believe in, if anything at all." Such juvenile remarks may be expected from spiteful and immature minds, not from serious and mature human beings.

Our present situation has clearly shown that old customs and traditions are not sufficient to hold the community together, and that these are the very aspect of our religion which is driving away many Zoroastrians to other religions. The attitudes of the orthodox towards those of other religions only add to the general unrest and outright conflict all around us.

The annual ceremony of remembrance at the Cenotoph in White Hall on November 10, 1991 was a truly impressive and moving sight. Every year one experiences the same feeling of pride mingled with a great sense of sadness as one watches the young and the old, with all their memories. Forty Commonwealth High Commissioners laid their wreaths for their dead in the two World Wars, and among the first of them who went up together were the Commissioners of India and Pakistan. I wonder if the thought of

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the thousands of innocent men, women and children who have died, are still dying, and are yet to die entered their heads for even a moment.

Asho Zarathushtra did not say that the traditions or race of the Persians was the only means by which one could come to Ahura Mazda. What he did say was that the path of righteousness was the only true path. The only right path was (and still is) the path of Asha. Today the world needs the divine light as never before.

When Zarathushtra prayed that Ahura Mazda may grant him the strength to bring peace and harmony to the world, to the universal soul, he clearly set us that duty as well; and we cannot fulfil this duty by isolating ourselves from the rest of humanity, or by abusing others, and by forgetting that Ahura Mazda's creation is good and divine, and that we are only a part of his creation.

Ms PERIN DIVECHA
Kent, England

Oh for a Parsi President!

A recent news item refers to Janata party leader, Dr Subramaniam Swamy having expressed the view that the next President of India should be either a Christian or a Parsi, in order to reassert the country's secularism. For once, Dr Swamy is right.

Because he is law-abiding, tolerant, has a sense of humor and respects all communities and their religions, a Parsi President would be an asset to the country in these turbulent times.

BHIKHIAJI M. ADENWALLA

Katrak's slide show

On December 21, 1991 when the Parsi residents of Thane gathered on the occasion of a ghambar at the Patell Agiary they witnessed Mr Pervez Katrak's slide-show of the cities of Iran. His interesting running commentary was a special feature of the show and was highly appreciated. We hope other associations and anjumans will avail of Mr Katrak's free services for the enlightenment of the community.

R. M. CURSETJI, P. B. BHESANIA
Trustees, The Thana Zoroastrian Charity Fund

Community attitudes

Those who know something about Iran's past tell me that the mobeds had their say in everyday matters and they were hand in hand with the kings of their time.

It's a pity that we amongst ourselves create problems, even in democratic India (where a Parsi girl married to a respected non-Parsi is not allowed her last rights).

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There are about 25 Hindu families living in Tehran, Zahedan and Shiraz, mostly Sardars and Sindhis holding Iranian passports but the Islamic Government does not declare holidays for any minority.

We also have Armenians who've come in the past and are still coming to Iran and settling down first as mechanics and draughtsmen who don't even know the Farsi language. Once here their elders help them by employing them and teach them the trade. Working on their own, they're their own bosses and Muslims come to them for help in repairing their cars. Once the Armenian starts earning after he's picked up the job, he goes for a wife and in due time has even bought himself a house where he does not pay any rent. There are no BPPs here! The Jews mix with the Muslims in the bazaar and it's a known fact that on every Saturday when the Jews observe their religious holiday Tehran's bazaar is paralysed.

Affluent Zoroastrians should create opportunities for our youth by building a 12-storey high complex where the first four floors should be converted into mechanical workshops. The ground floor should be for car mechanics where well-to-do Parsis could bring their cars for repair. Self help is the best help. Our youths should go for technical lines in case they find it difficult to study. I'm sorry to say that Irani hoteliers or industrialists have not put together their resources in building one such building for Parsi/Irani Zoroastrians.

Once a boy starts taking interest in work he'll become serious in life and should be advised to marry soon. In fact elders should speak on these matters rather than on wearing the sudreh and kusti or muktads or ghambars. Only when a person is happy and well fed will he stick to religious rituals.

F. M. ABRISHAMI
Tehran, Iran

Scripture for a horse?

It was very shocking and insulting to read in the sports column of the *Indian Express* of February 1, 1992 that Pratap Reddy has trained a horse for the Hyderabad winter season which he has named "Zendavesta."

I request all our community members to see that this is rectified as soon as possible.

BURZIN ATASHBAND
Hyderabad

Edited by Amavaz S. Manna

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Events and Personalities

Republic Day honors

The list of national civilian awardees, announced on India's Republic Day, was headed by the 87-year-old industrialist Jehangir Ratanji Dorabji Tata who was conferred the Bharat Ratna, read the banner headlines of many dailies of January 26, 1992. Three other Parsis were named for the Padma Shri awards: statesman Homi J. H. Taleyarkhan, gynecologist Dr Burjor Cavas Dastur and boxing chief Aspy D. Adajania.

J.R.D. Tata was the popular chairman of Tata Sons for 53 years until 1991 when he handed over the reins to his successor Ratan Tata and preferred to settle for the chairman emeritus and director's position of the parent body and other Tata concerns. However, on the academic endowments and fellowships founded by the Tatas, JRD continues to retain his active involvement. This participation extends to institutions like the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (TIFR), the Atomic Energy Commission and the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore, having nurtured these science centers over many years, mentions his bio data.

Recognized as the founder of civil aviation in India, JRD is the first from this country to qualify for a pilot's licence. He also founded India's first national carrier — Tata Airlines in 1932, subsequently renamed Air India.

Several awards has he won from aeronautic institutes like the gold medal from the Federation Aeronautique International,



Above: Bharat Ratna winner Tata
Below: Padma Shri recipients



Dastur



Taleyarkhan



Adajania

ale, the Edward Warner Award from the International Civil Aviation Organisation. Over the years his achievements have earned him awards and citations from almost 35 bodies. Additionally several institutions have made him honorary member, conferred on him different ranks or bestowed on him the doctorate degree,

the bio data further informs.

Known both within and outside India, on the national front Taleyarkhan has served as governor of Sikkim and cabinet minister of Maharashtra holding portfolios of health, housing, food and civil supplies, national savings, fisheries, tourism, printing industries and family planning, his curriculum vitae notes. In the international sphere he has sought to promote India's interest as the Indian ambassador to Italy and Libya and its representative to the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) of the United Nations.

Until recently senior member of the Minorities Commission, Taleyarkhan is also active within the community. He is chairman of the Indian chapter of the World Zoroastrian Organisation (WZO), and has been made a permanent invitee to the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India. Advise and tribal welfare is another issue

to which he has devoted his energies, mentions his curriculum vitae.

Dastur is a member of the Medical Education and Drugs Committee of the Government of Maharashtra. He has had considerable experience working as obstetrician and gynecologist, resident

house surgeon, resident anesthetist cum pathologist and resident medical officer of different hospitals at different times. He has worked as honorary obstetrician and gynecologist at the Masina Hospital, the B. D. Petit Parsee General Hospital and at the Parsi Lying-In Hospital.

The 74-year-old doctor is the first

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Parsi to receive the Prince of Wales gold medal and scholarship for standing first at the Doctor of Medicine examinations conducted by the Bombay University, mentions his bio data. His research work with different experts in his field of medicine culminated in the discovery of the 'Shaw Dastur's Cells' and the 'Shirodkar-Dastur Sling Operation,' it is reported.

Adajania, the president of the Indian Amateur Boxing Federation, has been credited with the organization of the MRF Sixth World Cup Boxing Tournament 1990 in Bombay. Reportedly the first Indian to be appointed on the jury of the Olympic Games in boxing in 1984, Adajania has also been invited as referee at various other international boxing meets whether at the Olympic or the Asian Games level.

He was the first Indian representative on the Association Internationale de Boxe Amateur, reports the *Indian Express* of January 26, 1992.

March for peace

Dressed in daglis, phetas and shawls several Parsis took to the roads of Delhi on that chilly day, February 15, 1992. Walking ahead of an artistically decorated tableau that exposed the Zoroastrian faith to the man on the street, the Zoroastrian team was participating in a multi-faith march for a Spiritual World Order for the 21st Century, writes Lt Gen Adi Sethna, president of the Delhi Parsi Anjuman (DPA).

Starting at the Fatehpuri Mosque, the procession wound its way to the historic Chandni Chowk as thousands of spectators looked on with interest. The Parsi tableau was the work of Nari Tarapore and Ms Dhun Bagli, credits the news release. The march ended at the Brigade Parade Ground where Sethna explained, through the depictions on the tableau, the principles of Zoroastrianism and the work of some Zoroastrian stalwarts for the freedom movement in India and for national unity thereafter.

The following day, the organizers convened a seminar when Zoroastrian prayers were recited by Ervad Cawas Bagli and translated into Hindi and English by Ms Piloo Jungalwalla. Thereafter Sethna spoke on world peace interspersing his talk with quotations from the Zoroastrian scriptures, notes the write-up.

Vasai's new association

Barely four months old, the newly constituted Vasai Parsi Association has realized



the need for a community hall, houses for the economically weaker sections, and better transport and communication facilities. Sixty-five Parsi families are believed to have settled in Vasai some of whom commute to Bombay for reasons of work and others are employed locally as teachers, informs a press release.

When the Association was inaugurated in November last year by former member of the Minorities Commission Homi J. H. Taleyarkhan, an announcement concerning death formalities came as a relief to the Vasai residents. Formerly a death in Vasai, to be interred at the doongerwadi, necessitated obtaining a death certificate from the doctor, clearance from the tehsildar of the area, the Jury House and finally the Gamdevi Police Station all because Vasai falls within Thana district and the doongerwadi at Kemp's Corner within the city limits. Thanks to Taleyarkhan's intervention and the cooperation of the officials concerned the time lost before interment has now been reduced such that after obtaining a death certificate from Vasai and informing the Gamdevi Police Station about the death, the body can be brought to the Bombay towers of silence, the release informs.

The gathering from Vasai, Virar and Nalla Sopara was then acquainted with the 32-bedded Nowrojee Clinic and Hospital founded by Parsis and presently run by the municipality.

15 Calcuttans feted

To mark the 400th death anniversary of

An exposure to the Zoroastrian religion at the multi-faith march

the celebrated Dastur Meherji Rana, known for impressing Emperor Akbar with the Zoroastrian philosophy, the Parsis of Calcutta gathered at the Olpadvala Memorial Hall on November 2, 1991 to felicitate 15 select Zoroastrians for their noteworthy achievements. The function started with a jashan and ended with a ghambar. In between came recognition for the awardees in the form of a scroll and a medallion presented by chief guest Ms Najoo Batlivala, widow of the late Ardeshtir Batlivala who was trustee of the Calcutta Zoroastrian Community's Religious and Charity Funds (CZCRCF) for several years, reads a write-up in the October-November '91 issue of *Calcutta Gavashni*.

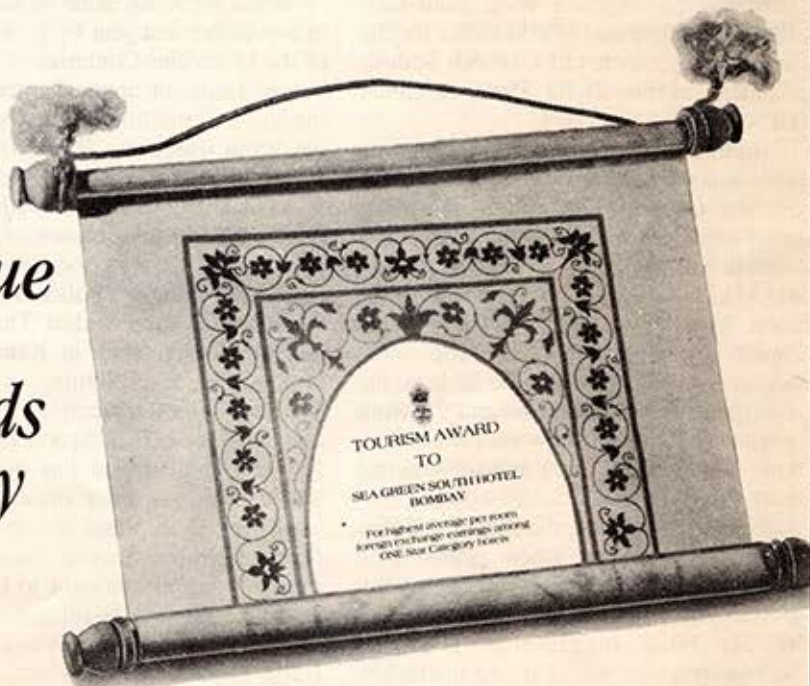
In the steel and metal line recognition came for Dr Minu Dastur, founder and chairman of M. N. Dastur and Company, the consultancy firm advising Indian and foreign governments and multinational concerns on the construction of steel plants. Metallurgist Dr Dara Antia was felicitated for his work as secretary in the Department of Planning and later as director of metals under the Government of India.

On the business and economic scene the following contributors were acknowledged: Pesi Narielvala, senior partner of S. R. Batliboi and Company, and director of several public companies. The chartered accountant's expertise is foreign



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collaborations, the write-up reads. Behram Rustomji's specialization in foundation engineering enabled him to start his own firm Pile Foundation Constructions Company (India) Private Limited and to execute a number of jobs including deep sea wharfs, jetties, etc. notes the write-up in *Gavashni*.

Taking up public causes is Cusrow Irani who has been chairman of the Press Trust of India and was reelected chairman of the International Press Institute in 1991. His abiding loyalties with *The Statesman* and his knowledge of law has enabled him to champion the cause of press freedom. Pesi Ginwala's reputation for law as an advocate of the Calcutta High Court and the Supreme Court has enabled him to aid the community on legal issues, in particular with the difficulties of the Mehta Atash Adaran when his advise was sought to surmount financial barriers, the write-up notes. Widening the silent world of the deaf is Ms Dhun Adenwalla who started the Oral School for Deaf Children in Calcutta but is now settled in Poona where she works with young deaf children and travels to Bombay to lecture at the National Institute for the Hearing Handicapped. A partner in his father's electrical firm Hoshang, Tangree and Company, Khurshed Tangree is known for his philanthropic bent of mind whether giving financial, manpower or moral support to those in need. A pioneer in the concept of outdoor advertising was Rusi Gimi whose commitment extended to improving the health in rural areas and additionally serving as chairman of the St John Ambulance Association. Now deceased, Gimi was also the sheriff of Calcutta.

In sports, acclaim was showered on: veteran athletes Jehanbux Kapadia and Ms Prochy Mehta who have won medals for India at world meets; basketball champ Ms Shirin Kiash who was on the selection committee of various basketball and hockey associations; Russi Jeejeebhoy, the first Parsi from Calcutta to be appointed selector by the Board of Control for Cricket in India (since deceased) and oarsman Sam Medora who has won several regattas and now taken to umpiring the event.

Bringing melody into the lives of Calcutta Parsis is Vistasp Balsara through his vocal and instrumental music. Popular in the film industry and other circles, Balsara has also cut gramophone records, the *Gavashni* write-up further informs.

Stay on shifting of fire

"The trustees are... not to remove or shift the fire-temple in question from its present location in Bharuch to any other place outside Bharuch." V. Vasvada, joint charity commissioner, Baroda division thus stayed the relocation of the Doongaji Agiary fire by his order dated January 3, 1992. The next hearing was scheduled for March 6.

The trustees of the Agiary were planning to bring the fire to Bombay's Godrej Baug where a new fire-temple is under construction.

On an appeal filed by Sam B. Sethna and eight others against Bejanji Lakdawalla and six others managing the Agiary, the stay was granted on the grounds that the Agiary is frequented by the Bharuch Parsis, there are sufficient funds to maintain the fire temple and there is a mobed to perform the boi ceremony, reads a report in the *Jam-e-Jamshed* of February 2.

To celebrate the joint charity commissioner's decision, a maachi financed by the Sethna brothers — Noshir, Sam and Minoo — was performed in the Agiary in the presence of several Parsis who had come to attend the ceremony as also the religious talk that followed on "The status of the fire in nature and its great deeds" by Kersasp B. Makihatana and Ervad Pervaz D. Mithaiwalla, notes the *Jamé* report.

With this development the progress of the Godrej Baug agiary has once again been impeded. The Doongaji family was keen that the family's sacred fire have better patronage. They had even promised Rs 10 lakhs towards the cost of the new agiary building but the monies could not be released in the absence of the Gujarat charity commissioner's sanction. Four years since the foundation stone laying of the agiary, the outcome of the project is still not known.

Godrej's watermark

Confronting us is a spectacle of nearly 50 gaily colored boats holding center stage at the Naoroji Pirojsha Godrej Memorial Boating Station. The peripheral space on the ground floor is assigned to a sail repairs loft, a boat repair and building bay, gymnasium, stores. And the dormitory accommodation on the first floor is in-



Admiral Ramdas inaugurating the Godrej Boating Station (top) while Soonu Godrej looks on

tended for the youths associated with the Sea Cadet Corps (SCC), a movement intended to widen the nautical horizons of adolescents.

The chief of the naval staff Admiral L. Ramdas was there to inaugurate the 1,100 sq ft Boating Station. Also in attendance were a host of service officers, industrialists, members of the Godrej family, parents of the cadets and well-wishers who were invited to witness the Admiral inspect the cadets' guard and band before the commissioning on November 10, 1991. Seated in the shade of the cement and concrete Training Ship *Jawahar* in

South Bombay, the visitors had only to look left for a view of the 25-year-old *Jawahar*, and right, when they wanted a vision of the Boating Station, these two structures lying almost adjacent.

As *Jawahar* serves as the SCC national headquarters, it is put to use not only for the 900 cadets currently enrolled with the Bombay unit but also for the total strength of 2,000 throughout India, as notes the Corps' 1992 souvenir. With the SCC increasing in popularity and activities, *Jawahar's* area was occasionally found to be constrictive. This had been a subject of concern for the Sea Cadet Council, a public charitable trust administering the activities of the SCC.

Way back in 1974, industrialist Naoroji Godrej, one of the trustees of the Council to whom youth welfare and yachting were equally dear, offered to fund an extension to the prevailing yachting and other training facilities from the Pirojsha Godrej Foundation, informs Capt Rabi Ahuja. In recognition of Godrej's financial and conceptual commitment to this project the Council decided to name the Boating Station after the late industrialist who had endeavored to steer the project ahead.

Prominently displayed at the Boating Station are the names and sailing achievements of sea cadets who have won national and international awards over the years so as to inspire each successive crop of cadets. Among the names are international yachtsmen Lt Farokh Tarapore and Cyrus Cama who were introduced to this sport as fledglings of the SCC, mentions Ahuja, captain superintendent of the SCC.

During the 54 years of the SCC there have been other Parsis too who have gained from the self-discipline, morality and leadership training imparted at the four-year courses. The foundation they have received has given them confidence in their subsequent careers whether in the navy, merchant marine, business or industry. While for some this course serves as a hobby, to others the grooming is the beginning of a future vocation, it is mentioned.

Enrolment is open to boys and girls in the 10-18 age-group irrespective of class, creed or religion on a nominal annual subscription of Rs 50. If the students conform to the age requirements, are physically fit, have a basic knowledge of English and can convince the interviewers that they are genuinely interested, they are welcomed aboard the SCC.



Thereafter it is strict discipline. Every Sunday without a break the Bombay cadets have to report at *Jawahar* at 7.30 in the morning and then follow five arduous hours of training in the skills of watermanship. There are also training camps to attend and the dormitory at the Boating Station with a capacity of 100 beds will come in useful at such times.

A voluntary civilian organization, the Corps relies on donations, advertisements in its souvenirs and the community's largesse to continue with its activities. They receive no government grants although support does come forth: as for example, the land for the Boating Station leased by the government for 99 years at a nominal rent of one rupee per year, Ahuja informs. With the governor of Maharashtra as the president of the Sea Cadet Council, the chief minister as the senior vice president, Sumatiben Morarjee, Major General B. G. Shirely and Air Vice Marshal Bharat Kumar as the vice presidents, the others on the trust board are Vice Admiral H. Johnson, Vasant J. Sheth, Vice Admiral R. K. S. Gandhi, Jamshyd N. Godrej, Rear Admiral A. Tandon, S. G. Kale and K. M. Sheth.

Together they navigate the Corps. It is for the cadets to steer the charted course adopting the SCC motto, 'Ready Aye Ready.'

Parinaz Gandhi

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Sheriff Ms Bakul Rajni Patel (standing) inaugurated, on February 21, 1992 a special five-week course for ladies offered by the Davar's College of Commerce, Banking and Language Studies on "How to Manage Money Matters." Next to her is Dr (Ms) Khorshed Madon, principal of the College founded by her father Prof Sohrab Rustom Davar 92 years ago.

health." Dr Nowshir Kaikobad Jungalwalla of New Delhi was conveyed this news by Alfred Sommer, dean of The Johns Hopkins School of Hygiene and Public Health vide his letter dated December 23, 1991. This was on the occasion of the School's 75th anniversary when past heroes were listed in a special edition of their publication *Public Health*.

Founder-director of the National Institute of Health Administration and Education in New Delhi, Jungalwalla has been mentioned in four international *Who's Who* as well as in a national one, informs his wife Piloo. Another distinction to come his way was when he was named a member of the Order of the British Empire.

On the WHO he served as adviser in venereal diseases, on the Indian Health Ministry in New Delhi he was senior public health adviser and from 1957-60 was director of the All-India Institute of Hygiene and Public Health in Calcutta. A fellow of the All India Institute of Medical Sciences, the doctor was also appointed convener and honorary treasurer of the Indian Council of Medical Re-



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search, informs his bio data.

The 79-year-old health enthusiast who retired from all public duties in 1980 is credited with giving New Delhi an emergency telephone number when ambulances can be summoned posthaste.

The son of a port health officer, Jungalwalla was born in Rangoon, Burma and qualified as a member of the Royal College of Physicians in London. He later joined the Indian Medical Service as a gynecologist and was in active service as colonel in the Sudan and Egypt, reads his bio data.

Representing Rangoon University in rowing, Jungalwalla's interest in sports extends to swimming, tennis and squash, further adds his bio data.

'Steelman' Irani

The Steelman of the Year recognition came to Dr Jamshed Jiji Irani, joint managing director of Tata Iron and Steel Company Limited (TISCO) in November last. Noteworthy contributions to the development and growth of the steel industry qualified Irani for the award conferred by the *Indian and Eastern Engineer*, reports *The Afternoon Despatch and Courier* of November 26.

Earlier it was the Ministry of Steel and Mines that twice honored him with the National Metallurgist Award and a platinum medal in 1974 and 1988 respectively, reads his bio data. Keenly involved in the Total Quality Movement, Irani is seeking to improve quality culture in TISCO and the different institutions with which he is connected. He is president of the Indian Institute of Metals (IIM), chairman of the Metallurgical Engineering Division Council of the Bureau of Indian Standards and adviser to the India Society of Engineers.

Sixty-five-year-old Irani who is chairman of Tata Refractories Limited and the Tinsplate Company of India Limited, also serves on the board of other companies and various research councils.

The organizations of which he has been made fellow are the Indian Aca-



(From left) Health enthusiast Jungalwalla, metallurgist Irani, social worker Ghadiali and sportsman Tarapore

demy of Sciences, the All India Management Association and the Institute of Standards Engineers. Irani has also been appointed on the board of directors of the Brussels-based International Iron and Steel Institute, further notes the bio data.

A postgraduate in geology from the Nagpur University, Irani subsequently went to the University of Sheffield from where he did his M. Met and PhD, according to his curriculum vitae. He started his career as a senior scientific officer at BISRA in Sheffield and joined TISCO five years later in the research and development department.

Educationist feted

As an educationist, Ms Dina Rattanshaw Ghadiali of Surat had received umpteen recognitions in the form of Fulbright scholarships twice, a merit certificate from the Government of USA, a president's medal for the Best Teacher of the Country by the Indian government. As a social worker, honor came her way recently when she was conferred a special award by the All India Women's Conference, Gujarat branch, for her devoted social work for over four decades, informs a press release.

Since her retirement as principal of the Shree M. G. Singapuri Girls' High School, Ghadiali has been working for the Sheth P. T. Surat General Hospital, for the blind, deaf and dumb schools, the Union Education Society and the Narmad Sahitya Sabha. Besides, she renders honorary service to the BED College, Surat, imparting to the trainees methods of teaching English as a foreign language, the release notes.

The first lady member on the board of the Surat Parsi Punchayet, another institution to benefit from her commitment is the Guides movement where she has served as State Commissioner for Gujarat, the write-up mentions.

Cricket coach feted

Cricket coach Keki Tarapore who has groomed well-known players like Syed Kirmani, B. S. Chandrashekar, G. R. Vishwanath and others who have made it to the international scene was recently conferred the Rajyotsava Award by the Government of Karnataka, notes a press release.

During his career as cricket coach for more than three decades, Tarapore has known many rewarding experiences.



Mistry: dance dedication

Only last year at a conditioning camp in Bangalore before the Indian team left for the England tour, skipper Mohammad Azharuddin presented Tarapore his white floppy hat autographed by all the Indian players, informs the release.

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At the All India camp organized by the Board of Control for Cricket in India in Bangalore, Tarapore's was a familiar face assisting the national coach in training promising players like Kapil Dev, Ravi Shastri, Shivlal Yadav, besides others. At matches like the Ranji, Duleep and Irani Trophies played in Bangalore, it is Tarapore who gives the commentary on All India Radio.

His interest in cricket started during his school days in Bangalore. He was the captain of his school and college cricket teams and qualified for the Ranji Trophy national championships. After attending a three-week camp for prospective cricket coaches, he has been officiating as one. His first posting was in Jaipur in 1960. Within six months he was transferred to Karnataka where he served till his retirement in 1990, notes a write-up sent by the family.

He shares his interest in cricket with his elder son Shavir who has represented the Karnatak state in the Ranji Trophy and his younger son Kaizad who is vice captain of the Bangalore zonal team, further informs the write-up.

Mistry's integral dance

For eight years Ms Benaifer Dinyar Mistry arduously imbibed the technique of Bharat Natyam from her mentors before making her debut as a dancer. The 16-year-old's arangetram performance at the ISKCON Auditorium on December 8 last year reflected her dedication to this visual form of Indian culture, informs a write-up in the *Blitz* of December 28.

A distinction student from St Louis Convent, Andheri, Mistry is presently a first year student at Bhavan's College. In addition to her dance training under Krishnankutty and Ms Ammukutty, she also finds time for sports and social work. Through dance she hopes to bring integration within the country, the *Blitz* notes.

SPOTLIGHT

State weightlifting champion Neville Daroga was selected to lead the Maharashtra team at the Senior National and Inter-State Weightlifting Championships in Bangalore in February last. The team coach was Viraf Panthaki, informs the *Jam-e-Jamshed* of February 16, 1992.

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Are the Kurds Zoroastrians?

Political conditions have propelled little-known people of Zoroastrian heritage to the consciousness of the world

Reports on surviving Middle Eastern tribes with Zoroastrian antecedents have been a major revelation of 1991. The Tajiks of the former Soviet Union who have now reached our doorstep and the embattled Kurds of Iraq whose plight hit the world's TV screens, made Parsi Zoroastrians squirm amid their own placid comforts.

The Zoroastrian Society of Ontario has set up a fund to aid the suffering Kurds. In Bombay, social worker Jal Ollia had made a similar, but unsuccessful, appeal in the *Jam-e-Jamshed* following the publication of a letter from Rustom Amaria in November 1990. Amaria, a secretary to the Protection Officer at the sub-office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Quetta had narrated the harrowing tales of two of the refugees. States Amaria, "The Kurd refugees have affected me, mainly because they have claimed to be Zoroastrians and/or their grandparents are Zoroastrians. I feel strongly for my community and most importantly I feel that we, as one of the smallest communities of the world should at least be aware of what is happening to some of the unfortunate community members, that hail from Iraq."

"I am led to believe that most of these Kurd-Iraqi refugees have converted from Zoroastrianism to Islam, due to excessive pressure, sometimes rather violent, from the Arab fellow citizens. Nearly all the present younger generation refugees that I have come across, claim to be Muslim converts, with grandparents still being Zoroastrians. Some of them still pray from the *Avesta*, without making it public knowledge. Their mannerisms and outlook towards life is predominantly alike ours."

Ushta, the quarterly publication of

Zoroastrian Studies (ZS), in each of its four issues of 1991, carried excerpts from the book *To Us Spoke Zarathushtra* by Prince Emir Muawiyah ben Esma'il Yazidi, recording the practice of Zoroastrianism by the Yazidis in exile.

The three million Kurds speak Arabic and Kurdish, notes *Ushta*. Emir Esma'il refers to his people as the Azda'ees, Yazidi being a corruption of the term. Esma'il's recurring theme is that governments over the centuries have ignored their claim by refusing to name them in the various censuses — categorizing them as "heathens," "others," "etc."

"For centuries, violence in the name of religion has been a main feature of life in the Middle East. Even today all the main political conflicts in the region are deeply rooted in religious differences," writes Esma'il, adding, "Nothing could calm the angry masses and detract their attention from their misery better than the massacre of a few Yazidi or Alawite villages in the name of the True Faith."

"It was during this long history of persecution that our original name as the Azda'ee was corrupted into being read as Yazidi... We were considered as vaguely Islamicized and allowed to survive on the fringes of history, as it were... We were obliged either to abandon many of our rites and ceremonies or to give them a pseudo-Islamic coloring. This strange situation forced us into what amounts to cultural hibernation..."

"In the 12th century, at the start of the Ottoman ascendancy in the region, an estimated 80 percent of the Kurds were either secretly or avowedly Zarathushtrians still. Today, the same percentage describe themselves as Moslems..."

"There (are), naturally, no accurate statistics concerning the Yazidis. In most places we are simply grouped together

with other Kurds. Sometimes, authorities in charge of the countries where we live prefer to ignore our existence or diminish our true numerical importance in their suitably rearranged statistics."

"The only way through which we keep some kind of statistics is by keeping our religious records. By using such records we may arrive at a series of broad figures."

"Thus, the largest community of Yazidis can be found in Turkey — an estimated total of 1.5 million. In Turkey, our people live mostly in Eastern Anatolia with strongholds at Diyarbakir, Sirat, Maradin, Chantaya, Bursa, etc. Yazidi communities also exist in Istanbul and Ankara."

"Next to Turkey, it is Iraq which has the biggest Yazidi communities. Totalling over a million, the Yazidis of Iraq have their strongholds at Sinjar, Shaikhan, Dohak, Mosul, El-Quosh and Zakho. One of the holiest spots for the Yazidis is also situated in Iraq, at Jabal Laleh, near Mosul, where many Emirs are buried."

"Iran ranks third as far as the number of Yazidis there are concerned. Totalling just under half a million, the Yazidis of Iran have their strongholds at Targever and Margever and the Kerman-shah region."

"In Syria, the Yazidis are estimated to number over 200,000 living in Jebel-Kurdagh, Aleppo, Ras al-Ayn, Hessa and Ghamshli."

"An estimated 25,000 Yazidis also live in Soviet Armenia. And the Yazidi community in Yemen is believed to number nearly 10,000. A further 10,000 Yazidis live in a variety of other countries in Europe and the Americas as well as the Middle East."

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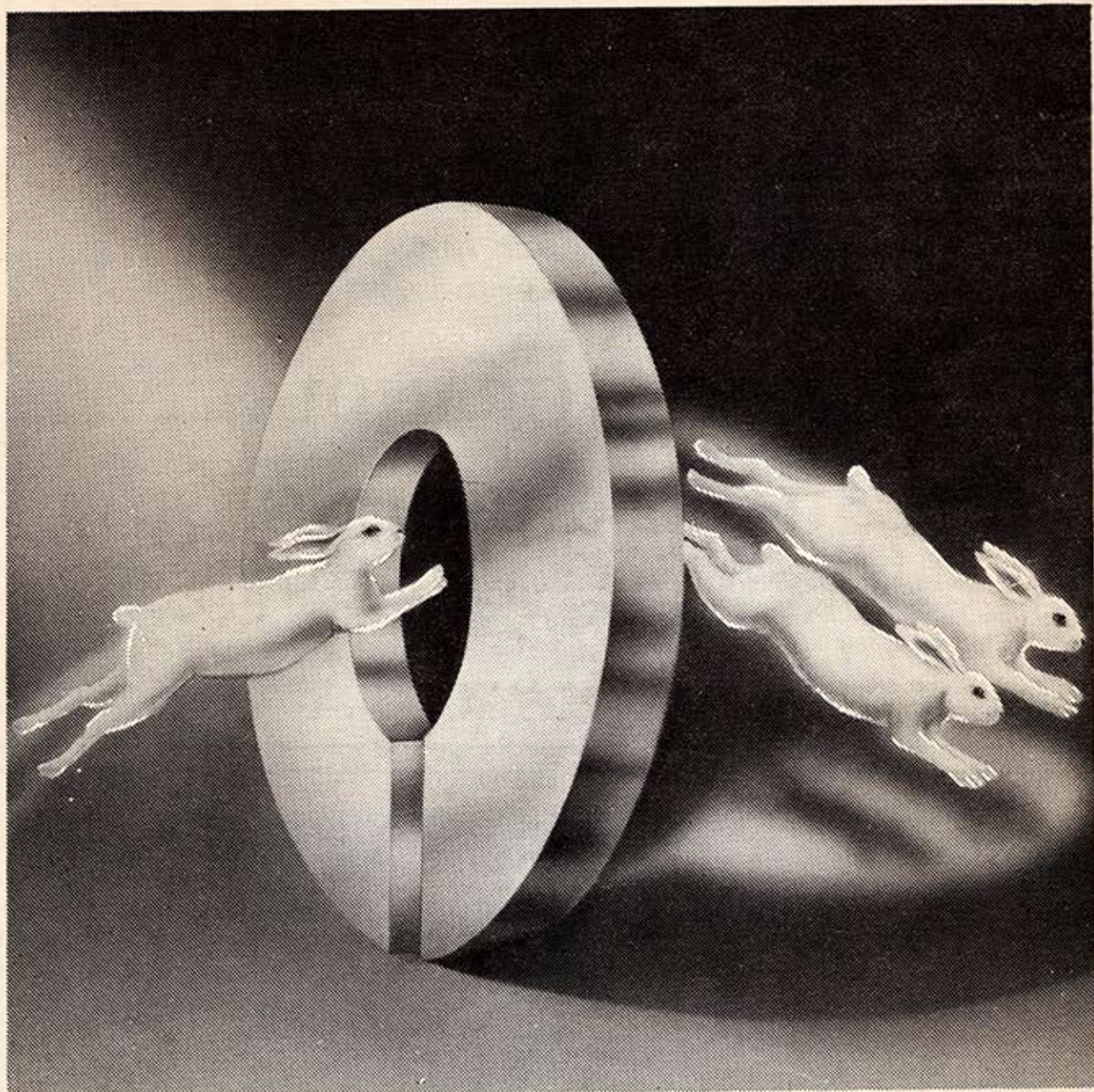
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Young Kurds flank the Kurdistan Cultural Center's sketch map of the area

less, consider ourselves to be only one of the numerous people who, each in (their) own way, share our faith. In the Middle East, we consider the Druze (in Syria and Lebanon), the Alawites (in Syria and Turkey) and the Zoroastrians in Iran to belong to the same broad religious community. Also in Iran and Iraq, such communities as the Qelkhani, the Kalbash, the Ahl-e-Haque, the Ali-Allahi, the Guran and the Shabak share the same religious, and often ethnic, roots with us.

"To be sure, the way each community presents its fate is specific to itself. Such representations are, in most cases, a result of centuries of coping with persecution which forced all of us to disguise our true identity and faith.

"We are all the people of Yazdan or Izad or Azda, all being appellations of the One God...

"The mantelpiece in the main reception room in our house was adorned with a single framed painting. This was the portrait of a man, sporting a long beard and wearing a headgear that looked like a cross between royal crowns and priestly turbans of the Orient.

"His eyes gazed at us constantly, keeping a watch on all we said and did. And, at times, I even felt that he saw what we were thinking as well. In the room no one paid any special attention to the 'man' in the wooden frame. There was no ritual veneration of him. At the same time, however, it was evident that everyone, including my father, was aware of the Presence...

"The man in the wooden frame was Zarathushtra, or Zarthusht as we called him, or Zoroaster. Zarathushtra's teachings could be resumed in what, at first

glance, appears a facile slogan: 'Good Thoughts, Good Words, Good Deeds.'

"And yet, in them is hidden all the mysteries that encompass man and his unique experience. In these simple admonitions one finds the entire spectrum of ethical and philosophical questions that have occupied the minds of generation after generation and shall continue to do so for ever. They focus attention to Good and Evil; on the need for values that define our humanity; on the indivisibility of thoughts and words and deeds.

"The Kurdish community of people as a whole could be considered Azda'ee, at least in a broad cultural sense. For the Kurds have never abandoned their basic ancestral values which have their roots in the faith of Zarathushtra...

"The first people we expect to respond to our appeal are our Kurdish brethren who share with us numerous common bonds of history, culture, language and suffering. We want all Kurdish Zarathushtrians to unite in order to preserve their personality and defend their identity.

"Next, we appeal to Zoroastrians everywhere; in India, in Iran, in West Europe and in the United States.

"We call on them to step forward and help create a united international community, regaining our just and proper place as the first monotheists. Differences of approach and different traditions need not separate us: we are one people; believers in one faith. Our keys may be shaped differently, but we all seek to pass through the same door to salvation and peace."

As the Kurds see themselves

In the meanwhile a two-page handout entitled "Endangered people and divided land: the Kurds and Kurdistan," produced by the Kurdistan Cultural Center

— a New York based non-profit organization aimed to promote the cultural survival of the Kurdish people — was forwarded to *Parsiana* by Keki Shroff of Canada in January 1992.

The write-up refers to "more than 25 million Kurds, with a distinct cultural identity of their own, and with a very high level of national consciousness, living in an area called Kurdistan which was divided by colonial powers to sustain their interest in the area after the First World War, between Iran, Iraq, Turkey and Syria.

"They are the fourth largest people in the Middle East following Arabs, Turks and Persians. Despite their constant struggle for self-determination and democracy in the region, they do not have enough support, neither from the third world nor from the West or East."

The article aims to rectify the media's lack of information on the history and political struggle of the Kurdish people:

"Kurdish people can be traced back approximately 5,000 years back. A country called Kardaka mentioned in (a) Sumerian inscription dates back to 2000 BC. About the time of the Arab conquests in the seventh century the term Kurd begins to be applied as an ethnic description of the Indo-European tribes in that region. The first mention of Kurdistan, which literally means 'land of the Kurds,' dates from the 12th century.

"The Kurdish language is an Indo-European language totally distinct from Turkish (Ural-Altaic language) and Arabic (Semitic language). Kurdish belongs to the north-western group of Iranian languages in contrast to Modern Persian which falls into the south-western group. The most important Kurdish dialects are Kurmanji and Sorani. Smaller dialects are Gorani, Luri and Zaza. Majority of the Kurds speak Kurmanji.

"Religious belief plays no part in Kur-

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dish distinctiveness. Most of the Kurds are Muslim but there are also Christian, Jewish, Yezid and Zoroastrian Kurds. Zoroastrianism was the original ancient religion of the Kurds and Persians. Zoroaster, the prophet and philosopher of Zoroastrianism was a Mede, an ancestor of the Kurds. Plato, Pythagoras, and many other Greek and Western thinkers as well as Confucius and Chinese philosophers are claimed to have emulated the teachings of Zoroaster. (Zoroastrian) theology and cosmology influenced the development of Jewish, Christian and Muslim thought. Also, the famous Saladin Ayubi, who fought against Richard the Lionheart and the Christian Crusaders so successfully in the 12th century, was a Kurd.

"As among many peoples whose formal education is little advanced, the oral literature of the Kurds is rich and extraordinarily abundant. It has even been possible to refer to the hypertrophy of its folklore. Some of the written texts go back to the 10th century. Music plays a vital role in preserving Kurdish culture. 'Dengbej' are the singing storytellers who carried (the) Kurdish heritage of poetry and music down through the centuries to modern times. Recently, Kurdish filmmaker Yilmaz Guney received an award at the 1982 Cannes Film Festival for his movie *Yol*.

"More than 50 Kurdish dynasties and principalities, which formed a buffer zone between the Ottoman Empire and (Islamic) Persian Empires retained their independence until the 17th century. The first division of Kurdistan took place in 1639 as a result of wars between the Ottoman and Persian Empires. Since this first division to now, more than 50 uprisings took place in Kurdistan. The last important Kurdish revolt of the 19th century broke out in 1880 under the leadership of Sheik Ubeydullah who was able to bring the entire Kurdistan under one leadership. This revolt is considered to be the beginning of Kurdish nationalism. In 1878 Sheikh Ubeydullah had written to the local British Vice-Consul: 'The Kurdish nation is a people apart. Their religion is different and their law and customs are distinct... The chiefs and rulers of Kurdistan, whether Turkish or Persian subjects, and the inhabitants of Kurdistan one and all, are agreed that matters cannot be carried on this way with the two governments.'

"Unfortunately, united Kurdistan did not survive very long under the joint attacks of the Ottoman and Persian Em-

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pires. Following World War I, in 1920 the Treaty of Sèvres signed between the Western Allies and the Ottoman Empire recognized an independent Kurdistan covering most of the present Kurdish area. However, this was never ratified and the final treaty of Lausanne signed in 1923 created the present states of Turkey, Iraq and Syria. Iraq was created by the British Empire in 1921 for their oil interest in the region. The Kurds never accepted to be a part of Iraq. The Kurdish revolt took place before the first king of Iraq, King Faisal, was brought from Mecca by Britain. At that time the British Royal Air Force was the first to use a chemical weapon — mustard gas — against Kurdish civilians to suppress their revolt. Kurdish leader Sheikh Mahmoud was sent to exile in India by the British Government in 1919.

"The greatest victory of the Kurdish liberation movement in the 20th century has been the creation of the Kurdish Democratic Republic of Mahabad in Irani-Kurdistan in 1946 which lasted only for one year (due to) the support of the British Empire to the Iranian Government (of Reza Shah) and with the end of support from the Soviet Union to the Kurdish Republic.

"Basic human rights are still denied in Kurdistan, to a degree that is shocking in its intensity. Countries with Kurdish minority fear Kurdish ethnic strength and any activity towards self-determination. Therefore, they actively try to assimilate and repress Kurds. In Kurdistan, torture and arbitrary harassment are the order of the day. Daily life continues to be characterized by fear of police persecution, including torture. Today, their existence is still denied by the Turkish Constitution.

"According (to a) Minority Rights Group by early 1984, 27,000 Kurds had died at the hands of the Iranian Army, of whom only 2,500 were freedom fighters.

"In Syria, over 200,000 Kurds are denied citizenship since 1961 but are required to serve in the armed forces. During the last 10 years the Iraqi government destroyed nearly 4,000 Kurdish towns and deported more than 300,000 Kurds to Southern desert areas. In 1983, 8,000 non-combat Barzani tribesmen were seized by the Iraqi government and their whereabouts are still unknown. According to Amnesty International reports, at least 300 Kurdish civilians, mostly under 18 have been executed in

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1985. Five thousand civilians died, and 10,000 were wounded following chemical warfare attacks in March and August 1988. Over 100,000 civilian Kurdish people fled to Turkey and Iran where their living conditions are still intolerable."

First person encounter

Involved for the past six years in the genetic improvement of wheat, barley and other cereals at the UN funded International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA) at Aleppo in Syria, plant biologist Dr Ardeshtir Damania was unaware of the historic presence of the Yazidis in the region. That is until he urged some scientists in the group on a visit to Iran six months ago to look up the Zoroastrians there. They returned with the news that a group of Kurdish settlers, believed to be Zoroastrian, were barely 70 kilometers away...

"They are called the 'Yazidis' — people from Yazd in Iran. They do not go to a mosque nor a church. In fact, they have no communal place of worship. Their origin is clouded in mystery, but they recognize Zarathushtra ('Zaradhusht') as a prophet of God. They seem to have separated over a thousand years ago from the main body of Zoroastrians, after the Arab conquests. They accept the *Zend-Avesta* as their holy book. Their high priest (called 'Sheikh') claims to possess copies of it written in the Kurdish language," writes Damania.

Making the westward journey by car to Afrin, a town closer to the Lebanese border, with Damania on November 16, 1991 were a Muslim laboratory technician and the latter's Kurdish wife who speaks the language fluently though she professes Islam. They had been instructed to locate a green grocer named Aref and were able to trek him down in his fields where three other Yazidis were helping him dig a tubewell. Damania quotes Aref as noting that the community is well off on the basis of the olives, potatoes, melons and vegetables they cultivate.

Damania notes that this particular group claims to have originated in the area near Afghanistan (or Arachosia). Their holy places lie in Iraq in the town of Sinjar and the village of Lalash, about 80 km away in the Sinjar mountains. "I was shown a video film of this holy place where there is a temple. It was not clear whether this is a fire-temple as

Dr Ardeshtir Damania's six years in Syria were preceded by nine years with the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) in Rome. A graduate with plant ecology and plant geography from the Indian Institute of Science (IIS), Bombay, Damania's interest in the subjects was fired by Professor Faredoon Bharucha, the famous plant ecologist from France and Cambridge who was at one time the principal of the Institute and to whom Damania ascribes the introduction of the subject in India. Thereafter Damania acquired his MSc degree in plant genetics from the IIS and the University of Birmingham, UK, before acquiring his doctorate in variations in wheat and barley land races from Nepal and the Yemen.

The ICARDA center in Aleppo, Syria, where Damania works, is one of 15 worldwide centers set up with a mandate to improve crop production in West Asia and North Africa. Wheat, barley, chick pea (channa), lentils, beans, forage grasses and vegetables as well as small ruminants like goats and sheep are a part of their purview. Damania cites an example: The Bedouins keep thousands of sheep, hiring post-harvest fields for the animals to graze, in this case barley. It had been a particularly good barley crop but the stalks proved too abrasive and the animals' gums began to bleed. Damania and fellow scientists were assigned the problem of evolving a more suitable breed of barley. Thus, says Damania, the needs from season to season are diverse. The varieties have to be very flexible to ensure substantial production when favorable agricultural factors come together, as 90 percent of these farmers depend on natural climatic conditions.

"A hundred years ago Africa was a self-supporting continent where food was plentiful." The civil war in Ethiopia with depredation and constant fear of being driven out of their homes has combined with vagaries of climate to result in famine conditions. Its rainfall has depleted

Cultivating dry lands

dramatically thanks to the indiscriminate felling of trees for firewood. Its greatest need, says Damania, is for a decade of peace and seeds which can withstand the vagaries of climate and soil.

"Many areas (in the world) are not getting rain now... Today Cherrapunjee (in Meghalay — for long celebrated as the world's wettest spot) doesn't get even 200 inches of rain. Perhaps there may be more rain in Vancouver!"

Syria, which receives a meager two to three inches of rain annually, is locked in conflict with neighboring states over the waters of the Euphrates. "The Assad Dam that Syria is building, makes a huge lake so Iraq is not getting anything... The water table is receding each year (while) maize and tomatoes (the traditional crops) require a lot of water," informs Damania.

The natives survive on *khobz*, an Arabic bread like *naan* which is government subsidized, the plentiful olives and goat cheese. Vegetables are very cheap at the time of seasonal overproduction but meat is twice its price of India. Commercialization is just coming in.

The socio-religious atmosphere in Syria is liberal, says Damania. Their national drink — *arak* — is made of aniseed and the state has its own distilleries making beer, whisky, brandy, gin and wine. The women sport jeans and mini skirts and frequent nightclubs.

Damania compares the depleting Parsi population in Bombay and Gujarat to that of the Armenians in Syria where many youths have migrated to California and the old people remain to die, one at a time. "Many Parsi houses in Navsari are closed because people are serving elsewhere. Single old people are occupying old flats." The city is crowded, but Damania missed the old lifestyle in Navsari when fresh *malai* (cream) and fish were delivered to the doorstep. His dilemma is one he shares with many Parsis — what to do about his house in the Parsi mohalla. He doesn't want to sell it, but no one from the family is willing to stay in it, he says. According to Damania, Parsis may survive in some pockets like Toronto or London. He draws solace from the hope provided by the Yazidis and the Tajiks that Zoroastrianism may continue to flourish.



Damania: encountering the Yazidis



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we know it, since no fire was visible such as the one in our agiaries. However, the chief priest wearing what looked like Arabic dress lit a fire himself during the ritual.

"When I showed them a small picture of Zarathushtra, which I had carried with me from my home in Aleppo, they at once recognized it as 'Zaradhusht' and told me that they too had similar pictures in their homes," adds Damania.

On the second visit to Afrin, the technician's wife could not come. In addition the two visitors carried a sophisticated video camera to record their meeting and discussions. In retrospect Damania felt that the presence of the Muslim and the video camera caused a slight uneasiness among the Yazidis and may have contributed to the limited amount of information which was forthcoming.

Damania records his visit to the Yazidi village of Ain Dara, literally 'holy spring,' about 12 km from Afrin, on the road to the citadel of Saint Simeon where they were introduced to one of about 40 Yazidi families:

"They told me that they always slept with their beds in the east-west direction and kept their pillows on the eastern side. In the morning they prayed facing the sun. Two girls, Samiah and Rohlat (meaning sunrise in Kurdish), of about 20-25 years of age spoke broken English and told me that they believed in seven holy spirits: Shams, Amadi, Naseerdin, Sajjardin, Babadin, Fakhraddin, Hasan and Khadi. These seven names may represent the seven creations mentioned in the divine Heptad, viz. Khshathra, Haurvatat, Spenta (Armaiti), Ameretat, Vohu Manah, Spenta Mainyu, and Asha (Vashista) (See Mary Boyce — *Zoroastrianism*, p13).

"When shown the Asho-Farohar they recognized the symbol as 'Malak Taous.' The Creator they called 'Yazdan,' and 'Zaradhusht' the messenger of 'Yazdan.' They asked me a lot of questions about the Zoroastrians in India and their customs. The girls had some knowledge of Friedrich Nietzsche's *Thus Spake Zarathushtra* of which they seemed to possess a copy in German.

"They informed me that they had only a small ceremony when a boy reaches two to four years of age. The priest came and said some prayers and chopped off a small lock of the boy's hair. There was no ceremony at all for girls. Since they do not undergo a navjote ceremony they do not wear a sudreh and kusti.

"They mostly have arranged marriages. Love marriages and premarital courtship is frowned upon. They have some cases of intermarriages also but is very actively discouraged. This is done by the Yazidi elders having a frank talk with the other boy's or girl's parents. Since the Muslims themselves discourage intermarriage this is not a very difficult task, i.e. to convince the non-Yazidi to forget about the proposed marriage. However, defaulting female members who marry non-Yazidis were usually banished from the community. But in recent times attitudes have changed, and on rare occasions Yazidi girls do marry Muslim boys, but Yazidi boys, they informed me, never marry Muslim girls. It is not surprising. I was told that in the past Yazidi boys who dared elope with a Muslim girl were even killed!

"Their marriages are always performed at the home of the bridegroom since they have no places of worship of their own or 'baugs' where they can assemble. In fact they are not permitted to

"The authorities prefer to ignore our existence or diminish our true numerical importance"

assemble at all. The date of the wedding is decided by parents of both sides but the costs are borne entirely by the bridegroom. A day or two before the wedding ceremony the girl's mother invites friends and relatives to see the exhibit of articles the girl has made herself (embroidery, paintings, handicrafts, etc) or those things which she has saved for her marriage. The wedding ceremony, performed by a priest, takes about half an hour and is very simple without much fanfare or rituals. Friends and relatives give money, rather than objects, as presents to the couple.

"The disposal of the dead is by burial, similar to that of the Muslims. However, the treatment of the body before burial resembles the Zoroastrian practice. The body is bathed with water by relatives of the same sex and then wrapped in a white shroud. Ornaments (if any) are removed and handed over to the family members.

Three girdles torn from the same shroud are tied around the head, waist and the legs. The body is then carried by any four relatives acting as pallbearers to a special burial ground which is distinct from that of the Muslim and Christian communities. A coffin is only used if the body has to be transported over a long distance to the burial place. After prayers the priest descends into the grave and removes the girdles, shroud, and coffin (if used) and the body is buried. After the funeral the priest returns with the bereaved family and stays at their home for three days, offering prayers for the spirit and the soul, and consoling the family and those who come on condolence visits."

Cauliflower, lotuses, pork and alcohol are taboo among the Yazidis but there is no ban on smoking, informs Damania, though he doesn't know why. The colour blue was similarly banned, though the youth are now becoming a part of the international jeans culture. Black is the color of sadness and considered unfit for use as apparel.

"In April and October each year, there is a feast where a holy dress, Taj Hella, is displayed and all Yazidis come to kiss it and pay homage and offer small denomination currency notes and coins. It seems there are two or three of these holy dresses in the area, made of one piece of cloth. The dress is said to be very heavy. Later in the afternoon, there is a sacrifice of lamb or chicken and everybody must partake of this consecrated food without exception, informs Damania.

They used to celebrate March 21 as "Navruz" by lighting fires on top of their houses and in the town square, but this has since been banned by the authorities, notes Damania.

"The young girls I spoke to were at once tense when a non-Yazidi Kurdish person came into the room where we were sitting. They immediately stopped talking and a video film showing their rituals in their holy town in Iraq was switched off. It was started once more after this person left and they had secured the door. Hence it seemed that they are not free to practice their religion or customs or talk freely with strangers (or foreigners) and are always suspicious of outsiders (non-Yazidis)," Damania is conscious of the emotional currents. This is not surprising considering the history of their persecution, not unlike that faced by the Zoroastrians of Iran after the Arab conquests, he adds.

continued on page 98

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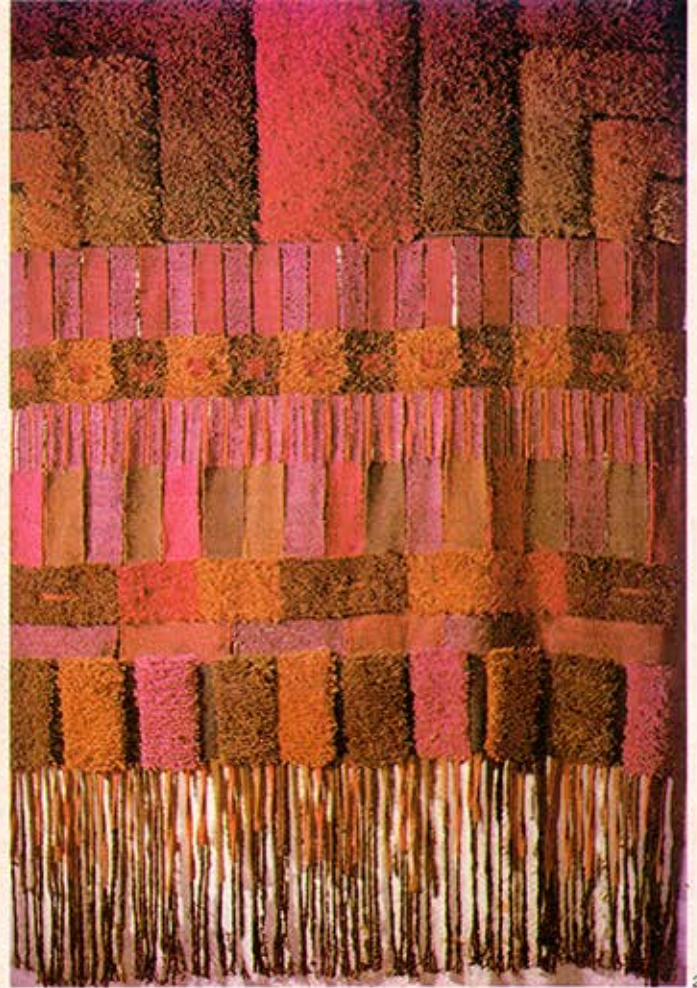
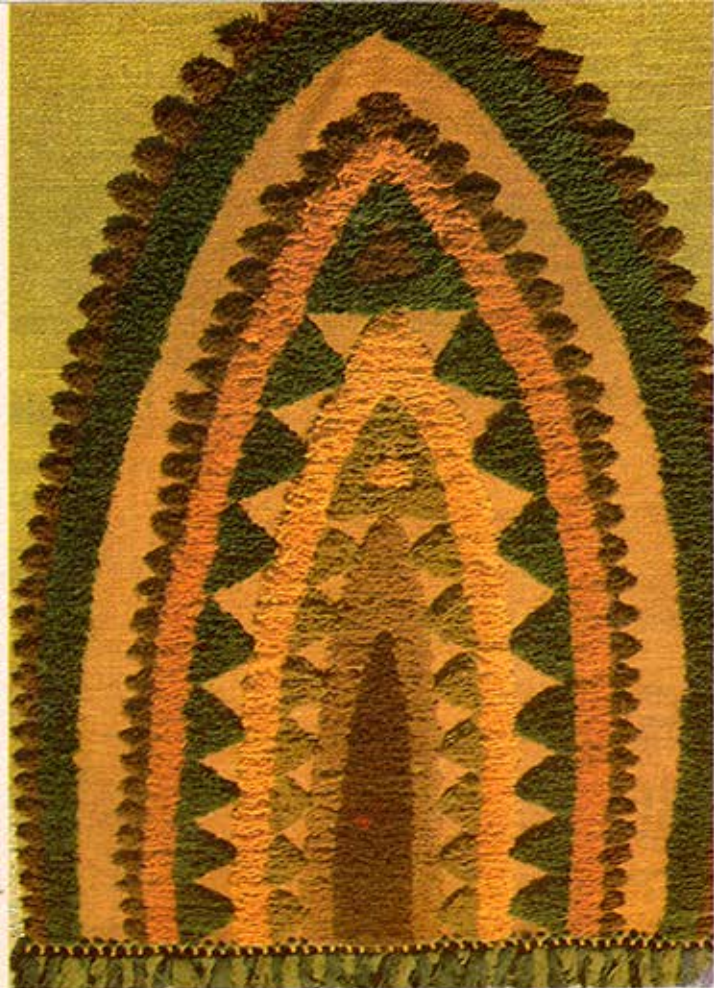
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Handwoven wall hangings
2 and 3 by Sethna
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Many A Splendored Weave

Gustasp Irani

Despite her handicap the late Nelly Sethna continued to weave masterpieces and inspire local artisans

Though confined to a wheelchair, Ms Nelly Sethna insisted on visiting the Jehangir Art Gallery on the opening and last day of her and Ms Roshan Mullan's exhibition of handwoven, handcrafted creations and then retired from the lime-light — for good. Within a fortnight of the closing of the exhibition, she died on March 1, 1992 at her residence in Bombay following cardiac arrest. With remarkable willpower she had been warding off multiple sclerosis that invaded her system more than two decades ago.

Critically acclaimed as a weaver of national and international repute, Sethna's work had been recognized with a Padma Shri by the Government of India in 1985 and an award for excellence by the World Zoroastrian Organisation in 1991. During her 59-year life span, the artist was twice invited to participate in the World Congress of Craftsmen. Her two books, *Shal -- weaves and embroideries of Kashmir* and *Kalamkari*, were both well received. Other distinctions to come her way was her appointment as textile design consultant to the National Institute of Design, Ahmedabad and the Homi Bhabha Fellowship that she used to revive Kalamkari, the rare art of printing and painting with vegetable and earth dyes.

A simple, unostentatious life-style is what the artist believed in. "I take everything from nature," Sethna was wont to tell her husband Homi and admirers. Her exhibitions in different parts of India reflected her emphasis. Through her displays she helped lift the traditional craft to the realm of art. Several artisans working under her also benefitted from the patronage and awareness that her work created within and outside India. "Her work is in the classical mold, it will never go out of fashion, it's eternal,"

says Ms Shireen Gandhi of Chemould Art Gallery.

"The limits of art today are not confined by one's nationality. Nelly's work was international. She did what she felt was honest; she broke new ground. Not that she rejected tradition, but she was never bound by it," says Ms Roshan Kalapesi, designer, former member of the All India Handicrafts Board and a longtime admirer of Sethna's work. "Though we draw our inspiration from tradition our work is very contemporary," says Mullan who acknowledged Sethna as her mentor.

"Nelly and Roshan had a very special bond. To understand their relationship you've got to understand that Nelly was a very poor teacher," says Homi. "She did everything on her own and expected her student to do the same." Hardworking Nelly never sought to find the easy way out, remembers designer Ms Mini Boatwala who had known Sethna since their student days at London, their personal and professional relationship enduring till the end. Together they had travelled to Kutch as part of a delegation to study the crafts of Gujarat.

Sethna learned weaving the hard way. A qualified textile designer from the Regent Street Polytechnic, London, she subsequently won a Fellowship to the Cranbrook Academy of Art in the USA. On her first day at the Academy she was placed in front of a loom and told to do her own thing. "Though she had studied textile designing, this was the first time she was confronted by a loom," says Homi. Seeing her despair, a fellow student from Finland showed her the ropes — make that the threads — and how they were strung across the loom. That night Sethna did not go home but spent it working on the loom. The next morning when the other students came to the class

she had her first piece woven on it. "It illustrates what kind of person Nelly was; she was a determined fighter all her life," mentions her husband.

She fought her way up in life from very modest origins. As a little girl she would walk barefoot to school in Malad. As a student at the Sir J. J. Institute of Applied Art she had to bear the brunt for daring to oppose the professor's arbitrary evaluations. When abroad, to finance her studies she took up jobs, whether through the firm of Hartnell's (the Queen's embroiderers) or even menial work as a maid.

On her return to Bombay in the late 1950s, she joined the Bombay Dyeing and Manufacturing Company and was singlehandedly responsible for starting the company's textile design department. "At that time no textile mill in Bombay had an independent textile design department of its own," says Homi.

Her understanding with the employers, the Wadias, was that along with her commercial commitments to them she would keep in touch with her artistic pursuits and her weaving. She wove tapestries for Air India and other commercial houses. Later she won the Ford Foundation Travel and Study Award which financed her global trip to study the craft and art of weavers, traditional and contemporary. On her return she was commissioned by the Ford Foundation to do a long hanging which, according to her husband, adorned the three-storeyed stairway well of their building in New Delhi.

Then in 1969, unexpectedly, Nelly lost vision in one eye for a week. It was the first inkling of the crippling multiple sclerosis that would waste her petite physique and, in the last years, mute her voice, making even simple speech an ef-

fort. This disease was over the years slowly going to eat into her system and confine her to a wheelchair by 1975; a disease that was eventually going to tear one of the country's most acknowledged and creative weavers away from her loom by 1987.

Sethna and Mullan's partnership started soon after Sethna had been diagnosed a victim of multiple sclerosis. The experienced artist was then looking for someone to groom and assist her in work. She invited Mullan to try her hand at weaving and Mullan picked up the threads from there.

As a person Nelly was "most unexpected; very humorous in a caustic sort of way. She could not tolerate those who were pretentious or pompous," recalls Kalapesi. Reserved by nature, she had a select few close friends though she was always willing to support those who came to her doorstep for help. To some she gave monetary help, and others, including a few Parsi ladies, gained from the craft skills like macrame she imparted to them to make them self-supporting. She worked as a scriptwriter, visualizer and even helped her documentary filmmaker husband in directing art and craft films which won national and international awards. Besides her deep involvement in all craftwork, the theater and films interested her as much as talks on philosophy.

Nelly, however, never allowed her fame to affect her humility, stresses Kalapesi. "It was very touching to see how she related with traditional crafts-

men. They would sit at her feet and call her 'amma' (mother). But she would protest and say that she should be sitting at their feet."

Sethna is survived by her husband Homi.

Weaving magic together

Though shy and unassuming, Ms Roshan Mullan was able to match senior artist Ms Nelly Sethna's fire and assertiveness



Nelly Sethna (on the wheelchair) with husband Homi and Mullan

on the loom; a slash of bold color here, a subtle undertone there... This was evident at the recent exhibition of their wall hangings at the Jehangir Art Gallery from February 12 to 18, 1992.

Their works together transcend the roots in woven fabrics. "If art is viewed as expressing oneself through color, then these wall hangings can be viewed as

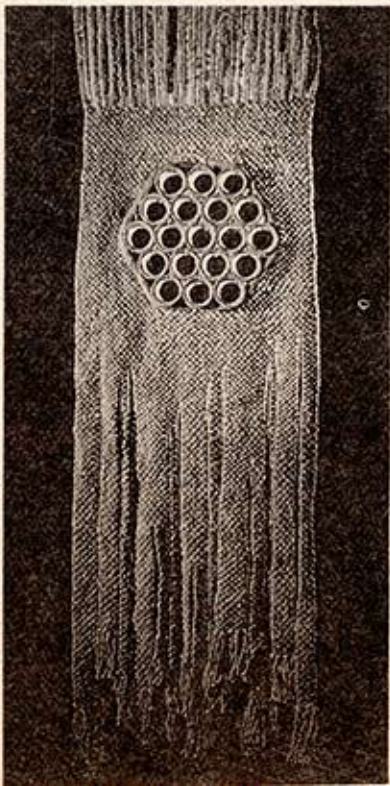
paintings. Basically we work with color, but in threads rather than paint," says a soft-spoken Mullan, a graduate in commercial art from the J. J. School of Art whose first glimpse of a loom was at Sethna's residence in 1969. She can, however, be brazen in her work and artistic expression. Then she can be mellow too in her choice and use of textures. From tight, symmetrical and geometrical designs to freeflowing expression, the range of the exhibition was wide.

Mullan explains the basic tools of the art form. The loom is the easel. The warp, or the threads stretched lengthwise in the loom, and usually in one basic color, is the canvas. The weft, or the threads that go across horizontally, is the paint. Material used in the warp is usually cotton; in the weft the range is wider — cotton, rayon, wool...

Though very much in awe of her inspiration and guru Sethna, Mullan has developed a distinct style of her own in which she repeats the basic design in overlapping slats of fabric which gives the work three dimensional depth.

"Beautiful; a kind of travel around the world. I felt in this work a piece of Indian America, a little of Africa and the genius of Asia. You artists are creating wonderful things." Thus commented a French visitor on the recent exhibition. These observations summed up the essence of the subtle interplay of colors and designs woven on the loom, and more, they recognized the international influence in Sethna's work which she has passed on to her student Mullan. The exhibition was also a testimony of the fact that the two ladies had woven a binding relationship into the tapestries they created.

Handcrafted creations by Sethna and Mullan



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"What is Zoroastrianism and what is not?"

Arnavaz S. Mama

A historical perspective of three millennia leads Prof Richard Frye to question some contemporary Zoroastrian assumptions

"Persian imperial history can be a source of answers to our problems. It was tremendously cosmopolitan. We can't use the term orthodox before the third century AD because until then there was no codification of religious dogmas. Maybe, the present times fit pre-Sasanian times better," Professor (Dr) Richard Frye, Aga Khan professor of Iranian Studies at Harvard University noted during a public lecture organized by Zoroastrian Studies (ZS) in August 1991. In the course of four lectures in Bombay — two under the auspices of the K. R. Cama Oriental Institute's platinum jubilee committee, one under ZS and the first Naoroji Pirojsha Godrej Memorial Lecture sponsored by the Athravan Educational Trust — Frye dwarfed his audiences as much by his physical presence as by his intellectual achievements.

The History of Bokhara, The Heritage of Persia, The Histories of Nishapur, The Golden Age of Persia, The History of Ancient Iran and several other publications attest to Frye's claim that his "personal opiate" is Iranian studies.

Frye approaches Zoroastrianism through the eye of the historian. Examining the concept of universalism in the Zoroastrian context, Frye concedes that like Judaism, Zoroastrianism is bound with a people or country. Ahura Mazda was the god of the Iranians even as Marduk was the god of the Babylonians and Isis of the Egyptians. And Zoroastrianism has remained faithful to the "national character," being practiced only by people of Iranian descent.

This was not strictly true during the Achaemenian or Sasanian times, though

"we don't know what Zoroastrianism was (really) like under the Achaemenians. Even the Sasanians didn't know," he adds. While the early Achaemenians allowed freedom of worship, the later Achaemenians had begun to consider the profession of Zoroastrianism as a "touchstone of fealty to the Empire." And in Sasanian times religion and the state became completely intertwined. Even Armenians or Georgians of Zoroastrian descent who chose to embrace other faiths were forcibly reconverted. After the advent of Islam into Iran, the Zoroastrians withdrew into ghettos. "The idea that Zoroastrianism was only for a special group, had to follow...it was a product of the political conditions of the time."

The implications of the religion's universal/particular controversy have a direct bearing on the social question: "Is it necessary to restrict the community in order to preserve the religion?" Says Frye, "Iranians in Iran don't feel the same way. Twenty-five years ago when I was in Iran they converted. You (the Parsis of India) have to decide what you want." In an interview with *Parsiana*, Frye advocated the division of the community into liberal/conservative sects, each going its own way. "Divide the fire-temples and let them go each way," continued Frye, adding with scholarly humility, "I'm telling you what I think is right, but I may be wrong."

Allowing for the wealth of interpretation of the Zoroastrian faith, Frye says, "The scriptures survive because they mean all things to all people...Zoroastrianism in the ninth century was different from Zoroastrianism in the

fifth century or in the fifth century BC... Just as language changes, so does religion..."

"Rituals are a very important part of any religion — religion without rituals is just a philosophic society like theosophy. It is important to have rituals; and anything that explains them and why they came into existence is all to the good," he adds. "But if rituals are pushed too far so that they become the only end of religion, then there is only form and no content with people going through them like automats..."

"There should be someone to interpret (the rituals), study psychology, participate in community problems. You have to have more education... Discussion there has to be because ethics, morality, change over generations... Priests can't say we won't discuss. (They) should get involved, question themselves." Frye emphasizes the necessary balance and understanding between rituals and customs on the one hand and morality and philosophy on the other, with a thoughtful application of ideas to changing circumstances. He cites the Shakers of Pennsylvania who use carts and horses because there's a tradition that you can't use automobiles, as an example of ritualized atrophy.

Currently lecturing at the University of Tadjikistan in Dushanbe, Frye is acquainted with Soviet archeological excavations in Central Asia. One of the prime findings of archeologists is ancient pottery. The one item all ancient peoples used for carrying liquids and grain, it becomes "a key to the movement of peoples." However, fads for certain de-

signs were passed on by merchants and do not always indicate migration, which is one of the limitations on the effectiveness of archeological study. Another, says Frye, is "How do you connect pottery to peoples speaking a particular language?"

Some of the Soviet excavations date back to the Kushan period (circa 2500 BC) and have unearthed some fire altars. Frye cautions, "I'm not sure that all fire altars are Zoroastrian. Fire had been venerated... long before the coming of Iranians on the Iranian plateau." The Greeks and the Vikings venerated fire, the Hindus have fire altars in some of the temples in Mathura and the war memorials or Tombs of the Unknown Soldier have an undying flame in various parts of the world.

Reverence for fire is widespread and old but not exclusively Zoroastrian. "What do we mean when we talk of fire-temples or fire altars?" asks Frye. Though some aboriginal temples have been excavated dating to the second millennium BC, Frye doubts their connection with the early Indo-Europeans: "Neither the *Vedas* nor the *Avesta* mention temples. Herodotus says the Persians had no temples — they worshipped on hill tops. No temples have been found in Persepolis."

There were three general methods of disposal in the ancient world, cremation being the earliest. The bodies of heroes and chiefs were burnt on boats by the Indo-Europeans. In Egypt and Mesopotamia inhumation, including burial as well as mummification, was the normal practice. Exposure was the form of disposal favored by the tribes of Central Asia — perhaps because of their nomadic lifestyle. They made astodans or urns for the dead, similar to dokhmas. "Was cremation given up in favor of exposure because of the Zoroastrian belief in environmental conservation? In Fars there are lots of astodans and dokhmas but not in other places like Azarbaijan. What were they doing?" Frye speculates. Thus, according to Frye, it is "very difficult to determine whether people were Zoroastrians or not on the basis of such evidence before 2000 BC. But from 800 BC onwards the question is only whether they followed the injunctions of Zarathushtra or older Iranian beliefs."

Even so Frye cautions, "Be very careful of thinking of Iran as completely Zoroastrian from that time to now. Change is part of life. What is essential? What was changed?" are the questions.

The region around the Lake of Urmia in Azarbaijan, Seistan, Seikvarga (the Uzbek Republic) and Bactria on the River Oxus are four geographical claimants as the homeland of Zarathushtra and the *Avesta*. Fars, Isfahan, Kerman, Yazd stake no such claims, informs Frye, dismissing the claim of Azarbaijan as a product of Sasanian territorial ambition. Seistan and Seikvarga are similarly shrugged away as essays in making "the geography of the *Avesta* fit the area you want to push." He considers Bactria as the most likely because it was one of the most populous regions in the pre-Achaemenian period.

"When were the *Gathas* created? When were they written down? These

devas that the *Vedas* refer to. It was "Zarathushtra who turned the Indo-European equation around," acknowledging the monotheism of Ahura Mazda and relegating all the devas then known into a subgroup. Some of these were revived by latter-day Zoroastrians and reinstated in positions of eminence.

Nor did successive layers of Iranian religious reform permeate to farflung tribes in the Pamirs, the Hindukush and elsewhere so that today the Yazidis/Kurds/Osettes display a curious mixture of pre and post-Zarathushtrian Iranian religion blended with Islam. They are "now looking for an identity — hence their claim to be Zoroastrian" though their religious rites bear little resem-



are two different things," Frye answers himself, hazarding a period after 1500 BC when the Aryans split. "The contents of the *Gathas* are not like anything in the *Vedas*. The *Vedas* are more like the younger *Avesta* i.e. pre-Zarathushtrian," he explains.

Speaking of the movement of the Indo-Aryan peoples, Frye examined a recent University of Varanasi theory that ascribes their original homeland as close to China. "In that case wouldn't they have moved to the east, towards the rich Huang He river basin rather than the deserts and mountains of the west?" he asks. Frye considers it more likely that the tribes emanated from the steppes of southern Russia. The Hitites of the second millennium BC (i.e. 1500 BC or so) were definitely Aryan, according to him. "They hadn't yet split into Indians and Iranians," all of them worshipping the

R to L: Prof and Ms Frye with KRCOI honorary secretaries Homai Modi and Capt Hormazdiar Desai

Photo: Yaamin D. Poonegar

blance, according to the professor. But asks Frye in a gesture of capitulation to an overwhelming subject, "What is Zoroastrianism and what is not?" In Tadjikistan, Uzbekistan, Sogdiana and elsewhere there are various calendars and feasts similar to but not identical with those of Sasanian Iran, confirms Frye. Those people are also fond of making idols of clay.

The Achaemenian and Sasanian dynasties originated in Fars where a series of valleys provide easy access but are also easier to defend against external foes, avers Frye. The Achaemenians introduced great changes into the ideology, religion and society of the Medes who

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were just emerging from their nomadic lifestyle where the clan or extended family constituted the unit. Cyrus and Darius substituted this allegiance to the clan with allegiance to a people, an empire — the Persians. And "the Empire continued not because the Achaemenians were strong, edifying characters — they were not — but because of loyalty to the imperial idea. The benefits derived from the Empire kept it together," emphasizes Frye.

Earlier victors like the Assyrians had imposed their own laws, gods and rule over the conquered peoples, so that the conquered people also became Assyrians. Not so the new system of Cyrus based on universal law. The Achaemenians adopted the Aramaic language as their own because it was the most widespread. In fact Darius' inscriptions are couched in Illyrian, Babylonian and old Persian. For the first time there was secular law, rather than religious law, administered by judges who were competent and impartial, informs the historian. It contrasted with the local systems based on religion which, however, were permitted to coexist. "Their postal sys-

tem, imperial weights and measures, currency, etc impressed the Greeks and Romans. The imperial bureaucracy was not under priestly control as in Egypt but secular."

Were the Achaemenians Zoroastrians? "Of course they were but, like the modern Persians, what was important was the building of the Empire. They did not let (their religion) interfere with tolerance. Tolerance was the best politics..."

"Before the advent of Cyrus, Central Asia was territoria incognita," notes Frye. The Illyrian inscription of Darius records the existence of many gods — Marduke, Ahura Mazda, Isis, Osiris — leading Frye to speculate, "Were they something like the Bahais of today? Were all religions the same?" adding, "There was a tolerance for different religions in their places. (But) if the Empire is universal, shouldn't its god be universal?"

"Persepolis became the imperial symbol of the power and glory of the Achaemenian Empire. The farohar symbol above the king was the only (nonsecular) symbol." It was an "unbelievable spectacle," its syncretic imperial style re-

flecting the borrowings from Assyria, Greece and Egypt, states Frye. Gold leaf covered the walls, Frye quotes the Greek historians. From personal experience he advocates a contemplative visit to Persepolis in the early morn or late evening — "it's really quite an experience!" he says.

Under the later Achaemenians, ideas began to change. Frye ascribes the political concept of Iranshahr — the land under the Achaemenian dynasty and "that people who live there (having) to accept the state religion" — to Xerxes.

According to Frye the Achaemenians were "lip service Zoroastrians" with a sorry history of fratricide and the ascendance of political expediency and "the Sasanians were not much better." But, according to him, the wealth of detail in the frescoes of Persepolis is superior to anything in stone in the Near East. Attempts to copy the architectural style of Persepolis in the buildings of Shiraz about 200 years ago during the Qajar period, mark the first glimmer of discernment and appreciation of Persia's ancient past among its own people.

The Sasanian Empire lasted twice as long as the Achaemenian, says Frye. And

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then too law played an important role. But now religion gained in importance, defining the identity of its people. Religious leaders in each community became responsible for the conformity of the citizens and the collection of taxes. The relationship between the individual and the state became a function of the religious authority and Zoroastrianism acquired the stamp of orthodoxy.

Many east Iranians had not been under Achaemenian rule. In subsequent times historic memory of famous heroes changed to folklore and legend. Frye places the *Shah Namah* in the age of the Parthians. The story of Rustom is known as the story of the white dev among the Sogdians, he says. "It indicates that many stories of the *Shah Namah* were in fact epics of the nomadic peoples of eastern Iran and not of the west Iranians who lived in Kerman, Tehran, etc. That is why the Achaemenians are not mentioned in the epic. It does not touch history before the time of Alexander."

Some of these stories are an amalgam of the folklore of different peoples, borrowed and changed, notes Frye. After the loss of the Empire Zoroastrians got into ghettos and tried to maintain traditions. The past was preserved in mythology and folklore in the *Shah Namah*. In Khomeini's Iran the recitation of the *Shah Namah* was stronger than it had been 20 or 30 years earlier.

"The ancient history of the Near East is only preserved in Iran. History was erased by the Christians and the Muslims...It is only because of archeology that we are able to recover the past but there are large gaps. Khorrasan (a province of Iran) is not even touched."

William Lamb's stories of Tamerlane and Genghis Khan initially roused the young Frye's interest in Central Asia. A wartime assignment in Afghanistan provided the means to whet it. Professor Libier, an authority on Ottoman history, was Frye's tutor at Illinois University. Another Middle Eastern scholar, Albert Ormstead, became his boss as coordinator of information in Washington, overseeing the Afghanistan and Middle Eastern desk. Through Princeton, Harvard, and London University's School of Oriental Studies, where he studied under Professor Henning and sparred with fellow student Ms Mary Boyce, the cast of the die favored Frye's obsession with the Near East. On the faculty of Harvard University since 1948, Frye has been a visiting professor at Frankfurt and Hamburg Universities, the director of the Asia Institute of Pahlavi University in Shiraz for 15 years and thereafter trustee until Iran's Islamic revolution of 1978.

His scholarship tempered by the experience and wisdom of 72 years, Frye maintains, "Orthodoxy is deciding what is eternal and worth preserving and separating what needs change and reflection. We have to live in the world as it is, (converging towards) one world. We have to have more tolerance..."

"Conversion? Conversion happens inside. Maybe we need to have more born-again Zoroastrians! If people want to study and desire their children and grandchildren to be Zoroastrians, (you still) won't have a storm of people. They should be accepted only after a long period, over time..."

"The trouble with fanaticism is that fanatics say, 'If the world was like me, what a wonderful world it would be!' But variety is the spice of life. Live and let live..."

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Infamy



for bigamy

Dosabhai Framji Karaka

***Any man who took a second wife
without the prior sanction of the Panchayet
was excommunicated***

Those who jocularly state that Parsi men should be allowed more than one wife in order to counter the charge that there are not enough qualified men around as compared to the women, will be surprised to learn that bigamy was practiced by some Zoroastrians prior to 1818 and even after.

In that year the Bombay Parsi Panchayet passed resolutions forbidding bigamy in the community. Author Dosabhai Framji Karaka in his History of the Parsis including their Manners, Customs, Religion and Present Position writes how the undesirable practice was stopped.

Parsiana publishes the relevant extract.

In 1818 the Bombay Parsi Panchayet passed regulations against bigamy, a crime then on the increase among Parsis. Bigamy has always been strictly prohibited among them. The law against it was rigidly adhered to by the ancient followers of Zoroaster, and by their descendants in India for hundreds of years, but in more recent times some Parsis, either because of their disagreeing with their first wives, or on account of their barenness, began to take to themselves second wives. But it must be said to the credit of the earlier Parsi leaders, and of the Panchayet which adjudged social and religious disputes among the people, that

they always set their face against this evasion of the law. Whenever special cases occurred, and parties sought permission to take an additional wife, the ruling body reserved the right of deciding as to the validity or otherwise of the application, and sanctioned or rejected it accordingly.

This practice lasted for centuries after the Parsis arrived in India; but about the beginning of the nineteenth century it was found that they were gradually infringing the law, and that many innocent and unoffending wives were forsaken by vicious husbands on trivial grounds, and new ones taken with impunity. The evil engaged the attention of the Panchayet, and they resolved by every means in their power to arrest its progress among their countrymen. A public meeting of the Parsi inhabitants of Bombay was therefore convened, as already stated, and rules strictly prohibiting bigamy were adopted by the unanimous decision of the assembly. As these rules are not only interesting in themselves but afford an insight into the special cases under which a person was then allowed to take a second wife while the first was alive, we give a literal translation of them:

"Further, we, the whole Panchayet now assembled, have this day resolved that from and after this day no person who has a wife living shall marry another; and if any person feel compelled

to marry another wife, he shall put his case in writing and represent the same to the above members of the Panchayet; after which the said members will fix a certain time, as they shall think proper, for the investigation of the case and the hearing of the petition of the complainant, which shall be admitted by the complainant and by all the people; and those who will not admit such decision shall be punished as mentioned below by the Panchayet as to them shall appear fit.

"Further, a person requiring divorce with his wife, and then permission to marry a second, shall represent his case to the Panchayet, as above stated; and the Panchayet shall meet and inquire into the merits of the case thus brought to their notice; and in case the bad conduct of the first wife be proved according to the usages of our religion, the Panchayet shall take securities from him for her alimony (food, clothing and lodging) and her jewels, and for funeral expenses on her death, as the Panchayet shall deem proper, and then they shall give him permission to take another wife.

"Further, any person having a trifling dispute with his wife shall not be allowed to marry another. In case he shall marry without the permission of the Panchayet obtained, as mentioned in the preceding paragraph, he shall be put out of our community.

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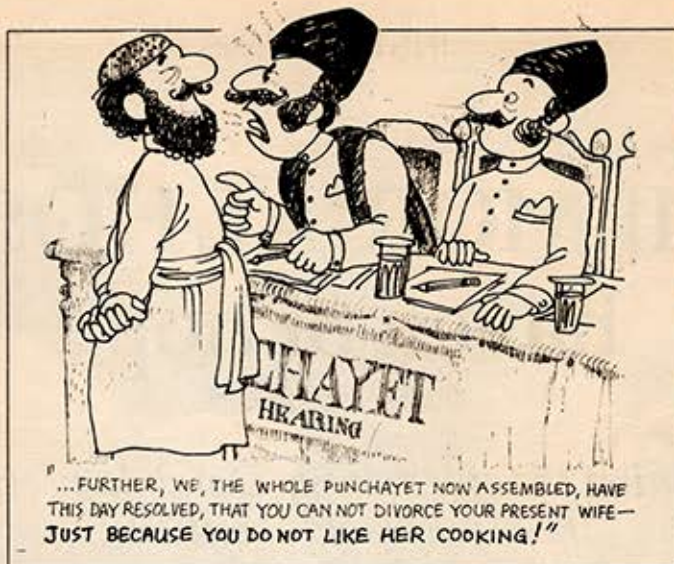
"Further, any person going out of Bombay to take unto himself a wife at Thana, Karanja, or at any town or village, while his first wife is alive, shall be turned out of caste by the Punchayet on his return to Bombay.

"Further, whoever shall marry a second wife by permission of the Punchayet, the marriage ceremony of such person, if he be a Shehenshahi, shall be performed by Dastur Kharshedji Jamshedji himself, or with his order by priests under him; and if he be a Kadmi, by Mulla Firoz, or under his order by priests under him. If any other priests shall perform the ceremony, the Punchayet will not acknowledge it and shall not allow the offending party to enter any fire-temple; nor shall any persons give to priests officiating as above, without permission, donations in funeral and other ceremonies. Any one not acting according to what is above stated shall be further punished as the Punchayet shall think proper.

"Further, any person attending the nuptials of any individual who shall marry a second wife without permission from the Punchayet shall also be punished by the Punchayet as they think proper.

"Further, any person having no children, and his wife not past the age of delivery, shall not marry a second wife, even though he should promise to satisfy his first wife, and obtain her consent to do so. On the other hand, he shall not allow his wife to take unto herself another man for her husband; and the Punchayet shall not acknowledge any writing or agreement for the mutual discharge of marriage vows, and shall not allow him to take unto himself another wife, nor the woman to take unto herself another husband; and all who do so without the permission of the Punchayet shall be turned out of caste, or shall receive such other punishment as the Punchayet shall deem proper.

"Further, any person obtaining permission from the Punchayet to take a second wife (his first wife being alive) shall be subject to the payment of such a sum of money for charity as the Punchayet shall deem him able to afford; and after the payment of such sum the Punchayet may give him permission



to marry a second wife."

The judicious and vigorous proceedings of this Punchayet, which insisted upon implicit obedience to rules and regulations duly accepted by the community, were for some years attended with most salutary results. Its decisions were respected and admired because strict justice was administered to all without fear, favor, or distinction between the rich and the poor. The following is an instance of the manner in which the law was executed by the Punchayet in the case of an erring Parsi who defiantly committed bigamy a few days after the passing of the new caste rules. The delinquent, Jamshedji Beramji Laskari, had recently returned to Bombay from Calcutta with a large fortune, and it may also be explained that he was related to one of the members of the newly-elected Punchayet. Relying on his wealth and connections, he boldly violated the rules of his caste and married a second wife while the first was still alive. The Punchayet thereupon summoned a meeting of the whole "anjuman" or community, which resulted not only in the excommunication of Jamshedji and his newly-married wife, but in his father being compelled to expel him from the paternal home on pain of being himself excommunicated. When Jamshedji saw the Punchayet was determined to make an example of him, he was so annoyed and irritated that he assaulted the priest to whom the duty had been delegated of proclaiming his excommunication. The offender was therefore summoned before a police magistrate to whom Jamshedji expressed his regret for what had occurred and his willingness to abide by such punishment as the Punchayet might award him. He made this submission in

the belief that that body would deal leniently with him. In this he was destined to be disappointed. The Punchayet immediately convened another meeting of the Parsis, at which the following humiliating resolution, which must have been particularly exasperating to Jamshedji, was passed: "That the said Jamshedji Beramji Laskari should take one of his own shoes in his hand, and with it strike himself five times on his face, in the presence of the community which would be assembled for

the purpose of witnessing the punishment; and further, with a halter round his neck, ask the pardon of the priest whom he had assaulted, and of the Punchayet which he had insulted, and recoup to the Punchayet the cost which it had incurred in engaging counsel for prosecuting the case against him."

At a meeting of the community held in Dadiseth's fire-temple on June 16, 1818, and at which a large number of Parsis were assembled, Jamshedji was made to carry out the requirements of the resolution, which must have been felt as particularly degrading by a man of his temperament. His penalty did not stop here. Further humiliation was in store for him, and in expiation of the crime of bigamy itself he was ordered, after undergoing certain ceremonies, to appear before the Punchayet with a halter round his neck to solicit pardon for his transgression, to deliver up to his first wife all her jewels and property, and to deposit with the Punchayet a sum of two thousand rupees for her maintenance. It was only after complying with all these conditions that he was readmitted into the community.

The rigor and promptitude with which this first breach of the regulations of the Punchayet was punished inspired awe and terror among those who might otherwise have as readily committed the offence themselves, and followed the example of Jamshedji in taking a second wife during the lifetime of the first.

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

TATA MEMORIAL HOSPITAL

haven of hope

Noshir Dadrawala

*Enshrining the spirit of Sir Dorab Jamsetji Tata,
the 50-year-old institution
expands its fight against cancer*

Cancer for me was not a remote disease whose mysteries were periodically unravelled in brightly-worded newspaper reports. Two decades ago, in the outpatient department (OPD) of the Tata Memorial Hospital (TMH) brimming with patients, Dr J. C. Paymaster had announced my mother had cancer. Seventeen years later I had sat in the same OPD as one more patient, with doctors probing into my medical history and asking me dozens of questions. Restored to health and strength under the advice of Dr Praful Desai, director of the TMH, I was once again at the renowned cancer institute, researching for an article on the occasion of its golden jubilee.

Although there are quite a few cancer hospitals in India today, the Tata Memorial — one of the largest comprehensive cancer centers in the world — takes the

brunt of about one-third of the total number of cancer patients treated in India. "Its 370 beds make it the largest in Asia and the Middle East. Its Cancer Research Institute is also the largest institute for basic research in cancer in this part of the world," Desai furnishes the facts.

An important golden jubilee project of the TMH, according to Desai, is to have a new OPD complex in a new building. "Most of the diagnosis and treatment procedures will be done in the outpatient department, thus drastically reducing the duration of hospitalization," avers Desai.

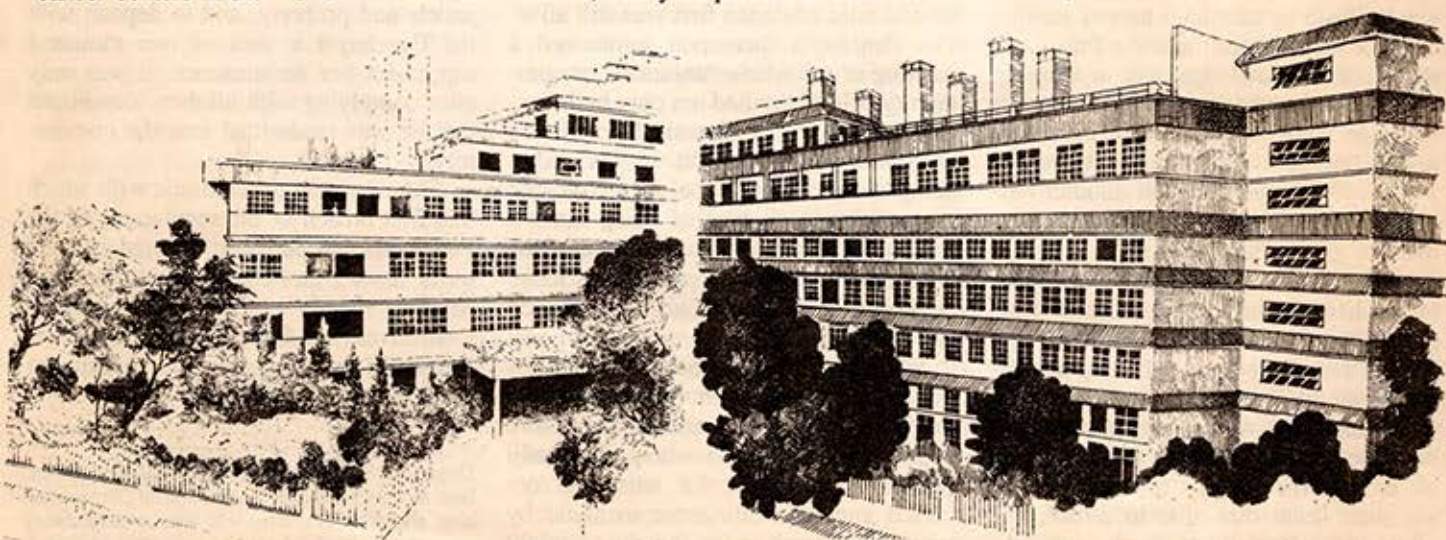
"The outpatient department is the nerve center of all clinical activities in the Hospital," mentions Desai, quoting some telling figures: of the 25,000 patients who visit the clinics of the TMH annually, nearly 55 percent or 15,000 patients have cancer; nearly 60 percent of them receive

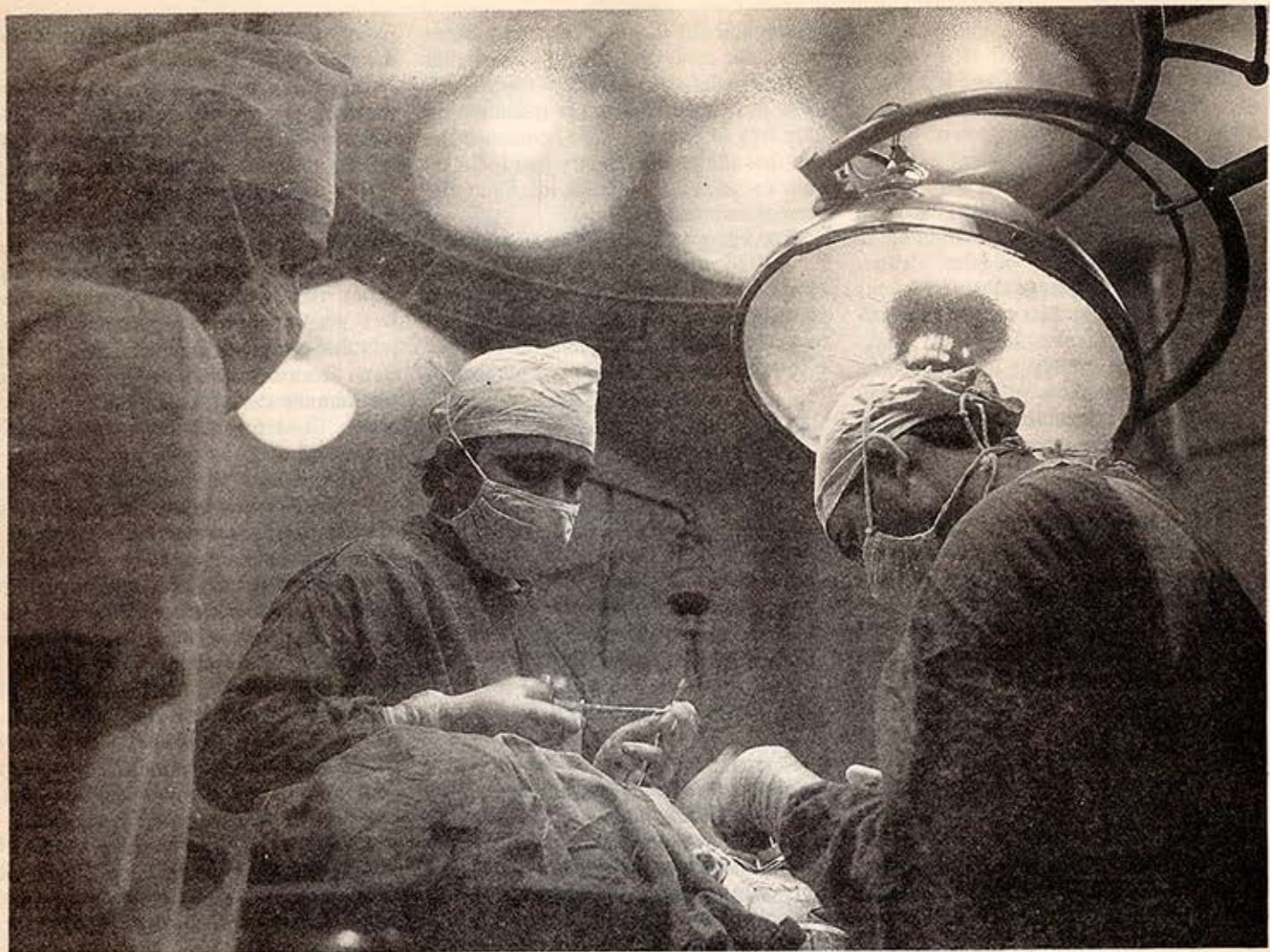
primary care at the hospital; others come for consultation and return to their base; 70 percent are treated free of cost." Despite a small expansion during 1976-77 the 1941-built facility is overcrowded.

Involved earlier with the planning and development of the Hospital, Dr D. J. Jussawalla who retired as director of the Tata Memorial Centre (in 1966 the Tata Memorial Hospital and the Indian Cancer Research Centre fused into the Tata Memorial Centre) in 1980, sees the proposal for a new center in New Bombay as a step in the right direction. To be called the "Advanced Centre for Treatment, Research and Education in Cancer," it will be deemed as a university where further

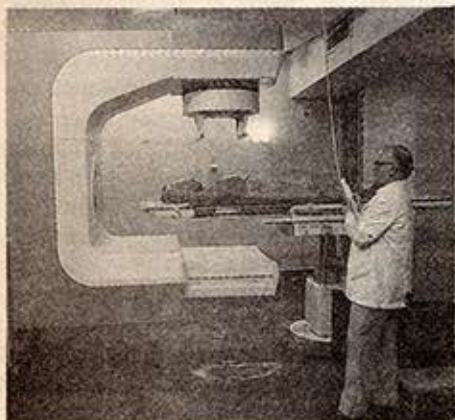
Illustration of the Tata Memorial Hospital

Courtesy: Mario Miranda, *The Heartbeat of a Trust*





*Surgical removal of a tumor
at the Tata Memorial Hospital.*



*Radiation therapy widely used
to treat cancer (above).*

*The medical team attending to a child
patient at the Tata Memorial Hospital
(right).*



studies. in cancer can be undertaken.

The Hospital is viewed as a catalyst rather than as a magnet. There is a growing emphasis on training doctors from other regions in every aspect of cancer treatment. "At any given time," says Desai, "there are 15 to 20 medical professionals, scientists and technicians from various parts of the country training in different departments of the Centre. Roughly, 70-80 postgraduate students from the Centre do their master's or doctorate with the Bombay University, making it a large postgraduate training center. Whenever assistance is required anywhere in India to establish a cancer hospital or a cancer wing in a general hospital, the Tata Memorial makes its knowhow available."

"As many as 20 senior surgeons and 50 young trainees at different levels utilize the 11 modern operating rooms every day of the week, Monday through Saturday," observes Dr M. R. Kamat, a senior surgeon at the Tata Hospital. "Nine thousand major operations and 14,000 minor operations are performed per year," he continued. A very active and modern department of anesthesiology supports this busy department of surgery. Besides expert professionals, the department has a state of the art critical care unit, an emergency laboratory for analysis of blood gases and blood chemistry, a pulmonary function laboratory and a respiratory therapy unit.

Nearly 60,000 X ray diagnoses are carried out by the department of radio-diagnosis every year. The department has a number of high-performance X ray machines with facilities for image intensification, TV monitors and fluoroscopy arrangement, CT scan and ultra sound routinely used for accurate detection of early cancer and the extent of its spread. Early detection of the disease is very important and, according to Jussawalla, "Cancer check-ups provide the possibility of preventing 80 percent of all cancers that may arise if neglected."

"Radiation therapy," according to Dr (Ms) K. A. Dinshaw, head of the department of radiation oncology, "is a major form of cancer treatment for nearly 60 percent of all patients." Dinshaw who has been connected with the Hospital for the past 17 years feels the TMH's is the most overworked radiation oncology department in the world. The Sloane Kettering Memorial Hospital in New York treats 200 patients a day and feels it is overloaded. Here at TMH we cope with more

than double the number," she said. "Besides," she continued, "almost 80 percent of those who take radiation therapy receive this expensive form of treatment totally free of charge." She bemoaned the fact that although a country like India requires at least 700 radiation machines, the present number is just 160.

According to TMH superintendent Dr R. S. Rao who has been with the Tata Hospital for nearly three decades, the Hospital presently operates on a budget of Rs 26.42 crores as against a budget of just 0.05 crores in 1941. The number of

*The chances of
being cured
of cancer
are often better
than surviving
heart disease*

beds too have increased from 80 in 1941 to 170 in 1962 and 370 at the moment. The Hospital spends nearly 48.45 percent of its resources on patient care, 21.80 percent on operational requirements, 13.68 percent on basic research.

What is cancer?

Put simply, cancer is an abnormal, unrestrained new growth in cells and tissues that produce deleterious, often fatal, effects. If their growth is not checked, these cells infiltrate and destroy contiguous tissues, often transporting the cancerous cells to other parts of the body where they grow as colonies called metastases.

Early Egyptians (3,000-2,500 BC) made references to "tumors and ulcers of the breast" with an added warning that "bulging tumors" have no cure. Mummies from the Gizeh Pyramids were found to have cancer of the bone. In the *Upanishads*, the fountainhead of Indian philosophy, cancer has been referred to as "urphada."

Dr Manik Chitnis who heads the cellular chemotherapy unit of the Cancer Research Institute informed us that human beings alone are not prone to cancer. Tumors can develop in higher animals and plant species too. Certain fish in that most romantic of rivers, the Nile, have been known to develop lymphosarcoma.

Even chicken and mice develop the dreaded disease.

"Research is throwing up pointers to the likely factors that may set the complex process of uncontrolled malignant cell growth into motion," avers Desai. "One of the most promising lines of research involves oncogenes. Each cell contains 30,000 to 50,000 genes... Oncogenes are a part of the normal growth controlling genes. When these specific genes somehow get 'turned on' they produce a protein that causes the cell to begin growing in an abnormal fashion." It is only when the immune system fails that the cells go awry. It is for science to identify the 'switching on' factor.

"Our tumors are a reflection of our life-styles," states Rao. "Nearly a third of cancers are preventable, if we are willing to change our habits."

The inclusion of 'life-style' in the list of causes is important. Social and cultural habits vary widely and directly influence the distribution of the disease. In Parsis, for instance, rates of cancers of the pancreas, prostate and bladder are relatively high (consumption of alcohol and a western dietary pattern are likely causes for these cancers). Hindu men, whose addiction to *paan* (betel) and tobacco is common, suffer from cancer of the oesophagus (food pipe), while in Muslim men cancer takes its toll on the lungs, oesophagus, tongue and hypopharynx areas. Christian males who smoke and drink are known to contract cancers of the stomach and lungs. Alcohol and tobacco are therefore definitive causes for the onset of cancer.

Various factors are implicated in the causes of female cancers in different religious groups. The low rate of cervical cancer in Muslim women, as compared to that in Hindu women, has been attributed to the religious practice of circumcision in the Muslim males. An equally low rate of cervical cancer in Christian females (as compared to Hindus) is a result of late marriages. The Parsis — who are educated, westernized, belong to a higher socioeconomic strata and marry at a late age — have the lowest rate of cervical cancer. They are, however, prone to cancers of the breast, body of the uterus and the ovaries mainly because of late marriages. Conversely Hindu women who marry early, have several children and live in conditions of poor hygiene, commonly suffer from cervical cancer. Because of their *paan* and tobacco habits, they are also susceptible to

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cancers of the buccal cavity, pharynx, stomach and oesophagus, which are not so common in Parsi women.

"The high evidence of breast cancer among Parsi women," said Jussawalla, "is mainly due to late marriages and the late first child. The first child at the age of 20 greatly reduces the risk of breast cancer."

Homeopaths believe when a person's vitality or internal resistance gets lowered as a result of extraneous factors, disease results. Cancer, according to eminent homeopath Dr Farokh J. Master, "is not a local ailment but a manifestation of a general or systemic disease. Hence treatment must cater not only to the affected part but to the patient as a whole."

Progressive treatment

"We have come a long way from where we started," said Dr Gopal, a doctor of medical oncology at the TMH. "Leukemias and other cancers we couldn't cure in the past are well within our comprehension today. Genetic engineering and monoclonal antibodies also show great promise. In the current situation, we can say that there is reasonable amount of hope," he notes optimistically.

At the Cancer Research Institute located within the precincts of the Hospital complex, 10 divisions specialize in studying different aspects of cancer. The main thrust of the research is on prevention.

"Alleviating cancer pains," observed Dr L. J. De Souza, a brilliant surgeon and pioneer of the hospice (home for the terminally ill) movement in India, "is vital for the patient. The department of anesthesiology incorporates an active Pain Clinic with modern facilities and expertise to relieve acute and chronic pain, not only through oral medications, but also by nerve blocks and epidural and sub-arachnoid (within the thin membrane of the brain or spinal cord) injections."

Explaining the rapid progress in controlling the scourge, De Souza continued, "Today, with sophisticated instrumentation, we are able to give high doses of radiation therapy without burning normal tissues. In the past, surgery was the only answer. Now with chemotherapy and brachytherapy, we are able to preserve the organs. The emphasis is on limb and organ conservation while controlling the disease."

"Marrow transplantation will soon be performed routinely at our Hospital," says Dr S. H. Advani, chief of the division of

medical oncology. "The expert team of medical oncologists at the Hospital had performed the first bone marrow transplantation in India (1983) on a young girl of 10 years to cure her from leukemia which was potentially lethal." He also imputes a major advance in the fight against cancer to modern drugs.

Dr (Ms) Z. S. Bharucha connected with the blood bank at the Tata Hospital, said, "Over 10,000 units of blood are supplied annually, ensuring safety of donors and recipients." The department also has the facility to fractionate blood into different components for better preservation and optimum usage. Amongst other activities are an AIDS surveillance center and a transfusion medicine training center.

"Pathology," according to Dr (Ms) R. F. Chinoy, "is the basis of cancer diagnosis and treatment. Each year, the department reports on over 50,000 tissue biopsies and fine needle aspiration smears." Prompted by a cascading series of research developments, Desai notes, "Today cancer is recognized as just another serious disease confronting modern society — one that is sometimes cured, sometimes chronic and sometimes fatal." Although a magic medicinal cure isn't in sight, cancer, if diagnosed and treated at stage one — when the tumor is localized to the organ or original site — the cure rate is between 75 to 95 percent. The chances dwindle (between five to 20 percent) if detected at stage four when the cancer spreads.

Advisees Desai: "When the specialist confirms the presence of cancer, there should be no cause for panic and confusion." The chances of being cured of cancer are often better than those of surviving heart disease — nearly half of those who suffer acute coronary attacks die immediately or within 30 days.

Homeopathy, according to Master, can be of some use in every aspect of cancer therapy. After surgery, the chances of a cancerous lump growing back again either in the same place or in some other place can be minimized by proper constitutional homeopathic treatment. There are also homeopathic drugs to counter the side effects of radiation and chemotherapy. "More people die from the toxic effect of chemotherapy and radiation than from cancer," said an eminent homeopath who did not wish to disclose his identity. Master, however, is disillusioned by the scant respect doctors at the Tata Hospital have for homeopathy

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and those who practice this system of medicine. "If only a very small part of the millions of currency notes being spent on cancer all over the world were to be utilized for homeopathic research we could come close to man's triumph over this disease," he said with dismay.

Desai's answer was simple, "Be it ayurveda or homeopathy, we need to have scientifically documented proof about the efficacy of a system in fighting a given disease."

Patient reactions

R. M. Lala, author of several books documenting the progressive Tata spirit, has himself been battling the malignant cells with chemotherapy for the past two years, sans surgery or radiation. He feels that the treatment prescribed at the TMH is on par with that in more advanced countries like the USA and UK. There is however variance in terms of frequency and dosage. "My personal opinion," said a young Glen Almeida whom we found patiently awaiting his turn in the OPD "is that doctors at the Tata Memorial tend to over-drug you with chemotherapy."

A young Ms Geeta Rao, who had earlier been treated at the TMH for lymphob-

lastic leukemia and was just beginning to pick up the threads of normal living, was all praise for Advani and the division of medical oncology. "But for a balanced treatment using a combination of chemo-

"If you expect human feelings in this place, you are sadly mistaken"

therapy and radiation I would have been finished by now. I found the doctors and nurses both sensitive and alert."

Advani, himself a paraplegic, requires a wheelchair to go about his business. Along with his dedicated team of doctors, he treats some 250 patients daily. "Dr Advani," said an admiring patient, "is a true profile of courage and a source of inspiration to millions. Setting aside his personal pain, he is a man who has dedicated his life to bringing relief

to thousands of cancer patients."

There are, however, a large number of patients who liken the portals of the Hospital to the gateway of death. "If you expect human feelings in this place," said a frustrated parent of a 12-year-old child suffering from leukemia, "you are sadly mistaken. In almost every department for the past two weeks I had to endure rank indifference. The man-hours lost at the Hospital defy calculation. What can be achieved by commonsense is frustrated by the application of needless procedures. Movement from one department to another, from one test to another, the intervening lunch hours and weekend holidays lead to a colossal waste of time." This, despite the TMH's computer department providing facility for integrated patient information, handling hospital registration, investigations, treatment and follow-up.

The doctors who normally treat patients are highly qualified but their availability at the Hospital is both limited and uncertain. Most top surgeons, for instance, have just four hours for outpatient consultancy and this is grossly inadequate for the teeming number of patients. The surgeon might be available on, say Wed-

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nesday and Friday for two hours each day. If, however, anything happens to the patient in the meanwhile, he can invoke only divine favor. Other doctors at the Hospital will not touch patients under the care of a fellow doctor.

"The inner strength patients develop once they reach our doorstep is incredible," acknowledges Dinshaw. "The Hospital administration may have its own problems, but a hopelessly sick person — a cancer patient, in particular — would like the facilities to be better and the treatment a little more humane," concluded the father of the little boy with leukemia, before taking him on a wheelchair to the department of medical oncology.

Resourceful beginnings

"When Lady Meherbai Tata died of leukemia," writes Lala in *The Heartbeat of a Trust*, "Sir Dorab, who always had an interest in the fight against disease, was stirred to do something about the treatment of cancer... Details were being worked out when Sir Dorab died in June 1932. In 1933, Sir Dorab's secretary, N. M. Muzumdar, made a fervent appeal to the trustees to do 'something out of the ordinary which the average run of philanthropy does not touch or cannot reach; something with a future' as a memorial to Sir Dorab."

Sir Nowroji Saklatwala, a trustee of the Sir Dorabji Tata Trust expressed his eagerness to launch on a comprehensive cancer institute. In this he was supported by J. R. D. Tata.

"The trustees," according to Lala, "had on their hands a hospital project of dimensions much larger than any private organization in India had till then taken on entirely on its own; it had no precedent from the Suez to the Sea of Japan; and the field was highly specialized. The trustees were mainly men of industry, men who knew the nuts and bolts of steel manufacture but nothing about radium, X rays or cancer. There were many pulls and pressures on them as they screened every little detail from the nurses' call system to air-conditioning equipment.

"It was in these circumstances," continues Lala, "that Dr Clifford Manshardt... was requested to undertake the duties of director of the Trust, primarily to help in the execution of the cancer hospital project. Anticipating the needs of the project, he advised that the Trust's foreign scholarships should, for some time, be restricted to scholars who were going abroad to train for the cancer hospital —

surgeons, radiologists, pathologists, dietitians and nurses. Years later Manshardt was to record:

"Only those who were associated with the hospital project during the years of its planning will ever know the amount of hard work that went into the making of the Tata Memorial Hospital. Only those who shared in the ups and downs, the disappointments and successes, can realize the human anguish that went into the institution. As a layman, I had been inclined to idealize the medical profession, but long before my education in medical politics had been completed, I realized that doctors engage in the same kind of feuding that is found in less exalted professions. It is true that American professional consultants, without adequate knowledge of Indian conditions, did make errors of judgement in respect to organizational details of the Hospital, but strong nationalistic feelings on the part of a group of Bombay doctors, who had considerable influence with the trustees, did not make the task of arriving at a working mean any easier. An undertaking of the magnitude of the Tata Memorial Hospital would have been difficult in any country, but to rear an institution of this kind, in the face of the limitations under which we were working in Bombay, required imagination, energy, patience, pertinacity and obstinacy."

The Hospital was opened on March 1, 1941 by the Governor of Bombay, Sir Roger Lumley. The magnificent seven-storeyed structure had taken exactly four years to complete. The site at Parel, formerly marshy and waterlogged, had to be drained before excavation. "The choicest material was used in its construction, the best possible equipment had been procured from round the world, though it was wartime... The architectural features of the Hospital were designed, and the construction was supervised, by the firm of Gregson, Batley and King," informs Lala. Prof Regaud of the Curie Institute and Dr James Ewing of the New York Memorial Hospital were the two experts who played a great role in advising the Hospital.

"The name of Tata is known throughout the world as a house of great industrialists and as a family of great philanthropists; but of all of the philanthropic projects connected with that name, none would attain a greater importance, or reflect greater credit on its founders, than the Tata Memorial Hospital for cancer," said the Governor. "This Hospital is the first large contribution of India to the in-



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ternational fight against cancer."

The two top surgeons when the Hospital opened were Dr John Poole and Dr Roy Cohn. "Nine months after the Hospital was opened," observed Lala in *The Heartbeat*, "The US entered the war against Japan in December 1941 and both surgeons were called back to the US Armed Forces. Dr Cohn left a year after the Hospital started. Poole continued for two more years. The Dorab Tata Trust had in the meanwhile ensured the training of four young Indian doctors who, within three years of the opening of the Hospital, were in total charge of the surgical side: Dr J. C. Paymaster, Dr E. J. Borges, Dr D. R. Meher-Homji and Dr D. J. Jussawalla. The department of pathology was headed by Dr V. R. Khanolkar and of radiology by Dr K. P. Mody. Among the senior administrators was Col Sir Jamshed Duggan. With very few exceptions, like the two top surgeons, the staff of the Hospital from the start was entirely Indian. Three years later it was totally Indian."

Lauding the commitment of Paymaster, Borges, Meher-Homji and Jussawalla, Lala says, "It is a measure of the dedication of these four surgeons that they devoted the rest of their working careers to the Tata Memorial Hospital, for which purpose they had been trained. They spurned many a lucrative opportunity to work abroad."

From 1941 to 1948, the Sir Dorabji Tata Trust ran the Hospital entirely on its own. In 1949, the Bombay government sanctioned an annual donation of one lakh rupees. Seventy-five percent of the beds were free and the Trust had poured into this Hospital one crore rupees by 1957, the highest contribution to a single project by the Sir Dorabji Tata Trust. Said Jussawalla, "had the Sir Dorabji Tata Trust not started the cancer hospital it would have been another 15 years or more before the government could have undertaken a project of this dimension."

"By 1957, the Trust realized that the pressures on the Hospital were enormous. The trustees had to choose between holding down its growth or seeking assistance for expansion. This, they felt, could come on an adequate scale only from the government and in May 1957 the Hospital was handed over to the nation," writes Lala. Though the Union Ministry of Health took charge it was unable to provide the means needed for its sustained growth. Even the routine functioning of the Hospital fell prey to financial constraints and bureaucratic delays.

When Dr Homi Bhabha intervened, the task of running the Hospital was entrusted to the Indian Atomic Energy Department, emulating the US Atomic Energy Commission's experience in running a number of cancer research hospitals in the USA. "This decision," according to Lala, "saved the Hospital. On its board, since 1963, came outstanding men like Bhabha, and, later, successive chairmen of the Atomic Energy Commission, Dr Vikram Sarabhai and Dr Homi Sethna. They brought to the Hospital not only their experience and the prestige of their office, but also the considerable resources that were available to the Atomic Energy Commission."

Since the formation of the Tata Memorial Centre, its governing council has been headed by the chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission. With three representatives on the council, the Dorab Tata Trust continues to steer the Centre.

Jussawalla, 76, spoke endlessly about modern advances in the diagnosis and treatment of cancer but tactfully evaded any comment on the Hospital. After obtaining his master's degree in surgery in 1941 he had been appointed resident surgical registrar at the Tata Memorial in the same year. In 1944 he was selected as assistant surgeon and on completing the FRCS, was elevated to the post of sur-

geon in 1948. He founded the Indian Cancer Society in 1951 and three years later was elected founder member of the International Cancer Central Commission. He became a director of the Tata Hospital in 1972.

Attempts to interview Paymaster and Meher-Homji also met with failure. Both politely but firmly expressed their inability to comment, even over the telephone.

Keeping pace with cancer research

"The explosion of new knowledge in the field of cancer requires an up-to-date library," says Jussawalla, "and at the TMH nearly 15,000 books and journals keep the staff and students abreast of modern developments around the world. Every month nearly 150 journals arrive at our desk with new information about cancer." A computer data search allows the retrieval of any reference within minutes. The library, according to Jussawalla, is the nerve center of all academic activities.

Time after time has been dedicated to the science of oncology, and yet man is as close to the knowledge of a cancer cure as he was four decades ago. "That magic cure isn't forthcoming. To find the reason for cancer would be the key to the whole life process," says Desai. "Nature will not give away its secrets so easily."

The author's health battle

It was October 1987. I had just turned 26 and taken up employment with the Centre of Advancement of Philanthropy. Life seemed secure and happy with a devoted wife and a four-year-old son. The appearance of a dark, ominous cloud was soon to shatter the illusion of joy.

It started with my developing an innocuous cough which was accompanied by bouts of vertigo and mild fever. For the next three months or so I sought treatment for these apparently harmless symptoms which I learned later were manifestations of something deeper and more serious. By March 1988 I had lost 20 kgs of weight. I was put through a battery of tests, X rays, hormone studies, CT Scan and the usual blood and urine tests. They re-

vealed that I had cancer and immediate surgery was considered necessary. My reaction to the news was one of total disbelief: how could cancer afflict someone so young? I was a health freak, exercised regularly, never smoked...

The tumor within me had to be surgically removed with a painful slit in my abdomen. What followed was an aggressive 90-day chemotherapeutic treatment. Those were painful days I spent at TMH. But at the end of three months, the doctors were able to induce complete remission. (Complete remission means finding no evidence in laboratory tests that the patient has, or has ever had, cancer.) Outside the Hospital gates I kicked my scooter to life, thinking the Big C (Cancer) seems to have lost much of its sting.

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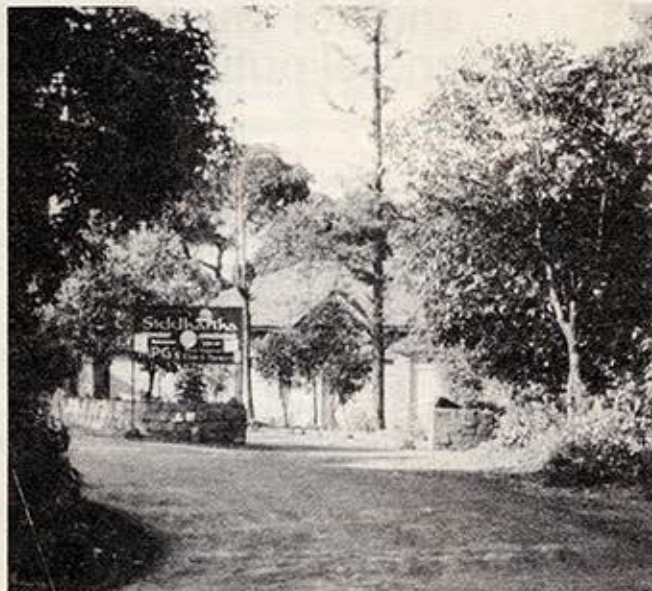


Bombay industrialist Pranlal Bhogilal strives to protect the land of the Mahabaleshwar Parsi Gymkhana from misappropriation

Hotel Siddhartha, says a large signboard as you enter the driveway of the Mahabaleshwar Parsi Gymkhana (MPG). Inside the rooms are plush with color TVs, intercoms and other amenities. Once a social watering hole, with membership exclusively for Parsis, the MPG has undergone a radical metamorphosis. Now it functions largely as a hotel for its cosmopolitan members and their guests for whom it also organizes disco *dandias* every Saturday and Sunday on its premises. But it is the food served here that reflects the transformation — pure vegetarian.

The story of the MPG is one of community indifference on one hand and intrigue on the other. Once a lively social gathering place for members of the community on holiday at the hill station, the prime four-hectare property of the MPG was largely neglected a few years after India won its independence in 1947. Then in 1972, the trustees amended the membership laws and permitted non-Parsis to become guest members in an effort to revive interest in the Gymkhana.

The rejuvenation of interest in the MPG took place in the late 1970s. In 1978 a circular was sent to all members in which the managing committee lamented over the past neglect and proposed a scheme to construct buildings on the property "so as to procure for the Gymkhana a good return by allotment of said flats to the members or (those) who should like to become members of the Gymkhana of any community on such terms and conditions as may be agreed by and between the trustees and the prospective members of the premises to be constructed." Accompanying the proposal was another circular seeking the members' consent which would em-



Fencing in the land?

Gustasp Irani

power the trustees to proceed with the legal, technical and other aspects of the scheme.

Pranlal Bhogilal, noted industrialist and life member of the MPG however, protested. He wrote to the chairman of the Gymkhana and asked to be provided with the minutes of meetings, the resolutions passed and other documents relating to the scheme. He also instructed his lawyers Matubhai Jamietram and Madan to write to the authorities in Mahabaleshwar, Satara and Wai not to sanction the plans to develop the Gymkhana property as it was "beyond their (the MPG trustees') powers and authorities and as such illegal and bad in law." Further he filed a case at the Bombay City Civil Court and

obtained a commitment from the trustees to give 15 days' notice to all members before any meeting of the MPG.

According to Bhogilal, the functioning of the MPG managing committee was most irregular. For years no notices were sent to members, no annual general meetings held, no accounts submitted and the proposed housing scheme was sprung upon the members without taking them into confidence.

By 1979 the letterhead of the MPG had changed. Under the masthead read: "Open to all communities" and the office address was given as the address of Shantilal N. Shah, a well-known Bombay based builder and real estate developer.

Meanwhile, the lease on the MPG land, as also on most other land in Mahabaleshwar, had expired in 1977. The lease was renewed in 1983 subject to certain conditions that restricted construction on the property to only 12 percent of the total land and a FSI of 0.15. Furthermore membership was to be kept open to the public, "irrespective of caste, creed or religion."

Concerned by the developments in the MPG and on the urgings of Bhogilal, a number of prominent Parsis, including people who had bungalows in the hill station, wrote to the Gymkhana seeking membership, but in vain. *Parsiana* spoke to two prominent Parsis who confirmed that they got no response to their applications. "Even eminent persons like (industrialist) S. P. Godrej and others have not been able to get membership forms on some pretext or the other," says Bhogilal. According to him, the Gymkhana is controlled by a small cote-

At the entrance of the Mahabaleshwar Parsi Gymkhana's prime property

rie of persons, some of whom were builders and architects from Bombay, who do not want to lose control over the Gymkhana.

After the renewal of the lease in 1983 the managing committee devised a new scheme to build cottages on the land and sell them to members of the Gymkhana. The matter was brought to the attention of Jamsheed Kanga, secretary of the Maharashtra Public Services Commission and trustee of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet. The then secretary of the revenue department, Kanga made inquiries with the concerned authorities. "I found that an application was made by which the Gymkhana proposed to construct buildings for its members. It was really a means of transferring Gymkhana land to private individuals who were members of the club," says Kanga who wrote to the authorities to prevent such transfers from taking place.

Kanga sees the building scheme of the MPG as a violation of government trust. The government, he points out, renewed the lease of the land on which the Gymkhana stands for the use of the gen-

eral public; no longer is it only for the Parsis, nor is it to be used to build houses for a few members. "From the government's point of view the land was given

Every club is accountable to its own members and not the general public

on trust and it should not be misused for the benefit of a few."

The MPG managing committee members remain largely non-committal. When contacted at his farm in Panchgani, the acting president of the MPG Minoo Sethna informed us that the trustee and managing committee of the MPG had advised him to tell us to direct all our inquiries to Jal Heerjibhedini, former editor of *Kaiser-E-Hind* and president of the

MPG. According to Sethna, every club has a right to select its own members and it is to these members that they are accountable and not the general public as long as they do not violate the laws of the land or the constitution of the club.

Heerjibhedini, when contacted over the phone, stated that he was still the president of the MPG but because of a fracture he had suffered he was not in touch with the MPG's activities and thereby unable to discuss the matter further. As a result of the MPG managing committee's tight-lipped response, no one seems to know for certain what plans they have for the Gymkhana apart from the fact that the property is currently used as a premise for Hotel Siddhartha.

And so the MPG recedes into the footnotes of Parsi history, a victim of the community's indifference. As Kanga observes: "As for the Parsis, they do not seem to be interested in the Gymkhana." Bhogilal, however, sums it up when he laments: "What's wrong with the community? Can't you all even look after what your *baap-dadas* (forefathers) left for you?"



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Outside, the storefront sign boldly reads in Gujarati: "N. D. Mulla and Sons." Large, brown, wooden cabinets with glass enclosures line the walls. All are filled with cloth, garments, home slippers, prayer caps, bed sheets and religious artifacts. Hanging on the walls are large photographs of Zarathushtra, the store's founder Nuserwanji Mulla and his wife Jerbai.

Darabshaw Mulla is one of the last dagli makers left in Bombay. "What do you want to know?" he says impatiently from behind the sandalwood counter where he is seated with a cat on his lap. We had been warned about the 83-year-old Mulla: about his reprimanding children for biting their nails, about not tolerating loiterers, about having no patience with people who do not know what they want.

"There are one or two others who make them (daglis) but I am the last Parsi who makes them," states Mulla. "There's not much demand for it now. People don't wear daglis anymore, they wear suits now." He pauses, jutting his lips out in an exaggerated pucker, then scrunching them back in again.

Mulla appeared to show no regret in the demise of dagli makers and the dwindling interest in daglis themselves. Had there ever been a 'Golden Age' in dagli sales, we asked: a time when he was not surprised if someone came to the store and asked for a dagli; a time when the sales of daglis alone could sustain him financially. But he informed us that daglis have always been a side business ever since he started.

"It's not a very paying concern. It never has been. The orthodox dress is disappearing. On an average I sell approximately 15 daglis per month. Kustis and sandalwood are the main sellers. We are one of the largest suppliers of sandalwood in the area."

"People don't wear daglis anymore"

Farhad Desai



Mullas: tailoring to community needs

"Making a dagli is very simple," he says nonchalantly. "You select the cloth. We take the measurements, cut it and

stitch it." When asked about his choice of material his answer is equally ambiguous. "There are only two or three types of cloth (for making daglis) — terrycot, terelene and cotton. I don't recommend any one over the other. They are all good. Whatever the customer wants, I give him."

"When I first started, I had Gujarati tailors working for me. But eventually I learned from them and started taking orders myself. Now I have a Christian tailor to do the stitching for me."

"My father started this business 99 years ago. He only sold cloth and ready-made garments, like sudrehs. Until 1932 I worked in an office as an auditor. When I joined my father's business, I included sandalwood with the other items we sold. Now my wife Dolet and son Noshir work with me as partners."

As more and more people enter the store, asking for Mulla's assistance, the interview seems to be over. He never really seemed to understand why it was occurring in the first place. His busy schedule is partly because of the store being located directly next door to the H. B. Wadia Atash Bahram. In fact, the Mullas have provided an "express counter" facing the temple from where many people buy sandalwood before going in to pray. There are a few other fire-temples nearby and Parsi Dairy Farm is also just across the street. The area around his shop (Dhobitalao) used to be more of a Parsi locality, bringing in a constant stream of visitors. However, many Parsis moved away to colonies in the suburbs, allowing the neighborhood to become more cosmopolitan.

In spite of all the changes he has seen over the years, Mulla has a great deal of confidence in his business, and in the entire Parsi community living on for years to come. Wearing daglis or in a new guise?

The last of the Parsi dagli makers, Darabshaw Mulla is witness to the growing disenchantment with this once popular mode of dress



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In Venezuela, DASTURCO provided design/engineering services for SIDOR-IV steel plant expansion. In Malaysia, DASTURCO was Project Consultant for the Trengganu DR/EAF steel plant and also provided technical services for the stabilization of steelmelt shop performance.

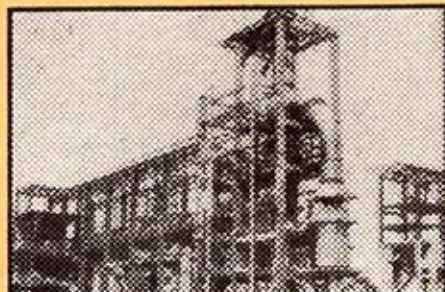
DASTURCO's other recent international assignments include: Master Plan for the development of the steel sector in Egypt upto 2000 A.D.; sectoral study for the Egyptian aluminium industry; feasibility study for carbon and graphite electrodes project in Arab countries, etc.



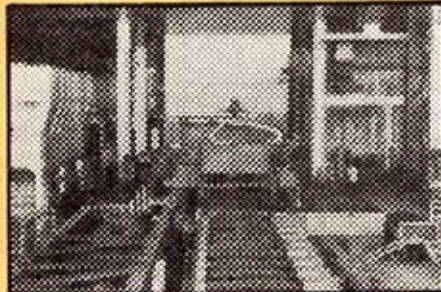
Visakhapatnam Steel Project: Thermal power plant and blower house with three 60 MW turbo-generator units



Misurata Steel Complex, Libya: DR plant



Sponge Iron Plant, Paloncha: DR unit with waste gas cleaning facility



Alloy Steels Plant, Durgapur—Modernisation Stage II: Continuous slab/bloom caster under installation



Salem Steel Plant: Annealing and pickling lines for stainless steel strip



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Operation theater

The annual production of the Parsi Medical Amateurs is a popular event in the community

Gustasp Irani



*Clockwise from above:
Dilnavaz Gamadia, Thrity Nalladaru and
Bomi Pardiwalla in Manchoo Macbeth;
a bemedalled Jimmy Sidhva hand in
hand with T. Nalladaru, Gamadia and
Marzban Nalladaru in Asla Fasila;
Homi Dordi, Shirin Irani-Mirza,
Rustom Patel, Nalladaru and Sidhva
in Manchoo Macbeth*



The next time you need an X-ray taken would you go to a Parsi who thinks he is Macbeth? Or have your cataract removed by an over-grown boy? Or your chest pains checked out by a witch? Or your tooth filled by another witch, and a sexy one at that with mini skirts and halter neck blouses? Or in general entrust your health to a motley collection of characters afflicted by a variety of quirks? If you do, you are probably in the very best medical hands in the city of Bombay. This host of reputed Parsi doctors have been entertaining audiences over the last 20 years with farcical plays that spoof the Parsi community. The amounts raised at these shows go towards different charities.

Let's sample the humor they serve. A noted gynecologist and car rally driver checks up a patient and car, both Padminis, and gets their reports mixed up. As a result, the husband going through his wife's medical report is taken aback when he is informed that she has remarkable headlights which he is advised to get polished by his servant regularly. However, her exhaust gases are a cause for concern... Elsewhere, there is a reference to a noted Parsi surgeon who uses a new method of surgery that permits him to make a small slit on your body and a big one in your pocket.

Lest we dismiss such triviality, let us clarify: there is a method in this madness. Through their *nataks*, the doctors have collected over Rs 50 lakhs for various causes to date. The beneficiaries include the Indian Cancer Society, the Masina Hospital and of course the B. D. Petit Parsee General Hospital (PGH). They have also established a Dr Jehangir Wadia Memorial Book Fund in memory of the man who originally started this medical theater way back in 1917. The Book Fund gives Parsi medical students financial aid to meet the costs of text books and other educational expenses. "We give something to every applicant even if it is a token amount," says radiologist Dr Jimmy Sidhva who has recently been elected vice president of The Parsee Medical Amateurs (PMA) under whose

auspices the plays and charities operate. Sidhva, one of the chief motivating forces and a lead performer in theatric operations, has now taken to scripting *nataks* for the PMA too. Dr Fardoon Soonawala, noted urologist and former vice president of the PMA, has taken over as president since last year. He succeeds cardiologist Dr Aspi Golwalla, presently chairman of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet, who held the post since the inception of the organization.

Bombay has not been the sole benefi-



Rohinton Talati (left) and Sidhva in Madhouse nu Mehmaan in 1970 marked the revival of the tradition

ciary of the doctors' entertainment and charity. The medical men have taken their shows to Poona, to Baroda and even to Karachi where they have raised funds for local charities and causes with their histrionics.

"In all these 20 years, in all our performances, all characters have been played by Parsi doctors," says Sidhva. That is excluding the one occasion when, according to Sidhva, they had to rope in their non-medical wives who publicly thrashed their spouses on stage. "Only because the script required it," Roshan, Sidhva's wife, clarifies.

"It's great fun; we do some *ghela ganda* (fooling around) on the stage. And, it's for a good cause," adds Sidhva who wrote, directed and played the main

role in the 1991 play *Manchoo Macbeth*. The play, in a way, was a break from tradition for it was the first time that the PMA did something that was not written by Wadia. The PMA's 1992 production was a variety review, *Doctors on Parade*, directed by Sam Kerawalla.

Beginning 1917, Wadia wrote a series of parodies in which he personally took a lead part. His inspiration was the bard himself — Shakespeare. According to Sidhva, Wadia got the idea of doing a parody on the Parsis while watching a performance of *Romeo and Juliet* by a visiting Shakespearean troupe from London. As a result he wrote *Ghotala ma Gosh*, a Parsi version of *Romeo and Juliet*. *Bewafa Baira*, based on *Hamlet*, followed, and thereafter there was no stopping his creative outpourings. In those days too, Wadia tapped the Parsi medical fraternity for his actors. However, since the medical profession then was largely a male bastion, the female parts were played by the wives and family members of doctors. After Wadia, the tradition lapsed; the doctors restricted their performances to operation theaters.

Then one day in 1969, at a gathering of Parsi doctors and their guests, ophthalmologist Dr Soli Cooper mentioned Wadia. "Who's Jehangir Wadia?" two medical students enquired. The query led noted jurist Fali Nariman, sitting next to Sidhva, to observe: "They don't know who Dr Wadia was! It is a shame! It is like a lawyer not knowing who the late Jamshed Kanga was!"

The next day Sidhva met Golwalla and they decided to revive the memory of Wadia by enacting a few scenes from his plays at the next annual gathering of Parsi doctors. "We managed to get a script of one of Wadia's plays, *Madhouse nu Mehmaan*," recalls Sidhva. But who would direct it? Adi Marzban was too busy, so they approached Homi Tavadia. "From then on he stayed with us till the day he died," says Sidhva. Tavadia's first vote of confidence in the acting talent of the Parsi doctors was to suggest that they do the entire play rather than just a few

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scenes. Like Tavadia, a number of non-medical Parsi professionals have helped backstage as the doctors braved the lime-light and the audience. Among the regulars, supporting PMA productions from the wings over the years, are Ms Katy Tavadia, the late Ms Hilla Nariman, Dali Palkhivala, the late Goody Seervai and his son Jango, Sarosh Bhabha, Sam Kerawalla and the late Sarosh Mody. Center stage stalwarts include PGH assistant medical superintendent Dr Marzban Naladaru and his wife Dr Thrity, Dr Dinyar Gamadia and his wife Dr Dilnavaz, Dr Rustom Patel, Dr Homi Dordi, Dr Noshir Gandhi, Dr Dara Gandhi, Dr (Ms) Pervin Mody, Dr (Ms) Pouru Bhiwandiwalla, the late Dr Sohrab Mehta, Dr Burjor Pardiwalla, Dr Bomi Pardiwalla, Dr Darius Anklesaria, Dr Tehemton Bhathena, Dr Nusly Pocha, guest performer Dr Aspi Golwalla... and, of course, the Sidhvas — not only Jimmy but his late father Nadirshaw who took part in the original Wadia productions, and now Jimmy's son Sorab.

In January 1970 *Madhouse nu Mehmaan* was performed on a makeshift stage — courtesy the late Fali Pavri — without stage props at the annual gathering of the fraternity of Parsi doctors. Word of this event seeped out. "Show us lay people what you doctors can do," the community clamored. So they hired the Bhulabhai Desai Hall, pegged their highest seats at the then exorbitant price of Rs 100 and decided to give the proceeds to charity — more specifically, the B. D. Petit Parsee General Hospital. Dr Homi Mehta, resident medical officer of the Hospital at the time, voiced his reservations about the venture. "Aye soo gela ganda tamé log karooh (what is this nonsense you are doing?)" Sidhva recalls his protest. But once Mehta saw the response of the public who filled the hall to capacity and the accolades the play received, he was converted. Every year after that he would personally go around collecting advertisements for the brochure, the frailty of his own personal health being used to persuade hesitant donors.

Year after year the PMA put up two shows; the first for the annual gathering of Parsi doctors and the second for the general public. The plays they did were all written by Wadia till the supply ran dry. So the next year they selected the best scenes from all his plays and strung them together with a loose story line. The effort was, in a way, a good exercise for Sidhva. The next year, while recu-

perating from a bad back, he decided to fill his time with trying to write a play as per the Wadia mold. Using *Macbeth* as his backdrop, *Manchoo Macbeth* was the fruit of his labor.

The play, according to Sidhva, was in keeping with the true Wadia tradition in ways other than that it drew from Shakespeare, was a Parsi spoof and that all the roles were played by Parsi doctors. Like Wadia's plays it was filled with songs and it did not shy away from digs at Parsi eccentricities and the com-

**Emergencies
always take priority
over play practice**

munity's leading personalities. Like the reference to a Parsi doctor who would not operate on Behram roj: "Téh dara par gosh kem kapé (How can you cut meat on that day?)" Even the individuals among the audience are not spared, leading to a lot of ad-libbing on stage. "Our wives sell the tickets at the Parsee General so we know who will be sitting where in the audience," says Sidhva and that allows them to adapt the script in advance. Occasionally the members of the audience hit back. In one play a character on stage, about to be stripped of his clothes, pleaded he be spared the ordeal to protect the sensitivities of a particular lady in the front row. Up popped the spirited lady in the audience and shot back: "I have paid Rs 100 for this ticket. Surely I am entitled to see the whole show."

There have been other hurdles that the performers have had to overcome over the years. Sidhva recalls how during one performance he was suspended over the stage in a basket and the rope and pulley mechanism got stuck and he could neither go up nor down. There was another occasion when the person responsible for the stage props did not show up and the performance was staged "in keeping with the modern trend of theater" against a plain black backdrop. On another occasion the audience heard a backstage assistant wail, "*Khotto léghe péri né gayo* (He has worn the wrong pyjama and gone on stage)." The one left behind would not fit the actor whose cue it was to go on stage.

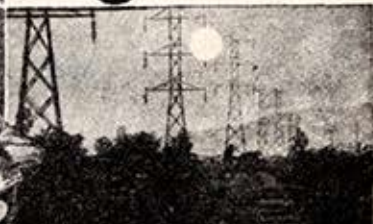
"Our one fear is that one of our doctors may be called away on an emergency on

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the final day," says Sidhva. To date, they have not had to face such a situation. During rehearsals though, it occurs frequently. Emergencies always take priority over play practice.

Rehearsals are held in the evenings in the Parsee General Hospital's administrative offices after the doctors have finished their consultations. Occasionally patients or their relatives would stroll in to investigate what was going on and stumble on these dignified men behind the stethoscopes engaged in a lot of hullabaloo.

Sidhva recalls one lady who came to his clinic a day after a performance and observed, "You look very different from what you looked on stage." "Naturally, I expect I would," he retorted. "The stage is fun, the clinic is work," but there is humor in the clinic too. Like the time a patient emerged from behind the curtains with the X-ray gown upside down; his legs through the armholes.

Then there was an eye surgeon who was confronted with a baffling problem. The 70-year-old man from whose eyes he had removed a cataract wanted to know if it was okay to have sex the very next day. Brushing aside the doctor's call for

caution, he wanted to do it three times a day. "I get great relief dipping a piece of cloth in hot water and applying it to my eyes," the patient elaborated on the comfort he obtained from "seks (hot compress)." No wonder, Sidhva observes, Parsi

**"The Parsis
are a sporting
community"**

Gujarati is a good language for farces and comedies. "It is easily understood by everyone and not only the Parsis for, one-third is Gujarati, one-third is English and one-third is swear words."

Equally important for the success and humor of Parsi farces is the eccentricities of the community itself. Members are constantly fighting over some issue or the other and this provides fodder for *natak* writers. Sidhva recalls his visit to Bangalore years ago when he was 17 years old and had gone to the agiary there. As he

entered the fire-temple a local Parsi resident marched up to him and enquired, "If you should die where would you like your body to go? The aramgah or the dokhma?" Parsi farces, according to Sidhva, are a form of documentation of the burning issues that have occupied the community through the years.

Equally important for a Parsi farce to succeed is the audience and for all its squabbling and fights the Parsis, according to Sidhva, know how to laugh at themselves. "I must say this for the Parsis; they are a sporting community." And over the years the community has encouraged the doctors in their efforts by patronizing their plays.

Yet it would be folly to dismiss the PMA as a unit which is allowed to get by with a lot of blemishes. In this genre of theater they are a competent outfit and none other than the noted theater personality and former editor of *Jam-e-Jamshed*, Adi Marzban, paid them the ultimate compliment. He observed that should any of them, for any reason, tire of the medical profession, they could come to him; he had seen enough acting talent to ensure that they did not starve.

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"We have to review our systems"

Parinaz Gandhi

Commercial or community progress requires an open mind, says finance planner Adi Rabadi

For India, "I see a great future if the present trend of liberalization is allowed to proceed without a hitch." For the Parsi community, "I only see numbers dwindling. We have to be optimistic, but with dwindling numbers and mixed marriages I don't think there will be a Parsi identity left after 35 years." Adi Bapuji Rabadi of Calcutta, vice chairman and joint managing director of the reputed engineering consultancy firm of M. N. Dastur and Company, and a trustee of the Calcutta Zoroastrian Community's Religious and Charity Funds (CZCRCF) made known his views while on a business trip to Bombay at the turn of the year.

Financial planning, management and industrial cost accounting are the areas in which Rabadi specializes and in which he earned two distinctions in 1991 — the Vijay Shree Award and the Glory of India International Award and gold medal conferred by the International Friendship Society of India. And before Rabadi could bask in the publicity of the second award presented to him in Washington, Rabadi received a letter intimating him that he had qualified for the Vijay Ratna Award from this Society. Rabadi rises from the settee in his room at the Taj Intercontinental to bring us the letter. His chubby face breaks into a smile and there is bemusement reflected in his eyes.

On advisory panels, appraisal committees, review councils and national commissions, Rabadi's counsel has been sought. The subjects have always con-



Rabadi (right) receiving the Glory of India International Award from the Indian Ambassador to USA Dr Abid Hussain

cerned finance — management accounting, industrial reconstruction. But his most enduring commitment has been with M. N. Dastur and Company with which he has been associated for 28 years ever since he joined as administrative officer of the Bombay branch, was appointed company secretary within four months, and director at the end of five years. The joint managing director's designation was to follow 20 years later, and the vice chairman's rank came to him two years thereafter. And during these years he has prepared studies for evaluation of iron and steel and industrial projects not only in India but 20 other countries, as lists his curriculum vitae. In particular his social

cost-benefit research for the Syria Steel Plant earned him appreciation from the World Bank, he mentions.

"India could be among the five most industrialized countries in the world if the Indian entrepreneurial spirit is allowed to flourish" uncramped by clauses which restrict economic activity and motivate tax evasion, believes Rabadi. As an executive entrusted with many of the Company's modernization and expansion projects he has been a witness to the crippling effects of the "licence-and-permit raj."

Business instead of employment in commercial houses should be the aspiration of Parsis, believes Rabadi. In Calcutta itself he observes many youngsters employed in banks and hardly any opting to be entrepreneurs although they pursue the commerce line. Migration to Bombay and overseas in search of job prospects as also the trend towards smaller families has left Calcutta with barely 120-150 Parsis below 25 years of age, informs Rabadi, himself a migrant. The only difference was that while most are drawn to Bombay, Rabadi's career with M. N. Dastur led him to Calcutta.

The headstart in Rabadi's career followed his success at the management accountancy diploma course on which only chartered accountants were eligible to enrol. He was one of the first two CAs to pass this course which required intensive study in financial management. Initially he was employed with Associated Ce-

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ment Companies where he continued for five years before shifting to M. N. Dastur.

An interest that Rabadi carried forward from Bombay to Calcutta is sports. It commenced during his school days at Don Bosco in Bombay and was nurtured while he double graduated in commerce and arts from Podar College. A one-time resident of the Mancherji Joshi Parsi Colony in Dadar, Rabadi remembers teaming with Farokh Engineer, Polly Umrigar and others who, pursuing sports as a career, went on to becoming well-known names in the cricket field. Presently he is involved in an administrative capacity officiating as president of the Office Sports Federation (West Bengal). He has also served as vice president and honorary treasurer of the Cricket Association of Bengal.

As do many other families who want a change from their work schedules, the Rabadis too frequent the popular Calcutta Parsi Club where Rabadi has been president for the past six years. About 150-200 Parsis are known to assemble there over the weekends and the Club's women's basketball team is one of the best in Calcutta, the president insists. Rabadi is happy that his entire family, including daughter Sharmin, a class IX student, and son Kaizad, a class VI student also visit the Club when their study schedule permits. Wife Bapsy too supports his interests but she is largely involved with welfare activities, working as secretary of the Calcutta Zoroastrian Stree Mandal.

"The relations between different Parsi organizations (in Calcutta) is harmonious — no infighting or politics. The Calcutta Parsi community is very compact," maintains Rabadi, one of the three trustees of the CZCRFC on which devolves the responsibility of administering the financial affairs concerning the Zoroastrian community.

The Calcutta residents "like to get together often..." Rabadi has noticed during his eight years as trustee. The occasion could be a *natak*, a regular event among the Calcutta Parsis, or a dinner. The Rabadis' spacious mansion too has accommodated many a social function be it in honor of the all-India delegates attending an executive council meeting of the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India, or the community youths who had converged in Calcutta to participate in the all-India youth fest. Organization of religious talks and seminars at the trust's Olpadvala Hall, with

even the youngsters showing an avid interest of late, is raising the consciousness of the community.

Of the total 1,000 odd, "many Zoroastrians in Calcutta are on the wrong side of 60," states Rabadi who has himself just crossed the 60-year milestone. The youth are limited in number, and so too are the priests. They have five full-time and one part-time priest but their search to find mobeds for Calcutta is proving difficult despite offering Rs 3,000 as salary plus free housing and food, reports Rabadi who has been simultaneously functioning as trustee of Calcutta's Mehta Atash Adaran.

There are neither vultures nor khandhies in Calcutta. It's the youth volunteers whose assistance is sought at the time of a funeral. And yet the anjuman continues with the dokhmenashini system on the advice of a high priest who has given them to understand that a dokhma and an aramgah cannot coexist despite the prevailing practice in other regions like Bangalore.

"The Calcutta Parsis are liberal on the intermarriage issue believing 'we have to live with this problem,'" informs the practical trustee. Even then, they have not succeeded in permitting non-Parsi spouses membership of the Calcutta Parsi Club. "I am also a traditionalist but I feel we have to review our systems and change according to the times," he observes. The stand that Rabadi likes to adopt in his diverse roles from an economist to an activist is "it is preferable to bring about a unanimous decision than have dissension and dispute."

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Amidst the poverty of Daryaganj — the dividing line between new and old Delhi — Dr Shroff's Charity Eye Hospital is the medium and the message of its founder whose credo it was that "the gift of sight should not be the prerogative of the rich." Thus, 62 of the 78-year-old Hospital's 94 beds are devoted to the free treatment of the poor, its 19 special rooms where charges vary from Rs 50 to Rs 200 per day contributing to some of the cost, while 13 other beds — two or three to a cubicle — generate Rs 30 per day inclusive of bed, board and all medical charges.

The Hospital offers intraocular lens implantation (the planting of an acrylic lens in place of the removed cataract), retinal and vitreous surgery which takes care of detached retinas, vitreous hemorrhages and other disorders like the correction of squint and muscle imbalance. The doctors, all post graduates in ophthalmology, include three categories of practitioners — those who are totally honorary, the full-timers and

those who combine honorary work with private practice, informs Dr Minoo Shroff, managing trustee of Dr Shroff's Charity Eye Hospital Trust and honorary chief medical officer of the Hospital.

The Hospital's financial needs are only nominally met by the meager fees it charges. The rental of a plot of open land

lakhs almost since the Hospital's inception. Another Rs 20,000 come from the New Delhi Municipal Committee annually. The Tarawati Ram Gopal Foundation supplies free spectacles for poor patients. The Godrej Memorial Trust donated an Argon Laser used in retinal surgery worth 8.25 lakh rupees. Helpage India, MISEREOR — a German social service organization — and the Lt Governor of Delhi contributed equipment and funds totalling almost 10 lakh rupees. The contribution of Sir Dorab Tata Trust (Rs 1.5 lakhs), the Godrej Foundation (Rs 50,000) the Dastoor Contact Lens Laboratory (Rs 51,000) were augmented by another Rs 2.45 lakhs by Dr V. Sagar in 1989. Large and small donations amount to nearly seven lakh rupees a year.

Faced with an annual deficit of approximately 3.25 lakh rupees and the need to maintain the Hospital building, upgrade patient facilities and medical aids, led the Trust to issue an appeal for a Hospital Development Fund co-signed by some of Delhi's most respected citizens. As against a target of Rs 50 lakhs, the Fund has collected Rs 2,70,000 approximately. The Shroffs are at pains to impress that each donation of Rs 250 pays for the cost of cataract removal, inclusive of four-day hospitalization, for one poor person. Donations to



*Dr Minoo Shroff examining a patient
through the slit lamp*

for weddings and functions at Rs 1,100 a night contributes. But it is the government grants and the largesse of other trusts and donors which have helped the institution to survive. The Delhi Municipality provides an annual grant of Rs 1.5

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*On the campus of
Dr Shroff's Charity
Eye Hospital*

*Below : Dr Cyrus
Shroff working on the
fundus camera*

*Below 2: Dr Noshir
Shroff in the process
of an intraocular
lens transplant*

the Hospital are tax exempt under section 80G of the Income Tax Act. Cheques may be drawn in favor of Dr Shroff's Charity Eye Hospital, and mailed to the managing trustee at XI/5026 Kedarnath Road, Daryaganj, New Delhi 110002.

As with most charity organizations the Hospital has to deal with those who do not deserve charity but want to get things for free. The Shroffs demand no declaration of income: "People don't give their correct income anyway but those who cannot give anything are obvious enough," says Minoo. The Hospital supplies hard contact lenses for Rs 300 a pair as against Rs 600 to Rs 800 outside; muscle imbalances and squint, which cost over Rs 3,000 for correction to each eye, are done at the Shroff Hospital for anything between Rs 105 and nothing. Similarly the patient pays Rs 105 for a cataract operation which costs more than Rs 180 to the Hospital.

The pride lies in doing high quality work irrespective of financial returns. The rewards are diverse. The only eye hospital in Delhi in 1962 when the International Congress of Ophthalmology was held, Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru provided it a large grant for renovation and equipment. "The foreign ophthalmologists attending the Congress appreciated the work done at the Hospital and the dedication of its staff," notes Minoo. At the intraocular lens implant workshop conducted by noted US surgeon Dr Y. Y. King at the Shroff Hospital in 1984, it was Minoo's son, Dr Noshir Shroff who was chosen to assist.

Eye camps are a regular activity of the

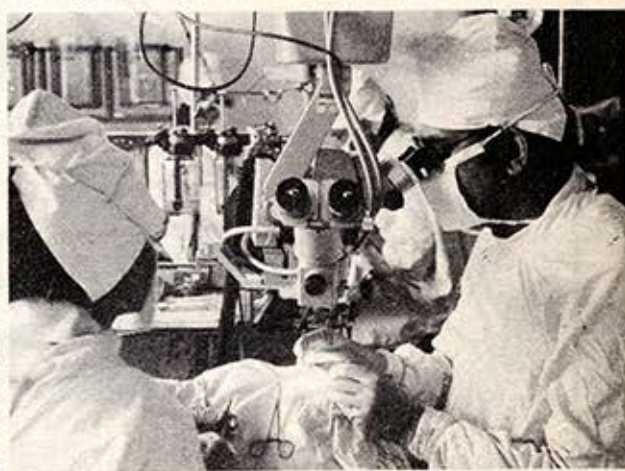
Hospital with about six doctors and eight ancillary staff working on operation days, creating conditions for aseptic surgery and ensuring post-operative care.

An ENT (ear, nose, throat) department was added in 1967 and treats about 24,000 patients a year in the OPD (outpatients department). Though more than a 1,000 ENT operations take place each year, the Hospital is unable to provide separate beds for ENT patients.

History

Sorabji Shroff was "not a normal person. He was a man of God, doing God's bidding as though he was ordered," remembers Justice Prakash Narain, retired chief justice of the Delhi High Court and presently chairman of the Hospital's board of trustees.

The Bombay-born Shroff received his licentiate in medical science, obstetrics and surgery from the University of Punjab and, after earning his Fellowship of the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh (FRCSE), chose to settle in Delhi in 1913 as a practising eye specialist. Devoting a large part of his time to treating the eye problems of poor patients free of charge, by 1914 Shroff had founded the Hospital that bears his name in a large room in Lala Laxmi Narain's dharamsala. Work-



ing entirely on his own, the treatment was largely confined to diseases like trachoma, conjunctivitis, corneal ulcers, removal of foreign bodies, etc which could be treated in OPD. When philanthropist Haji Mohammed Ishaq placed an entire floor in his newly constructed building at the disposal of Shroff, the Hospital began accepting a few indoor patients for operations like cataract, glaucoma, etc. Even so, during the 13 months spanning October 1916 to November 1917, he had treated 16,771 patients.

The present premises in Daryaganj

became functional in 1927. It absorbed most of his time, devoted freely, private practice being restricted to a few hours outside the Hospital to meet the needs of the family. By 1922 Shroff had established a public trust with an initial donation of Rs 5 lakhs to ensure the future of the work. Individuals of the eminence of the industrialist and philanthropist Sir Sri Ram and Delhi Mayor Nuruddin Ahmed have served as chairmen of the board.

"What a man he was — nothing ever shook him!" says Narain. Shroff's son Minoo recalls his father's stint as the British government's nominee on the Delhi Municipal Council: In 1919 the Duke of Connaught, member of the British royalty, was expected to visit India. The Delhi Municipal Council advised the government against the proposal to invite Connaught to Delhi, but to no avail. Delhi broke into riots and there was bedlam all around. The embarrassed government sought to even the score with the Delhi citizenry by imposing a fine of Rs 40,000. Declaring that he would vote "according to the dictates of my conscience," Shroff opposed the fine along with other Council members on the

grounds that the government had rejected their advice in the first place. Thus opposed by its own nominee, the furious British government blacklisted Shroff after his term was over, rejecting his application for land for the Hospital, not once but three times. It was only when Reverend Hale (archbishop of Delhi) intervened

"Nobody
compelled us.
We just naturally
went into
ophthalmology"

with the vicereine, Countess Reading, convincing her that "Shroff was not interested in politics but only in humanitarian work" that the government, after dragging its feet some more to assuage its wounded ego, gave about three acres of land on a 999-year lease and the Hospital was established in its present premises in 1927, narrates Minoo.

Countess Reading laid the foundation stone, heading the list of donors with a gift of one lakh rupees followed by the government's own Rs 50,000, the Delhi Municipality, Sir Ratan Tata Trust and a host of others convinced of Shroff's dedication. Once cordial relations were restored with the government, however, there was no looking back. Shroff became a regular invitee to official functions and in recognition of his social and humanitarian work was awarded the Kaiser-e-Hind Gold Medal in 1933.

For 12 years Shroff guided the destiny of the Delhi Parsi Anjuman (DPA) as its president, acquiring the land for the Mengusi Dharamshala. It was during his tenure that the DPA's constitution was drafted.

Subsisting on boiled rice and *paneer* (cottage cheese), as remembers his daughter-in-law Mehroo, Shroff was always an unorthodox man. "Bored by dogmas," averse to controversies, Shroff had instructed that muktads for him be held for one year only, says Minoo. But he fired his family with his own penchant for humanitarian service so that not only his son Minoo who inherited the managing trusteeship of the Hospital from his



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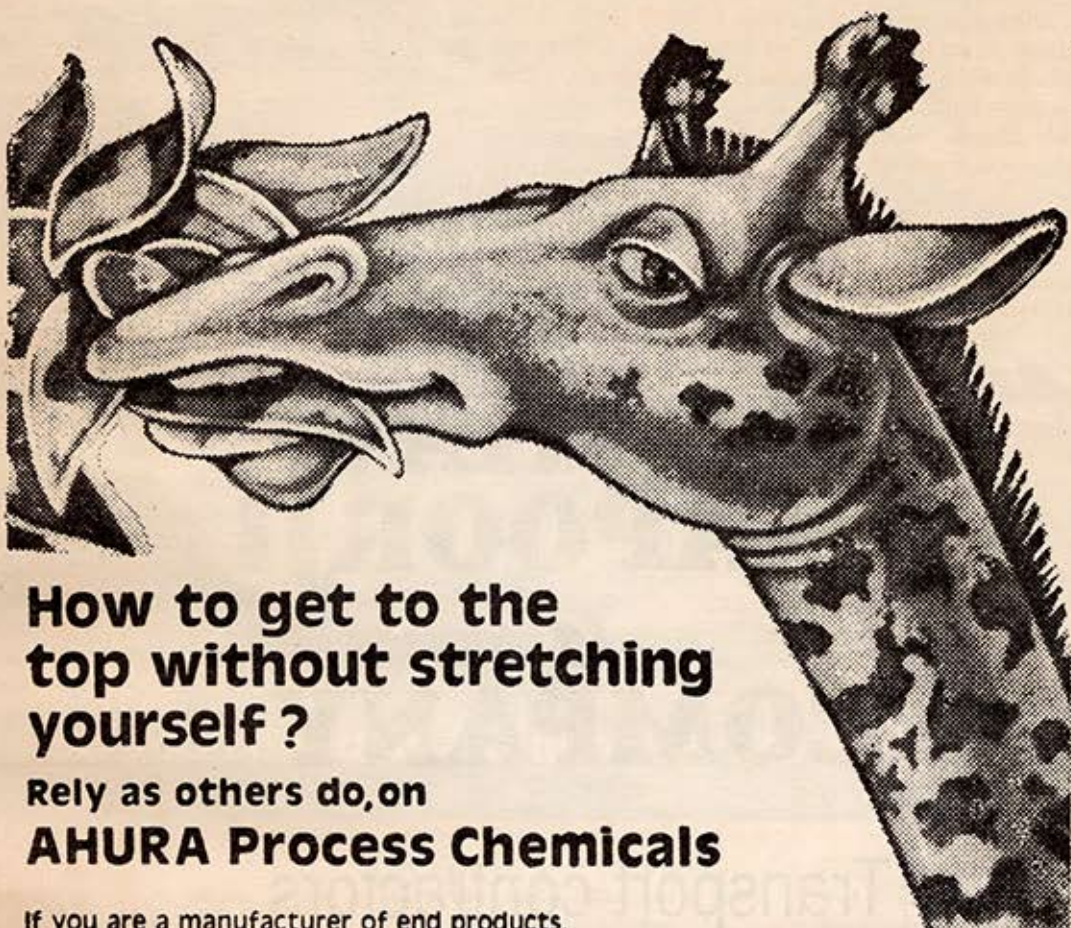
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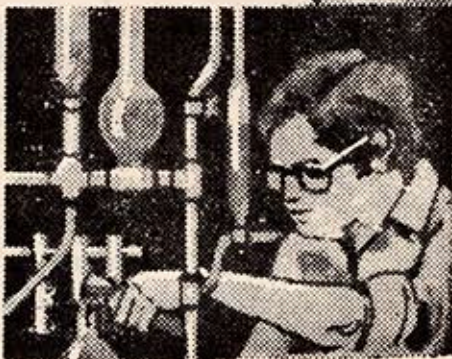
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father, but Minoo's two sons Noshir and Cyrus have continued the Shroff tradition as leading ophthalmologists, freely giving their time to the Hospital's patients. Nor is the Shroff family the only one in its third generation of service at the Hospital. The tradition is shared by other workers as well.

Nonetheless the Hospital has had to face a couple of strikes. During the first one in 1946 "Papa gave in," recalls Minoo, but subsequently "in 1966 we did not give in." That strike was restricted to the non-medical staff — the doctors and nurses continued to work. The men had lined up, shouting slogans, when there was a power failure at the Hospital. The old generator required to be cranked and Minoo was all set for a bout of physical labor when two old-timers broke rank and said to him, "*Saab hut jao* (Sir, please step aside)." They started the generator, then went back to their sloganeering!

Though the labor had been incited to ask for municipal or government wage scales, Minoo emphasized, "We just didn't have the funds." He held firm, leading the labor commissioner to remark, "He looks mild but he is a

hard nut to crack!"

The municipal, Tata, Wadia, Reading and Amarchand wards were built when the Hospital was built. The Daya Ward, the administrative block and a new block for diagnostic purposes and special rooms were added later. Today a ward would cost more than 1.5 lakh rupees to build as against its 1954 cost of Rs 25,000, assesses Minoo. The chief medical officer's house which the family occupied until 1979 was given up to provide quarters for five others while the Shroffs shifted to their new joint family accommodation at Kailash Colony.

The Shroff factor

The Shroffs are the "only family in Delhi truly interested in helping the poor," eulogizes Dr M. K. Srivastava who joined the Hospital as honorary officer on special duty after retiring as accounts officer, central revenue. The Hospital acquired the land in three plots in three instalments. Says Srivastava, "So much sacrifice, but nothing for themselves. Even now there are four persons giving fully honorary service to the Hospital including Mehroo who is the honorary

welfare adviser." Similarly Dr H. S. Trehan and his team of four ENT surgeons also provide honorary service to the Hospital.

Associated from childhood with the Hospital and the subject of eye care, Noshir Shroff says, "Nobody compelled us. We just naturally went into ophthalmology. The environment grows on you..." Noshir specializes in implant surgery and phacoemulsification — a cataract removing technique requiring a very small incision which permits the patient to go back to work in two to three days. The system has been around in the world for over a decade now, says Noshir but is comparatively recent in India, its two known Zoroastrian practitioners being Dr Keki Mehta in Bombay and himself. Noshir's wife Niloufer is a PhD in physics so their two sons Darius and Kersey have two fields to choose between. Cyrus specializes in retinal and vitreous surgery. His wife Rukshana lectures in the department of English at the Lady Sri Ram College. Their two children are Zubin and Rushad. Thus the odds are 15 to one in favor of a fourth generation Shroff at Dr Shroff's Charity Eye Hospital.

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Pioneering Neurologist

Dhanvantari awardee
Dr Eddie Bharucha's study reveals
a record high incidence of Parkinson's
disease among Parsis

Gustasp Irani



by the State Government when he was presented the Dhanvantari Award by Sudhakarrao Naik, chief minister of Maharashtra.

"The award was not one of the things I was aiming for but I was pleased to get it nevertheless," says an unassuming Bharucha. More rewarding was the response and good wishes from colleagues and students, past and present, that poured in as a result of the award. "I am overwhelmed by their warmth," says the neurologist.

The response however is not surprising. When Bharucha returned to India in 1953 after specializing in neurology at the Institute of Neurology, University of London, at the Presbyterian Hospital University of Columbia, New York and at Harvard University, there were barely three to four qualified in this field in the entire country and just two small neurology centers at Vellore and Calcutta. Today, as a result of Bharucha's persistent efforts there are about 250 qualified neurologists in India, 15 hospitals and six postgraduate institutes with neurology departments.

Neurology, according to Bharucha, is the study and treatment of disorders in the nervous system, the brain, the spinal cord and the nerves that come out of there. Symptoms of disorder can take the form of visual disturbances, squints, an inability to chew and, of course, epileptic fits. In Bharucha's estimate there are eight million cases of epilepsy in India. "The trouble in India is that people do not know that epilepsy can be controlled and treated. You've got to go from hut to

hut, from house to house, to find and treat patients," he says.

And that was just what the doctor did when he covered 16 of the 22 villages in Vasai taluka, 100 km from Bombay. In all he examined 16,300 people and discovered 78 cases of unreported epilepsy. The undertaking was part of a World Health Organisation (WHO) study which aimed at estimating the extent of the disease in Indian villages.

"The brain has got a rhythm of its own, like the heart has got a beat of its own. When this rhythm is disturbed you get an epileptic fit," Bharucha explains. The disturbance in the rhythm can be caused by a number of reasons, like tumors which may cut oxygen supply to the brain or through diseases like jaundice or meningitis which can upset the metabolism of the brain. "Epilepsy is not hereditary," Bharucha clarifies.

Contrary to popular belief, the neurologist states that there is little that a lay person can do when someone gets an epileptic fit in public. Rather than try to stop the fit by putting the soles of one's footwear to the patient's mouth or some metal, like keys, in his hand, the doctor advises: "Turn him over on his side so that he does not choke on his own saliva. See that he does not get hurt by any sharp objects around. You should let the fit wear itself out."

The other major research project undertaken by Bharucha was a neurological study of the Parsis. Here his son Nadir, a qualified neurologist himself, assisted

From village to village, from hut to hut, from colony to colony, and from flat to flat, Dr Eddie P. Bharucha, noted neurologist, surveyed first the adivasis of Vasai taluka in Thana and then the Parsis of Bombay, detecting and treating neurological disorders. Bharucha is not a prototype of a barefoot doctor, but he definitely is a pioneering one whose contributions to neurology in the country are many. He was instrumental in opening the department of neurological studies at Bombay's King Edward Memorial (KEM) Hospital in 1953, the first in western India from where young Indian doctors could qualify in this branch of medicine without necessarily having to go abroad. In addition to this and other significant work, Bharucha has over 200 publications in journals and textbooks, is the president of the Neurological Society of India, vice president of the World Federation of Neurology, and secretary general of the Indian Epilepsy Association.

On November 3, 1991, Bharucha's contributions were officially recognized

With best wishes for Parsiana's success From T P K

him in the task. Together the father and son team covered 15,000 Parsis in a number of colonies in Bombay. The highlight of their finding was the high instance of Parkinson's disease in the community — 192 per hundred thousand. "Ireland is supposed to have the highest instance of Parkinson's disease — 172 per hundred thousand. Ours (the Parsi count) is even higher than that."

These statistics, Bharucha is quick to point out, are misleading at best. One reason for the high rate of this disorder in the community might be a high proportion of aged members in the community. "In India only 12 percent of the population is over 50. For Parsis, the figure is 46 percent. We have an inverted pyramid," he observes.

One problem with Parkinson's disease is that it is not easily recognizable and its symptoms — trembling limbs — are often dismissed as part of the aging process. The disease is caused by the premature demise of certain brain cells. However, to date there is no effective cure or control for the disease. "There is treatment for Parkinson's disease up to a point, and then it becomes worse," says Bharucha.

"There is no strong hereditary factor in Parkinson's disease," mentions Bharucha. In fact, in the survey of Parsis conducted by him, he noticed a surprisingly low occurrence of hereditary diseases, especially so since there is a high rate of intra-family marriages in the community. "I am not too concerned (about intra-marriage). It also brings out the good points of the community," observes Bharucha. According to him, it could be one reason for the Parsi success story.

But it is a story that is threatened by extinction. Bharucha is perturbed by the declining Parsi population. One reason, as he sees it, is that Parsi women tend to marry late because they value higher education and their careers. "If things continue (like this), in the next 100 years there will be very few Parsis left. Our community is a very good one; it will be sad if it disappears," he laments. One admittedly drastic solution, according to the doctor, would be to get daughters married once they reach the age of 18 or 19.

But for Parsi girls to get married early is probably in the realm of fiction and Bharucha is no stranger to this world. He enjoys reading novels. "I like spy stories," he says, lightheartedly adding: "because neurology is a little like a spy story."

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ARE THE KURDS...

continued from page 40

"The girls told me that they are taught Islam compulsorily at school. They are very eager to learn a lot more about Zaradhusht and their own religion but even their parents discouraged them from gaining this knowledge. It may be because the parents do not know much about it themselves. Or, more likely, it may be to protect the youngsters, since the latter come in daily contact at school and at work with non-Yazidis, and might say something inadvertently about their own religion which might be labelled subversive," speculates Damania. "I was told that they are also not allowed to assemble in a large group in public."

Some Yazidi males have migrated for work to Germany and Azerbaijan, formerly in the USSR, returning to marry from among their own community. Some of those settled abroad marry locally. Hence some Yazidis have German wives. They also speak of Yazidis living in the USSR.

Claiming a more or less static population figure with an average four or five children per couple, Damania says, the Yazidis seem not to be too worried about their numbers, the loss to the community on account of intermarriage and migration. If upon marriage a woman is found to be not fertile the man usually marries again and the first wife either continues to live with the husband or returns to her parents on divorce. A woman whose husband dies prematurely is discouraged to remarry by her in-laws, although there is no objection to remarriage of widows on religious grounds.

In addition to Ain Dara, 15 other villages around Aleppo where Yazidis still live include: Khatma, Buffelore, Ashk Kebar, Bussufan, Kemar, Taramdar, Ghazaoui, Iskan, Burgilkaz, Kubashin, Barad, Gundimazan, Nayer, Jalamal, Kastel and Fakhira. Many of these villages, in the past, were totally inhabited by Yazidis. But today only 50 percent of the original population remains. Another upper middle-class Yazidi family in Aleppo whom Damania met subsequently, spoke of the Kurds and Kurdistan being originally part of the Persian Empire. Later, when the Arabs invaded, some Kurds became Muslims or Christians but many continued to follow the Zoroastrian religion. However, the Kurds were suppressed, particularly the Zoroastrians. The Syrian Yazidis claim to have been living there since over a 1,000 years

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but are not permitted to practice their religion. In fact very few families even have pictures of Zarathushtra or have any idea of what he looked like. They do not have any religious books. "They confirmed my suspicion that the younger generation is purposely kept ignorant of the community's history and religion in order to avoid discrimination, persecution and antagonism at school, college or place of work. When asked by outsiders they admit that they are Yazidis of Kurdish origin, beyond that they do not say anything," adds Damania.

The Yazidis believe that Zarathushtra was Kurdish since he was born within the borders of their so-called Kurdistan which at present forms part of Iraq, Syria, Turkey and Azerbaijan. They are said to be more nationalistic than religionist, wanting their own independent 'Kurdistan' more than the freedom to practice Zoroastrianism!

Parsi Zoroastrian fears

Latent fears of being swamped by numbers perhaps leads Parsi Zoroastrians to take an exclusivist attitude. As an ex-

ample, one perturbed individual has forwarded to *Parsiana* xerox copies of relevant pages from the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, the *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, the *Encyclopaedia of Living Faiths*, etc which concentrate on the differences between Yazidi and Zoroastrian practices. States the *Britannica* (1986 ed):

"The Yazidi religion is a syncretic combination of Zoroastrian, Manichaean, Jewish, Nestorian Christian and Islamic elements.

"The chief divine figure of the Yazidi is Malak Ta'us (Peacock Angel), worshiped in the form of a peacock. He rules the universe with six other angels, but all seven are subordinate to the supreme God, who has had no direct interest in the universe since he created it. The Yazidi relate that when the devil repented of his sin of pride before God, he was pardoned and replaced in his previous position as chief of the angels. This myth has earned the Yazidi an undeserved reputation as devil worshippers."

Compiled by Amavaz S. Mama

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Popularizing Parsi Cuisine

*Time-honored Parsi recipes
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from Jeroo Mehta's new book*

Have you tried *bhaji ma bheja* (brains with spinach), or prawn and cabbage foogad, or corn *akoori*? Offering an assortment of 101 non-vegetarian and vegetarian dishes, desserts, pickles and snacks is Ms Jeroo Mehta in her recently released *Enjoyable Parsi Cooking*. Published by Vakils, Feffer and Simons Ltd, the 147-page cookbook, priced at Rs 150, serves as a sequel to her earlier award winning *101 Parsi Recipes* which saw three reprints.

"What is special about Parsi cooking is the 'Caspian experience,'" writes Mehta in the introduction to her new book. She perceives Parsi dishes as a blend of "the original flavors from the shores of the Caspian Sea (whence the Parsis migrated) with the diverse ones of India."

The "little-known but delightful" Parsi cuisine which all can enjoy has been tastefully presented by her with color photographs to increase its appeal. Nineteen dishes are offered under the rice section, providing the maximum variety. The meat section lists 16 recipes, the vegetarian 14, the fish and eggs 11 each, and the chicken nine. Additionally there is a choice of eight pickles, chutneys and preserves. The desserts are seven — just as well for the Parsis who have a large percentage of diabetics.

The neat compilation makes easy reading, with pages earmarked for a glossary, weights and measures, substitutes, hints and suggestions. "This book proves once again the mastery of Jeroo Mehta's style of writing perfect recipes..." notes the back cover of the book.

Mehta, who studied journalism at New York University, was the former associate editor of *Eve's Weekly* and a regular contributor of recipes to several magazines in India. International recognition came her way when some of her recipes were included in the Time-Life

International series *The Good Cook. Cooking for the family* is another publication to her credit. Her efforts to popularize the Parsi cuisine are said to be well-received by reputed hotels and restaurants



Assortment of Mehta's dishes with prawn and cabbage foogad (top right)

Photo: Apu Sista, *Enjoyable Parsi Cooking*

throughout the world, many of which have adopted her recipes and are announcing Parsi specialities on their menu cards.

The three recipes that follow (courtesy Vakils, Feffer and Simons Ltd) will give *Parsiana* readers a sample of Mehta's *Enjoyable Parsi Cooking*.

PRAWN AND CABBAGE FOOGAD (serves 4 to 6)

Prawns with cabbage and coconut make an unusual but tasty combination.
Prawns (200 gm — shelled and cleaned)
Onions (2 medium — finely sliced)

Garlic (6 cloves) — grind to a paste --
Ginger root (3/4" piece) — fresh — 1 tsp
Green chillies (4 — finely chopped)
Green chillies (4 — slit down the center)
Cabbage (1/2 kg — finely shredded)
Coconut (8 tbsp — fresh, grated or 6 tbsp desiccated)
Salt (1/2 tsp)
Vegetable oil or ghee (2 tbsp)
Heat oil or ghee and fry onion in it for 2 minutes. Add garlic-ginger paste and chopped green chillies. Blend well and cook 1 minute. Add prawns. Cook 2 to 3 minutes and when they curl up add the cabbage, slit green chillies and salt. Mix well, then add coconut and mix again. Add 1/2 cup water and bring mixture to a boil. Cover and cook on low heat 10 to 15 minutes till cabbage and prawns are cooked. Uncover and cook on medium heat 5 minutes or till mixture is almost dry.

SPINACH PULAO

(serves 6)

Layers of vegetables and rice, baked, help to blend the flavors dominated by the sweet and sour spinach.

Spinach (*palak*, 1/2 kg)
Onions (4 medium — finely sliced)
Turmeric powder (1/2 tsp)
Chilli powder (1/2 tsp)
Worcestershire sauce (1 1/2 tsp)
Sugar (1 1/2 tsp)
Potatoes (250 gm — peeled and cut into 1/2 cm cubes)
Carrots (100 gm — scraped and cut into 1/2 cm cubes)
Rice (2 cups — soaked in water 1/2 hour)
Chicken stock (1 cup or 1 chicken soup cube dissolved in 1 cup hot water)
Salt (2 3/4 tsp or to taste)
Vegetable oil or ghee (as needed)
Remove thick stalks of spinach then finely cut the leaves and tender stalks. Wash very thoroughly. In a pan heat 6 tbsp oil or ghee and fry onions in it till

brown. Remove excess oil. Remove three quarters of the fried onion and keep aside. To the onions in pan add turmeric powder and chilli powder and cook $\frac{1}{2}$ minute. Add spinach and mix well. Cook, covered, on medium heat till spinach is cooked. Add Worcestershire sauce, sugar and $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp salt and cook, covered, 2 to 3 minutes longer. Keep pan aside.

In a frying pan pour oil or ghee to a depth of 1 cm and heat to hot. Add potatoes and fry till cooked. Remove and keep aside. In the same oil fry the carrots. Remove and add to potatoes. Add $\frac{3}{4}$ tsp salt and mix.

In another pan heat 1 tsp oil or ghee. Drain water from the rice and add to the oil and cook, stirring, for 2 minutes. Add 3 cups water and $1\frac{1}{2}$ tsp salt. Bring to a boil then lower heat and cook, covered, till all the water has been absorbed.

Divide rice into 4 equal portions. Put one portion of rice at the bottom of a large pan and place half the spinach over it. Spread half a portion of rice over spinach

then sprinkle half of the potatoes and carrots and $\frac{1}{3}$ of the fried onions over it. Over this spread one whole portion of rice and repeat layers as above. Sprinkle remaining fried onion evenly over the top layer of rice and pour 1 or 2 tbsp oil or melted ghee over the surface. Pour soup over the rice and cover and place in a moderately hot oven (190°C , 375°F or Gas Mark 5) for 30 to 40 minutes or till rice is cooked. [Serve with plain or spiced curd (yogurt), your favorite table sauce or mild curry.]

BAKED VERMICELLI PUDDING

(serves 6)

An unusual way of preparing vermicelli.

Vermicelli (100 gm — fine)

Milk ($2\frac{1}{2}$ cup)

Sugar ($3\frac{1}{2}$ tbsp)

Vanilla essence (1 tsp)

Cardamom powder ($\frac{3}{4}$ tsp)

Nutmeg powder ($\frac{3}{4}$ tsp)

Eggs (2)

Almonds (12 — blanched, peeled and

finely sliced)

Vegetable oil ($\frac{1}{2}$ cup)

In a large pan heat the oil to medium hot. Add vermicelli and fry till light brown in color. Remove at once with a perforated spoon allowing as much oil as possible to drain away. Put vermicelli into another pan. To the vermicelli add 1 cup milk and the sugar. Cook on medium heat till milk is almost absorbed, then add remaining milk and cook about 5 minutes or till another cup of milk is absorbed. Do not let the mixture get dry. Remove pan from heat and add vanilla, cardamom and nutmeg. Taste and add more if desired. Mix well and allow mixture to cool 5 minutes.

Add eggs to mixture and blend well. Butter a baking dish and pour mixture into it so that the mixture is about $2\frac{1}{2}$ cm deep. Bake in a moderately hot oven (190°C , 375°F or Gas Mark 5) till set. In a small pan heat 2 or 3 tablespoons vegetable oil and fry almonds in it till golden. Sprinkle almonds on pudding and serve hot or warm, with cream if desired.

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"Charity never faileth"

Shirin Bharucha

Hand Book on Administration of Trusts by Noshir H. Dadrawala. Published in 1991 by The Centre for Advancement of Philanthropy, C/o J. N. Marshall Pvt Ltd, Mistry Mansion, 4th floor, 107 M. G. Road, Fort, Bombay 400023. Pp: VIII + 85. Price not stated.

In the incessant race for advancement and things material, we should pause to share our gains with the less fortunate and disadvantaged. This seems to be the philosophy and guiding principle of Noshir H. Dadrawala in the writing of his *Hand Book on Administration of Trusts*. Actually, Dadrawala handles the subject of charity and its necessity with not just a philosophy or principles but with almost a religious fervor and zeal. The religion he draws strength and example from is, happily, not just his own faith. In the context of the need for smoothing, if not altogether blurring, the distinction between people from differing faiths, his inspiration comes from the many religions of India, the *Egyptian Book of the Dead*, the ancient Greeks and Romans.

Dadrawala provides, as the title of the book suggests, a sort of a ready reckoner for the setting up and managing of trusts. He commences from the very basics — the meaning of charity, which according to him denotes "all the good affections that men ought to bear towards each other." The concept of charity has gone well beyond this very broad and rather vague definition, and now encompasses a host of projects and purposes which in the eye of the law would amount to charity.

A rather sketchy outline is given of the early history of trusts and their regulation. It would have been of more than just passing interest to know how and for what esoteric objects charities were created in the past, especially as Dadrawala

says trusts have been in existence for well over a century. They would surely have provided us with lessons on how to create trusts so that their objects do not fail, and even perhaps how they should or should not be administered. The various aspects of a trust — such as its trappings, the role, duties and responsibilities of a trustee and the role of the Charity Commissioner — are set out in brief.

People are not really aware of the onerous responsibilities of being a trustee, and how easily a casual approach might cause a person to be in breach of a trust. There are many people who consider being a trustee a 'status symbol' and after their appointment take little interest in the work of a trust. This is a clear dereliction of duty and all the more regrettable as the beneficiaries are neglected. "Such trustees do more harm than good," Dadrawala rightly reminds us that it is a mistaken notion that a breach of trust is com-

People are not aware of the onerous responsibilities of being a trustee

mitted only if there is misappropriation of the trust property — the terms of a trust must be scrupulously carried out.

Relevant sections from other laws as applicable to charitable trusts, such as the Income-tax Act, the Industrial Disputes Act, are there, put in a nutshell.

People who wish to create a trust will find this a helpful primer. Perhaps, the picture would have been more complete if Dadrawala had fleshed out the chapters of his book with some of the problems, delays and difficulties one faces in setting up and managing a trust, particularly the encounters with officialdom. Why is it that despite the many rules, regulations, returns, checks, inspections and surveillance, trusts are still mismanaged? Why in many cases do trustees permit trusts to needlessly pay taxes or not get the best return on their investments?

In a study done on Parsi trusts some years ago by Hormazdyar Dalal and Dr



Dadrawala: trust insights

Jamshed Modi (of the Zoroastrian Community Development Institute of which team Dadrawala had also once been a part) the

following dismayed findings were recorded:

"Educational trusts are paying taxes because the scholarship money is not distributed. Sixty trusts with a corpus of 2.64 crores earn an interest of only five percent when the minimum return available is nine percent. By investing the corpus of these trusts at only two per cent more, an income of 5.28 lakhs can be generated."

Has the picture changed for the better since the study? It would appear not. Parsis are not what they were either in numbers or in economic strength. Dadrawala can, most definitely, help institute a change in this by succinct advice addressed to ailing and inoperative trusts so that the needs and wants of the community can be better met, a suggestion which can perhaps be taken into account when this handbook is expanded into a book.

Two very important questions are dealt with, but all too briefly: the amalgamation of trusts when they cannot function independently; and the change of a trust's objects when the original ones have failed. These are areas where quick help is needed to rescue a fund from lying fallow and becoming, on this account, eventually moribund. This would certainly have furthered the cause of the Centre for Advancement of Philanthropy under whose aegis this book is written.

From a person like Mr Dadrawala, so steeped in the cause of trusts, readers may have liked to know how people could be further encouraged to set up trusts. What incentives could take them down this path? What roadblocks can, without detriment, be removed and procedural simplifications instituted so that the social conscience of people is roused for the common good and charity is made a way of life? After all, "charity never faileth" is the Biblical aphorism.

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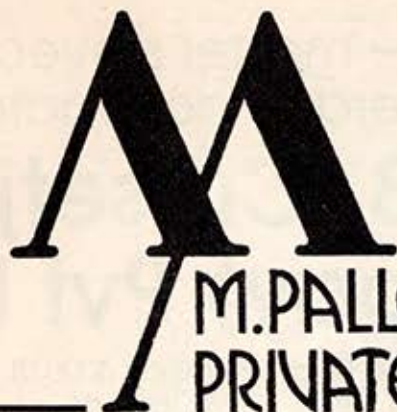
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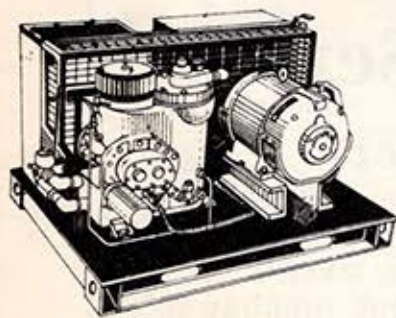
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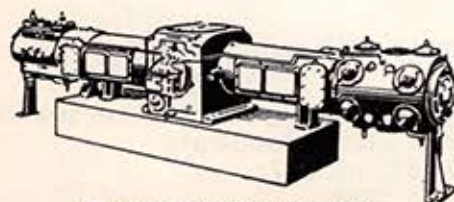
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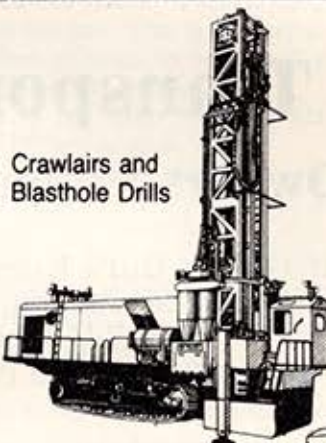
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The fragrance of truth

Hormazdyar S. Dalal

Parimal by Bejon Desai. Published by Navaz Publications. Available at N. M. Tripathi Pvt Ltd, Shamaldas Gandhi Marg, Bombay 400002 or Ashram Road, Ahmedabad. Pp: IX + 168. Price: Rs 90.

The present generation has achieved much in the last 50 years or so, but has lost the values of life. Bejon Desai's *Parimal* is a pointer to this loss.

A collection of 40 essays in Gujarati, *Parimal* recounts the personal experiences of a child-like, honest man. It is not a catalogue of mere names of personalities or holy men who have influenced Desai but a bouquet of goodness, humanness and other higher qualities he has imbibed from them. Its fragrance — *Parimal* — wafts through one's senses, for those who care to enjoy it.

As an educationist and former principal of Boys' Town Public School, Nasik, Desai is well-known. But, his friends know him better as a *gazalkar*, a poet. He



Dadasheb Potnis releasing *Parimal* by Desai (far left) Photo: New Bains Studio

began writing poems at a very tender age, encouraged by his teachers.

Those who sought to build his character would punish him severely, at times brutally. It was not for commission of crimes or for dereliction of duties, but for raising doubts, for questioning... The elders were however honest enough to apologize for their weaknesses. Essays 2, 19 and 23 are fine examples of such magna-

nimity. The painful events taught Desai to value truth, led him successfully to the path of knowledge, and thence to spiritual learning.

Once, the Desai family was affluent, but Bejon was not fortunate enough to enjoy the fruits. He with his mother had to face pecuniary hardships. Two anxious days and nights had to be spent by this young boy seeking ways and means to raise Rs 15 for his matriculation examination fees. Unknown to him, they were providentially paid by the family priest, Rustomji Desai.

With such lessons in generosity, Bejon came to Bombay, in quest of further knowledge at St Xavier's College. Six years of university life helped him cultivate his interest in the languages — Gujarati, Prakrit, Sanskrit and Avesta-Pahlavi. Also, it brought him in touch with Dr Irach Taraporevala, Behramgore Anklesaria, Jamshed Unvala and many other Zoroastrian scholars.

More important, it cleared the way for acquaintance with enlightened masters like Sant Muktanandji who taught him that "the things of this world merely tempt us but lead us nowhere." Swami Gangeshwaranandji taught him to value devotion: learn to renounce and (you) will be able to make better use of the gifts of God.

"To decide to renounce is one thing, but to be free from the desires of life is the ultimate truth," said Shankracharya of Dwarka whom Desai had met. Mataji

Anandmayi whose sermons he attended once said, "Man like the fish ever lives in the divine waters of life, still he fails to know the Brahma. Not even an effort is made to know Him." Bejon translated such sermons into life.

His guru Kanu Baba guided him to control anger. "Be humble in life" was his message. The same lesson he learned from the selfless spirit, Jamshed Mehta of Karachi. This saintly being advised him

"not to complain against injustice." "Do not misuse power," was another advice Baba gave Desai when he was to take charge of Boys' Town. Other moral tales like those of Buzurgcheher or Hazrat Ali have had an influence on Desai also.

No mortal soul is above trials and tribulations, not even the saints. Shri Raman Maharshi or Ramakrishna Paramhans were the victims of cancer. Why not, then, a Bejon Desai? Thus a question that constantly plays on his mind is "Who am I?"

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A Well-Wisher

MILESTONES

The age of Zoroastrian brides — as listed in this issue — ranged between 22 and 32 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 23 and 40 years, averaging at 29.

There were 28 births in Bombay in the month of February as per the list from four hospitals. Of the 92 Zoroastrians who died in Bombay, 27 succumbed to heart disease, seven of whom were above the age of 80. The other killers were old age and general debility (10), pneumonia and lung disease (nine) and cancer (six). Four patients each fell prey to accidents, brain disease and hypertension; three to stroke; and two patients each to bronchitis, diabetes, asthma, tuberculosis, liver disease and hypovolumic shock (sudden fall in blood supply). The isolated cases registered last month were: gastro-intestinal bleeding, osteoporosis (loss of bone density due to excessive absorption of calcium and phosphorus from the bone), septicemia, dehydration, arthritis, acidity, atherosclerosis (deposition of fatty substances in the arteries), anorexia (loss of

appetite), angina (sense of suffocation or constriction), Parkinson's disease, tumor, haemorrhage and uremia. A 36-year-old youth was also lost to the community. In the case of one death, the coroner's report was still pending. The youngest age at death was four months as compared to the oldest: 98 years.

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. For example, the birth figures for Bombay are supplied by four hospitals; births in suburban hospitals and nursing homes are not included unless individuals send us information together with a copy of the birth certificate. In the breakup of deaths according to illnesses, especially of the elderly, death is often due to a combination of several diseases.

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

AGRA

Married

Jennifer Pesi Kaka and Porus Hosang Debara on February 22, 1992

AHMEDNAGAR

Born

A boy, Zeyn, to Mani and Rustom Kermani; November 13, 1991

BOMBAY

Born

A boy to Ferzin and Rohin Kanga; February 1, 1992
A girl to Frenny and Zerkis Lakdawalla; February 1
A girl to Lily and Rustom Karai; February 2
A girl to Pervin and Vistasp

Supariwalla; February 3

A girl to Freny and Gev Jabulee; February 3

A girl to Tanaz and Lakesh Kaul; February 4

A girl to Aban and Percy Damania; February 5

A girl to Rashna and Soli Desai; February 5

A girl to Farida and Jamshed Hodiwalla; February 5

A girl to Nilufer and Peter Fernandes; February 8

A girl to Silloo and Aspi Irani; February 8

A boy to Firuzeh and Kaikhushroo Vacha; February 8

A girl to Dinaz and Rohinton Dastoor; February 11

A boy to Jeroo and Kayumars Mehta; February 11

A girl to Behroze and Adi Gara; February 12

A girl to Behroze and Kersi Nazer; February 12

A boy to Azarmi and Sam Billimoria; February 14

A girl to Pervin and Noshir Daruwalla; February 14

A boy to Tanaz and Neville Shroff; February 14

A girl to Farida and Navroze Nanavaty; February 15

A boy, Hormuzd, to Khurshid and Mahiar Panthaki; February 16

A girl to Farida and Dinyar Damania; February 20

A girl to Zenobia and Meher-nosh Karkaria; February 20

A girl, Shara, to Huzan and Rustom Sethna, sister to Kyrus; February 21

A boy to Nilofer and Jehangir Shroff; February 23

A boy to Daisy and Cyrus Patel; February 24

A boy to Roshni and Pahali Sumariwalla; February 24

A girl to Veera and Farokh Bhot; February 28

Married

Havovi Faredoon Mobed-jina and Rohinton Behram Bharucha; December 29, 1991

Amy Hoshi Merchant and Urvakh Naval Hoyvov; January 12, 1992

Dilnavaz Rusi Pithawala and Rohinton Nariman

Jamshedwalla; January 19

Maharukh Sorabji Kasad and Mehernosh Phirozshaw

Billimoria; January 27

Shirin Noshir Choksy of Baroda and Farokh Cawas Poonawalla; January 28

Tuli Dadi Patell and Zubin Rusi Sethna of Georgia, USA; January 31

Bakhtavar Keki Khambata and Darius Minoo Katak; February 4

Daisy Jal Dharampuriwalla and Kersi Dara Bhadha; February 6

Shirin Ardeshir Chhapgar of New Delhi and Marazban

Nariman Zaiwalla; February 7

Zenobia Farrokhdalal and Firdosh Sohrab Balsara; February 9

Manizheh Kekhosro Goshasebi Hasanabadi of Poona and

Shahrugh Sohrab Irani; February 9

Goolsun Minoo Pardiwalla and Barjor Dorab Mevawala; February 9

Oofrish Erachshaw Bhathena and Vistasp Dhunjishaw

Contractor; February 10

Pervin Cawas Bhaisa and Hosidar Shapoor Daji; February 10

Rasna Pestonjee Degamwala of Bulsar and Rohinton Jalejar

Medhora; February 11

Roshni Homi Bhivandiwalla and Hormazd Parvez Sanga; February 13

Vabiz Dali Sadri and Darayus Pesi Dastoor; February 14

Persis Kersi Dhondy and Dinshaw Hoshang Bilimoria; February 15

Naznin Faramroze Khambata and Sharukh Dorabshaw

Govadia; February 16

Parvin Hormusji Pithawala of Surat and Jahabux Dhunjisha

Dumasia of Surat; February 17

Dilshad Faramroze Patel and Firoz Noshir Behramkamdin; February 18

Susan Jehangir Dumasia and Darayus Burjor Dastur; February 20

Roshan Jehanbux Tavadia and Khurshed Erach Bacha; February 21

Rashna Noshir Byramji and Sorab Ratan Patel; February 21

Phirozi Jehangir Irani and Anosh Behram Irani; February 23

Binaifer Homi Palsetia and Cyrus Dhun Gagrati; February 24

Rieana Kali Peshoten and Hiraz Keki Medhora; February 24

Avan Fardoon Mehta and Fredy Sorab Bam; February 25

Died

Sheroo Merwan Irani (61), residing at Silver Ark Apts, Swastik Soc, Jamnagar, 361008; January 30

Rustom Jehangirji Kolah (88), Empress Court, 142, Maharshi

Karve Rd, 400020; February 2

Ratanbai M. Mithaiwala (79),

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Framroze Shavakshaw Kuka (84), 18/A, Saravsar Block, Marazban Clny, Gilder Lane, Tardeo, 400007; February 4
Goolbai Pallonji Warden (90), Wadia Hse, Wodehouse Rd, Colaba, 400005; February 4
Viloo Dinshawji Ragina (46), M/25, Nowroz Baug, Lalbaug, 400012; February 5
Eruch Manekshaw Bobbinmaker (70), 751, Rustum Villa, Dr Ghanti Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; February 6
Nariman Piroshaw Mistry (87), Room no 5, Anjuman Bldg, Parsi Agiary, Parsi Gully, Kalyan, Dist Thane, 400601; February 7
Mery Framroze (Cowasji) Bhagalia (72), 4, Parsi Clny, Kankaria Rd, Ahmedabad 380022; February 8
Fali Phiroze Kummara (71), Ganga Vihar, C Rd, Marine Drive, 400020; February 8
Dinsha Pirojshaw Bana (73),

609, Pateti Block, Jame-Jamshed Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; February 9
Farhad Rumi Daruwalla (36), Neral, Taluka Karjat, Dist Raigad, 410201; February 9
Hilla Nadirsha Dordi (86), Gool Mans, Dinbai Petit Path, Balaram St, 400007; February 9
Naja Maneck Kanga (89), D/10, Cusrow Baug, S. B. Rd, 400039; February 9
Shera Framroze Madan (80), 10/A, Jeevan Asha, 60/A, Peddar Rd, 400016; February 9
Mani Savakshaw Sadri (52), Room no 10, Municipal Chawl no 10, Veera Desai Rd, Andheri, 400058; February 9
Mehru Farrokh Antia (69), A/9, Keval Mhl, 64, Marine Drive, 400020; February 10
Gulchare Keki Irani (64), 13, China Hse, 2nd Koliwada Dockyard Rd, Mazgaon, 400010; February 10
Framroze Dossabhoy Langrana (80), Presswalla Bldg, Lamington Rd, 400008; February 10
Savak Hormusji Oomrigar (71), Dr Engineer Hse, Kashinath Rd, Tardeo, 400034; February 10
Alamai Rustomji Siganporia (75), B/2, Petit Bldg, Bala-

ram St, Grant Rd, 400007; February 10
Afrid Kekhusru Chergeman (75), 604/B, Lakshmi Sadan, Dadar, 400014; February 11
Beji Burjorji Dumasia (63), 2/176, Wadi St, Rustumpura, Surat, 395002; February 11
Nawaz Behramji Siganporia (78), R-11, S. B. Bharucha Baug, Andheri (W), 400058; February 11
Jal Meherwanji Hakim (82), 16/17B, Rustom Baug, Victoria Rd, Byculla, 400027; February 12
Piroja Jamshedji Mistry (84), Union Bldg, 54, Sleater Rd, 400007; February 12
Jal Jehangir Ayem (88), Jer Mans, 19, Gazdar Rd, Chira Bazar, 400002; February 13
Kersasji Sorabji Bacha (72), 4, Parsi Anjuman Bldg, Doodh Naka, Bandar Rd, Kalyan, 421301; February 13
Maneck Hormusji Balsara (70), 1/B, Tata Mills Hsg Soc, Elphinstone Rd, Parel, 400012; February 13
Pirojshah Cawasji Pardiwala (86), U. P. Niwas, Dr S. S. Rao Rd, Lalbaug, 400012; February 13

Framroze Behramji Panthaki (80), Beach View, Bhulabhai Desai Rd, 400026; February 14
Thretona Kersasp Aga (54), Nanik Niwas, Warden Rd, 400026; February 15
Nargish Faram Cooper (68), La Citadelle, M. Karve Rd, 400020; February 15
Meherbai Jamshedji Dadyburjor (81), 27, Cuffe Parade, Colaba, 400005; February 15
Fali Jamshedji Balaporia (74), Ivanhoe, 139, Backbay Recl, 400021; February 16
Nariman Dadabhai Bhesania (81), D, Petit Bldg, Balaram St, 400007; February 16
Shapur Hormusji Dastur (88), P/12, Nowroz Baug, Lalbaug, 400012; February 16
Bomi Sorabji Davierwalla (59), Il-Palazzo, Panchgani, Dist Satara, 415001; February 16
Mani Burjorji Gandevia (67), Room no 5, 561/63, Sunder Mhl, J. Shanker Seth Rd, 400002; February 16
Bachan Manecksha Jalna walla (75), 732, Dinsha House, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; February 16
Gool Edalji Gilder (75), 12, Batliwala Bldg, Khan Est,

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Mahim, 400016; February 17
Tehmi Temurasp Thanevala (76), 56, Anita, Mt Pleasant Rd, 400006; February 17
Homi Dinshaw Katrak (89), 675, Amy Villa, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; February 18
Mehli Framroze Khambatta (67), 1, Navab Manzil, Chum Village, Khar (W), 400052; February 18
Hadokht Jehangir Lelinwala (72), 9, Kasri Mohamudi Bldg, Khetwadi, 14th Lane, 400004; February 18
Dinshaw Darabshaw Mody (73), 2, Laxmi Narayan Sadan, Dr Ambedkar Rd, Dadar, 400014; February 18
Sehra Framroz Singara (86), Neelambar, Peddar Rd, 400026; February 18
Eruch Faramroze Unwalla (66), 132, Bora Bazar St, Fort, 400001; February 18
Hilla Rustomji Vesuna (80), May Villa, 163, Victoria Rd, Byculla, 400027; February 19
Dhunbai Jamshedji Driver (83), 17, Malegamwala Bldg no 2, Mahim, 400016; February 20
Homi Jehangir Major (78), Coover Mans, 12-P, Ramabai Rd, New Gamdevi, 400007;

February 20
Dhanjisha Bomanji Mistry (80), Vijaya Bhavan, Proctor Rd, 400007; February 20
Jalejar Behramji Pastakia (75), 14, Panday Sanatorium, Wodehouse Rd, Colaba, 400005; February 20
Mehera Fakirji Ukaji (75), 12/A, Ratan Abad, Tukaram Javji Rd, Off Sleater Rd, 400007; February 20
Behram Burjorji Bhiwandiwalla (65), P/1, S. B. Bharucha Baug, Andheri (W), 400058; February 21
Naval Kapadia (65), C/o Dossibai Home, Masina Hosp, Victoria Rd, Byculla, 400027; February 21
Jaloo Dadabhai Nazer (66), B/3, Contractor Baug, Mori Rd, Mahim, 400016; February 21
Soonu Homi Dubash (64), 8, Khareghat Clny, 34, Hughes Rd, 400007; February 22
Jal Ardeshir Gilder (70), Aspan, 8, Perry Cross Rd, Bandra, 400050; February 22
Keki Darabshaw Kelawalla (76), 7, Kashinath Bldg, Kashinath Clny, Tardeo, 400034; February 22
Kaikhushru S. Saroshian (Irani)

(71), Room no 20, Shanti Niketan, Padamji St, 400004; February 22
Gustasp Hormasji Unwalla (81), 25, Asha Kunj, Parsiwad, V. P. Rd, 400004; February 22
Hoshang Jehangirji Vajifdar (71), Sophia College, Bhulabhai Desai Rd, 400026; February 22
Rusi Khurshedji Batliwalla (76), 3, Crown Bldg, Uranwala St, Grant Rd (E), 400007; February 23
Ardeshir Pallonji Bhiwandiwalla (70), 8, Parsi Panchayat Qrs, Ambawadi, Malabar Hill, 400006; February 24
Lavji Jahangir Bode (61), 87, Sirin Manzil, Chandanwadi, 400002; February 24
Dina Faramroz Dhala (82), F. S. Parukh Dharamshalla, Hughes Rd, 400007; February 24
Rashna Daraius Mistry (4 mths), Room no 26, Petit Sanatorium, Cumbala Hill, 400036; February 24
Nanabhai Sorabji Writter (71), 10, Abbas Bldg, Jalbhai St, Charni Rd, 400004; February 24
Nusserwanji Sorabji Bacha (91), 5, Jyoti Mhl, 13, Sleater Rd,

400007; February 25
Dhunmai Cowasji Marolia (90), E/10, Cusrow Baug, S. B. Rd, 400039; February 25
Peshotan Darabji Taraporewalla (83), Benkuvan Mans, Wadia St, Tardeo, 400034; February 25
Freny Homi Anklesaria (56), Dubhash Bldg, Kashinath Clny, Tardeo, 400034; February 26
Khorshed Jamshed Cooper (75), Navjivan, Nepean Sea Rd, 400006; February 26
Keki Kaikhushru Irani (75), 6/2, C. J. Clny, Sir Ratan Tata Clny, Tardeo, 400034; February 26
Hoshang Ardeshir Panthaki (59), A, The Reward, 220, Tardeo Rd, 400007; February 26
Khorshed Homi Patel (83), Via Sanjan, Nargol, 396135; February 26
Mani Eruch Pestonji (98), 6, Station Ter, Sleater Rd, 400007; February 26
Coomi Jal Tarapore (71), A/16, Dattaguru Co-op Hsg Soc, Deonar, 400088; February 26
Pesi Pallonji Balsara (80), C/79, Contractor Baug, Mori Rd, Mahim, 400016; February 27

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Pesi Pallouji Balsara (80), c/79, Contractor Baug, Mori Rel, Mahim, 400016, February 27
Boman Cursetji (74), 29, Karelwadi, Thakurdwar, 400002; February 27

Freny Nariman Engineer (81), B, Sargam, Shripal Complex, Virar, 401303; February 27
Khorshed Hoshang Master (75), 1/A/6, Tata Hsg Soc, Dr Ambedkar Rd, 400012; February 27

Perin Keki Patel (66), B/6, A. H. Wadia Baug, Parel Tank Rd, 400033; February 27
Minocher Framji Soonawala (92), 1/A, Sagar Sangeet, 58, S. B. Rd, 400005; February 27
Kaikhushroo Dinshaji Todiwala (85), 3, Ready Money Bldg, Sir Ratan Tata Rd, Tardeo, 400034; February 27

Manijer Rustomji Gandevia (87), Parochisty, Lallubhai Park, Andheri (W), 400058; February 28

Hormusji Naoraji Naterwala (81), 692, Chinoy Bldg, Dr Dinshaw Master Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; February 28

Dinamai Nadirsha Sarkari (83), Room no 2, 18, Avabai Bldg, Sleater Rd, Grant Rd, 400007; February 28

Mahaynoo Noshir Irani (73), Beg Mohamed Mans, 3, Chowpatty Sea Face, 400007; February 29

Gustad Vicaji Wadia (64), D, Bhiwandiwalla Ter, Dhobitalao, 400002; February 29
Ratan Sorabji Wadia (68), Old Mani Mhl, 79, Mathew Rd, 400004; February 29

CALCUTTA

Born
 A girl, *Khushnoo*, to *Farida*

and *Kersoo Indorewala*; December 10, 1991
 Twins (boys), *Bezan* and *Umez*, to *Diana* and *Cawsi Lilawala*; December 21

Married

Meher Cawas Katrak and *Abhijit Mookerjee*; January 21, 1992

Died

Soli Pestonji Bulsara; December 5, 1991
Hilla Jamshed Tangree, mother of *Tehmi Bilimoria*, Beroze Bilimoria and *Shenaz Dut*; February 4, 1992
Rusi Burjorji Gimi, husband of *Zarin* and father of *Freny Daroga*, *Prochy Meua* and *Tehnaz Bahadurji*; February 21
Ardeshtir Hormusji Sabawalla, husband of *Jalamai* and father of *Soli* and *Mini*; February 29

KANPUR

Died
Aran Dastoor of *Calcutta*, wife of *Jehangir* and mother of *Yezdezard*, *Tehnaz* and *Kaikhushroo*; January 20

NAGPUR

Died
Tehmi Navroji Bhathena; January 14

POONA

Died
Katty Keki Irani (62), 895, Synagogue St, 411001; January 7
Noshir Ardeshtir Press (84), 952, Nana Peth, 411002; January 9
Khodadad Boman Irani (78), 880, Boottee St, 411001; January 11
Framroze Sorabjee Ghaswalla (70), 14, Mody Clny, 411001;

January 31

Goolbanoo Framroze Jijina (80), 514, Nalini Apts, Sholapur Rd, 411001; February 3
Sorabji Fakirji Jokhi (77), 1939, West St, 411001; February 5
Meher Jehangir Pavri (91), 850, Dastur Meher Rd, 411001; February 17

SURAT

Died
Banubai Pirojshaw Bhathena (94), Popat Mohallo, Nanpura, 395001; February 3
Dinshaw Pallonji Bodhanwala (83), Unwalla Bldg, Nanpura, 395001; February 3
Hillamai Naoraji Lashkari (79), Gaurang Apt, Nanpura, 395001; February 13
Dollyben Doshabhai Tadiwala (70), Bungalow No 8, Vrindavan Society, Athwalines, 395001; February 18
Jerbanu Jamshedji Turel (68), Turelwadi, Saiyedpura, 395003; February 26

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CALIFORNIA

Married
Bakhtawar Elavia and *Rayomand Bhadha*; December 28, 1991

CHICAGO

Born
 A girl, *Tina*, to *Munira* and *Farrokh Siganporia*, sister to *Farrah*; February 7, 1992
 A boy, *Justin*, to *Patty* and *Farahmand Kadkhodaian*, brother to *Armand*; February 8

KARACHI

Born
 A girl, *Farizeh*, to *Shirin* and *Mazditar Ogra*;

September 22, 1991

A girl, *Natasha*, to *Nazneen* and *Percy Bharucha*; November 12
 A girl, *Zara*, to *Kashmira* and *Freydun Bhader*; November 14
 A boy, *Timur*, to *Tenaz* and *Aspandiyar Minwalla*; November 26
 A girl, *Nasha*, to *Niloufer* and *Adil Mavalwalla*; December 12
 A girl, *Anushae*, to *Kermin* and *Soli Parakh*; December 17

Married

Tushnamaity Aspi Trombaywala and *Jamshed Minwalla*; September 12
Rukshana Jamshed Bhapoo and *Aspi Dinshaw Charna*; September 19
Delara Sam Jamsaji and *Sheryar Minoo Hirjikaka*; October 23
Merengiz Irani and *Hoshang Irani*; October 25
Anita Faredun Mistry and *Savak J. Meherhomji*; November 11
Anita Faram Karanjia and *Rustom Noshir Asli*; December 16
Shirin Behram Kavasji and *Rayomand Hoshedar Kotwal*; December 19
Armin Jimi Mobed and *Yazdi Jimi Mehta*; December 26
Shermin Polad and *Cyrus Noshirwan Cowasjee*; December 27
Sonita Lawyer, daughter of *Zarin* and *Hoshang*, and *Rustom Amaria*, son of *Lily* and *Pesi*; January 30, 1992

Died

Jer Piroshah Lawyer (78); December 31, 1991

PENNSYLVANIA

Born
 A girl, *Freny*, to *Lily* and *Aspi Dastur*; January 30, 1992

CORRECTION

A boy, *Misharr*, was born to *Binaifer* and *Rusi Rutnagar* on December 27, 1991. The father's name was mistakenly printed as *Aspi* in *Parsiana*, January 1992. The error is regretted.

TOTALS (for this Issue)

Born: Boys 14, Girls 27
 Married: Parsi 40
 Intercommunal 1
 Died: 112

Compiled by Roxana A. Mirza

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