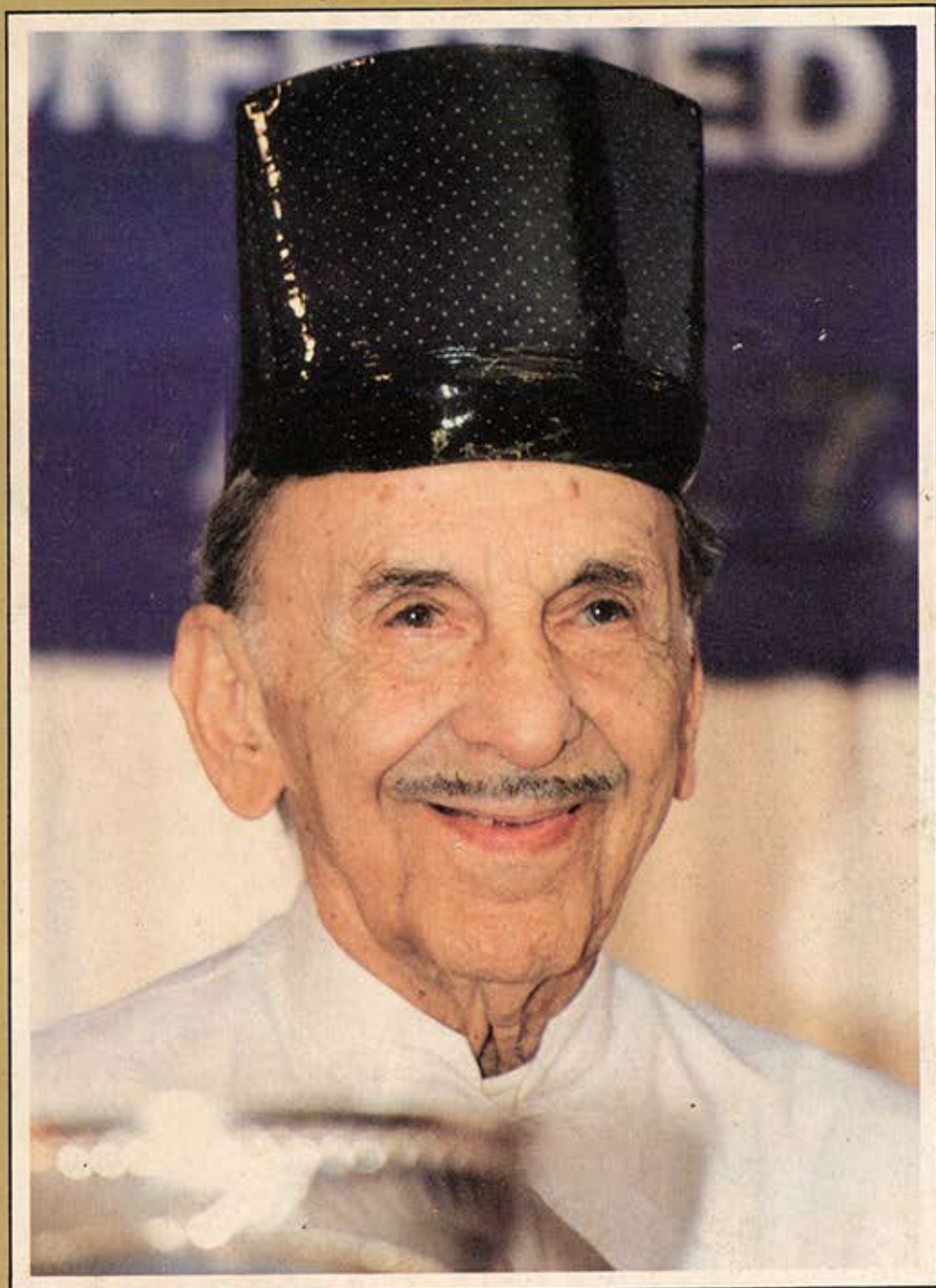


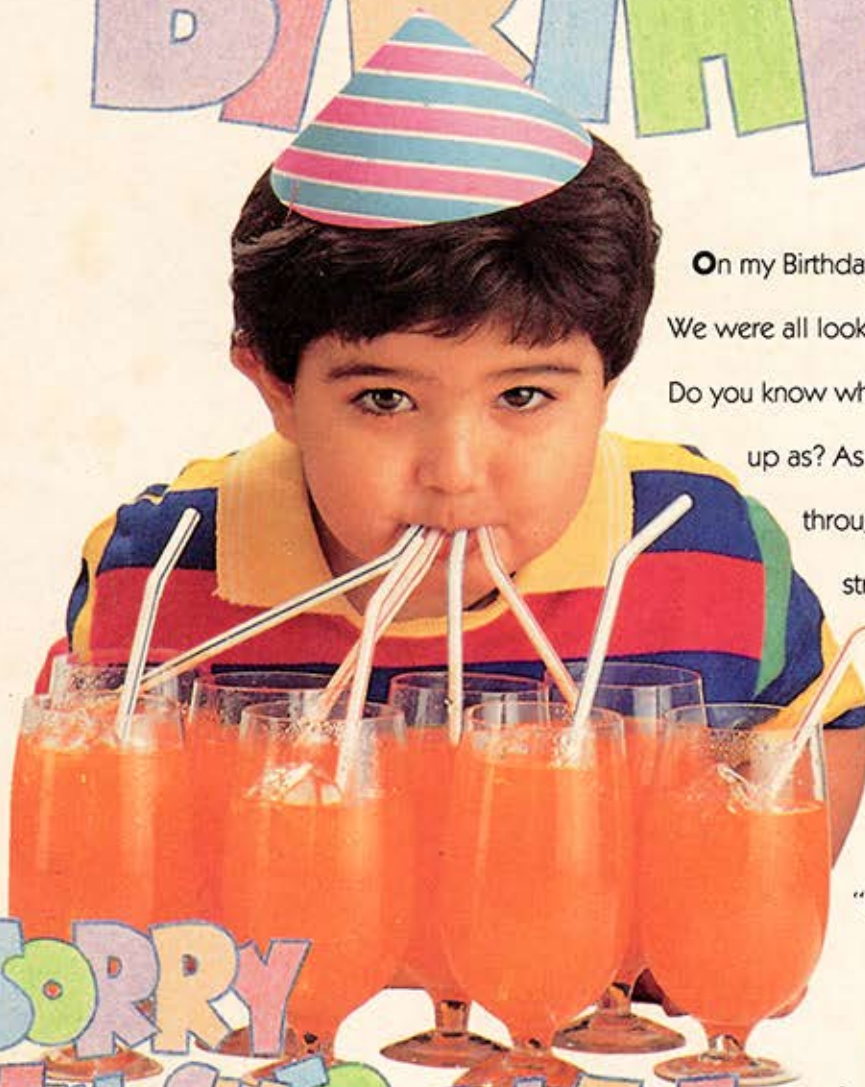
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APRIL 1992 Rs 12



BHARAT RATNA JRD TATA

HAPPY BIRTHDAY



On my Birthday there was a fancy dress party.

We were all looking for Ustaad.

Do you know what he dressed

up as? As Jumbo! And

through a long

straw in his

trunk he

drank up

everyone else's Rasna! And what

did he say when we caught him?

"Happy Birthday. I love you Rasna!"



**SORRY
I FINISHED ALL THE
RASNA**



Orange • Pineapple • Lime • Shahi Gulab • Kala Khatta • Kool Khus • Kesar Elaichi • Masala Soda (Jal Jeera) • Cola Cola • Mango Ripe
One glass = 180 ml

Parsiana

April 1992
Volume 14 Number 10

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 Unsigned letters or those without an address will not be published.

"Things fall into place"

I was delighted to read what Arnavaz Mama wrote about Homai Modi ("Things fall into place," *Parsiana*, February 1992). As a past member of the Young Collegians' Zoroastrian Association (YCZA) many years ago, I had very little contact with Homai Modi. Since then I have come to know more about her. What perhaps few know, is her private life and how courageously she turned her misfortune into an opportunity for developing her great administrative talent for the benefit of her community.

For her great faith in her religion and a strong belief that "things fall into place" I admire her greatly. She put aside her own personal sorrow and plunged into working for others. She has truly practised her religion. We need many more Homai Modis today to show our little community that "practice is better than precept."

Ms PAREEN LALKAKA

"A Zoroastrian in Japan"

The letter "A Zoroastrian in Japan" (Readers' Forum, *Parsiana*, February 1992) does not give the full details. I am happy to add the following:

Mr Rustomji Vasunia and Mr Framroze Vasunia started the firm of Messrs Vasunia and Company at Kobe (Japan). They were later joined by their two other brothers Mr Pesi and Mr Homi Vasunia. All the brothers worked together. They were all intelligent and hardworking. Their main business was trading in silk piecegoods.

The Company flourished largely because of Framroze and his popular relationship with members of the Silk Merchants' Association. At that time, it was an honor to be president of the Silk Merchants' Association and candidates for the office avidly solicited votes in their favor. Framroze never cared for the presidency. So a delegation of the Association members comprising Sindhis, Marwaris and Gujaratis approached Framroze to become president. Framroze thanked them and courteously declined this offer. They continued to press him, but to no avail. Unfortunately he channelised his intelligence only in his trading business; he would also have been famous if he had applied his mind to the manufacturing industries.

During World War II, luckily all the brothers were in Bombay. Today, except Homi, all the brothers, staff members Phiroze Mehta, Minoo Wadia, Minoo Master, Rusi Billimoria (Dandiwalla) and other Hindu staff members have expired. Mr Homi Vasunia and myself from the staff are leading an active life though retired.

JEHANGIR M. ENGINEER

"Safeguarding the rights..."

In the article "Safeguarding the rights, privileges, benefits..." (*Parsiana*, January 1992) there is a reference to a recent incident I experienced at the Bomanji Merwanji Mevawalla Agiary near Victoria Gardens in Byculla, Bombay.

To put the record right I would like to clarify as under:

After the 10th day ceremonies of my mother's demise, the panthaky of the Mewawalla Agiary, mentioned to my father to ensure that I do not ever visit this agiary in future, whether as a devotee or for any future death ceremonies that the

family held at the Agiary.

He (the panthaky) reiterated that he was of this very firm opinion and if the trustees of the Agiary were asked to intervene by my family, to permit me admission to the Agiary for my mother's prayers, he would refuse to conduct such prayers and would be ready to resign on this score.

I may add that I rarely visit this Agiary as I have been residing in Worli since my marriage 17 years ago.

Ms ROSHNI ANAND

"Mozart and..."

There is a discrepancy in "Mozart and a Zoroastrian" (Zoroastrians Abroad, *Parsiana*, January 1992). The article based on "Mozart and a Zoroastrian" in the Informal Religious Meetings' (IRM) newsletter (November-December 1991) has been ascribed to Dorab Patel, retired justice of the Supreme Court of Pakistan. The author of the IRM article is Mr Dorab J. Patel, a friend of mine who is closely associated in IRM activities and is a trustee of its fund.

VIRASP P. MEHTA

Karachi

Arnavaz Mama replies:

We regret the assumption that there is only one Dorab Patel in Karachi and apologize to both gentlemen.

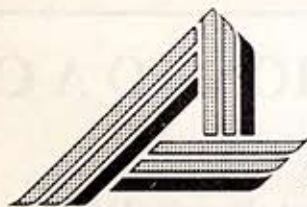
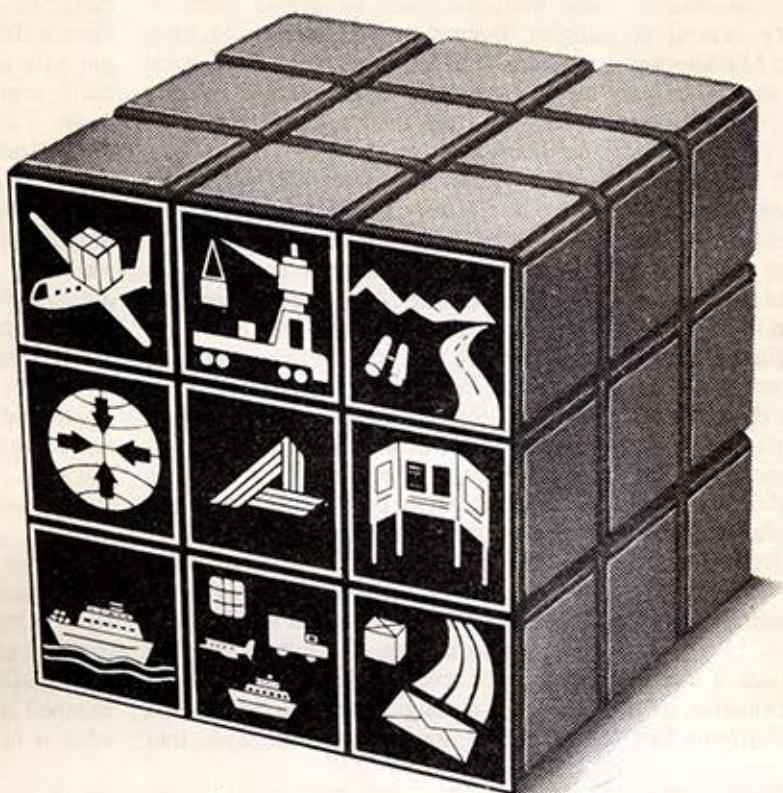
"The Purifying..."

Ervad Darius N. Sethna in "The Purifying Prescriptions" (Readers' Forum, *Parsiana*, January 1992) calls Dr Ali A. Jafarey a "self proclaimed Muslim scholar (whose) motive is to distort, manipulate and convert the Zoroastrian teachings to suit his Muslim Iranians... and make it acceptable for them to swallow the pill."

I would say it is our own fault if anything of this sort is really happening today. Dr A. A. Jafarey is right when he claims that in Iran nirang is not administered at navjotes or weddings, and I don't think Mobed R. Shahzadi will be ready to swallow the pill either and provide *gomez* at the ceremonies or stop signing wedding certificates and performing navjotes in which *gomez* is not taken.

It is a question of the influence of the majority community on the minority. In India among the Hindus the cow is sacred and drinking bull's urine would not be looked down upon. In Iran among the

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majority community, the Muslims, urine is a defiler and a person coming in contact with it requires purification. Here you cannot differentiate, justify and prove that bull's urine, call it *nirang*, *geushmaesmana* or *gomez*, can purify instead of being a defiler. As it is, non-Muslims are considered untouchable. If you add to it a urine drinking non-Muslim, it is an odd position to get into.

About conversion Ervad Sethna says "like one cannot choose one's parents, one cannot choose one's religion — one is born into it by the master plan of the cosmos..." I think he means the cosmos has all the religions included in its master plan, but then all other religions are open to conversion and even have used coercion for conversion. Thus if we accept interested, sincere converts we would not be disrupting the cosmos plan more than other religions but rather we could say it is part of the cosmos plan to change the thinking of a person, from, for example, saying a '*Doroug-e-maslahati*' (a lie for good reason) to saying no lies '*Homat o Hukh o Havaresth*.'

I think Dr Jafarey has made a sincere suggestion regarding the formation of a Council of Mobeds ("The Purifying Pre-

scriptions," *Parsiana*, October 1991) but if such a council would include scholars, businessman, physicians, engineers, etc it would be more broad based. Problems and solutions could be studied from all angles. Even those with whom we do not agree could be included in the council for they could raise their opinions in the council and the final solution would be multifaceted.

We should not forget Iran where the origin and history of Zoroastrianism lies. The Muslim population know of their ancestors being Zoroastrians and want to know about their old religion. Many regret that their ancestors had given in. Now if you go to Sazeman Fravahar bookshop in Tehran you will find more books on the Zoroastrian religion written by Dr Ali Akbar Jafarey, Dr Pour Dawoud, Hashem Razi, Bohran, Hussain Vahidi, etc; but no one has translated into Persian what has been written in India or around the world. The Iranian Zarthushti hears Mobed R. Shahzadi at '*Porsa*' ceremonies finding parallels and trying to explain things in light of what the Muslim majority believes; he reads in a Persian book on his religion that the sudreh and kusti are meant to divide the body into

two parts; the upper part, the pure one, the mind, and the lower part, '*Zer-e-shakam*' the sexual part; thus he feels that the pant and shirt do the same job more practically. So don't be surprised or blame them if they stop wearing the kusti to begin with and replace the sudreh with the easily available '*ganji* (vest).'

In Yazd, from where the majority of the Iranian Zarthushtis come, there is only one fire-temple, which is again considered an '*Asar-e-bastani*' (historical monument) and is partly open to visitors. The non-Zoroastrian visitors outnumber us.

It is time we change our ways and look beyond the borders. It is time to be constructive. Instead of booing our critics it is time we find answers and teach them to our children. Don't just say cosmic plan, full stop. Prove it. Today's child needs more reasons than his father. Give them to him.

In Iran the dokhmas have been closed down, again because of the Muslim influence. Our people lacked the knowledge to prove that the system had a solid base. The walls were often broken into or climbed and photographs taken to find out what it is like inside and the dead were

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not left in peace. So they were closed down during the Shah's reign. Now more than 30 years have passed. The dokhma has lost its importance to the community. Today you find young motorcyclists using its slopes to perform stunts.

The Zoroastrian community in Iran is the smallest minority. The problems of the country make itself felt more on such minorities. For 10 years ending 1991 all anjumans were frozen by the Government. The Central Anjuman of Yazd was grabbed by a person whose faith as a Zoroastrian was under question. He misused all the Anjuman's powers and funds received from the Government endowment during this period, causing untold difficulties to the community.

Has the Parsi Punchayet or other organizations given a thought to their fellow Zoroastrians in the land of Asho Zarathushtra? I could say Imam Khomeini has done more for the community than any one else. Today Iran is a religious country and so the Zoroastrians are more religious too. It is compulsory for our children to learn the *Avesta* by heart as part of their studies at school. We had more young mobeds in the last 10 years than in any other period. Today the Ira-

nian Zarthushti seeks more information about his religion and it is the Jafareys that provide it, are known, respected and quoted. So please redirect your efforts, time, energy and resources.

FARIBORZ MEHRABAN RAHNAMEEN

Tehran, Iran

I become more and more concerned at the limited and myopic vision of the orthodox in our community. Take, for instance, the letter on the subject by J. Colah (*Parsiana*, January 1992) in which he assumes that Brig N. B. Grant, being an army officer, "must be fully aware of the fact that there are certain rules, regulations, traditions and disciplines..." which he would not question. He feels that we Zoroastrians also have our rules, traditions, etc which we must observe without question.

What J. Colah fails to appreciate is that the army of today is very, very different from the army of, say, 1,000 years ago, or of 500 years ago, or even of 1914-19 A.D. Since the modern Indian army is modelled on the British army, I take it that certain rules and disciplines have changed; the attitudes of officers towards those under their command, and of the men towards their officers have changed.

But these changes have not weakened or eroded the discipline in any way — but have made regiments and the army in general much more effective, disciplined and respected, as the British army.

As more and more is known of psychology and the human mind, the understanding of stresses and strains of a soldier and his life has grown, and therefore the rules and regulations governing them have changed. For example, to take an extreme case, when someone "leaves his post" in time of battle, or deserts because his nerves can no longer stand the terrible stress of seeing his friends and comrades killed, or the noise of gunfire, he may be disciplined, or receive medical care but he will not be shot, as he was as recently as during World War I just 78-79 years ago.

In the same issue of *Parsiana* Ervad Darius Sethna writes:

"One who pollutes, contaminates and adulterates the order of nature, by forsaking his/her religion of birth — by inter-marriage or by conversion... commits the paramount crime of creating disorder in the functions of nature, which reflects today in our so-called modern ways of life."

If there is pollution, contamination, etc

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in our community, it is not the result of intermarriage or conversion but the result of reducing and minimizing the Holy Prophet's teachings, by removing from it the divine order of Asha, the cosmic order, which is also the soul of Ahura Mazda.

All the "disorders in the function of nature," and in men and women's lives stem from the erosion of spiritual and moral values in individual lives and in society as a whole, which is not peculiar to our community alone but to mankind as a whole.

We have remained static for centuries, going through the motions of customs and traditions while we have left their religious and spiritual meanings far behind until they have been forgotten. This has led to stagnation and lifelessness of the soul. As a community we are suffering from spiritual inertia. How can this malady be cured if the wrong diagnosis is made?

Ms PERIN DIVECHA
Kent, England

Montessori training

The Association Montessori Internationale of the Netherlands is organizing the sixth training in Bombay from mid-July, 1992. This is open to all those interested in early childhood education and is recognized internationally with job opportunities in foreign countries too besides being accepted in Bombay. Those interested are requested to contact the director, at Shri Jain Mahila Samaj, H Cross Road, near Marine Lines Station, Bombay 400002.

Ms ZARIN MALVA
Director, Association Montessori Internationale,
Bombay

An intact astral body

From the humanitarian point of view, it seems laudable that an individual should donate his physical body, after death, for physiological research or parts of it to help a fellow human in need. But from the divine point of view, there ensues more harm than good in this kind of transplantation for the following reasons:

•After dropping his physical body at death a human being continues to live in his astral and mental bodies till these are also discarded and he returns again to earth in a physical form to work out his remaining karmas. The astral body which survives after death for some period, must have its physical parts intact in order to make spiritual progress. For example, if the physical eyes of an individual are donated after his death, his astral body will

be bereft of eyes and in his astral blindness he will suffer great pain.

•Because the donor will be constantly attracted to vibrations of parts of his own physical body, now embedded in someone else's human form, he will find it difficult to sever links with this earth.

•The person who receives the donated parts (the donee) incurs a great karmic obligation which he has to pay back with interest to the donor in another life. And by deferring his own present suffering, he will have to pay his karmic debts in harsher terms in his next life.

•Those who remove physical parts from a dead individual without having obtained his consent during his lifetime, carve out a bad karma for themselves for which they will have to pay dearly either in this life or in some future life.

Of course, when an individual dies bereft of certain parts of his physical body by birth or by accident or necessary surgery, he does not incur karma and his astral body after death remains intact and does not suffer.

Now why is a person born in a particular religion? It is in order to master the line of vibrations of that religion. Every person is born as a bundle of vibrations which respond to the vibrations of prayers and rituals of that particular faith. It is therefore wise and safe to abide by its dictates; acting otherwise proves harmful.

A Zoroastrian is born with such vibrations that his or her astral body is not "fire-proof," unlike that of a Hindu. The prayers and rituals of a Zoroastrian during his lifespan, and even after his death, do not make his astral body "fire-proof." As a result, when a Zoroastrian is cremated, his or her astral body gets consumed in the fire together with the physical body and not in accordance with the divine process of dropping bodies one after another at the right time. Hence the individual carves out great suffering for himself. It is only in certain cases, e.g. when a Zoroastrian dies accidentally in a fire, that God's permission is granted to the divine hierarchy to help the victim in saving his astral body from being destroyed.

It may happen one day that a divine soul born among Zoroastrians will add or vary certain prayers and rituals to bring about a change of vibrations that will make his astral body "fire-proof" too, like that of a Hindu. But as things stand it is most unwise for a Zoroastrian to opt for cremation.

Ms NERGES F. DAMANIA

Edited by Amavaz S. Mama

SCHOLARSHIP FOR DENTISTRY

Applications are invited from deserving Zoroastrian students having passed the Std XII/HSC or equivalent, with minimum 75% marks in Physics, Chemistry and Biology.

The scholarship is towards securing admission in a recognized Dental College in South India for degree of Bachelor of Dental Surgery.

Applications giving details of name, age, sex, nationality and religion, attempts, parents' occupation and income should reach

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Events and Personalities

Elections in Poona

Heading the new board of trustees of the Poona Parsee Panchayat (PPP) is Dara K. Irani who will officiate as president for the year 1992. Thereafter the president's seat will be filled by rotation from amongst the six other trustees who were elected to the board on December 5, 1991 at the Pudumjee Hall, notes a press release from the PPP.

Working with Irani for the 1992-96 term will be trustees Jamshed S. Bokdawala, Minoo P. Davierwalla, Marzban C. Kaikobad, Dr (Ms) Perwin M. Davierwalla, Boman E. Amaria and Dinshaw S. Anklesaria.

Environmental award

Conservation of water in industry in India and tertiary treatment of municipal sewerage is Prof Soli J. Arceivala's major contribution. Master planning of storm water drainage and sewer rehabilitation for Greater Bombay is the important World Bank funded project of which Arceivala has been appointed co-director. Such outstanding assignments in the field of engineering research and design earned Arceivala, the managing director of Associated Industrial Consultants (India) Private Limited (AIC), the Environmental Engineering Design Award, 1991, notes the company's January '92 newsletter. The award came to him from the Institution of Engineers (India) at the Indian Engineering Congress in Poona on December 22.

Keeping things environment friendly is the aim of AIC, a Bombay based consultancy company, founded 30 years ago to specialize in environmental pollution control work. A team of about 40 professionals work under Arceivala to service AIC's major clients which include Hindustan Lever, Tata Oil Mills, Rallis India, Premier Automobiles, Mafatlal, the International Airports Authority of India, the Poona Municipal Corporation and the Punjab Water Supply and Sewerage Board, amongst others. While AIC accepts assignments in India, its sister con-

cern Trans Environ Consultants (TEC) manages projects outside the country, the company brochure informs.

For 14 years Arceivala served as regional advisor for environmental health with the World Health Organisation's (WHO) regional office in Europe and also officiated as chief of WHO's South-East Asia region covering 11 countries. Before his stint with WHO, the engineer was the director of the National Environmental Engineering Research Institute (NEERI) in Nagpur.

The 66-year-old environmentalist who has authored three books on his subject of specialization is affiliated with educational associations in different corners of the world. Many a technical institute in Yugoslavia, Turkey, Sri Lanka, Venezuela, Muscat, Bangkok and Netherlands has Arceivala on its visiting faculty, the last one having him for the past 18 years, his bio data mentions. He has also been credited with introducing the first post-graduate program in environmental engineering at the Bombay University. At the Victoria Jubilee Technical Institute he served as vice president, rector and head of the civil and sanitary engineering department, further informs his bio data.



Honor for prosthodontist

At the World Congress of the International Research Committee of Oral Implantology (IRCOI) attended by 450 implantologists from 16 countries, Dr Firoze D. Mirza was honored with a gold medal. The meet was in Berlin in end November, as reported in *The Afternoon Despatch and Courier* of December 10, 1991.

President of the Indian section of the IRCOI and founder chairman of the Bombay Society of Oral Implantologists, Mirza was reportedly the first to introduce dental implantology in 1962 and porcelain technology in 1970, according to a write-up in *Mid-Town Musing* of January 22, 1992. In addition to his appointment as honorary dental surgeon to the Governor of Maharashtra, Mirza also managed the prosthodontic department at the Nair Hospital Dental College which he had been heading for the past 25 years. Before he accepted professorship at the Governmental Dental College, Mirza was in the USA for seven years. When in the States, Mirza qualified for his masters from the Tufts University in Boston and later served as associate professor in two top American universities, informs a press release from the family.



Mirza: researching dental implantology. (Left) Arceivala (in suit) receiving the Environmental Engineering Design Award

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Presently he is chairman of the Continuous Education Program of the Indian Dental Association. He has 62 scientific papers to his credit and has been invited to lecture in different cities in Europe, USA and the Far East, further reads his curriculum vitae.

Rajiv Gandhi medalists

The Rajiv Gandhi Gold Medal for Excellence in Management was awarded to Ms Zeenia Lawyer, partner of Associated Breweries and Distilleries (ABD) while the Gold Medal of Merit for Industry was bestowed on Rusi Engineer, managing director of Industrial Boilers Limited. The awards were presented on January 30, 1992, under the aegis of the Special Executive Magistrates' Directory Committee, at the hands of Ramrao Adik, minister for finance, Government of Maharashtra at a special function at the Indian Merchants' Chamber.

Hailed as one of the leading woman entrepreneurs of the country, Lawyer has guided ABD, the manufacturers of the popular beer London Pilsner, into achieving the number one slot in Bombay, informs the company release. In the foreseeable future, the businesswoman who is reportedly the first to inculcate the pub culture in Bombay, plans to open a chain of exclusive 'London pubs' in the city.

A well-known figure in the field of boilers, being the founder member and immediate past president of the Indian Boiler Manufacturers' Association, Engineer has now adopted a new manufacturing technology. The acute shortage of fossil fuel has made Engineer opt for re-

Adik presenting the Rajiv Gandhi gold medals to Lawyer (left) and Engineer



newable energy resources. He has been vice president of the Energy and Fuel Users' Association and has chaired the energy committee of the National Alliance of Young Entrepreneurs, his bio data notes.

Wildlife benefactor

The White Pelican painting autographed by Prince Philip was presented to Sohrab Pirojsha Godrej who qualified for the 25th Anniversary Benefactors Award from the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF). The painting of the white pelican is particularly symbolic for it is the



Godrej (left) shaking hands with Prince Philip

first of the avians to be taken off the list of endangered species in Canada, according to a press release. The chairman of the Godrej companies who was conferred the award at Buckingham Palace last year has joined the select band of 25 donors who have earned this recognition.

Founder trustee and vice president of

the WWF (India), Godrej was instrumental in establishing the Indian headquarters of the WWF at the Pirojsha Godrej National Conservation Centre in Lodhi Estate, New Delhi. His concern about nature conservation is evident at Pirojshanagar, the Godrej industrial garden township in Bombay, which boasts a large expanse of mangrove forests "perhaps the best on the Indian west coast," as notes the press release. In a city like Bombay where more than 12.5 million people live in intense congestion, Godrej believes that every tree is a symbol of hope.

To arouse environment consciousness at festival time, Godrej has initiated two movements: Sarvajanik Holi curbs the wanton destruction of trees while Sarvajanik Diwali marks the occasion as the festival of lights rather than as a festival of noise, further informs the release.

Amrapali in London

Fifty-one shows of the dance ballet *Amrapali*, directed by Hosi Mulla, were booked even prior to the premier in London. The British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), impressed by the program, shot scenes from the ballet and interviewed Mulla along with his partner Mahendra Boricha in 1991. The same duo was also responsible for the designing and stitching of the costumes, according to a write-up in the *Jam-e-Jamshed* of December 1, 1991.

Another production, *Shakuntala*, after a successful running of 40 shows in London gained popularity in the States where



(Clockwise from top left)
homeopath Master,
dentist Mistry and
solicitors Nanavati,
Contractor
and Pardiwala



Mulla was invited to direct the artists at the Kala Academy in Chicago.

With his dance troupe Shiv Shakti Kala Kendra formed in 1975, Mulla has performed Indian classical and folk dances in East Africa, Canada, USA, Hong Kong, Japan, Korea and Australia besides several places in India.

Starting his dance training at five years of age, Mulla learnt Kathak from Pandit Gopi Krishna and Guru Vijay Kumar Shreshtha, and Bharat Natyam under Guru Rajlaxmi and Guru Umadevi Dutt. He now conducts his own classes in these two dance styles at Peddar Road in Bombay, further mentions the write-up.

Master on US television

For yet another time noted Bombay homeopath Dr Farokh Jamshed Master featured on Channel 63 of the New York television. Last October he appeared live on a program on "Homeopathy and Skin Diseases," informs a press release. On the Montreal television the doctor discussed "Is Homeopathy Slow-Acting?"

He also addressed a public gathering in La Plama, California on the "Changing Concepts of Homeopathic Medicine." His tour through the UK saw him lecture at the London College of Homeopathy, the Classical College of Homeopathy and at the Hahnemann College of Homeopathy, notes the release. He was specially invited to the Third Annual Congress of the UK Homeopathic Doctors' Association where his distinction in this field of medicine was recognized with a post-

graduate certificate presented to him by Siez Hahnemann, the great great grandson of Dr Samuel Hahnemann, considered the father of homeopathy.

In India the University of Rajasthan has reportedly selected him for a doctorate degree, the press release further informs.

Dental excellence

Outstanding academic performance at the Bachelor of Dental Surgery examinations earned Dr (Ms) Saiesha K. Mistry a string of awards and prizes.

Mistry's academic excellence in 1991 qualified her for a prize from the Indian section of the International College of Dentists as also another one from the Indian Dental Association. Her performance in community dentistry and conservative dentistry won her separate prizes, informs a press release from the family. Being the highest scorer among Zoroastrians, Mistry was conferred the Dr Dinshaw Maneckji Surveyor Memorial Merit Certificate from the Zoroastrian Dentists Organization.

The young dentist who is the daughter of eminent orthodontist Dr Keki Mistry plans to qualify in prosthodontics (a branch of dentistry specializing in the artificial replacement of missing teeth) expecting to make the most useful contribution in this field.

Her expertise in table tennis has brought the talented youngster an inter-collegiate sports award, further mentions the release.

Students excel in law

The righteous Parsis are always known to fight for the right or rather their perception of the right. Pursuing legal battles with fresh fervor will now be a new crop of Parsi solicitors and lawyers who have excelled at different law examinations in the recent past.

Ms Sanobar P. Nanavati was reportedly the only candidate from India to appear and pass the examinations of Solicitor — England and Wales in November last year. After she completed her articles in India, the scholarships she received from the R. D. Sethna Trust and the Higher Education Committee of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet enabled her to appear for the examinations abroad, notes a press release.

When a student at Queen Mary School, the H. R. College of Commerce and Economics and the Government Law College, Nanavati had won several prizes at the Bharat Scouts and Guides competitions, elocution competitions and government moot court competitions.

In the meanwhile, at the solicitors exams conducted by the Bombay Incorporated Law Society, 135 candidates appeared of whom only eight were successful, three of them being Parsis. Ms Shiraz Adi Contractor of Bulsar scored the highest followed by Mehernosh R. Pardiwala who secured a second rank. The other Zoroastrian to qualify was Ms Rashna Zaiwala, informs Dr R. D. Asana from Bulsar.

Contractor works as an assistant at the solicitors' firm Dhruv and Company. Earlier she had done her articles at Crawford and Bailey after completing her education from St Joseph English Teaching High School, Bulsar, the Sydenham College and the Government Law College.

Pardiwala has completed two years of articles at Mulla and Mulla and Cragie, Blunt and Caroe under his mentor Burjor Antia. With an impressive moot court record, having been invited to the South-Asian Regional Commonwealth Mooting Contest, Pardiwala has been the recipient of the Government Open Merit Scholarship for five consecutive years from 1985-90, mentions his bio data.

Heading the list of successful students at the LLM examinations conducted by the South Gujarat University last year was Khurshed Noshir Variava of Bulsar,

reports *The Bombay Samachar* of December 8. He is reportedly the only Parsi candidate from Gujarat to have secured this distinction.

Cycling champs

At the State Cycling Championships held in Bombay, early last December, Ms Shiraz Palkhiwalla came first in all the four events in the girls under 18 category. In the one km sprint, one km time trial, two km individual pursuit, and the five km points race where Palkhiwalla stood first, Ms Shazneen Arethna came in second, informs a write-up in the *Indian Express* of December 12, 1991, reporting on the meet in early December.

In the women's category, Palkhiwalla came in first in the one km sprint and the three km individual pursuit. In the other two women's events — the one km time trial and the lap race (six laps) — won by national champion Ms Jasmin Arethna, Palkhiwalla stood second.

In the boys under 18, Palkhiwalla's brother Astaad won all the events: one km sprint, one km time trial, three km individual pursuit and the 15 km points race. In the men's section, Astaad stood first in the one km time trial, one km sprint and the 1,000 m mass start while Firdaus Irani stood second in the one km sprint, 1,000

m mass start and the 4,800 m mass start, further informs the *Express* write-up.

The 'Goodyear' woman

The paucity of entries forced the organizers, Sportsraft, to reduce the Goodyear



Vakil: on the fast track

Women's Car Rally to a one-day event. "When the decision was taken, strangely enough the entries flowed in and the la-

dies said: 'What a shame we can't have a two-day run.' But that is women for you; they truly can be unpredictable," reads a press release from the organizers.

Of the 22 cars that were flagged off from Ramada Inn on November 30, 1991 only 15 completed the 200 km run from Bombay to Shahapur and the one to come first was Ms Farah Vakil's. Her penalty point count being the lowest helped Vakil from Poona defeat Ms Nisha Sutaria, last year's winner, the release reads.

Many drivers got lost along the way due to faulty navigation. But Vakil was ably assisted by Zoru Bhathena (son of rallyists Katie and Darayus) and attributed her success "entirely to my navigator. He read the tulip charts intelligently," said the winner. A flat tyre at the starting point was the only obstacle for Vakil.

CORRECTION

An inadvertent error has been made in "15 Calcuttans feted," Events and Personalities, *Parsiiana*, March 1992: "Russi Jeejeebhoy... to be appointed selector by the Board of Control for Cricket in India (since deceased)..." Jeejeebhoy is alive and still renders active service in the field of sports. We regret the error and tender our apologies to him and all concerned.

Roxana A. Mirza, Editor, Events and Personalities.

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In and out and into the woods

Arnavaz S. Mama

A new obstacle looms before
the Australian Zoroastrian Association's
attempt to build a darbe meher

"We are an extremely democratic community," says Purviz Kolsawalla, president of the Sydney-based Australian Zoroastrian Association (AZA) of New South Wales. The AZA has just emerged successfully from a four-year legal ordeal regarding its right to develop the AZA House property in Annangrove which was being blocked by neighbors. Kolsawalla, in his third two-year non-consecutive term as president was justifiably proud of the way decisions to fight it out were taken at the grassroots and executed by the managing committee.

In all Kolsawalla says he has spent 10 years on the managing committee of the 22-year-old AZA. He reckons that there are 600 to 650 known Zoroastrians in Sydney and maybe others who may not want to mix. The total Zoroastrian strength in Australia may be around a thousand with about 250 to 300 in Victoria, 100 plus in Perth and with Adelaide, Brisbane, Hobarth accounting for perhaps another 20 to 25 individuals. With Zoroastrians in the Perth region and in New Zealand the contact is scant. "Now they're at the dhansak-bhelpuri stage," laughs Kolsawalla, implying the relative infancy of those communities.

The stocky, mustachioed Kolsawalla who describes himself as a hot tempered person, notes with mock disparagement that it takes "a fairly thick hide" to be successful in community work! "As human beings we do make mistakes... Un-

like Noshir (Irani who has also served several terms as president of AZA) and I who are in the front and therefore seen and heard... there are so many silent

workers who do their own thing." Among those who "have put in maximum effort for the community" Kolsawalla lists Ervad Peshotan Katrak who, as the lone mobed, has given yeoman service to the Sydney Zoroastrians, Ms Shirley Mahableshwarwalla and Kersi Meher-Homji, the erstwhile and current editors of the AZA newsletter *Manashni*, Meher-Homji's wife

Villie, Dorab and Sherna Kotwal and a number of others. "The people who performed the best are those who got the hardest jobs," attests Kolsawalla.

Kolsawalla perceives a central coordinating body as the prime need for international Zoroastrians. For example, "with an average of two deaths a year, the paidust is performed by our priest with a behdin. The uthamna, etc are done here. Therefore we need a body here for advice and coordination," says Kolsawalla who was fully enthused by the idea of an Inter Regional Zoroastrian Congress Council (IRZCC) which had been mooted at the end of the Fifth World Zoroastrian Congress in Bombay in 1990. The IRZCC had been conceived as a Bombay-based liaison office with a full-time secretary to clear information of all kinds concerning Zoroastrians everywhere, but failed to

generate support from the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India and the Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP) and never materialized. Kolsawalla sees such a body as a clearing house for religious and social concepts, helping young Zoroastrians seeking education abroad, providing common ground for religious education, conveying guidance from the high priests to the communities seeking it (somewhat like the Mobed Council of Iran), conveying resources where most required. The World Zoroastrian Organisation (WZO), of whose international committee Kolsawalla is a member, is doing important social work as for example its involvement in the amelioration of rural Zoroastrians in Gujarat, he says. But this would be the world body's only role for, "unless the BPP joins a scheme, it can't get off the ground," avers Kolsawalla, referring to the stalemate between the BPP and the Federation on the one side and the WZO on the other on the membership rights issue.

Unlike Bombay, "we don't have a housing problem (in Australia) but an identity problem. We don't want to lose the Zoroastrian identity. But there are so many divisions keeping us (Zoroastrians) apart, despite our education. The personality cult is a big thing everywhere," rues Kolsawalla, adding, "If we could just get together and talk, we'd all be better off. But after every congress nothing happens for four years!"

Kolsawalla feels "We'll never have a fire-temple in Sydney because we don't have fully qualified mobeds. Even London can't afford one." A dadgah fire which can be lit as required is fine but an adarian fire would not be feasible, he says.

The Sydney community is "reasonably liberal in that non-Zoroastrian spouses are allowed to participate," informs Kolsawalla. Though there are quite a few mixed marriages, Kolsawalla says the trend is now for "in marriages." The majority reaction in Sydney, to the controversy following the BPP's refusal to accept the body of Ms Roxan Darshan Shah (née Nazir) at doongerwadi, was that she had the right to be interred in the dokhma, he adds.

A manager at Godrej before he decided to try his luck in Australia 25 years ago, Kolsawalla says he did his post-graduation courses by correspondence.



Kolsawalla: "we need
advice and coordination"

Photo: Varghese Fernandez

"You have to be extremely time efficient. If you don't do things on time, you can't do them," says Kolsawalla of life Down Under. According to him there is no fear of racial prejudice in Sydney, especially for Parsis. Good secretaries with computer skills, word processing abilities, etc are hard to come by and therefore easily acquire immigration to Australia, says Kolsawalla. Tradesmen and mechanics are also always in demand. Education in governmental institutions is good but he advises against being taken in by private colleges which always advertise in newspapers abroad. "Check them out with the Australian High Commission first," he cautions as there are many Chinese who have received a raw deal in this regard.

Keen to keep the community and themselves up-to-date, Kolsawalla and Keyoumarz Keyanian did their PhD theses on different aspects of Zoroastrianism through the Zoroastrian College run by Ms Meher Master-Moos in Sanjan. No other institution (like the Bombay University, for example) would permit them to do this by correspondence. In fact, when *Parsiana* interviewed Kolsawalla in early January, he was in Bombay to receive his doctorate. He had also updated and put Ervad Kavasji Edalji Kanga's Avesta-English dictionary on computer, placing it on Zoroastrian public domain and offering the same to any Zoroastrian for the price of the diskettes plus postage, waiving all copyright (see "Avesta-English Dictionaries," Zoroastrians Abroad, *Parsiana*, November 1991). However, the effort led to a controversy (see side piece, "The cost of learning from books").

In the meanwhile, as the President's column notes in *Manashni* (January-March 1992), the general body voted overwhelmingly (76 percent) in favor of constructing a darbe meher on the Annangrove property at an extraordinary

general meeting summoned on December 1, 1991. The same issue of *Manashni* also contains a copy of the letter written by Kolsawalla, in his capacity as president of AZA, to the trustees of the Arbab Rustam Guiv Trust noting the AZA members' decision to build. In response to an earlier fax from Dr Rostam Sarfeh, president and trustee of the Rustam Guiv Trust, Kolsawalla notes, "As a major donor, the Arbab Guiv Trust is entitled to nominate one member on...the subcommittee of trustees after the Darbe Meher has been built... There is no question of nominating a president or vice president as both the offices are elected offices, elected by members of AZA of NSW. As per the wishes of the Arbab Guiv Trust Ms Naazi Marzbani shall be one of the five trustees on this subcommittee." Kolsawalla also requested that a sum exceeding A \$ 10,000 from the Arbab Rustam Guiv Trust's bequest, which still remained with Marzbani, be released for the building fund.

Sarfeh's response dated February 29, 1992, published in the April-May edition of *Manashni*, however indicates that AZA is not out of the woods yet. Referring to the Trust's contribution Sarfeh writes, "In other localities one of our conditions with the seller was that he should obtain from the authorities the right to build a temple at the place. The same procedure should have been adopted in Australia. I admit that the land is in a beautiful place and probably it was purchased at a reasonable price; but if we are not allowed to create a temple there with the privileges of every other church or temple, of what use would be that property for us? I think that it is a very suitable place for the headquarters of Dr P. Kolsawalla for administering his personal and community affairs.

"By this token, may I suggest that the Zoroastrian communities, both Parsi and

Irani, purchase the present premises for the headquarters of their beloved president and the money to be laid aside for creation of the Darbe Meher Zoroastrian Temple...

"In conclusion Arbab Rustam Guiv Foundation trustees believe that the donation of Arbab Rustam Guiv should only be used for the purchase of a Darbe Meher Zoroastrian Temple and until such a property is not available, the total sum of \$ 1,31,080 (donation plus interest) should be laid aside in a Rustam and Murvarid Guiv Fund..."

The AZA thereupon turned over all documents and letters pertaining to the Arbab Guiv Trust's donation to David Roe Treatt and Watts, Solicitors for a legal opinion. The Annangrove property had been purchased in 1985 from the AZA's own funds and its long drawn out battle to secure the official approval to build on it has at last been obtained. The Trust's donation was made pursuant to a deed, named Deed of Release, dated November 19, 1987. The Association has also received funds from other donors and from its own members to assist in the cost of construction, as notes the solicitor's response dated April 6, 1992.

The solicitor's letter further notes, "In our opinion your Association is bound by the Deed to use the funds given by the Trust for the erection and fitting out only of a house of prayer as described in that Deed and for no other purpose. Likewise, the Trust, having given the monies, is only entitled to insist on your compliance with the terms and conditions of the Deed... It has no authority to direct you as to the land on which the building should be constructed, as to the design or nature of the building (other than to ensure that it is in fact a house of worship as described in the Deed) or in any other way to direct the affairs of your Association relating to the land or the building..."

"If you breach the terms of the Deed, undoubtedly the subcommittee would report that breach to the trustees. The Trust would then be in a position to seek from Australian courts orders directing you specifically to comply with your obligations. (Except) for that remedy, we cannot see any other rights in the Trust..."

"On the instructions that you have given us, we are of the opinion that your Association is entitled to apply the monies given by the Trust to the erection and fitting out of the House of Worship despite the recent letters from Dr Sarfeh..."

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The cost of learning from books

When Australian Zoroastrian Association president Purviz Kolsawalla successfully completed the first computerized Avesta-English and English-Avesta Dictionaries, the deed was announced in the Association's newsletter *Manashni* (September-October 1991). The last dictionary, a venerable work prepared and printed at the turn of this century by Ervad Kavasji Edalji Kanga, was out of print with secondhand copies impossible to find, wrote Kolsawalla.

The new work was severely criticized by Dastur (Dr) Hormazdyar Mirza in a lengthy review published in *The Bombay Samachar* of February 2, 1992 to which the *Samachar's* editor added his own comments. Mirza was particularly critical of the compiler's lack of direct knowledge of the Avesta language and its grammar: "The compiler does not explain what benefit he derived from his dictionaries. He does not explain how one can use a dictionary of a language without any knowledge of that language. Can one use even a dictionary of the English language without any knowledge of that language?"

At the end of a chapter-and-verse indictment, Mirza arraigned Kolsawalla for being "allured by a high degree without systematic study and without the necessary training, offered by a degree distributing agency; the whole plan was conceived, undertaken and executed without any literary equipment and without (the) necessary qualification... (the) publication of the compiler's dictionary is a stigma and public fraud on scholarship, on (the) Zoroastrian religion and on (the) Zoroastrian community."

In a letter to *Parsiana* dated February 20, 1992 Kolsawalla has strongly objected to "such a slur on my character and the defamation of my good name... I hold a responsible managerial position and have a young family to support. My interest in our great *daena* (religion) started in 1978. As there are no universities teaching Avesta or Zoroastrianism in Sydney, I had to do all my studies from books in Gujarati and English. Over the period I have collected and studied on my own from over 500 books on our religion. Some of the books had been kindly donated by well-wishers throughout the world. The rest were purchased or photocopied by me with

my own hard earned money.

"As part of my studies I started teaching myself Avesta from Ervad Sheriarji Bharucha's Avesta primers. In 1989 I had requested the trustees of the Parsi Punchayet to supply me with photocopies of Ervad Kangaji's Avesta English Dictionary and Avesta Grammar. I am very grateful to the Parsi Punchayet trustees for supplying me photocopies of Kangaji's English-Avesta Dictionary (note: not the Avesta-English Dictionary as requested) and Avesta Grammar. I paid for the photocopying costs and arranged to get the photocopies picked up from Bombay by my Sydney Zoroastrian friend who was visiting Bombay at the time... Is it a crime that I, as a student, tried to learn more about my religion the only way I could, by teaching myself from books? Who have I harmed by my action? Who have I defrauded...?"

"Of course my dictionaries are bound to have mistakes. It is my first effort. Is it a crime that I have attempted to try to do some work in our religious studies without seeking approval of the learned Dasturji or Bombay University? Is it a 'fraud' because it was not prepared under the supervision of the learned Dasturji? Am I 'stigma,' because residing outside Bombay I could not attend Bombay University, the citadel of Avesta studies as proudly trumpeted by the Editor of *Mumbai Samachar*? Who would look after my family, my job and my community in Sydney while I luxuriated in full-time studies in Bombay at Parsi charity's expense, as so many of our Parsi scholars have done?..."

"As a matter of courtesy I sent a copy of my Dictionaries to the Bombay Parsi Punchayet along with other institutions, entirely at my expense, as a way of saying thank you. In return I have been stabbed in (the) back by the trustees by commissioning a report which slanders me and rubbishes my humble initial attempts. I was in no way informed about the report being commissioned, nor was my permission sought. These Dictionaries are my private efforts and property. Who gave the Bombay Punchayet trustees the right to get my work evaluated without my expressed permission? Have the Bombay Parsi Punchayet trustees in their arrogance taken it upon themselves to judge all the works written on our religion? If

that is so, how is it that when some Western scholars have written badly about our religion, they have maintained a cowardly silence!..."

"It is a crying shame that very few members of our community are interested in our scriptures and in studying the Avesta and Pahlavi languages. With the result (that) the few scholars who have studied the Avesta and Pahlavi languages become important and are looked upon in awe. They might write obscure articles in scholarly journals which few attempt to read and less understand. What we are doing in the West is not to write scholarly articles in journals, but to make our glorious religion understandable to common men and women. Our children are getting excited at the tremendous life force in Zarathushtra's teachings. If this is perpetuating a 'fraud' and a 'stigma' then I am proud of it..."

"I am very grateful to my friend and mentor (Ms) Meher Master-Moos who honored me by launching my Dictionaries on my convocation day. As I don't know most of the trustees of the Parsi Punchayet nor Dr Mirza, have I got embroiled in the incessant rivalry that is prevailing in Bombay, because of my association with the Zoroastrian College?... The Zoroastrian College is situated at Sanjan and is fully authorized to grant degrees from The Open International University as well as The UNO (United Nations Organisation) World Peace University recognized throughout the world on a UNO charter..."

"I am still hoping that there is at least one Parsi scholar in Bombay who (can) help me rectify the mistakes in the Dictionaries, so that the next edition would be a better one..."

"I am currently preparing a comprehensive work on the *Gathas* which includes the transliteration of the Avesta prayers in English, translations by 19 scholars, esoteric explanation as provided by Dr F. S. Chiniwalla and my commentary. This would be realized on computer diskettes some time this year. However, unlike the Dictionary, this would not be placed on the Public Domain. It will be available to all interested parties at no charge, except the cost of copying and postage. However I shall maintain all rights on these disks, so that I have discretion over its distribution..."

Elections in October ?

The declining Zoroastrian population of Bombay will elect its biggest representative forum in history

Arnavaz S. Mama

Five days in August had been designated by the Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP) for the general election of 802 members of the Anjuman Committee. But a further extension was sought and granted by the Bombay High Court on June 16. The new deadlines specified are October 31, 1992 for holding of the Anjuman Committee elections. The elected Anjuman Committee members together with 802 donors already on the Punchayet rolls will then elect (by December 31, 1992, as per the new court order) trustees to the BPP board for the next seven years.

For the first time in its long history the BPP's elections will be held constituency-wise. This change has been necessitated by the large number of persons who must be elected. The number of seats have been distributed between 11 constituencies demarcated by the BPP administration depending on the demographic distribution of the community. According to this distribution, the Fort area has the maximum representation (see box).

The elections will be held in five different parts of the city for the convenience of Zoroastrians resident in those areas. The places earlier designated were the BPP office building on D. N. Road, the Khareghat Colony's Khareghat Hall, the Rustom Baug Pavilion, the Recreation Center at S. V. Bharucha Baug, Andheri and the Madressa Annexe in the Dadar Parsi Col-

ony. Any voter from any constituency can vote on any of these days at the designated places, according to the Punchayet note of June 4, 1992. According to the earlier announcement of April 30, the constituencies had been grouped into five batches, each group being assigned a single day to elect its representatives. The booths in all the vicinities were scheduled to be open from 9.30 a.m. to 5.30 p.m.

Only those with valid certificates of enrolment on the BPP's general register will be entitled to vote. The register is required to close on November 30 prior to each Anjuman Committee election as per

more than four years.

However, since the old A, C and D registers have been abolished, the 19,535 members so listed are required to exchange their old certificates for new ones. Despite repeated notices and the Punchayet team going from baug to baug in April 1992 to enable residents to effect their transfer, only 3,805 certificates have been exchanged, notes the BPP announcement. The BPP's response to an enquiry on June 8 revealed that this figure now stands at "4,000 and odd." The last day for transfer of certificates is two clear days before the first election day.

The summer exodus from the city has been cited as a reason for the lack of a significant number of nominations. According to *Parsiana* sources only 80 nominations had been received by end May.

The trustees also had second thoughts about holding the elections in June as originally planned on account of the rains.

According to the High Court order of December 17, 1991 which was framed with due agreement of the Punchayet, the Anjuman Committee was required to be in-

stalled by August 31, 1992 and the election of the trustees—there are two vacancies with the terms of Dr Aspi Golwalla and Jamsheed Kanga having expired—completed by end October 1992.

Electoral distribution into constituencies

Constituency	Denoted by	Allocated seats
Colaba	A	74
Fort	B	90
Kalbadevi	C	79
Malabar Hill	D	71
Worli	E	84
Parel	F	64
Dadar	G	81
Borivli, Goregaon and Jogeshwari	H	57
Bandra and Mahim	I	69
Tardeo and Hughes Road	J	79
Grant Road	K	54

clause 10(i) of the electoral scheme. In this case the register is deemed to have closed on December 17, 1991 when the final High Court order cleared the way for the election which has been delayed by

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YOUTH FEDERATION Plan of Action

Parinaz Gandhi

Identification of career opportunities and support of community institutions are the initial projects of the newly constituted Federation of Zoroastrian Youth Associations

The five young executive council members of the newly constituted Federation of Zoroastrian Youth Associations (FOZYA) solemnly sat round the table on March 27, 1992. Facing them were a motley of 20 bewildered invitees, most of whom had little idea why they had been summoned barring the knowledge that their interest and involvement at earlier all-India Zoroastrian youth meets had earned them this distinction.

This was the scene at the commencement of the first executive council meeting of FOZYA. A registered body, barely four months old, FOZYA is constituted with the intention of "promoting unity and solidarity amongst the Zoroastrian youth." A delayed start by 25 minutes; a last-minute change in the venue from the Muncherji Khareghat Hall to the Parukh Dharamshalla at Bombay's Khareghat Colony; and the presence of two senior guest speakers before the business slated on the agenda could be initiated contributed to the prevailing uncertainty.

Of the 15 youth wings from different corners of India enrolled with FOZYA, only four were represented that day. It was evident from the self introductions that the maximum attendance was from Bombay even though the Bombayites had only been invited as observers and no one was officially representing the largest Parsi settlement in India. This is because Bombay had yet to join FOZYA. "Bombay being a vast city, we have de-

cided to enrol members on the basis of geographical location," announced FOZYA president Jehangir Bisney, broaching the first item on the agenda, "enrolment of other Zoroastrian youth

givings were expressed as to whether there would be something worth reporting on a monthly basis, Parakh was insistent, "It must be monthly; even if it means writing that 'nothing has happened.'"

Most of the Bombay youths present reported that they were living in the Parsi colonies in the city's different localities. As per their statements, each baug did seem to have its own association. But many of the youths' allegiance appeared to rest more with the Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP) Youth Club with which they've associated ever since they completed the Holiday Programme for Youth. (A project of the BPP, the Holiday Programme for Youth is a month long series of activities conducted annually for students who have appeared for their school leaving examinations. Thereafter if they wish to retain their ties, the students join the Youth Club.) And since the BPP Youth Club is a vibrant body meeting every month for social, welfare and leadership training projects, the spokespersons from this group failed to appreciate why the Club could not be made a member: "What is the criteria for membership?" "Why can't you channelize the group available?" "Which other organization has worked for the Parsi youth as HPY (Holiday Programme for Youth)?"

Over the cross-talking Bisney patiently tried to explain the complications that could ensue: Youth wings from dif-



Council members (from left): Debara, Bisney, Parakh and Karanjawalla

associations." They had envisaged different baug associations in Bombay nominating their representatives who would serve as focal members between their respective geographical locations and the FOZYA secretariat in Hyderabad. "The main aim is interaction," reinforced FOZYA secretary Ms Mehernavaz Parakh; "not to become members and forget all about it for six months but someone who'll give an immediate reply" and be prompt in correspondence. To maintain continuity each association was asked to send in a report every month. When mis-

ferent camps within the community would then demand membership too resulting in rivalry and attempts to supercede one another. Representations would then also come forth from other cities and towns demanding that youth bodies other than the one recognized by the anjuman be granted membership. "This would lead to conflict. Why don't you activate the baugs instead?" persisted Bisney. The youths who had come in their individual capacity rather than as representatives of their baugs were thus convinced to get a letter from their respective colonies indicating their willingness to enrol on FOZYA.

Bisney's contention that FOZYA is aiming to bring together the Parsi youth of the entire community, led to another series of interrogations: "What will be the benefits from joining FOZYA? What do we expect from getting together?" Despairing the community attitude of always seeking returns, one of the FOZYA supporters queried, "What is the association going to do for FOZYA?" How are you going to help?"

As youth you should not wait to be told to do something; take the initiative, do it. This was the message impressed by guest speaker Homi Bodhanwalla of Jamshedpur, vice president of the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India (FPZAI) and advisor to several Tata companies. This, he believed, would be an adaptation of a Tata philosophy for the employee: "give him what he deserves before he asks for it." With health, education, spirit of adventure, tolerance, dignity of labor and discipline, every Parsi could achieve wonders, he was sanguine for he believed that "there is no royal route to becoming great." An advocate of yoga who at 70 plus regularly does the headstand, Bodhanwalla maintains, "The world today is so much upside down that it is when you are on your head that you are actually seeing the right side of things."

"To educate Zoroastrians in general and Zoroastrian youth in particular on all matters affecting the Zoroastrian religion and culture" is one of the objects of FOZYA. Trying to instill in them a pride

in their traditions and imparting certain keynote messages of Zoroastrianism was Lt Gen Adi Sethna who during the course of his talk narrated experiences, colored by years of association with the armed forces, the Delhi Parsi Anjuman where he serves as president and the FPZAI where he is vice president. "Can anyone present recite the *Din no kalmo*, with meaning?"



you accommodate larger numbers within a restricted budget, advised Bisney, noticing the interest and awareness generated by earlier youth meets. The role of youth in community organizations and entrepreneurship is what the organizers plan to include in the sessions, stated Karanjawalla enquiring what else the prospective participants would like to see introduced.

Variety, greater group participation, overcoming sexual biases and the need to break through different pockets of isolation without compelling anyone to share lodging quarters with strangers were the views that came forth.

The subject of career and

Executive council members of FOZYA (above) and youth invitees (below) hear Sethna (gesticulating) relate his experiences

he challenged. Goaded by his guidance the group collectively fumbled to get the sequence and the meaning right.

At the Sixth All India Zoroastrian Youth Seminar in Ahmedabad from October 24 to 26, 1992 there will be a session on religion, but not the social aspect of religion, it was stressed. Taking up subjects like the Roxan Shah case (which created a major controversy when a Zoroastrian woman married to a Hindu was not permitted to be interred at the Bombay doongerwadi), the youths felt, tantamount to going round in circles for ultimately the discussion came to nothing. Zoroastrian history is what the session will focus on, briefed Porus Karanjawalla from Ahmedabad, vice president of FOZYA. Lamenting on the level of ignorance among the community youth, he said, "We do not know who is the father of Zarathushtra but we know who is the brother of Ram."

The organizers of the Youth Seminar would like to restrict the number of participants to 200, working within a budget of two to three lakh rupees. Better that



employment opportunities has been taken up at earlier youth meets too. But this only went to the extent of inviting outstanding entrepreneurs to share their experiences. FOZYA instead plans to do something more definite on this issue by taking it up as its "main project." From the deliberations it emerged that there was a need to bring together employers and youths, and to disseminate information along the lines of a glossary on careers describing the training and funds — available and required — for different courses. Another area where the youths seek improvements is in the operation of trusts that extend grants and loans for educational purposes. The formalities, the bureaucratic procedures and the time lapse,

they complained, defeat the purpose and the energies spent in procuring the loans. What they recommended instead was the formation of a central body of trusts that could screen the applicants and then sanction scholarships of higher denomination to a select few rather than nominal amounts to several such that the aid extended could, in terms of the devalued rupee, measure up to requirements. The ambitious youth were urged to be more practical by senior invitee and joint honorary secretary of the FPZAI Keki Gandhi who advised, "set goals where you can succeed."

"Support *Parsiana*" is a project that FOZYA has voluntarily undertaken, even including the item on the agenda of its first meet. To augment *Parsiana*'s limited subscription base, every member present was urged to enrol at least six subscribers before the next meeting. Bisney advocated gifting *Parsiana* on festive occasions and told the youths to adopt a door-to-door approach to overcome the inertia of potential subscribers who could not be bothered to make out a cheque and mail it. This made Karanjawalla question whether an appeal had been received from *Parsiana* and the reason for FOZYA fa-

voring this monthly over the other community publications. In response Bisney detailed *Parsiana*'s financial position running as it has in the red over the years, and counter questioned, "Has any one found out how *Jamé* is doing?" This debate came to a natural end when a Bom-

**"Can anyone
present recite the
Din no kalmo,
with meaning?"**

bay resident who had never heard of *Parsiana* enquired, "But what does *Parsiana* do?"

"As a community we are becoming *dheela* (ineffective)." "We are getting bogged down because we have no political voice." "It is one thing that we choose to laugh at ourselves and another thing to have others laugh at us." These were the opinions expressed during the open forum. What many youths found

particularly irksome was the media making a laughingstock of the community and suggested legal measures like injunctions against producers for tarring the image of the Parsis. But little could they do to remedy the situation on this front as youths, so they were advised to consult the seniors at the executive council meeting of the FPZAI on the following two days (March 28 and 29).

There were other issues too left unresolved. With enrolments from Bombay still unconfirmed, FOZYA decided to defer the co-optation of five members on the executive council. But as Bisney summarized, "Today was the first meeting so don't expect to come to a decision on all matters... The most important thing is that we keep in touch."

The next meeting of FOZYA is scheduled in Ahmedabad to coincide with the Youth Seminar in October.

The executive council members present at the meeting were: Porus Debara from Agra, Porus Karanjawalla from Ahmedabad, Mehemavaz Parakh from Hyderabad, Sarosh Palkhiwala from Poona and Jehangir Bisney from Secunderabad. The Press was represented by *Parsiana*.

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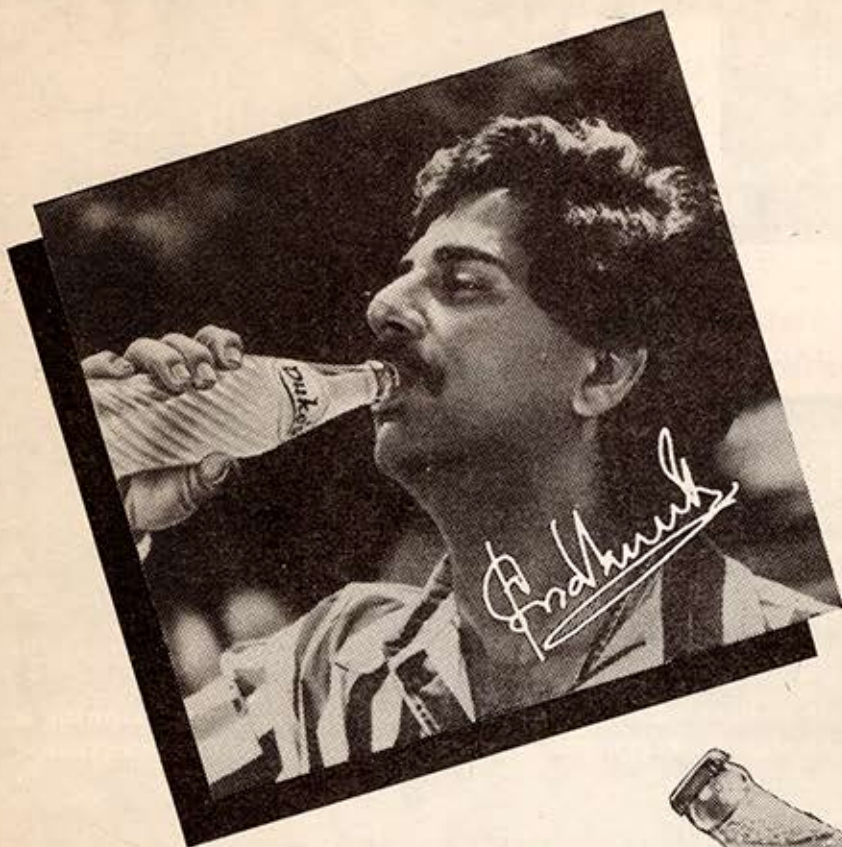
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Arnavaz S. Mama

J.R.D. Tata, the first Zoroastrian awardee of the Bharat Ratna, was accorded a special reception by the Bombay Parsi Punchayet

"You have endowed me with qualities, expectations and desires which I do not think I really deserve. If I did my job fairly well and honestly and sincerely it was to a large extent because I wanted to be worthy of Jamsetji Tata and the traditions he created for us."

Jehangir R. D. Tata gently disclaimed the tributes paid by speaker after speaker at the function organized by the Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP) to felicitate the conferment on him of the nation's highest civilian award, the Bharat Ratna.

The community, whom JRD addressed as "all my friends and fellow

Parsis," crowded the central lawn of Cusrow Baug and gave the punctiliously correct octogenarian in dagli and pugri a standing ovation. The few empty seats at the punctual start of the function at 6.15 p.m. on April 7, 1992 had been occupied as the evening progressed and latecomers thronged the side aisles. Fortunate Cusrow Baug denizens viewed the proceedings from their ringside windows as Tata wondered aloud why he deserved "the esteem, affection, recognition of these fine people for whom I've done so little in any organized way."

Confessing that he "had not been a

concerned or active Parsi," JRD spelt out for the assembly the development of his ideas on the subject of communities and religions: "Since I was much younger I have felt that communities, organized religions and activities, for too many centuries despite being well-intentioned, have been responsible for quite a lot of hatred, lack of friendship, violence even, among billions of people who needed the opposite." However, "if there is one thing I'm proud of, it's of being born a

A part of the audience on Cusrow Baug's center lawn Photo: Superstar Video Labs



Parsi...(This) tiny community of ours has achieved so much in so little time. I feel proud that I am one of them, one of you; proud for more than one reason, because the community is highly respected. But this is a community and this is a religion that, since its existence, has proved to be a very honest and peaceful group of human beings under a great leader, creator of the faith, Zarathushtra." The "confession" laid to rest the community's suspicion that their admiration of "aapro JRD" was only one-way.

Terribly proud that "I bear the name of Jamsetji Tata," JRD, born 1904, the year that Jamsetji died, recalled how he had been a student of his illustrious grand-uncle since the earliest years of maturity. He quoted from a letter written by Jamsetji, then in the US, to his sons on hearing that they and their team had succeeded in finding the ideal location for Tata Steel at what subsequently became Jamshedpur. Jamsetji had exhorted them to plan out the town for the optimum benefit of all its inhabitants.

JRD said he had been "enormously impressed. Jamsetji Tata not only created industry but was a great humanist who believed in doing things right and honestly. He was human at a time when no one bothered about the rights of labor, when there were no unions. His whole life showed the humanity of the man... I continue to be a big admirer. I was determined to be largely guided by him. On a number of times, on problems that were not directly connected with Jamsetji, I asked myself how Jamsetji would respond to such a proposal... I have tried to, want to and continue to do whatever is right and honest and simple and humane."

Another name JRD respects greatly is that of Dadabhai Naoroji. The comparatively recent development came about three or four years ago when the Dadabhai Naoroji endowment wanted to give its award to JRD who decided he must know more about Naoroji than that he had been an MP and had propagated the case of India's freedom. Going through Sir Rustom Masani's biography of Naoroji, JRD found that Naoroji "had done one thing that amazed me. As a young man who had just finished college...he tried to find who had paid for his education. More than 100 years ago (he discovered that) it was being paid out of taxes on items of

consumption and services used by the poor. The young man of 20, (realizing that) he was educated by the poor, decided it was his duty to repay the poor. It really (moved) me. I was very proud not only to accept, but to welcome, being made an awardee of his trust."

JRD's first reaction on being awarded the Bharat Ratna as recorded by the national press had been an unassuming questioning of his own worthiness for the award. At Cusrow Baug he reiterated that the Bharat Ratna should be reserved for greater performance.

"Proud to be an Indian even as I'm proud to be a Parsi," JRD registered his distress at the community's dwindling numbers and that "a time will come when there won't be a Parsi community to be proud of." Though he said he had ideas of his own "why the Parsi population had

cation by Dastur (Dr) Kaikhusroo JamaspAsa followed by BPP chairman Dr Aspi Golwalla's welcome speech. Golwalla extolled Tata's munificence — the latest charity being a two crore rupee foundation called the JRD and Thelma J. Tata Trust for the uplift of women in India; his humor "in overcoming stressful situations;" his physical and mental energy generated by "a cool head, an empty stomach and a warm heart... You believe that man is made to live to 125. The dumbbell and weights are your companions... You are young at heart... Your eyes light up when a pretty face comes your way... We will look forward to celebrating your 100th birthday."

"A well-lived life is as rare as a well-written one. In the case of JRD both conditions have been fulfilled," noted well-known jurist and community doyen Nani Palkhivala. He viewed the award of the Bharat Ratna as an atonement by the government for past misdeeds, notably the abrupt dismissal of JRD from the chairmanship of Air India in 1978 after he had introduced the aviation indus-



Tata, garlanded and shawl-draped, receiving salver and bowl from Golwalla (left)

Photo: Superstar Video Labs

On the dais (L to R) Minoo Shroff, Homi Ranina, Kanga, Wadia, Tata, Golwalla, Palkhivala, Desai, Bengalee, Guzder and JamaspAsa Photo: Dolly Divecha

gone down to this extent," the nonconformist did not elaborate. In a very rare article on the subject about 12 years ago he had propagated the need for widening the community base through intermarriage. It had attracted the ire of the orthodox. The lesson learnt, Tata now urged the Punchayet, the high priests and others to try and arrest the decline, "find ways, new ideas, projects to serve the people of this community." Only half jestingly did he promise, "(When) I do pass on, I'm telling you I'm going to come back to find out for myself what our youngsters have done in the direction of revitalizing this great community!"

The evening had begun with an invo-



try in India and nurtured it for 46 years. It was, said Palkhivala, "also a recognition of the business class — that good values in business have played a vital role and will play an even more important role in the context of liberalization." Recalling



A glimpse of the audience

Photo: Superstar Video Labs

Isn't it time to start? (from left) Desai, Guzder and Tata before the function began Photo: Rishi Davar

how Dadabhai Naoroji had been elected to the British Parliament in 1892, Palkhivala underlined the symbolism in a Parsi winning the highest national award exactly 100 years later.

As one who had known and admired JRD for half a century, Palkhivala spoke of the man's tendency to live dangerously, of an instinct for courting danger in contrast to the general tendency to seek safety, wanting "to live on the verge of disaster" and enjoying it! Added Palkhivala tongue in cheek, "When the heart specialist told him he did not need open heart surgery, he was disappointed. He wanted to experience surgery!"

Tata's profound sense of humor prevents him from being pompous, attested Palkhivala. So "he walks up to your office rather than call you to his" and embarrasses his juniors! Each speaker bore witness to Tata's courtesy, respect and sensitivity to the suffering of others; to the quest for perfection which drove lesser people to the wall; to his zest for life; to his reverence for human liberalism; to his desire to "see as far as one may into the great forces behind the detail;" to his ultimate Zoroastrianism.

Neville Wadia, who has known him for more than 50 years, sees JRD's example of how he expanded the House of Tatas as his greatest gift to the younger generation of entrepreneurs. Wadia recalled the years he flew at Juhu airport with JRD and the latter's sister, the late Sylla Petit who was the first lady in India

to get a pilot's licence; the establishment of Tata Airlines in the 1930s and Jeh's "extraordinary dedication to the new venture," his professionalism — stymied for a pilot to fly Wadia from Jodhpur to Bombay, Tata himself had taken over, exactly 55 years ago!

Wadia also remem-



bered Air India's first flight to London on June 8, 1948 when it took off punctually at 0005 hours and after special receptions at Cairo and Geneva, all meticulously planned and executed, reached London 15 minutes ahead of time. Wadia says JRD told the captain in the cockpit to seek permission to circle overhead so as to land exactly on the dot!

Referring to the 88-year-old as the "Grand Young Man of the community" BPP trustee Eruch Desai commented on Tata's "renaissance intellect," his "uncanny ability to pick the right man for the right job, the leader who knows where he's going and gets others to follow him." However, "one mistake the Parsi community has made is following Tata's advice on family planning," noted Desai, referring to Tata's concern for the need to control India's runaway population growth. He was, perhaps, the first in the country to point to it as the most urgent national problem. The Parsis have been the most avid in curtailing their progeny and the results are a dwindling community.

In an era when nepotism was fashionable, Tata chose outstanding professionals and gave them the freedom to grow, retaining their respect and affection, noted BPP trustee and member of the Indian Administrative Service (IAS) Jam-

shed Kanga. Nor did he hesitate to loan his top men to government, Kanga added. Dr John Matthai, Sir Homi Modi, Sir Ardeshir Dalal, Nani Palkhivala were all conscripted for national duties: "The government never hesitated to entrust governmental affairs to a Tata man." In today's atmosphere of low ethics in business and industry, "the country's best exponent of the ethical way... owes it to the business community... to record his experiences," urged Kanga.

BPP trustee Jamshed Guzder referred to JRD's promptness in furnishing a 50 lakh rupee bank guarantee that enabled Guzder to set up a customs clearance office to clear air cargo in a day instead of the two to three weeks that it originally took. Guzder also noted that Daimler Benz, makers of Mercedes cars, quickly chose Tatas to collaborate with even though there were many others vying for the tie-up. The decision, according to Guzder, was based on their finding in JRD "a man who had a reputation that whatever he undertook should (net) the best for the shareholders and the company — nothing for himself."

In a ringing vote of thanks BPP trustee and vice chancellor of Bombay University Dr (Ms) Mehroo Bengalee declared with "pride and confidence that this 'Ratna' is ours; belongs to us... As a community, this achievement makes us richer still." Bengalee read from the citation that had accompanied Bombay University's selective awards to 18 prominent citizens in 1981. Tata was one of the five Parsi recipients. The University had declared him "prince of industrialists, master manager... patron saint of Indian aviation... an ornament of this city."

More importantly, Bengalee commented on Tata's "unparalleled humility that the community (witnessed) this evening" and brought to his notice the problems of education and employment faced by the community today: "Our children fall by the wayside. Can our youngsters plan for the future? Even dream of a future? They're looking up to you to extend a helping hand to them..."

Tata had been showered with garlands by individuals and organizations. The Panchayats of Bombay and Surat had also presented him with a shawl and silver salver. His low tones husky with emotion, Tata responded "from the depths of my heart... thank you for honoring me; thank you for liking me. I say goodbye with a great feeling of thanks and gratitude for tonight and for being a Parsi."

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Emerging from the valley of silent darkness

Gustasp Irani

The founder of The Helen Keller Institute for the Deaf and Deaf Blind, Behroz Vacha believes in the handicapped child's right to education

Let's play pretend; pretend that you are deaf, dumb and blind; pretend that the dimensions of your world are defined by touch alone. Into this world a lady intrudes. Gently she takes your hand in hers and caresses away any resistance you might have to her touch. Then, slowly she starts to communicate with signals. Repeatedly she sits and rises, makes you sit and rise, and through her touch and signalling alone reaches across the void to you. Next, she signals she cares, that she is there to guide and love you. Welcome to the world of silent darkness; Ms Behroz Vacha, founder, director and motivating force behind The Helen Keller Institute for the Deaf and Deaf Blind, Bombay, the first and only one of its kind in India, demonstrates that it is not as despairing as it might seem at first.

In recognition of her role as a beacon of light in the bleak dark world of the deaf-blind, Vacha was presented with the Anne Sullivan Medal at an international conference in Sweden on August 8, 1991. The award, instituted in 1966 to commemorate the birth centenary of Ms Anne Sullivan, the teacher of the world renowned deaf-blind Ms Helen Keller, comprises five medals presented every four years. Vacha is the first Indian and Asian to be so honored.

The same year (1991) she was presented with the Rotary Club of Bombay Public Service Award and selected as the Woman of the Year by the Zonta Club International (Bombay III Branch). A year earlier she was conferred the Rustom Merwanji Alpaiwala Memorial Award by the National Association for the Blind, India.

Recognition, it appears, came in a rush to Vacha who started her pioneering work for the deaf-blind in 1977. She welcomes it, for to her it is a recognition of the needs of the deaf-blind and the people around her, volunteers and professionals who work selflessly to meet these needs.



Finger movements effectively used in communication

"I am just a part of the Helen Keller Institute. Any award I receive is on behalf of the institution," says Vacha, adding as she takes us around, "To know me is to know my children."

There is a little girl of six just learning how to walk; her parents had unwittingly cocooned her, fearing she might get hurt because of her multiple handicaps. Vacha aids the child's teacher with the exercise; one hand firmly but gently across the small of the girl's back and the other hand working the legs up and down. "It is painful for her," Vacha informs us. The girl winces, but playing among the pinched features is a smile; she recognizes the familiar loving touch.

The foundations of the deaf-blind Institute, Vacha explains, are rooted in pa-

tience, caring and dedication. We see it reflected in the smile of a mother who sits observing her daughter interact with the teacher and learns how to reach out and touch the hidden crevasses of her daughter's life. At a neighboring table, a little girl leans forward (she recognizes people by their smell), her hands seeking out Vacha who is then drawn into a great big affectionate hug.

There is a great deal of activity at the table where two teenaged boys sit with their teacher; hands darting around in furious conversation. Nearby another teenager interacts with his counsellor, both sporting wide grins. "They have a great sense of humor. They joke about a lot," says Vacha. Later she calls the boys over to meet us and we realize that if there are any inhibitions about their handicap, they are within us. But soon they draw us across the barrier and briefly we are communicating, sharing each other's worlds. One boy gently runs his hands over our body, exploring its physical form. Strangely the touch is not an intrusion on our physical form, no more than someone looking at us is, for the hands are, in effect, his eyes.

"Anyone whose grey cells are ticking can be treated as a normal child no matter what his or her handicap. It is often the way we, the society, think and feel about them which is the real handicap," says Vacha, adding that every child should have a right to an education according to his or her ability.

At the deaf-blind Institute the right to education is offered at present to 23 deaf-blind students. Because of the nature of their handicap the teacher-student ratio is high — one to one for the young and one

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Vacha being presented the Woman of the Year Zonta Club award by Mitha Shroff (left). Looking on (from left) are Jayashree Masur and Freny Paghdwala

to two for the more advanced students. Qualified counsellors help the older children. "Many of them are reaching their adolescence and must deal with the problems that the age brings," Vacha explains. In addition the Institute has its own residence quarters in Borivli where 16 of the deaf-blind students reside.

It all began in 1977, with three students, a meager Rs 150 in the coffers and a whole lot of courage, caring and determination that a handful of determined women started work from one residential abode. According to Vacha, the starting was important for she believed that assistance from well-wishers would follow. "I believe that people have a lot of goodness in them and it is for me to reach out and tap it. Often what I get may not be what I want, but I know that it will eventually help the Institute and the children," says Vacha who does not hesitate to ask for a good cause. "I even fight with my God for my children," she confesses.

And miracles, small and big, do happen. Vacha shows us an unsolicited letter she received from the Gulf Refugee Relief Fund. In it they state that their primary objectives have been met and from the surplus funds they are donating a part to the deaf-blind Institute. There are companies which have donated furniture when refurbishing their offices. Then there are people who have supplied transport, the qualified and dedicated teachers and staff, the volunteers who have donated their skills and time to the Institute and of course there is Vacha's husband Nariman (formerly a secretary of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet and of the N. N. and R. N. Wadia Trusts): "He has not only allowed me unhampered free-

dom in my work but has actively supported me in my task."

According to Vacha, there is a difference between pity and sympathy. With pity, one gives and forgets. Sympathy, however, is the true foundation of philanthropy. "Philanthropy is to give of yourself, not just your wealth." Vacha derives part of her inspiration from the lines of an unknown author who observed: "A hundred times I remind myself that my inner and outer life depends on those living and dead and that I must exert myself in the same measure that I have received and am receiving and pass it on to posterity."

The last part 'and pass it on...' Vacha informs us, is her own addition. It is something she is constantly doing. On the walls of her office almost all inspirational lines have handwritten tailpieces. It is a reflection of her drive to give a little more and inspire those around her to do the same.

Vacha recalls instances from her childhood that were to influence her commitment to the deaf and deaf-blind in her adult years. "As a young schoolgirl in

Bulsar I had a deaf boy in my class and I noticed that people and other students picked on him only because he was so timid and handicapped." Years later when she revisited Bulsar she noticed a grave in front of the school and was informed that it was the last resting place of that same deaf boy. To Vacha, the grave was symbolic of a muted spirit that was denied the right to education for no fault of its own.

After qualifying in the education of the deaf from Bombay and the University of



The handicapped children at the Helen Keller Institute learn at the hands of qualified instructors Photos: Gustasp Irani

Manchester, Vacha started her career as a teacher to the deaf. In 1965 she met a 17-year-old girl Shyama Mehta who was born deaf and progressively lost her eye-

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sight till she was totally blind by the age of 16. "Her courage, her sense of humor, her sharp memory amazed me. She was instrumental in showing me the true spirit of courage. Indeed, she changed the entire pattern of my life," Vacha records. From then on Vacha started to think increasingly about deaf-blind children.

In 1971 she took a seven-year-old deaf-blind boy Persy, diagnosed as mentally retarded too, under her wing. She believed in him and his mental abilities. This was certified by Dr Edward Waterhouse of the Perkins Institute of the Blind and Deaf-Blind in the USA who, on one of his annual visits to India, diagnosed Persy as a deaf-blind boy with retarded milestones and not as a retarded boy. In 1974 Dr Waterhouse invited Vacha to participate in a program of the deaf-blind at the Perkins Institute.

Vacha returned to India and, despite the odds, ventured into the country's unexplored valley of silent darkness. And in this valley there was self enlightenment too. "I learned that ideas may come from others sometimes, but I am responsible for my own decisions," says Vacha. To Vacha it was a rediscovery of the true Zoroastrian teaching of choice based on good thoughts, good words and good deeds. Vacha sees a disturbing contradiction within the Parsi community. Parsis are renowned for their charity and philanthropy but when it comes to sharing their best gift, their religion, they are selfish. "Nowhere does Zarathushtra talk of non-conversion. He in fact asked his followers to spread his message to all corners of the world."

And spreading goodness, in her own way, is Vacha as the story of Ashok illustrates. When only one year old, Ashok, a deaf-blind boy, was referred to Vacha by an adoption agency as they did not know how to handle a child with his kind of handicap. The Vachas, who have no issue of their own, took the little boy to their home and cared for him for four months, until such time as he was adopted by an American couple. Vacha shows us a letter from Ashok's new parents. In it they mention the medical treatment and operations the child has undergone as doctors try to retrieve his vision. They end by thanking the Vachas for giving them Ashok, stating: "He certainly has brought a lot of joy, love and happiness into our home."

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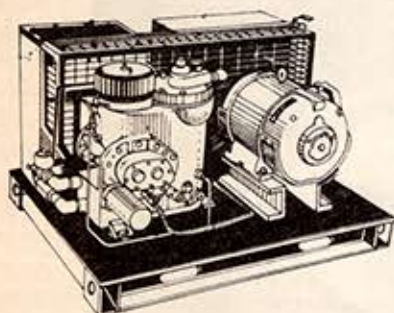
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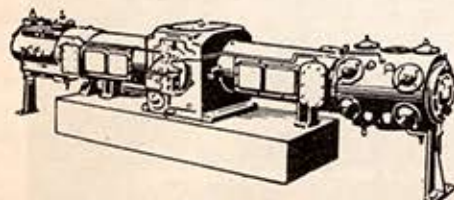
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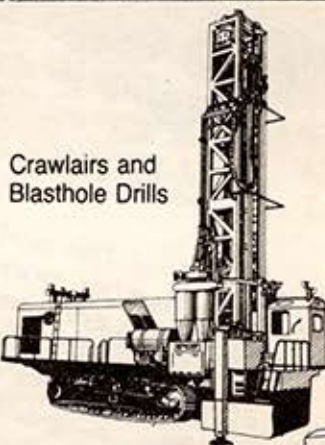
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Wedlock's end: 1

K. C. Vajifdar

With the last amendments the Parsi Marriage and Divorce Act is once more in step with current thinking

What are the responsibilities imposed by marriage and what redress does one spouse have when the other spouse chooses to disregard them? Answers to the question have been a part of the general social environment, changing with time.

The Parsi Marriage and Divorce Act (PMDA) was the first to codify such social expectations in 1865, becoming the most advanced concept of social justice in India at that time. It was amended in 1936 but, 50 years later, contemporary Parsis were chafing at the restrictions and prejudices of a bygone social era. What is more, in comparison to other, later legislation in the arena of personal law, like the Hindu Marriage and Divorce Act, the PMDA had lost its preeminence as a legislation that was in keeping with the spirit of the times.

Legal personality K. C. Vajifdar analyses the main clauses of the PMDA since its last amendment in 1988. In a series of six articles Vajifdar explains the changes that have been incorporated as also the main heads under which either party to a marriage may apply for divorce.

In this issue Vajifdar discusses the similarities and common grounds between the PMDA, the Special Marriage Act of 1954 and the Indian Penal Code. Forthcoming articles will discuss the legal ramifications of impotency, bigamy, adultery, desertion, cruelty and change of religion. Alimony, distribution of property and custody of children, all of which follow when a marriage breaks up, will be discussed in the concluding article.

The changes which have taken place in the Parsi Marriage and Divorce Act (PMDA) of 1936 under the amendment of 1988 were recommended by the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India to the Government of India in the form of proposals to amend the Act. The Minorities Commission then considered these proposals and recommended the proposed amendments which were also



supported by the Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP). These amendments are to bring the PMDA in line with the provisions of several other marriage laws and specifically the Special Marriage Act (SMA), 1954 and the Hindu Marriage Act (HMA), 1955 whose provisions are more in consonance with the times in which we live.

The similarity between the PMDA and the SMA now is that it is possible to get a divorce by mutual consent.

Under the SMA a person could always get a divorce if cruelty is proved. The present amendment includes this provision in the PMDA and henceforth a Parsi will also be able to get a divorce on the ground of cruelty. Cruelty can be either mental or physical and divorce can be granted on account of mental cruelty to either party. Mental cruelty is not defined anywhere in both the Acts but it depends on the circumstances of each case and the Court would decide the issue bearing in mind the status of the couple, their background, their financial level, etc. Now, under the PMDA a husband can get alimony if the wife is rich and has her own income. No such amendment has been made until now in the SMA.

The Indian Penal Code (IPC) has nothing to do with either the PMDA or

the SMA. The only relevant sections of the IPC are 494 and 495 which deal with bigamy. It is important to note that bigamy is not allowed either under the PMDA or the SMA and both these laws lay down that if any marriage is contracted in violation of these laws it would not only be void but would attract a penalty of seven years' rigorous imprisonment under Section 494 and 495 of the IPC.

Under section 32(d) of the PMDA, a Parsi can get a divorce if he/she is able to prove that the defendant has committed adultery, fornication, rape or an unnatural act (defined as carnal intercourse against the order of nature with man, woman or animal and punishable under section 377 of the IPC with imprisonment up to 10 years). However, a divorce would not be granted on any of these grounds if the suit has been filed more than two years after the plaintiff learned of the fact.

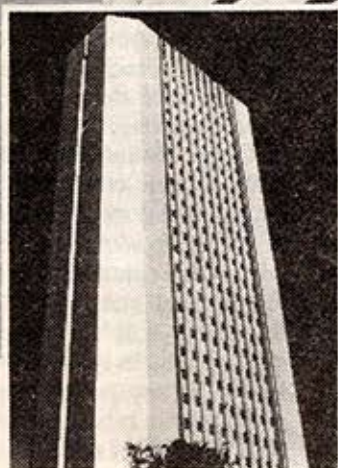
Unlike some other communities, a Parsi has no right to get a divorce by custom. This sort of custom is, in effect, divorce by mutual consent. Particular caste punchayets or tribunals have the authority — recognized by the courts — to pronounce decrees of divorce. This right, however, is not vested in the BPP.

Under section 43 of the original Act hearings were conducted "in camera (behind closed doors)," where no members of the public were allowed, only if such a wish was expressed by either party to a matrimonial suit. The law now states that every suit filed under the PMDA shall be tried in camera and it shall not be lawful for any person to print or publish any matter in relation to any such case on pain of a fine of up to Rs 1,000. Only the judgement of the Court may be published with the previous permission of the Court.

Proceedings under the SMA, 1954 and the HMA have always been conducted in camera.

Koover C. Vajifdar is an advocate of the Bombay High Court. He is a frequent contributor to the general Press on the implications of the Rent Act and the legal ramifications of marital problems.

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JRD

An Endearing Portrait

Burjor K. Karanjia

Beyond The Last Blue Mountain — A Life Of J. R. D. Tata by R. M. Lala. Published in 1992 in VIKING by Penguin Books India (P) Ltd, B4/246 Safdarjung Enclave, New Delhi 110029. Pp: 398. Price: Rs 295.

J. R. D. Tata is a biographer's dream subject for many reasons: for his achievements in spheres as diverse as aviation and family planning, hydroelectrics and women's uplift, soap and steel; for his unbending qualities of discipline and leadership that enabled him, born to the top echelon, to stay there and at the same time to consolidate and expand Tata interests, the exercise tempered always by the recognition of human relations as the first principle of management; and, above all, for the man that he is, cultured, refined, sophisticated and charmingly aloof, with an infinite capacity to see the funny side of things and the quite disarming ability to laugh at himself.

There is another quality of JRD that is also a mark of his greatness, but in the instant case might have proved to be unfortunate. That is his humility which led him initially to object to his "life" being published. His objections were overruled, fortunately for posterity and for young men and women with stars in their eyes who might otherwise have been deprived of a glowing success story.

But a subject like JRD imposes upon the biographer an additional burden. In a world in which, normally, deeds find it difficult to keep in step with words, he has to find the words to match the deeds. He has to rise to the height of his subject, catch the spark of inspiration off him, as it were. R. M. Lala brings to his biography, *Beyond The Last Blue Mountain*, the requisite amount of hero-worship, but that has not prevented him from asking an awkward question or raising an honest doubt. The result is an endearing and colorful portrait, painstakingly and lovingly drawn, insightful and intimate.



JRD seated in the boardroom. Behind him is a bust of Jamsetji Tata

One does not have to read this record of JRD's achievements to realize how richly deserving he is of the Bharat Ratna award. But having read it, one gets the rather uncomfortable feeling that the government, having acted dishonorably and dishonestly with JRD on more than one occasion in the past, by conferring this belated honor on him is seeking to redeem itself.

Aviation was JRD's first and remains his constant love. How this came about makes for interesting reading. The legendary Louis Bleriot, the first to fly a plane across the British Channel, was his neighbor at Hardelet in France where JRD spent much of his childhood. Bleriot also built a hangar near the beach where his

personal plane used to land to the excitement of the residents. Nobody was more excited than little Jehangir: "From then on I was hopelessly hooked on aeroplanes and made up my mind that, come what may, one day I would be a pilot."

Sure enough, years later in 1930, he undertook a solo flight in a Gypsy Moth from Karachi to Paris. This was the historic precursor to the initiation of Indian aviation industry and its development, in the course of four decades, into one of India's success stories. Tata Air Lines, founded in 1933, became Air India International in 1948 with the inaugural flight to London by the gleaming *Malabar Princess*. Recalls JRD: "Seeing the Indian flag displayed on both sides of the *Malabar Princess* as she stood proudly on the apron at the airports of Cairo, Geneva and London, filled me with joy and emotion."

Then in 1953, like a bolt from the blue, came the nationalization of the aviation industry. JRD and Sir Homi Mody expressed their indignation to the then union aviation minister, Jagjivan Ram, at the back-door manner in which nationalization had been brought in, at the cost of heavy losses to the shareholders. In the course of the discussion JRD asked Jagjivan Ram whether a bureaucratically run airline system was in the interest of the country. The minister replied that it would not be run as a government department and hoped that JRD would help them run it. "I told Mr Jagjivan Ram that I was so indignant at the manner in which the government had treated the air transport industry during the last three or four years and had deliberately brought it to its knees, in order to acquire it for a song, that to ask me to be the head of the nationalized company was to add insult to injury and that I had no intention to preside at my own execution, my duty being only to protect the interests of the shareholders and the employees."

Worse was the government's sheer dishonesty in the matter of compensation. "First, they were going to take over — to pay for what they took — and then did an absolutely dirty thing... The government banned their (the planes') export. We said these planes have a value of Rs 500,000 in the world. They said exports were banned and they banned them... just before (the) negotiations. So what they paid us was the original cost minus the depreciation." JRD noted that the petrol tax alone, paid by the airlines in seven years, exceeded the total amount paid for the assets by the government.

It was the same thing, complained JRD, when they nationalized the banks and the insurance companies. "With identical dishonesty, they said, 'When we can save money, why not?!' So they didn't care a damn, including Jawaharlal!"

Of course JRD was offered the chairmanship of both the domestic and international airlines. He was reluctant to accept it, fearing that if he did, the government would be emboldened to grab another industry, pay minimum compensation and then get the top industrialist to preside as a government nominee. But his colleagues, the 18 heads of departments at Bombay House, including, surprisingly, M. R. Masani, a vigorous op-



At an Air India reception (from left): Bobby Kooka, Thelma Tata and JRD

ponent of socialism, persuaded him to accept — till 25 years later in 1978, by the cruellest of ironies, he was summarily removed by Morarji Desai, the then Prime Minister. Even the elementary courtesy of informing him directly was denied him.

JRD's protest at what was virtually a dismissal was replied to by the Prime Minister with the sort of meaningless and hypocritical praise the government is past master at laying on thick on such occasions. But, as subsequent events proved, it wasn't JRD but the aviation industry, the country and the government itself which were the worst sufferers. The demoralization of Air India, the decline in service, popularity and profitability, began with the dismissal of JRD.

But JRD had still to run an empire, unique in India, of steel, electric power, insurance, cement, oil and soap, and textiles. A measure of his success is that when he took over as chairman, the entire group consisted of 14 companies. When he laid down office 52 years later, there were 95 companies, their turnover having increased from 17 crore rupees to an estimated Rs 10,000 crores. Perhaps the secret, as he confided to Lala, is: "If I have any merit it is getting on with individuals according to their ways and characteristics. In 50 years I have dealt with a 100 top directors and I got on with all of them. At times it involves suppressing yourself. It is painful but necessary... to be a leader you have to lead human beings with affection."

JRD's fears when offered the chairmanship of Air India and Indian Airlines proved to be true. Three companies which Tata had nurtured -- the domestic

airline, the international airline and New India -- were nationalized within four years of each other. Was the enterprise worth it, asked JRD, when the fruits of it were snatched away with confiscatory compensation?

But the worst was yet to come. When, later, the nationalization of Tata Steel was suggested, the then minister George Fernandes added insult to injury once again by telling the magnate patronizingly that the government would make him "the czar of the steel industry," putting him in charge

of all the steel plants of India, including all the government steel plants that were making heavy losses!

JRD was hurt and disillusioned. All the hopes he had cherished of building an alliance for progress between industry and government came to nothing. A firm believer in Andrew Carnegie's principle of the trusteeship of wealth, he debunked the much talked about concept of "concentration of economic power." Taking his own case, he said, "I doubt that there is anywhere in the world outside India any industrial executive in charge of a major enterprise with less power than I have."

He deplored the abolition of the managing agency system in spite of its tremendous contribution to the growth of Indian industry, recalling how years ago Sir Dorabji Tata had pledged his personal fortune and his wife's jewellery for a bank loan to pay the wages of Tata Steel employees. In vain he pleaded that the right policy for a socialist government, armed with enormous powers, would be to curb the use of illegitimate funds, on the one hand, and to release for nation-building purposes all the resources of those in the private sector whose past record had shown them worthy of the nation's trust, on the other. But his pleas fell on deaf ears. The managing agency system was terminated in April 1970.

If JRD wasn't embittered, it was because he could always fall back on his inner resources, chief of which was his sense of humor. *Beyond The Last Blue Mountain* is replete with examples of this quality. Of his Granny Briere who appears to have been quite a character, he would say: "She was a very formidable lady. Her husband was a humorist and after some time with her ran away, as anyone would have done had he been

married to my grandmother." When the Germans took over Paris, Granny Briere, then 90, was one of the very few to be allowed to leave the city. Comments JRD: "I always say they allowed her to get out of Paris in self-defence!"

No other chairman could possibly have got away with what he told an earnest shareholder at an annual general meeting. This shareholder complained that his wife, who had been using Tata Hamam soap for years now, found that its quality had deteriorated. JRD told him, "If your wife is so discontented, she must change the soap." The shareholder replied, "Sir, she won't do that, she will never do that." "Then," said JRD, "you must change your wife."

When as president of the International Air Transport Association (IATA), JRD was asked for a photograph to hang on the walls of his IATA office, he complied with a covering letter: "As requested, I send herewith a photograph of myself to join the 'Rogues Gallery' on the walls of your room." But JRD could be bitingly sarcastic too, as he was when Romesh Thapar, a known supporter of the Communist Party, wrote to "My dear Jay," that he had given JRD's name as reference in his application for a position in the Foreign Service. JRD gave a scorching reply: "I have no objection at all to your having given my name as a reference, although I do think it is a sad commentary on the present condition and frame of mind of the proletariat that its leaders are reduced to seeking the support of bloodsucking capitalists such as myself! However, I shall cooperate out of enlightened self-interest, as I may one day have to come to you for similar support under somewhat altered circumstances. I would be content with a minor post, say, as commissar for industries with a couple of dachas, three American cars and a few servants (including a member of the secret police) thrown in... Yours, Jeh." A PS to the letter is uproarious: "I have looked up the dictionary and find that jay is 'a noisy, chattering, European bird of brilliant plumage,' and, figuratively, an impertinent chatterer or simpleton. For future reference please note therefore that

my name is spelt 'Jeh,' in abbreviation of 'Jehangir' and that any resemblance between me and the bird is purely coincidental."

More than his remarkable achievements, it is the little personal touches that make JRD come alive in these pages: The inferiority complex he suffered from for

human aspect in all that he did: "All my management contributions were on the human aspect, through inducing, convincing and encouraging the human being...."

JRD had the example of his forbears to live up to. *Beyond...* shows how it was the pioneer Jamsetji who dreamed a magnificent dream, Sir Dorab and Sir Ratan Tata

who gave it rich substance, and JRD himself who consolidated and expanded its parameters. In this he was helped by all the members of his family, his dear wife Thelma with whom he has had a love affair spanning several decades, his brothers and sisters, his co-directors, colleagues and workers who gave of their unstinted loyalty and devotion, a truly dedicated team.

What might have struck a jarring note in this story is JRD's initial support of the Emergency. "I think I was wrong," he later admitted. "But it was my feeling at the time. You could put it that I regret it today, but in those days the apparent disintegration that could have led to anything, appalled me."

JRD feels that the presidential system of government is more suited to Indian conditions than the parliamentary one. One wishes, though, that his case for the former had been less sketchily presented. And, to set the record straight, Sir Arde-shir Dalal was not the first Indian to be appointed Municipal Commissioner of the Bombay Municipal Corporation. It was Sir Rustom Masani.

It is said that loneliness is the penalty tagged on to greatness. The top is always a lonely place to be. In the biography a colleague of JRD's is reported to have said that in some ways the doyen of industrialists had everything, but in other ways nothing. If a colleague seeing him working late in the office pleaded with him to go home, he was wont to reply: "What have I to go home to?"

True, a life lived so glorious is vulnerable to loneliness, which tends to creep in like a thief in the night. But in the light of day this is only a delusion of the mind, a strange revenge of the whirligig of time. For one who has sowed wisely and reaped handsomely, there is now a whole rich harvest to be gathered.



Suzanne (Soonie) R. D. Tata with her five children (from left): Rodabeh, JRD, Jimmy, Sylla and Darab

not having been allowed to acquire an engineering degree at Cambridge. His debt of gratitude to John Peterson, ICS, then working for Tata Steel, for initiating him into the principles of management. The flashes of temper that drove him on one occasion to berate no less a person than His Excellency the Governor, Sir Stanley Jackson, for keeping several hundred persons including women and children waiting for an hour, so that His Excellency's car could pass, on a bitter cold morning in Darjeeling. His meticulous attention to detail, even to the lipstick worn by Air India hostesses: "White lipstick from a distance makes you look like a corpse and the passenger is not very interested in being served by one who looks like a corpse." His preference for living dangerously: "I like everything that is a little on the edge, on the verge of disaster..." The importance he gave to the

Saklatvala A Compassionate Socialist

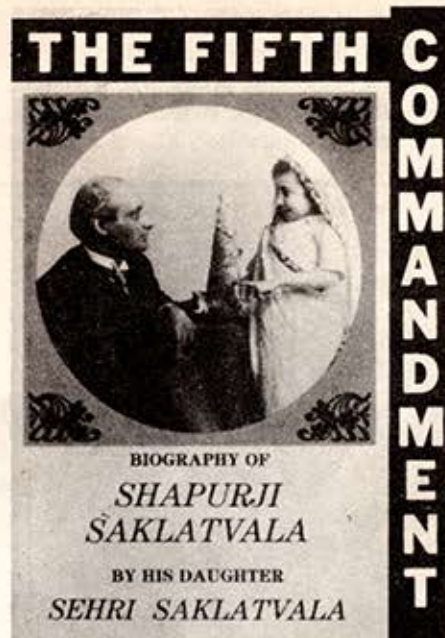
Dina Mehta

The Fifth Commandment — A biography of Shapurji Saklatvala by his daughter Sehri Saklatvala. Published in 1991 by Miranda Press. Printed by Manchester Free Press, Paragon Mill, Jersey Street, Manchester M4 6FP, UK. Pp: 487. Price: £ 4.95.

How many of us remember (never mind obey) the fifth injunction as it appears in *Exodus*, chapter 20, verse 12, which says: "Honor thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee." This Biblical command is so far removed from our sentiments today (after all, aren't parents to blame for all the ills we are heir to?) that we tend to take it with a big pinch of salt.

Yet *The Fifth Commandment* is a fitting title for Sehri Saklatvala's biography of her father. "How we daughters flatter our fathers," is her comment on Aunt Hannah (mother's sister) who took pleasure in listening to Paul Robeson "because he sounds like Dad!" And Sehri goes on to write that perhaps she, too, is guilty of such adulation. But as one reads the story of Shapurji Saklatvala's life both in India and in England, one does get the feeling that her pride in her father was justified.

The story begins in Bombay. Shapurji was born a Parsi. The second son of Dorabjee Saklatvala, a business partner of Nusserwanji Tata (founder of the great industrial house of Tata), and Jerbai, Nusserwanji's youngest daughter, Shapurji's family situation was a complicated one. From the time he was a teenager he was brought up in the household and care of his uncle Jamsetji Tata, Nusserwanji's only son. The lad grew up believing (rightly or wrongly) that his father had suffered a great economic wrong at the hands of the Tata branch of the family. Had Shapurji been able to dislike Jamsetji (as the son of the man who had wronged his father), he would have been able to cope better, emotionally, with the



situation. But there was a genuine bond of affection between uncle and nephew so that the sensitive boy was torn apart by conflicting loyalties. And this "tribal turbulence" between the Tatas and the Saklatvalas was to affect him all his life.

That he saw his father as an underdog (not enjoying the prosperity of the other members of the family) may well account for Shapurji's early awareness of and concern for the poverty in which the majority of his countrymen lived. As a college student his voluntary service as assistant to Professor Haffkine (a Russian scientist and humanitarian who had fled the injustices of the Tsarist regime) in his program of inoculation against the bubonic plague that hit the city in 1896, brought him in personal contact with the wretched slums of Bombay. What he saw there always remained in his mind and he sought all his life to remove poverty, not only in India but everywhere in the world.

India was at this time under British domination and one of Jamsetji Tata's dreams was to give his country an iron and steel industry. It was out of his far-sightedness, study and tireless travelling both in Europe and America that this great enterprise began to take shape; and while his son Dorab handled the financial aspects of the Tata Iron and Steel Foundation, Shapurji was given the more arduous job of prospecting for the raw materials. As he was stubbornly pursuing this wearying task in distant tracts and jungles of Central and Eastern India, Jamsetji

died in Vienna. Apart from his grief, Shapurji felt personally vulnerable now that the loving protection of his powerful uncle was no longer there. His fears were not unfounded, according to his daughter, for after the crucial minerals were located (thanks to his perseverance against all odds) and the company was being structured, Shapurji was eased out of the business.

With his uncle dead, his health failing and faced with antagonism from his cousins, Shapurji left for England in 1905, where he met Sally Marsh, his future wife, whose name he changed to Sehri. He fathered a brood of five children, the youngest of which was daughter Sehri who was to publish his biography in 1991, when she was 72 years old.

Had Shapurji flourished in the family business, he might never have advanced far along the road of "compassionate socialism" and his political career might not have been so illustrious and fulfilling. When he joined the Independent Labour Party in 1909 in Manchester, he became the third Indian (and Parsi) to be elected to the British Parliament (the other two being Dadabhai Naoroji and Mancherjee Bhownagare); and always he used his position to expose iniquities anywhere in the world and to plead for the rights of individuals as well as the masses. The causes he espoused were the Fabian Society, the trade union movement, the women's franchise (suffragette Sylvia Pankhurst was a friend), the conscientious objectors' movement. Above all, with courage and at every opportunity, he lent his voice to the urgent and compelling cry for India's freedom from foreign rule, denouncing the British domination in the House of Commons itself.

Indeed, Shapurji worked to free people everywhere from all forms of tyranny, the peoples of Africa, China, Ireland and all others. He went even further than that. He wanted the workers the world over to own the means of production, whether it be on the land or in a factory for they were, he felt, the creators of the country's wealth. In other words he believed passionately and steadfastly that only world communism could liberate the working people from exploitation, illiteracy and want. He became a founder member of the Communist Party in the UK, and in

1922 he singly bore the party's standard in the British Parliament of 615 members.

Shapurji emerges from the pages not only as a successful politician, but as a man of unblemished integrity which gained for him the respect and admiration of his followers as well as those who had no sympathy whatever for his political ideals. Perhaps the groundwork for this impeccable conduct was laid in his childhood. Like most Parsi families of that time, the Saklatvalas were devout Zoroastrians and the fundamental tenet of this faith, which can be summed up in the simple prescription, 'good thoughts, good words and good deeds' was apparently imbibed by the growing boy and served him well all his life. For while Shapurji thought the ritual of religion to be sometimes divisive and the cause of much human conflict, he took this core precept to heart and there was never anything clandestine about any of his activities. Indeed, so great was his preoccupation with honesty, writes his daughter, that it "often made him an intimidating parent."

Some of the most delightful portions of the biography are those which tell of the private life of this renowned public figure. The fact that her parents met at all, the author celebrates as a miracle. "For he was born in the East, she in the West; he grew up in affluence and she in humble poverty; he had an academic education while she attended a one-roomed village school only until she was 13..."

The courtship, marriage and parenthood are vividly described. Many little facts and quirks and anecdotes flesh out the portrait of the man — like, for example, his insistence on being present at the birth of his son Kaikoo. But in 1915 that was considered scandalous and Shapurji was ousted from the bedroom when the nurse threatened to abandon her patient if he remained there!

Family ties were profoundly important to Shapurji and he had a deep affection even for those relatives whose conduct in public or private affairs ran contrary to his own convictions. "He was, after all, the only socialist in a clan of highly successful capitalists, but he loved the clan nevertheless." Equally strong were the threads that bound him to the country of his birth. "His sacrifices are great," Mahatma Gandhi (with whom he did not see eye to eye) wrote of him; and one of the hardest things for Shapurji to bear was that after the overwhelming welcome he received from his countrymen on his visit to India in 1927 the Establishment, which had consistently viewed this revolution-

ary as 'dangerous' (he had Scotland Yard detectives continuously on his heels in the UK), condemned him to permanent exile from home.

Perhaps there was some justification for such qualms. For wherever he went, Shapurji drew crowds. He was an outstanding orator and people thronged to hear him. He showed unfailing courtesy in debate and he put hecklers in their place with humor and logic. This humor he seems to have bequeathed to his daughter, for her perceptions are keen and balanced, her writing never descends to boring platitudes and though her unfailing good taste proclaims her to be a lady on every page (we have so many bitches writing today!) she is by no means a pastel person and can be forthright and assertive when she chooses to.

A case to the point is the incident she describes when working in India House: "...some male chauvinist made me excessively angry, and I danced through the office brandishing a pair of scissors, threatening to operate on his spheres of virility." Actually, she goes on to confess disarmingly, his virility was safe from her surgical intervention because she was too squeamish even to cut someone's fingernails.

Squeamish or not, Sehri's prose is vigorous, she writes *young* (at 72!). She also speaks with the sagacity of her years when she reflects on whether the communist creed as recommended by her father would have brought that prosperity to India which her national liberty has so dismally failed to do.

"The plunderers are now at least Indian plunderers," she writes, though there can be scant consolation in that for the country's drudges. She concedes that communist states have provided a fertile soil for tyranny and torture and that there are no real grounds for believing that in India it could have produced anything better. But this she deems to be "distorted communism." And just as "Christ did not envisage that his advocacy of brotherly love would result in the Inquisition... neither did Marx envisage the possibility of a Stalin..." Man's cruelty, she concludes, is not so easily conquered; like a weed, it is "an indomitable survivor."

Today it may seem incomprehensible to most of us that when Shapurji was a young man, communism was the refuge of noble minds. To him being a communist meant working tirelessly for the poor. Being a communist meant no man or groups of men should build their own prosperity on the suffering of others.

Being a communist meant feeling as keenly for thousands as you did for your own brother. Communism presented to the workers a new social structure that could alleviate the deprivations of poverty, it was the end of the old order of class domination and economic slavery, it was the resurrection to a new life of education and opportunities and freedom — indeed, it was hailed as the birth of a truer democracy!

How sadly it all turned out to be, how appalled Shapurji would have been to witness the upheavals in Europe, how stunned that the brotherhood he had thought to be holy and imperishable had degenerated into a hideous despotism that held people in such vile subjection.

How wise, then, is the poetic vision that saw that the old order must change, yielding place to new. And God fulfills Himself in many ways, wrote Tennyson, "lest one good custom should corrupt the world." This is what happened, and the world has turned full circle — in Sehri's lifetime!

At the end of her book, the thought I'm left with is this: Perhaps the good people — dreamers, intellectuals, men of conscience — in the early decades of the 20th century acquiesced in communism because they saw men like Shapurji Saklatvala on the horizon?

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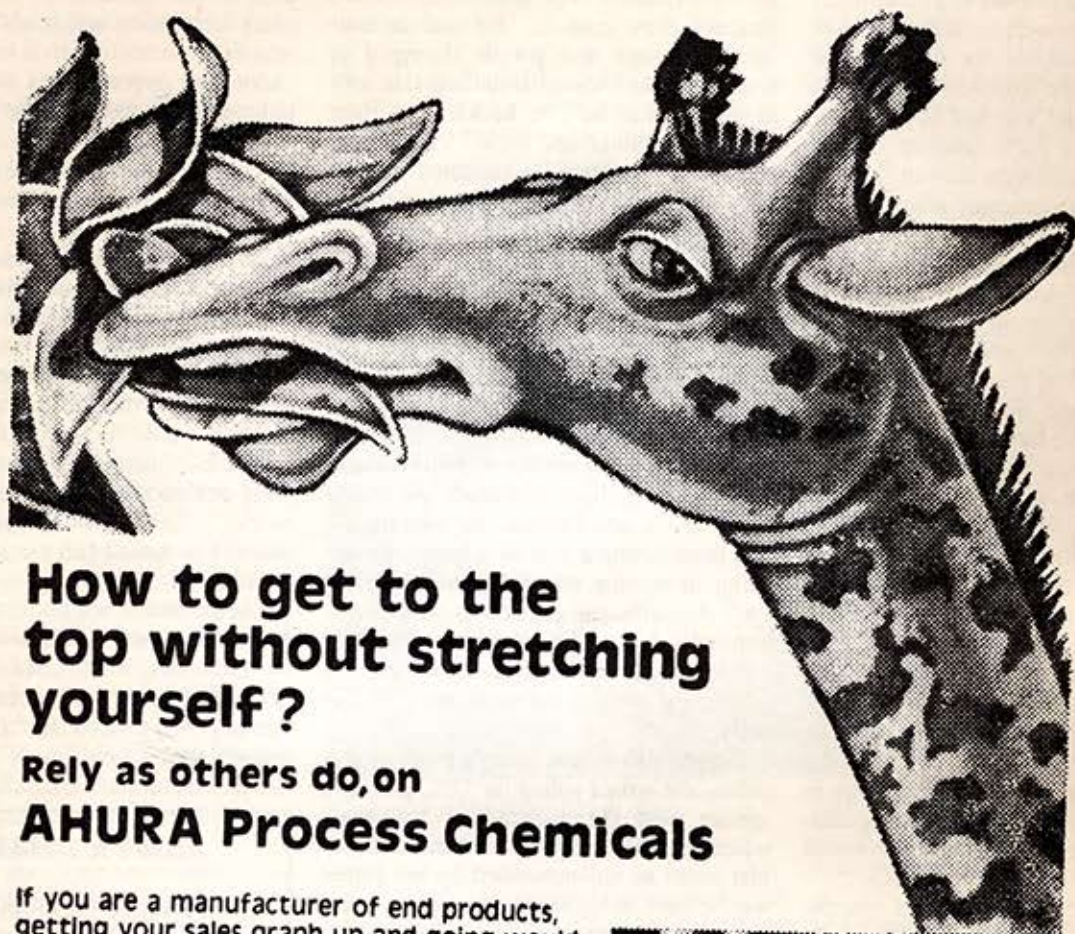
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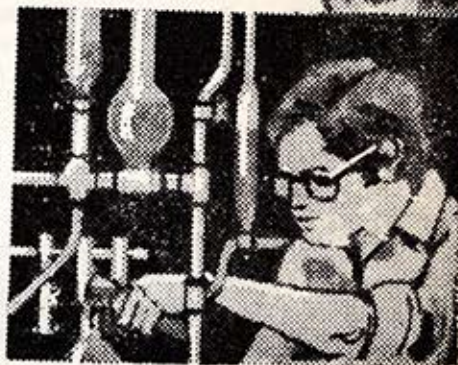
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In the interests of a clearer appreciation of demographic developments in the community, *Parsiana's* 'Totals' at the end of Milestones will, from now on, separately reflect the figures for Bombay, the rest of India and Zoroastrian settlements abroad.

Under each head column A indicates figures published in the current issue. Column B provides the running total under each category for 1992 (i.e. the cumulative 1992 data up to the last published issue of *Parsiana*).

The age of Zoroastrian brides (as listed in this issue) ranged between 19 and 38 years, the arithmetic mean (the total number of individual ages divided by the total number of brides) being 25 years. The corresponding figures for the grooms were 24 and 40 years, averaging at 28 years.

As compared to 80 Zoroastrians who died in Bombay in March, there were 15 births. The major killer was heart disease, claiming 30 patients, of whom 11 were above the age of 80. Fifteen victims succumbed to pneumonia and lung disease, six to old age and general debility, and four to diabetes. Dehydration and kidney failure took the lives of three patients each, whereas two victims each fell prey to brain disease, nervous disorder, hypertension, cancer, asthma, uremia and hypoproteinaemia (deficient protein in the blood plasma). Atherosclerosis (deposition of fatty substances in the arteries), anemia, haematemesis (vomiting of blood), hypotension, septicemia, burns and osteoporosis (loss of bone density due to excessive absorption of calcium and phosphorus from the bone) were the isolated cases registered last month.

There was one reported case of murder. A premature baby boy was also lost to the community. The oldest to die was a 97-year-old as compared to the youngest: a 27-year-old man.

The data on births, marriages and deaths has been compiled from information supplied by various newsletters and anju-

mans 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 private 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.

BOMBAY

Born

A girl to *Niloofer and Hormazd Cooper* on February 26, 1992
A boy to *Shiraz and Jehangir Pardiwalla*; March 1
A girl to *Nilufer and Rustom Irani*; March 2
A boy to *Yasmin and Farhad Irani*, brother to Yanosh; March 3
A boy to *Gulrukh and Rohinton Shroff*; March 3
A girl to *Sharon and Sohrab Dhondy*; March 12
A boy to *Behroze and Shapoorji Mistry*; March 12
A girl to *Ketayun and Farhad Irani*; March 16
A girl to *Zarin and Farrokh Munsiff*; March 17
A boy to *Maharookh and Sharookh Irani*; March 19
A boy to *Mahbanoo and Sohrab Faroodi*; March 20
A girl to *Nilufer and Rohinton Dalal*; March 26
A girl to *Niloofer and Jamsheed Banaji*; March 27
A girl to *Riah and Aref Khan*; March 27
A boy to *Nazneen and Jal Thanawala*; March 30
A girl to *Aban and Falee Bilimoria*; March 31

Married

Aban Bomi Patrawalla and Jehanbux Pesi Kerawalla; February 22
Almitra Pervaz Sidhva and Neville Jehangir Billimoria; February 27
Ruzbeh Pesotan Gubba and Viraf Ardesar Daruwala; February 27
Nazneen Dhun Irani and Faridoon Navroji Gamadia; February 28
Nargis Ratansha Dadrewala of Daman and Farrokh Framroz Karai; February 28
Methoo Eddi Darukhanawalla and Keki Dhunjishah Surty; February 28
Jarin Sheheryar Pavri of Dewas, Madhya Pradesh and Mehernosh Dadabhoy Tangri; February 28
Kashmira Soli Commissariat and Parvez Erachsha Driver; March 1
Shernaz Erach Bhot and Homyar Jamshed Master; March 1
Arnawaz Jamshed Lelinwala and Hormuz Maneck Mehta; March 1
Aban Keki Bharucha and Daraius Hoshang Shroff; March 1
Nina Behram Khajotia and Farhad Soli Irani; March 5
Roshan Dinshaw Lalla and Parvez Firoze Malegamwala of Poona; March 6
Meher Keki Batliwala and Rayomand Homi Palsetia; March 6
Parizad Dara Havewala and Darius Khushroo Joshi; March 7
Zenobia Keki Bharucha and Nevil Erach Dadrewalla; March 8
Dilnavaz Sohrab Irani and Jamshed Shapur Irani; March 8
Anahita Russa Ginwalla and Behram Cooverji Ardeshir; March 10
Delnaz Rustomji Taraporewalla and Farhad Fali Khatao; March 12
Dilkhush Firoze Shroff and Pirooz Adi Balsara; March 16
Dinci Hormazdiar Desai and Nadir Hoshang Karanjia; March 21

Frannie Edulji Aderbad and Phiroze Pesi Engineer; March 22
Zarine Noshir Katgara and Jehanbux Jehangir Mistry; March 22
Persis Pervaz Wadia of Ahmedabad and Darius Bomanji Solan of Pakistan; March 22
Anahita Edulji Aderbad and Malcolm Pesi Engineer; March 23
Farzana Shahpoor Faroodi of Dahanu Rd and Hector Percy Antia; March 24
Delnavaz Mehraban Pashutani-zadeh and Shazad Sheriyar Izediyar; March 28

Died

Bahadur Edulji Malesara (66), residing at P-27, Nowroz Baug, Lalbaug, 400012; February 26
Meherbai Hormusji Elavia (82), 650, Karani Mans, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; February 29
Minoo Hormusji Hiloowalla (61), 34, Strand Hse, Opp Strand Cinema, Colaba, 400005; February 29
Ardeshir Maneckji Kapadia (78), D/3, Bhiwandiwalla Ter, Dhobitalao, 400002; February 29
Tehmina Jehangir Anklesaria (80), 2/B, Petit Bldg, Avabai Petit Lane, Balaram St, Grant Rd, 400007; March 1
Nelly Homi Sethna (59), 72, Ashoka Apts, Rungta Lane, Off L. Jagmohandas Rd, 400006; March 1
Jamshed Dadabhai Katrak (73), B1-A/2, Petit Chawl, Avabai Petit St, Grant Rd, 400007; March 2
Roshan Hosang Variava (62), B/16, Custow Baug, S. B. Rd, 400039; March 2
Dhanmai Kavasji Karani (78), Irani Bldg, Dhuswadi, Dhobitalao, 400002; March 5
Phiroz Nasserwanji Canteenwalla (76), E/26, Jer Baug, Dr Ambedkar Rd, Byculia, 400027; March 6
Framroze Maneckji Daruwala (89), Batliwala Bldg, Khan Est, Stn Rd, Mahim, 400016; March 6

Hormusji Jehangirji Engineer (96), Sethna Bldg, 55, M. Karve Rd, 400002; March 6
Meherbai Savakshaw Gandhi (90), 5, Kapadia Bldg, A. H. Wadia Bldg, Parel Tank Rd, 400033; March 6
Kerbanoo Dorabji Patel (82), 1, Greenfields, 134, M. Karve Rd, 400020; March 6
Framroze Hormasji Balsara (75), 34, F. S. Parukh Dharamshalla, Hughes Rd, 400007; March 7
Jer Savaksha Broacha (81), 22, Surya Kiron, Cumballa Hill, 400036; March 7
Minocher Gustadji Kapadia (85), 665, Band View, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; March 7
Dina Adi Dalal (72), 14/11, Pantnaki Bldg, Sir M. V. Rd, Andheri (E), 400069; March 8
Dina Dara Madon (81), 241, Chandra Mhl, Princess St, 400002; March 8
Gospi Sam Sanjana (59), B/4, 301, Hari-Om Apts, Borivli (W); 400092; March 8
Nariman Framji Khatao (81), 42/46 A, Gowalia Tank Bldg, A. K. Marg, 400036; March 9
Jal Hormazji Siganporia (71),

R/25, Nowroz Baug, Lalbaug, 400012; March 9
Rustom Ardeshir Vakil (90), 147, Lentin Hse, Alibhai Premji Marg, 400007; March 9
Minocher Ruttanshaw Bhavnagri (91), Room 7, Maneck Mans, M. M. Chotani Rd, Mahim, 400016; March 10
Burjor B. Daruwala (70), 6/10, Panthaki Baug, Andheri (E), 400069; March 10
Rustom Rashid Irani (87), 5, Baharistan Bldg, Opp Vikhroli Stn, 400083; March 10
Sheroo Mino Mukadam (64), Room 5, 133, Mody St, Fort Market, 400001; March 10
Motamai Munchershaw Billimoria (85), 132, Sherhin Apts, Modi St, Fort, 400001; March 11
Meherwan Rustom Irani (60), Room 5, Transit Camp Bldg, Old Khareghat Clny, Hughes Rd, 400007; March 11
Framroz Mahiyarji Mirza (86), A/6, Tardeo Chmbs, Cassinath Rd, Tardeo, 400034; March 11
Nariman Pirojshaw Pastakia (75), G/701, Veena Beena Apts, A. D. Marg, Sewree Naka, 400015; March 11
Khorshedbanoo Sorab Goiporia

(86), 26, Piroja Mans, Opp Grant Rd Stn, 400007; March 13
Shapoor Javanmard Jamasbnejad (76), Irani Bldg, 128, Bazar Rd, Bandra, 400050; March 13
Perin Rustomji Raja (80), Room 15, Shanti Niketan, Pawwalla St, 400004; March 13
Jamshed Edalji Tamboly (68), 36, Adi Marzban Path, Ballard Est, 400038; March 13
Minoo Kaikhushru Unwalla (77), 2, Somerset Hse, 169/A, Colaba Rd, 400005; March 13
Kety Framroz Vandrewala (58), O/1, S. B. Bharucha Baug, S. V. Rd, Andheri (W), 400058; March 13
Nariman Dossabhai Balsara (67), Nana Parsiwad, Bulsar, 396001; March 14
Rustom Khurshed Doctor (76), 602/A, Simla Hse, Nepean Sea Rd, 400036; March 14
Dosabhoy (Dosu) Dinshawji Nargolwalla (63), Hirjibhoy Sethna Bldg, Chikalwadi, Grant Rd, 400007; March 14
Rustom Khodadad Amuyan (65), Popla Sadan, Century Bazar, Worli, 400025; March 15

Jerbanoo Jahangir Aga (83), 515/C, Meher Mans, R. P. Masani Rd, Matunga, 400019; March 16
Baby boy of Parinaz Jamshed Chinoy (stillborn), 9, Javji Ter, Sleater Rd, Grant Rd, 400007; March 16
Jehangirji Eduljee Adajania (97), P/17, Nowroz Baug, Lalbaug, 400012; March 17
Behman Dossabhoy Colabewalla (76), 12, Gulmanor, 8, Strand Rd, Colaba, 400007; March 17
Morwariz Ardeshir Irani (80), Jehangir Mans, Next to Metro Cinema, 400020; March 17
Savak Sorabji Jesung (53), 667, Dhunmai Bldg, Lady Jehangir Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; March 17
Boman Jamshedji Master (61), Malegaum & Boyce Bldg, 669, Katrak Rd, Wadala, 400031; March 17
Dolly Dossabhoy Bhiwandiwalla (62), C, Bhiwandiwalla Ter, 618, Girgaum Rd, 400002; March 18
Gaimai Rustomji Dittia (91), Heera Meher, Wodehouse Rd,



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Dossan Gustadji Mama (95), 5,
 Beach Hse, Sassoon Dock Rd,
 Colaba, 400005; March 18
Pilloo (Maneck) Ratanshaw
Mobedji (75), 3, Divecha Bldg,
 Charai Edulji Rd, Thane,
 400601; March 18
Khorshed Dinshaw Wadia (86),
 F/1, Nowroz Baug, Lalbaug,
 400012; March 19
Kushroo Jehangirji Darukha-
nawala (75), Chaman Chmbs,
 1st Marine St, Dhobitalao,
 400020; March 20
Ratanshaw Dadabhai Mistry
 (80), C/o Ms Aspi Forbes,
 Jamasp Tata Block, Tata Clny,
 Bandra, 400050; March 20
Framroz Pestonji Munshi (94),
 8, Hanvant Bhavan, 80, Nepean
 Sea Rd, 400006; March 20
Maneckbai Bomansha Aibara
 (93), B/22, 63, Vrundavan Soc,
 Marjiwada, Thane (W), 400601;
 March 21
Pestonji Kuverji Asli (86), 9/10,
 Gool Mhl, Noshir Bharucha Rd,
 400007; March 21
Dinshaw Rustomji Battliwala
 (73), 764/F, Sarosh Court, Tilak
 Rd, Dadar, 400014; March 21

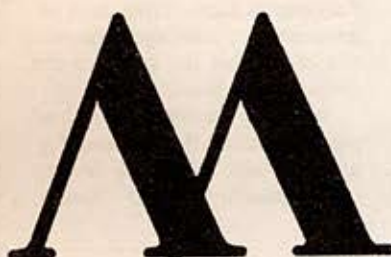
Bomanshaw Behramji Bhesania
 (71), 688, Wadia Bldg, Dinshaw
 Master Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar,
 400014; March 21
Gool Menekaji Dalal (73),
 Silla-Villa, 21, Megharaj Sethi
 Marg, Bombay Central,
 400008; March 21
Minocher Rustomji Keravala
 (91), 622, Palia Mans, Parsi
 Clny, Dadar, 400014; March 21
Banoobai Jehangirji Khot (79),
 689/23, Dr D. Master Rd, Parsi
 Clny, Dadar, 400014; March 21
Tehmuras Dadabhoj Patel
 (90), Kuver Hse, Sassoon Dock,
 400005; March 21
Jal Nawroji Elavia (78),
 72, Bai Hirabai Petit Bldg,
 Grant Rd Stn, 400007;
 March 22
Bahadur Keki Gotla (27), 684,
 Lalkaka Hse, Khareghat Rd,
 Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014;
 March 22
Piroja Phiroze Panthaki (81),
 Wadia Bldg, 604/E, S. Gandhi
 Marg, 400002; March 22
Shireenbai Jalejer Mistry (88),
 H/14, Nowroz Baug, Lalbaug,
 400012; March 23
Perin Jehangir Virjee (73), 801,

Coover Villa, Khareghat Rd,
 400014; March 23
Aloo Manekshaw Billimoria (76),
 266, Patel Bldg, Opp Central
 Cinema, Girgaon, 400004;
 March 24
Shainaz Mherwan Irani (35),
 30, Jamaji Todiwalla Chawl,
 Sun Mill Rd, Parel, 400013;
 March 24
Banoo Cawasji Mody (78), 648,
 Kaka Bldg, Firdoshi Rd, Parsi
 Clny, Dadar, 400014; March 24
Khorshed Bejonji Talati (85),
 52, Jupiter, 1, Anstey Rd,
 Cumballa Hill, 400026;
 March 24
Banoo Burjor Sinor (75), 1/11,
 A. H. Wadia Baug, Parel Tank
 Rd, 400033; March 25
Keki Furdoonji Zaveri (60),
 5/1, Ratan Tata Clny, Sir Ratan
 Tata Rd, Tardeo, 400034;
 March 25
Rutton Dossabhoj Patel (83),
 C/4, Sangam Bhavan, Opp
 Strand Cinema, Colaba, 400005;
 March 26
Homai Sorabji Aderianwalla
 (90), C/o Ms Roshan Hoshang
 Tata, Dara Mirza Bldg, Tata
 Blocks, S. V. Rd, Bandra,

400050; March 27
Tehmina Cawasji Tatra (85), D,
 Petit Chawl, Dinsha Petit St,
 400004; March 27
Gool Ratansha Katrak (81), 5,
 Jehangir Mans, 1st Marine St,
 Dhobitalao, 400002; March 28
Houshang Darabshaw Elavia
 (54), 5/12, Tata Clny, Sir Ratan
 Tata Rd, Tardeo, 400034;
 March 29
Nusserwanji Sorabji
Masalawala (80), 12/A,
 Panthaki Baug, Andheri, 400069;
 March 30
Dady Burjorji Mistry (81),
 607/B, Sohrab Hse, Dr Ambedkar
 Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014;
 March 30
Ratanbai Rustomji Mody (92),
 386-B, Sir Jagmohandas Bldg,
 J.S.S. Rd, 400002; March 30
Homai Rustom Andaz (78),
 Windsor Chmbs, Cawasjee
 Patel St, Fort, 400001;
 March 31

CALCUTTA Died

Dinshaw Madan, husband of
 Behroz and father of Armine
 and Neville; March 13



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Piroja Darab Driver, mother of Shirin and Jimmy; March 27

DARJEELING

Born
A boy, *Anaoshak*, to Dimple and Marzban Mody; February 11

KANPUR

Died
Dharmai Bamanji Sukhia; March 2

POONA

Died
Munchi Ardeshtir Gotwala (91), 661, Taboot St, 411001; March 20

SURAT

Died
Jalejar Faramroze Bhatena (68), Ami Cottage, Vanki Bordi, 395003; March 1
Alamai Gustadi Kavina (83), Elor Park, Gujarat Hsg Board, Baroda, 390002; March 11
Pervez Sorabji Junwanwala (58), Makipa Falyu, Vanki Bordi, 395003; March 21
Alabai Jehanbux Sena (86), Adagra Mohalla, Nanpura, 395001; March 23
Khorshedbanu Jehangirji Munshi (68), Gam Amamal, Post Karjan, Taluka Kamrej, 394180; March 28

...

ADELAIDE

Born
A girl, *Priya*, to Taina and Timmy Pavri; February 21

CHICAGO

Born
A girl, *Karishma*, to Zenobia and Khurshed Kasad, sister to Cherag; February 7

HOUSTON

Married
Nilofer Madon of Bombay, daughter of Dinoo and Jamasp, and Swapna Mondal; February 20

KARACHI

Born
A girl, *Veera*, to Alla and Burjor Rustomji; January 27
A girl, *Tara*, to Anaheet and Eddie Shroff; February 13

Died

Ardeshtir Maneckji Khory (69); January 6
Cooverbai Darabsha Gotwala (90); January 10
Bachubai Gustad Framji (80); January 15
Jamshed Peshotan Patel (71); January 17
Kersi Nusserwanji Patel (72); January 22
Sam Jamshedji Mulla (61); February 2
Shirin Jeahangir Mody (82); February 7
Noshirwan Rustam Asli (57); February 11
Parinbanu Ratanshaw Kapadia (91); February 25
Behram Rustamji Kermani (72); February 25

LONDON

Married
Vera D. Shroff and *Farroakh Homi Parekh*; December 22, 1991

Died

Vispi Mistri (42), son of Hilla and Keki; February 23, 1992
Nancy Ardeshtir Cowasjee (66); February 26

QUEBEC

Married
Dinaz Bhatena, daughter of Sheroo and Minoo, and *Khushroo Kanga*, son of Banoo and Adi; September 28, 1991

TORONTO

Married
Zarine Daver of New Delhi, daughter of Freny and Rustom, and *Rajiv Silgardo*; January 18, 1992

VICTORIA, British Columbia

Died
Naoroji D. Kooka, husband of Jini and father of Nergis, Rashna Charania, Yezdee and Farrokh; September 20

The telling figures

The annual figures for births, marriages and deaths for 1990 were not published as *Parsiana* had been awaiting the birth figures from the Bombay Municipal Corporation. After making several inquiries we were informed that the Municipal birth certificate no longer states the religion of the child. Thus there is no way of knowing the total number of births to Zoroastrians in Bombay unless one were to visit each and every hospital and nursing home in the city to gather the facts.

The birth figures cited are the totals of births listed in *Parsiana*. Their source is primarily the B. D. Petit Parsee General Hospital, the Breach Candy Hospital, the Parsi Lying-in Hospital and the Masina Hospital. It should also be specified that the births mentioned in *Parsiana* include offsprings of intercommunity marriages irrespective of whether the father or the mother is a Zoroastrian.

We may assume from past percentages that the *Parsiana* figures represent around 55 percent of the Bombay births. Hence,

augmenting the *Parsiana* figure for total births in 1990 of 244 by 45 percent, the estimated total births may be reckoned at 354. Similarly, the *Parsiana* birth figure of 319 for 1991 may be augmented to an estimated 463.

In 1990 there were approximately 610 more deaths than births -- a rise over the 1989 figure of 571 (see "1989: The telling figures," *Parsiana*, May 1990). In 1991 there were 100 fewer deaths and 75 more births than in 1990. Hence, the difference between deaths and births -- which depicts the numerical decline of the community -- is estimated lower at 407.

The marriage totals for 1991, 458, too showed an increase by 108 over the 1990 total of 350. While in 1991 the percentage of intercommunity marriages was around 19 (if calculated as a ratio of intercommunity marriages to the total number of marriages -- 88:458), and 24 percent (if calculated as a ratio of intercommunity marriages to community marriages -- 88:370), in 1990 the corresponding figures were 22 (80:350) and 30 (80:270).

We list below the actual Bombay numbers:

1990

Born: Boys 142, Girls 102
Married: Parsi 270
Intercommunal 80
Died: Interred 964
Cremated 12
Body donated 1

1991

Born: Boys 162, Girls 157
Married: Parsi 370
Intercommunal 88
Died: Interred 870
Cremated 16

TOTALS FOR 1992

	Bombay		Other Indian cities		Foreign cities	
	A	B	A	B	A	B
BORN						
Boys	7	26	1	--	--	1
Girls	9	32	--	--	4	2
MARRIED						
Parsi	27	57	--	1	2	1
Intercommunal	--	--	--	1	2	--
DIED						
Male	46	104	4	7	8	--
Female	38	84	5	14	5	--

A: Total numbers in this issue

B: Running totals for 1992 (February and March issues)

These figures pertain to information provided to or collected by *Parsiana*. They do not represent the total number of births, marriages and deaths in the Zoroastrian community in India and abroad.

Compiled by Roxana A. Mirza

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Zarathushtra's knight-errant

Arnavaz S. Mama

French scholar Paul du Breuil tried to awaken Zoroastrians and the world to the immensity of Zarathushtra's vision

He considered it his mission in life to restore to Zarathushtra the prophet's rightful preeminence among the world's philosophers and preachers. To Dr Paul Jouveau du Breuil, French scholar, philosopher and author, Zoroastrianism still had "something to teach our desperate world" and to that end he expected "the Zoroastrian community...to oppose today's fanaticism with a bright image of Zarathushtra's ethics, and to convince people by their common noble behavior wherever they are."

Of noble birth, chivalrous to the core, du Breuil passionately sought to create a universality of belief based on tolerance. In Lausanne, Switzerland, in 1989 when European philosophers and theologians gathered to discuss "What religion for Europe in the 21st century?" Zoroastrianism was considered for the first time. "I am proud of my contribution," du Breuil had noted at a lecture — on French orientalist research and the Parsis — organized by the Platinum Jubilee Committee of the K. R. Cama Oriental Institute (KRCOI) in Bombay on January 14, 1991.

It was a paler, gaunter du Breuil than the man we had met four years earlier in Delhi. He had been considerably ill — too ill to attend the international scholars' conference organized by the KRCOI in 1989. But the blood cancer, which ultimately felled him on October 19, 1991 in Paris at the age of 59 had not, in January, undermined du Breuil's scholarship or his keenness for detail. He traced the ebb and flow of academic interest in Zoroastrianism in France and the conflict of English and French interests in this field, as in others, during the high noon of

colonialism. The next day he was exhausted, requiring long hours of medical help and profuse in his apologies for having made *Parsiana* wait.

The pain and discomfort of the illness necessitated an earlier return to Paris than scheduled. But it did not prevent him from registering his sorrow at the full-blown, bitter controversy — on the religious rights of Zoroastrian women married to men of other faiths — then raging in the city subsequent to the death of Ms Roxan Darshan Shah in July 1990. In an article titled "Orthodoxy and Conversion," sent to *Parsiana* in June last year, he documented his own position on the question of conversion in Zoroastrianism: "The truth of a religion is not kept by the traditional clergy only, but is to be found in the original texts and in the history of such religion."

Arguing against the theory that Muslim Iranians could be readmitted into the fold as they are the progeny of Zoroastrians, du Breuil noted that the Iranians who converted to Islam eventually mixed with the Arab, Bedouin and Mongol invaders. Their mixed genes had already been commented on by traveller John Chardin (1643-1713) on the basis of the varied physical types of people he had encountered in Iran. To du Breuil the question of race was an inferior contention to the knowledge of the *Avesta*, a requirement which according to the traditional texts is the hallmark of a Zoroastrian. This knowledge had to be buttressed by "the ethical behavior of the person (desiring) to become a Zoroastrian, whatever... the neophyte's nationality. The orthodoxy of the position towards conversion must be found in the

Avesta. Asha, arta, proclaim the love and respect of Zoroastrian followers for order through the right rules and the discipline of straight deeds through good thoughts and good words."

In the same article du Breuil cites two examples of the historical record of the proselytizing spirit of Zoroastrianism: "King Yazdegard II wanted the complete conversion of Christian Armenia to Mazdeism (449 AD) and sent not less than 700 priests, ... to teach these people Zarathushtra's doctrine. The Mazdean missionaries built new fire-temples or transformed Christian churches into Mazdean shrines. The Christian clergy had to forsake their liturgical dress and sacerdotal ornaments and the youth received the order to learn the Mazdean teachings... Mazdean customs like the ritual use of bull's urine (*nirang*) was also taught to, and marriage between close relatives encouraged among, the newly converted people (Lazare, XXVIII; Elisee, p 199-200).

"On the other hand, the *Bahman Yasht* says clearly that before the end of time, the good religion of Zarthost will be current in the world: 'Men of the seven regions will be steadfast in the good religion and will accept the religion and Sasan (the savior, Sasyosh) will propagate the religion in the world.'"

Basing his advice on the historical knowledge of the European Protestant reform movement whose fidelity to the spirit of the Gospels led it to reject the multitudinous rituals of the Roman Catholic clergy, du Breuil suggested that the community "have a representative body — a committee which would define the right conditions for conversion and

the qualities (required)...I would answer 'yes' to the principle of conversion, but only when the community will have settled proper rules for them and that these very specific rules be not based on racial arguments but on spiritual (disposition) and theological knowledge as well as on the ethical and moral behavior of the candidates. (Thus) the Zoroastrian community will (preserve) its existence forever."

It had been the major theme of his earlier interview ("The difficult choice," *Parsiana*, March 1987). "The whole Zoroastrian community is on the Chinvat Bridge... Your choice is to remain or to disappear," he had noted, advocating a referendum within the community to determine a set of ideas and practices that would promote unity among Zoroastrians everywhere.

Born March 15 (1932) in the family chateau at Vincennes, du Breuil characteristically chose to associate the date with the publication of the first French translation of the *Avesta* by Anquetil Duperron in 1771 rather than with Julius Caesar's assassination on the Ides of March, notes his friend and English translator Farrokh Vajifdar of London. In an article in the newsletter of the Informal Religious Meetings (IRM, October-November 1991) of Karachi, du Breuil refers to his initiation into the study of the ancient Iranian religion: "Because Zoroastrianism appeared as the most interesting of all major spiritualities in the eyes of my former (teacher) of the history of religions and philosophy, because Zoroastrianism had strongly influenced my father's life, of all the religions I have studied, the religion of Zoroaster has become one of the most fascinating to my eyes and as much dear to my heart."

The tall, lanky aristocrat was to acquire a double doctorate — one in the history of religion, another in comparative religion. Hereditary commander of the order of St John of Jerusalem, a former chargé de mission, member of learned societies and of l'Académie des Sciences d'Outre-Mer, du Breuil went on to publish 13 books, the great majority of them fully on Zoroastrianism; others introducing Zoroastrianism in some context or the other. Monographs, articles and lectures took the Parisian to California, Mexico, India, the Middle East.... "Field studies in the history and ethnology of religions took him to West and Central Africa, Central and South America, the

Middle East, the Indian subcontinent and the Far East... He was even initiated into the esoterics of some religious systems," writes Vajifdar. "His large, philosophically oriented tome on Zoroastrianism and comparative religion, *Zarathushtra et la Transfiguration du Monde* (Zarathushtra and the transfiguration of the world, with translations published in several European languages though not English), passionately underscored his ecumenical vision and understated his daunting knowledge of the history and content of the Indo-Iranian and Abrahamic religions... He saw in Zarathushtra's teachings and vision a profound philosophy destined for the transformation, and not mere information, of man to achieve the transfiguration of this world. Hence the title of his book which was prefaced by the Gathic quote: 'May we be those who will work towards the renewal of the world!' For Paul, Zoroastrianism was spirituality in action."

Des Dieux de l'Ancien Iran aux Saints du Bouddhisme, du Christianisme et de l'Islam (From the Gods of Ancient Iran to the Saints of Buddhism, Christianity and Islam) won du Breuil the Golden Pelican award in 1989. In 1990 he published *Les Jains de l'Inde* (The Jains of India), which won the Fernand and Louis Marin award, informs Vajifdar, and *La Chevalerie et l'Orient* (Chivalry and the Orient). In July 1991 du Breuil had mentioned, in passing, the receipt of the Paris Human Geographical Society prize in the form of a Paris Townhall bronze medal officially presented to him at the House of Polytechnicians in Paris. "This is little satisfaction in the middle of the shadows of my illness," he wrote.

La Chevalerie "marked a new orientation in his research and which is, in my view, the only satisfactory work on chivalry. It is also probably his masterpiece," noted Jacques Dupuis in French at the condolence meeting of l'Académie des Sciences d'Outre-Mer. In an article in *Le Trait-D'Union* Dupuis notes further (as translated by *Parsiana*), "Against the widespread belief that chivalry was a simple social phenomenon of the Middle Ages, the revival by the Church of inborn chivalrous virtues, he (du Breuil) posed his idea that the virtues required of the knight errant were already enunciated in the *Gathas* of Zarathushtra and thence in the feudal context of ancient Iran. In the fundamental conflict between good and evil, between Mazda and Ahriman, and in the ultimate triumph of the good which

was the essence of this religion, is contained the perennial idea of chivalry, an idea which was transmitted from the Zoroastrian East to the Latin West."

The editorial tribute to du Breuil in *3e Millenaire*, a French language "journal of art, science and philosophy for the man of the future," refers to him as "our collaborator and friend" who questioned and looked askance at western religions because of his extensive knowledge as a historian of religion.

"He formed close and firm friendships with many of our coreligionists, having had the highest regard for our respected dasturs, the late Framroze Bode and Nowrooz Minochehr-Homji, the scholarly Kaikhusroo JamaspAsa..." recalls Vajifdar, adding "When consulted or sometimes quizzed on community affairs Paul would sagely advise and indicate, even caution and direct, but never saw it his function to interfere. Viewing the frequent dissensions and infighting with distress, he would occasionally wonder whether the Parsis were, after all, the best custodians of Zoroastrianism...."

"For him ritualism was the nobly uplifting system expounded by Zarathushtra in his *Gathas* which made man a co-worker with God. Lamenting the Parsi trend for succumbing to all manner of pseudo-mystical allurements, he was passionately insistent on a return to the Gathic spirit of Zoroastrianism: 'This is the most wonderful legacy you are so privileged to have bequeathed to you; do not squander it, do not betray Zarathushtra!'"

Du Breuil had noted some of his reasons for extolling Zoroastrianism in his IRM article as "a religion which taught that God was wise and good, the friend of man while every other religion was teaching the fear of a choleric and terrifying God; a religion which taught that the human spiritual destiny depends on our good thoughts, words and deeds, while other religions were still looking for divine omens out of animals guts; a religion which considered women as equal to men while so many others, as well as most of the Greek philosophers like Aristotle, denied that women even had a soul..."

"Zarathushtra condemned all forms of exploitation of man by man and of persecution of animals. In the *Gathas* the defence of cattle, especially the ox of which the prophet knows the soul and hears the complaint (Y 29) comes back as a leitmotif, as a permanent and major theme of Zarathushtra's teaching. We cannot ig-

nore it. The ox is also the prototype of the whole animal fauna (Y 13, 39.2)...Respect for life and animal welfare have just become a new victory of western conscience thanks to great thinkers like Mahatma Gandhi and Dr Albert Schweitzer; yet it was preached by Zarathushtra 3,000 years ago!...

"The faithfulness of Irani Zarthoshtis and of Parsis to their cultural identity, to preserve and protect it as such, is not incompatible with a wholesome though selective opening of their religion to the world as an example of human dignity, of courage and of universal ethics... Then, to take the word of the Gospels, 'You will be among the true salt of the earth...if you let your light shine before men that they may see your good deeds...'"

Du Breuil is survived by his mother, his wife Michèle and his sons Fabrice and Yvain.

Godiwala's hearty helpings

Died: Rohinton Bejonji Godiwala, 57, leading caterer of Bombay, on November 12, 1991 following renal complications.

A simple, unassuming man who would always be in the background, attired in a cotton shirt and trousers, Godiwala was constantly sought by people of means for a meal catered by him carried with it the flavor of distinction.

With their increasing popularity, often the Godiwala's would be catering at more than one baug in Bombay on the same evening. At massive community gatherings like Jamshedi Navroze ghambars they would be entrusted with the catering. But the ultimate recognition came when they had the dinner *paats* laid out with red cloth instead of the customary white in honor of Ms Indira Gandhi, the then prime minister, who was present at a celebration function hosted by her husband's Parsi cousins.

Only last year, at an exhibition, Parasika, documenting the contribution of Parsis in India, Godiwala was approached for his recipes. He had a natural flair for cooking though he had never studied at a catering college, informs his son Neville, adding, "He was a better cook than my



mother. He would have the final say in the taste of a dish before it was served." Therefore, while his wife Freny would supervise the service tendered to the guests, Rohinton would position himself near the kitchen. And since he had no qualms about dirtying his hands when a cook or a *rotliwala* threatened to leave, he had only to start doing the work himself and the labor problem would be resolved, observed his son.

Godiwala's magnanimity extended not only to his customers, but to his friends, neighbors, the poor and the destitute. When catering for ghambars, he would charge the lowest possible rates and even include an extra course on the house, acknowledged Ms Homai Modi, one of the chief organizers of community functions. The surplus from his catering assignments would often go to the widows' chawl at Mazagaon. Several individuals too benefited from his largesse. Remembers his neighbor Noshir Dadrawala, now executive secretary of the Centre for Advancement of Philanthropy, "Knowing that both my parents had died when I was 18 and still studying, he had extended an open invitation that I could always come for a free meal at any of the baugs where he was catering." Not only Dadrawala but several others too availed of such offers.

Besides, he was also known to finance navjote ceremonies of poor Zoroastrian children, donate vessels every year during muktad to the Dalal Agiary, in Bombay's Mazagaon area, mentioned Ervad Nariman Dalal at a condolence meeting convened by the Amateur Artistes Association (AAA) on November 30. This Association which he was instrumental in founding in 1957, he further served as president, custodian, honorary general secretary and member of the managing committee at different times, according to

the condolence resolution. The AAA's chief purpose was to distribute text and exercise books to school and college students at nominal or no cost, an activity he had been undertaking in his individual capacity since a young age from his meager pocket money. Besides, several Gujarati productions of this Association did Godiwala participate in or script. He also spared time and resources for the P. D. Marker Physical Culture Institute where he was trustee, states Dadrawala.

Godiwala's own health in the meantime was deteriorating with mounting tension, increasing diabetes and kidney complications that required regular dialysis.

Although there was a manifold increase in the work pressures, he never regretted switching over to catering downstream in 1964, believes Neville. Godiwala's first job was with Indian Oxygen and later as foreman at Firestone. A graduate in arts from Bombay's Khalsa College, he additionally gave tuitions in mathematics. His love for challenges then made him start a bakery, Renowned, as a partnership venture. Later he went on to run the canteens for the National and Grindlays Bank, the Parsi Gymkhana and the Cusrow Baug Pavilion. The last served as a stepping stone from where he started accepting private orders. And as the husband and wife team slogged away, the children were left under the care of their grandmothers, looking forward to the time spent with their parents on long holidays every two years.

Of the three children, Tanaz, the youngest is most interested in the catering line. In fact, after her was named their allied business, Tanaz Decorators, an offshoot of the catering business that supplies furniture, cutlery and linen to others in the trade. Just before Godiwala's death, the family had submitted a tender for the running of the canteen at Elphinstone Club, but subsequently withdrew it, according to a family source.

Several outlets in Bombay started selling Godiwala eats off the counter. The caterers twice tried to establish a daily distribution network but could not succeed, reports Neville. Godiwala's "main dream," as was often conveyed to his family, was to set up Godiwala Enterprises, a setup akin to the Sir Ratan Tata Institute, supplying quality food and offering employment to the needy.

The caterer is survived by his wife Freny, son Neville and daughters Roxan and Tanaz.

Parnaz Gandhi



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