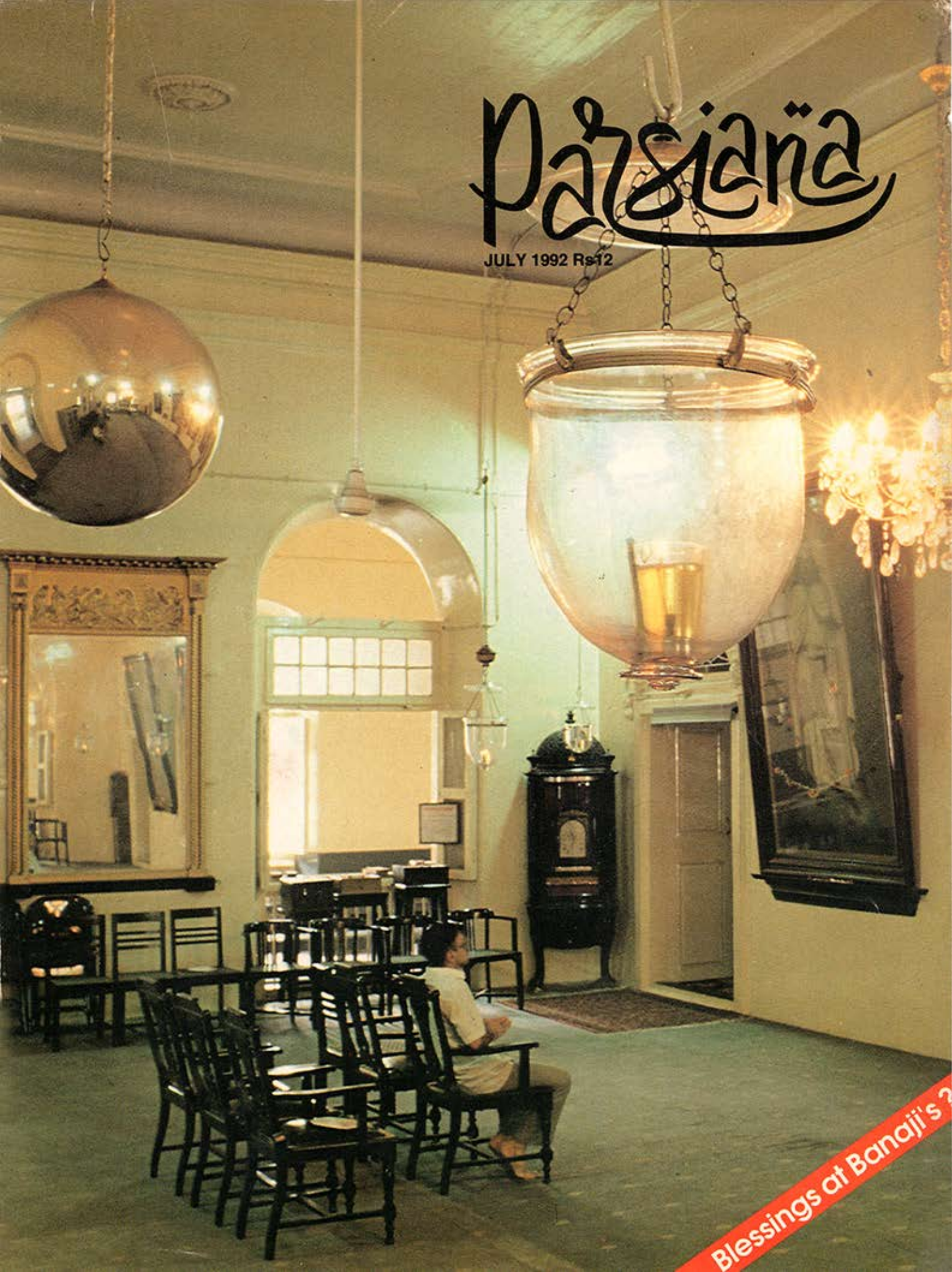


Prasiddha

JULY 1992 Rs 12



Blessings at Banaji's ?



Is there life after bad report cards?
Woof. Arf. Scratch. Sniff. Dribble.
Drool. And a big, sloppy kiss.
That's what friends are for.

**TASTE
THE
THUNDER**



Parsiana

July 1992
Volume 15 Number 1

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 Unsigned letters or those without an address will not be published.

"An intact astral body"

I would like to point out that Ms Damania's concept of an astral body ("An intact astral body," Readers' Forum, *Parsiana*, April 1992) is rather incorrect. She has stated, "... 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..."

This statement shows how confused the writer is regarding the topic. Who is "he?" First of all, after death we are no longer considered "human," but spiritual beings. Secondly, the astral and mental bodies are nothing but our soul which is eternal and immortal. If our soul is discarded then who is entering our physical form? Our astral body is the soul, our own real self and our physical body, its home, a cage. The fact that we discard our astral bodies means to discard ourselves from ourselves. If a soul is so destructible then how is it possible to live either in a physical form or otherwise?

What is it that makes our physical form breathe? We (i.e. our souls) have been living through centuries, either in the physical form on earth or out of it in the other world, and remember all the past lives that we have lived. Our physical body being very cumbersome provides a barrier to all the extrasensory powers and thus the higher or spiritual faculties of mind lie dormant behind the conscious mind. But if the subconscious mind were to be tapped during hypnosis we would remember the past lives in a flash. What about the yogis who 'astral travel' while in a trance? Now all this would not be possible had our minds and astral bodies been "discarded." To discard our soul would mean an end to our existence.

Regarding paying off karmic debts, we on earth are in no position to judge that. We suffer or rejoice according to the life we have led on earth, irrespective of what is donated, borrowed or lent. The spiritual and the universal laws are not as simple as Ms Damania makes them out to be. It is the intention and motive behind every deed one has performed that counts. An individual suffering hardships on earth does not necessarily mean that he was wicked or donated parts of his body. On the contrary, he may have been a very good person and his suffering may be a test to further prove the spirituality of the soul by being able to withstand hardships and plough through life in the best possible way. Suffering is one way by which one can advance in spirituality along with our prayers which help to a great extent. Regarding "the donor finding it difficult to sever links with this earth," in our religion the after-death ceremonial rites are powerful enough to sever all ties and vibrations with this world, leaving the soul free to proceed on its way.

"Fire-proof?" Quite unheard of where souls are concerned. The only logical reason as to why Zoroastrians do not cremate is because the dead body is considered impure and since we revere our holy fire we do not pollute it and show disrespect by tossing the dead flesh in it. The question of something eternal getting "consumed" by fire just does not arise. If fact, we Zoroastrians always do have our spiritual fire burning within us.

Ms Damania, in her article, has spo-

ken of this greater self (our soul) in a very demeaning manner by using words like "consumed," "destroyed," "discarded." She has also mentioned the possible arrival of 'a divine soul' to change our prayers. Wasn't Zarathushtra, who did much for the spiritual advancement of his followers, divine enough? We certainly do not need to lessen the powerful effects of our *Avesta* by some modern, improvised version of prayers.

To have faith in Zarathushtra and to look upon the immortality of our soul with respect would be the first step towards spiritual progress.

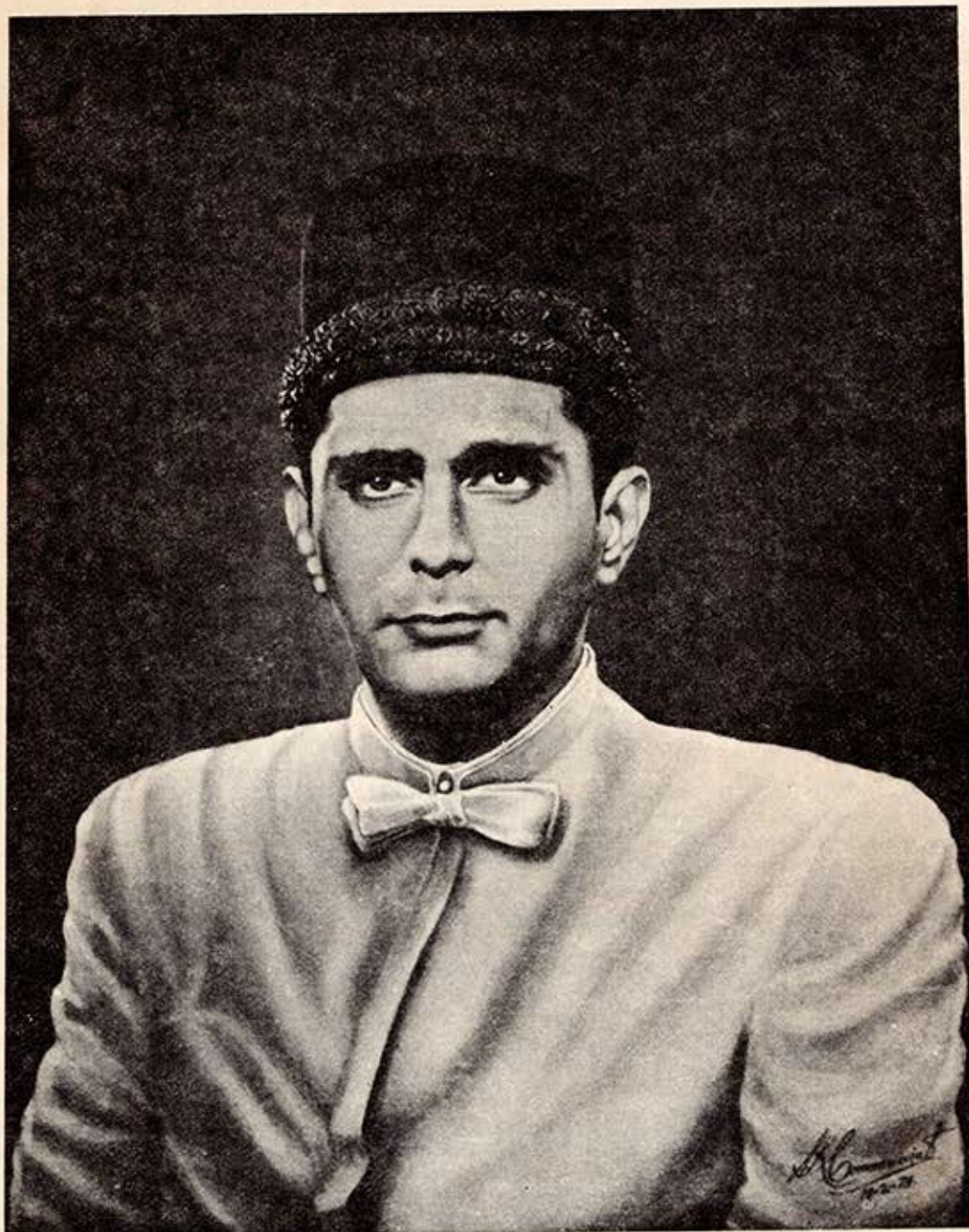
Ms VERA R. DAROGA
New Bombay

"Safeguarding the rights..."

I was surprised and shocked to read what Ms Roshni Anand had written against the panthaky of the Bomanji Mevawalla Agiary near Victoria Gardens, Byculla, Bombay ("Safeguarding the rights..." Readers' Forum, *Parsiana*, April 1992).

Personally, I feel that the panthaky was within his rights to prevent the entry of a Zoroastrian lady married to a non-Zoroastrian. The panthaky of an agiary is empowered to disallow any member of the community from entering the agiary; he is the man who runs the agiary in all respects; he is as it were "the captain of the ship." I must congratulate the panthaky for the courageous action he took when he knew Ms Roshni was married to a non-Zoroastrian. The panthaky of the Bangalore fire-temple is very particular that any person (whether man or woman) married to an alien caste should not be allowed. He is well within his rights and the trustees of the fire-temple support him. Ms Roshni can take legal action but I can't definitely say she will win the case! I am very sorry that our Parsi girls prefer to marry outside the community when there are Parsi boys available. I think part of the problem is sex. Our girls and boys prefer to marry against our marriage rights because they want anybody who is interested in them. I may be wrong. They say they are walking with the times and so we should not go against them!

There is another controversy about a retired brigadier who wanted to steamroll the panthaky of an agiary in Bombay and entered without the proper headgear



In Memoriam

Mr Fali Meherji Variava

Director

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(Parsi topi). His treating the agiary as though it is an army under his command and issuing orders to the pathaky is, I think, quite wrong! This hurts the religious feelings of the other behdins! The ex-brigadier could do anything within the precincts of his house, not in a religious place! I feel very sad that in the name of reform or modernization, some Zoroastrians perform controversial acts!

F. K. TARAPORE

Madras

Jewish parallels

Your readers will probably be surprised that an American of the Jewish faith, and a religious Jew at that, would write a letter to *Parsiana*. They might even be more surprised that this religious American Jew subscribes to *Parsiana*. But I do, and how I came to be interested in the Parsi community may also be of interest.

Over 20 years ago, as a graduate student I lived in India for six months and worked with the Jewish community of Bombay. I was living in the Byculla section of Bombay, a section filled with temples, churches, synagogues and mosques. Each morning for me was an exciting tapestry of the human experience. One morning, soon after I arrived, as I was quietly praying on my balcony I noticed an elderly man on the balcony of the apartment house across the street. Dressed in white and wearing a strange looking hat, holding a small book in his hands, he was quietly praying. I thought he was Jewish and enquired about him with one of my Bene Israel friends. I received the following reply, "Oh no, he is a Parsi. The Parsis are a very ancient community, highly respected for their industry, ethics and devotion to education... a good people similar in many ways to the Children of Israel." Fascinated by a people of whom I until then knew nothing, I then began to learn about the community and their faith. Although I never had the privilege and opportunity to visit an agiary or observe the rituals firsthand, I have kept up my interest in your community.

Perhaps the most fascinating aspect of Parsiism to me is the similarity to the Jewish community. Both were exiled from their original homeland, both emphasize family, faith, education, industry and pride in heritage, both have been persecuted, both continue to use ancestral languages for their liturgy, both have problems of intermarriage, conversion, assimilation and both have great tasks of

translating an ancient faith into contemporary society. In fact with slight changes in terminology, the articles in *Parsiana* could be transposed to any American Jewish journal.

I decided to renew my subscription to *Parsiana* to learn more about Zoroastrianism, not for conversion but for appreciation of the richness of your ethical heritage. In Judaism we have never claimed to be the sole arbiters of truth and revelation, therefore we do not proselytize. A non-Jew who is devoted to loving, kindness, mercy and justice is just as beloved to God as the High Priest of Israel. Our rabbis teach that each people has a covenant with God. When I read about your efforts to preserve your faith and culture I can sincerely appreciate this dictum. Dr STEPHEN M. MALLINGER

Pennsylvania, USA

"The Parsees..."

How many of the members of our community saw the documentary *The Parsees — The Zoroastrians of Bombay* telecast on the Star TV network? What I saw was a good attempt (mind you, only an attempt) depicting the typical Bombay Parsi.

I am afraid the interviewees were not impressive. Hilla Sethna was giggling like a school girl though she was trying to be very erudite. Dasturji Kotwal was at his sanctimonious, pompous best and looked like a fundamentalist padre spewing forth dogmas about our beautiful and harmonious religion. That Parsi lady married to a Muslim, who took her child Imran to our temple and said in Urdu, "Imran bété wahan mat jao," deserved the scolding she got from the priest. What did she expect? There are rules and regulations in every religion. Why deliberately do something insincere (not unholy) and invite the wrath of the dogmatists?

No madam, your little boy is not unclean, he is a child of God, but why spoil his image of our religion by making him a scapegoat? Would it not have been better to have avoided taking him to the agiary and yet taught him at home the vast beauty of thought in our Zoroastrian ethos? Till the rules change and people learn to believe that all religions are a message of love and harmony given by various prophets at different times in history for the spiritual growth of mankind, let us respect the rules for what they are worth! A policy of confrontation will

not lead us to the path of broadmindedness. Many Roxan Shahs will have to be sacrificed at the altar of bigotry before the light of truth dawns and a new era of peace is ushered in. Till then let us be patient.

It's no use saying the first pioneer in various fields of endeavor was a Parsi. Be a Parsi pioneer today and show the world what tolerance and patience mean! These are turbulent times for all. Can God reside in the hearts of priests who spew forth venom and condemn innocent women when in death and deny them a decent funeral? Think and ponder.

Mr GOOLOO R. MEHTA

Sasanian coins

I am a numismatist and a fellow of the Royal Numismatic Society, London. I am especially interested in Achaemenian, Parthian and Sasanian Zoroastrian coins and was instrumental in bringing distinguished numismatists like Dr A. D. H. Bivar, Dr Kreyenbroek, Dr Simms-Williams, Ms Susan Tyler-Smith, David Sellwood, etc to the Zoroastrian House, London for lectures.

Mr Furdoonjee D. J. Paruck was the first Zoroastrian to produce his masterpiece *Sasanian Coins* in 1923; and is to this day referred to by eminent numismatists the world over. David Sellwood, author of *Sasanian Coins* and also *Parthian Coins*, has updated F. D. J. Paruck's book of 1923.

Parsiana could occasionally carry extracts from F. D. J. Paruck's book as he covers not only coins but also other issues of Zoroastrian interest like art, tapestry, history of our Zoroastrian kings, etc. Let us not forget this great man Furdoonjee D. J. Paruck who produced his masterpiece under severe financial difficulties 69 years ago!

I wish that fellow Zoroastrians would not use *Parsiana* to wash their dirty linen in public! There is so much to be done to improve the lot of our poor, handicapped, disabled, terminally sick Zoroastrians who need help now and can't wait! It is only with the combined resources of Zoroastrians the world over that we can improve the lot of our poor Parsi and Zoroastrian brethren in Gujarat, Maharashtra, etc.

NOSHIR P. PATEL

Middlesex, UK

Navjote at Visakhapatnam

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devastating cyclone of 1990, the stalwart of the Kapadia clan of Visakhapatnam, Sorabji Bomanshaw Kapadia, celebrated the navjote of his younger grandson Naushirwan around the same time in Vizag this year.

Though Naushirwan's parents had already booked a baug at Bombay, they bowed to his wishes and Sorabji came all the way to Bombay to arrange for the same two priests, Ervad Yezdi Pestonji Panthaki and Ervad Jamshedji (Jemi) Jehangirji Charna to travel to Vizag with his son Russey and other members of the family. The trip during the 1990 cyclone had taken six traumatic days but this time the party reached Vizag after two nights' journey, at 4 o'clock in the morning.

The navjote ceremony was performed in the hall of the three-star Hotel Apsara in the presence of an august gathering of about 300 people which included the mayor, naval officers from the Eastern Naval Command, government officials, businessmen, relatives and all the members of the Parsi community present in Vizag. The guests raised numerous questions regarding the applicability of the religion to modern times and its stand in comparison to other religions.

On the entertainment side, the liquor flowed, the channel music was lively and the buffet spread on the spacious lawns of the hotel, sumptuous.

Ervad YEZDI PESTONJI F. PANTHAKI

Patel Agiary needs funds

Our Patel Agiary completes 150 years on Sunday, May 9, 1993. It is the oldest Agiary in Poona, established and nourished by my ancestors. Poona now has a very large Zoroastrian population and we wish them to cherish and sustain this place of worship for many years to come.

The building is badly in need of repairs. I am therefore appealing to you to contribute towards its repair and furnishing. Cheques may be made in the name of "Sardar S. R. Patel Agiary Fund" and sent to the undersigned at 613/B, Nana Peth, Poona 411002.

Dastur HORMUZDIAR N. K. DASTUR
Chairman-cum-managing trustee
Sardar Sorabji Ratanji Patel Agiary, Poona

Help for students

With the blessings of the late Mancherji Edulji Joshi, founder of the Dadar Parsi Colony and a great social worker, the Mancherji Joshi Memorial Education Fund is doing excellent work for the last

23 years. We give financial help to needy and deserving Parsi Zoroastrian students for their school and college education.

As costs are spiralling, it becomes more and more difficult for the parents/guardians to bear the entire cost of educating their children. Therefore the demands on our Fund are constantly increasing.

Thanks to benevolent institutions and generous persons, the donations received by us are also growing, enabling us to give financial help to an increasing number of students. Our resources, however, are limited, and we cannot meet the full requirements of all applicants.

This, therefore, is an appeal for generous donations to enable us to reach out to more students and also to augment the quantum of help to be given to individuals according to their needs and merit.

Last year we gave educational aid to 180 students, totalling Rs 1,00,000 which included Rs 18,000 given to two students for studies in their specialized field abroad.

Our accounts are regularly audited and we can submit to you copies of our statement of accounts and financial report from which you will gather that we are utilizing more than 85 percent of our total income for such aid, while the amount spent for administrative purposes is minimal. Thus our donors are ensured that every rupee they give is utilized for the purpose of education.

Cheques for donations should be drawn in favor of "Mancherji Joshi Memorial Education Fund" and should be crossed and made account payee only. They should be sent to the undersigned at 614, Jame Jamshed Road, Mancherji Joshi Parsi Colony, Dadar, Bombay 400014. Our official receipt for the donation will be sent to you immediately.

JAL KHAN

Narielwala's creativity

Mr Piloo D. Narielwala, a veteran advertising professional, passed away on June 28, 1992 at the age of 64 after a terminal illness. Educated in Bombay and Bangalore, he started working at a young age, beginning with D. J. Keymer, a front-ranking ad agency in the '50s. In 1955, he joined Burmah Shell (now Bharat Petroleum) and left the oil company to start Aiyars Advertising in 1959. When Aiyars collaborated with London Press Exchange in 1963, Mr Narielwala be-

came the managing director of LPE-Aiyars which was one of the fastest growing ad agencies of the time, handling some of the plum national accounts.

Mr Narielwala started Creative Workshop, a partnership firm, in 1969 which handled much pharmaceutical literature. Among its leading clients are Bharat Petroleum, Zuari and Hoechst. Creative Workshop also has a modern in-house recording studio.

Mr Narielwala was a self-effacing person, committed to clients whom he never chased for business or ingratiated himself with to retain accounts. He was an ad consultant; not an agent. For him, successful advertising meant meeting the clients' objectives, not winning awards. He won their trust by looking at the business from their angle. His cheerful and helpful nature is reflected in the personal bonds he forged with his clients to whom he was a family friend. He avoided self-projection and interfaced with people at all levels with extreme consideration and gentleness. He was noted for his lack of aggressiveness — the hallmark of his profession.

A less-known facet of Mr Narielwala's early days was a soccer bulletin he brought out and distributed free to fans at Cooperage. The bulletin carried evocative sketches by Mr R. K. Laxman who charged a nominal fee to help out a struggling youngster. The cost-plus was recovered through advertisements, a technique much in vogue today. He derived his surname from his roots in Kerala's Alleppey where his family had a thriving business.

N. SEKAR

Evocative songs

By chance I came across at Chor Bazar a couple of old Parsi Gujarati songs on 75 RPM records. They need to be played on a gramophone. (Remember the instrument which has to be wound by a crooked L-shape handle?)

The songs — *Gota golab né champano har, Jer Jehangir no jagdo, Ek eda ni lada, Tapéli chula per* — pluck the strings of your heart.

Even those in the 30-40 years age-group may not have heard of these songs. What a pity. It is a must for those who want a whiff of bygone days of bawajis in mohallas.

In my childhood, whenever we heard *Gota golab* played in anyone's house in the Soonawalla Mohalla at Khetwadi, we

knew there was a birthday and that *sev* (vermicelli fried in such a way that even an Italian won't recognize it) and *dahi* (yoghurt) would come to our house. So no *broon maska* (bread-butter) for breakfast that day. We would patiently wait for the *dahi* and *sev*, generously garnished with fried shavings of almonds [those were the days when almond *mamro* (superior quality) was available at two rupees a kilo].

Ek eda ni ladai, a literary barrage, will make you enjoy the early morning fights between estranged neighbors; no sending of expensive legal notices then. *Tapéli chula per* is a regular anthology of forgotten Parsi cuisine.

I was inspired so I got these records taped by Behram Mistry. The tapes are available at cost at Yazdani Bakery, Cawasji Patel Street, Fort, Bombay 400001.

Z. M. ZEND

For a Parsi President

I feel Bharat Ratna J. R. D. Tata would have been the ideal choice for the post of President of India. He is a leading industrialist, respected in business and industrial circles not only in India, but all over the world. Now that our government is thinking of a progressive economy, a

person like JRD would be an asset and would guide the government with practical and pragmatic suggestions.

So far we have had eminent Hindu, Muslim and Sikh representatives to occupy the presidential *gaddi* (seat). Why not a Parsi?

The Parsi community has contributed generously, shaping various educational and medical institutions and offering munificent scholarships irrespective of caste, creed and community e.g. the J. J. Group of Hospitals, the J. J. School of Arts, the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre and the Tata Institute of Social Sciences. They have contributed eminent doctors and scientists like Homi Bhabha and Homi Sethna, as also administrators and politicians. They have produced eminent national leaders like Dadabhai Naoroji, Sir Pherozeshah Mehta and Mme Bhicaiji Cama who contributed a lot to the freedom struggle. When other minorities were asking for various privileges like separate electorates and reservation of seats in government institutions, the Parsis never asked for anything.

In 1947, when India attained freedom, the Indian National Congress formed the central government (due to their majority

in the elections) and Jawaharlal Nehru was elected Prime Minister of India. Thereafter various provincial Congress committees were asked to elect their candidates for the post of chief ministers of different states.

The redoubtable leader of the Bombay Pradesh Congress Committee, F. H. Nariman, who had fought and suffered a great deal for the freedom movement was expected to be chosen as the first chief minister of Bombay. But somehow Mr B. G. Kher, a solicitor of Bombay who was comparatively unknown till then, was elected chief minister of Bombay.

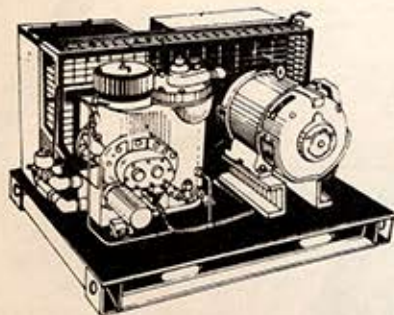
Sir H. P. Modi was the only eminent Parsi to be appointed as the governor of Uttar Pradesh during Nehru's regime from 1947 to 1952.

C. S. Bhabha was the only cabinet minister in the central government and after him there has been no Parsi gentleman as cabinet minister at the center.

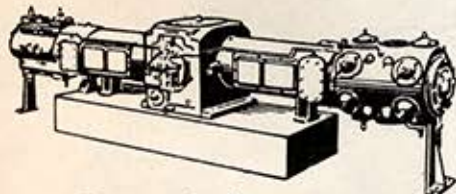
It would have been an act of grace and confidence and fair play if the most eminent Parsi J.R.D. Tata had been chosen for the highest office in the land i.e. of the President of India.

S. V. GULVADI

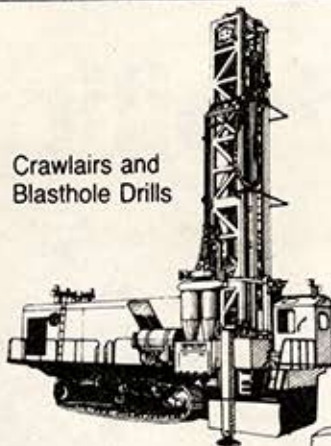
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Events and Personalities

Operation Sahara

Losing one of the team members in the desert, going without water for three days, encountering bandits along the way and pushing their two-wheelers over long distances of calf-deep sand were only some of the problems overcome by the six intrepid Indians — with Neville Darukhanawala at the helm — who crossed the Sahara desert from the north to the south on their 100 cc Kinetic Honda scooters. They created automotive history in the world when they traversed this path on their Kinetic Hondas, notes a press release from *Car and Bike International* magazine.

This expedition was the brainchild of Adil Darukhanawala, the editor of *Car and Bike International*, who deputed four members of his publication: brother Neville, the sports editor of *Car and Bike*; Dilip Bam, road test editor of the magazine; Roland D'Souza, the magazine's editorial coordinator and Farookh Shaikh, associate editor of the Pedal Power section of the publication. Additionally the team benefitted from the experience of ace two-wheeler rallyist C. K. Chinnappa from Bangalore and an Indian Air Force bomber pilot Wing Commander Koka Rahul Rao from Delhi. The members took turns riding the two Kinetic Hondas, with Rao driving the Mercedes Benz 240 GD jeep as escort.

The distinctive mark of this journey was the team's use of the small-wheeled, small-engined Kinetic Honda known for



Neville Darukhanawala (top, center) with his teammates who made history in the Sahara desert on their Kinetic Honda scooters (below)

its strong chassis, light weight and electric push button start. Special 'knobby' patterned tyres for the desert soil and an additional headlight were the alterations made on the Kinetic Hondas before they crossed the formidable desert over varying terrains including rocky mountains,

sandy wastes and thick equatorial jungles.

The marathon 5,995 km distance from Casablanca in Morocco to the Nigerian capital Lagos was traversed in just 22 days instead of the anticipated 42. The journey which began on December 19 last year meant that the sextet had to brave severe winter conditions. En route to Algiers Chinnappa, who was riding in sub-zero temperatures with three pairs of gloves, found it "so cold that my fingers were frozen in a throttle grip throughout the next two days," he reports. Conversely riding through a sandstorm gave the members an experience of wading through a furnace! Riled for setting out on such a "foolhardy" venture, the group had to endure additional penalties for risking this journey and offer bribes at almost every check post in monetary terms or by way of a song and dance. The ordeal finally ended on January 9 this year when the team entered Lagos to a standing ovation from the Honda staff, the release further informs.

Housing crusade

"Three thousand applicants on the files of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP) have been led along the primrose path of promises for several years. Many of them have given up the quest in frustration and disgust. Others are still floundering in the slog of despond. We have, therefore, felt that if all the articles on this subject are compiled in the form of a booklet, the BPP and Mr Justice Bakhta-

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war Lentin (the ombudsman of impeccable integrity appointed by the BPP to hear grievances from disgruntled parties who feel they should have qualified for a flat but have not been granted one) would have a better opportunity to study the whole matter in depth and find out what has gone wrong, where and how. If our efforts succeed in fulfilling this aim, we shall consider it a matter of service to those members of our community who have approached us with their grievances," writes Jehan Daruwala, editor of *The Bombay Samachar* in his introduction to the 49-page booklet, *Housing Policy of the BPP*, brought out in mid 1992.

Reproduced in the booklet are scores of letters complaining against the anomalies of the BPP's merit rating system; the sale of flats at Spenta on Gibbs Road; the unauthorized occupancy of flats in certain Parsi baugs; the disuse of certain flats left locked and unoccupied for long intervals; the demand for donations towards the construction of the Godrej Baug agiary; the appointment of an ombudsman... The responses elicited by the authorities have also been carried. All such correspondence had originally appeared in the weekly Parsi Tari Arsi columns of *The Bombay Samachar* from February 1990 to April 1992.

"These are the matters which need a thorough probe and full explanation for the satisfaction of the community. The general belief in the community is that some of the measures and remedies taken up by the BPP are the quick-fix type of solutions which solve nothing but only aggravate and accentuate the problems and miseries of the people," Daruwala writes.

Suggested solutions and recommendations to ease the pressure on housing have also been put forth in the booklet.

"It is self-evident that in public life, one has to be responsible and ready to accept criticism. Those persons and the newspaper who point out these facts are doing it in public interest. They are actually helping the trustees by bringing to their notice that things have gone wrong in spite of all the care and precaution taken by them. This is being done as a moral duty. No thanks are expected for it, but our only request is that the criticism or the presentation of facts should not be taken in bad grace," Daruwala clarifies in the booklet.

In coveted service

"It's a 24-hour job with calls to attend to

even at midnight," says Bakhtiar Keki Dadabhoy, divisional operating superintendent with the Western Railway. The 28-year-old class I gazetted officer of the central government who is affiliated to the Indian Railway Traffic Service, Da-



dabhoy is now working in the Bombay division at Bombay Central. As one of the few Parsis in the higher administrative services of the Government of India, Dadabhoy has offered his assistance to any one seeking to join the civil services. His present appointment involves planning the routes and coordinating the movement of trains on the Bombay to Surat and Surat to Jalgaon routes on the Taptiwal section.

"Recruitment to the...class I services of the central government (which includes the Indian Railway Traffic Service) is by means of a civil service examination conducted by the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC), a constitutional body to recruit among others, top brains for the government's administrative apparatus," notes a letter from Bakhtiar's father Keki, director general, civil defence, ministry of home affairs. "This is perhaps the most competitive and taxing examination in the country with a three-stage selection procedure which takes a full year to complete," he writes from Delhi. Competition is intense among fresh graduates, postgraduates and professionals from the science, commerce and arts streams. "From about 3.5 lakh aspirants at the preliminary exam stage, about 10,000 to 11,000 become eligible to write the main examination. From these about 1,700-1,800 are called for an interview/personality test. The final list of successful candidates after a medical examination consists of about 800-850 candidates. To get a coveted all-India or central service appointment (income tax, railways, audits and accounts, etc), one has to find a place among the first 300 successful candidates," the letter further informs.

A first-class student throughout his school and college career, Bakhtiar stood third in his Bachelor of Arts examinations, graduating in economics from the Hindu College, Delhi. His post-graduation was in sociology. The reason for this change, he explains, was to give

him a suitable combination of subjects at the UPSC exam where he ranked amongst the top 300 candidates.

Bakhtiar's other interests include oil painting, chess and astrology. A keen swimmer and tennis player, he had also represented his school in table-tennis at the junior level, informs his bio data.

Veteran winner

The only athlete to win four gold medals at the Seventh Asian Veteran Athletic Championships was Calcutta's Ms Prochy N. Mehta who was acclaimed the most successful participant, informs a press release from the family.

At the four-day meet from June 11-14, 1992 held at the Toa Payoh Stadium in Singapore, Mehta participated in four events (the maximum permissible for any contestant) in the 35-39-year age-group. She set a new Asian Veterans' record in the triple jump with her leap of



Mehta (center): another gold for the record winner

8.98 m. Additionally she came first in the 100 m, 200 m and 400 m races. Her inclusion in the relay team which came third won her an additional bronze.

Retaining her active association with sports for nearly 27 years, 38-year-old Mehta is currently vice president of the Women's Basketball Association of West Bengal. Under coach Santanu Biswas the athlete works out for two to three hours at a stretch, six days a week

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The Moment of Pride

"The Atash Kadeh was built and they came. There were well-wishers and Zarthoshtis as far as the eye could see. The hard work of laying the cornerstone of cooperation and coexistence between the Persian and Indian/Pakistani Zarthoshtis, bore fruit on that pleasant day in March when the fire was lit by the mobeds at the Atash Kadeh," notes the May newsletter of the Zarthoshti Anjuman of Northern California (ZANC).

The opening of the Atash Kadeh in San Jose on March 28, 1992 marked not just the building of one more edifice but the proof that given the will, Parsi and Iranian Zoroastrians could be creative together.

The Atash Kadeh was sanctified with a jashan performed by 10 officiating priests representing both communities. "Witness the occasion today, and you will see the fruits of our joint efforts and ability to get along," noted ZANC president Feroze Bhandara in his inaugural address.

"Both our communities share common goals and concerns, and working jointly will go a long way towards giving a lasting foundation to the Zoroastrian community in North America.

"Ours is a cross-cultural marriage and we have to make it succeed. First by understanding our cultural differences, second by fostering trust and tolerance for each other's ways.

"Our goal and emphasis should be a policy of cooperation for the sake of our children and youth. We do not want to lose them to the outside through intermarriage or other influences. Let us start by using the facilities here for the benefit of our children who in turn can start to break down the barriers growing up as Zoroastrian Americans. I propose that in the future we sponsor common events for our children and youth," Bhandara was optimistic.

The newsletter relates how the Atash Kadeh was built with the joint efforts of ZANC and the Persian Zoroastrian Organization (PZO), ever since the construction began a year ago. The collaboration goes further back as the two communities joined hands to create the funds essential for the task.

When it came to dressing up the Atash Kadeh for the function Dr Homai Kasad painted a full-length portrait of

Zarathushtra. Flower garlands, chowk designs, sound and lights put together by willing young Zoroastrians proclaimed a memorable occasion. A highlight of the celebration was a Farsi rendition of Beethoven's *Ode to Joy*, urging the gathering to shed their cultural differences and join together in a fraternal bond.

The Persian youth then performed a colorful ethnic dance depicting spring, informs the newsletter. The day ended with the 700 guests participating in a celebratory dinner. The whole proceedings were professionally videotaped and photographed, the set, *The Moment of Pride*, being available against a donation of \$ 50. And now the PZO and ZANC are looking out for a caretaker priest, fluent in English and willing to learn Farsi.

Muktad prayers have already been scheduled to be held at the Atash Kadeh and the momentum carried over to the Sunday School where the students were initiated into the art of making sudrehs and kustis during May by Pervez and Shirin Mody.

The growing community

The Chicago community at last count numbered about 550 Zoroastrian men women and children, notes president Bomi Damkevala of the Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Chicago (ZAC) in their June newsletter. A majority of the newcomers have found homes within a 15-mile radius of the Darbe Mehr at Hinsdale, he adds.

A regular feature at ZAC has been increasing participation in interfaith dialogue. Members of the Interfaith Dialogue Committee were scheduled to visit the Darbe Mehr in June with a presentation by Kayomars Mehta and others on the cards. Also, with the second Parliament of World's Religions being due in Chicago in 1993, ZAC has established a temporary new fund to meet the expenses connected with the event next September.

Muktad prayers on each of the five Gatha days have been planned at the Darbe Mehr, informs the July newsletter. For the inclusion of the names of the deceased ZAC has requested a contribution of \$ 25 per name to be made by August 14. Individual prayers have also been provided for at the rate of \$ 300 for the five days, to be performed at the convenience of the priests on a first come first

served basis.

ZAC's new board was unanimously elected on June 14. Office bearers for the 1992-94 term include president Bomi Damkevala, vice-president Pesi Vazifdar, secretary Rumi Jamsetjee, treasurer Ms Arnavaz Elavia, assistant secretary Ms Anahita Antia, assistant treasurer Minoo Press, informs their August newsletter. Chicago high priest Ervad Dr Kersey Antia continues on the board. Members at large include Ms Dilshad Antia, Shahroakh Bankwalla, Hosi Mehta, Kayomars Mehta, Ms Roxana Mehta, Keikhosrow Mobed, Ms Mehroo Patel, Ms Roshan Patel and Ms Dinaz Weber.

A significant amendment in the constitution has been proposed by the board to the effect that a board member who fails to attend four consecutive board meetings or 50 percent of the meets in one year, automatically ceases to be a member of the board. The amendment could not be put to vote at the annual general meeting for lack of a quorum. A mail ballot has been circulated in the July newsletter. The newsletter also carries a warning of complaints from the Darbe Mehr neighbors regarding littering and noise during ZAC as well as private functions.

President scholar Deboo

"My Commission on Presidential Scholars has determined that you have made outstanding achievements and is recognizing you as representing the finest in American education," notes the congratulatory mailgram from President George Bush to Ms Shanaya Deboo, a high school graduate in New Canaan, Connecticut. The missive placed Deboo among the elite 141 students from the United States considered the cream of the 1992 batch of high school graduates across the country.

Handpicked by the group of eminent private citizens who constitute the Commission, the finalists comprise one young man and one young woman from each state of the US federation, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico and US families living abroad, on the basis of academic and artistic success, leadership and involvement in school and community, informs a press release. The final selection was made

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If it's Monday, it must be Banaji's

Parinaz Gandhi

A new cult figure named Jalbawa lures crowds to the Banaji Atash Behram on Monday evenings

"Maai, rupiyo aapjo," a beggar outside the Banaji Atash Behram pleads for alms. When she asks for a rupee, she is rewarded with two! The donor even looks around to see if she can aid any other bystander. Such is the magnanimity witnessed on a Monday evening at the Banaji Atash Behram. Monday evening is of special significance here for it is Jalbawa time.

The twilight hours in the Aiwisruthrem Gah (from sunset to midnight) on Mondays is the time when swarms of devotees visit the Banaji Atash Behram with a prayer on their lips and a wish in their hearts. There is a growing belief that wishes made in Jalbawa's name, during the *boi* ceremony (when the fires are fed with sandalwood) in the Aiwisruthrem Gah, are fulfilled. Of Jalbawa as a person, nothing is known, yet in his powers is reposed considerable faith. The faith usually starts with one individual whose success story inspires the other members in his family, his neighbors, his office colleagues, his... to try their luck.

While initially it was a select following that came to the Atash Behram religiously on Mondays, as word spread it has become a mass phenomenon, more so in the last four to five months. Nearly 200 Zoroastrians come to the Atash Behram every Monday from near and faraway Andheri, Vasai, Thane. The trustees of the Atash Behram are aware of this development but they do not wish to involve themselves by endorsing or refut-



Banaji Atash Behram: gaining popularity

ing any beliefs. "Aastha hoi to hamé su kari sakiyé (If there is faith, what can we do?)" managing trustee Burjor Antia asks a rhetorical question.

The devotees who claim that their weekly trips have been rewarded with favors are unable to confirm whether the credit should go to the atash padshah or Jalbawa. They only know that they receive definite help. Internecine family squabbles have brought many like Tehmuras Poonegar and Sohrab Irani to seek solace at the Atash Behram. Poonegar, now retired from Godrej, says that three years back he was advised by Ervad Aspi Nalladaru, a boiwalla at the Atash Behram, to come regularly for seven or nine Mondays, then take a break for one Monday, and if he so chose, start the round again. His abiding faith now continues to bring him to the Atash Behram

every Monday, accompanied by his wife, and occasionally by his daughter too with a "*murad ké baal bachha saathé sukhi rahiye* (a wish to live happily with the family)."

Irani, a storekeeper at the B. D. Petit Parsee General Hospital, too has been coming here over three to four years. While he was seated in the lobby outside, his wife, daughter and son-in-law were inside the dadgah room while the *boi* ceremony for the adarian was in progress. He mentions that his son-in-law who is a panthaky at the Thoothi Agiary at

Walkeshwar also comes here regularly because he has faith. The important criterion is "*khara antakaran saathé aavanu* (come with genuine feelings)," he stresses drawing an analogy with the believers who are drawn to St Michael's Church at Mahim where throngs stand in queue for hours on nine consecutive Wednesdays to attend mass and to light a candle, in the hope that their cherished desires will come true.

It is not only minor wishes that devotees seek to fulfil at the Banaji Atash Behram. Ervad Jehanbux Chithiwalla, a boiwalla at the Atash Behram, relates the incident of his cousin's recovery after the doctors had given up hope as he lay in a comatose condition following an accident. The cousin is now able to attend the Atash Behram himself. Ervad Faramroze Behramkamdin, also a boiwalla at the Atash Behram, had heard of two cases where after prayers on three consecutive

Mondays, wishes had been fulfilled: In one instance of a house burglary, the thief as also Rs 60,000 of the stolen 70,000 were traced; in another episode when there were no sign of a boy who was suspected to have committed suicide, his remains were finally found in a ravine.

The help received is not always in the nature of miracles. It could be in the form of right guidance, right approach or right insight. People from all walks of life, all strata of society, and all age-groups constitute the regular Monday crowd.

But not all the coreligionists seen on a Monday come for wish fulfilment. One devotee who refused to divulge his identity said he had been coming to the Atash Behram for the last nearly three months but had not asked for anything. It was only faith in the atash padshah that brought him there.

Since when has Jalbawa got associated with this Atash Behram? Why only on Mondays and that too only the Aiwisruthrem Gah? Who was Jalbawa? No one seems to have any definite replies. There are no pictures of him — "but neither is there one of Homaji (venerated in the community for his prophetic statements) who was an *asho nar* (pure soul)," argue his supporters. The absence of knowledge leaves everyone free to rely on their own imagination.

"You know how things start in the community... Just a few people start it and it is taken up by the rest of the community," explains Dastur Kaikhusroo

JamaspAsa, a trustee of the Atash Behram, ruling out any historical or mythological reference to Jalbawa. One senior devotee of Jalbawa remembers children of yore being instructed to offer *sukhad* (sandalwood) in Jalbawa's name for success at an examination. But others of the same generation discredit this version. The Aiwisruthrem Gah, informs JamaspAsa, is significant for it is the time when the Angel Sarosh is propitiated, for protection through the night. On all other queries he maintains, "I know as much as you do."

Whether Jalbawa was a behdin or an osta, is in the region of speculation. Yet his connection with the Kadmi atash behrams appears to be strong. Not only is he venerated at Bombay's Kadmi Atash Behram — the Banaji Atash Behram, even in Surat's Kadmi Atash Behram the attendance is said to be the largest on Mondays when people with faith in Jalbawa visit it regularly. Chithiwalla who was serving the Kadmi Atash Behram in Surat before coming to Bombay says that in Surat this has been going on for several years. The antecedents again are obscure but it is said to be a known fact that one aged Parsi gentleman, Ratansha Patvi, has been visiting the Surat Kadmi Atash Behram religiously for years ever since his mother instructed him that in Jalbawa's name he should offer *sukhad* on a particular day at a particular time. The nine-Monday connection is believed to be an add-on development. But in



Above and left: Banaji Atash Behram on a Monday morning, readied for the innumerable devotees who will congregate at sunset time

Photos: Homyar Mistry, Homz Prints



most cases, the nine-Monday formula stretches to infinity once faith is established.

Those who are used to praying in the quiet precincts of the fire-temple find the Monday ritual a little tedious. [The crowd on a Monday evening reportedly outnumbers the congregation on the evening of the Atash Behram's *salgirah* (anniver-

sary) or even the morning of the New Year.] With great difficulty they may manage to find space for parking their vehicles in the compound outside. And prostrating before the fire is well nigh impossible if their timing happens to coincide with the *boi* ritual.

Of the multitudes who converge at the Atash Behram, several come well before sunset to assure for themselves a vantage position facing the fire, refusing even to budge to accommodate the latecomers. The adarian room in particular gets more crowded as compared to the padshah room when the respective *boi* ceremonies are being conducted. Since all sandalwood must be offered to the fire in

**Absence of
knowledge leaves
everyone to
their own
imagination**

good time, occasionally a second *boiwalla* goes round with a *khumcha* (platter) for the convenience of the devotees. Invariably the *ashodad* on a Monday far exceeds that collected on any other weekday but the priests claim that it is not the money but the presence of so many devotees that brings them happiness. [Competition among the *boiwallas* is minimized because at Banaji's they have a system whereby each of the *boiwallas* has a *vaari* (spell of duty) for 15 consecutive days when they have to do the *boi* in all the five gahs. The responsibility of a full Adar month also comes by rotation.]

Not all the believers are particular about facing the fire. Some are content to sit on a chair in the hall outside under the comfort of a fan with a prayer book in hand. Although many rows of chairs are arranged in the hall for the convenience of the devotees, those who arrive late have no choice but to stand or squat on the carpets. While some of the regulars patiently sit through both the *boi* ceremonies (for the adarian and the padshah), for the others restlessness sets in after the adarian *boi* and one may even overhear idle gossip in the nature of which boy gave which girl what kind of pendant and in what metal, and how the girl reciprocated...

ZOROASTRIANS ABROAD

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from 2,500 semifinalists who were initially selected and invited to participate by submitting essays, self assessments, secondary school reports and transcripts.

Simultaneously Deboo has bagged four other national awards — the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation Grant, the National Merit Scholarship, the Citibank Corporate Scholarship and the Robert C. Byrd Honors Scholarship — plus school



awards for excellence in English, history and law, as per her bio data.

The talented teenager has been playing the piano for nine years and holds two Schubert Club gold cups, has represented her school in lacrosse, basketball and swimming, participates in mock legislature sessions, literary journalism, etc. Staff writer Larry Hartstein in the Newsbeat column of *The Advocate* of May 5, 1992 speaks of Deboo's participation in the school's Buddy Program as she walks with a mentally handicapped boy each Sunday. "He's taught me to really appreciate things," she says.

The 17-year-old daughter of Gulistan and Farokh Deboo intends to tie up her disparate interests in biology, political science and history by going into environmental law or environmental politics during her stint at Princeton which commences this fall. Deboo's real life hero is retired Supreme Court justice Thurgood Marshall: "He really overcame a great deal and I think it's important as a minority to try not to focus on what you don't have and don't make a big deal that you're slightly disadvantaged, but to compete with people on the same level,"

she amplifies. Significantly, when asked to compile a few important personal facts for the introduction to President Bush, Deboo began by identifying herself as a Zoroastrian, informs her aunt Hutoxi Contractor of Pittsburgh.

Women to the fore

Currently doing her master's in veterinary science (MVSc) at Colorado University, Bombay's Dr (Ms) Tina Rustomjee is majoring in surgical oncology, notes a letter from her mother Katie. Alongside she is participating in research on a new kind of heart valve requiring transplantation from a pig into a dog's heart. A type of open heart surgery, the work is done on a by-pass machine, notes the letter. If successful, the valve may be patented by the professor conducting the research and used on children.

Rustomjee is also researching in orthopedic surgery on her own, adds her mother, and hopes to be able to bring and use the new technology when she sets up her own clinic in Bombay on her return.

The College of Wooster has recognized Ms Scherezade Pocha's academic excellence by naming her a college scholar, informs a press release from the College. The daughter of Sherna and Dr Nusly Pocha of Bombay, Scherezade was selected by the Wooster faculty committee on the basis of academic records, individual interviews and a competitive examination. The 125-year-old institution has an undergraduate enrolment of approximately 1,800.

Ms Pia Cyrus Vachha of Bombay has been elected to Lambda Sigma, a national honor society for sophomores who exhibit outstanding scholarship, leadership and service, notes a press release from Lawrence University in Appleton, Wisconsin. Similarly Ms Rashne Rustom Jehangir has been elected to Mortar Board which honors seniors on the same basis. Both girls are ex students of Bombay's Cathedral and John Connon School.

Compiled by Arnavaz S. Mama

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A globe-trotting ambassador of Buddhism

A Parsi by birth and Buddhist by faith, Behram Ghista believes that religion is a matter of choice

Gustasp Irani

In the silence of the remote heights of the mighty Himalayan mountains sat a lone Parsi in cosmic contemplation. And as he worked out his spiritual equation with his Creator he found that Buddhism answered his questions better than Zoroastrianism. "I won't say I have converted but I follow the Buddha's teachings," says the 37-year-old Behram Ghista, a US qualified graphic designer who has today become a globe-trotting ambassador of Buddhism.

Ghista, who studied the major religions and spent years meditating in the mountains, now girdles the world spreading his message of love and meditation. "I see myself as a Parsi and Buddhist and perhaps I don't really belong to any one group," he adds with a smile that momentarily softens his sharp, intense features.

"The one thing I can't accept about Zoroastrianism is that karma and reincarnation are not talked about," says Ghista. He adds that he did read about and take a look at a Zoroastrian sect, the Ilm-e-Khshnoom, that attempts to incorporate these concepts into their theology, but according to him it fell far short of what was required.

The other failing of Zoroastrianism, according to Ghista, is that its practice today is steeped in dogma. "For most, Zoroastrianism has become a religion of meaningless prayers and endless rituals. They do not pay attention to the need for self-development or self-advancement." But he is quick to clarify that he is not passing judgment on the Prophet; the fault lies with his followers who have reduced his teachings to meaningless dogma. The other consideration is that a large part of Zoroaster's teachings has been irretrievably lost in time.

Yet Ghista's Zoroastrian roots filter

through in his interpretation of Buddhism. Take, for instance, his definition of karma: "It means action based upon choice." According to him, man is not a hapless victim of predetermined destiny.



Ghista: "listen to the inner being"

Photo: Gustasp Irani

Buddhism, he clarifies, is not a religion which advocates a frugal and ascetic lifestyle for the masses (but only for the select few), which encourages its followers to withdraw from the mainstream of life. Instead, like Zoroastrianism, it encourages man to participate in creation. He points out that the Buddha took six years to attain enlightenment after which he returned to the active world and participated in it for 45 years. "He did not withdraw into a cave," he observes. Ghista pushes the comparison further when he asks: "Why did Zoroaster go into the mountains for 10 to 12 years? What was he doing there?"

The answer, according to Ghista, is

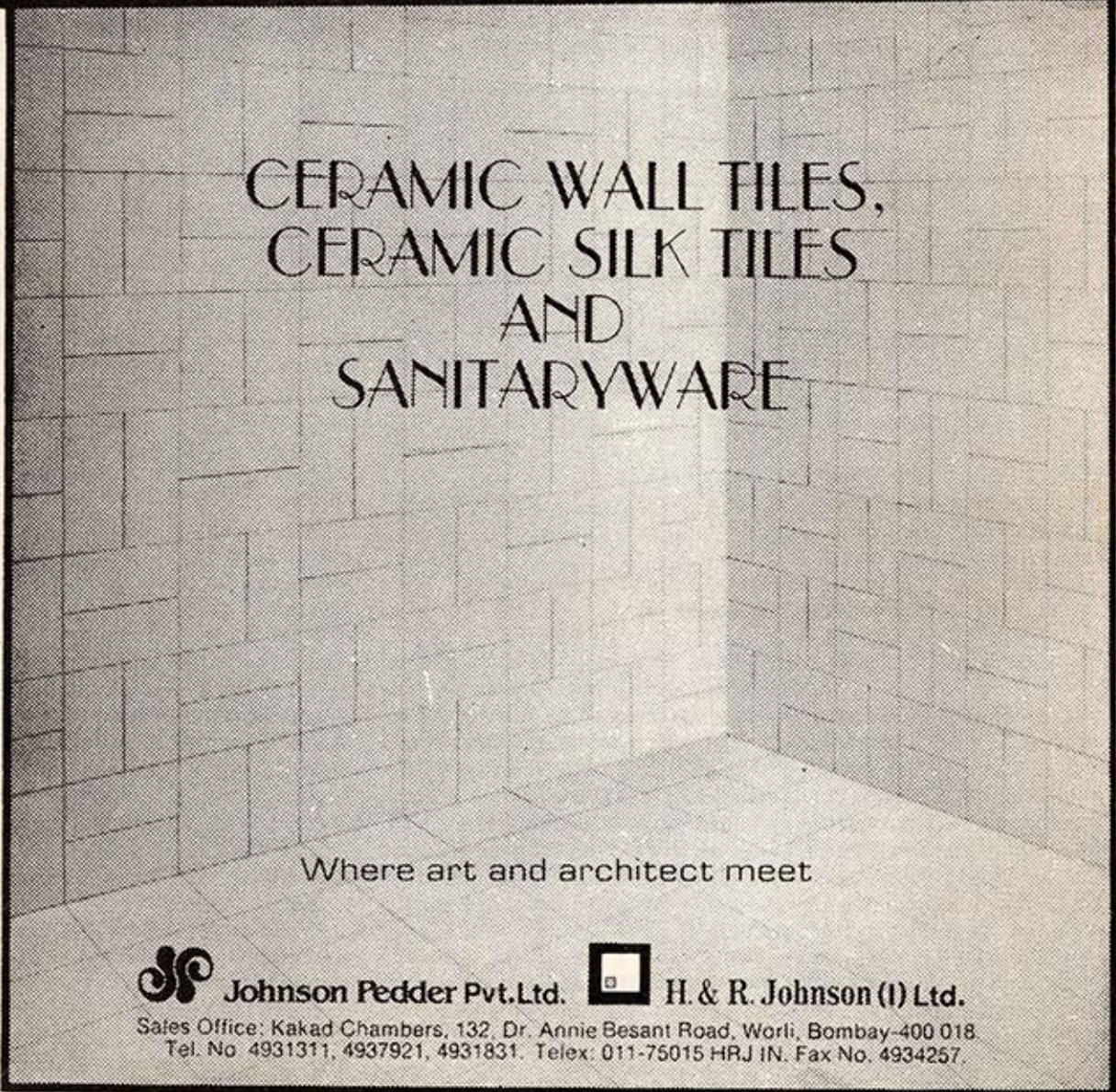
that Zoroaster was meditating and that, he believes, is one aspect of the religion that is ignored and lost. "Meditation is very important. One has to stop the mind from the chatter of mindless prayer and rituals and listen to what one's inner being has to say."

Zoroastrianism, Ghista believes, has a strong moral and ethical code which accounts for the community's outstanding contributions in the field of material development. But since the religion pays no attention to meditation, it falls short of the expectations of someone seeking spiritual development — which is the second of the three stages of the progress of man (the first being material). The third stage is the realm of wisdom and enlightenment which is for the few. "But even they have to return to the world and share their spiritual enlightenment," he observes.

Yes, Ghista has been there and has returned. In 1988, while meditating in the mountains, he had a profound spiritual experience which compelled him to return to the mainstream of life again. (Ghista values that experience and refuses to share it lightly with all and sundry.) As a result he went to Nepal to work in one of the 50 worldwide centers run by Lama Zopa Rinpoche with whom he believes he has a karmic connection from past lives. Ghista explains this karmic link: "As soon as I saw his picture for the first time, I knew that I knew the man and had to meet him again."

While in Nepal for a year, Ghista was authorized by Lama Rinpoche to conduct classes in meditation. In 1990 Ghista returned to India and in Dharamsala started to conduct his own meditation classes. At first he put up posters advertising his classes in restaurants where foreign tour-

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ists dined. Those who attended, went back richer for the experience. On their return to their native lands some of them invited Ghista to come over and conduct meditation classes there. Recently Ghista has started flying around the globe, both physically and spiritually.

On his visits to Bombay, Ghista has been conducting meditation classes at the J. B. Petit High School for Girls' premises, thanks to the encouragement of the School's principal Ms Shirin Darasha, and also at the residence of some of his students. "Most of my students in Bombay are Parsis and Hindus," says Ghista.

He believes that the right techniques of meditation are essential if they are to be truly beneficial. "To tell a person to love, love, love, is impractical if you don't tell him how or why or what loving really is... It is not just a question of sitting down and meditating; because that would stir the inner self and bring all kinds of unresolved conflicts and garbage to the surface and unless you know how to handle this, you might have a problem... Meditation may be termed as self-psychoanalysis," says Ghista.

Ghista's spiritual quest started, strangely enough, in his graphic arts

classes at the California Institute of the Arts in the US. Disillusioned by the rampant materialism around him he sought to explore the realms of spirituality for inspiration in his work. For his master's degree thesis he studied seven major religions — Hinduism, Zoroastrianism, Buddhism, Taoism, Islam, Christianity and Judaism and incorporated these studies into his designs. "All religions say good things, only some say it more profoundly," he observes.

The profundity of Buddhism was to influence him greatly. On graduating he returned to India in 1983 and headed for the mountains in Himachal Pradesh and Dharamsala. In 1986, he toured and lived in three Buddhist countries — Thailand, Sri Lanka and Japan to study the religion in greater detail. He returned the following year only to head back to the mountains till in 1988 he had his intense spiritual experience in Manali. This compelled him to return to the world of men again and share his spiritual wisdom with them.

Ghista informs us that he has not become a monk or lama, but wears only white. The color, he explains, means that he has renounced family life. "I have no

family; the world is my family," he states. A smile softens his imperturbable face as he admits that there are favorites in this large family. Like his parents Phiroz, an architect, and Freny, now retired in Canada after spending years in the Punjab and in Lagos, Africa, where young Ghista spent his formative years; like his brother Jimmy in the UK and sisters Aroozia Irani in Canada and Firoozia Bulsara in Calcutta; and like the only Parsi couple in Dharamsala, the Navrojees, who Ghista refers to with affection: "They are like my foster parents." Or like the Parsis. For Ghista may wear white but he also wears a sudreh and kusti — especially when he visits the agiary.

Karma, he points out, decided what family and race he was reborn into but it did not decree which religion he was to inherit. "Why go through an initiation ceremony — the navjote — if you are born into a religion?" he argues. "Yet every religion has it, because religion is a matter of choice."

The choice Ghista made was a Zoroastrian and honest one. When he did not find what he was looking for in Zoroastrianism, he looked elsewhere and to Buddhism to satisfy his spiritual needs.

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The Tribal Connection

Gustasp Irani

The Parsi-tribal connection in Dadra and Nagar Haveli goes back to the early history and development of the union territory

"At Karchond village, a cluster of 20 to 25 huts, the memory of Ratanshah (Panthaki) is still revered. He was a rich Parsi landlord. He freely mingled with the tribals and had a tribal 'wife' in each of the several villages he owned." This report by Ms R. Hussain in her book *Dadra and Nagar Haveli — A Study in Tribal Resurgence* on Ratanshah's exploits in the union territory of Dadra and Nagar Haveli, a few kilometers off Vapi in Gujarat, is at best an exaggeration.

Ratanshah, according to Dara Vaid whose family still owns land in the union territory and who knew the man, had only two wives. One, a Parsi lady back in Nargol and the other, a tribal in Karchond village. Ratanshah's claim to fame was that, unlike many of his fellow community men who left their wives and families back in Nargol and kept tribal mistresses, he made his tribal woman his legally wedded wife. "By tribal rites, of course," adds Vaid.

Ratanshah had a son from his tribal wife, according to a rich Muslim farmer and landlord at Khandvel, a forest resort area, a half hour's drive from Silvassa, the territory's capital. The son died recently. But Ratanshah's grandson is alive and married to the daughter of none other than the village sarpanch — Devji.

On the walls of Devji's house in Karchond, hang pictures of Zarathushtra, an afargan fire and the farohar, informs

Farhang Irani who, along with his brother Aspi, recently purchased land and a hotel in the union territory. The information is not surprising for we learn that Devji, too, is the son of a Parsi and a tribal woman.

The Parsi-tribal connection goes back to the early history and development of

selves in possession of land with more jungle and forest than revenue. To correct this imbalance they, according to Vaid, offered plots of land to anyone who would bring one-fifth of the area under cultivation.

The Parsis from neighboring areas, particularly from Nargol, grabbed the offer. Bit by bit, they cleared parts of the forest and brought it under tillage. The adivasis or tribals, both local and those brought by the Parsis from Nargol and the neighboring areas, helped them in this task. The Parsi landlords established these adivasis as their tenants and moved on to develop and claim the next plot of land. Soon the community owned over 50 percent of land in the Portuguese territory.

"The Parsi landlords looked after their adivasi tenants," Vaid explains. "They built huts for them, provided them with seeds and other inputs and during the drought years cared for them and their families."

And some took tribal women for mistresses. The problem, according to Vaid, was that the Parsi women stayed back in Nargol and did not accompany their husbands into the wilds. He recalls how up to 1954, once every month bullock cart convoys would leave the villages of Dadra and Nagar Haveli laden with rice, wheat, pulses, vegetables, firewood, eggs, honey and a whole lot of provisions for the families back in Nargol.

It was because of the close links the



Perin Guest House in Silvassa

the union territory that was once part of Portuguese India. According to Vaid, the British gave the 72 villages to the Portuguese as part of a dowry in a marriage of political convenience; only, their gift was parcelled out from the territory that belonged to the Maharaja of Dharampur! According to *A Study in Tribal Resurgence*, however, the Portuguese were allowed to collect revenue from these 72 villages as compensation for a warship that had been mistakenly sunk by the Maratha Peshwas who ruled the area in 1779. Either way the Portuguese found them-

settlers maintained with their home base over the years that no Parsi institutions of any sort were built in Dadra and Nagar Haveli. No agiaries, no dharamshalas, no



Time for toddy tapping Photos: Gustasp Irani

sanatoriums, no dokhmas... One tradition that sprang up as a result of this contact was the annual tour of the area by the priest of the Nargol agiary. For one month each year, he went from one Parsi settlement to another and at each stop his bullock cart was filled with provisions: rice, dal, vegetables, honey, wood... "Everything he would need to see him through a full year," says Vaid.

Similarly, every year young Parsi boys from Nargol would organize a month-long trekking tour of the territory: an initiation and familiarization program of sorts. Vaid recalls when he was a teenager, he and other Parsi boys would meet at Silvassa which served as the starting point of the journey. From here, they would start trekking from Parsi farm to Parsi farm right across the territory. The stop at Ratanshah's farm was one of the highlights.

"He was a jolly man who would become a young boy with us around. He was small made, five feet nothing and a crack shot. He had shot over a 100 tigers," says Vaid.

Yes, wild animals infested the dense forests that covered large parts of the territory. "There were no proper roads, no electricity, no facilities of any kind,"

states Vaid's Portuguese wife Claudette. She first met her husband when she had gone to Silvassa to attend an aunt's wedding. After the liberation of the territory from the Portuguese and its subsequent merger with the Indian union, things changed radically: better roads, electricity, education... and sadly, deforestation too.

But first things first. The liberation in 1954 was effected not by the Indian government but by a handful of civilian volunteers. Here the Parsis played a dual role. On one side was freedom fighter Vaid marching with a group of civilian volunteers who were trying to force the Portuguese out; on the other was a Mr Contractor who was helping the Portuguese to flee! According to *A Study in Tribal Resurgence*, the freedom fighters intercepted the car in which Contractor was helping the wives of the Portuguese administrator and police chief to flee the territory. The two ladies were detained and Contractor was forced into playing the role of a messenger shuttling between the liberators and the Portuguese. The latter eventually slipped into Indian territory and surrendered to the Indian police, rather than to the freedom fighters.

Though free of foreign rulers, it was another seven years before Dadra and Nagar Haveli joined the Indian union. According to S. V. P. Raikar, currently the chief of police and director of transport, the territory was administered during this period by the freedom fighters who appointed people from amongst themselves to the various posts. This



was till 1961 when the small pocket of land became part of the country. "I was one of the signatories when Dadra and Nagar Haveli was merged with India," says Vaid.

With the introduction of the Land Ceiling Act the Parsi influence in Dadra and Nagar Haveli started to decline markedly. The Act also sparked massive deforestation in the region. In the 1970s, Vaid informs us, the tribal tenants were made owners of the land they tilled with no compensation paid to their landlords, many of whom were Parsis. All excess land above the ceiling limit was purchased by the government at a paltry sum of Rs 33 per acre. To cash in on the land before they lost it, many landlords, and not Parsis alone, started felling the forests on their property and selling the wood.

It was the dawn of a new industrial era and here, too, a Parsi, Vaid again, made a significant contribution. He claims to have developed the first industrial estate in the region and lured industrialists from Maharashtra and Gujarat to set up units here. Union territory tax shelters also helped the project along. "It was the first cooperative industrial estate in the country," says Vaid. Today there are three such industrial estates in the territory.

The Vaid family were among the first to recognize the tourism boom in Dadra and Nagar Haveli and built the first hotel, Dariz Hotel Pvt Ltd, in the territory in 1985. Vaid's daughter Zeena ran the establishment up to 1991, when she got married. Now the Hotel is managed by Vaid's son Rohinton who also looks after Jer Bar, reputedly the oldest and most popular bar in the region. "Tourism is a relatively new development and it offers tremendous scope for the future," says Rohinton.

Recognising this opportunity the Irani brothers, Farhang and Aspi, recently bought over the Dan Hotel at Silvassa. They plan to make it the first hotel in the region to offer Star TV to its guests. Also in Silvassa is the Perin Guest House owned by Parsis who live in Devka and Daman.

The Irani brothers, who hail from Dahanu and who purchased land in Dadra and Nagar Haveli, represent to many a resurgence of the community's enterprise in the union territory. With the establishment of a new thermal electric plant at Dahanu many expect other Irani Zoroastrian farmers located there to move in and

Dan Hotel in Silvassa

start buying land here. Land prices which are between Rs 20,000 and Rs 30,000 per acre are expected to spiral.

"The soil here is very fertile and good for orchards and crop cultivation. You can grow chikoos, mangoes, coconuts, bananas, or rice, wheat, sugarcane... the choice is yours," says Farhang, whose family also owns the Santosh Sagar fast food restaurants at Napean Sea Road and Tardeo in Bombay.

But there is a 'catch 22' situation involved in buying agricultural land. "You can't buy agricultural land unless you are an agriculturist," says Aspi. And, according to him, to be deemed an agriculturist by the authorities you have to own agricultural land. "It is a problem you can get around," his brother assures us.

"Don't buy land from a tribal. The title will not, and cannot be legally transferred," warns Khushru Vaid, a young former Union Bank of India employee who has been looking after the 250 acres of the Vaid family farms over the last three years. The farms are the only places of some significance left of what was

once a thriving Parsi settlement. And he has another word of advice for young Parsis wanting to settle in Dadra and Nagar

To cash in on the land before they lost it, many landlords started felling the forests

Haveli: "For tourists the place may be great, but no Parsi woman would want to settle here permanently." Yes, certain traditions die hard.

The one occasion when Parsis come in droves is when it is the turn of Dadra and Nagar Haveli to host the annual village ghambar of the region which includes Nargol, Sanjan and the neighboring areas. In 1992, the Vaid family farms plan to

sponsor this ghambar in memory of one of their members, Jehangir, who died in 1990. Today, the ghambar is a time for feasting and people from Bombay come in luxury buses to join the merriment. Earlier, the farmers came in bullock carts to feast, meet, discuss problems and if necessary raise funds to help a fellow community member over a difficult patch.

And as we discuss this age old tradition, another beckons: it's time for the round of the toddy tappers. We go into the fields and watch them scale the trees that line the embankments between fields. The traditional toddy trade of the Parsis died in Gujarat with the introduction of prohibition, but it still survives at the Vaid farms in Dadra and Nagar Haveli.

"The Parsis' toddy is the best in the entire region," says a tourist official at Silvassa as he advises us to sample it. We do. It is excellent. And as we sip the brew we contemplate the silhouette of toddy tappers perched on palm trees against the evening sky.

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Keeping the Community in Line

In its heyday the Panchayet could—and did—keep erring Parsis in line

Dosabhai Framji Karaka

There was a time when Parsi women ventured from their homes unescorted, after sunset "to fetch water or to go to market, and (to attend) pleasure parties without the protection of male companions or servants."

There was a time when Parsis worshipped at Hindu and Muslim shrines.

There was a time when Parsi priests flocked "uninvited to the house of any Parsi who might have any ceremony to perform for the purpose of obtaining, as if by right, their share of the ashodad (gift in money) and not infrequently were they riotous on such occasions."

In this extract from Dosabhai Framji Karaka's two-volume History of the Parsis including their Manners, Customs, Religion and Prominent Position, published by Macmillan and Co in 1884, read how the Bombay Parsi Panchayet tackled these in the eighteenth century.

While the Panchayet punished offenders against caste rules and social laws with firm impartiality, it earnestly desired at the same time to eradicate from the people's minds the pernicious and superstitious customs which had taken root among them through their contact with the other races of India. Little by little practices which were regarded almost as outrageous to the purity of their religion had crept into vogue among the Parsis; and these the Panchayet considered itself bound to extirpate. Numerous meetings were held, and various decisions were arrived at for the well-being and general advantage of the community.

In 1819 it was brought to its notice that Parsi women were in the habit of leaving their houses after sunset to fetch water or to go to market, and also that they attended pleasure parties without the protection of male companions or servants. The Panchayet held this conduct to be discreditable to the good name of the Parsi community and especially of the female portion. A proclamation was therefore issued to the effect that no woman was to go out of her house alone

on any pretence whatever before sunrise or after sunset, and that if any woman was unavoidably detained at the house of a friend or relative she should not return "without a servant and a lighted lantern, and if any woman was found walking on the road unaccompanied as above, she would be seized by nassessalars (corpse-bearers) or persons employed for that

be admitted that these were high-handed proceedings, and we can only account for the passive submission to them by remembering that the authority of the Panchayet in those days was so greatly dreaded that none of the community dared to question its behests.

Another important step which the Panchayet took in the direction of reform was that of prohibiting Parsis from sending offerings to Hindu temples. Parsi women in earlier days were very credulous and full of superstition. They believed everything which was poured into their ears by crafty and designing persons, whether they were Parsi priests, Hindus, Brahmans or Mahomedan fakirs. They were ready to make vows to Hindu gods and Mahomedan saints for the fulfilment of their desire to be blessed with children if they were barren, or to secure the undivided affection of their husbands if they happened not

to be on good terms with them, and for the general attainment of any wishes they might cherish. It was further brought to the notice of the Panchayet that many Parsi women and men also were in the habit of wearing charms, amulets, and threads, obtained from conjurors and magicians in the belief that by wearing them they would not only be protected from evil spirits, but that they would also secure their own happiness and the realiza-



purpose, and publicly disgraced and confined in the *nasakhana* (a place where the funeral biers are kept)."

This edict proved so effectual that for some time after it was proclaimed a Parsi woman was scarcely ever to be seen in the streets of Bombay before sunrise or after sunset because the Panchayet, true to its threat, did actually punish such offenders as were detected by placing them in their so-called prison, the *nasakhana*. It must



rich man committed bigamy he not only escaped punishment, but members of the Panchayet itself held free intercourse with him. The terrors of its law were reserved for the needy! A body acting on this principle deserved to die, and it passed away without regret in the year 1836.

In a letter published in the *Bombay Times* of December 9, 1844, Mr Manakji Kharshedji Shroff gave an abstract of these rules which we quote below as they are not only interesting in themselves but also show the nature of the social evils from which the Parsis were then suffering:

"It was usual previously to the passing of the above-mentioned regulations for Parsi priests (who form a begging fraternity, and they are some hundreds in number) to flock uninvited to the houses of any Parsi who might have any ceremony to perform, for the purpose of obtaining, as if by right, their share of the *ashodad* (gift in money), and not infrequently were they riotous on such occasions. Independently of this, how exceedingly hard upon individuals having very limited means was it to be compelled to distribute *ashodad* to all! However, such was the influence exercised at that time by the priests that parties preferred to incur debt rather than the displeasure of the priests by sending them away without any *ashodad*. Under these circumstances

the late Panchayet wisely ordained by the said regulations that no priest should go uninvited to the house of any Parsi, on any occasion, for the purpose of asking *ashodad*; nor was any layman to give it to any priests other than those whom he may have invited (and he might invite unrestrictedly as many priests as his inclination prompted or rather his means would admit of his doing).

"On the fourth, the tenth, and the thirtieth day of every month in the first year, and afterwards

on every anniversary of the death of any Parsi, either male or female, 'custom' obliged them to circulate trays loaded with sweetmeats, fruits, cooked dinners, and even pots and pans, both

tion of all their hopes. In these objectionable practices the men too often connived at the weakness of their better halves.

The Panchayet therefore, with a view to effectually suppress these pernicious customs which were dishonorable to the Zoroastrian religion, proclaimed on November 4, 1819 that no one should make vows or give offerings to Hindu temples or Mahomedan mosques, or wear charms or amulets or threads, and that if any one was found to break these orders, he or she would be "seized and publicly disgraced." This threat had a good effect upon erring Zoroastrians, but only for a time, and through fear of public disgrace. In after years, when the power of the Panchayet was again on the wane, the objectionable practices were revived, but happily the greater enlightenment of the present day has resulted in their almost entire discontinuance.

The Panchayet also directed its efforts towards correcting the evils arising from many injurious customs which prevailed about this time among the Parsis, and passed some very salutary rules for that purpose at a public meeting held at the fire-temple of Dadi Nasarvanji Seth on December 15, 1823.

But the healthy influence of the Parsi Panchayet did not last for any lengthened period. So long as its members were elected by the voice of the whole community, and so long as it conscientiously and impartially dealt out even-handed justice to all, its acts commanded the respect and obedience of the people. But the Panchayet began very soon to decay from

the old cause, with the seats of the originally elected members having on their deaths been usurped by their sons, worthily or unworthily, or by others whose sole recommendation was their influence or connection with the surviving members. A Panchayet thus constituted could not and did not act with the fearless independence of the body elected in 1818. It therefore fell into contempt. The Parsi community at this time had also considerably increased in numbers, and when an influential or wealthy man committed a breach of the social laws enacted by the old Panchayet, he relied on the support of his friends and adherents; and the existing members of their body had not the moral



courage to deal with such offenders in the same manner as their predecessors had been in the habit of doing. The fact was soon made clear that they had one law for the rich and another for the poor. When a

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copper and earthen, among their relations, friends and acquaintances, in addition to giving extensive feasts and dinners to the whole caste, on such occasions. All these practices appeared to the late Punchayet to be both extravagant and unnecessary, and merely indulged in to 'vie with each other' and for the gratification of vanity; and therefore it was ordained by the aforesaid regulations that neither cooked dinners, nor sweetmeats, nor fruits, neither pots nor pans, either copper or earthen, should be sent from one house to another amongst the Parsis; that they were not to give extensive feasts nor dinners to the whole caste on the performance of any ceremony for their dead; that any Parsi who chose to invite a limited number of guests from amongst his relations, friends and acquaintances might do so; but their number should not be so great as to consume more than 200 lbs of meat, which was the maximum quantity allowed to be purchased for a single feast; nor should any poultry be used at such feasts; that any individual wishing to give a dinner to the whole caste might do so, but only during the days of the gahambars, and that such caste dinner should consist (as hitherto) of plain rice and curry, without any kind of meat or poultry.

"Another, and a most abhorrent practice, sanctioned by custom (borrowed entirely from Hindus), which prevailed among the Parsis, was the going backwards and forwards, on the part of the women, to the houses of their relations and friends and acquaintances daily for months after the death of any male or female member thereof, and when assembled to cry, and beat their breasts, and bemoan their loss. They were also in the habit of keeping fast, and denying themselves beds to lie upon, in order to indicate their excess in grief on such occasions. This being forbidden by the Parsi religion, and found also to be injurious in the extreme to the health of those who indulged in such displays of their feelings, the late Punchayet most humanely ordained that such practice should be checked as much as possible, and that on the death of any infant the meeting of the women should be as short as possible; on that of children from one to seven years of

age, they should meet but for three days; and on the death of any one above that age, to meet 10 days, and 10 days only."

Mr Manakji Kharshedji then goes on to state, "It so happened that, shortly after the passing of the aforesaid regulations, one of the sisters of Hormusji Bamanji Wadia (then the most distinguished and influential gentleman among the Parsi community, and one of the leading members of their Punchayet) trans-

gressed one of the said regulations by sending round dressed dinners from her house to her relations.

"As soon as the information of this circumstance reached another member of the late Punchayet, he directed his informer to seize upon the pots and dishes containing such dinner, even if in the most conspicuous part of the town, which was ac-

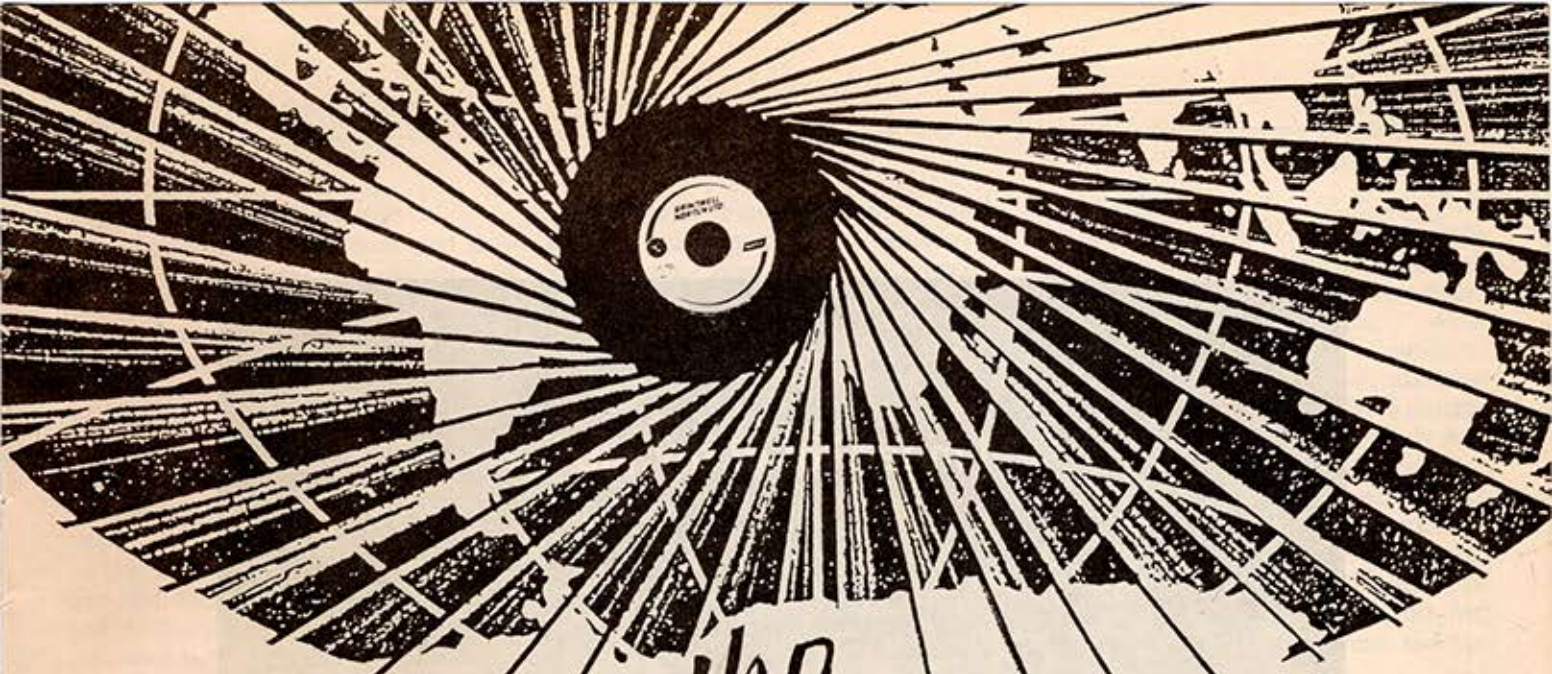
cordingly done; and the pots and dishes were sequestered by the said member of the Punchayet, who collected a number of indigent Parsis together in his church, where they were allowed to feast upon the dainties seized as above mentioned.

"The said member of the Punchayet, after having thus acted, intimated to the said Hormusji Bamanji Wadia what he had done, which was nothing more nor less than his duty to the Punchayet; and he now called upon his distinguished friend and colleague, the said Hormusji to do his also, by causing a general assembly, and making an example of her who had thus disregarded the Punchayet's order, although so intimately connected with him.

"And be it said, to the credit of the said Hormusji Bamanji Wadia that, however exalted he was in rank among the Parsis, far from taking any offence at what had occurred, he highly approved of and applauded the act of his colleague, and consented to the assembly of the Punchayet, which accordingly met the next day, when in the midst of that body he expressed his displeasure at what his sister had done, and caused one of her sons (Ardeshir Framji Wadia) to pay on her behalf the (due) fine to the Punchayet."

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

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EVENTS AND PERSONALITIES

continued from page 11

at the Institute of Athletics, West Bengal, reads *The Statesman* of June 24, 1992.

Scouts excel in academics

Scouting helps the students to concentrate on their studies, writes scoutmaster Bahadur A. Palkhiwalla of the Homavazir's 11th Central Bombay Bharat Scout Group, listing the achievements of his scouts who had excelled at various examinations. Reference was made to rover Zubin Adi Mistry who scored 9.7 on an index of 10 at the Indian Institute of Technology's MTech(Civil) examinations. Rover Nekzan Noshir Wadia passed his BE (Mech) exams with distinction. Standing fifth in the BCom merit list was rover Farrokh Feroze Tarapore. At the Secondary School Certificate examinations in 1992, assistant patrol leader Baizad Todiwalla scored 89 percent and patrol leaders Ariz Roozva Master and Farhaan Parvez Dubash scored 87 and 82 percent respectively.

The Group's civic conscious scouts recently painted the road dividers on the Mancherji Joshi Road at Dadar. "After this good turn...there are fewer accidents on the road," reports scouter Hormuzd E.



Homavazir's scouts' street service

Dastur in a press release.

Founded by Ardeshir Homavazir in 1927, this Group has three sections: cub pack for boys in the six-10-year age-group, scout troop for the 10-18-year boys, and rover crew for boys over 18 years, informs the fourth edition of the *Mancherji Joshi Colony Directory*.

Autograph obsession

Every morning Ms Eirene Marzban

Mowji is ready with her bunch of letters that she posts to famous personalities around the world. The daily postage cost works out to Rs 500 for this 60-year-old woman who has cultivated a unique hobby of obtaining autographs of well-known personalities throughout the world. Dinshaw D. Naterwalla provides the details in *The Bombay Samachar* of May 31, 1992.

Her efforts so far have been rewarded with signatures of 556 dignitaries like Ronald Reagan, Jane Fonda, Kurt Waldheim, Norman Vincent, Rajiv and Sonia Gandhi, Greta Garbo, Julie Andrews, George Bush, Richard Nixon, Roger Moore, Jimmy Carter, Teddy Kennedy and Boris Becker, to name a few. Reactions to her hobby have varied. Some of the VIPs encourage her by complimenting her work or enclosing autographed photographs. One unexpected response was from the Italian opera king Pavarotti who sent her a marriage proposal. Several others have refused to oblige.

Those with whom she has not made any headway are Zubin Mehta who reportedly despite 12 reminders did not part with his signature, Madona, Mikhail Gorbachev, Boris Yelstin and J. R. D. Tata. Yet Mowji is one who refuses to

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give up hope and persists with her hunt nevertheless.

This obsession for her began in 1986 when she came across a magazine called *American Collectors* at a local library. Thereafter she subscribed to it which made her feel the need to collect something of value too. It is said that buyers all over the world have an eye on Mowji's collection but she would rather sell it in bits and pieces, further writes Naterwalla.

Dastur's philatelic gold

His research exhibit, *India Used Abroad — Aden Victorian Era*, won Vispi Dastur yet another gold medal at the Granada 92 World Stamp Exhibition. It was under Dastur's deputation as the national commissioner for India that the Indian team won 10 medals of which two were gold, informs a press release.

This exhibition in Spain in April 1992 was celebrating the 500th anniversary of Christopher Columbus' discovery of America consequent to an agreement with Queen Isabella to discover a shorter sea route to India.

After this exhibition, Dastur, a member of the Government of India's philatelic advisory committee in the ministry of communications, stayed on to attend the world congress of the Federation of International Philately as the Indian participant, the release informs further.

Vice president of the Philatelic Congress of India and honorary secretary of the Empire of India Philatelic Society, Dastur has authored two books on philately and is reportedly the first Indian and Asian to win the Roake International Trophy for original research in philately.

"Aunties Classes" cross 50

"Aunties Classes" in Deolali is where

many a doctor, advocate, engineer, businessman and military officer have received their first introduction to formal education. It is here that the present students, ex-students, parents and well-wishers congregated on March 15, 1992 to celebrate the golden jubilee of the Contractor Classes run by Ms Khorshed and Ms Roda Contractor, writes Ms Hufreen Rohinton Desai in a press release.

Beginning in 1942 with five children of close friends, the popularity of these pre-nursery classes has increased over the years requiring them to employ an additional six teachers when the strength of the children had reached 90. Love and care, the hallmark of the Contractor sisters, won them in return recognition as "universal aunties," further mentions Desai.

The law-abiding Parsis

In Bombay, where little concern for the city is the prevalent attitude, the delayed monsoons in the city this year led A. B. Parmanand, a retired civic hydraulic engineer to reminisce in *The Times of India* of July 13, '92 about a similar situation 26 years ago.

Due to the late onset of the rains in 1966, in July the Bombay Municipal Corporation (BMC) appealed to Bombayites not to use water for washing cars and similar purposes.

Subsequently, it rained and all forgot about the crisis and the appeal. In December, Parmanand's office received a telephone call from an old Parsi lady who wanted the BMC's permission to wash her car!

The Parsi community is "always law-abiding," believes Parmanand.

Compiled by Roxana A. Mirza

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K. C. Vajifdar

Since direct proof of adultery is difficult, the court has to rely on presumptive proof based on circumstances

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.

Vajifdar's fourth article deals with adultery as severally defined in the PMDA and the Indian Penal Code. Prior articles dealt with impotency, non-consummation of marriage, bigamy, desertion, etc. Future articles will deal with the concepts of cruelty, change of religion, alimony and the custody of children.

Adultery, as defined under Section 497 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) implies sexual intercourse with a person who is, and whom the offender knows or has reason to believe to be, the wife of another man, without the consent and connivance of that man. Such sexual intercourse, not



amounting to the offence of rape, is guilty of the offence of adultery and shall be punished with either simple or rigorous imprisonment for a term which may extend to five years or with a fine or with both. However, under the law the wife of any person who commits adultery shall not be punished under any circumstances, even as an abettor.

Thus under the IPC the offence of adultery can be committed only by a man and not by a woman. Evidently, the law contemplates that the married woman involved in an illicit relationship with a man is a victim of circumstances and is not the author of the crime. The legislature in its wisdom has thought it fit that the sanctity of a matrimonial home should be preserved at any cost. Hence, when a man has an illicit relationship with an unmarried or divorced woman there is no crime in law and the man committing the offence cannot be prosecuted.

Adultery, under the Parsi Marriage and Divorce Act (PMDA) however simply means voluntary sexual intercourse bet-

ween one spouse and a member of the opposite sex, during the subsistence of marriage.

It is to be noted that direct proof of adultery is absolutely impossible. In fact, it is highly improbable that any person could witness such an act. Then, what is the evidence that is required? The evidence given must be clear and cogent regarding conduct so as to lead to irresistible inference that the offence in fact has been committed. Thus, almost always as a general rule, adultery is proved by presumptive proof based on circumstantial evidence.

What could be the circumstantial evidence? It is evidence of visits to brothels, contracting venereal disease and, most of the time, confessions and admissions.

Thus, adultery may be inferred from proof of inclination, association and opportunity. It is to be remembered however that circumstantial evidence produced must be acceptable to the court which should be left in no unreasonable doubt regarding proof of the fact of the commission of the act of adultery. Circumstances must be such that it would lead to no other conclusion but that of adultery.

In a particular case, a wife left her husband and started living openly with a man. Thereafter, she started going everywhere with the man she was living with and sometimes, she even called herself his wife. In these circumstances, the court held that it was proved beyond a reasonable doubt that the wife had committed adultery.

Adultery can be proved by circumstantial evidence or the court may presume adultery when it is satisfied that a guilty attachment exists between the parties. Still, if there is any doubt about the parties coming together the inference of

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adultery cannot be raised. Thus, the court would not as a general rule infer adultery from evidence of opportunity alone.

It is to be remembered that a very common proof of adultery offered is the entry in a hotel register, a hotel bill, etc. Even though false names are given, the handwriting of the person signing the register is good evidence.

However, where there is no evident background of an adulterous association, the court is not prepared to come to the conclusion of adultery merely because a hotel bill and register is produced.

In one case, the husband adduced no evidence at all of any adulterous association by the wife nor any medical evidence, yet he contended that his wife must have committed adultery because of the lapse of time between their last cohabitation and the date of birth of the child. The court declined to give a divorce on the ground that the husband had not shown that he did not have any access to the wife during the period that the child was conceived.

Generally, the court is very reluctant to act on the ground of adultery on admissions and uncorroborated confessions of the defendant. Its conclusion would be based on the weight of the evidence. The court must be satisfied by the surrounding circumstances where the evidence which is adduced may or may not be trustworthy. If the court is satisfied, it is up to it to grant relief notwithstanding the absence of independent testimony on the subject.

In a particular case, a wife admitted having committed adultery in a number of letters. Thereafter, she recanted when a suit was filed. On the evidence of the husband and the letters written by the wife, the court held that adultery was proved.

The onus of proof is always on the person who alleges adultery. Evidence tendered must be clear and convincing so as to lead to the irresistible conclusion that adultery has, in fact, been committed. The court should be satisfied beyond a reasonable doubt even though direct proof of adultery is not possible. However, I must state that it would be unsafe to come to a finding of adultery on the uncorroborated testimony of a detective. Acceptance of such evidence is not illegal but certainly not advisable.

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.

With
best wishes
from

**Farah
&
Tanya**

The Sanjan Saga

Homi Rogers

Kissh-i Sanjan by H. E. Eduljee. Published in 1991 by H. J. M. Desai and Ms H. N. Modi, joint honorary secretaries, K. R. Cama Oriental Institute, 136, Bombay Samachar Marg, Bombay 400023. Pp: iii+197.

Few places in the Indian sub-continent have fired the psyche of generations of Zoroastrians as much as Sanjan. Priestly families trace their lineage to this small port town. A march — albeit to a Western beat — is composed by virtuoso Mehli Kashinath to immortalize the place. And even in architecture Sanjan figures: a *stumbh* (memorial column) was erected here at the beginning of this century through subscriptions from 2,860 members of the community from over 46 towns and places beyond India like Canton, Colombo and Aden.

The mystique of Sanjan continues to enthrall us. Only a few years ago, the youngest of all Zoroastrian atash kadehs was consecrated here; and a religious revivalist group battles against all odds (including meager finances) to set up a Zoroastrian College in this humble township.

Much of the aura that surrounds this small town in Gujarat can be traced to the fact that the oldest extant account of the community's migration to India is celebrated in a work of Persian verse called the *Kissh-i Sanjan* (the story of Sanjan). Written in 1600 AD by Bahman Kaikobad (Sanjana) of Navsari, the *Kissh* narrates the saga of one band of Zoroastrians who at the end of the rule of the unfortunate Yazdegird, the last Sassanian ruler of Persia, fled to the mountains of Kohistan and thence to Hormuz, before setting sail for India. They landed at Diu, where they spent 19 years before



reaching Sanjan, where they received sanctuary.

The *Kissh* continues the story of this band who, in order to honor the promise they had made when hit by a violent storm during their voyage, proceeded to set up the first fire-temple in Sanjan. Over the centuries, facing many vicissitudes imposed by war and weather, they protected the fire with their lives, be it up on the steep hill of Bahrot, or in the swampy slush of Bansda. The *Kissh* ends with the 'Iranshah (the holy fire brought from Iran) being installed at Navsari amidst pomp and pageantry. It was brought here from Bansda at the instance of a behdin from Navsari, Changa

Asa, who "for piety and love towards the Good Religion had no equal."

When Kaikobad put this saga (spanning over 600 years) to verse, he prayed in his epilogue that "when some devout man in the future reads this, he will bless me..." But, as the saga captured the imagination of more Zoroastrians, and as it got translated again and again (especially around the turn of the present century) into Gujarati and English, Kaikobad's work got bogged down in controversies and debates, and was even referred to as a "palpable falsehood."

One of the main reasons for this was that chronology was not Kaikobad's strong point. Throughout the saga, he gives no dates but only mentions intervals between events, and even these intervals are usually quoted in round numbers or centuries. This has led to an unending debate and as the *Kissh* is the oldest account of matters that are of great historical importance to the Parsis, the story has been subjected to microscopic examination by leading Zoroastrian scholars and self-appointed purists.

With a view to placing the many facts before the community, *Parsiana* published two decades ago (in 1971) a two-part article on the *Kissh* by Eduljee. Ms Piloo Jungalwalla then suggested to the K. R. Cama Oriental Institute (KRCOI) that the articles be brought out as a pamphlet. Eduljee agreed, but feeling that the articles were too slight in substance, extended the work to its present form. As published by the KRCOI, the book is a full study of the *Kissh*: It narrates the story, explores its chrono-

logical aspects, and through extremely informative and well thought of appendices sheds more light on Parsi history in India before and after the event of bringing the Iranshah to Navsari, at which point Sanjan's story ends.

For a task as onerous as this, the KRCOI (and *Parsiana*) could not have entrusted the work to anyone better than Eduljee. Years ago, this reviewer had read an article by Eduljee in an anthology on Zoroastrianism, edited by Vishwanath Pandey. Here Eduljee succinctly marshalled facts to prove that Zoroaster must have lived during the period 1,700 to 1,400 BC thereby demolishing, ever so gently, the cherished belief of those who maintained that the religion was over 6,000 years old. It is in the same cogent manner that Eduljee examines the many sources of the events occurring in India, and with references and notes listed comprehensively, enables the reader to view the history of the Parsi diaspora and its aftermath.

Eduljee lays before the reader three scholarly studies of the *Kisseh* before presenting his own comments and suggested chronology. It is indeed surprising how three scholars of repute like Jivanji Modi, the intellectual heir of K. R. Cama, and the two Hodiwalas (S. H. and S. K.) can differ so radically in their interpretations of the same source material. It is hence even a greater delight to read Eduljee's comments and critical assessments, written without the prudishness of a puritan, or the polemics of a pamphleteer. One need not necessarily agree with his suggested chronology, but the manner in which he lucidly sets about it, and indulges in some open thinking, is very commendable. It is equally praiseworthy that after mustering up over 38 pages of deductive history, Eduljee candidly admits that "it is not possible, on the basis of the *Kisseh* to give exact dates for the movements of the first Zoroastrians... (though) we can say that some Zoroastrians... arrived at Sanjan some time in the early 780s."

What Eduljee is quite precise about, however, is the mistaken identity of Dastur Neryosang Dhaval who is popularly believed to be the dastur who expounded the religion to Jadi Rana, the Hindu king/chieftain of Sanjan. As per evidence quoted by Eduljee, it is even doubtful whether Kaikobad had before him the 16 Sanskrit *shlokas* attributed to Dhaval, when he wrote the *Kisseh*.

Most manuscripts containing the 16

Sanskrit *shlokas* (a translation of which is provided in the book) or referring to them, date from the middle of the 17th century, whereas the *Kisseh* was written in 1600 AD. Probably, the *shlokas* were interpolated later, or as Eduljee concludes, quoting M. P. Khareghat, the *shlokas* may have been there, but on the basis of their structure and thought, could not have been written or recited by a Zoroastrian.

A reading of the *shlokas* also exposes the fallacy of the long-standing conten-

The *Kisseh* is the oldest account of matters that are of great historical importance to the Parsis

tion of Parsi orthodoxy that accepting converts is to go back on our promise to Jadi Rana, who gave us sanctuary in India. No *shloka*, be it recited by a Zoroastrian priest, or interpolated later, upholds a non-proselytization clause. This fallacious interpretation has arisen, Eduljee points out, due to Hodiwala's translation of the 11th *shloka*, "the only one to say in clear terms that Parsis do not convert." Eduljee points out that Hodiwala himself had in his notes on the *shloka* mentioned that he had amended the Sanskrit original by giving it this meaning. Eduljee quotes Hodiwala's reason verbatim for doing so in the book under review.

This is an example of how a myth is created and perpetrated, and Eduljee needs to be commended for drawing the community's attention to these facts, without being controversial or hurtful. Eduljee's rendering of the *Kisseh* calls for a fresh reading of other works of antiquity, so that the community can review the facts in their proper perspective, and not through the agency of bigoted interpreters.

If the *Kisseh* has thrown up certain startling facts, Eduljee's narration of the other aspects of Parsi history in India is equally interesting. Notable amongst these is the tumultuous transfer of the Iranshah from Sanjan to Bahrot to Bansda to Navsari, and the final transfer to Udwada. It makes for a good epic abounding in court drama, treason and

high adventure, including a Moses-like recession of waters of the Par river to enable the Sanjanas to cross into Udwada, while their adversaries (the Bhagarias of Navsari) had to return sans Iranshah. Of similar stirring valor is the tale of the massacre at Variav, though even Eduljee's erudition cannot provide a date to it.

Yet another appendix (the book has six) of great interest and relevance is an 80-page section on the accounts of Parsis left by early European travellers in India from 1322 to the end of the 18th century. These accounts describe Parsi occupations, beliefs and customs, and show the changes that have taken place in the community over the years. Sample a few surprises from the section: "Parsis are less bigoted in their customs, manners and dress than most nations." "Parsi merchants lie repeatedly for the sake of profit."

What makes this appendix all the more interesting is that Eduljee spikes the accounts with his own comments ranging from the defensive and the critical to just plain elaboration. Within this appendix, which occupies nearly half the length of the book, is the seed for yet another publishing venture — which probably the KRCOI could consider — a book on Parsis as viewed through the eyes of other communities, both travellers as well as the local populace.

Eduljee's *Kisseh* with its interrelated appendices makes for a book worth reading and preserving. The only reservation one has is that it does not provide any information on the work itself or its literary merit.

How many verses was the *Kisseh*? What was the meter used? How would it rank in comparison to Persian literature, including the *Shah Namah*, which was then a part of our oral heritage? And, how would it compare to literature produced in India contemporaneous to it? Generations to come may never get to read, or be able to read, the *Kisseh* in its original. Perhaps a transcription in Roman script of a few of its moving passages, which would give a feel of the text, would be welcome.

The inclusion of more picture plates (the book has only four, including that of the *Revayats*) or a manuscript of the *Kisseh* would have enhanced the value of the work. And though the making of an index is a painstaking task, its absence in a volume like this — rich with names, and ideal for reference — is largely felt.

A Recap of the Raj

Khusro F. Rustamji

In The Districts of The Raj by Y. D. Gundevia. Published in 1992 by Orient Longman Limited, Kamani Marg, Ballard Estate, Bombay 400038. Pp: 233. Price: Rs 75.

The one characteristic of Yezdi Gundevia that set him apart from many of his peers in the Indian Civil Service (ICS), was that he never posed as the 'bara saheb (big boss)'. He was always himself — the lad from Bandra — unspoilt, straight and warm-hearted. He was brought up in a cultured family: "My father was a lover of art and my mother a lover of music."

At the beginning of his book, *In the Districts of the Raj*, Gundevia says he lays no claim to being a hot nationalist, having come from a totally apolitical family. He was the grandson of a one-track loyalist — Kaikhusro Kabraji — editor, novelist, playwright and musician, who translated the British national anthem into Gujarati, *Raksa Dev Too Maharani*, which was sung in a grand chorus led by Kabraji's sisters at Ballard Pier when an important dignitary landed. Throughout his college career Gundevia gave tuitions, and half the money he earned he gave his mother.

As in all Parsi homes of the past, there were hundreds of English books in the house: poetry, drama, novels, he read them all. "I was gradually becoming an agnostic," he wrote, as almost the whole of that generation turned out to be. He began service as a lover of England, and retired as a lover of India.

Then that tragic day. About his sister Tehmina and her husband Dick Rutnagar he says, "The 4th August 1929 is an indelible imprint in my memory. It was a Sunday. Tehmina and Dick motored down to our house in Bandra — they were going for a swim at Juhu — that beautiful palm beach just beyond suburban Bandra. I could have joined them too, but did not. Two hours later came the thunderbolt. Dick, Tehmina and two friends had drowned."



Despite the tragedy, the family felt that he should go to England and try for the ICS. He wrote of boarding houses in England, travels on the continent, music concerts... and then the unexpected selection on his first try for the ICS, followed by his posting in the out-of-the-way district of Gonda in Uttar Pradesh.

There are vivid pictures in the book of district life during the Raj: camp, settlement work, the *zamindari rajas* (kingly landlords); there is the local tyrant in embroidered sherwani and flannel pyjamas, a glittering sword hanging from his belt, an elaborate turban with a peacock feather peeping out of its folds... But for the rest of the population there was nothing but starvation. Working night and day they produced grain which was sold at Rs 2 for 80 pounds. Gundevia says, "Very often I rode mile after mile and the fields looked as starved as the people

that cultivated them." And there was indebtedness and *begaar* (forced labor).

At the age of seven he was present when a daughter was born to his maternal uncle, a policeman. She was named Rokshana. When he came back with ICS tagged to his name, he asked her for a waltz and fell in love with her. Rokshi, the pigtailed girl, later become his wife.

She certainly turned out to be a versatile woman: an angler, shikari and constant companion. "So there we were, Rokshi and I, in a series of camps under canvas day after day, month after month... lost in admiration for our cook Niamat." And in the heat of the districts, running barefoot, was his daughter Rapti, who could speak the Purbi dialect like a native.

Floods, fairs, jungle camps and clubs — Gonda, Gorakhpur, Bahraich, Mirzapur, more and more towns and tribal dances — all figure in the book. Also working with the Congress; tiger shoots and a eulogy on a horse, on whom he rode from camp to camp.

A useful chapter in the book is about the Christian missionaries. What they did in the past to educate, tend the sick and develop the backward district areas, makes a saga of service and sacrifice which has never been understood or appreciated in independent India.

Many Englishmen have written about the Raj, few Indians have done so. *In the Districts of the Raj* is a book that is easy to read, a picture of district life in the past which can stir up nostalgia in many bosoms and be a guide to future historians and administrators. It shows the type of work that a district magistrate did, his close contact with the rural folk and his insights into their problems. At the same time it talks of shikars, of *dak* bungalows with scorpions on the roof; and of a woman, Rokshi, who braved it all and was, moreover, a delightful hostess and finally the editor of her husband's last book.

MILESTONES

The age of Zoroastrian brides (as listed in this issue) ranged between 23 and 55 years, the arithmetic mean — the total number of individual ages divided by the total number of brides — being 33 years. The corresponding figures for the grooms were 25 and 59 years, averaging at 37 years.

There were 16 births in Bombay in June. From the 97 Zoroastrians who died in Bombay last month, 22 succumbed to heart disease of whom six were 80 years and above. The other major killers were pneumonia and lung disease (11), cancer (eight) and general debility and old age, diabetes and brain disease (seven each). Shock and anemia took the lives of five patients each. Parkinson's disease and hypertension claimed four victims each while septicemia, ulcer and malnutrition claimed two lives each. Arthritis, atherosclerosis (deposition of fatty substances in the arteries), high blood pressure, hemiparesis (slight paralysis or weakness of one half of the face or body), nervous disorder, asthma, viral fever, hematoma (a swelling filled with blood), pyrexia (fever), thyrotoxicosis (a condition due to the excessive production of the thyroid gland

hormone), liver disease and tuberculosis were the isolated cases registered last month. There was one murder case reported. One teenager, two youths in their 20s and three youths in their 30s were lost to the community. As compared to the highest age at death, 96 years, the youngest to die was a four-month-old baby girl.

The data on births, marriages and deaths has been compiled from information supplied by various newsletters and announcements 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 boy to *Hira and Rohinton Pavri* on June 1, 1992
A boy to *Mahrukh and Zubin Sutar*; June 1
A boy to *Parvene and Darayus Baria*; June 4
Twins (boy and girl) to *Kashmira and Farokh Ankleshwaria*; June 5
A girl to *Neeta and Kayomaz Dastoor*; June 11
A boy to *Mahnaz and Farhang Pashootan*; June 11
A boy to *Kerbanoo and Cyrus Solaina*; June 11
A girl to *Zenobia and Hormazed Jehangir*; June 12
A boy to *Dinaz and Naozer Vankadia*; June 13

A girl to *Pervin and Jimmy Kasad*; June 16
A girl to *Tanaz and Karl Naoroji*; June 18
A girl to *Zarine and Xerxes Mistry*; June 21
A boy to *Sanobar and Adil Bharucha*; June 27
A girl to *Ruby and Yezdi Parekh*; June 27
A boy to *Homai and Yezdi Irani*; June 28

Married

Farzana Khodadad Izadyar of Poona and *Shahriyar Shahbahram Atai*; June 7
Nilufer Behram Dotiwalla and *Viraf Gustadji Ichhaporia* of Ichhapore; June 7
Rashna Bomi Peer and *Kersi*

Homi Harda; June 9
Hutokshi Jehangir Bhathena and *Percy Adi Desai*; June 12
Tehmi Minocher Bharucha and *Minoo Rustomji Amrolia*; June 14
Chandan Bamansha Tavadia and *Jamshed Nasarwanji Jijina*; June 21
Shirin Khodayar Mehri-kalan-tari and *Bijan Dehgonpur Pur-dehgon*; June 30

Died

Tehmina Sapur Desai (91) residing at Rele Chmbs, Raghavaji Rd, Gwalia Tank, 400036; May 31
Veera Dinshaw Desai (66), 4, Neelam, 14th B. Rd, Khar, 400052; May 31
Tehmi Naval Daruvala (78), 779, Daruvala Hse, Parsi Clny, M. Joshi Rd, Dadar, 400014; June 1
Adi Hormusji Dubash (64), Garda Bldg, Panthaki Baug, Andheri (E), 400069; June 1
Frenie Peshotan Sanjana (79), 5, Devdutt, B. J. Rd, Bandra, 400050; June 1
Bomi Hormusji Shroff (72), Dadyseth Agiary, Flora Fountain, 400001; June 1
Noshir Rustomji Joshi (61), 8, Milan, 191, Perin Nariman St, Fort, 400001; June 2
Sakarbai Ardeshtir Mehta (92), 4/51, Wadia Baug, Parel Tank Rd, 400033; June 2
Keki Hormusji Arjanwalla (86), Gool Mans, 88, Walkeshwar Rd, 400006; June 3
Villoo Dickie Makati (34), 22/10, Brindavan Soc, Thane, 400601; June 3
Ratan Nadirshaw Sukheswala (81), 4/45, Jal Darshan, Nepean Sea Rd, 400006; June 3
Zenobia Behram Adarboman (66), 91, Windsor Chmbs, 7, Cawasji Patel St, Fort, 400001; June 5
Nurgez Hormusji Amrolia (84), Aderbad, Patkar Marg, 400007; June 5
Yezdi Burjorji Engineer (38), 21, Prem Court, Peddar Rd, 400026; June 5
Phiroze Sorabji Mirza (63), 11/A, Sayaji Bldg, Balaram St, Grant Rd, 400007; June 5

Keki Maneckshaw Siganporia (61), 307/8, Sarita Bldg, Jesal Park, Bhayandar (E), 401105; June 5
Soli Kaikhushru Fanibanda (61), Windsor Chmbs, Cawasji Patel St, Fort, 400001; June 6
Alu Cawasji Satta (74), 17, Kala Niketan Bldg, M. Karve Rd, 400020; June 6
Eva A. R. Wadia (87), 15/A, Prabhu Kutir, Altamount Rd, 400026; June 6
Tehmina Dinshawji Billimoria (80), 15, Khareghat Clny, Hughes Rd, 400007; June 7
Sheroo Dhunjishaw Chawda (71), 275/D, Soona Bldg, Chikalwadi, Tardeo, 400007; June 7
Soli Muncher Mithaiwala (58), 301, Asha-Sadan, Anand Ngr, Vasai (W), 401201; June 7
Manijeh Burjorji Rana (86), Bhabha Hse, 191, Bora Bazar St, Fort, 400001; June 7
Goolbai Dossabhoy Bhesania (87), Sahani Villa, N. Gamadia Rd, Off Peddar Rd, 400026; June 8
Dinshaw Kavsi Dastur (87), Thakur Niwas, Churchgate Recl, 400020; June 8
Minocher Bejanji Sadarwala (80), 764/F, Sarosh Court, Opp BEST Depot, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; June 8
Framroz Rustomji Balsara (87), 503, Joanna, 10, Pali Rd, Bandra, 400050; June 9
Mani Peshotan Bamji (79), 800, Burjor-Behram Bldg, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; June 9
Firoze Bomanji Irani (76), 619, Banoo Mans, Jame Jamshed Rd, Dadar, 400014; June 10
Shirin Boman Irani (80), 8, New Mistry Bldg, Balaram St, 400007; June 10
Pestonji Kharshedji Jasawalla (75), 8, Saidunissa Hse, Sleater Rd, 400007; June 10
Hilla Shavaksha Engineer (72), Mody Bldg, Marzban Clny, Gilder Lane, Lamington Rd, 400008; June 11
Pestonji Jamshedji Saher (77), C/2, Captain Clny, Tardeo, 400034; June 11
Freny Hormusji Bharucha (76), B, The Reward, Tardeo, 400007; June 12

Adi Shavaxsha Dhondy (85), R/2, Cusrow Baug, S. B. Rd, 400039; June 12

Soonamai Pestonji Doctor (85), 28/B, Sidhwa Bldg, Balaram St, Grant Rd, 400007; June 12

Beji Ratanshaw Daruwalla (54), A-3/41, Greenfields Avillion, Mahakali Caves Rd, Andheri (E), 400093; June 13

Hormusji Rustomji Havaladar (67), 7/C-10, Tata Clny, Tardeo, 400034; June 13

Shireen Burjor Irani (53), 317, Kooka Bldg, Sopari Baug, Parel, 400012; June 13

Freny Nadirshaw Karwa (88), Crown Bldg, Uranwala St, Grant Rd, 400004; June 13

Homi Khodad Irani (43), Orient Baug, Lam Rd, Deolali, Dist Nasik, 422401; June 14

Bapu Ardesher Mistry (78), E/10, Shapur Baug, V. P. Rd, 400004; June 14

Meher Dady Pastakia (58), C/4, G/15, Nowroz Baug, Lalbaug, 400012; June 14

Amy Homi Jeejeebhoy (85), Ratan Manor, Garden Rd, Colaba, 400005; June 15

Behram Hormuzd Kermani (75), R/26, Nowroz Baug, Lalbaug, 400012; June 15

Jal Bejonji Lakdavalva (80), 14, Cricket Club of India, D. Vatcha Rd, 400020; June 15

Dina Darabsha Nilgiriwala (76), A/1, Jer Baug, Dr Ambedkar Rd, Byculla, 400027; June 15

Aloo Sorabji Wadia (58), 4/12, Tata Clny, Tardeo, 400034; June 15

Freny Nariman Pardiwalla (77), 62, Khatau Apts, 243, Walkeshwar Rd, 400006; June 16

Minoo Behramshaw Patel (85), 53, H. N. Petit Bldg, Opp Grant Rd Rly Stn, 400007; June 16

Cyrus Parvez Sabawala (20), 11, Malcolm Baug, S. V. Rd, Jogeshwari (W), 400102; June 16

Perin Hormusji Sethna (78), X-101/15, Godrej Clny, Stn Rd, Vikhroli (E), 400079; June 16

Dina Tehmurasp Bharucha (81), 54, Sunshine, Dr R. Patel Rd, Off B. Desai Rd, 400026; June 17

Shirinbai Jehangirji Bhoot (87), Tara Mans, 11th Lane, Khetwadi Main Rd, 400004; June 17

Nariman Ardesher Golwalla (96), 32, Bakhtawar Annexe, 22, N. Dabholkar Rd, 400006; June 17

Pulibai Rustomji Laskeri (78), 17, Tarachand Bldg, Gamadia Clny, Tardeo, 400007; June 17

Banu Maneckji Baria (84), Balaram Bldg, 33, Balaram St, Grant Rd, 400007; June 18

Jer Hormusji Gorimar (34), B/76, Empire Est No 2, Cumballa Hill, 400026; June 18

Pesi Cawasji Pithawala (61), E/2, Nowroz Baug, Lalbaug, 400012; June 18

Sirus Kaikushru Irani (65), 145, Daruwalla Bldg, Alibhai Premji Marg, 400007; June 19

Mani Rustomji Katgara (78), 6/9, Rustom Baug, Victoria Rd, Byculla, 400027; June 19

Minoo Byramji Morena (60), 1/1, A. H. Wadia Baug, Parel Tank Rd, 400033; June 19

Dinshaw Maneckshaw Patel (79), 406, Vijay Apts, Caesar Rd, Amboli, Andheri (W), 400058; June 19

Faraun Jehangirji Bulsara (68), 61, Milan, 87, Tardeo Rd, 400034; June 20

Dhanjishaw Ardesher Wankadia (82), O/13, Dalal Est, Near Bombay Central, 400008; June 20

Mani Shiavax Bachana (59), 601, Namdar Hse, Opp Bandra Police Stn, Bandra, 400050; June 21

Nariman Bhikaji Boga (69), 5/7, Panthaki Baug, Andheri (E), 400069; June 21

Katy (Katayun) Eddie (Edulji) Dastoor (65), 5, Akash Ganga, 89, B. Desai Rd, 400036; June 21

Kekasru Rustamji Pavri (85), 17/94/D, Madhav Bhavan, Parsi Wada, Lower Parel, 400013; June 21

Burjor Dinshawji Bharucha (81), 405/65, Sygille Apts, Worli Hill Rd, 400018; June 22

Aloo Behram Kharadi (72), 25, Bombay Fire Fighter Hsg Soc, J. R. Boricha Marg, 400011; June 22

Framroze Sorabji Billimoria (78), Reshma Bldg, Dongre Rd, Mumbra, 400612; June 23

Gaimai Adi Engineer (80), B/7, Tardeo Chmbs, Kashinath St, Tardeo, 400034; June 24

Freny Naval Katrak (65), 811/7, Tilak Rd, Above Central

Bank, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; June 24

Freny Hosi Khajotia (58), B/13, Mody Bldg, Zoroastrian Compd, Parel, 400012; June 24

Dali Sam Mistry (43), 16, India Hse No 2, Kemp's Corner, 400036; June 24

Sam Eruchshaw Mody (71), C/o Mr B. Gandhi, Tata Clny, Bandra, 400050; June 24

Dara Cavas Dastur (72), 401/402, Sai Dham, 719, Govind Patil Rd, Dandpada, Khar, 400052; June 25

Bhikhamai Ardesher Patel (82), P/34, Cusrow Baug, S. B. Rd, 400039; June 25

Dina Soli Patel (70), F. S. Parukh Dharamshala, 34, Hughes Rd, 400007; June 25

Manekshaw Temulji Patel (86), 9, Doctor Bldg, S. B. Bharucha Baug, Andheri (W), 400058; June 25

Freny Phiroze Doctor (85), Chinoy Mans, 162, B. Desai Rd, 400036; June 26

Savak Khodabux Kermani (Irani) (50), C/1, Petit Chawl, Balaram St, 400007; June 26

Banoobai Manchershia Tiina (87), 182, Enterprise Apts, Forjett Hill, 400036; June 26

Gool Nariman Fardunji Vaid (83), Munsiff Bldg, 635, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; June 26

Navajbai (Najamai) Pirojshaw Bhathena (85), 220, Tara Mans, 11th Lane, Khetwadi Main Rd, 400004; June 27

Homai Kavasji Boman Behram (71), Modi Mans, 49, Mere-weather Rd, 400039; June 27

Rohinton Behramsha Ghamat (43), Ali Manzil, Balaram St, Behind Apsara Cinema, 400007; June 27

Pervin Minoo Balsara (28), E/2/1, Tata Hsg Centre, Lallubhai Park Rd, Andheri (W), 400058; June 28

Rustom Padamji Bharucha (68), 6, Jehangir Baug, Juhu, 400049; June 28

Dina Khurshed Choksiy (72), F, Dalal Est, Lamington Rd, 400008; June 28

Pestonji Gustadi Engineer (81), B/3, Bhairavi Apts, Bhardawadi Rd, Andheri (W), 400058; June 28

Farzin Xerxes Lakdawalla (4 mths), A/9, Daruwalla Bldg, Below South Frere Bridge, Grant Rd, 400007; June 28

Freni Fredoon Naoroji Mehta (81), Pehlvi Bldg, 315, Lamington Rd, 400007; June 28

Kaikhushroo Cawasji Mehta (Driver) (83), Alpawala Bldg, Stn Rd, Mahim, 400016; June 28

Ardesher Naoroji Mistry (72), Shroff Hse, 42, Sleater Rd, 400007; June 28

Zarin Aspi Dapoliwala (14), Bhadwar Bldg, Khan Est, Mahim, 400016; June 29

Avabai Kavasji Lalkaka (88), Dubash Mans, 20, Mt Mary Rd, Bandra, 400050; June 29

Mehroo Phirozsha Abadan (78), A/239, Botawalla Bldg, Tardeo Rd, 400007; June 30

CALCUTTA

Born

A girl, **Freya**, to **Zarene** and **Sarosh Gazder**; May 14

Married

Bakhtawar Chothia and **Boman Parakh**; June 14

SURAT

Died

Khushroo Sorabji Jussawalla (44), Botawalla Bldg, Tardeo, Bombay, 400007; June 1

Mani Darabshaw Siwalwalla (51), Kuka Chawl, Shahpore, 395003; June 3

Dadabhoy Nowroji Nogamwalla (70), Lal Gate, Kanapith, 395003; June 5

Homi Cawasji Amalsadiwalla (71), Gam Amalsad, Taluka Mandvi, Dist Surat, 394160; June 6

Alooben Nusserwanji Elavia (64), Rajendkumar, Sasapati, Rajpipla, 393145; June 9

Burjorji Nusserwanji Dordi (92), Alati Baug, Rustompura, 395002; June 26

Faramroze Hormusji Vesuna (95), Bhapa Mohallo, Nanpura, 395003; June 29

...

AUCKLAND

Married

Mahrugh Mistry, daughter of **Thrity** and **Yazdi** and **Tom Edmund Stazyk**; May 6

BRITISH COLUMBIA

Born

A girl, **Natasha**, to **Rashna** and **Shahrokh Kianipour**; April 4

CALIFORNIA**Born**

A boy, *Farhan*, to *Dilshad* and *Hoshang Hormasji*; June 9

CHICAGO**Died**

Sorour Kadhodaian, mother of *Hooshmand*, *Arjomand*, *Broomand*, *Farahmand*, *Niroomand* and *Parvin Khosravi*; May 16

DETROIT**Died**

Alamai Deboo, mother of *Behroze Gandhi* and *Jamshed*; June 2

HOUSTON**Born**

A boy, *Zal*, to *Ava* and *Noshir Bhathena*; March 22

KARACHI**Born**

A boy, *Daniyal*, to *Havovi* and *Jehanbux Bharucha*; May 18

Died

Pestnji Khurshedji Minwalla (94); May 1

TOTALS FOR 1992

	Bombay		Other Indian cities		Foreign cities	
	A	B	A	B	A	B
BORN						
Boys	9	63	—	2	3	9
Girls	7	67	1	1	5	13
MARRIED						
Parsi	7	135	1	3	1	3
Intercommunal	—	24	—	1	1	4
DIED						
Male	46	171	5	28	7	19
Female	53	242	2	38	5	14

A: Total numbers in this issue

B: Running totals for 1992 (February-July 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.

Aspi Cowasji Patel (69); May 1

Burjor Meherwanji Anklesaria (93); May 7

Pestnji Piroshaw Randeria (69); May 8

Gustad Sohrabji Nanavati (79); May 9

Khorshed Cowas Daruwala (63); May 11

Soonoo Minoo Malbari (65); May 18

Piroja Kaikhushru Khambatta (96); May 24

SINGAPORE**Born**

A girl, *Alexandria Susan*, to *Tehnaz* and *Michael Crook*; May 8

TORONTO**Born**

A girl, *Zara Jacqueline*, to *Khorshed* and *Darrin Tooth*; May 7

A girl, *Ava Kureshan*, to *Mahroukh* and *Bejan Raffi*; May 10

A girl, *Katy Jinny*, to *Allane* and *Rohinton Gatta*; May 23

VANCOUVER**Died**

Adi Jokhi (61), husband of *Soonu* and father of *Cyrus*, *Rusi*, *Dinshaw* and *Roshni*; February 6

WESTMINSTER, California**Married**

Avan Amalsad and *Gustad C. P. Sagar* of *Ottawa*; April 19

Compiled by *Roxana A. Mirza*

With the compliments of

P. S. KUKA

Chairman

★ ★ ★

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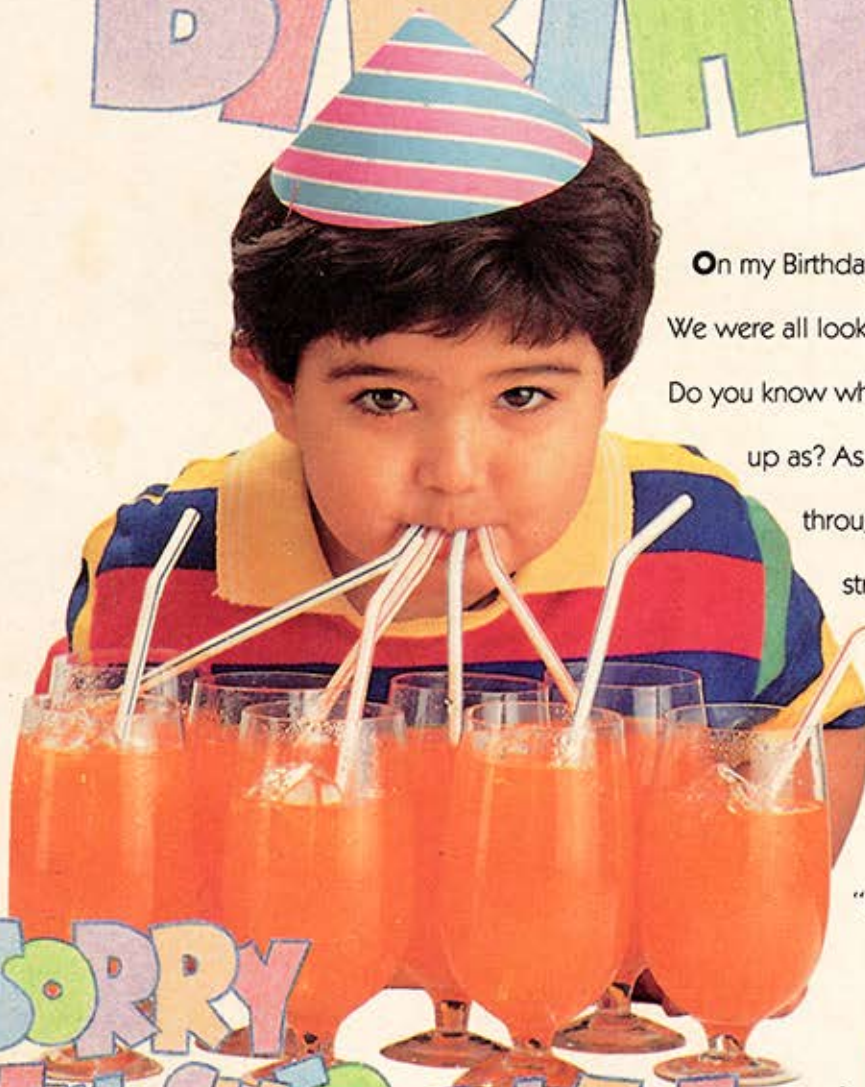
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HAPPY BIRTHDAY



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



Duke's

*Gotta
get myself
the goodness of
Mangola!*

