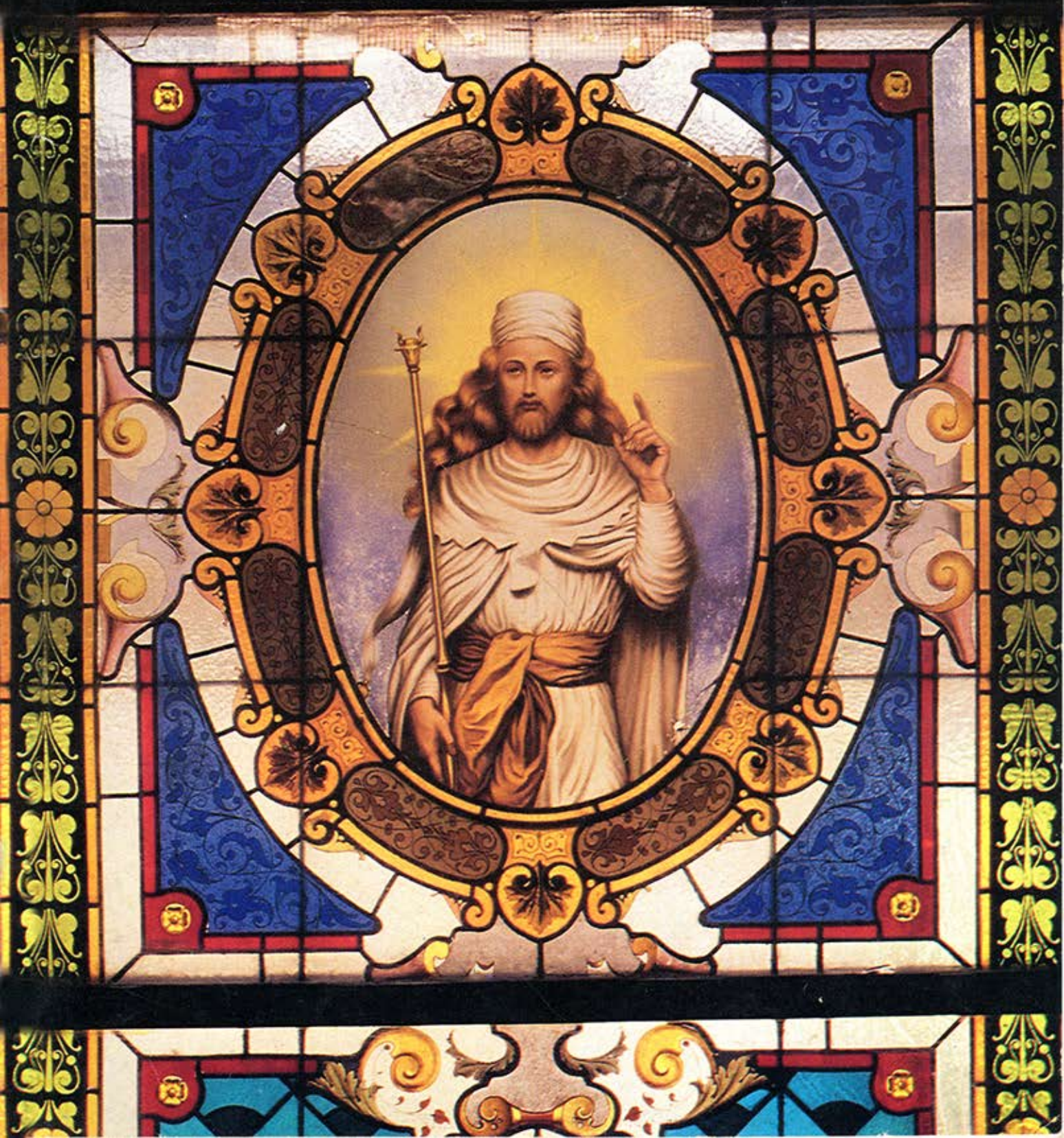
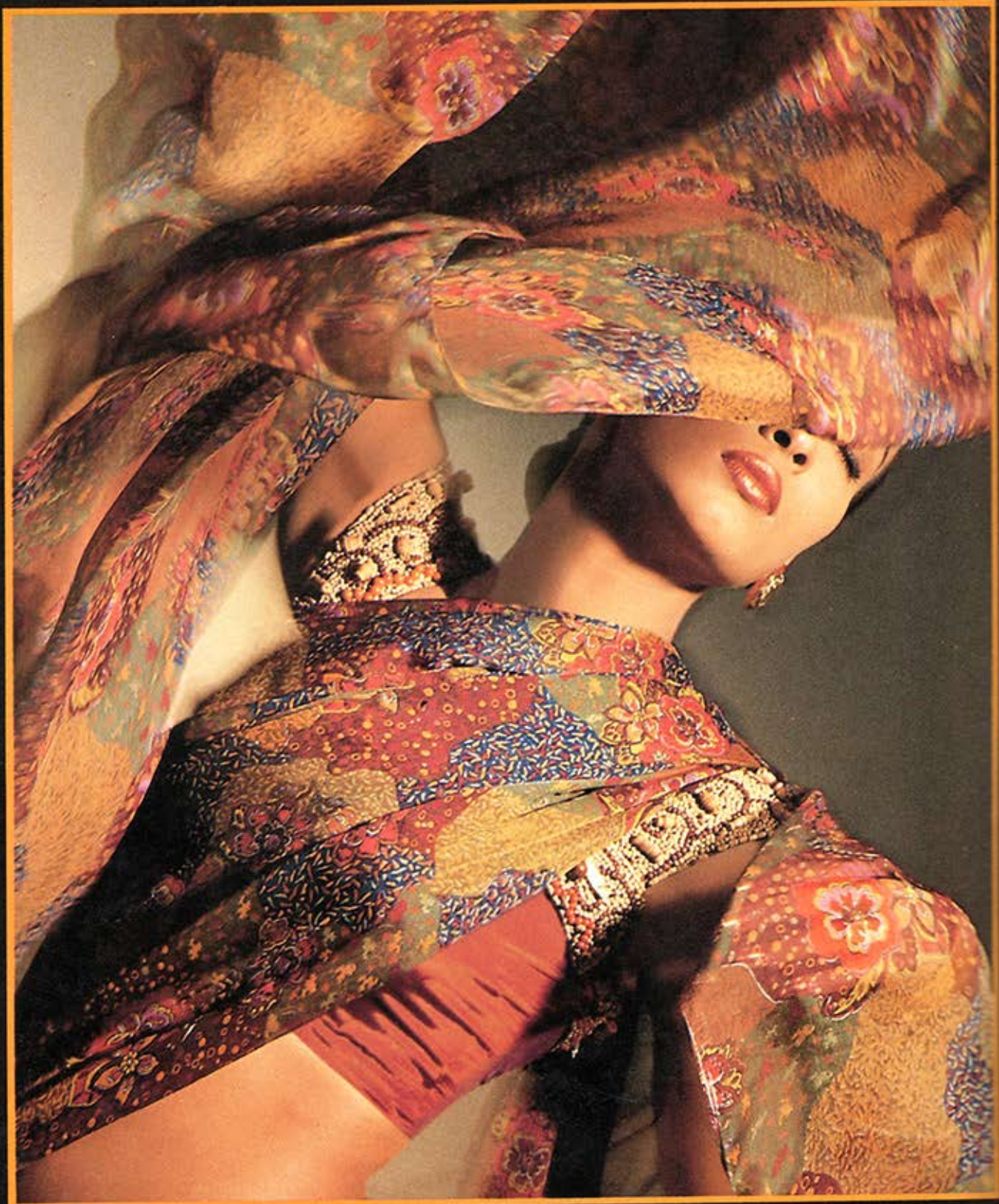


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August 1992
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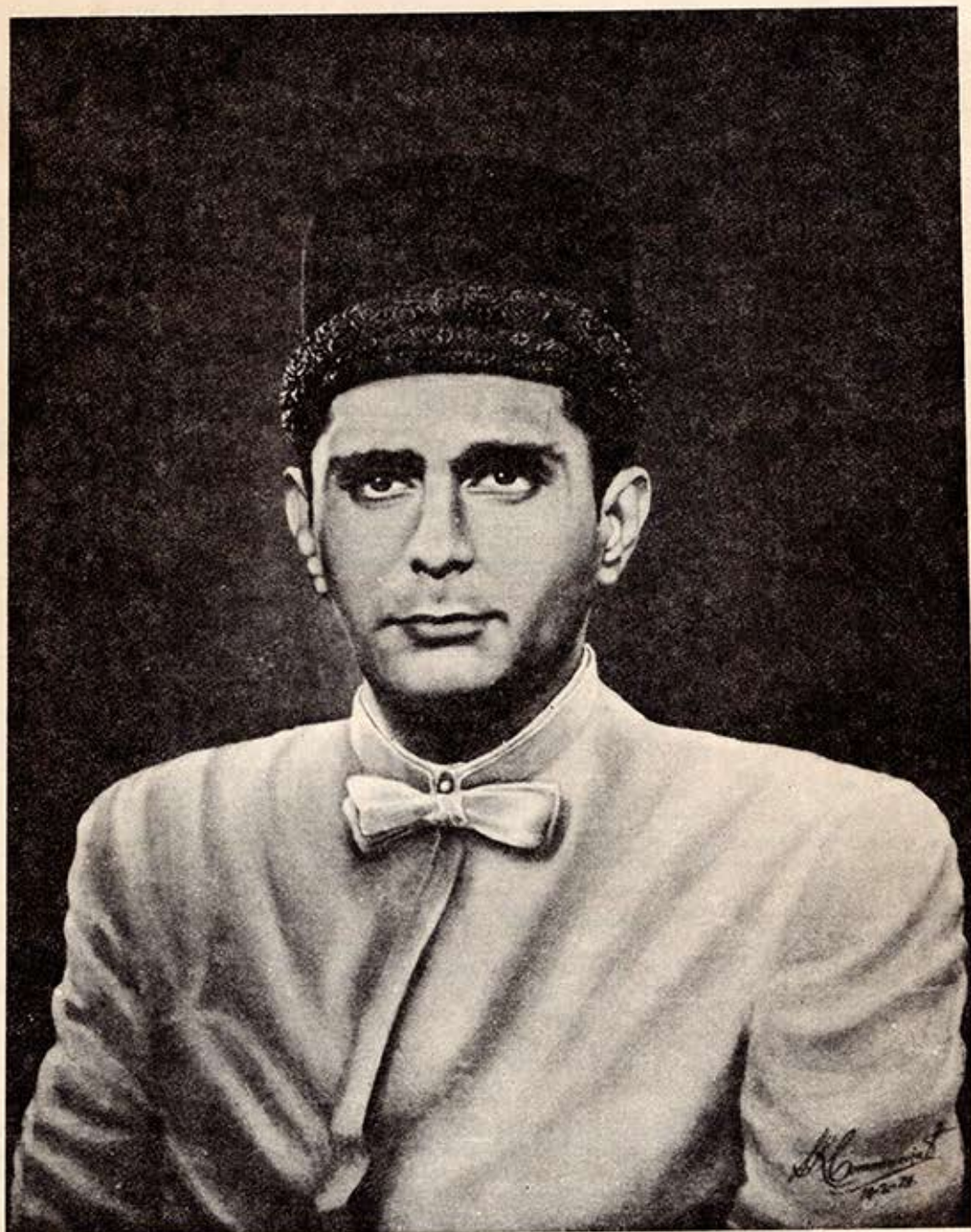
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Cover: Stained glass panel at the Tata Agiary, Bandra
Photograph by Homy Mistry, Homz Prints

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In Memoriam

Mr Fali Meherji Variava

Director

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 Unsigned letters or those without an address will not be published.

"Tajiks: In search of..."

With Iran claiming about 90,000 Iranian Zoroastrians, Kurdish Zoroastrians said to number a staggering 32,00,000 and now Tajik Zoroastrians ("The Tajiks: In search of a religion," *Parsiana*, May 1992), one ought to sit up and ask himself whether we, Parsi Zoroastrians, can retain our claims of monopoly over the religion much longer?

Do we have the political will and leadership to reach out to these diverse groups and establish Bombay as the world headquarters of Zoroastrianism? It can be done if we move now. After another 20 years, when Zoroastrians in these new regions have organized themselves, we may forever have to play second fiddle in the community of our own coreligionists!

With the Arabs of the Middle East pumping men and money (by the billions!) in an all-out effort to promote Islamic rule in the new Central Asian re-

publics, with them already building mosques and sending in their mullahs, the question troubling us should be: Will the Muslims once again succeed in crushing the Kurdish and Tajik Zoroastrians into submission to Islamic fundamentalism?

Has the time come when we shouldn't be wasting our limited energy worrying about whether or not to admit a Kurdish Zoroastrian into our agiaries or a Tajik Zoroastrian into our dokhma but, rather, about how to become the fountainhead of our faith and leaders of the snowballing Great Zoroastrian Revival?

KHURSHED PASTAKIA

"Intermarriage statistics"

Your reply to Mr R. P. Daruvala's letter (Readers' Forum, *Parsiana*, May 1992) that the decline in population of the Parsi community in India is due to late marriages and small families relates only a part of the story. A more pertinent reason for the decline is migration. Statistics indicate that the Parsi population in India has been declining since the end of World War II when Parsis started migrating, initially to the UK and in the last two decades to the USA.

Migration of boys abroad has a powerful effect on diminishing the population not only because of migration per se but also because it is partly responsible for unmarried females and intermarriages on account of decreasing availability of educated marriageable boys here.

In my opinion, the only practical solution for stopping the decline of the Parsi population is to completely stop the funding of gift and loan scholarships for studies abroad. Today in India any candidate admitted for postgraduate engineering courses in any institution in India is automatically entitled to a scholarship of Rs 1,800 for MTech and Rs 2,400 per month for a PhD. The money so saved by the charitable institutions and trusts could be more gainfully utilized for setting up both large and small scale industries in CIDCO (City and Industrial Development Corporation of Maharashtra Limited) and MIDC (Maharashtra Industrial Development Corporation) areas where our youths can be gainfully employed. Changing situations demand changing policies.

Dr P. D. SUNAVALA

"Madhivala's mending..."

I was very pleased to read "Madhivala's Mending Touch," (*Parsiana*, May 1992). I have personally experienced his treatment and was very much satisfied with it.

Due to oversight you have forgotten to include the name of Mr K. Kotwal, a



disciple of Dr Madhivala, who invited him regularly to his shop, O. K. Wafers at Tardeo, and is responsible for having had hundreds of patients treated by this angel in the garb of a

man. Later on Mr Kotwal picked up this treatment and he has been giving the benefit of the same in a smaller clinic near O. K. Wafers entirely free.

I have one suggestion that this gifted art of Madhivala's should be taught to young Parsi aspirants by Dr Jal Amaria, Mr Kotwal and others. All these osteopaths are getting older, and as such training new recruits is very very essential.

Dr S. R. WADIA

"Religion and..."

"Religion and..." (Readers' Forum, *Parsiana*, May 1992) is one more protest against Dr Ali Jafarey by yet another vibrationist, Mr Bhujwala, writing in some sort of official capacity. Yes, we in London are in receipt of an excerpted letter from Mr Jal Birdy as well as photocopies of *The Bombay Samachar* caveat Jafarey article painstakingly reproduced for its membership by our local association — the only time that *The Samachar* has been broadcast here under its committee's rules of democracy and freedom of information!

I can say it is a pleasure and a privilege to know Dr Jafarey both personally and through his writings. I last met him here a month ago: we have occasional differences which make for bonds of understanding and cement greater mutual respect. He is continuing with his good work in attracting more seekers after Zarathushtra to the faith; he does not interfere with others' beliefs and leaves our vibrationists severely alone to psych themselves up in the manner best befitting them.

It is not easy to determine exactly why Dr Jafarey is singled out for disfavor

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among *Parsiana* readers. Is it because he writes to the point? Is it perhaps because he has done something he knows the prophet of his choice, our Zarathushtra, has enjoined him to do — something in which our would-be leaders have signally failed? Could it be that he has dared to look into the *Gathas* too deeply — again something which we plainly prefer not to do, but to instead invoke philosopher such-and-such, or scholar so-and-so, or even sage what's-his-name?

It is easily perceived that scholars and academics do not rate very highly with Mr Bhujwala. To be sure, some do theorize at unreal levels. He should therefore set himself to wondering why just about most worthwhile work emanating from Parsi Zoroastrians are invariably joint productions with non-Parsi "western" scholars. I will provide a hint: it certainly isn't because Parsis are deficient in English! His casual comments about anyone gaining knowledge and understanding by reading translations is merely wishful thinking and a disservice to our hard-working, deeply involved scholars: would that Zoroastrianism were that easily grasped!

Let your readers ask themselves why it is that our negationists and exclusivists always cite those with no direct knowledge of the *Gathas* — the fount of genuine Zoroastrianism — and even from other religions, and almost never quote Zarathushtra himself? Could it be because they have come to the uncomfortable realization that our prophet's sacred songs contain some unpalatable lyrics — truths which cannot sustain their long-held beliefs and fantasies, truths which might well rip away their superficial layers of religiosity?

I do not pretend for a moment that I have achieved greater heights of spirituality than any of my fellows. But on the strength of what I increasingly find myself reading in their own words in your Readers' Forum, I do believe that a growing number are turning their backs on the *Gathas*.

Mr Bhujwala summarily dismisses Dr Jafarey as lacking in Parsi culture and ambience. Whilst it is important for a Parsi to possess the full panoply of his religious traditions (whatever they may be) and institutions (whatever they are perceived today to be), it is far from mandatory for an appreciation of Zarathushtra. It might even be advisable not to look into these too closely for our

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own peace of mind, for then we should uncover an indiscriminate mass of accretions and borrowings very far removed from Zarathushtra! Dr Jafarey is perhaps fortunate in not being encumbered with these. Perhaps it even allows him an unrestricted view of Zarathushtra!

Why are our priests, our spiritual leaders, so silent in these matters? Do they not pray "these *Gathas* offer refuge and protection for us. They are for us both food and clothing?" Does the assembled congregation not attend the Yasna ceremony to hear these fine declarations? Or do they neither know nor care? And where are our Parsi scholars and researchers: if they at all see any inconsistencies between Dr Jafarey's activities and their own understanding from their studies, why do they not indicate these? Dr Jafarey would, I am sure, be happy to accommodate them.

It is evident that we are impelled by fears and irrational, inconsistent behavior. We want to exclude fellow Indians and Iranis, yet we are flirting with the unknown quantities represented by Zarathushtra-conscious Tajiks and Kurds! We claim to fear for the safety and well-being of our coreligionists in Iran — and goodness knows, they have troubles of their own: I for one would not like to be at the receiving end of a fanatic's bullying or bullet! Yet we ignore the fundamentalist presences in Tajikistan, Iran, Iraq, Syria, Turkey and yes, even India itself! Of course we should take note of every fear expressed all about us; fears and threats are powerful reasons for total inactivity and immobility on our part.

Let us do nothing, say our leaders; leave us to vibrate in peace, let us vibrate in ignorance, for vibration is bliss! Has anyone questioned the purpose and outcome of these universal vibrations? How do we square the vibrations produced one moment by foul-mouthedness and in the next vibrations emitted by the same sources now in the prayerful mode? Do such amazing vibrations result in peace, harmony and advancement? Has not realization dawned in our numbed minds that these vibration theories are being blatantly put about by our ethnocentric theosophists to breed the viruses of disension amongst us and hatred of our fellow-humans? Vibration theology is not liberation from fear and ignorance — it is an obscenity and a slap in the face of Zarathushtra and his saintly disciples.

By all means let Mr Jal Birdy and his

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like-minded fellows experience burning concerns — they are, after all, fire-priests. Perhaps the real burning issues will finally confront them some day. I for one would request these deluded folk not to concern themselves on my behalf regarding my identity and salvation. My good and kind prophet Zarathushtra has very helpfully laid these out for me in his *Gathas*. Perhaps Dr Jafarey will also make known his views on the subject in due course through the pages of *Parsiana*. We can assuredly look forward to hearing more from him about his Zoroastrian missionary work.

A small piece of unsolicited advice to Mr Birdy and company: Please look over your shoulder at the encroaching army of "alien" evangelists. They are here in the UK and Continental Europe, as also in the States and Canada, insidiously working upon the hearts and minds of our younger generations. And while you take stock of the real situation, do not please forget that Anglo and Americo-Parsis born in the new lands of our Parsi and Irani dispersions have less and less affinity with the lands of their parents' origins. Dr Jafarey is doing his share for these imperilled Zoroastrians; what are you doing?

Dr Jafarey continues to work in his own way and at his own pace. The important thing is that he is working for Zarathushtra. He is not some brash mass converter; he has not craftily amassed millions; he is not a mountebank. If it so happens that he is playing Zarathushtra false, well does he know the penalties for such betrayal. And so, well may he carry on working — for us, for Zarathushtra, for humanity!

FARROKH VAJIFDAR
London, UK

"An intact astral body"

What your otherwise immensely readable publication lacks is a section devoted to humor for which we Parsis are justifiably renowned.

The letter "An intact astral body" from Ms Nergesh F. Damania ("Readers' Forum," *Parsiana*, April 1992) would undoubtedly provide excellent material for such a section; an opportunity which has sadly gone begging.

As the author's address is not indicated, would it by any chance be Disneyland USA? Fireproof, vibrating Parsis! What next Mr Editor?

MINOO H. MEHTA
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"Operation theater"

As an avid follower of the Parsee Medical Amateurs' productions, I may safely pride myself on being a connoisseur of their performances ("Operation theater," *Parsiana*, March 1992).

Over the years, they have given enjoyment to thousands of Parsi theater-goers, in a style that is uniquely their own — or, more accurately, uniquely Dr Jimmy Sidhva's. He has enthroned himself in the hearts of his fans as the master of mirth.

No doubt, the plays are a team effort, and mention must be made of the other excellent actors, viz Drs (Ms) Thrity and Marzban Nalladaru, Homi Dordi, Rustom Patel, Ms Pervin Mody and Sorab Sidhva. But there may be no doubt, that without Dr Jimmy Sidhva's unique style and presence, the plays lose two-thirds of their flavor.

I think that the community as a whole owes this talented radiologist and his band a tremendous debt of thanks, for their dedication in sacrificing their time and energy in the pursuit of the truest



A scene from Manchoo Macbeth produced in 1991 by the Parsee Medical Amateurs

form of charity — the giving of sweat and blood; even more creditable in view of the fact that these doctors are among the busiest medical practitioners in the city of Bombay.

Their yearly, or once-in-two-year efforts are eagerly awaited by Parsi theater goers, and I may say with confidence that amateurs they may call themselves,

but amateurish they are certainly not.

DARAB DHUNJISHAW MASTER

Doongerwadi affairs

While at doongerwadi to attend the funeral of an acquaintance, I saw a number of notice boards fixed on the walls. I found those notices meaningless and/or redundant. The notices were:

•"Keep silence when the prayers are in progress." Does it mean that when the prayers are not in progress, one can talk, laugh, cut jokes, or dis-

cuss the share bazar? Most of the people, attending a funeral, know how to conduct themselves, while there may be some who do not or cannot keep quiet. By the way has this notice served any purpose?

•"Public Telephone" -- There is no telephone provided there. One might have been there in the past.

•There is a board to prohibit the presence of hawkers. I have not noticed any hawkers ever visiting the halls. As a matter of fact outsiders are not at all

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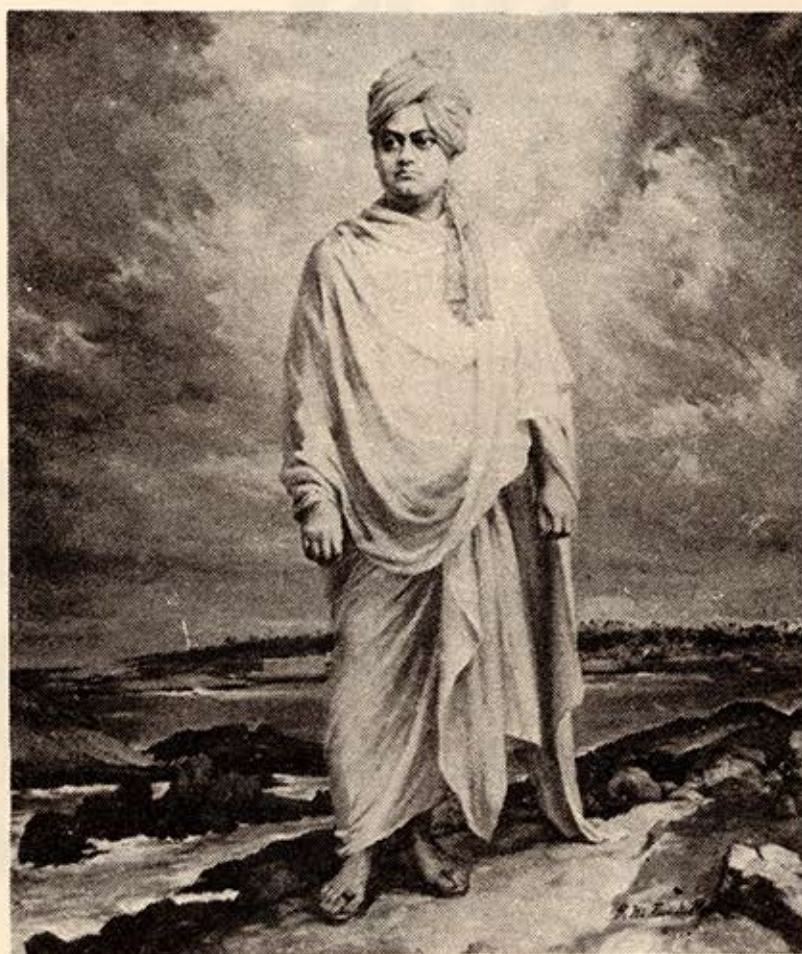
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allowed and if there are any insiders, they can be told once not to visit the halls.

•There is a notice board that only those dead bodies are allowed there which are to be consigned to the dokhma. Is it possible or necessary for the relatives of the deceased to bring a corpse to the doongerwadi when it is intended for burial or cremation? The authorities have made safeguards in this regard. What purpose does this notice serve?

It has also been noticed that benches provided are not painted or protected from rusting. Perhaps something can be done in this regard and the property of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet preserved.

DALI J. GUNDEVIA

Ms G. J. Tata, Bombay Parsi Punchayet's joint secretary, replies:

All the notice boards are placed with a clear intent and as a result of experience gained; it cannot be said that they are either meaningless or redundant. However, with regard to some of the specific ones referred to, we have to observe as follows:

The public telephone was misused and has been discontinued. However, any member of the community can avail of the phone in the nearby manager's office, 24 hours a day, on payment. Incidentally, the notice board regarding the public telephone has since been removed.

With regard to the hawkers, whilst no hawkers are normally permitted to sell any items at the doongerwadi excepting sandalwood by authorised persons only, on specific days of importance, it is experienced that some Parsis hawking goods do make an attempt to sell their articles at the doongerwadi. Hence the need of the appropriate notice.

With regard to the benches the same are painted from time to time to prevent rusting. The benches in the pavilions were painted about two-and-a-half to three years back. Those exposed to the weather are worse off, but they are also painted from time to time as funds permit. Doongerwadi accounts are in heavy deficit and last year alone the approximate deficit was of the order of Rs 10 lakhs. It would be highly appreciated therefore, if those, like Mr Gundevia, making suggestions also take interest in contributing to, or raising contributions towards, maintenance of the properties, in response to the donation appeals issued from time to time.

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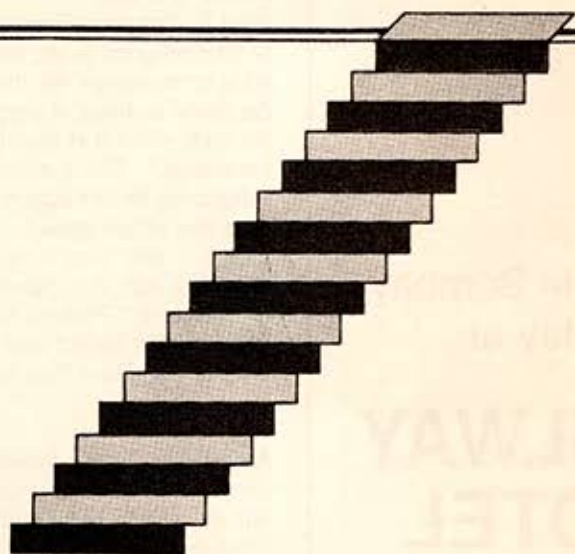
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Honoring India's great

The recent unveiling at India House, London, of the bust of Dr Ambedkar by the Indian High Commissioner and the Government of India's honoring him (Dr Ambedkar) — though belatedly — with the Bharat Ratna is, perhaps, indicative of ushering a highly commendable new era seemingly aimed at the pursuit of honoring India's great. However, no such honor has been accorded to, or even contemplated for Dadabhoj Naoroji, which does give food for thought.

India House sports the portraits of Mahatma Gandhi, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Krishna Menon, etc but not Dadabhoj Naoroji whose contribution to the industry of the Indian subcontinent has been immense, who co-founded the Indian National Congress, influenced Mahatma Gandhi, etc.

For the Dadabhoj Naoroji Parliamentary Centenary Celebrations on July 19, 1992 at Zoroastrian House, London, the managing committee of the Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe (ZTFE) arranged to present the Indian High Commissioner with a portrait of Dadabhoj Naoroji to be placed in India House. Is this an indication of a distinct lack of due recognition of the contribution to India of the one affectionately known as "The Grand Old Man of India" and/or a complete absence of even a modicum of meaningful persuasive ability on the part of the current managing committee of the ZTFE? Zoroastrian House has not found favor with Britain's political heavyweights e.g. Paddy Ashdown MP (leader of Britain's Liberal Party), Sir David Steel (formerly leader of the Liberal Party), etc have selected other venues for celebrating the Dadabhoj Naoroji Parliamentary Centenary.

FURHOK K. TANGREE
France

A tribute to Dr Warden

Dr Pestonji Byramji Warden had no children so he was specially fond of young people. We too looked forward to his visits at the office where he was the medical advisor.

"Kemchheo! Kemchheo! Ossie how are you?" Dr Warden would call striding into the room where I was busy at my typewriter. "Oh — your hands are cold," he announced. "That means your circulation is poor. And that means you need a drink! Come over to see me. On second thoughts, I'll pick you at 5.30 p.m." And at 5.30, there would be the doctor, striding in, "Kemchheo! Kemchheo! Hurry and come on."

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Just as whisky would successfully deal with my ailment, the good doctor had similar success with Aspro. A patient giving him a long story of ill health would be carefully listened to. Then Warden would take out a tablet of Aspro, crush it and hand it over with a flourish. Invariably the patient would get well and the doctor spared further complaints.

One day, coming to me, he said "Ossie, what do you think of the name *Parsiana* for my new magazine?" "Very Parsi-ish," I replied. "One would think you were talking about me!" he laughed.

Such was his sense of humor — as wide as his grin. True, he was very much



Warden: considered *Parsiana* his legacy to the community Photo: Homiyar Mistry

a Parsi. Attired in a long Parsi frock-coat with a Parsi pheta on his head, he looked every inch a distinguished member of the community, except when he stepped into his huge car. Warden was so short, he barely reached the windscreen! Of course, he'd take all our teasing good-naturedly -- a sure sign of a large heart; and intellectual humility — for he was extremely well learned with a postgraduate diploma from England. It was said that he had cured our managing director of a disease that no other specialist could even diagnose.

He lived at Worli Sea Face with his sister, brother-in-law, two nieces Tina and Mona... and with his memories. Especially those of his wife. Her picture stood in his large room surrounded by a clutter of books and papers that often overflowed from the tables to the chairs, to the bed. The first thing he'd do on entering the room was to light a candle in front of it and stand there for a few seconds with closed eyes. The slanting rays

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of the evening sun cast soft shadows on the wall, bathing the room with bitter-sweet tranquility. Then in a few minutes, Warden would soon be his jovial entertaining self.

Starting *Parsiana* was very important to him. His dream was to leave his community something of value. If *Parsiana* is anything like its founder, it must be brilliant.

OSBORNE D'SOUZA

This warm, personal tribute to Dr P. B. Warden was written by the late Osborne D'Souza a few months before his death and forwarded to Parsiana by his daughter Ms Sunila D'Souza.

WZO appeal

After having worked for 65 years at the doongerwadi in Bombay, Ervad Jamshedji N. Sinor, 92, now lives at Navsari in abject poverty with his wife and daughter.

Sinor was hospitalized for severe depression arising out of his poverty-stricken condition. His wife too experienced a fall and was in hospital for a long time.

Ms Dinbai Mirza, an 82-year-old widow, resides in the village of Khata Amba in Valsad district, Gujarat state, with her daughter. Khata Amba is located in the tribal areas and there is no

other Zoroastrian family in the village. Mother and daughter live on a hand-to-mouth basis in dire poverty.

The World Zoroastrian Organisation (WZO) appeals to Zoroastrians worldwide to contribute generously to making the sunset lives of these poor Zoroastrians a bit comfortable. Contributions, eligible for exemption under section 80G of the Income Tax Act, in the name of "The WZO Trust" may be forwarded to Dinshaw K. Tamboly, 1215, P. Jeejeebhoy Towers, Dalal Street, Fort, Bombay 400023. Overseas contributions in the name of The WZO to Mr Shahpur F. Captain, 25, Willow Close, Bishops Stortford, Herts CM23 2RY, UK.

DINSHAW K. TAMBOLY

Member, WZO Managing Committee

Establish priorities

These days your magazine is, perhaps understandably, full of letters and articles on who is a Parsi, etc.

First of all it needs to be emphasized that a person can be a Parsi — a descendent of the man from Pars, but need not be a Zoroastrian (a Parsi who has had a thread ceremony). Thus the daughter of a Zoroastrian lady married to a Parsi cannot have a navjote ceremony unless the Parsi is also a Zoroastrian. However, if the father was a Zoroastrian and the

mother a Parsi, the offspring could have a navjote ceremony.

Next come the Zoroastrians married to non-Parsis. The above holds good for them to.

Clearly if reforms need to be introduced in all the ceremonies from birth, navjote, marriage, to death, before conversion is even thought about, priorities must be established and changes made step by step.

Reformers asking for the moon prevent the first steps from being taken at ground level.

S. N. NANPORIA

Edited by Amavaz S. Mama

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Events and Personalities

On the Supreme bench

After judgeship of the Bombay High Court, he was made chief justice of the Karnataka High Court, and now it is judgeship of the Supreme Court for Sam Bharucha, reports *The Bombay Samachar* of June 28, 1992. When his new posting was announced, Bharucha was officiating as governor of Karnataka.

Constitutional and taxation laws have been Bharucha's forte. Prior to his appointment on the judicial bench at the Bombay High Court he was practising on the civil and commercial side, according to the newspaper report.

The 55-year-old judge's education was at Bombay: St Mary's High School, after which he completed his science graduation from St Xavier's College, and his law graduation from the Government Law College. He started practising law in the chambers of Murzban Mistree who had trained under Sir Jamshedji Kanga, further informs *The Samachar*.

Samachar's new score

"For a person, if his character is lost, everything is lost." It is the same for a paper. "If its credibility is lost, everything is lost. Age does not imply wisdom, but... in the case of *The Bombay Samachar*, age has only made it better," noted Bhagvati Kumar Sharma, Gujarati novelist and journalist. He was speaking at the function held on July 3, 1992 at the Tejpal Auditorium to felicitate *The Bombay Samachar* which entered its 171st year of publication. The program was held under the joint auspices of the Surat Parsi Panchayat (SPP), the Bombay Parsi Panchayet (BPP) and the Bombay Metropolitan Citizens' Committee (BMCC) at the Tejpal Auditorium.

Only by merit can a paper stay so long in circulation, remarked jurist Nani Palkhivala who was presiding over the function. As the oldest existing newspaper in Asia and fourth oldest in the

world, "it is a watchdog of democracy and not like most papers, a poodle of the men in power," Palkhivala continued.

The secret behind their success is that it has a Parsi management (six generations of Camas have managed the newspaper) and a podgy man (referring to Rusi Cama, director of the publication) behind the wheels, jested the evening's chief guest, industrialist Ramkrishna Bajaj.

A progressive and reformist paper, *The Samachar* is popular among Parsis, Gujaratis, Muslims, Memons and Jains, and as noted SPP president Dr Sam Bhacca, "It is not a newspaper, but an institution." He mentioned how the founder Furdoonjee Murzbanjee launched the paper in 1822 for the benefit of the traders and businessmen in Surat.

Just like a man is known by the company he keeps, a paper is known by the editor it has. He is responsible for the daily sales of 1,26,000 and weekly sales of 1,54,000, mentioned BPP trustee Jamshed Guzder commending Jehan Daruwala's contribution as editor of the paper for the last 16 years.

"Isn't it a shame that when *The Times*

of India completed 150 years, it had a stamp issued in its name. But *The Samachar* on reaching 171 years has not impressed the government?" lamented Mahipatrai J. Shah, chairman of the BMCC.

Looking forward to their publication's second centenary, Cama added: "Most of us may not be present when the paper celebrates its 200th birthday; we will be present in spirit for sure." And, for its continuity, it will require not only a face and a character, but also a soul, pointed out Daruwala.

Doctors on Parade again

The variety review *Doctors on Parade*, staged thrice by the Parsi Medical Amateurs (PMA) early this year and which netted more than six and a half lakh rupees for charity, will be performed again in Bombay in November and thereafter in Karachi and Poona, informs PMA president and noted urologist Dr Fardoon Soonawalla.

Directed by Sam Kerawalla, *Doctors on Parade* had skits in Gujarati and English, dances and music which kept the

Bhacca (in specs) presenting a casket to The Samachar's Rusi Cama (in dagli) and Munchi Cama while Palkhivala (left) and Bajaj applaud



audience entertained through the evening. After the superiority of the sexes was debated in the last item, the quawali, the stars of the evening were introduced to the accompaniment of rap music, the idea of program coordinator and compere Dr Bomi Pardiwalla.

The cast, all doctors, included: Dara Gandhi, Noshir Gandhi, Dinyar and Ms Dilnavaz Gamadia, Murzban and Ms Thrity Nalladaru, Pardiwalla, Homi Dordi, Rustom Patel, Ms Armaity Amin, Ms Villie Bamboat, Ms Havovi Sanjana, Paurus Irani, Ms Arnavaz Havewalla and Ms Zenobia Framroze. Backstage assistance came from Ms Aban Pardiwalla, Ms Shirin Vakil and Ms Farida Green. The studio recording was done by Sarosh Bhabha and Esoteric Acoustics Corporation were the sound engineers.

The two shows in March in aid of the B. D. Petit Parsee General Hospital netted an income of six lakh rupees of which three lakhs came from philanthropist Kaikhushroo Chinoy and one lakh from Bombay Parsi Punchayet trustee Jamshed Guzder, informs Pardiwalla. The proceeds are to be used for the Hospital's equipment requirements and treatment of poor patients. Rs 56,500, raised from their very first show on March 8, was earmarked for scholarships to medi-

cal students, states PMA honorary secretary Dr (Ms) Thrity Nalladaru.

To bring in more youngsters will be the focus of the PMA in the years to come, mentions Soonawalla who took over as president of the association from Dr Aspi Golwala last year. His own involvement with the PMA dates to his college days when he used to organize social events for PMA's precursor, the Parsi Medical Social Gathering, he reminisces. The tradition for earmarking funds for different charities has continued since those days.

The aging community

Of the 42 Zoroastrians in Allahabad, more than half are past the age of 50. The maximum number, 13, belong to the 60-69-year age-group followed by six in the 50-59-year age-group and five in the 70-80-year age-group, writes Captain Homi Dandiwalla, president of The Allahabad Parsee Zoroastrian Anjuman (APZA). There are six youngsters in the one-19-year age category, and 12 others in the 20-49-year age-group. In each of the age-groups the sexes are almost evenly distributed. The figures were calculated after taking into consideration one birth and one death recorded last year as also the migration of Air Com-

modore Manek B. Madan and his wife Yasmine.

At the last annual general meeting on June 20, 1992, Ms Shireen Homi Dandiwalla was unanimously elected trustee for three years. She will be assisting president Dandiwalla and vice president Dossu Ghandhi who also serve as trustees of the anjuman.

*New Allahabad trustee
Shireen Dandiwalla*



The Dandiwallas' donation of Rs 10,000 in memory of their daughter Shenaz will be used by the Allahabad Anjuman towards the maintenance of the burial ground, as per the minutes of the meeting. It was further resolved at this meeting that any youth representing the Allahabad Anjuman at the meetings of the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India, the Federation of Zoroastrian Youth Associations or youth seminars would be provided travel and conveyance costs.

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KERSI N. PATEL: GENERAL MANAGER

Two Parsis stabbed

She opened the door to a familiar neighbor's face. It was the same 15-year-old lad residing on the floor above her at Tata Colony, Tardeo who used to help her out with domestic chores and in return get rewarded in cash or kind. Knowing that 58-year-old Ms Aloo Wadia was alone at her residence, knowing her husband Soli's schedule, knowing where she kept the cash in her house, Rayomand Jehanbux Patel chose to enter her residence in the pre-noon hours on June 15, 1992. Along with his accomplice Christopher Macwan, Rayomand overpowered the lady and after murdering her, the duo absconded with Rs 7,000 according to a detailed report of the crime in *Shri*, a Marathi tabloid of August 8.

It was the domestic aid who noticed the door of the flat open and her mistress' body lying in a pool of blood. She raised an alarm and sought their neighbor Ms Freny Patel's assistance. The police were then summoned and after the post mortem, when the body was cleaned, 34 stab wounds were noticed.

Originally it was the domestic servant who was kept in a lockup for two days after which she was proven innocent and released, mentions Wadia's brother Minoo Patel. Her statements gave the police the clue that Rayomand and Macwan could be possible suspects. She reported that they would often stop talking whenever she happened to pass by.

Rayomand was then convicted and after a continuous beating he confessed to the crime, giving the police the gory details of how the victim had tried to fob off the criminals, how the two boys had prevented her from seeking her neighbor's assistance, and how they had continued stabbing two knives into her body even after one of these was broken. Macwan was later traced near the Bombay Central railway station, mentions the *Shri* report. According to the police, the boys were drug addicts. The juvenile delinquents were originally detained in a remand home as they had not yet reached the age of maturity. They will undergo their respective sentences on becoming majors, notes a family source.

Barely a month after Wadia's murder, Keki Sohrab Balsara was killed on the street in Bombay's Fort locality on July 20.

The 40-year-old chasniwalla at the Godavra Agiary had parked his bicycle outside the Agiary and had gone across the road to shop for provisions at around 6.30 in the morning. Balsara spied someone trying to steal his vehicle and started

shouting for help when the thief whipped out a knife and attacked the chasniwalla, according to the *Indian Express* of July 21.

The deceased received nine stab wounds and died before he could be admitted to the St George's Hospital, mentions the news report.

The murderer has not yet been traced by the police. But according to unconfirmed sources, the murder could not have been occasioned by robbery, but was possibly motivated by vendetta.

Dotivala Rotary president

"It needs an ability to make up one's mind, to take a decision and accept the subsequent responsibilities." This statement was part of the keynote address delivered by Field Marshal Sam Manekshaw at the installation of Rotarian Godrej Naval Dotivala as the president of the Rotary Club of Bombay Hills South. An invocation by Dastur Hormuzdiar Mirza to the effect that service to man is service to God, set the tone for the evening's function at the Taj Mahal Hotel on July 16, informs a press release.

In the coming year the Rotarians will focus on the development of the youth, announced Dotivala. During his 15 years of association with this movement Dotivala has been involved with different projects concerning the youth. His other activities concern polio awareness campaigns, blood donation drives, creation of sports and recreational facilities, and provision of basic amenities for the Jaiphalwadi slum dwellers. Several awards and shields have been conferred on Dotivala in connection with his community service and his key role in the organization of the Model United Nations

Assembly, informs *Bombay Hills Highlights*, a bulletin of The Rotary Club of Bombay Hills South.

A science and law graduate, Dotivala's education was at the Aitchison Chief's College at Lahore, the Elphinstone College, Bombay and the Royal Institute of Science, Bombay, now called the Institute of Science. Sixty-two-year-old Dotivala is currently a consultant with Accra Pac (India) Private Limited, reportedly the leading aerosol manufacturers in India, and Marshalls, the premier wall-paper makers in the country, notes *Bombay Hills Highlights*. He knows six languages and takes a keen interest in philately and photography, informs the release. As a historian and a biographer he compiled and edited a book on Sir Pherozeshaw Mehta in 1990. The other organizations with which he is connected are: the All India Flexible Packaging Manufacturers Forum and the Indo-Australian Society where he is president, the India-Iran Cultural Society where he is honorary treasurer and the Mayor's Fund where he is honorary secretary, the release adds.

Master marksman

Winning seven medals at the 35th National Shooting Championships (Big Bore) held at the Army Infantry School in Mhow in April this year was Zorast Zend from Maharashtra, informs *The Times of India* of May 2. He won three golds, one silver and three bronze in the international shooting union category in the 300 m range. Representing the Chamundi team from Maharashtra, the versatile marksman, with his SLR (self load-

continued on page 96

Rotary president Dotivala (cuts cake) while looking on (from left) are Sudha Jobalia, Dr Rustom Davar, Kishor Jobalia, Manekshaw, Mirza and Havovi Dotivala



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In and around Karachi

While others have been talking about reverting to the Fasli calendar which is consonant with the seasons, the Informal Religious Meetings Trust Fund of Karachi has produced a diary for Yazdegirdi 1361 (March 21, 1992-March 20, 1993) in which Cyrus Cowasjee urges the reader to "make Fasal Sal calendar the only Parsi calendar and forge community unity."

Starting with a short explanation about the calendar, the first few pages spell out the 30 days of the month and their meanings followed by a list of Zoroastrian festivals and ghambars. Each month begins with an exhortation from the *Gathas*.

Advertisements by banks and industrialists, Zoroastrians and non-Zoroastrians, have enabled the publishers to produce a neat job with quality paper.

Among the late Dinshaw Avari's many interests was health culture which led him to preside over the Jehangeer Peeroozshah Dubash Health Culture Institute for 34 long years. To honor his prolonged commitment Avari's portrait was unveiled at the Institute by Khawaja Nadir Pervaiz, federal minister for water and power. The function continued with an exciting display of gymnastics, exhibition boxing and a body-building competition as notes a report in the *Parsi Sansar* ané Lok Sevak of May 2, 1992.

Byram Avari, member of the national assembly who is now president of the Karachi Anjuman and of this institution in the place of his late father, emphasized the need for additional sporting facilities and announced developmental plans including a swimming pool, a volleyball court and a table tennis room, informs *Parsi Sansar*. Avari also used the occasion to vault the dedication of other Institute members, notably Boman Dalal who has served it for 52 years. Nadirshah Dubash, representing the Dubash family which had donated this building to the Institute in 1927, presented a memento to Byram Avari.

"With her talent she mobilized the young to catwalk, dance, sing and perform on stage; building along the way camaraderie and sense of fun, and discovering talent. That evening Asha Irani got a plat-

form to reveal that he could sing Elton John's *Sacrifice* like the original track and, Spitman Petigara could accompany on the organ to accomplishment," writes Ms Sunnu Golwala of budding impresario Ms Cyra Noshirwani.

The Young Mazdiyasnian Zoroastrian Association (YMZA) which sponsored the show provided invaluable assistance backstage. Smart young Zoroastrians helped in compering the show and with set construction/decoration.

A fresh college graduate, Noshirwani visualized the two-hour non-stop entertainment, conceiving the program, choreography, costumes, and light effects, setting in motion 76 performers, informs Golwala.

The varieties modelled ranged from wedding lace, zari woven, temple purchase, badlas, salma/sitara and Swiss borders to the ultimate Chinese garas. Ladies in their 20s to late-50s strode the catwalk draping the ubiquitous sari in myriad ways, writes Golwala. There was the nine-yard sans choli wear, the Bengali non-petticoat style, the Gujarati half-sari-half-petticoat version and the innovative two-sari-two-palo wear.

The Sari Extravaganza was presented under the aegis of the Karachi Zarhosti Banu Mandal (KZBM) by its joint honorary secretary Ms Hutoxy Cowasjee, to celebrate the KZBM's 80th year, informs Golwala.

An enlightening documentary on the history of different types of saris, different styles of wearing it and technical details of embroidery and weaving, gave depth to the show. To achieve all this, Cowasjee is said to have frequented the libraries of a local fashion designer and of the wife of the Indian consul general, and had sought the expertise of knowledgeable ladies.

Khosravi's new system

Faridoon (Fred) Khosravi's new waste treatment system — the cyanide destruction unit (CDU) — is generating thousands of dollars annually in cost savings for the Boeing Company in Portland, Oregon, notes a write-up by Ms Susan Hill in the Company's house magazine. Khosravi has not only designed the unit but customized it to meet the Portland division's very specific needs.

Boeing generates about 3,200 gallons of cyanide waste water daily from its plating process, informs Hill. For 12 years before the new CDU came on line, Boeing employed a flow through treatment process that was costly and cum-



Khosravi with daughter Roxanne-Shirin and son Jimmy

bersome and required the company to ship waste water to their vendor for treatment when the cyanide levels were high, notes the article. The new system is not only said to be cost effective but safer. Working on a batch system, each batch is pumped into a tank where the new chemical works like a domestic bleach, destroying the cyanide. The purified water is then released into the sewers, informs Hill.

Versatile Fred had scored the highest marks in English in the SSC examination before acquiring the St Xavier's College's Rajadhyaksha Gold Medal for 'highest marks in chemistry at the BSC examination, recalls his brother Rashid who forwarded the Boeing newsletter write-up to *Parsiana*.

Will the twain meet?

"Can there be orthodoxy and reform within a faith?"

Jehangir Sarosh of Hertfordshire, UK has scheduled a seminar at Zoroastrian House, London, to answer the question on November 15, 1992. Supported by the World Conference on Religion and



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Peace and the World Congress of Faiths the seminar, which is open to all, expects to use Jewish experience as a guideline to Zoroastrians stumbling along the path. "How the Jewish community has been able to draw strength from the differences of opinions and interests within the faith" will be presented by Rabbi Dr N. Solomon of Selly Oak College, Birmingham, and Rabbi Hugo Gryn of the West London Synagogue.

The topics that the two clergymen will cover include intermarriage, conversion, the cost of maintaining orthodoxy, the cost of reform, the need and importance of rituals, the role of discord and harmony in enriching the faith and the division or convergence of the coreligionists.

Unwala's sweep

After setting a precedent with a distinction in each of the 12 subjects that he offered in his high school examination in Nassau, Bahamas, Darius Unwala topped the list in the entrance exam to Halesbury College, Hertford, England. He also received \$ 3,000 as scholarship from Resorts International for his outstanding performance, notes a news clip-



Unwala: with younger brother — excellence all the way

ping forwarded to Parsiana by the family.

Despite these successes, Unwala is not quite sure in which direction his career lies — in law like his barrister mother, engineering like his father or medicine like his uncle, informs a family

source. Unwala is also an excellent swimmer, plays music and is interested in the martial arts as notes a report in *The Tribune*. No wonder Queen's College principal Rev Charles Sweeting commended Unwala "as an example to all the youth of the nation," as quotes *The Tribune* report.

Kotwal's attainments

After a master's degree in theater from the Ohio State University (OSU) Kaizaad Kotwal is now set for a one-of-a-kind inter-disciplinary doctorate in filmmaking, theater and computerized animation there, informs his mother Mahbanu. The OSU is credited with having produced some of the most prominent cartoonists in the country.

At the Wabash College in Crawfordsville, Indiana, whence he graduated after schooling at Bombay's Cathedral and John Connon School, he blazed a trail of achievements: He was said to be the first student in the College's 160-year history to attempt a triple major in economics, art (painting, sculpture and design) and theater — and score a double distinction. During these four years as an undergraduate Kotwal was

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awarded a string of prizes from the College plus an award for outstanding volunteer service from the State of Indiana, serving as councillor and assistant teacher on the Indiana Governor's Scholars Academy. "Kaizaad Kotwal is the type of individual who will make a contribution to society on an international level. He is the only student of whom I have ever made that assessment," avers Professor Gregory Huebner who chairs the College's art department. History professor Peter Frederick comments on Kotwal's knowledge of many cultures and philosophic traditions.

The son of orthodontist Dr Navroze Kotwal, Kaizaad says he enjoys writing short stories and poems, had sung for his College choir and participates in dramatics. His characterization of The Man in *Holding Talks* by Ola Rotimi — a Wabash theater department production — drew high praise from writer Ms Susan Cantrell in the local newspaper. As one who epitomizes all those who rationalize their way out to taking action, hiding their reluctance to commitment in a torrent of words, "Kotwal gives an extraordinary performance," she writes.



Fracis: into more creative pursuits

Chosen to give the commencement address — reproduced in *Wabash Notes*, summer 1991 — for his graduating class, Kotwal had three suggestions to make to his Alma Mater: the need to foster diversity, make a serious commitment to

change and self-improvement "not as a result of competition with others, but from competition with oneself."

Goodbye, technology

No longer motivated by his technical career as a computer professional, Sohrab Fracis seized upon the expiry of an existing contract to veer his life into more creative pursuits, notes an interview by Charlie Patton in *The Florida Times Union*.

"I decided it was now or never. I needed to make a stand, to make my life revolve around something I was truly motivated by," says Fracis. So he started out to write his first book — a novel called *So-Long, So-Mesh* that has landed the first prize at the contest sponsored by the Florida's First Coast Writers' Festival, informs the *Times-Union* article.

So-Long revolves around the experiences of a young Indian immigrant to America, informs Patton. And while awaiting a response from publishers, Fracis, a graduate in engineering from the University of Delaware, enrolled at the University of North Florida to pursue a

continued on page 120

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Almost every second person standing for the BPP Anjuman Committee elections will win a seat

Gustasp Irani

In the wake of all the legal battles that have preceded the four-year delayed Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP) Anjuman Committee elections, the two orthodox groups appear set to win the majority of the 802 seats being contested. The Zoroastrian Cultural Welfare Association (ZCWA) led by Dr Syrus Irani which has fielded 718 candidates and the Jashan Committee (JC) led by Bomanshah Minochehr-Homji which is fielding around 200 candidates had taken the electoral initiative much earlier than the rudderless middle-of-the-road Committee for Economic Revival (CER). The CER is fielding around 425 candidates. (In the last Anjuman Committee elections in 1981, the CER — then known as the Committee for Electoral Rights — had swept the polls, defeating an opportunistic orthodox alliance.) In constituencies such as Dadar and Khareghat Colony, independent parties have emerged as strong contenders from their areas.

Prior to the tame electioneering was a flurry of legal activity, an endless juggling of election dates and schedules, and the issue of interminable public notices in the Press by the BPP to keep the seemingly indifferent electorate posted on the ever-changing scene. As the two main parties contesting the elections, the CER and the ZCWA, spent most of their energies in the court rooms, they appeared to have little left over to devote to campaigning on issues facing the community, or to win votes.

As per the latest court directive, the dates finalized for holding the Anjuman Committee elections are October 30 and 31 at the BPP office and the Dadar Parsi Colony respectively. Nominations up to September 30 — i.e. one month before the election date as for the electoral scheme — have been excepted, totalling 1,663. By October 14, the last date for

withdrawal, and the sifting of invalid nominations, the number dropped to 1,578.

By October 13, 5,155 old D Register certificates had been exchanged for the new general register ones. As a result of the various amendments to the election scheme approved by the Bombay High Court, voters who wished to exercise their franchise had to obtain new registration certificates. The High Court ruled that the elected representatives on the Anjuman Committee would have parity with the F Register donor voters i.e. those who had paid Rs 5,000 or more under the old scheme and Rs 15,000 under the new scheme. The certificates exchanged by the donors amounted to 496 of a total of 802. With trusteeship elections tentatively fixed for December 19, donors are free to exchange their old F register certificates up to December 16.

Much time and energy was frittered over the fixing of the last day for filing nominations when the election dates were changed by court orders at the behest of various parties. The main beneficiary of the extension of the nomination date from September 1 to September 17 and thence to September 30 — with the numbers rising from 1,133 to 1,390 to 1,663 — was the CER.

The legal tug-of-war between the CER and the ZCWA was set off by their conflicting needs: while the CER sought time the ZCWA wanted to get on with the contest. To understand their diagonally opposite positions we need to examine the number of nominations each party was in a position to file by September 1 — the original cut-off date. The ZCWA claimed to be ready with the whole slate of 802 candidates covering all the 11 constituencies (allowing for 84 candidates from Dadar whom Adi Doctor is spearheading). By contrast the CER had only 250 from Colaba, Parel, Ban-

dra-Mahim and Andheri-Jogeshwari constituencies. As Fali Poncha and Ms Silloo Kavarana were out of Bombay, the onus of finding candidates fell largely on Dinshaw Mehta. Furthermore, with the JC also in the fray and seeking to fill its own slate, the exercise was reduced to a scavenging game.

We glean an idea of the problems the contesting parties faced by considering the statistics. Should all the three parties have fielded the full slate of 802 candidates each, there would have been 2,406 candidates in the fray or about 50 percent of all Parsis registered with the BPP and who had bothered to collect their certificates under the new election scheme (as on 1/9/92). In other words every other Parsi eligible to vote would have to be a candidate.

Compounding the problem was the constant flux the BPP found itself in as it tried to come to grips with the nuances of the new election scheme. For instance by late August they had transferred 359 names from constituency F (Parel constituency) to constituency H (Borivli, Goregaon and Jogeshwari) which in turn resulted in the number of seats on the Anjuman Committee from each constituency being revised — F down to 49 from 64 and H up to 72 from 57.

When the CER found that it would have to let more than two-thirds of the seats go abegging, instead of filing its 250 nominations on schedule, it sought to buy time and move the courts.

A fallout of the legal battle that ensued led to a growing disenchantment in an already indifferent Parsi community. "The average Parsi is not bothered about the Anjuman Committee elections. There is indifference to what they refer to as 'Parsi politics,'" says Adi Doctor who has managed an orthodox slate of 81 candidates from the Dadar constituency.

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Hapless parties to the 'Parsi politics' are the various independent groups contesting the elections. In Dadar, in particular, the equation gets complex as both the ZCWA and the JC have endorsed the group organized by Doctor. Irani says, "Dadar we have left to Adi Doctor." Minochehr-Homji, managing trustee of the JC observes: "Adi Doctor is working for us in Dadar."

Doctor, however, remains guarded in the matter. Admitting that the ZCWA and the JC sought his assistance he observes: "Our group does not belong to any organizational structure." He steers clear of committing his group's vote to either the ZCWA or the JC that endorse it: "Should our group win we will advise our candidates to vote for the best candidate when the trustee elections come up." He does, however, clarify his position on the eternal orthodox-reformist conflict within the community: "I am not an orthodox, I am an ultra orthodox."

Likewise the other Dadar faction — a loosely held group of 80 individuals organized by Ms Silla Motivala, Ms Pervina Doctor, Ms Tehmy Aga and others — refuses to commit itself to voting for CER trustee candidates just be-

cause the party has endorsed its slate in Dadar. Says a group member, "We can't stop anyone from endorsing us. But it does not mean we will have to vote for their trustee candidates. We will vote as individuals, each according to his or her own preference. We will look at all the candidates and vote for the best." The best, at least according to Motivala, will be someone who is educated, enlightened, socially responsible and broad-minded. The capacity to tackle the changing circumstances and hard realities is a prerequisite. While in Dadar the Adi Doctor group will get the combined vote of the ZCWA and the JC, in the other constituencies where the JC has fielded candidates, the orthodox block of votes could well be split between the two. Minochehr-Homji shrugs. "It can't be helped," he says.

The chief divide between the ZCWA and the JC is their choice of candidates for trusteeship. The newly constituted Anjuman Committee along with an equal number of 802 donors will be called upon to elect two people as trustees of the BPP in December this year. The candidates the ZCWA proposes to put up are Dr Viraf Kapadia and Irani. Kapadia's

candidature according to Irani is "definite" while his own is in the realm of "all probability." The JC has its own two candidates but Minochehr-Homji prefers not to disclose their identities. "When the time comes we will let you know," he states.

The other difference between the ZCWA and the JC is that while the former extends its platform beyond religious orthodoxy to social and economic issues (see "The 1992 BPP Elections: marked by inertia," *Parsiana*, June 1992), the latter confines itself largely to religious fundamentalism. Anjuman Committee candidates standing on the JC ticket, as informs the managing trustee, are asked to sign a declaration stating: "...As for my views, I am a strong Zoroastrian believing in all the tenets, rites, rituals and traditions of our Mazdayasni Zarhosti din. I am a firm believer in dokhmenashini. I am against juddin navjotes and juddin marriages."

The main parties have, to date at least, been merely shadow boxing. The JC, according to Minochehr-Homji, has scheduled a number of public meetings. The ZCWA fed poor Parsis at Cama Baug on September 20. The CER by comparison

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appears to be floundering as it struggles to get its act together. Whether the parties will be able to whip up any degree of enthusiasm among the Parsis before the election remains to be seen. Otherwise the victor of the Anjuman Committee elections might well be a winner by default.

The court rounds

The first shot of the current court battle was fired four days before the last date (September 1) of filing nominations under the old schedule. Nariman Mehta and five others of the CER moved the City Civil Court in late August seeking extension of the nomination date on the grounds that the BPP had retracted its earlier ruling that a candidate could stand from as many constituencies as he or she desired and now restricted each candidate to only one constituency. The court accepted their plea and extended the last date of filing nominations to September 17 and the right of a candidate to stand from as many constituencies as he or she desired.

As a result, the BPP referred the matter to the High Court seeking clarification on its earlier ruling of one candidate-one constituency and prayed for an extension of the elections as a result of the confusion. The High Court confirmed its ruling of one person-one seat and advised the BPP to hold the elections as scheduled.

Back to the City Civil Court where the BPP and the CER in separate suits sought clarification on the extension of the final date of nominations to September 17 and on the same day agreed to consent terms in the High Court whereby the entire election schedule was postponed. As a result the last day for filing nominations was set for October 15, the Anjuman Committee elections were to be completed by December and the election of the two trustees by February 1993.

Enter ZCWA. In the High Court they challenged the consent terms agreed to by the CER and the BPP on the grounds of collusion and won a ruling rescheduling the election to their original dates — namely the Anjuman Committee elections to be held before the end of October and the trustee elections by end December.

The BPP subsequently revised its original Anjuman Committee election dates. Now they were to be held on two

continued on page 98

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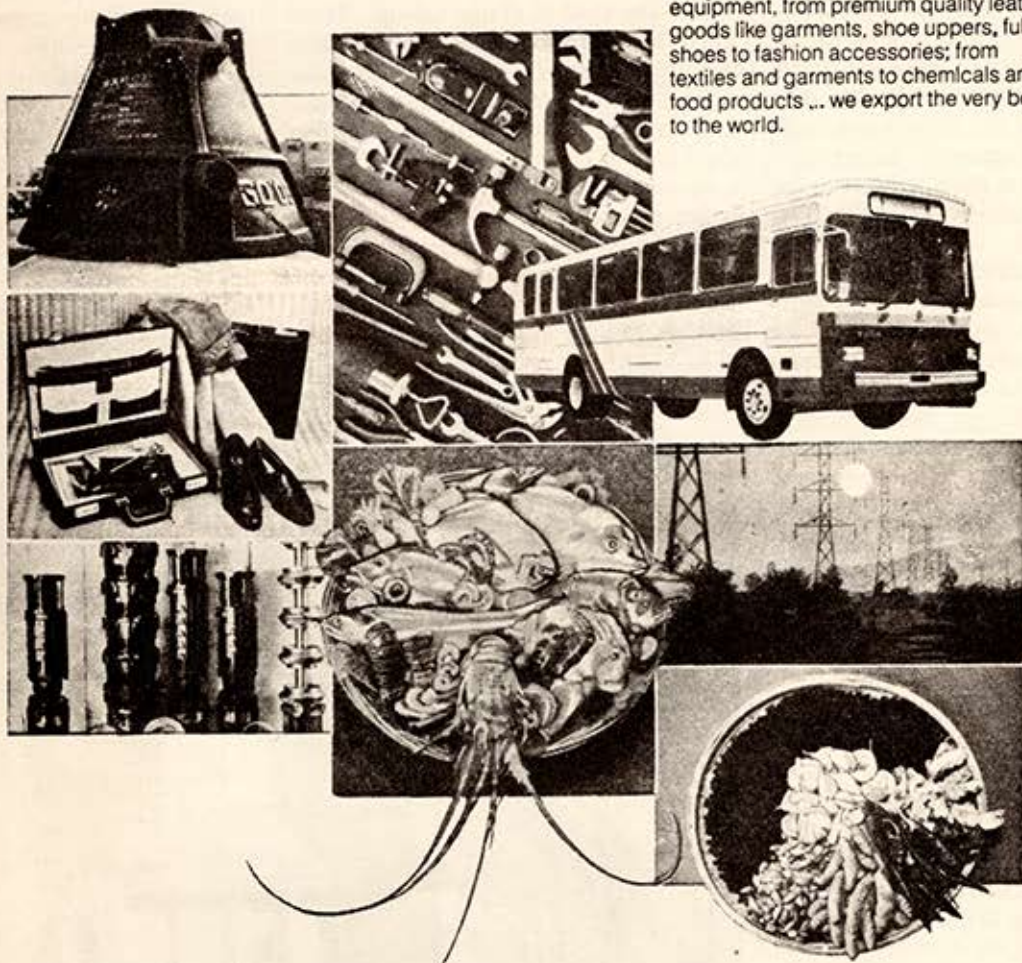
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Visions of the *Gathas*

Homi Sethna attempts to present the philosophy of Zoroastrianism in his new documentary

Homi Rogers

Of all Zoroastrian scriptures, the one that has attracted the most attention, especially of scholars, are the *Gathas* — hymns said to have been composed by the prophet himself. Widely translated, annotated and declared to be the only valid document of the Zoroastrian faith, the *Gathas* have spawned innumerable interpretations, from the scholastic to the fictitious, as in Friedrich Nietzsche's *Thus Spake Zarathustra*.

It is thus only fitting that the message that was disseminated as an oral tradition over the centuries, and then interpreted variously on plaques and paper, should 25 centuries later be depicted in the medium of the times: the movie screen. The transition from clay tablets to celluloid is a long journey in time, but the hymns have lost none of their esoteric richness in the passage. That is the impression one is left with on viewing Homi Sethna's 45-minute documentary, *The Voice of Zarathushtra*: an attempt to portray the prophet's teachings in the visual medium of film.

Sethna is a trained and experienced documentary filmmaker. His earlier film on the Parsis, *Happiness Unto Others*, made in 1983, won critical and popular acclaim, and was lauded by an over-sensitive and critical community as a faithful depiction of its life and mores. One, therefore, had come to expect much from Sethna, even if the latest project seemed over-ambitious.

At no time are the *Gathas* an easy document to comprehend. They contain Ahura Mazda's revelation to our prophet on how, with the aid of Amesha Spentas (holy immortals) man can achieve perfection and happiness here, and eternal bliss in heaven thereafter. But it is no easy task to depict this in a visual medium — and yet be faithful to the origi-

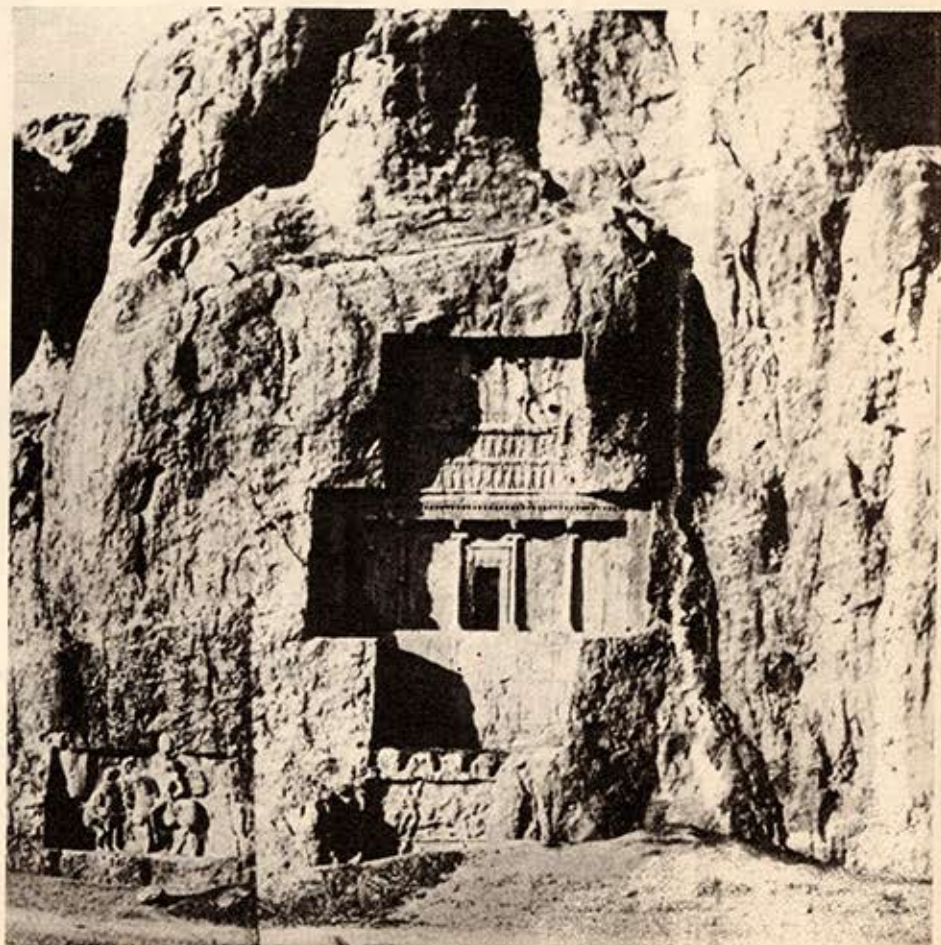
nal. There is no mythology in the *Gathas*, the Amesha Spentas do not constitute any kind of divine family. There are no legends about them. So, how does one depict them? And how does one convey the message that with their assistance one can fight duality in life, defeat the forces of Angra Mainyu?

Sethna resorts to the traditional black-board approach. Prof Kaikhosrov Dinshaw Irani, who collaborated on the script and on whose suggestion the film was made, lectures the audience from a podium, pointer in hand, on three differ-

ent occasions in the film. He introduces the Amesha Spentas, defining for us how Ahura Mazda gave us Vohumana (the good mind) to distinguish between good and evil, and guide us towards the path to Asha (righteousness). The other immortal spirits working in unison are: Spenta Armaiti (piety, devotion), with Khshathra Vairya (desirable control), contributing to the building of a healthy and perfect world, Haurvatat and, finally, Ameretat (immortal bliss).

Can this philosophy, presented in such a lackluster manner, be intelligible to the average mind, to whom the Zoroastrian theology of dualism itself is barely comprehensible? Using a visual of questionable origin Sethna depicts Angra Mainyu here as a black devil, with ungainly claws and emitting smoke — the very embodiment of evil. The didactic nature of the film weighs it down; and the prophet's voice is shrouded in obscure chants, instead of coming to us in a familiar catechism.

It is, as we conceded earlier, a difficult task to portray the prophet's teach-



Naksh-e-Rustom: arouses curiosity
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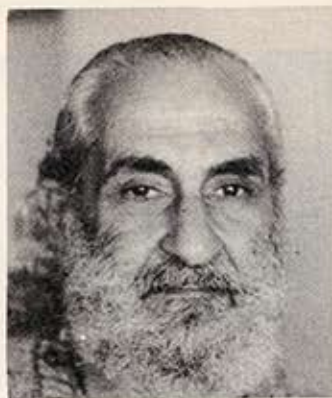
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ings. But if only Sethna had infused more spirit into them! Not that the documentary is without occasional flashes of brilliance. Within the short framework, Sethna focuses on contemporary concerns, which the *Gathas* had dealt with: ecology, environmental preservation, sanctity of marriage, role of righteousness in society, to cite a few. What is even more laudable is that this exercise is undertaken with an economy of words; it informs with an air of detachment, sans sentimentalism or dogma. The script alternates between passages from the *Avesta* sonorously rendered by Ervad Rustomji Panthaki and Ervad Ramyar Karanjia, and the English translations as effected by Irani's father Dinshaw, an established authority on the *Gathas*. One of the finer sequences is the juxtapositioning of Vedic chants with *Avesta* recitations as boys training to be priests are shepherded into The Athornan Boarding Madressa (a school at Dadar in Bombay for imparting religious education to boys from priestly families).

Sethna's work traces the history of religion from the age when supernatural forces like volcanoes were worshipped, more from fear than reverence, to the age when Zarathushtra, doing away with shamans, propounded a monotheistic religion. There are some good portraits of



Sethna (left) with collaborator Irani



Zarathushtra, including some very rare and lesser known ones, probably culled from ancient books or German artists. But though Sethna has some rare visuals, his commentary does not throw light upon them. A couple of scenes seem to be shot in Iran. A viewer would have appreciated knowing the names of these places where pockets of the faith still exist. The tomb of Darius I is shown; but a little more emphasis given to the visual of Naksh-e-Rustom in Persepolis would have made for that extra enthusiasm amongst Parsi viewers for having glimpsed a monument from their *madar-e-vatan* (motherland).

Sethna may well argue that such a commentary would dilute the message of the film. But unwittingly Sethna himself gets the message muddled in his rather

rambling screenplay, which lingers over the rituals of navjote, marriage and death, probably in a bid to breathe some visual life into the theology. There are small incongruities like having a navjote girl wearing a pink frilly western cap instead of the traditional Parsi *topi*; or choosing Irani, dressed in a suit rather than a *dagli*, to play the narrator, instead of a revered Parsi priest. Clearly, Sethna rides

two horses in this docudrama, and rides neither too well.

This is not to belittle a brave attempt to convey Zarathushtra's message in modern times and Sethna, who confesses to having known nothing about the religion till he started work on this project, may have found it a revealing exercise himself. But does Irani's commentary and the passages selected from the *Gathas* convey to the viewer that one can dispel evil from this world by using one's free will to do good actions? Or that one suffers misery and failure by opting for the evil path? If the viewer gets this message, which is the true voice of Zarathushtra, then Sethna has done his job well.

Sethna's documentary is a faithful recording of the prophet's voice. His intentions are laudable. What is missing is the lyrical content.

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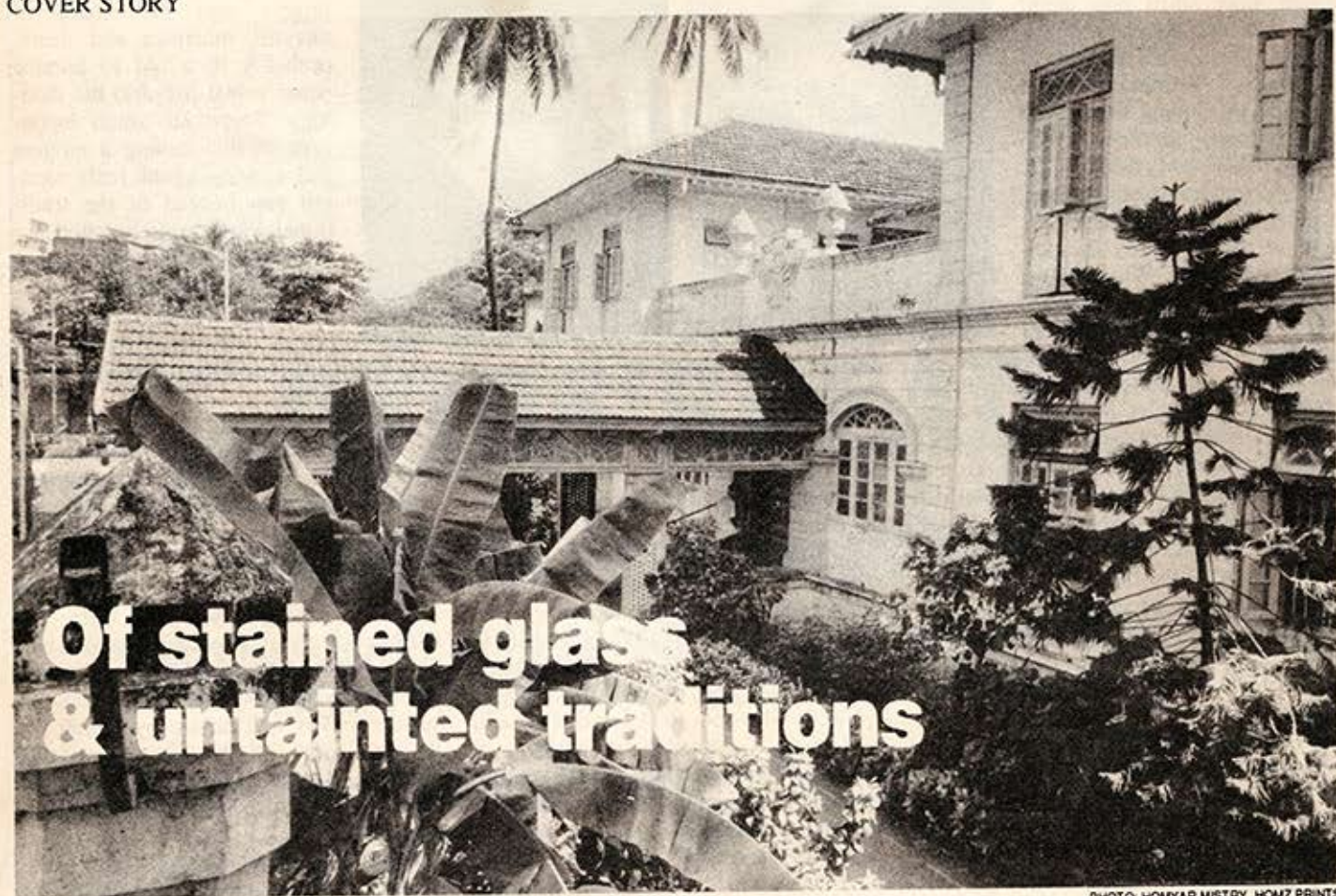


PHOTO: HOMYAR MISTRY, HOMZ PRINTS

Of stained glass & untainted traditions

A stained glass portrait, a *kebla* facing south and a multi-panthaky system set apart the Tata Agiary in Bandra

Homi Rogers

It is a mildly warm mid-September evening. Ervad (Dr) Peshotan Peer sits at his glass-topped desk at the Seth Nusserwanjee Ruttonjee Tata Agiary at Bandra, his large ledger-cum-almanac (in which he records his clientele's rites) partially covering a legion of photographs of the Tata family placed beneath the glass. Through the iron bars from the windows across, a gentle breeze wafts in, along with mild tootles from paper flutes. As the evening shadows darken, the tramp of footsteps beyond the wall that separates the Tata Agiary from the road outside, increases in volume. And the toots crescendo into near cacophony as revellers return from the annual Mount Mary festival in droves.

Next year, the flutes may sound even louder. And the faces of revellers become visible. For the Lady Jamsetji Hill

Road on which the Agiary stands is to be widened, and the vacant courtyard of the 108-year-old Agiary may have to be ceded to the Bombay Municipality to meet the growing needs of civilization. Concessions to changing trends may thus usher in further assaults on this century-old citadel of Zoroastrian traditions though secretary P. P. Ravtewala of the N. R. Tata Bandra Agiary Trust states that they have made a representation to hold on to the land which is earmarked for religious purposes.

What distinguishes this Agiary the most — not only in its neighborhood, but amongst Zoroastrians the world over — is the stained glass portraiture of the Prophet Zarathushtra which has graced many a Zoroastrian calendar or greeting card. Surprisingly, despite its great popularity, next to nothing is known about its

origin. R. M. Lala, who has authored a trilogy on the Tatas, states that there is no mention of the stained glass in the Tata archives to which he has had free access. K. H. DadiNatha, one of the present trustees who has served the Tatas for over 40 years, mentions that it is believed that the glass was once a part of the Tata Palace, before being shifted to the Agiary. But neither he nor Ravtewala can tell for sure if this was so, or when it was transported to the Agiary.

Old-timers recall having seen the panel (Zoroaster's portrait is depicted between Edwardian motifs) for donkey's years, but cannot recall any history to it. Yet there is little doubt that the piece is of great antiquity. It probably dates back, as Kekoo Gandhi, owner of Gallery Chemould and a behdin respected at the Agiary, hazards to guess, to the end of



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the last century, or the early 1900s, when a European, probably an Italian artist, may have been commissioned to do the job.

The art of making stained glass is itself very old, having been developed during the Middle Ages in Western Europe. After an initial period of glory, it went into oblivion and was revived only in the 19th century. Authentic stained glass is colored during the glass-making process, then cut by a glass cutter and reassembled to form a picture. Simulated stained glass is where colorless glass is chemically treated or painted on to look like stained glass. This art is closer to painting on glass, and Ms Anu Marwah, who specializes in it, estimates its durability "to be around 10 years." Considering the antiquity of Tata Agiary's Zoroaster, there is little doubt that it is a section of authentic stained glass.

Strangely, though, the portraiture does not seem as authentic as the stained glass. Zoroaster's features are not as distinctly Pithawallaian as in the popularly accepted portraits of the Prophet by Muncherji Pithawalla which hang in our fire-temples. And, for a change, the Prophet is shown holding up his left hand — instead of the right — in blessing, while the right hand has changed its function, and holds the mace. Is it a case of the European 'vive la difference' or, has the glass been assembled (or re-assembled) at the Agiary in a wrong sequence?

Or, is the "error" analogous to the Agiary's *kebla* (sanctum sanctorum) whose entrance faces south, so that when the worshipper prays, or bows to the fire, he is facing the north, the direction which most Ilm-e-Khshnoomists consider to be the abode of Ahriman, to be shunned when offering prayers. According to Maneck Vazifdar, the panthaky at the Wadia Agiary outside Nowroz Baug at Lalbaug, his and the Tata Agiary are only two of their kind in Bombay to have the entrance to their *keblas* facing south, while the opposite end is sealed off. "There is little truth in the north-no-good theory," counters Peer. "Otherwise, would the (earlier) Yaodzathregars (priests skilled in performing liturgical rites) not have pressed for a change?"

According to Bomanji Behramji Patel, author of the now out-of-print *Par-*

siona Dharamsthalo (Religious places of the Parsis), Nusserwanjee Tata agreed to set up an agiary at Bandra on being approached by a group of Parsis residing in the northern suburbs of Mahim. He believed, in keeping with Zoroastrian tenets, that wherever eight to 10 Parsi families stayed, a fire-temple should be provided. For this purpose, Nusserwanjee founded, as the tablet informs us, "out of his own money," the Nusserwanjee Ruttonjee Tata Agiary, consecrated to the memory of his late wife Jiva(n)bai. He himself defrayed expenses for the maintenance of the Agiary for the first six months, besides "setting aside a sum of Rs 25,000 for its maintenance," informs Raveewala.

The opening ceremony of the Agiary on *roj Behram mah* Shehrevat 1253 YZ (corresponding to March 6, 1884) was, from all accounts, a stupendous success. Gandhi, who resides in a bungalow further down Hill Road where the land

the head priests from all the ecclesiastical divisions had converged for a jashan. Nusserwanjee's son, Jamsetji (yes, the same Jamsetji who laid the blueprint for the Tata Iron and Steel Company, and gave Bombay the Taj Hotel) read out a message from his father, who could not be present. The elders proposed a vote of thanks. And the trinity of panthakies (priests in charge of administering the religious needs at the fire-temple), appointed by the Tatas, took over the duties.

The administration of the Tata Agiary by three panthakies is a unique arrangement, against the normal ratio of one to an agiary. Moreover, all three panthakies have to be — and to date, have been — of the Bhagaria family. The Bhagarias are traditional priests from Navsari. They were so named because when in 1215 AD Hom Bahmanyar with his son Feridun, and three grandsons, came to Navsari to serve the growing population of Parsis there, the priestly duties and incomes accruing thereof were to be shared by the families. The system worked well in Navsari, and the families were hence called Bhag-arias, or sharers.

The Tatas, who also belong to a family of Navsari priests (Jamsetji, like his father Nusserwanjee, and grandfather Ruttonjee was a fully ordained priest, as were his sons Sir Dorab and Sir Ratan Tata) decreed that the flame be tended only by priests belonging to their families. Though, why three, remains a mystery. The first set of three panthakies were savants: Ervad Khurshedji Behramji Sahiar whose portrait still graces the wall near the fire; Ervad Meherjirana, a descendant of the famed Dastur Meherjirana who expounded the Zoroastrian religion in Emperor Akbar's court; and Ervad Framroze Navroji Kutar who was a co-translator with his brother Mahiyar of the entire *Shah Namah* into Gujarati in 10 volumes.

Succeeding generations of the above panthakies continued the tradition till 1960 when Ervad Kaikhushroo Kanga (also of the Bhagaria sect) expired, and Ervad Darab Kutar, a direct descendent of Framroze, requested the trustees that, in view of spiralling costs, the Bhagaria's *bhags* (divisions) be permitted to only two henceforth. Naval Tata, then a trustee, agreed and the Tata Agiary has since

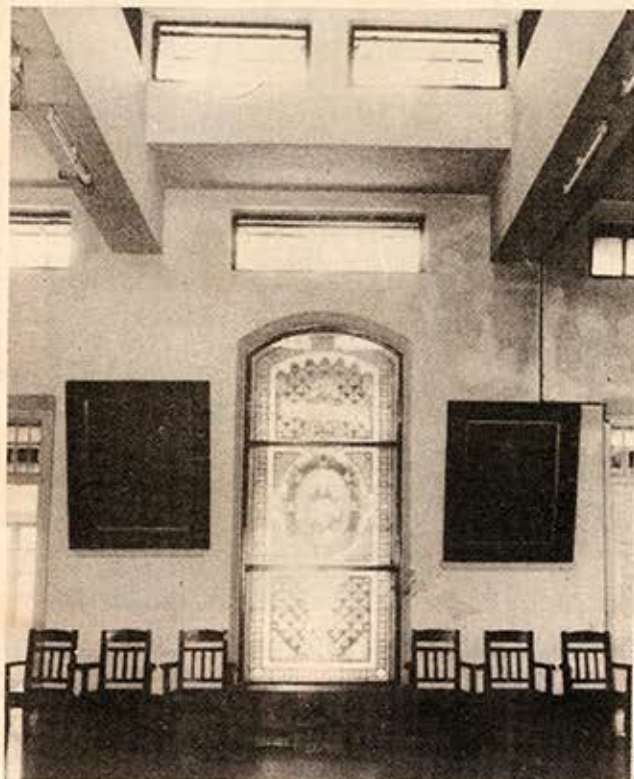


PHOTO: HOMAYAT MISTRY, HOME PRINTS

meets the sea, recalls a clipping from *The Times of India* (preserved in his family collection), which stated that "over 500 distinguished Parsis were present," and the road was so cleaned and spruced up that "it put Ballard Estate (the then Nariman Point of corporate Bombay) to shame." It is a scene that invites description. There, in the hall, where today hang the photographs of all the Tata men and women associated with the Agiary,

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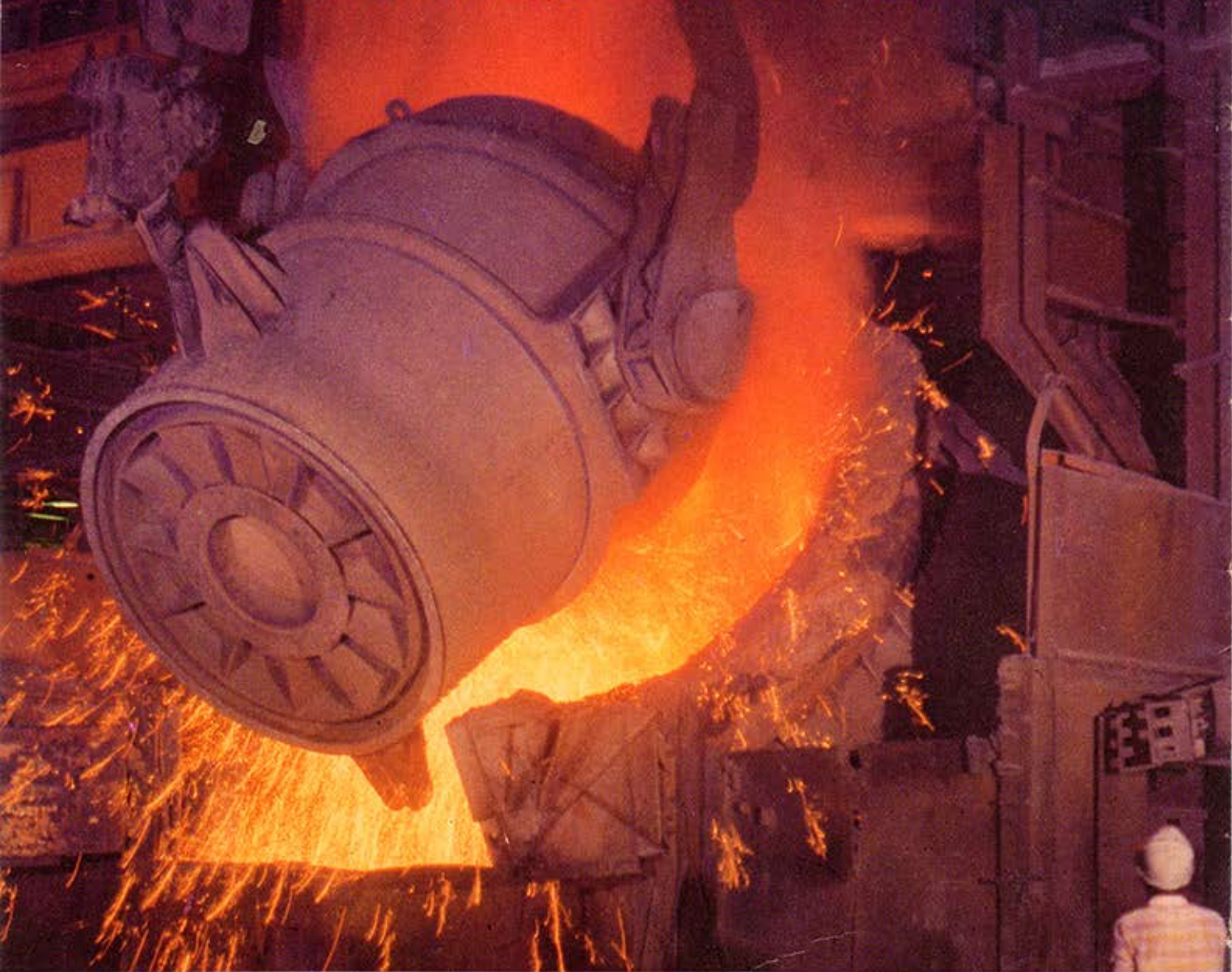
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Peer at his table lecturing to Zoroastrian devotees at the Tata Agiary
Photo: Dolly Divecha

had only two panthakies, the current ones being Ervad Jehanbux Tata, who is assisted by his son Zarire, and Peer. Tata predates Peer as the Agiary's panthaky by five years when he joined to replace (the then Ervad) Dastur (Dr) Firoze Kotwal, who left after a seven-year stint to take up the principalship of the Athor-nan Madressa in Andheri.

The present panthakies have continued the Zoroastrian traditions of their predecessors. And Peer has even ushered in additional stringent codes of conduct. The food offerings on *baj-satum*, are strictly vegetarian. "Non-vegetarian food invites not the angels, but *darvands* (devils)," argues Peer, a noted votary of vegetarianism as a Zoroastrian way of life. The Tata Agiary may not be the first to promote vegetarianism. That distinction perhaps belongs to Colaba's Seth Jeejeebhoy Dadabhoy Agiary, where Peer was panthaky before his services "were summarily terminated," in his own words, for what he believes was his adherence to placing only vegetarian foods, even for the *sethias'* dear departed. But the Tata Agiary is probably the one with the longest tenure to shun meats. Most *behdins*, though, do not pay much importance to the abstinence from meat for their departed's souls.

According to Gandhi, Peer is "an ace at prayers" and compliments the panthaky for his mellifluous rendering of them. A measure of the confidence reposed in panthakies can be gauged from the *muktad* tables at an agiary. The Tata Agiary has had around 40 to 60 tables in the past few years. The figure could be more, but Peer is too conservative to "attract" more *behdins*; nor did the establish-

ment of Tata Blocks at Bandra in 1927 swell the Tata Agiary's coffers, its occupants preferring to visit the neighboring Panthaky Agiary instead.

"Ervad Tata and I," stresses Peer, "perform jashans or house-warming ceremonies only when the non-Parsi member of the household agrees to stay away from the jashan room." With prices on Hill Road, a posh locality, skyrocketing, there are few Parsis who have recently bought flats in the neighborhood. The setting up of a co-operative society — Namdar House — on land owned by an Irani next to the Agiary, however, has given the Tata Agiary the friendly neighborhood *adarian* status.

In other ways too, winds of change, dormant for a hundred years, have started to sway the palm fronds that stand overlooking the Agiary's well.

On the death of Naval Tata, the Agiary's trustee for more than 50 years, the trust nominated Ms Aloo N. Tata, his daughter-in-law, as a trustee. With the trustees visiting the Agiary ("Ratan and his brother Jimmy were here this New Year's Day," gushes Peer), and being made welcome there, will Ms Aloo Tata be given the same reception? For Aloo, though of Parsi parentage (she is the daughter of Pallon Mistry of the Shapoorji Pallonji family) is married to Noel Tata, the baptized Catholic son of Naval and Simone Tata. Peer, who did not attend Naval Tata's cremation, even though it could have meant the termination of his tenure for choosing not to pay his last respects to a trustee, states that he will not utter the new lady trustee's name in the Tata prayers at the Agiary.

Probably the answer, allegorical

though it sounds, should be sought in the Agiary's visual glory: the stained glass. Aftab Khan, Bombay's veteran stained glass maker of over a dozen years, claims that "the functional aspect of stained glass is to primarily reflect light." The Tata family have been pioneers in many a field, and known for their foresight and vision. Will their stained glass Zoroaster throw light on a vexed community and illumine the path of those who seek Him?

LATE NEWS

BPP Elections further postponed

The ruling of the Bombay High Court on October 23, 1992 has extended the date for the holding of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP) Anjuman Committee elections from October 30 and 31 (see "The 1992 BPP Elections Orthodox set to win," page 32 in this issue) to December. The date for filing nomination for the Anjuman Committee elections was also extended from September 30 to October 31. The greatest beneficiary of this extension will be the middle-of-the-road Committee for Economic Revival (CER) which had only mustered around 425 candidates. The Zoroastrian Cultural Welfare Association (ZCWA) led by Dr Syrus Irani had fielded 718 candidates while the Jashan Committee (JC) fielded around 200. The ZCWA and the JC were both supporting the *Adi Doctor* orthodox camp in the Dadar constituency.

With the extension of the deadline the elections will be more keenly contested as the CER would be in a position to file more nominations for the elections. The tentative dates for the elections in December are 5th, 6th, 12th, 13th and 20th. The elections are to be held in five centers.

The Anjuman Committee elections are being held after a span of almost 12 years. The last election was held in early 1981 and the next was originally scheduled for early 1988.

The trusteeship elections have now been set for February 13, 1993.

The terms of Dr Aspi Golwalla, the chairman of the BPP and Jamsheed Kanga, one of the founders of the CER are over and both are continuing as trustees at the behest of the Bombay High Court. Both these seats will be up for election once the new Anjuman Committee is formed.

"Certified that I had the pleasure of performing the navjote of Master Darius Puz-Surti, son of Mrs Rati Puz-Surti and Federico Puz, of Rheinau, Switzerland, this morning at the residence of Mrs and Dr B. S. Surti of 37, Sarojini Devi Road, Secunderabad 500003 in (the) presence of the Parsi Zoroastrians of Secunderabad and Hyderabad, and others. Sd Burjor Pavri, July 25, 1990."

For Darius, this document signed by Ervad Pavri is as important as his birth certificate because it recognizes his "new life" in the Zoroastrian religion. Born to a Zoroastrian mother and a non-Parsi father, Darius' status as a Zoroastrian may have been legally established with the performance of this ceremony but not so his right to admission at all fire-temples in India, most of which are open only to Parsi Zoroastrians (those born of Parsi parents or Parsi fathers and have been initiated into the faith).

For, soon after the child was taken to the Khan Bahadur Seth Edulji Sohrabji Chenoy Anjuman Dar-e-Meher in Secunderabad, his grandparents and parents received a letter from the managing committee of the Parsi Zoroastrian Anjuman of Secunderabad and Hyderabad (PZASH) objecting to Darius' entry to the fire-temple. "This illegal act has not only wounded the religious sentiments of our community, but has also caused the desecration of our sacred place of worship. You will agree that Master Darius cannot, by any definition, be considered a Parsi Zoroastrian," wrote the honorary secretary N. F. Nagarwala.

The correspondence that went back and forth between the Anjuman, Darius' mother Rati and the maternal grandfather Dr Bahman Surti shows the points that were raised by both the sides.

Thereafter Ms Puz-Surti decided to approach the trustees of other anjumans enquiring whether they had "any objection to my son entering your agiary... during his visits to India." Barring the Delhi Parsi Anjuman (DPA), she



Doors closed to Darius

In her quest to gain admission to agiaries for her son Darius, Rati Puz-Surti received rejection slips from three out of four anjumans



received only negative responses from the rest.

The reason that the DPA could admit Darius is because according to the Privy Council judgment (of 1915) in the case of Saklat vs Bella (see *Parsiana* April and May 1990) the trustees of a fire-temple are at liberty to admit the child of a Parsi mother and a non-Parsi father if they so choose. The Privy Council judgment noted that the trustees "can treat her (Bella) as a trespasser. But it does not follow that they are bound to so treat her... When the subject matter of such a trust or charity is the rendering of some convenience or service of such a nature that it will not hurt the lawful recipients if others share with them, their lordships are aware of no case in which it has been held that the trustees are bound to exclude persons who have no legal title to share... The intrusion of an unbeliever into a place of religious worship might well be a case of substantial interference with the devotions of worshippers. But the plaintiffs have failed to make out that Bella was not a Zoroastrian."

Three members of the Parsi community of Rangoon had filed the suit claiming that Bella's entry into the Rangoon agiary on March 21, 1915 "not only wounded the religious feelings entertained by religiously inclined Parsis, but also caused the desecration of the said sacred temple." While the first judge dismissed the suit and the Chief Court of Lower Burma concurred with the judge, the Privy Council upheld the appeal viz "that Bella was not entitled as of right, to use the temple, or to attend to or to participate in any of the religious ceremonies performed therein." But the judges also noted that "the plaintiffs have failed in the greater part of their suit and that giving to them of a declaration is an indulgence." The judges refused to give an injunction restraining Bella from entering the fire-temple a second time. In Bella's case, of course, the proceedings

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were not initiated by the trustees of the fire-temple but by others.

In the case of Puz-Surti, the opposition generated has only served to strengthen her resolve to get her daughter initiated as a Zoroastrian — irrespective of whether the agiaries in India choose to acknowledge her as one.

Parsiana reproduces the entire, unedited exchange of correspondence (obvious typographical errors have been corrected) between the Surti family, PZASH and the other anjumans of India.

Between PZASH and the Surti family
Dr Bahman S. Surti and Mrs Khorshed B. Surti

Dear Sir/Madam,

The managing committee has been informed of the conduct of an alleged navjote ceremony of one Master Darius Puz who is the offspring of a non-Parsi Zoroastrian father (and also your grandson) on July 25, 1990.

However, the alleged navjote is no concern of our Anjuman, but what is a matter of deep concern to both the Anjuman body and the community is the fact that, Mrs Khorshed Surti and Mrs Rati Puz had brought the child presumably after the alleged navjote ceremony,

into the Dar-e-Meher, unknown to the young mobed, Neville Bhatela (who was at that time tending the adaran) knowing fully well that no person, adult or child, other than a Parsi Zoroastrian can enter the Dar-e-Meher. This illegal act has not only wounded the religious sentiments of our community, but has also caused the desecration of our sacred place of worship. You will agree that Master Darius cannot, by any definition be considered a Parsi Zoroastrian. Your attention is invited to the decision reported in ILR 33 Bombay 509; and AIR 1925 Privy Council 298.

We are shocked and surprised that Dr Bahman S. Surti, a renowned scholar of the Zoroastrian faith, a translator of the *Shanama*, recipient of many awards and a former trustee of our Anjuman should have turned a blind eye to the flouting of the tenets of our sacred religion. It is surprising how Dr Surti, a staunch believer of our faith and its practice, could have radically changed his views when it concerned his family and to have agreed to be a party to such an illegal act carried out by his family in this regard.

You are fully aware that the terms of the declaration of trust restrict the right of worship and participation in our reli-

gious ceremonies only to those who are Parsis (including Iranees) who profess the Zoroastrian religion.

The managing committee takes strong objection to this act of transgression in the matter of Master Darius, son of Mr and Mrs Frederico Puz of Aheinau, Switzerland being brought into our sacred Dar-e-Meher by Mrs Khorshed Surti and Mrs Rati Puz.

Master Darius Puz is not a Parsi Zoroastrian and is not entitled to the use and enjoyment of any of the benefits as enjoyed by our declaration of trust.

Please take notice that in spite of this letter, should you or any of your family members, violate the terms of our declaration of trust or offend the tenets of our religion within the precincts of our Dar-e-Meher, we shall have no alternative but to take appropriate steps under law, both civil and criminal, as may be advised, to vindicate our rights at your responsibility as to all costs and consequences thereof.

Yours faithfully

N. F. NAGARWALA
Hon Secretary, PZASH

August 1/3, 1990

Copy to Mr and Mrs Frederico Puz with a request to take note of our objections mentioned above.

continued on page 74

Wishing you all
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&

"Happy New Year"

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AIMZ

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*At its first
general meeting
the Association of
Inter-Married
Zoroastrians highlighted
the indiscriminate
treatment meted
out to women
married outside
the fold*

"We don't want confrontation... We don't want to stoop to calling names... We only want our legal rights," stated Ms Meher Amersey, chairperson of the newly formed Association of Inter-Married Zoroastrians (AIMZ) at the body's first general meeting convened at Godrej Bhavan on July 15, 1992. Speaking on behalf of the other lady members of the Association who objected to the community condemning its women for marrying outside the fold while the men married to non-Parsis continued to enjoy all the rights, Amersey reiterated, "We women are outraged as most of us continue to practice Zoroastrianism after marriage."

Some priests in certain fire-temples have barred these ladies admission after their intercommunity marriage. On their death, priests have refused to pray for them. They need special permits in the form of affidavits for interment in the dokhma set aside for their exclusive use. Their children, even if their navjotes are performed, have been declined entry to religious houses. Such treatment has prompted the Association to seek parity. "We intend to take a test case to court and see how the courts react," said advocate Berjis Desai, the AIMZ honorary secretary whose Fort office is used by the Association to manage its administrative affairs.

Their coming together at the first general meeting was to discuss "common problems and for interaction," as noted the circular letter announcing the meeting. There were no formalities, no dais, no microphone for the informal gathering of nearly 40 like-minded individuals. Facing the audience sat Amersey in the center flanked by *The Bombay Samachar's* director Munchi Cama and editor Jehan Daruwala, and the Association's vice chairperson Ms Smita Crishna and Desai.

"We are impatient about results," declared Daruwala. "We want to see results achieved in our lifetime... There's no time for compromise." The prevalence of certain inequitable laws in the community prompted Daruwala to quote, "Where laws end, tyranny begins"... (In our community) we have laws yet unfortunately tyranny prevails... Is there any such religion which would deny prayers to a person seeking it?"

"A year has gone by. People are losing interest," lamented Ms Homai Bode

impressing upon the AIMZ members the need to fight for "justice against injustice."

Earlier it was the priests at the Doongerwadi who had declined to pray for women married out of the community. In recent times there was the instance of Ms Roshni Anand, present at the July 15 meeting, whose father had been categorically informed by the priest at the Mevawalla Agiary in Byculla that she would not be granted entry to the Agiary where her mother's after-death prayer ceremonies were scheduled. Granting that most community organizations are governed by their own trust deeds, Anand, as a beneficiary of this institution can move the charity commissioner or file a civil suit challenging the trustees and priests for barring her the right to use the fire-temple, advised Desai.

In Secunderabad, Ms Rati Puz-Surti was admonished in writing for bringing her son, born of a non-Parsi father, to the Dar-e-Meher, causing "desecration of our sacred place of worship." This was after his navjote was performed. "It may sound odious. But that's the law of the land" where one has to be a Parsi as also a Zoroastrian to be entitled to the use of certain religious institutions, briefed Desai. The AIMZ is only interested in pursuing a matter through court if they can be sure of victory — in establishing that the children of Parsi-Zoroastrian women should enjoy the same privileges granted to the progeny of Parsi-Zoroastrian men and their non-Zoroastrian spouses. In her quest to gain recognition for her son, Puz-Surti wrote to the major anjumans in India enquiring whether they would permit her son entry to their respective fire-temples. Barring the progressive Delhi Parsi Anjuman she had got only negative responses from the other anjumans, informed Puz-Surti.

A need was also expressed for maintaining a register of those whose navjotes had been performed so that their Zoroastrian bonafides would not be questioned at a later date.

The AIMZ's immediate plans were to build up an electoral college for the Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP) Anjuman Committee elections scheduled for October. With the BPP's amended election scheme now stipulating that persons of either sex married outside the community may be called upon to attest

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their Zoroastrian status at the time of registering as voters, the AIMZ was happy with the parity. Earlier it was only the females who were required to give a confirmation that they continued to be Zoroastrians. All present were requested to enlist as voters on the BPP rolls. But assuming that they manage to conscript new voters, the AIMZ would only have a stronger say in the Anjuman Committee elections seven years hence, the registers for the present elections being deemed closed as of December 1991. When Puz-Surti sought to ascertain whether those residing outside Bombay could register as voters, she was told that they couldn't,

**"We want to see
results achieved in
our lifetime.
There's no time
for compromise"**

whilst actually they are permitted to.

"Instead of sporadic and ad hoc efforts by aggrieved individuals, well directed and organized efforts under the umbrella of an Association will yield better and faster results" was the belief that prompted the AIMZ to set its wheels in motion, as specified their first circular letter.

But they do not wish to take any hasty decisions which could impede their future. The AIMZ has therefore adopted a guarded stand with regard to the BPP's revised decision on the dokhmenashini issue, for while earlier the BPP had refused interment rights to a lady married outside the Zoroastrian fold, they had subsequently declared that on submission of an affidavit from the deceased's family the body could be interred in a separate dokhma. The BPP "deserves our support because at least they rejected the fundamentalists' demand (to debar Zoroastrians married outside the fold any rights to community institutions)," averred Desai. "We will be making a representation to the trustees pointing out the lacuna in their resolution and asking them to rectify. After persuasion we may take legal action," he continued.

A newsletter is also being planned by this new body which had received its certificate of incorporation only a few days prior to the holding of the general meeting. This would be more to express their

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viewpoint as against the orthodox opinions carried by *Deen Parast* which all AIMZ members were receiving regularly even when they had chosen not to subscribe to it. One orthodox votary went to the extent of sending anonymous letters to the non-Zoroastrian husbands of AIMZ members instructing them to keep their errant Zoroastrian wives in check, it was reported.

Enquiries on the strength of the membership brought in varying reports, ranging from "77" to "close to 100." As con-

**"The impression
given is that they are
the innocent
prodigals hounded
by the traditionalists"**

veyed at the meeting, some are finding the one-time fee of Rs 1,000 from regular members (Zoroastrians married outside the community and their children aged 18 and above) and Rs 300 from associate members (any person above 18 who sympathizes with their objects) rather prohibitive. On the other hand, some are said to have sent contributions larger than that required for the life membership dues.

Efforts are continuing to bring in more members for the AIMZ. "Having taken up a cause, one should not go about it in a half-hearted manner," advised Daruwala in *The Bombay Samachar* of July 26, 1992. He further recommended, "Let not the ladies take it as yet one more social pastime... they should be vigilant and active. Every case of discrimination or persecution should be highlighted through the Press and the authorities concerned should be asked to play the ball. They should not allow their interests and rights to be subservient to that of any other organization, institution or group... Luckily there are bold, frank and forthright members of the AIMZ such as Meher Amersey, Smita Crishna and others led and advised by the brilliant young solicitor Berjis Desai... Its prime concern should be to fight for and assert the rights of its members. This however should not preclude their involvement in matters concerning the Parsi community in general."

A report of the July 15 meeting in *The Times of India* of August 4, sympathizing

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with the AIMZ's objectives, evoked responses from different quarters. Adi Doctor, Ms Rati Sorabji and Kaizad Keravala challenged: "The impression sought to be given is that they are the innocent prodigals who are being hounded by the traditionalists... It's an insolent breed, instigated and misguided by a couple of solicitors and fusty journalists... If the AIMZ wants to avoid bitterness and acrimony in a small community, all that it has to do is to set up its own religious institutions, as the Jews

**"They wish only
to safeguard
themselves against
the orthodox
who discriminate
against them"**

have done the world over, and not bulldoze its way into the time-honored and hallowed consecrated institutions." Along similar lines Ms Sherena Khan disapproves of the AIMZ members who have "consciously and voluntarily flouted their community's unambiguous rules on intermarriage. Having done so, they now seek to escape the known consequences by stridently challenging and distorting an ancient and time-tested religious code to justify themselves... The hypocrisy of their proclaimed concern for their religion is overwhelming..."

A contrary view was put forth by Ms Khursheed Khurody: "The AIMZ was formed to protect the rights of women, not to assault the Zoroastrian faith which does not in any of its tenets support prejudice and bigotry. Parsi women have no intention of forming their own sub-faith. Instead they wish only to safeguard themselves against the contentions of the orthodox who blatantly discriminate against them..." she continued.

Despite the criticisms coming their way, the AIMZ was pleased that Cama and Sorabji Godrej, chairman of Godrej and Boyce were among those present at the Association's July meeting. Of future support for the AIMZ Desai was confident: "In the years to come, the numbers will be overwhelmingly in our favor. Today every family includes one non-Parsi, tomorrow every home may have one."

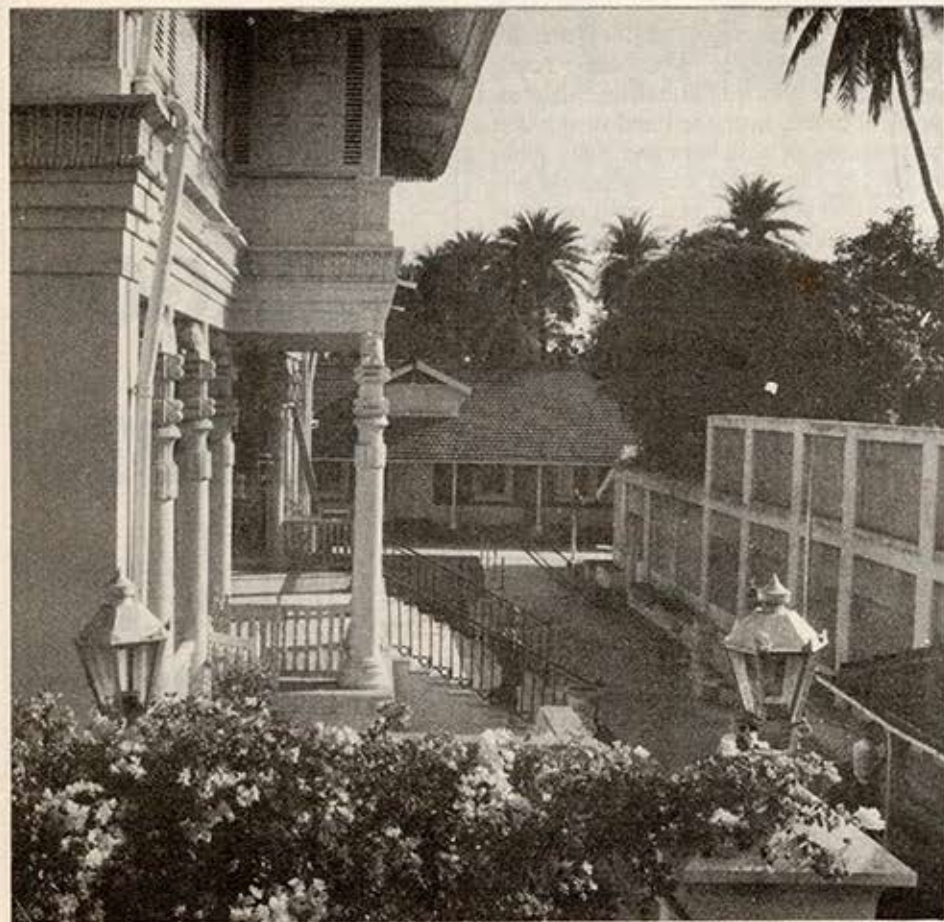
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Udvada deserves a better deal

Only about 150 Parsis, mainly the aged and infirm, remain in Udvada today

Aban Bana

Far removed from the turmoil of urban existence, the 1,500-acre coastal village of Udvada survives today as a dim reminder of the halcyon days of the Parsis in India.

Situated 178 km north of Bombay just outside the confines of the industrialized township of Vapi in southern Gujarat, the

hamlet of Udvada is home to the most venerated temple of this monotheistic community, which enshrines the holy fire or Iranshah.

A village established almost exclusively on ecclesiastical custom, where in numbers the athornans (clergy) far outnumbered the behdins (laity), Udvada was

never a commercial outpost offering opportunities for either employment or entrepreneurship. While the athornans were grouped into nine different families, collectively known as the *nav kutumbi*, and assigned the privilege of tending the Iranshah, the behdins were mostly cultivators, transporters and sellers of toddy and liquor. With the tasks thus clearly designated, these settlers managed to eke out a comfortable livelihood and Udvada thrived under their benign influence.

Prosperity was much in evidence and a visitor strolling down one of the dusty lanes of the village could see the well-maintained timber-and-mortar homesteads, complete with their manicured kitchen gardens, teeming with adults and children. The fragrance of incense and sandalwood wafted into the streets while the older residents in knee-length *sudreh*s muttered their *kusti* prayers on the white-washed verandahs.

Shapurji Kavasji Hodivala writes in his 800-page Gujarati volume, *The History of Holy Iranshah* that in 1927 there were 1,353 athornans (481 of them women, 446 men and the remainder children) inhabiting 230 houses, while the behdins numbered a mere 101 and lived in 40 houses.

Today, Udvada is a faded reflection of its past glory when the pioneering zeal of the Parsis throughout India had projected them resolutely to the forefront of nation-building. Hardly 150 Parsis dwell here now though the census records a total population nudging 5,000, including the bhandaris, kolis, manghelas, harijans and adivasis, residing in 876 houses. Not one Parsi birth has been recorded here for the past three decades and the P. P. Mistry High School and the Zilla Prathamik Shikshak Samiti's primary school, having a total of around 1,700 pupils, do not have a single Parsi child on their rolls, according to the Gram Panchayat talati, or revenue officer, Ramanbhai Patel. However, the village is not entirely devoid of Parsi children as Homi Sidhva and his wife, who run the Globe Hotel with their two sons and daughter-in-law, have their two grandsons staying on the premises; and Noshir Motiwala, who with his wife runs the Ahura Bakery from his house, has a son and a daughter

The venerated Iranshah at Udvada



Deserted homesteads in Udvada: a grim reminder of past prosperity

Photos: Ashvin Mehta

who are pupils at a school in Daman. His brother, Jambax, also has two children studying locally.

But these are the only Parsi children in Udvada village. Mostly the aged and infirm have remained behind, many of them unmarried or widowed, their families and other relatives having ventured out to more beckoning pastures. Even the priesthood has been dismembered, the sons having migrated to Bombay or abroad where they pursue professions and a lifestyle that afford them no time for religious duties. Admittedly, they were also disinclined to take after their fathers because of the bleak economic prospects which characterize their vocation. Consequently, distinguished ancient lineages of priesthood have now withered away and there are never enough mobeds or priests to recite the litany of rituals and ceremonies Parsis are known for. Many dwindling families of Udvada have sold off their homes and joined the rest of their kin elsewhere. Others have left, but still retain their properties which lie locked up and have

fallen into disuse.

Among the elders of the village who passed away in the last few years was Noshir Motiwala's father, Marzban Motiwala, also known as Marzban Biscuitwala because of the distinctive *khari* biscuits, macaroons, *khatais* and Surti biscuits that were produced by his Hormazd Bakery. He was seen all over town in his woolen sweater and black frayed jacket, even on the hottest of days, pushing his bicycle rather than riding it, his attendant trudging behind him with the iron trunk of biscuits balanced on his head. There was also Behram Sidhva, a confirmed bachelor who dwelt on the verandah of his locked cottage opposite the Seth Jamsetji Jeejeebhai Dharamshala. He was the odd jobs' man at the Iranshah and went about his chores with a kerchief round his neck, his trousers rolled up knee-high and a withered black topi on his head. Then there was Jal Sidhva who, too, worked at the fire-temple, seated in his soiled sudreh at the place where devotees performed their *kusti*, twining the wicks of the oil lamps and

engaging in arguments at the drop of a hat.

The charming seaside Majestic Hotel had become identified with its owner, Minoo Patel, whose directions to his servants boomed across the sprawling structure. Majestic has never been the same after his demise some years back. Then there was Ervad Behramshah Bharda, the doyen of the Pundole sect in Udvada, who was a regular speaker at all religious functions organized by his followers. Another recent death was of Hormasji Munshi who with his wife Aloo had settled in Udvada for the past few years, having purchased a flat in Ashirwad Apartments that overlook the Iranshah. A paralytic, Hormasji was fortunate to have had a wife who tended him with utter devotion till he breathed his last. Aloo Munshi has also brought a lot of color to her surroundings, having planted flowering plants in the compound of Ashirwad and spending considerable time in her enclosed garden.

There are still some 'living trademarks' of Udvada, among them Pesi

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Patel, the owner of King's Hotel overlooking the beach. A squat, rotund person, this former sarpanch of Udvada has a thriving circle of friends and can be seen every evening (except when it pours) sitting with them in a semicircle on the beach, chatting away until sundown. Close to King's is the Seth ni Dharamshala, managed by the genial couple, Ardeshir and Arnavaz Mirza. There is also Sorabji Dastur who ran the village library next to his house for decades before he finally had to quit his pleasant job because of advancing rheumatism. But shortly before his retirement, he singlehandedly collected Rs 70,000 for repairs of the building.

In the lane leading to Iranshah sits



(Above) New construction clashes with the old and mars the Udvada skyline.

(Left) The sale of sandalwood continues to be a vocation for residents



Rusi Panthaky in his tiny shop that emerges out of the wall of Ervad Firozeshah Makujina's residence. There he sells sandalwood and other religious bric-a-brac to those worshippers who patronize him. Minoo, another son of the late Marzban Motiwala, runs a pokey "soda lemon shop" where he prays right through the day. He also alternates as the local corpse bearer as there are none in Udvada.

The condition of most Parsi survivors in Udvada is pathetic. Economic deprivation is palpable and many of them live on charity that is barely sufficient for a dignified existence. Malnutrition and eye diseases linked with geriatric problems are also prevalent, and there are no trained people to look after the aged and the needy. Many of the old generation mobeds, bent with age, now bide their time at the fire-temple, hoping for alms from sympathetic worshippers. Often, their abject penury staves off medical treatment till it is too late, or till their aggravated illness forces them to seek it. And, compounding the plight of the poor is the fact that the commodity prices in Udvada rival those prevailing in Bombay. Survival, then, is often at subsistence level.

The statewide prohibition in force in Gujarat has also been something of a damper to the development of tourism in this picturesque seaside resort. Many visitors thus prefer to lodge themselves in hotels on the adjacent Union Territory of Daman, drawn there by the proliferating licensed bars and streetside taverns.



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Ironically, the highest consumption of liquor in India is probably in Gujarat, with alcohol being smuggled into the state from almost all directions, making prohibition a farce. But the hoteliers in Udvada are an honest lot who do not believe in bending rules by greasing the palms thrust towards them. There are five hotels and three dharamshalas run by the local Parsis in Udvada, but they are patronized mostly during weekends. Business is slack for the rest of the week though summer holidays and Parsi festivals stir up life to a marked degree.

The construction of apartment buildings has considerably helped rejuvenate the village. Four such blocks have been erected and one more is under construction. The flats are tenanted mostly by middle-class Parsis from Bombay who are regular visitors to Udvada. Consequently, these flats too, like the old houses, remain locked up most of the time.

Frequent visitors to the village feel it deserves a better deal: its age-old ambience, its quaint tumbledown houses, its casuarina-fringed beachfront, its clear air, its bracing winters and its delicacies like *umbariyoo* and *taréli boi* make it a potentially alluring resort. Ideally, it of-

There are never enough mobeds to recite the litany of rituals and ceremonies

fers the Parsis of Bombay an easily accessible idyllic retreat from the noise and filth of their metropolis. There are many who feel more at home in Udvada than in Bombay and would unhesitatingly leave the city for good if Udvada could provide a means of livelihood and school education. They are thus eager to revive this community stronghold and restore it to its past primacy.

The village can at least be a resettlement place for retired Parsis from Bombay, which in turn could greatly ease the community's housing problem in the metropolis. With so many houses in Udvada up for sale, these could be acquired by a trust set up specially for the purpose. The trust could then rent out, on a nominal basis, these premises to retired Parsis. A gymkhana already exists on the beach in the village, but remains

locked up owing to neglect. It could well be rejuvenated to provide the aged residents a venue for entertainment. And for destitute Parsi widows and spinsters from Bombay an entire cottage industry could be established in the village, where they can live in harmony as a community and make *dar ni pori*, beadwork garlands, *papad*, pickles, *umbariyoo*, *kopra paak* and a range of provisions and items that can be sold both within the village and outside. In fact, Udvada has no place where one can even go for a cup of tea!

Udvada deserves a chance to survive. It is the only ethnic stronghold we have.



An educationist, trained in Switzerland, Ms. Aban Bana is the founder of the North London Rudolf Steiner School (also known as the Waldorf School) which believes in imparting comprehensive education to children through unconventional methods. She intends to establish a

similar project in India on her return in September 1992. Drawn to Udvada since her childhood, Bana has been a witness to the changes that have transformed this pilgrim town.

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In defence of the 'Ahd-nameh

Mithoo Coorlawala

Tolerance of other "people of the Book" marked the early phase of Islam, argues the author

Dr Ali A. Jafarey's review of the book *Purity and Pollution in Zoroastrianism, Triumph over Evil* by Jamsheed K. Choksey ("The Purifying Prescriptions," *Parsiana*, November 1990) sparked a controversy during which a critic, Ervad Darius Sethna, had suggested Jafarey consult the 'Ahd-nameh (Readers' Forum, *Parsiana*, April 1991). In a rejoinder Jafarey had questioned the authenticity of the 'Ahd-nameh. The following article from Ms Mithoo Coorlawala is a response to Jafarey.

In his article "The Purifying Prescriptions" (*Parsiana*, October 1991), Dr Ali A. Jafarey offers some sweeping statements on the 'Ahd-nameh and Salman Farsi which need to be properly evaluated. May I be allowed to share with your readers my own findings?

I have to agree at once that the spelling 'Ahd-nameh is more appropriate than the more usual 'Ahed-nameh. For the rest, I am boggled by this scholar's categorically stated and all too individualistic pronouncements. Here, we must recognize that we are in a relatively obscure area, but history does offer considerable factual information that can scarcely be brushed aside.

There seem no special reasons for Jafarey's lofty dismissal of the 'Ahd-nameh (i.e. written covenants or charters, granted by early Islam to conquered and subject peoples, guaranteeing protection from persecution) as "a very late fabrication by the Iranians to win some favor from their belittling Arab overlords." This may be noted as an informal personal opinion, as is the opposite theory of Columbia University's Prof James Russell. Both are agreed that these 'Ahd-namehs are inauthentic. But it is interesting that Prof Russell sees the 'Ahd-nameh not as forgeries concocted

by oppressed people to claim concessions, but on the contrary as later attempts by the conquerors themselves to create a tradition of Islamic toleration! In a letter seen by me, the erudite Prof Russell states: "The rescripts of Muhammad, Ali, etc are late and inauthentic, interesting in so far as they are an attempt to attribute to tolerant attitudes an ancient pedigree and sanction."

On the other hand, Dr Saleh Mohammed Alladin, co-editor of the 13th edition of *Extracts from the Holy Quran*, is firmly of the opinion that based on "abundant internal evidence" the 'Ahd-nameh are genuine "since they reflect the conciliatory and tolerant spirit of the Holy Prophet Muhammad."

For those who may like to believe as Dr Jafarey thinks fit to suggest, that "the 'treaty' is a favorite subject for some Zoroastrian scholars to quote," presumably as an affirmation of the Prophet Muhammad's reverence for the teachings of Asho Zarathushtra, I cannot resist quoting Dr Farhang Mehr, a staunch and learned Zarathushtrian. When specifically questioned about the authenticity of the 'Ahd-nameh, Dr Farhang Mehr said he believed them to be genuine, adding the sturdy remark that it was of no importance whether the 'Ahd-nameh were held to be genuine or not, since "our religion needs no attestation."

Similarly, Dr Jafarey's negative argument that "there is hardly any Muslim ulema who knows about the very existence of such a 'scripture'" is unimportant and establishes nothing either way. Strangely, Dr Jafarey uses the collective word "ulema" in the singular, but without quibbling about semantics, it is not surprising at all that for reasons of vested authority such a document might well fail to be acknowledged by one Muslim alim or a body of ulema. Why, after all, were the Dead Sea Scrolls so

long suppressed? Is there, perhaps, an analogy here?

To get a historical perspective, it must be remembered that the Zarathushtrian 'Ahd-nameh are not an isolated phenomenon. 'Ahd-nameh were granted to other Ahel-e-Kitab ("people of the Book"), the Christians and the Jews, by the Prophet Muhammad, the Imam and fourth Caliph Ali, and also by the Caliph Omar. The texts of several such 'Ahd-nameh survive — a covenant granted to the Jews is preserved in the National Library of Tehran, one to the monks of the monastery of Hizquil Zalkifl in the Chil Satoon Museum, Isfahan, besides covenants granted to the Jews of Medina, the Christians of Najran, the Christians of Mount Sinai, and the people of Jerusalem when that city fell to Caliph Omar. Additionally, there were innumerable minor charters granted to subject communities or stubborn pockets of resistance by military commanders or governors of provinces, dictated by military or political expediency.

There is no doubt that the granting of covenants of toleration and protection was a well acknowledged and well accepted feature of the prevalent culture, of the ethos of early Islam, and there are no special reasons for assuming that the Zarathushtrian 'Ahd-nameh under reference are necessarily spurious.

In fact, in view of the strong prevailing influence of the Zarathushtrian Sasanian Empire (of which Arabia was a dependancy when the Prophet Muhammad proclaimed his mission), and in view of the life-long companionship of Salman Farsi, the Iranian mystic later one of the most respected of the Ahsab (companions of the Prophet), it is permissible to think that a charter might indeed have been granted to Salman's brother Farrukh-bin-Shaksan and his Zarathushtrian coreligionists.



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These charters have a quality of genuine concern for the people to whom they were granted, with the privileges and protections clearly stated and unequivocal. It is sadly true that they held only for the times in which they were written — i.e. during the life-time of the Prophet Muhammad and the early Caliphs, his immediate successors. In the years that followed, what was nobly writ on parchment was rarely performed. It is painful to rehearse the torments and indignities suffered by Zarathushtrians and other subject peoples in the ensuing Islamic centuries. That, however, is a separate issue; not conclusive proof that these 'Ahd-nameh were never written.

Coming to Salman Farsi, Jafarey is right in that it would be inappropriate to designate him as the "preceptor" of the Prophet Muhammad; but it needs also to be clarified that this "simple follower who joined Muhammad in Medina" was no rank-and-file person, nor was his first encounter with Muhammad in Medina, as Dr Jafarey would have us believe.

In his study *Salman Pak*, Prof Massignon discusses in detail Salman's status in the new community established in Medina, i.e. whether Salman was rightly a *Mujahir* — a fugitive who had accompanied the Prophet on his flight from Mecca — or an *Ansar* — one of those in Medina who had come to the Prophet's assistance in this city of his refuge. It is clearly established that Salman (far from meeting with the Prophet in Medina) is distinctly designated a *Mujahir* therefore as having known the Prophet in Mecca before 1 AH (anno hegirae). Furthermore, he is one of the 16 companions of the Prophet chosen on arriving at Medina, to participate in the "rite of fraternization" which bound the *Mujahirun*, one by one to their hosts the *Ansars*.

At Medina, Salman directed the defence of that beleaguered city which he saved by the simple stratagem of digging a moat around it — an exercise in military engineering unknown to the Arabs of that time. It was on the occasion of this "War of the Ditch (*Khandaq*)" that the Prophet, according to a Sunni tradition, pronounced the celebrated Hadith (5 AH): "*Salman minna Ahl-al-Bait* (Salman is one of us, we who are the people of this house)," thus confirming Salman's adoption into the inner circle of Muhammad's own family. He is listed among those who received a share of the *Sadaqat-Ahl-al-Bait* — the provision made for the maintenance of the Prophet's household — and his name

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was read amongst theirs in the register of
pensions (*Diwan al-ata*) under Omar.

The exact year of the meeting of Sal-
man with the Prophet Muhammad is not
clearly established in Zarathushtrian or
Islamic tradition, but we are told that it
sparked a strong spiritual connection that
was instantaneous and lifelong.

According to Zarathushtrian tradition,
Salman is identified as Behzad, the well-

Salman directed the defence of Medina which he saved by digging a moat around it

born Dastur Dinyar, a spiritual counsel-
lor to the Sasanian Emperor Chosroes II.
According to the same tradition, it was
revealed to Dastur Dinyar that it lay in
his destiny to leave his country to convey
the laws of God, as revealed to
Zarathushtra, to the Prophet of a bur-
geoning new faith, a messenger-of-God
who was described but still unknown to
him. Dastur Dinyar travelled for many
years through Palestine, Syria, Iraq and
Egypt: he explored Manichaeism and
Christianity, met with masters in spiri-
tual practice, until at last he came upon
Muhammad in Arabia.

Apart from this Zarathushtrian tradi-
tion reported by various Parsi scholars, J.
E. Saklatwalla, N. F. Mama, G. K. Nari-
man and S. M. Desai, there is no other
conclusive identification of Salman with
Dastur Dinyar.

If we are to accept Jafarey's confident
assertion that "History (which presuma-
bly excludes Zarathushtrian tradition)
knows of no 'Dasturan Dastur Dinyar,'" it
is still an undeniable fact that by birth
Salman Farsi was a Zarathushtrian mystic,
a spiritual personage who supported
Islam at a time when there were no pres-
sures or compulsions to do so, and when
in fact it would have been materially
more advantageous to remain attached to
the Sasanian court.

Regrettably, little is known about Sal-
man's earlier days in Zarathushtrian Iran.
His later life and exceptional role as a
participant in the birth of Islam in Arabia
are well documented in Islamic sources
starting with Ibn Ishak (AH 151), seven
or eight recensions of the long Hadith
Khabar Salman (AH 150 — 175), the

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later biographies of Quazi Nurullah Shustri, Abdul Huq Mahaddis and other Oriental writers listed by Massignon but too numerous to mention here; in addition there are the studies in Western languages including the works of Huarte, Caetani, Horowitz, Zeki Pacha, Ivanov, Massignon, and most recently in English by A. A. Rezwi in Elmhurst USA — an impressive body of biographical writing for Prophet Muhammad's "simple follower" whom Jafarey would sweep into obscurity.

Salman Farsi came to occupy a unique place in Islamic history. The first of the Dharr Three Apostles (Hawariyun with

Salman's salary was distributed by him to the needy

Migadad and Abu Dharr), Salman was granted the unique privilege of reciting his prayers in his own tongue, the Persian language. By this act, the Prophet Muhammad clearly founded the spiritual beginnings of Iranian Islam, and Salman the "foreigner" (Ajami) became a pillar of the Shia sect, elevated to the Nausairian Trinity, together with Hazrat Ali and the Prophet himself.

It was whispered by the enemies of the Prophet that it was Salman the Ajami (Persian foreigner) who helped Muhammad with transcribing and interpreting the Divine Revelations: "They say, surely a person teacheth him. But the tongue of him at whom they hint is foreign, while this (i.e. the *Quran*) is plain Arabic (*Quran* XVI — 103)."

According to Tabari, Ibn Dahhak identifies *Al Ajami*, the non-Arab teacher of Muhammad, as Salman, and held the view that Salman had helped the Prophet to evaluate seriously the spiritual antecedents of his revelations. This is further explained by the Ismailite belief (according to Ivanov, *Ismailitica*) that the angel Jibri'il was the name conferred upon Salman for his divine mission, that while the Quranic revelation is of divine source, the dictation by an invisible angel is replaced by initiation from soul to soul communicated by divine order to the Prophet by his companion Salman.

Salman who was older than Muhammad by many years survived the Prophet to support with unflinching loyalty his son-in-law Ali and his immediate family,

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during the schism that followed the Prophet's passing. He is one of the five companions who took in private, at the Prophet's behest, an oath of fealty to Ali, and he is one of the seven protectors with whom Ali will bury Fatima at night. The loyalty and devotion of this mystic of Zarathushtrian origin to the Prophet Muhammad and his family are impeccable, and his involvement with the genesis of Islam intense. Salman Farsi's ordained engagement with Islam and its holy Prophet is a fitting example of the significant Zarathushtrian influence on many great world religions.

The second Caliph Omar appointed Salman governor of Mada'in, the fabled city built on the ancient site of Ctesiphon and Seleucia on the Tigris. There is a poignancy in the thought of this self-exiled Iranian, returning finally to this capital of the whole Persian East. It was as great in civilization as its Byzantine rival Constantinople, the center of the banking business and of Oriental sciences. The coins minted here bear the mint-mark Al-Bab, i.e. the sublime port!

As governor of Mada'in, Salman earned a salary of 4,000 dinars (the salary of the Caliph Omar being 6,000 dinars at this time). We are told however that Salman's salary was distributed by him to the needy, and that he used for his meager needs the income from the mats he wove and sold. Here in Mada'in, Salman died between the years 26 and 28 AH. His modest tomb at the foot of Taq-i-Kisra, the solitary arch of the palace of Ctesiphon, is a place of pilgrimage for devout Shias on the traditional anniversary of the 15th Sha'ban and at variable times for pilgrims returning from Najaf and Karbala.

To use Jafarey's words (but in quite a different sense!), Salman Farsi was indeed and essentially a "simple follower" of Prophet Muhammad, in that he filled his exceptional destined role and bore his high office meekly.

When that is said, one can only wonder at Jafarey's petulant disregard for the facts of history.



Ms Mithoo Coorla-wala holds a master's degree in English literature. By inclination she is a researcher in ancient Persian history.

"With best wishes
for the future
From
T P K"

DOORS CLOSED TO...
continued from page 50
The Honorary Secretary
PZASH

Dear Mr Nagarwalla

With reference to your harshly worded notice sent by registered post acknowledging me of "so-called desecration" of the atash adaran, I would like to know whether the honorary secretary has got the authority to issue such notices without the approval of the managing committee. If so, was it a unanimous decision of the managing committee? If not, how many members of the managing committee voted for such a harebrained resolution?

As a member of the Zoroastrian community I am entitled to seek this information.

Mr Nagarwalla, your advisors are apparently referring to the Privy Council judgement and the judgement of Justice Beaman and Justice Dyer quoted in the *Law Reporter* and *All India Reporter* that has no bearings to the present day circumstances and facts.

Mr Nagarwalla I challenge you to refer the case in all its details to Mr Soli Sohrabji, who has been appointed as the attorney general by the Government of India.

Mr Nagarwalla do you understand what is meant by the word "desecration" of any temple within India? Does the reverent entry of a child born of the womb of a Parsi Zoroastrian mother, whose navjote has been duly performed by a fully qualified ervad saheb mean "desecration" of the temple?

Mr Nagarwalla until I hear from you your cool and considered reply to my questions I would request you not to rush in where angels fear to tread.

Mr Nagarwalla remember those who stay in house of glass should seldom throw a stone.

Yours disgustingly

Dr B. S. SURTI

August 7, 1990

Copy to: 1. Mr Jehangir Hormusji 2. Mrs Gool Y. Chenoy 3. Dr Miss Pouruchisti N. Chenoy 4. Mr Noshir Marker 5. Mr P. Nalladaru 6. Mr Jehangir Bisney 7. Prof Dr F. D. Vakil 8. Mr Cyrus Irani 9. Mr Keki Rustomfram 10. Mr B. F. Dittia IAS (Retd)

Dr Behman S. Surti

Dear Sir

It is always implied that the honorary secretary is authorized to write to the parties, whenever necessary, conveying

the decisions of the managing committee.

We reiterate that we are bound by the terms of our declaration of trust which restricts the right of worship and participation in religious ceremonies to only those who are Parsis (including Iranes) who profess the Zoroastrian religion.

The other comments are extraneous and do not deserve any specific reply.

Yours faithfully

N. F. NAGARWALA

Hon Secretary, PZASH

August 31, 1990

The Secretary

PZASH

Dear Sir

I am in receipt of the copy of the letter written by you to my father accusing me and my mother for taking my son Darius who is the offspring of a non-Parsi Zoroastrian father to the agiary after his navjote ceremony was performed on July 25, 1990.

I am equally shocked and surprised that this act has wounded the religious sentiments of our community as no member of our community neither the panthaky saheb of the agiary raised any objection to me directly regarding this matter. In fact many members of our community expressed their willingness and happiness to accept him as a new member of our dwindling community. Even Mr Nalladaru and his wife (member of your managing committee) greeted Darius and wished him all the best in the sanctum of the agiary and did not show the least signs of neither anger nor shock. The very fact that he neither showed any signs of shock nor anger makes me come to the conclusion that only certain members (three or four perhaps) of your managing committee (and not all as you mention in the letter) may have raised objection due to vindictive and spiteful reasons just because I happen to be Dr Surti's daughter.

It has been proved twice in the court of law that my father was deprived of his right to remain as a trustee of the managing committee of your Anjuman and I can well imagine that you are seeking reasons to hit back upon him. It is however pathetic to note that whatever ill-feelings you may be having against my father for no fault of his own is being continued and thrown on an innocent child whom I consider to be a Zoroastrian because his navjote ceremony has already been performed.

I have further been informed through reliable sources that one Miss Nayar

(who is also an offspring of a non-Zoroastrian father and future daughter-in-law of Mr and Ms Behram Mistry, trustee of the Chinoy Parsi Dharamshala) also entered the premises of the agiary in June/July 1990 after her engagement to their son Mr Mistry to offer a thanksgiving prayer. Why were the members of the managing committee and the members of the community neither shocked nor surprised at her entry into the fire-temple? Does the managing committee have separate special laws pertaining to any one else who is not named Surti?

I demand an explanation as to how Miss Nayar was allowed to enter the agiary despite your rules and regulations (or should I say man-made laws) of your anjuman.

Not long ago a navjote ceremony of Mr Noshir F. Nagarwalla's daughter was performed at the age of about approx 30 years behind closed doors after having renounced her Zoroastrian faith in order to enter into the community again. Why were not the members of the managing committee shocked and surprised then? Or did you consider it to be a legal act?

I would however like to know how many members voted for and against my case and would also like to have the minutes of the meeting where my case was discussed.

As a member of the Parsi Zoroastrian community I am well within my rights to enquire.

I have also seen that certain funerals of Parsis are attended by non-Zoroastrians which actually should not be the case. How does the Anjuman close an eye to such happenings? Is it not a matter of deep concern for the community?

In case your managing committee believes in perpetuating traditional and ritualistic practices do you think it proper to allow non-Parsi Zoroastrians to see the faces of the dead bodies after their geh sarna ceremony has been done? This practice has been allowed in the presence of your managing committee members who have attended such funerals.

It is high time we become broad-minded and accept such children in our religion as I firmly believe that an offspring of a Zoroastrian mother can be regarded as 50 percent Zoroastrian whereas it is very difficult to prove whether the father is really Zoroastrian or not.

I have gone through the declaration of trust but nowhere does the declaration define as to who is a Parsi. There does

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not appear to be any prohibition in the declaration of trust against persons born to parents, one of whom is a non-Parsi.

The decision which you have referred to relates to an era when the fundamental right to practice the religion of one's choice was not existing. I may not be able to give you decisions of courts but I can assure you that the constitution of India guarantees the right of my son Darius to live and worship as a Parsi and practice the Zoroastrian faith.

It is indeed regrettable that your Anjuman should resort to threats of civil and criminal proceedings against me and my family members to vindicate your so-called rights. It is obvious that you are not sure of your rights and that is why you have descended to the level of throwing out undignified threats.

Kindly note that your agiary is not the only one in the world. It is consoling to know that there are possibilities for me to take Darius to other agairies which are not ruled by hypocrites and fanatics and who are ready to welcome the child with open arms rather than considering it an illegal act.

Last but not least may Ahura Mazda grant you enlightenment to come to conclusions in a fair and just manner in future.

Yours faithfully

Mrs RATI PUZ-SURTI

August 5, 1990

Copy to: 1. Mr Jehangir Hormusji 2. Mrs Gool Y. Chenoy 3. Dr Miss Pouruchisti N. Chenoy 4. Mr Noshir Marker 5. Mr P. Nalladaru 6. Mr Jehangir Bisney 7. Prof Dr F. D. Vakil 8. Mr Cyrus Irani 9. Mr Keki Rustomfram 10. Mr B. F. Dittia IAS (Retd)

Mrs Rati Puz

Dear Madam

Your letter dated August 5, 1990 was received by us on August 6, 1990 and we are to reply to you as under:

We have to state that we are bound by the terms of our declaration of trust and it was never our intention to have separate laws for different persons. In so far as the case of Miss Nayar is concerned, we are to state that we were not aware of her having entered our Dar-e-Meher. The restrictions which we have placed in the case of Master Darius will apply equally to Miss Nayar.

All other issues raised by you in your letter are irrelevant and do not call for a specific reply.

Yours faithfully

N. F. NAGARWALA
Hon Secretary, PZASH
August 31, 1990

Dr Behman S. Surti

Dear Dr Behman Surti Sahab

My greetings to you and your beloved family.

At the outset pardon my delay in writing this letter to you. I was expecting a

**"What a tragedy
that a progressive
community should
turn the clock back
to the
age of darkness"**

copy of the letter issued by the honorary secretary of Parsi Anjuman on behalf of the managing committee to you and your daughter Ms Rati, but I did not receive the same hence I was ignorant of the contents.

Ms Rati's letter and yours which I have received this day makes it clear that the honorary secretary has not taken into account the strong protest and dissent made by one member in the committee meeting. I for one did not subscribe to the "irrational" views and also strongly made clear my dissent should be placed on records.

So Sir please do not for a while think that the managing committee's harsh and irrational letter reflects all the members mind.

As a teacher and an activist belonging to the Human Rights Association Amnesty International, I strongly voiced my concern and made it very clear to the members that any action taken against the innocent child of Ms Rati will be cruel and wrong. Hence I will not hesitate to mobilize public opinion nationally and even go to the extent of seeking justice in the court of law through "public interest litigation." The next point which I made is why should a letter be written to Dr Surti? Only malafide intention perhaps can explain the same.

Dear revered Sir, as a Zoroastrian, I assure you that the pain and agony caused to you and your family will also be shared by me.

I shall strive my best within my abilities and capabilities to create a massive awareness on this avoidable situation and to fight the issue till your stand is vindicated.

Master Darius and the mother Ms Rati as Parsi Zoroastrians have the right to enjoy the privileges bestowed upon all Zoroastrians.

What a tragedy that a progressive community should turn the clock back to the age of darkness and irrationality and justify man-made irrelevant rules which also perhaps can succeed in preventing the entry of Lord Zarathushtra on the grounds that he is not a Parsi.

Welcome to the fold of Zoroastrianism, dear Baby Darius. We need you for our existence.

Yours very truly

Dr F. D. VAKIL
Dept of Political Science, Osmania University
August 8, 1990

Between Ms Puz-Surti and the anjuman of India

Puz-Surti's letter to the Bombay Parsi Panchayat is reproduced here. We assume the other anjuman were given a similar brief.

Dr Aspi F. Golwalla

Chairman, Parsi Panchayat,
Office of the Parsi Panchayat Funds and Properties

Dear Sir

I am born of Zoroastrian parents and am married to an Italian citizen who is a Roman Catholic. We are residents of Rheinau, Switzerland. I did not renounce my Zoroastrian faith at the time of marriage and was married under the Special Marriage Act. I am still following the Zoroastrian religion. I have two children — a boy named Darius aged 8 years and a daughter named Nadirah aged 5 years. Neither of my children have been baptised as Catholics because we decided to bring them up as Zoroastrians to which my husband did not have the slightest objection.

Exactly a year ago my son Darius's Navjote was performed in Secunderabad (a xerox copy of the certificate of which I am enclosing in my letter along with a xerox copy of a short account of the Navjote which appeared in the September 1990 issue of the *Parsiana*).

I would like to know from you whether your Anjuman has any objection to my son entering your Agiary in Bombay during his visits to India.

I am enclosing a self-addressed envelope and would appreciate an early reply as I will be leaving India in four weeks.

Thanking you

Yours faithfully

Mrs RATI PUZ-SURTI
July 19, 1991

Mrs Rati Puz-Surti

Dear Madam

Thank you for your letter dated July 19, 1991.

You are no doubt aware that Zarthosti anjumans in India function autonomously and in Madras entry into our Dar-e-Meher is the privilege of the following:

- Born Zoroastrians i.e. both the parents have been Zoroastrians

- Those Zoroastrians, whose father is a Zoroastrian although the mother may be a non-Zoroastrian

- Those who wear sudreh and kusti

Thanking you

Yours faithfully

M. K. BELGAMVALA

President, Jal Phiroj Clubwala Dar-e-Meher

July 29, 1991

On further enquiring whether her son would be eligible to enter their Dar-e-Meher according to clause 3 of the earlier letter, she was told:

Dear Madam

We thank you for your letter dated August 25, 1991.

We reiterate that entry into our Dar-e-Meher (fire temple) is the privilege of the following:

- Born Zoroastrians

- Persons whose father is a Zoroastrian

and mother a non-Zoroastrian and the child should have been inducted into the Zoroastrian faith.

At the time of entry, the above categories of persons have to wear the sudreh and kusti.

Thanking you

Yours faithfully

M. K. BELGAMVALA

Chairman and trustee

Jal Phiroj Clubwala Dar-e-Meher

September 13, 1991

Mrs Rati Puz Surti

Dear Mrs Surti

Please refer to your letter dated July 19, 1991 addressed to our president.

In this connection, as per rules of our BPZA (The Bangalore Parsee Zoroastrian Anjuman), we regret that we are not in a position to permit your son entering our Agiary.

With best wishes

Thanking you

D. N. BILLIMORIA

Hon Secretary,

The Bangalore Parsee Zoroastrian Anjuman

August 2, 1991

Mrs Rati Puz-Surti

Dear Madam

Your letter dated July 19, 1991 addressed to chairman Dr Aspi F. Golwalla was placed before the trustees at their meet-

ing held on August 2, 1991. I am directed to state that though your son Darius' navjote was performed in Secunderabad, since your husband is not a Parsi Zoroastrian, your son will not be entitled to the benefits of religious institutions under our control -- including our agiary as per the judicial decision.

Yours faithfully

G. J. TATA

Joint Secretary

Office of the Trustees of the Parsi Punchayet Funds and

Properties, Bombay

September 3, 1991

Mrs Rati Puz Surti

Dear Mrs Puz Surti

You are right in stating that the Delhi Anjuman is a progressive one. It is for this reason that it permits the children of Parsi women married to a non-Parsi spouse, whose navjote ceremony has been performed, to enter the fire-temple.

I trust that this information will be of some assistance to you so that you can bring your son to the Delhi fire-temple whenever you happen to be here.

With kind regards

Yours sincerely

Y. S. KAPADIA

New Delhi September 4, 1991

continued on page 98

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Perceptions of a Politician

Arnavaz S. Mama

Veteran politician Homi J. H. Taleyarkhan was awarded the Padma Shri for his contribution to the public life of India

He may be the last representative of that dying breed — a Parsi politician of national rank. And as such, it was fitting that Homi J. H. Taleyarkhan was awarded the Padma Shri by the President of India in the centenary year of Dadabhoy Naoroji's election to the British Parliament, an event which signalled the birth of the Parsi national politician as a species. It is apt too that Taleyarkhan, who is chairman of the Dadabhoy Naoroji Centenary Year Celebrations Committee, asserts "the staunchest belief in the spirit of secularism, meaning respect for all religions while adhering to one's own, the highest integrity...hard work, sincerity, application, devotion, dedication and determination to get things done." In an age of fast disappearing Gandhians, Taleyarkhan is prone to quote Gandhiji who greatly admired Dadabhoy as his "Dada" in the genuine sense.

But the community's attitude today is a far cry from Naoroji's. Commenting on the sparse community representation in the political arena today Taleyarkhan rues, "Parsis don't want to get involved," emphasizing, "Politics is not a profession — it's a vocation." In the course of an interview with *Parsiana* early in the year Taleyarkhan emphasized the need for the small Parsi community to stand united, with a mind-set receptive to changing conditions.

Taleyarkhan perceives dwindling



Taleyarkhan receiving the Padma Shri from President R. Venkataraman

numbers with an increasing segment below the poverty line (which he identifies at 35 percent of the community), unemployment, underemployment and beggary as the community's overriding problems today. In his own words, "houses not spouses," are the need of the hour, sincerely believing that if the community could have all the housing it needs, especially the weaker sections, its negative growth rate would be reversed! Earlier in the year he had inaugurated a housing colony at Sanjan established by the Tehmuras Pundole Trust, with flats renting at Rs 100, and held it up as an example.

As chairman of WZO (World Zoroastrian Organisation) India's executive committee Taleyarkhan is deeply committed to the project for the amelioration of rural Zoroastrians in Gujarat jointly

undertaken by the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India, the Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP), the Surat Parsi Punchayet and the WZO. "There are 8,000 poor Zoroastrian farmers in the rural areas... Unfortunately there are no privileges for minorities — only for scheduled castes and tribes." The project has dispersed aid worth more than Rs 15 lakhs so far, he informs, adding, "We are insisting that there should be proper monitoring." So far the aid has been

dispersed not in cash but in kind, covering such areas as pumps, pipes and tube wells, seeds, fertilizers and pesticides and, where possible, the hiring of farm machinery for the use of the Zoroastrian farmers.

Using his considerable political clout, Taleyarkhan's initial survey of some of the Gujarat villages in 1990, when he was still a member of the Minorities Commission, was an imposing affair as a fleet of government cars carried the local collectors, bankers, dairy experts and other officials not only to remote villages but into the slushy monsoon fields, trudging wearily behind the determined septuagenarian. Crediting WZO representatives Dinshaw Tamboli and Daver Kavasji Modi for their dedication to the cause of the rural Zoroastrians, Taleyarkhan admitted that despite the good intentions there were complaints that assistance was not reaching beyond a particu-



Taleyarkhan enjoying a joke with H. H. Ismail and Jawaharlal Nehru (top left); with Indira Gandhi at the momentous Congress session of 1969 when the party split (right); with Rajiv Gandhi at HOPE 88 — the international congress on drug awareness organized by Lions International

lar area. Acknowledging that "some are disgruntled that only one section is getting help," Taleyarkhan enunciates his approach to the problem: "It is better to have something for all than all for some. Should the others not get help? Should they become poorer?" His egalitarian approach may be explained by the fact that Taleyarkhan's years in politics have spanned almost the entire history of free India, especially under Jawaharlal Nehru and Indira Gandhi when socialism was the guiding philosophy of the Congress party. He is however keen on building a corpus for the project and believes that only the income from the donations should be utilized.

Taleyarkhan feels that "banks are unable to reach out for the requirements of the minorities." As a former senior member of the Minorities Commission's steering committee Taleyarkhan has endorsed a "strong recommendation to the government to set up a development and finance corporation for the minorities with a budget of 200 to 300 crore rupees

under the 15-point project of the late Indira Gandhi. If that comes through, we will give funds through the voluntary organizations — which may include Parsi organizations — for education, health, various projects for self-employment, small scale industries, entrepreneurship, career guidance, health, etc."

Taleyarkhan's entry into public life dates to 1948 when, less than 30 years old, he became the youngest corporator of the Bombay Municipality. After four years in the Corporation Taleyarkhan graduated to the Legislative Assembly, initially of the original state of Bombay and thereafter of Maharashtra. For a decade and a half Taleyarkhan functioned variously as parliamentary secretary to chief minister Y. B. Chavan (whom he recalls as an ideal and understanding leader), as chief whip of the Congress Legislative Party and as its general secretary during Morarji Desai's chief ministership. Rising to cabinet ministership on the formation of Maharashtra state, Taleyarkhan handled health, housing,

food and civil supplies, national savings, fisheries, tourism, family planning, etc at various times.

In that period too Taleyarkhan consolidated his image — the tall Nehru-jacketed frame, the Gandhi cap atop the tanned visage, the amalgam of good humor and hard work with brusqueness. It is this last characteristic — coupled with what his critics and well-wishers term his egotism — that seems to have detracted from Taleyarkhan's popularity. Taleyarkhan however objects to this assessment as unfair. He sees himself as "frank, never brusque... I am available to one and all from any section of society and any community to help solve their problems as much as I can."

Taleyarkhan considers his appointment as the first resident Indian ambassador to Libya as the most challenging assignment of his career. "On the eve of the Bangladesh war (then Prime Minister) Indira Gandhi said she was sending me into a 'burning cauldron.'" Those were the days when Colonel Mohamer

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*Left: An audience with Pope John Paul II for Thrity and Homi Taleyarkhan
Right: With Gaddafi in Libya*



Gaddafi, a fundamentalist, had just taken over in Libya and there was substantial ignorance about India. As Taleyarkhan recounts it, "It was so bad in the first year: Indians were very few and very nervous. We were advised not to wear Gandhian gear. Many of the Libyans would turn their backs on us when they saw us. The shopkeepers would not sell their goods to Indians!"

Taleyarkhan says that instead of taking umbrage he practised "patience, persistence, persuasion, perseverance but not provocation." When India was attacked in public meetings, Taleyarkhan would not leave the venue as other ambassadors did when their country was attacked. Instead he said he would ask to see Gaddafi. It would take a week to 10 days before the Brother Colonel — you couldn't call him Excellency — would grant the interview. On each occasion Taleyarkhan says he hammered in some hometruths about India. "He didn't know that India has the second largest population of Muslims in the world...that we have complete freedom of worship, equality of opportunity for all, the largest number of mosques..." Gaddafi was "greatly impressed. Within a year or so the tide turned," Taleyarkhan recalls in triumph, his tenure as ambassador being extended from three to six years, the last year's extension being at the request of Gaddafi himself. By that time Taleyarkhan says nearly 20,000 Indians had begun working in Libya — mainly professionals and shipping and oil experts — "on the same salary as the westerners." There were also Rs 600 crores worth of

project exports from India to Libya, the biggest awards going to Bharat Heavy Electricals Ltd and M. N. Dastur and Company.

Taleyarkhan claims he was the only non-Islamic ambassador to be able to see Gaddafi on request — a prerogative he enjoyed "because of our support to the Arab cause and Palestinian rights. Any non-Islamic country (espousing) Palestinian rights would be given preference." Eventually Gaddafi "recognized India's role in running their schools and hospitals... Though he was the totally accepted leader of the Libyans he wanted to convince me that he was democratic." But Taleyarkhan says he had to ensure that Gaddafi received "glass, handle with care" treatment and, to create a climate of confidence, nearly 60 delegations were exchanged between the two countries.

When Sikkim joined the Indian Union in 1981 Taleyarkhan was appointed its first Indian governor to occupy the office for the full four year period. His activity in Sikkim, though questioned by certain local factions, helped the Indian government consolidate its position in the strategic and beautiful border state. A visible link to the Sikkim assignment was a pair of Pekingese pups — Tinkoo and Betsy — who retained their cherished place in the Taleyarkhan household for almost a decade thereafter, and subsequently in the family's fond memory.

Ambassadorship to Italy and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations followed. Within months of taking up his task Taleyarkhan recalls

the flow of condolence visitors to the embassy as news of Indira Gandhi's assassination spread. Among them was Mother Teresa, wanting to come to India for the funeral and they flew down together with the Italian foreign minister Guiseppe Andreotti. "Italy was the first western democracy to respect India's request for a memorial, and a park and garden were named after Indira Gandhi in Rome on her first death anniversary when Andreotti and the Mayor of Rome unveiled the plaque and asked the Indian ambassador to join in the ceremony in the presence of a 2,000 strong gathering."

While Taleyarkhan faced no political problems in Italy, he realized that "our weakest link is that we're incapable of projecting our capabilities abroad." Accordingly, he says, he got several portfolios done up in Italian to showcase Indian products and services. Taleyarkhan found the Italians conversant with Indian culture and was taken aback when hilltop villages burst into songs by Rabindranath Tagore in Bengali! One of his achievements, he says, was the agreement to eliminate double taxation between the two countries. International subscriber dialing between Indian and Italian cities was also established during his tenure: "Now you get Rome more easily than Delhi," he laughs.

A man who likes to see and be seen, to hear and be heard, Taleyarkhan's remarkable energy and political predilections have propelled him into various fields. He has been chairman of the Government of India's national savings reor-

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ganization commission, all of whose recommendations were accepted and duly implemented by the late Indira Gandhi, he notes. As chairman of the Maharashtra State Financial Corporation he saw to it that small scale industries were assisted by expeditious clearance of their applications for bank loans. In promotion of business, trade, industry, energy conservation, environment, tourism and a host of other fronts Taleyarkhan has found the time to participate. His pub-

"We must find more points of agreement. We have got to keep the community together"

lished books and articles cover such subjects as *The Importance of National Integration and Communal Harmony* (where his model is the Parsi community), the promotion of tourism in India, *Environment and Forestry in Economic Development, Conservation of Energy, I have it from Gandhiji* and more.

Loathe to miss a single meeting of the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India, Taleyarkhan finds himself the repository of problems that need his political connections — in preserving or freeing encroached Zoroastrian properties, immigration problems, helping young Zoroastrians with high marks to gain admission to medical and engineering colleges that are foreclosed to them as the rising level of reservation has made competition for open seats increasingly tough and out of reach. Taleyarkhan was instrumental in getting a proper road made from Udvada Station to the town and in getting the Gujarat Mail to stop at Udvada every day to facilitate Zoroastrian pilgrims to the Iranshah. Impatient but genial, Taleyarkhan has used his personal contacts to help the youth, often going out of his way to share the joys of nature and of animals with kindred souls 50 to 60 years younger than

himself!

Taleyarkhan's education in Panchgani, Poona and London (King's College and Lincoln's Inn) was interrupted when his parents sought his return on the outbreak of World War II. Taleyarkhan is proud of his lineage: His paternal grandfather Hormusji was the first Indian principal of an English school, the Proprietary and Fort High School at Gowalia Tank, he recalls. Father Jehangir was occupied on the stock exchange while his mother Tehmina was "a great social worker. They were the finest and most loving parents one could have had," adding fondly, "and the finest and most loving wife" referring to Thrity (née Lichmore) who was awarded the Padma Shri in 1965 for her sustained contribution to organizing and promoting the handicrafts of India. The loss of their only child Firdauz — a lawyer of standing on the Bombay Bar and a dedicated mountaineer who sustained a fatal fall in the Garhwal Mountains last year close on the heels of the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi — created a chasm in the Taleyarkhans' lives.

Instead of dwelling upon the tragedy that was, Taleyarkhan has chosen to commemorate Firdauz by initiating several projects in the field of helping young lawyers, training young mountaineers, and donating his precious law library to the Bombay High Court. The Bombay Municipal Corporation has named the junction of Gamadia Road and Warden Road as Firdauz Taleyarkhan Chowk in view of his services to the poor and the needy, as notes his father. Taleyarkhan now concentrates his thoughts on social problems — on drug awareness and

AIDS and on keeping the community united and within the mainstream of national life, eschewing petty-mindedness. "We must find more points of agreement. We have got to keep the community together," believes the workaholic, and to that end sees a single calendar for the Zoroastrians as an end worth seeking.

Taleyarkhan would like to see obsolete trust deeds changed through cy pres petitions. Another source of funds, according to him, could be the sale of defunct dokhma lands, the proceeds being used for housing, health and education.

Citing Swami Vivekananda Taleyarkhan is keen that Zoroastrianism is separately listed as a major religion in the national census and not mixed up with "others." The desire to ensure that the Parsis continue to receive the respect of other communities motivated Taleyarkhan to get then Vice President Dr Shanker Dayal Sharma to unveil the portrait of Mme Bhicaiji Cama in the presence of Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi in Parliament House two years ago. Earlier this year he was involved in the 400th anniversary celebrations of Dastur Meherjirana who is credited with having convinced Emperor Akbar of the purity of the Zoroastrian faith and for having pioneered the study of comparative religions.

"Very keen that (there be) complete understanding between the BPP, the Federation and the WZO" it has been rumored of Taleyarkhan that he is interested in the trusteeship of the BPP. "That's what I have heard too," he responds cagily. "In any case I'm giving all help to the community whether I am in the Panchayet or not..."



Taleyarkhan with mother Tehmina to his right and wife Thrity to his left after being elected Municipal Corporator in 1948

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From spades to spoons

Homi Rogers

Katy Dalal was happily immersed in archeological ruins until eye problems accidentally led her to a new career in catering

Over a quarter of a century ago, Ms Katy Feroze Dalal's career lay in ruins. And far from being devastated by this, the lady was smugly pleased. Surprised? Not if you consider that Dalal was then India's up-and-coming archeologist.

Today, some two decades later, Dalal's vocation has changed. Ruins (archeological) have been forsaken for *rahnnis* (kitchens); relics have given way to recipes. Like a leitmotiv, pots and pans still figure in her life as Dalal takes on a new — and equally successful — avatar as the czarina of catering. Yes, the lady behind the blazing coal fires, adding just the right ingredients to make the *patra* (sit-down dinner served on plantain leaves) delectable at many a navjote and lagar in Bombay, is the same who faced scorching sun and sleeting cold 30 summers ago, discovering in the heart of the Thar desert a civilization older than the Indus Valley.

Born on New Year's day (January 1, 1942) in a middle-class household in Bandra, a suburb of Bombay, where Dalal recalls that a mango grove sheltered their cottage, she took to history like a fish to water. "There is a stirring within you," Dalal says with a sparkle in her eyes, "that sets the pace of your life, right from early age." And something within her was always propelling her, she claims, to know the past.

Her natural passion for history was fanned, "as fate would have it," by Ervad

Darab Kutar, a mobed at the neighboring agiary. "He was a sage," Dalal recalls reverentially, "and looked like one of our ancient priests... as if he had just stepped out of a Persian mythological book." Dalal, then Frenchman ("bet you

him personally, or had enjoyed long sessions with his shrink! "But what I say is history recorded in the many texts," stresses Dalal, reputedly an authority on the Achaemenians, the dynasty that ruled Persia when Alexander defeated Darius III.

By now it would seem that Dalal's course had been charted for her: the past interested her enough for her to make it her future. But her ship almost floundered, for pecuniary reasons. Her father Nariman, a clerk at the Claridges' printing press, could not have borne the strain of educating two sons and a daughter on his meager resources. But, at a time when Dalal may have had to give up her studies, history came to her rescue: she obtained the highest marks in World

History at the inter arts examination of the Bombay University, bagging, in the process, the Wordsworth Prize and Scholarship. The rest, as they say, is history.

Young Dalal joined the Heras Institute for her graduation; and under the eagle eye of Fr John Correa-Afonso, a figure of repute in history circles, completed her BA two years later, in 1962, majoring in Ancient Indian Culture.

The journey from Bombay to Pune is just 192 km, but for young Dalal it seemed aeons away. Spurred by her successes, and the growing realization that her dreams of making a career in history were becoming a reality, she stepped back in time to do her masters in archeol-



Photo: Homiyar Mistry, Homz Prints

wouldn't have guessed my maiden surname," she chuckles), attended the pre-navjote discourses by the learned priest, and continued to be fascinated by him after her initiation ceremony as he retold tales from the past to his rapt young audience, peppering them with his ready wit. "He brought to life Alexander, the Macedonian king who ruled practically half the world," claims Dalal. In turn, Dalal, with a sneaking admiration, speaks of Alexander, the man who defeated Zoroastrian kings and reportedly burnt our ancient scriptures in the royal library "at the behest of his mistress." She talks of him as if she had known

ogy at the only university then offering postgraduation studies in the subject: Pune's Deccan College. Here Dalal trained under two brilliant men, Prof H. D. Sankalia and Dr V. N. Misra, who were then the director and head of department of Pre-History, respectively. Today, her eldest son Kurush pursues a career in archeology at the same venerable institute where in 1964 his mother had received a first class first in her master's degree.

By now, Dalal had considerable 'digs' to her credit. She had explored the Harappan site of Rojadi in Saurashtra, the historic site of Dwarka, and seen most of the explored material housed in Gujarat's museums. But, as it had happened to her on other occasions, it was a chance event that altered her life considerably. Amalanda Ghosh, the then director general of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) read a paper at the Deccan College's Proto-history seminar on "The Indus civilization's origins, extent and chronology." He referred to a place called Sothi, which he had discovered on the Drishadvati river in Bikaner. The pottery at Sothi, Ghosh felt, could perhaps offer an insight into the origin of Harappa.

The lecture set Dalal off to discovering a civilization that predated the Indus Valley civilization, celebrated for its sites at Mohenjo-daro and Harappa. Three explorations were carried out by her in Bikaner. In between she got married and found in her husband, Feroze, an officer in the merchant navy, a true partner and supporter of her work. Feroze not only took an interest in archeology, he even financed her expeditions. For all the lure of this profession, thought to be synonymous with treasure-hunts, no gold or silver falls into the lap of an archeologist. All treasure must be handed over to the ASI, but the cost of the expedition is borne by the digger. Dalal has usually explored sites from her own resources, barring a Fellowship of Rs 350 per month granted to her by the Sir Dorab Tata Trust for three years.

In the following years, in addition to discovering the mysteries of an ancient civilization, Dalal explored life itself. Her father, enthused by his daughter's work, accompanied her on a few expeditions, and came up trumps, with the luck of a beginner. Her father-in-law, too, joined her on a dig, and it must have been amusing to see two old men, shovel in hand, digging up a mound to scruti-

nize fragments and fossils. But Dalal also saw the cruel side of life. Though always clad in a sari ("I would wear slacks underneath for comfort," the young Dalal would be mistaken for a woman of easy virtue. Laborers engaged for digging would occasionally try to exploit her. Dalal also witnessed the many miseries of a caste-ridden and male-dominated society, and the strange ailments that plagued the land. By then, she claims, she had received the gift of being able to read the other person's mind, and would uncannily know what/whom to protect herself against. She had also become a kind of faith healer which won her ample love from the simple villagers.

In 1967 she weathered the cold wave, unsurpassed in the past 50 years, that swept the Great Indian Desert, causing temperatures to drop way below normal and thunderstorms to rage... But it was more bitter for her to face the antipathy of some of her peers who rejected her claim of having unearthed a civilization predating the most ancient civilization known so far. Here again her husband was a pillar of strength. She sailed with him to England, where they met Sir Mortimer Wheeler, the universally acclaimed archeologist. Wheeler encouraged Dalal

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in her research and was very keen that she excavate sites in Rajasthan. In 1972 Dalal published her thesis on pre-historic pottery along the lost Saraswati river, and dedicated it to Wheeler's and Sir Aurel Stein's memory. The explorations in Bikaner and Bahawalpur, so close to the Indo-Pak border ("we could see the Pakistani soldiers guarding their posts"), were confirmed as the first sites where material earlier than the pre-Harappan period had been found. Its publication led to Dr Rafique Mughal, of Pakistan's Department of Archaeology, writing to Dalal to inform her that the pottery unearthed by her was equivalent to finds in Hakra ware in Pakistan, dating back to approximately fourth millennium BC.

For soldiers of the past, both Dalal and son Kurush predict a bright future. "There is so much yet to discover in a culturally rich country like India, that the avenues are endless," says Kurush, echoing his mother's thoughts. Like Dalal, who lectures at Bombay's St Xavier's College, Kurush is considering teaching, and hopes to do further research abroad. Dalal now no longer goes on 'digs,' but continues to contribute papers to journals and lectures regularly on interesting facets of architecture and scripture at the Dr (Ms) Meher Master-Moos-run Zoroas-

trian College. "My lectures," claims Dalal with justifiable pride, "attract more people than of many others at the College." One reason for this could be the fact that while Master-Moos levies an entrance charge for hearing other speak-

No gold or silver falls into the lap of an archeologist

ers, Dalal's lectures — at the archeologist's own insistence — are free. She was also a speaker at the International Congress held under the auspices of the K. R. Cama Oriental Institute in January 1989, an event where, besides winning plaudits on the podium, she charmed the delegates with her excellent daily lunches.

Cooking has also been Dalal's forte. And her career in catering came about fatefully. On a trip abroad with her husband in 1978, she complained of an eye problem. The visual impairment had the couple cut their trip short. Cautioned against undue strain and constant movement, Dalal found herself housebound,

with enough time on her hands to indulge in her hobby of baking puddings and cakes and preparing traditional Parsi food. In the spirit of Parsi camaraderie, she helped out a few friends when their cook was away or a celebration called for, before seriously contemplating sending out tiffins for a fee. Dalal's palate ticklers soon had their fans. Her cuisine brought new savor to the food at Masons' Club and to the dhansak at Ripon's. The Princess Victoria Memorial (PVM) Gymkhana gourmets, too, were left asking for more. The successes, though, were short-lived, as Dalal, embroiled in some unsavory controversies, quit PVM and Ripon Club, and decided to do it on her own.

"My favorite is prawn and pomfret patia," she proclaims, agreeing to share her recipe with *Parsiana* readers for Navroze. "It's interesting, though," says Dalal when her daughter Freny, mockingly teases her for giving away a 'trade secret,' "how the same recipe can be interpreted so differently. I once tasted dhansak at a cooking contest, and all the five entries tasted so different."

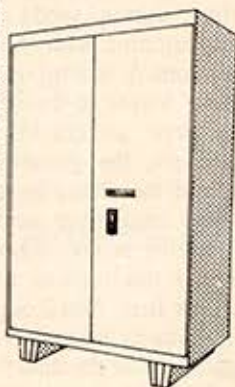
For Dalal, life has been sweet as well as pungent. But she has blended the ingredients right and therein lies the recipe of her success.

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PRAWN AND POMFRET PATIA (serves 6-8)

Prawns (1 large cup — deveined)
Pomfret (8 slices)
Coconuts (2 — grated)
Kashmiri chillies (15-20)
Cumin seeds (2 tbsp)
Dhana-jeera masala (1 tbsp)
Garlic (1 large pod)
Mustard seeds (½ tsp)
Black peppercorns (1 tsp)
Vinegar (½ cup)
Jaggery (¼-½ cup)
Onions (4 large — chopped)
Curry leaves (2 stems)
Coriander (1 bunch)
Tomatoes (4 large — finely chopped)
Cherry tomatoes (20)
Drumsticks (6 — cleaned and cut into 3-inch pieces)
Baby brinjals (10)
Chillies (4 — de-seeded and split)
Capsicums (2 — sliced)
Til oil (1½ cup)
Refined groundnut oil (1 cup)
Salt (to taste)

Take a large flat bottomed vessel. Wash pomfret and prawns separately, salt and set aside. Grind coconut, garlic, Kashmiri chillies, cumin seeds, mustard seeds and peppercorns with the vinegar on a grinding stone or in a mixie. Put the til oil and curry leaves in the vessel and allow the leaves to crackle. Add chopped tomatoes, the ground masala, split chillies and the dhana-jeera masala to the pan and cook over gentle heat. When a tantalizing aroma arises out of the masala add the prawns and cook them over a slow fire. Add 2 cups of water. When the prawns are cooked add the fish and jaggery. Roll the dish from side to side by holding the vessel with 2 cloth pieces. Do not stir with a spoon. Add

salt only if necessary as the pomfret and prawns are already salted. Add cherry tomatoes.

Cut the brinjals into four pieces. Retain the stalk. Place in salted water. Cut the capsicums into slices. Heat the refined oil in a frying pan or kadai. Fry the baby brinjals and allow the oil to drain on a plate. Put the capsicum slices in the same pan and remove immediately from the oil. Boil the drumsticks in salted water and set aside. Chop the coriander.

Serve the patia by placing it on a flat dish. Decorate it with the fried baby brinjals, capsicum, drumsticks and coriander. Serve with hot parathas or yellow Parsi dal and white rice.

CHICKEN FARCHAS

(serves 4-8)
Chicken (8 pieces)
Salt (to taste)
Ginger-garlic (1½ tsp — ground paste)
Kashmiri chilly powder (2-3 tsp)
Turmeric powder (1½ tsp)
Cinnamon, clove and black pepper (1½ tsp — ground)
Green chillies (2 — slit)
Coriander (1 tbsp — chopped)
Celery (some leaves or ½ a stalk)
Bread crumbs (1 cup)
Eggs (4-6)
Oil for frying

Wash the chicken and marinate it with salt and ginger-garlic paste. Coat it with the chilly, turmeric and 3 spice powders. Allow to stand for half an hour. Place the chicken in a heavy bottomed pan along with 1 cup of water. Place over a low fire and allow to simmer till the flesh is soft and tender. Coat the chicken pieces with the bread crumbs. Place oil in a kadai on high heat. Beat 4 of the eggs. Dip the chicken pieces in the

beaten eggs two or three at a time, and fry in hot oil till golden brown. Serve with potato chips and a green salad.

PARSI BHARUCHI AKOORI

(serves 4-8)
Eggs (12)
Milk (½-1 cup)
Onions (5 — sliced finely)
Coriander (3 tbsp — chopped)
Green chillies (1 tsp — chopped finely)
Tomatoes (2 — skinned, de-seeded and chopped)
Ginger-garlic (½ tsp — ground paste)
Black pepper (½ tsp — ground)
Raisins (½ cup — fried)
Almonds (½ cup — sliced and fried)
Pistachios (¼ cup — sliced and fried)
Salt (to taste)
Oil for frying

Place oil in a kadai. Deep fry the sliced onions till golden brown. Place tomatoes, green chillies, ginger-garlic paste and black pepper powder in a heavy bottomed pan. Add 4 tbsp of oil from the kadai in which the onions were fried. Cook on a slow fire till the tomatoes are soft. Add salt to taste and half the coriander.

Beat the eggs well and add ½ cup milk or more as required. Add the beaten egg mixture with the fried onions to the cooked tomato mixture along with half the raisins, almonds and pistachios. Stir the pan vigorously with a slotted spoon till the mixture becomes firm and pulpy like yoghurt. It should not be allowed to dry up.

Quickly transfer onto serving dish and decorate with the remaining raisins, nuts and coriander. Serve with buttered toast and jam as a breakfast item or with rotis or parathas for lunch or dinner.

continued on page 98

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Zend: the sharp shooter

ing rifle) commonly used by the army, earned three gold in team events and the other medals in individual events.

"Parsis are basically good marksmen," believes the champion shooter who would like to see a greater number of young Parsis opting for this sport. He himself is a regular visitor at the Worli Rifle Range. For several months prior to a shooting competition, Zend puts in a couple of hours' practice daily in the early mornings. There are three-four other Parsi boys too who seriously pursue this sport at the Range. The rest just come to while away their time during the holidays, remarks Zend.

According to the marksman, shooting is "not a costly sport." The Range provides the newcomer with a pistol and the guide's fees are nominal. One has only to pay for the pellets, informs Zend who offers to assist anyone interested in this sport.

A wine dealer by profession, Zend's love for the sport started out as a hobby during his childhood. His father used to take him hiking to Khandala and Lonavla where they practised shooting with a .177 air rifle whilst ensuring that never an innocent life was lost, he reminisces.

JRD's ready wit

A scaled down version of the Tata Estate (the pride of the Tata Engineering and Locomotive Company) crafted in wood, was to be presented to J. R. D. Tata at the Company's annual general meeting this year.

But just as the model of the automobile was being handed over to JRD, one of the wheels came off to the embarrassment of the organizers. "I hope this model comes with a warranty period," was JRD's spontaneous remark that saved the day, reports the *Indian Express* of August 24, 1992.

"You have to leave!"

That particular morning when he reported to work, Rohinton Chichgar was summarily informed that his services had been terminated. After working as a shift manager for an oil refinery in Al Jubair in Saudi Arabia for eight years, Chichgar was shattered when he with his family were asked to leave Saudi Arabia within a month's time. The reason cited for his dismissal was his religion, Zoroastrianism. This story has been recounted in *The Afternoon Despatch and Courier* of July 6, 1992.

"Why they are against the Parsis, no one will tell us. We were only told that people belonging to (our) religion are not allowed to work in Saudi Arabia... Nine times out of 10, they do not even tell you why they are terminating your contract. You are just asked to leave and you have to leave," points out Chichgar who re-

turned to Bombay in early May.

Being an Islamic country, the decision could not be challenged in any court of law for the only courts that exist there are Islamic courts. "Even the Indian embassy was no help at all," notes Chichgar. The only consolation for him was that his company intervened with the *ikanama* office that controls work permits and granted him an extended stay so that his children's academic year would not be disturbed, *The Afternoon* reports.

His wife Shehernawaz and children had accompanied him only three months prior to the dismissal order. But luckily for Chichgar, Shehernawaz had proceeded on leave without pay instead of resigning from the State Bank of India. On their return to Bombay it was her income that supported the family in the course of the troubled months during which Chichgar was unemployed.

"If the Saudi Arabians do not want Parsis in their country, why do they grant them visas in the first place?" questioned Shehernawaz who recounted how her husband had felt obliged to report for work just before the start of the Gulf War "because his company needed him... His oil refinery is so close to the air field base... there was tremendous risk to his life."

The Chichgars have one piece of advice for all the Parsi emigrants to Saudi Arabia: "Don't tell them that you are a Parsi. And if you are proud of your religion and do not want to hide it, don't apply for a job in Saudi Arabia."

continued on page 100

Shehernawaz and Rohinton Chichgar: not allowed to work in Saudi Arabia



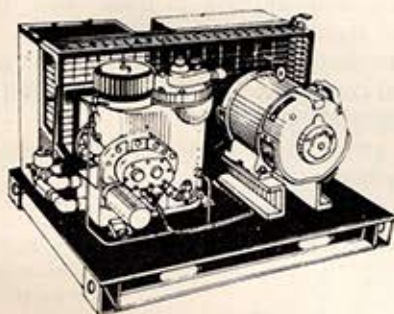
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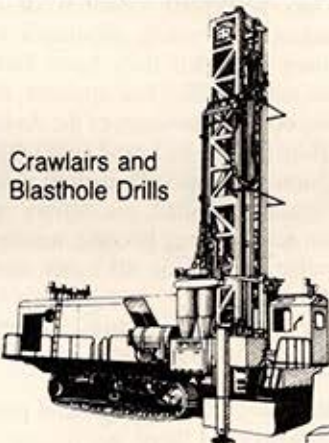
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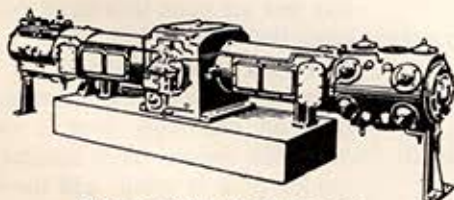
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The 1992 BPP ELECTIONS...

continued from page 36

days (October 30 and 31) at two centers and not on five days at five centers as earlier planned.

Khareghat Colony activists

While the different interest groups within the Parsi community seek to contest and win the largest number of seats in the forthcoming Anjuman Committee elections, a small group of Khareghat Colony residents aim to contest only 25 seats. Petrasp Patel, noted tax consultant and one of the guiding lights of the group, agrees that 25 votes may not be much in an Anjuman Committee of 802 elected members and an equal number of donors, but in a close contest it could influence the outcome.

The important point according to Patel is that to have meaningful leverage the 25 must vote as a bloc and it is for this reason they limited their numbers.

"Getting five Parsis to agree on anything is hard enough; getting 79 to agree is impossible," Patel says as he explains why the group decided against contesting the full slate — 79 — at Khareghat Colony. When it started organizing itself after the new scheme of the Anjuman Committee had been announced, the group originally envisaged was smaller. However, they expanded to accommodate a few more people who expressed interest in their work. Patel points out that all the members of the group are well settled and respected members of the community. He also takes pains to clarify that he is only one of many who have contributed to it.

Patel believes that the future of the community depends on the trustees who are elected to the BPP. "The trustees' job is not an easy one" says Patel. "The trusts they manage have firm bindings and they must work within these bindings. It's easy to make problems, but difficult to deliver," he adds. According to

him, the person that the Khareghat Colony group will vote for as trustee must be mature and yet not too old, of social stature, qualified, rational and with time enough to devote to the task. No, they do not have anyone who fits the bill or whom they propose to put up as their candidate. "When the time comes, we will meet all the (trustee) candidates and vote for the person we think is best suited for the job."

Patel is muted on his campaign platform as he does not want to be drawn into controversies, be it housing, religion, the election system or whatever. Neither does he see the need to link the election of trustees with the localized problems of Khareghat Colony. "We do not want to confuse the election of trustees with the problems of Khareghat Colony. We do not expect the trustee we vote for to feel obliged to us. We will do our duty and elect the best man. Let them do their duty and do the best job," says Patel.

DOORS CLOSED TO DARIUS

continued from page 78

Mrs Rati Puz Surti

Dear Mrs Puz Surti

Your letter dated August 25, 1991 has been with me for some time and I do apologize for delay in replying. The delay has been intentional as you will understand from the subsequent paragraphs. I had also received your letter dated July 19, 1991 addressed to me in my personal capacity which too was not replied as we were in the process of making some changes in our rules.

Any Zoroastrian who has had his or her navjote performed is permitted entry into the Kaikhushru Pallonji Dar-e-

Meher at Delhi since 1987. Although non-Parsi spouses of Parsi Zoroastrians could become members of our Anjuman since 1987, it was only on September 8, '91 that the annual general meeting of the Anjuman has permitted children of mixed marriages to become members of the Anjuman provided they have had their navjote performed. Their spouses, in turn, can also become members of the Anjuman.

It may please be noted that under our rules, non-Parsi spouses cannot make use of religious facilities, viz. agiary and aramgah, nor can they become trustees, but otherwise they enjoy all other membership privileges.

You will thus see that whereas we

have a cosmopolitan membership of the Anjuman, entry into Dar-e-Meher and burial facilities are open only to Parsi Zoroastrians who have had their navjote ceremony performed. I will also like to point out that the board of trustees of each anjuman have to frame their rules and regulations in accordance with the trust deeds they administer, and the general consensus of the overall membership of the Anjuman.

I trust you will appreciate the delay in my replying.

With best wishes

Yours sincerely

Lt Gen (Retd) A. M. SETHNA

President, The Delhi Parsi Anjuman

October 16, 1991

FROM SPADES TO SPOONS

continued from page 94

LAGAN SARA ISTEW

(serves 4-8)

Tomatoes (1-1½ kg — de-seeded, skinned and chopped)

Onions (4-6 large — finely chopped)

Sweet potatoes (½ kg — washed and cubed)

Red pumpkin (½ kg — washed and cubed)

Sooran (yam) (½ kg — washed and cubed)

Bhendi (okra) (½ kg — washed and cut into 1/4" slices)

Carrots (½ kg — washed and cubed)

Double beans (½ kg)

Turmeric powder (½ tsp)

Ginger-garlic (1 tbsp — ground paste)

Chilly powder (1 tbsp)

Cinnamon, clove, black pepper powder (1 tbsp)

Dates (1 cup — washed, stoned and chopped)

Currants (1 cup — washed and cleaned)

Vinegar (½ cup)

Sugar (½ cup)

Salt (to taste)

Oil for cooking and frying

Soak the double beans overnight. The next day rinse and cook in a pressure cooker along with salt and ½ tsp turmeric powder. When cooked, strain off the water.

Take a large kadai half filled with refined oil. Place on the stove over a high flame. Salt all the vegetables lightly and

fry each vegetable separately in small lots and set aside in a large thala or any other flat vessel.

Take a heavy bottomed pan. Place the chopped onions along with ½ cup left over oil and cook over a low flame. When the onions have become soft and golden pink in color, add the tomatoes, spice powders and dry fruits and allow to cook till soft. Add ½ cup of water or more as required and the fried vegetables and double beans. Shake the vessel from side to side.

Mix the vinegar and sugar, using as much vinegar as you desire. If you don't want to use ½ a cup, use less. Mix well till the sugar has melted. Pour over the cooked vegetables. Stir and serve.

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EVENTS AND PERSONALITIES

continued from page 96

Personnel advancement

He writes papers on the subject of personnel management and industrial relations. He conducts workshops and seminars in his line of specialization. His 20 years of active participation in this field has earned Dara Pavri a corporate membership of the London based Institute of Personnel Management, informs a press release.

A personnel and administrative manager cum factory manager with Permali Wallace Limited, Bhopal, Pavri is a life member of the National Institute of Personnel Management, Calcutta and has been elected honorary secretary of the Indian Society for Training and Development, Bhopal chapter.

He has been included on various committees constituted by the Madhya Pradesh Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Confederation of Indian Industry. The personnel manager has

also been included on the state level committee of the Workers Education Centre, constituted by the government of Madhya Pradesh.

Indore born Pavri is a graduate in science and law with a postgraduate degree in personnel management. He is



presently the president of the Bhopal Parsi Anjuman and also serves as joint secretary of the Rotary Club, Bhopal South, the release adds.

SPOTLIGHT

India's ace yachtsmen Lt Farokh Tarapore and Kelly Rao have been nominated for the Rajiv Khel Ratna award instituted by the union ministry of sports, reports *The Times of India* of August 12, 1992. The selection committee comprised Ramanathan Krishnan, Prakash Padukone, Prasun Bannerjee, Mansoor Ali Khan Pataudi and Ashwini Kumar.

Compiled by Roxana A. Mirza

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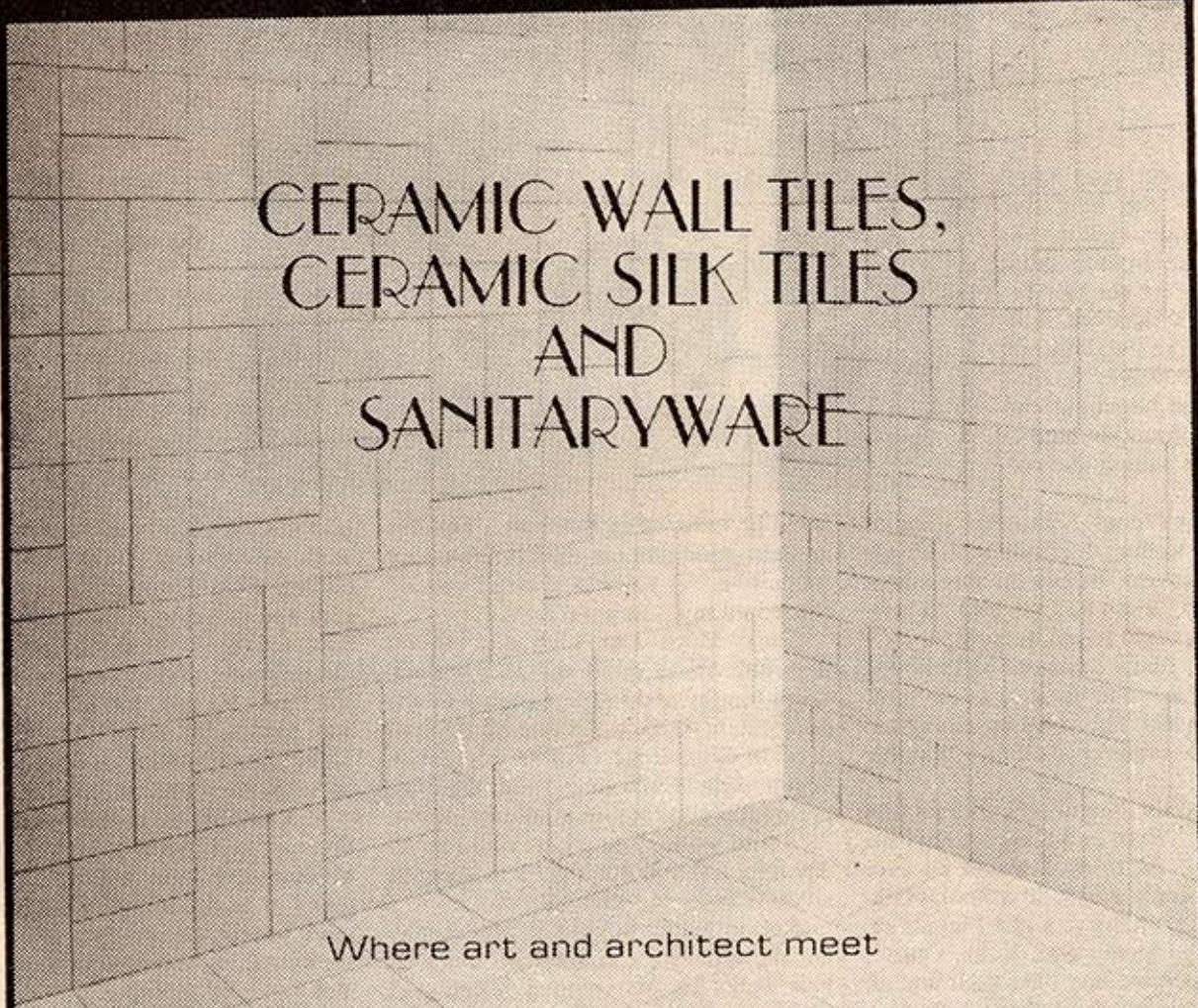
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A cut above the rest

Gustasp Irani

A preoccupation with hair
has led Jehanbux Mogul into the upper crust
of professional beauticians

"I want to cut your hair." What made the impulsive statement truly startling was that it came from a tailor who had never cut hair before. But his friend was willing to take the risk; at worst he would shave himself bald, at best he would collect Rs 20 from his parents for the free haircut. He collected Rs 20.

Jehanbux Mogul, 37, currently one of Bombay's leading hairstylists, both for men and women, recalls the day, about 15 years ago, when he gave his first haircut to his intrepid friend Kersi Mistry. "I owe a lot to him," confesses Mogul, who recognizes that one instance as the turning point which led to his switching careers from snipping cloth to snipping hair.

Mistry aside, Mogul was his own first guinea pig. "Even as a child I loved handling hair. At home I would be ever combing people's hair; at school advising friends on hairstyles and I would do weird things to my own locks. Once I had them permed into tight curls and on another occasion dyed them a flaming red," says a soft-spoken Mogul with a soft smile playing on his gentle features. Most people around Mogul were taken aback by his obsession, some were annoyed and literally saw red, but not his grandmother Dinamai Aspar at whose



home he grew up in Bombay. "She has an open mind and has always been very supportive. 'If you like it then I like it,' she would say," Mogul recalls.

Today Mogul's fan club is extensive: it includes both sexes and all ages and keeps him busy through the week in the little saloon he has established at his residence at Grant Road. Here he works with uncomplicated efficiency and neatness, personally cleaning up after each client. "It's hard work. You are on your feet all day long and you don't get a moment to sit down and rest," says Mogul.

But no matter how tired Mogul may be, the moment a client with untamed hair walks in, his creative juices start flowing. "Anyone who comes to me with wild, unstyled hair I find challenging," says Mogul. But he is the first to admit that the chances are he will have to compromise on the cut he will eventually give.

We watch such an encounter as a first-

time client submits her hair to his ministrations. Mogul runs his fingers through the mane, assessing it. "Split ends," he declares and advises her on the right methods of shampooing and caring for her hair. He would like it to go short, he says. She is hesitant and suggests a trim. So Mogul explains what he proposes to do —

give her an A line cut. Then he starts his work: combing out her hair and snipping; curling strands around his sensitive fingers and snipping. The movements are fluid, the comb and scissors orchestrating the emerging design. And when it is finally over the girl looks at her mirror self and sighs — in relief and appreciation. Mogul later explains he would have preferred to have gone shorter but...

But hairstyling is more than just cutting hair — it's part human relations. A beautician, Mogul explains, has to be tuned in to his client's sensibilities and more so when it comes to hair. "Hair is the only thing you can change overnight. You can't do anything drastic with your other features — unless you are Michael Jackson," says Mogul, who for this reason sees hair as the most significant aspect of beauty.

But he clarifies: "A change in hairstyle is not going to change your personality or identity. What I aim to do is

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highlight the plus points." When deciding on a hairstyle, Mogul's starting point is the shape of his client's face; it could be oval, round, square, rectangular or whatever. "Not everyone can carry every style, though the oval-shaped face can carry most," he observes.

Equally important is the client's image of herself and the kind of hair she would like to wear. An honest reaction helps Mogul in his task. It is not uncommon, after he has finished flashing his scissors, for a girl to say she had something quite different in mind. For instance, a girl wanting to grow her hair: in such a case Mogul will give her a cut which will let her hair grow gracefully. This in preference to her growing it wild and turning up a year later with a tangle of split ends. Says Mogul: "I don't find long hair particularly attractive." He finds short curls which are 'tossy' more attractive and versatile to groom.

Fifteen years ago when Mogul started styling hair, he found that Indians were cautious and preferred the standard U cut: that is, short in front and long behind. Today they are willing to try new styles and wear their hair shorter.

Hairstyling aside, part of Mogul's job is advising his clients on hair care: how to brush and shampoo. "I may advise some to wash their hair bending over or tell them which kind of shampoos to use and when to switch. For instance in winter they might need an oily shampoo and in summer a dry one," says Mogul. According to him there are no standard tips on hair care; each case is distinctive. For instance Parsi hair: in all these years he has been unable to slot Parsi hair into any convenient type. "You find Parsis with all kinds of hair, from thick fuzzy curls

to straight flowing hair," he observes.

As Mogul looks back on his career he observes that he did not encounter any problems as a male straying into the female world of hairstyling. "I was not the first man to enter the field. And I still do men's hair even though most of my clients today are women," he clarifies. If at all he encountered problems it was because of his circumstances as the son of an Udvada mobed.

"Dad was a priest in Udvada so he did not get to see all my childhood madness and obsession with hair," says Mogul. But once the father came to learn of it, he protested against hairstyling as a possible career choice. "A son of an Udvada priest cutting hair? No!" So Mogul dropped out of Wilson College (he had studied at the J. N. Petit Technical High School in Poona), did a course at the Zarpakar School of Tailoring and set up his own tailoring shop.

Three years later came that eventful day when Mogul gave his first haircut. Soon other friends and relatives were entrusting their hair to Mogul's comb and scissors and for two years he ran his tailoring and haircutting operations side by side. At that point he decided that he would dedicate his career entirely to hair. His father, meanwhile, had come to terms with reality and did not protest any more. Even though Mogul's clients at the time had faith in his ability and creativity, he attended a proper hairstyling course at Bandra before starting his new career.

For all his adventurism Mogul likes to function on familiar grounds: he will cut hair only at his own saloon, even at the cost of fame. Requests to style hair for weddings and social functions are turned

down if that entails Mogul visiting the residence of his clients. But there are many who value Mogul's pampering of their hair to endure his inflexibility.

Though Mogul is happy doing his own thing, he is not insensitive to his roots. He is acutely aware that he is partly responsible for a break with an old Parsi Zoroastrian tradition. His father, now 71, is the last in the line of one of the nine priestly families that have cared for the Udvada Iranshah fire. After him there will be no one to take over. "My paternal uncle is in Karachi and his children have no plans to come to Udvada. And I am not even a navar. After my father there will be only eight priestly families left in Udvada (to tend to the Iranshah)."

Mogul sees the sad decline of his family profession as only the beginning of the collapse of a system that has barely survived the onslaught of time. "Soon there will be only three or four families left in Udvada. The next time you go there just look around. You will not see young priests there," he observes.

The reason, according to Mogul, is obvious: no form of retirement fund or financial security exists for an aged mobed. "You can't blame the priests for not wanting their children to suffer as they did," says Mogul. And yes, the sight of some mobeds in Udvada begging is painful, but as Mogul says: "If they don't extend their hands, they will die of hunger." Recently there is a growing awareness of the plight of the Udvada mobeds in the community. Efforts are being made to help and trusts are being established. In fact, his cousin in Karachi has started one such trust for the Udvada mobeds.

This kind of awareness, as well as the exploration of new avenues, Mogul sees as a reflection of the resurgent spirit in the community. "Earlier I was distressed by the lack of ambition in Parsis. All they wanted was to become bank clerks. Now I find that things are changing. We are getting more interested in our religion and more Parsis are venturing into new businesses and trades," says Mogul.

Mogul himself is an example of this new resurgence in the community. Our forefathers were known for their resourcefulness and their ability to respond to an opportunity; there were Parsi carpenters, craftsmen and skilled tradesmen. Today there are Parsi beauticians and hairstylists. Mogul keeps alive the tradition of enterprise.

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Wedlock's end: 5

K. C. Vajifdar

While mental cruelty is increasingly recognized by the law courts, change of religion can no longer ensure divorce

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

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

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

In the ensuing article Vajifdar discusses changes in the law regarding judicial separation and change of religion. In four earlier articles Vajifdar had explained impotency and non-consummation of marriage, bigamy, desertion, adultery, etc. The last article will deal with alimony and the custody of children.

Under the Parsi Marriage and Divorce Act (PMDA) any married person may sue for judicial separation on the ground that the defendant has been guilty of such cruelty to him or her or their children or has used such violence or has behaved in such a way as to render it, in the judgement of the court, improper to compel



him or her to live with the defendant.

Cruelty has now been made a ground for divorce under the amended PMDA. However, in every suit for divorce on the ground of cruelty, it is left to the discretion of the court whether to grant a decree for divorce or judicial separation only. Thus, it is very clear that even though a Parsi may have filed a suit for divorce on the ground of cruelty, it is for the court to come to its own conclusion and not grant divorce but mere judicial separation.

Mental cruelty is proved when the court is of the opinion that by certain acts done by the party or certain words uttered, the frame of mind is disturbed. The court, whilst considering this aspect, would bear in mind the fact that the acts or words are of such type which would really upset the other party. However, when a person is very sensitive and cannot take anything spoken or accepted in society in an ordinary manner, the same would not be considered as mental cruelty. Thus in the case where a husband

was always telling his wife, "Don't be late and get ready soon," this was not held to be an act of mental cruelty; but when a husband goes on accusing his wife of having affairs with other men though not naming them, he was held guilty of inflicting mental cruelty.

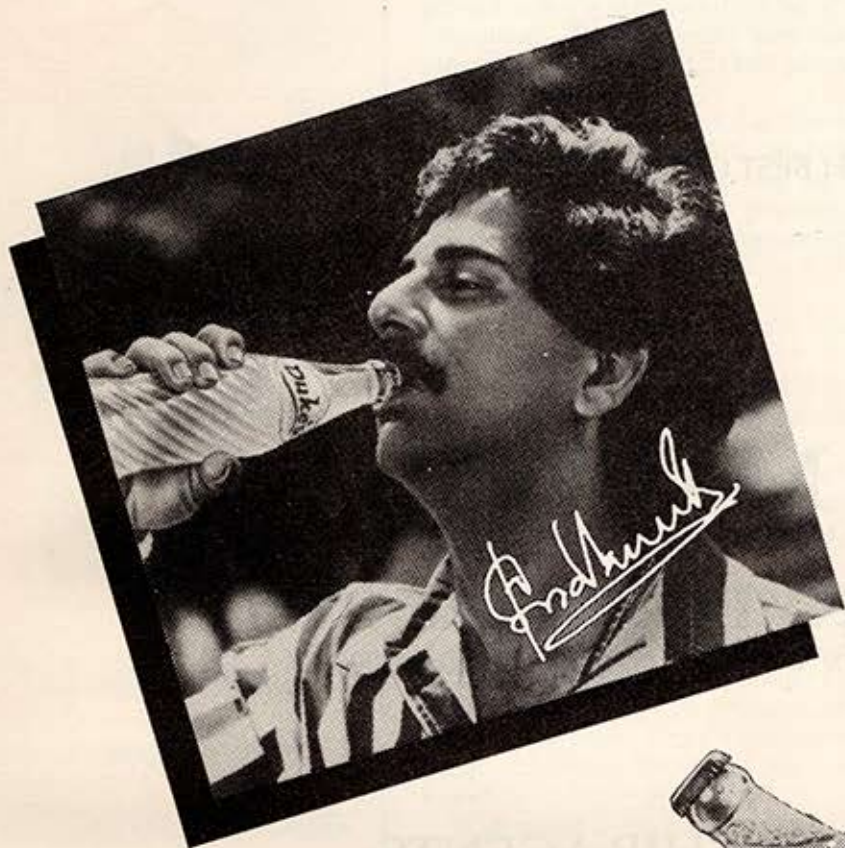
Repeated verbal onslaughts, either by the wife or husband, which disturb the frame of mind are considered mental cruelty. Mental cruelty is a good ground for taking a divorce. Nowadays there is hardly physical cruelty but almost always mental cruelty. It is always judged by weighing the consequences of the utterances and the acts done by the husband or wife to determine whether they cause mental anguish. Mental cruelty is supposed to be of far more consequence than physical cruelty. Between a husband and wife usually there is no evidence of a third party.

Thus all would depend upon the manner in which the party deposes before the court of law whilst giving evidence. The courts are lenient and are more prone to accept the version of a wife than that of a husband, even though there is a law of equality between them and no differentiation should be made. Almost always a wife, whilst narrating such instances, cries in a court of law and, bearing in mind human instincts, she tends to get a favorable verdict for herself either by conviction or sometimes by making a fuss about the same. In one case a woman broke down repeatedly whilst narrating the evidence and could not give a coherent answer in the cross examination and yet the sympathy of the court was with the woman.

Originally, under section 32(h) of the PMDA, a Parsi could get a divorce three years after an order for judicial separation awarding separate maintenance to the plaintiff had been passed against the

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defendant. The amended Section 32(h) has reduced the period from three years to one year. No marital intercourse should take place during that time. However, if the parties resume cohabitation after a decree of judicial separation is passed, they would not be able to claim the relief granted under this section.

What does 'resumption of cohabitation' mean?

In one very interesting case, a wife obtained judicial separation from her husband and started living apart. After some time, she returned to her husband's house with the child. The husband allowed her to live in a part of the house. The husband and wife occupied separate parts of the house. Cooking was also done separately. It was agreed between the husband and the wife that the wife would pay a certain amount of rent which would be deducted from the maintenance which was awarded to her. The court, in this case, held that cohabitation does not necessarily mean that there should be sexual intercourse between the husband and wife. Cohabitation simply means living together as husband and wife.

Thus, it is very clear that in order to get a decree of divorce after judicial separation, there must be no resumption of cohabitation even though the couple may be living like complete strangers.

It may be added here that nowadays courts do allow the wife to remain in a portion of the premises belonging to the husband and do give a decree to that effect. Plans are prepared as far as possible, separate entrances are given and as and when separate entrance is not possible, the parties are called upon to stay together as strangers and have nothing to do with each other. The wife cannot be thrown out from the premises by physical force by the husband. The same principle applies whether it is a judicial separation or a divorce.

No decree for divorce is granted if a Parsi has failed or neglected to comply with an order for maintenance passed against him under Section 40 of the Act, or Section 488 of the Code of Criminal Procedure 1898 or Section 125 of the Code of Criminal Procedure 1973.

The question is, should the husband and wife be forced to live with each other despite the fact that there are grave differences between them? In my opinion, marriage laws should be made so that long battles in court are avoided. The introduction of divorce by mutual

consent is one of the best innovations made in the PMDA. It had been long overdue.

Until recently under Section 32(g) of the PMDA it was contemplated that any married person may sue for divorce on the ground that the defendant has ceased to be a Zoroastrian provided that the suit was filed within two years of the plaintiff becoming aware of the said fact.

According to the changed law, simply because a Zoroastrian has ceased to be a Zoroastrian would be no ground for taking a divorce unless it is proved that a Zoroastrian has changed his religion by conversion.

It is true that some Zoroastrians do not wear the sudreh or kusti and do not accept the tenets of their religion. They never go to the fire-temples nor do they pray. Sometimes, they do not even call themselves "Parsis." However, they have not changed their religion. Such a person is an unbeliever of the Zoroastrian faith, although he may be born of Zoroastrian parents. But, a wife would not be able to get a divorce merely on the ground that her husband does not wear the sudreh or kusti and does not call himself a Zoroastrian anymore. It is only when change of religion is proved that either party could get a divorce.

According to the Constitution of India, every individual has a right to change his religion at any time and at his own choice. A Hindu can become a Muslim or a Christian. A Hindu or a Muslim or a Christian who has changed his religion can convert himself to his own religion. Zoroastrians, however, do not allow or admit conversion.

What does conversion mean? Conversion means the voluntary relinquishment of one's religion and adoption of another religion after a formal ceremony as may be required by different religions or communities. For conversion to the Hindu faith, a certain ceremony is required. Christianity also requires certain religious ceremonies to be performed for conversion to their faith. Conversion to Islam does not require any such ceremony. In order to embrace Islam and to become a Muslim, a person has merely to believe in the fundamental articles of the faith.

Now, conversion is of two kinds. The first kind is where a person wants to benefit by entering the kingdom of heaven according to his own belief. The other type of conversion is when a man wants to take advantage of the situation.

That advantage is especially for the purpose of marrying again. Once that purpose is achieved, a person almost always reconverts to his own faith.

Along with the change of religion, the personal law also changes. After conversion to the new religion, the convert gets all the rights under the personal law of the religion which he has adopted. When one party gets converted to a different faith and the religions of the husband and wife are different, the law which is applicable for determining monetary transaction is also different.

Another problem which arises is the question of matrimonial relief or dissolution of marriage when one of the parties to the marriage gets converted. In some cases, it has been held that it is neither just nor right to hold that a marriage was automatically dissolved by the conversion of one of the parties to the marriage to another religion.

Once a person has married under a particular law, even if there is a change of religion, the former law is applicable. Thus, a Hindu who converts himself to a Muslim cannot marry another woman unless he divorces his first wife according to the Hindu Marriage Act.

In a very important case of *Robasa Khanum versus Khodadad Irani* reported in 48 *Bombay Law Reporter* 864, a Zoroastrian woman was married to another Zoroastrian according to Zoroastrian rites in Iran. The wife subsequently converted herself to the Islamic faith and asked her husband to do the same. The husband refused to do so. As such, Robasa filed a suit against her husband in the High Court that it be declared that owing to her conversion to Islam, her marriage with her husband stood dissolved. The court held in this case that the law which must be complied with in this case was not the Muslim personal law but the rule of justice, equity and good conscience. The court held that merely because Robasa had embraced the Muslim faith, it did not dissolve the marriage.

It was held in another case that a Parsi who has changed his religion but has not been lawfully divorced from his wife remains bound to the provisions of the PMDA and cannot validly contract another marriage.

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

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"Action is the issue of religion"

Homi Rogers

Religion As Fight Against Evil. Zarathushtra by Nathan Soderblom. Published in 1992 by F. N. Mehta, Pehelvi Bldg, 315, Bhadkamkar Marg, Lamington Road, Bombay 400004. Pp: X+77.

The ancient religion of Zarathushtrianism, probably the first monotheistic religion at a time when the elements were worshipped, encompassed its theology within the poetry of its hymns. The *Gathas* are a communication (in 17 sections) between the prophet and his lord, Ahura Mazda, on how man can survive in a world infested with evil, and yet advance the cause of good.

Over the centuries the *Gathas* have fired the imagination of thinkers and laymen alike. Translated, and trans-created in many European languages, they have placed the ancient religion within the reach of the common man — even if for many a Zoroastrian the hymns lie buried in a mesh of dogma. It is said that a German soldier was found reading the *Gathas* in his trench during World War I.

The appeal of the hymns lies in its simple — and socialistic — philosophy. Zarathushtra was no Moses: he issued no commandments. What he stressed was the use of one's free will. The songs he composed spoke of oppression and how to overcome it — whether it be the oppression of feudal lords, or the clergy, or of tradition.

Various interpreted and expounded, the *Gathas*, as the present slim volume under review informs us, were the subject of the Gifford Lectures delivered at the University of Edinburgh in 1931 by Nathan Soderblom who had won the Nobel Prize for peace the previous year. The purpose of the Gifford Lectures is "the promotion of natural theology," and the lectures may be delivered by men of "any religion, or no religion." Soderblom, the archbishop of Upsala in Sweden, was, to quote from publisher F. N. Mehta's foreword, "a contributor to the science of religion, honored as a prince of the church, and beloved by many as a good man." His credentials, hence, are impeccable. And his series of lectures on "Religion As Fight Against Evil" as expounded by Zoroastrianism, an ideal introduction to the complex thought pat-

terns of the prophet's mind. But, as Soderblom rightly puts it, "The language is archaic, obscure; the order of the words extremely intricate... The *Gathas* are composed in a complicated and sustained meter..."

It is this handicap that has beguiled, even foxed, many a western mind, and



Soderblom: a rare vitality

interpretations have varied from slightly offkey versions to the ridiculous. The ancient Avesta language could have provided delight to the crossword buff, if there were any such in that period. Zarathushtra could be interpreted both as 'the one who possesses golden camels' and 'the golden star.' The word 'khar' could mean either 'glittering' or 'donkey!' Similarly the word 'geushurvan,' which appears often in the *Gathas*, is translated mainly by western scholars, including the much respected Stanley Insler, as 'soul of the cow,' or sometimes, 'lament of the cow,' when it should be 'lament of creation,' the word for cow and creation being the same in Avesta.

These incongruities of translation, either inherited or so interpreted by Soderblom for his study, hamper the smooth flow of his thoughts. For what can one make of the lecture where Soderblom interprets a stanza as 'who shall care for

the soul of ox, and the soul of cow to the benefit of man?' Or the 'ox-soul resigns itself...' But the *Gathas* are not laments of cattle, but of creation, of — as Sorabjee Kanga translates —

"The weeping world... In war, confusion, plunder I am hurled, I'm steeped in darkness deep in midst of bright sunshine."

Soderblom's interpretation gives Zoroastrianism an agrarian slant — a religion of cattle-breeders and farmers. Actually, Zoroastrianism is the religion of the common man — a socialist religion.

Soderblom is aware of the limitations posed by confusing translations. "It seems to me hazardous to deprive these words of their reference to persons and beings..." he confesses. But if some passages are blighted by this deficiency, there are yet many passages which Soderblom imbues with a rare vitality to bring out the ancient religion's many finer points. Few philosophers have understood and put in print the fact that in Zoroastrianism "action is the issue of religion." Soderblom celebrates the fact that Zoroastrianism eschews asceticism, does not make a virtue of penance, and takes a "consistently positive attitude towards labor, the arts of civilization and earthly obligations."

Soderblom's lectures weave in the age and times of Zarathushtra, his kinsmen, and even his opponents, the Karapans and Kavis. The lectures even shed some light on the literary merit and the metrical construction of the *Gathas*, often neglected as content takes precedence over form.

Soderblom's lectures have not — like the religion itself — dated. But fresher and crisper interpretations have been offered in the past 60 years since the lectures were first delivered. Mehta, in "attempting to present this book to the small but great-hearted community," has succeeded in his aim to place before the readers more information about our prophet and his work. It would be equally welcome if more such treatises put forth by scholars, including some of our own learned priests, are brought to the attention of the community.

MILESTONES

The age of Zoroastrian brides (as listed in this issue) ranged between 21 and 38 years, the arithmetic mean — the total number of individual ages divided by the total number of brides — being 29 years. The corresponding figures for the grooms were 32 and 51 years, averaging at 39 years.

As compared to 110 Zoroastrians who died in Bombay in July, there were 18 births. Thirty-eight Zoroastrians fell prey to heart disease of whom 17 were 80 years and above, while 18 succumbed to lung disease and pneumonia. The other killers were old age and general debility (16) and cancer (seven). Six victims each fell prey to septicemia and brain disease while kidney failure, malnutrition, hypertension, tuberculosis diabetes and nervous disorder claimed two victims each. The isolated cases registered last month were jaundice, atherosclerosis (deposition of fatty substances in the arteries), angina, Parkinson's disease, ulcer, bronchitis and liver disease. The coroner's report was still pending in the case of one

death. There was a murder case reported last month and a still-born baby was lost to the community. A centenarian breathed her last. The youngest to die was a 12-year-old girl.

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

BANGALORE

Died

Kaizad Tarapore (22), son of Nergesh and Keki on April 4, 1992

BOMBAY

Born

A boy, *Rohan*, to *Pervin* and *Rohinton Vesuna*; May 16.
A boy to *Aloo* and *Jimmy Billimoria*; July 1
A girl to *Avan* and *Manek Kalyaniwala*; July 1
A girl to *Kamal* and *Malcolm Maodawala*; July 3
A boy to *Zarine* and *Keki Hilloo*; July 4
A boy to *Anjali* and *Pheroze Bharucha*; July 7
A boy to *Simonil* and *Dinyar Madon*; July 8
Twins (boys) to *Roshan* and *Pervez Kohinoor*; July 10
A girl to *Dilnaz* and *Jamshed Karanjia*; July 15
A boy to *Meher* and *Keki Panthaki*; July 15
A boy to *Pari* and *Nevil Jokhi*;

July 17

A boy to *Roxana* and *Miki Bahariwala*; July 18
Twins (boy and girl) to *Hutoxi* and *Zubin Contractor*; July 22
A boy to *Khushnoor* and *Sarosh Tangri*; July 25
A boy to *Behroz* and *Eddie Pherozshaw*; July 27
A girl to *Sandra* and *Darius Kavarana*; July 28
A boy to *Meher* and *Kavas Dadabhoy*; July 30

Married

Hutoxi Savak Merchant and *Kersi Jamshed Divecha*; January 20
Rashna Dara Karbhari and *Mehernosh Burjor Sutaria*; June 8
Nargish Behramji Photographer of *Deolali* and *Zarir Bejanji China*; June 11
Gulcher Rohinton Pestonji and *Keki Burjorji Shaw*; July 12

Died

Najamai Manecksha Bhada

(84), residing at 3/4, Anand, Ambarnath (Dist) Thane, 400601; June 30
Aderbad Nanabhoy Cama (90), 17, Hampton Court, Wodehouse Rd, 400005; June 30
Khorshed Pirojsha Ranji (91), 802/C, Dady Hse, Khareghat Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; June 30
Kaikhashroo Dinshawji Anklesaria (92), 9, Dr Daji Bldg, Station Rd, Mahim, 400016; July 1
Dosabhai Khershedji Bhathena (78), 629, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; July 1
Shirin Jalejar Govewalla (86), Mirza Bldg, N. Petit St, Grant Rd, 400007; July 1
Behram Nesarwanji Mistry (62), 165, Manibhai Bhavan, Khetwadi Back Rd, 400004; July 1
Meheroo Tehmuraz Rustomji (88), 665, Band View, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; July 1
Khorshed Dhunjishaw Garda (71), B/9, New Khareghat Clny, Babulnath Rd, 400007; July 3
Maneck Burjorjee Dordi (70), 607/C, Samarth, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; July 4
Kersi Sorabji Palkhiwala (72), 42, Beach Queen, 35/B, Juhu Koliwada, Juhu, 400049; July 4
Meherbai Darabsha Balsara (80), Mistry Bldg, Captain Clny, Tardeo, 400034; July 5
Piroja Firoze Balsara (68); 804/B, Sai Niketan, Dr Ambedkar Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; July 5
Munchershaw Dadabhai Desai (75), 689, Dr Dinshaw Master Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; July 5
Yezdi Savaksha Karai (78), A, Kanta Bldg, Grant Rd, 400007; July 5
Eruchshaw Jamshedji Morena (81), A/38, Nootan Ngr, Guru Nanak Rd, Bandra, 400050; July 5
Homai Jehangir Avasia (79), 611, Pateti Block No 3, Jame Jamshed Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; July 6
Roshan Minoo Jalnawalla (66), 2, Doctor Bldg, Panthaki Baug, Andheri (E), 400069; July 6
Kushnuma Rohinton Khambata (12), 629-B, Rumsmeher Bldg, A. B. Homavazir Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; July 6

Dhanmai Munchershaw Mehta (92), Chothia Bldg, Zoroastrian Clny, Tardeo, 400007; July 6
Eruchsha Bejonji Bhote (74), J/15, S. B. Bharucha Baug, S. V. Rd, Andheri (W), 400058; July 7
Sorabji Jehangirji Birdy (92), 585, Khan Bldg, Chitra Bazar, 400002; July 7
Sheramai Sorabji Irani (78), Room no 7, Zaveri Bldg, Charni Rd, 400007; July 7
Dinamai Padamji Kapadia (90), B, Ambar Prasad Co-op Hsg Soc, Bandra (W), 400050; July 7
Dina Jamshedji Kavarana (65), Banaji Bldg, Forjett St Cross Lane, Gowalia Tank, 400026; July 7
Mehera Minu Modi (83), C/16, Cusrow Baug, S. B. Rd, 400039; July 7
Burjor Nowroji Pestonjee (89), Modi Lodge, Dinshaw Vatcha Rd, Gamdevi, 400007; July 7
Minoo Jehangirji Sopariwalla (74), O/10, S. B. Bharucha Baug, S. V. Rd, Andheri (W), 400058; July 7
Sam Hirjibhoy Choksy (68), 33, Aderbad, 34, Hughes Rd, 400007; July 8
Gulbai Rustomjee Driver (91), Khorshed Villa, Kur-Kumbh Rd, Daund, Dist Pune, 413801; July 8
Nariman Meherjibhoy Mistry (75), 598/B, A. H. Wadia Bldg, Girgaum Rd, 400002; July 8
Adi Dinshaw Motiwala (89), Lady Ratan Tata Bldg No 3, Turner Rd, Bandra, 400050; July 8
Khorshed Kekushroo Postwalla (72), 728, Sorab Mans, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; July 8
Rustom Behram Rateshtari (52), 164, Jivanji Mistry Bldg, Khetwadi, 10th Lane, 400004; July 8
Dhunjishaw Shapurji Amaria (81), 1/5, A. H. Wadia Baug, Parel Tank Rd, 400033; July 9
Soli Rustomji Baliwalla (75), Sandhurst Bldg, Sandhurst Rd, Opera Hse, 400004; July 9
Nergaze Jehanbux Dubash (88), 11/11, Mody Bldg, Gamadia Clny, Tardeo, 400007; July 9
Najoo Cawasji Gonda (74), C/o F. J. Sidhwa, 691, Albless Bldg, Dr Dinsha Master Rd, Parsi

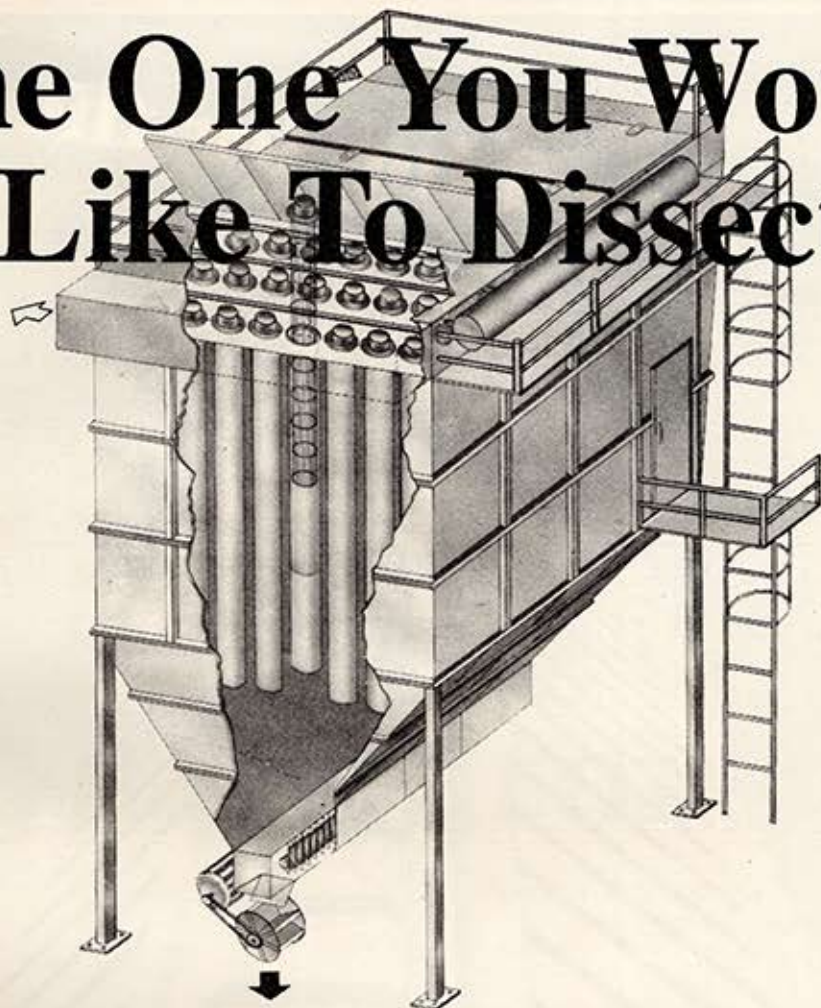
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Behram Jehangirji Darukhanawalla (73), Dehnu Bldg, Dr Ambedkar Rd, Parel, 400012; July 10
Behram Hormusji Elavia (76), 12/6, Dr Lentin's Bldg, Gamadia Clny, Tardeo Rd, 400007; July 10
Tehmina Jalejar Katrak (90), 568, Pushpavati Bldg, Chira Bazar, 400002; July 10
Tehmurasp Rustomji Sukhia (65), 1/12, Sir Ratan Tata Clny, Tardeo, 400034; July 10
Keki Ardeshir Contractor (54), C/o Mevawalla Agiary, Patanwalla Rd, 400027; July 11
Pirojsha Ratanji Daruwalla (90), 15, Ardeshir Dady Cross Lane, Khetwadi, 400004; July 11
Phiroze Burjorji Engineer (51), 691, Albless Bldg, Dr Dinsha Master Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; July 11
Phiroj Nadirshaw Kapadia (68), 207, Rajnigandha, 208, Kachehri Rd, Palghar (W), 401404; July 11
Homai Dadabhoy Palkhiwalla (68), Mistry Bldg, 635, J. Shanker Rd, Dhobitalao, 400002; July 11
Tehmina Nariman Ghista (89), 301, Allwyn Villa, Versova, 400061; July 12
Alamai Pirojsha Jokhi (71), 7, Carder, 23 A. Rajan Rd, (Off Carter Rd), Bandra, 400050; July 12
Rustomji (Rusi) Meherjibhoy Printer (75), 598/B, Wadia Bldg, Girgaum Rd, 400002; July 12
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Khorshed Nusserwanji Driver (76), Giriraj, Altamount Rd, 400026; July 13
Jerbanoo Sorabji Kanga (78), C/24, Cusrow Baug, S. B. Rd, 400039; July 13
Noshir Naoroji Mistry (72), B/12, Shapur Baug, V. P. Rd, 400004; July 13
Khorshed Ardeshir Vatcha (79), 19, Shanti Niketan, L. T. Rd, Mahim, 400016; July 13
Framroze Shapurji Engineer (80), A, Gool Mhl, Sleater Rd, 400007; July 14
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Aimai Jahangirji Balsara (93), 15/9, Ratan Tata Clny, Tardeo, 400034; July 16
Mino Merwan Engineer (71), Augustus Villa, 21, N. S. Patkar Marg, 400007; July 16
Burjor Framji Guzder (93), 733, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; July 16
Homai Cawasji Sidhwa (89), 9, Soona Mhl, Marine Drive, 400020; July 16
Pervez Merwanji Doodhwalla (43), 17E/42, Rustom Baug, Victoria Rd, Byculia, 400027; July 17
Keki Dhanjishaw Elavia (57), 189/19, Hirabai Petit Bldg, Opp Grant Rd Stn, 400007, July 17
Framroz Nusserwanji Randeria (82), 21, Gilder Lane, Dr Bhadkamkar Rd, Bombay Central, 400008; July 17
Baby of Darayus Fali Satta (stillborn), 659, Keki Hse, S. Palamkote Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; July 17
Dinshaw Darabshaw Cooper (46), A/1, Bhiwandiwalla Ter, 618, Girgaum Rd, 400002; July 19
Gool Bhadar Desai (85), J/3, Dalal Est, Opp Bombay Central, 400008; July 19
Tehmurasp Dhanjishaw Khambatta (75), 811/7, Jame Jamshed Bldg, Above Central Bank, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; July 19
Keki Sorabji Balsara (40), 27, Ratan Hse, Gola Lane, Fort, 400001; July 20
Banoobai Faramroze Billimoria (92), 7/C, Tata Clny, Tardeo, 400034; July 20
Rustomji Sorabji Cooper (87), Dalamal Apt, Cuffe Parade, 400005; July 20
Rustomji Naoroji Buhariwalla (94), 10, Arya Mahila Samaj Bldg, Kashibai Navrange Rd, Gamdevi, 400007; July 22
Noshir Rustom Irani (80), 233/7, Chirag Bldg, Mather-pakhadi, 400010; July 22
Freny Jehangir Jalnawala (68), 1/A, Laurel Hse, Edenwoods, Pokhram-2, Thane, 400601; July 22
Shavakshaw Erachshaw Khambatta (89), 44/C, Motiwalla Bldg, Proctor Lane, Grant Rd, 400007; July 22
Minocher Mehraban Mehra-banipoor (66), B/15, Manohar Villa, Shanti Baug, Chembur, 400071; July 22
Murad Jal Cama (78), C-2, Fariyas, Cumballa Hill, 400026; July 24
Nargish Framroze Gadiwalla (76), L/5, Dalal Est, Bombay Central, 400008; July 24
Jal Erachshaw Heerjibehedin (78), Kaiser-I-Hind Bldg, Currimbhoy Rd, Ballard Est, 400038; July 24
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Jerbai Behramji Sattha (92), 21, Jyoti, D. D. Rd, Mulund (W), 400080; July 24
Jehangir Motabhoj Shapoorjee (80), Babulnath View, Babulnath Rd, 400007; July 24
Banoobai Piroj Bharucha (76), 86/1, W. Rly Clny, Matunga, 400019; July 25
Roshan Mino Damania (75), Mody Hse, Padamji Marg, 400004; July 25
Alamai Manchersha Jokhi (84), 12, Mehta Bldg, 17, Panthaky Baug, Andheri (E), 400069; July 25
Khorshed Burjorji Mistry (93), 4/13-A, Tata Clny, Tardeo, 400034; July 25
Mani Manekji Kalapesi (82), 802-A, Dr Ambedkar Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; July 26
Eduji Bejanji Allbless (87), Khatau Mans, Oomer Park, B. Desai Rd, 400036; July 27
Jerbai Jehangirji Bardoliwalla (79), Hirabai Petit Bldg, Opp Grant Rd Rly Stn, 400007; July 27
Bhicajee Beharamji Gandeveia (83), 13-A-2, New Khareghat Clny, Babulnath Rd, 400007; July 27
Tehmurasp Jamshedji Irani (76), A-1, Sweet Home, 540, Pali Rd, Bandra, 400050; July 27
Piroja Bhadurji Master (78), C-11, Shapur Baug, V. P. Rd, 400004; July 27
Mehra Edujee Sajdivala (82), 675, Amy Villa, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; July 27
Goola Aspandiar Irani (70), 19, Station Ter, Sleater Rd, 400007; July 28
Tehmina (Ratanbai) Dhunjishaw Segvewala (101), 689, Sethna Bldg, Dr Dinsha Master Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; July 28
Homai Darabshaw Bhathena (69), Marzban Clny, 29, Dr Nair Rd, 400007; July 30
Najamai Pestonji Chichgar (88), Victoria Bldg, 55, Victoria Garden Rd, Byculia, 400027; July 30
Eruchshaw Rustomji Mehta (81), B/8, Shapur Baug, V. P. Rd, 400004; July 30
Dhun Phiroze Kalapesi (63), Bomanji Dhunjibhoy Bldg, 24/A, Nawab Tank Rd, Mazgaon, 400010; July 31
Hormusji Pirojsha Vasunia (90), Shiv Prasad, 97, Marine Drive, 400020; July 31
- HYDERABAD**
Born
 A boy, Dinyar, to Perveen and Viraf Mehta; April 10
- POONA**
Died
 Dinshaw Kaikhsroo Moriabadi

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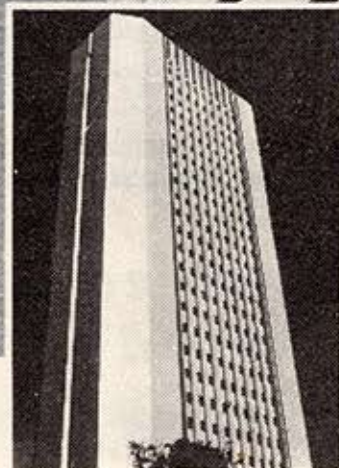
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(Irani) (64), 617, Sachapir St,
411001; July 5
Burjor Nasserwanji Marolia
(72), B/3, Park View Apts,
Salisbury Park, 411001;
July 15

Dhun Dinshaw Amaria (71),
12/B, Mody Clny, Synagogue
St, 411001; July 27
Feroz Cawasjee (81), Abhanga
Apts, 44, Sasoon Rd, 411001;
July 31

SURAT

Died
Hormusji Ardeshir Rabadi (91),
Mohta Mohallo, Rustompura,
395002; July 10
Jehangirji Sohrabji Kapadia
(68), 101, Zoroastrian Soc,
Behind Umra Police Stn,
395003; July 15

CALGARY

Died
Mehroo Balsara, wife of
Tehmuras; July 5

EVANSTON, Illinois

Born
A boy, *Jahan*, to *Shireen*

TOTALS FOR 1992

	Bombay		Other Indian cities		Foreign cities	
	A	B	A	B	A	B
BORN						
Boys	14	77	1	3	4	13
Girls	5	72	—	1	1	14
MARRIED						
Parsi	4	139	—	3	2	5
Intercommunal	—	24	—	1	1	5
DIED						
Male	61	232	6	34	2	21
Female	52	294	1	39	2	16

A: Total numbers in this issue

B: Running totals for 1992 (February-August 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.

Adenwalla and Dan Claes;
June 17

KARACHI

Born
A boy, *Danny*, to *Pareezad* and

Yazdi Talati; May 15
A boy, *Kevin*, to *Shermin* and
Jal Kaikobad; June 28

Died

Tehmina Eruch Limki (76);

June 1

Jal Kawashah Randeria (54);

June 11

Rustam Fakirji Cowasjee (91);

June 23

NEW SOUTH WALES

Married

Zameen Kotwal and *Rayomand*
Pavri; May 16

PENNSYLVANIA

Born

A boy, *Adam Michael*, to *Sandy*
and *Darius Jagus*; May 28

SAN PEDRO, California

Married

Khoosnam Mistry and *Cawas*
Commissariat; July 26

SANTA MONICA, California

Married

Shireen Gandhi and *Nick Kozel*;
June 27

ST ALBERT, Canada

Born

A girl, *Yasna*, to *Veera* and
Neville Rabadi; June 1

Compiled by *Roxana A. Mirza*

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Kaiser crusader

Parinaz Gandhi

Died: Jal Erachshaw Heerjibehedin, 78, former editor of the erstwhile progressive and popular community weekly, *Kaiser-e-Hind*, on July 24, 1992 following cerebral hemorrhage.

During the 40 years that Heerjibehedin steered *Kaiser-e-Hind's* journalistic coverage he "always insisted on efficiency, integrity and service from our communal organizations, and if he found anything wanting, did not mince his words," recollected Jehan Daruwala, editor of *The Bombay Samachar*, in his column on July 26.

On certain issues he was dragged to court for defamation. There were other times when he was

threatened with attempts on his life but Heerjibehedin refused to bow down. Not only did his paper serve as a medium to expose public wrongs, if he found no improvement in the situation he would pursue the matter himself through court.

"He was by nature mild and gentle, but there was fire in his pen," was the tribute that came to him from *Jam-e-Jamshed* in its edition of August 2, 1992.

To set matters right at the Bombay Zoroastrian Death Benefit Fund, controlling assets of over Rs 15 lakhs, Heerjibehedin, with the support of well-known advocate Ardeshtir Katrak, had to fight a relentless "seven-year war," pointed out his wife Aloo. In 1975, Heerjibehedin had been assaulted at his office by five-six Parsis for daring to run a series of articles criticizing the mystic leader Minocher Pundole and for referring to the financial irregularities allegedly practised by his devotees.

To the editor of the bilingual weekly in Gujarati and English, *Kaiser* was more

than a watchdog. It was a welfare agent. When the government decided to discontinue its grants to communal institutions, it was the *Kaiser* that created public awareness in support of the view that the community should abandon its narrow outlook and concede to making schools cosmopolitan. Concern for the poor farmers of Gujarat made Heer-



jibehedin approach his readers for donations towards the Parsi Khedut Fund that he established. After having collected nearly Rs 25,000 he personally made the rounds of the villages to ensure that aid was disbursed to genuine recipients. In

1974, Heerjibehedin was responsible for the arrest of a charlatan, Tekdivala Baba who had reportedly molested a Parsi girl. These highlights of *Kaiser's* eventful 100-year existence had been recapitulated by the editor in his farewell message to the readers in 1981 when the paper wound up following labor trouble at the printing press. The press and publication had changed owners a few months prior.

The popular column, The Week-End Parliament, which provided for a free exchange of thoughts among the *Kaiser* readers resulted in the conception of the Youths' Own Union (YOU). Having established the YOU, he helped the youth "in every conceivable way. One of (his) characteristics was to see that every young Parsi who approached him was given an opportunity to prove his talent," remembered Daruwala. Many a newcomer to the journalism scene he encouraged, acknowledges Purvez Engineer, a regular contributor.

What *Kaiser* considered its "greatest achievement" was the completion of the Tata Mills Cooperative Housing Colony in Parel that accommodates 232 middle-class Parsi families. Through his non-partisan editorials he created a consciousness within the community for better living conditions, reports his brother Soli, and thus arose the new housing society. "Without even a rupee in our pool, we built up the corpus... The colony worth almost one crore rupees has shown what a trusted newspaper can achieve with the genial cooperation of a group of honest, robust, resourceful individuals," wrote Heerjibehedin.

For him, *Kaiser's* closure was "like losing a child. That is why he tried to keep it limping along even though some nights he did it all single-handed... Finally he had to let go," Aloo remembers the painful parting. His contribution to journalism was acclaimed widely but his handling of business invited criticism. "He had great potential to be an outstanding journalist and all through his tenure he followed our dear father's tradition of fighting for the just and right cause," mentions his sister Rutty Pavri.

Jal had been roped in to take over *Kaiser's* reins on his father's sudden demise in 1940. After his education at St Xavier's School and St Xavier's College, Heerjibehedin trained as a cub reporter with *The Times of India*. His inclination towards journalism made him the most logical successor to his father's *Kaiser* enterprise which was then "already suffering from the difficulties and handicaps of a communal newspaper." Yet he made every effort to keep it viable and sustain reader interest by introducing novel features. With the assistance of Soli, who served as manager, the *Kaiser* press later accepted printing jobs for other concerns.

The quiet and reserved Heerjibehedin could also be very genial with those whom he knew well. Known to have had a good sense of humor, Heerjibehedin believed in getting things done not by reprimand but by poking a little bit of fun. "He was not a good conversationalist but he was a very good platform speaker," notes Aloo. He was particularly comfortable in the company of children. "He loved anything that concerned the youth," she continued.

Heerjibehedin was sympathetic to-

wards Israel "long before the Indian government had a change of heart." As a chiefly vernacular weekly, he may not have been able to change the government's thinking. But the *Kaiser* supplement on Israel, consequent to his trip there as the guest of Israel's foreign ministry, won him appreciation from the then Israeli Prime Minister Ms Golda Meir, notes the farewell message.

The Heerjibhedins' fondness for children made the issueless couple adopt a son, Homi. Their love for the arts and literature took them to art galleries, theaters and cinema halls, according to a family source. When he was confined to bed, he was wont to seeing one video film daily. And cats, whom he originally abhorred, had become so much a part of his routine that come breakfast time there would be one settled under his arm and another perched nearby keeping a fond eye over his movements.

Invariably on trips abroad he felt compelled to read all the newspapers available, visit the printing presses, keep himself abreast of advances in the print media... Until the end, his reading and writing continued. After the cessation of his own paper, he spent time penning letters to the editors of other publications and there was even one unfinished letter by his bedside on the day he breathed his last.

Heerjibhedin is survived by his wife Aloo.

All for the love of music

Died: Hoshang Jehangirji Vajifdar, 71, an integral personage on the western music scene in Bombay who used his offices with the Bombay Gramophone Society and The Bombay Madrigal Singers' Organisation (BMSO) to introduce international performers to the Indian audience; on February 22, 1992 following a road accident in Bombay.

Full of music and mirth at the end of the first night of the 1992 Jazz Yatra where he was one of the assistants entrusted with the organizational work, Vajifdar had sought a motorbike ride from his friend, little realizing that it was

to be his last journey. The death of the impresario left a void for many organizations, particularly the Sophia-Bhabha Hall where he was manager till the end, pleasing all with "his friendly presence, his smiling and welcoming ways, his



calm and reassuring manner, his readiness to help anyone who needed assistance," as noted Sister R a m i n a Coutinho, chairperson of the Society for the Higher Educa-

tion of Women in India.

In charge of record selection at the British Council Division's music library, Vajifdar was admired for "his integrity and devotion to the cause of music," wrote R. A. K. Baker, first secretary, cultural affairs with the British Deputy High Commission. His appointment as resident secretary of the Associate Board of the Royal School of Music, London, required Vajifdar to liaise with the examiners overseas, to accommodate the last-minute entries from music students in India. But the ever obliging "Hosi," as everyone fondly called him, would never turn down a request, remembers his close friend and current honorary secretary of the BMSO, Adi Sagar.

Along with Sagar he organized many concerts for the BMSO. Even when the BMSO ceased to officially collaborate with the Indian Council of Cultural Relations, Vajifdar would help out in his personal capacity. He had no regrets about individuals or organizations taking advantage of his generosity, elaborates Sagar. Before age slowed him down, he would be on his feet for hours at a stretch, gladly skipping meals so long as he had his cups of tea.

His fantastic collection of record albums and books on music acquired over the years were a great source of enjoyment to the bachelor. There are many who received their first exposure to western music at Vajifdar's residence, reminisce several of his former neighbors at Chira Bazar. On his death, his unique collection of 78 RPM records was donated to the British Council which is supposed to have subsequently forwarded it to the National Centre for the Performing Arts which houses the archives, informs his sister Nergish Buchia.

After his early education at the Esplanade High School in Bombay Vajifdar took up employment with Muller and Phipps for a short while. He then launched his own business but gave that up too. His abiding interest had always been music and the theater which made him enjoy his duties as manager first of the Patkar Hall and later of the Sophia-Bhabha Hall. After their uncle ignited the love for music in the Vajifdar family, with his brother and sisters Hosi gave momentum to the Bombay Gramophone Society whose weekly musical evenings were quite popular in the years following World War II, recalls Buchia.

Directly or indirectly, Vajifdar left a mark on different musical and theatrical groups in the city. Condolence messages came from Alyque Padamsee, director, Theatre Group, Bombay; from Christopher Mendonca of Piano Services and many others. Among the beneficiaries of Vajifdar's "little nameless unremembered acts of kindness and of love" are innumerable individuals. And some like Celia and Trevor Lobo of Chembur showed their gratitude by having a mass said for Vajifdar at their church in Chembur.

Vajifdar is survived by his brother Shiavax, and sisters Nergish Buchia, Khorshed Chothia and Homai Bilpodiwala.

P.G.

ZOROASTRIANS ABROAD

continued from page 30

master's degree in English. According to Patton, Fracis' second novel would be a historical epic on the Parsis.

Career in philanthropy

Bombay born Russy Sumariwalla has been named interim president and chief executive officer of the United Way International (UWI), a leading technical voluntary organization with more than 200 branches all over the world including India, notes a report in *The Daily* datelined Alexandria, May 18. The UWI's Indian affiliate, United Way of Baroda, was launched in 1985 and has been engaged in resource mobilization, allocations, management assistance and public education, notes the report. Sumariwalla, a former fellow with the United Way Strategic Institute, is said to have been a consultant to numerous philanthropic organizations.

Compiled by Amavaz S. Mama

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