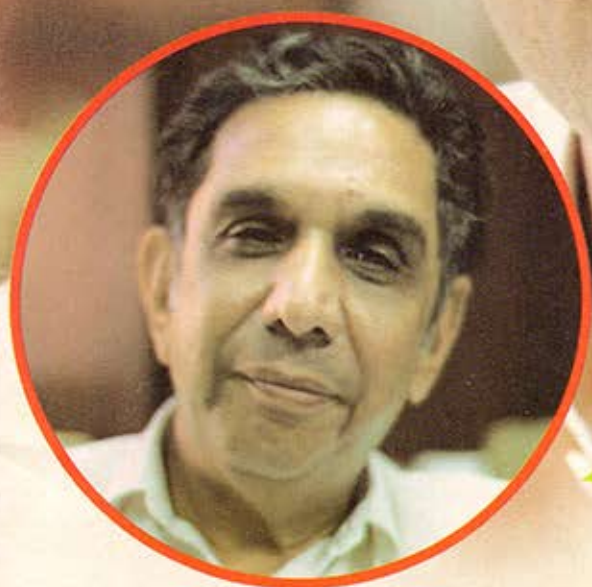


પાંચાંગ

SEPTEMBER 1992 Rs 12



The Delayed Elections

ZCWA leader Dr Syrus Irani and
CER strategist Rusi Sethna



At didi's wedding Ustaad did such dhamaal! To get the dulha's Rasna he called his dog Bozo. And asked him to create a hangama. Everyone ran after Bozo. And while that happened, Ustaad finished off all of dulha's Rasna. You know why? Because Rasna is so mmmmmmm.....!

Isn't it? I love you Rasna.



THE DULHA'S RASNA



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

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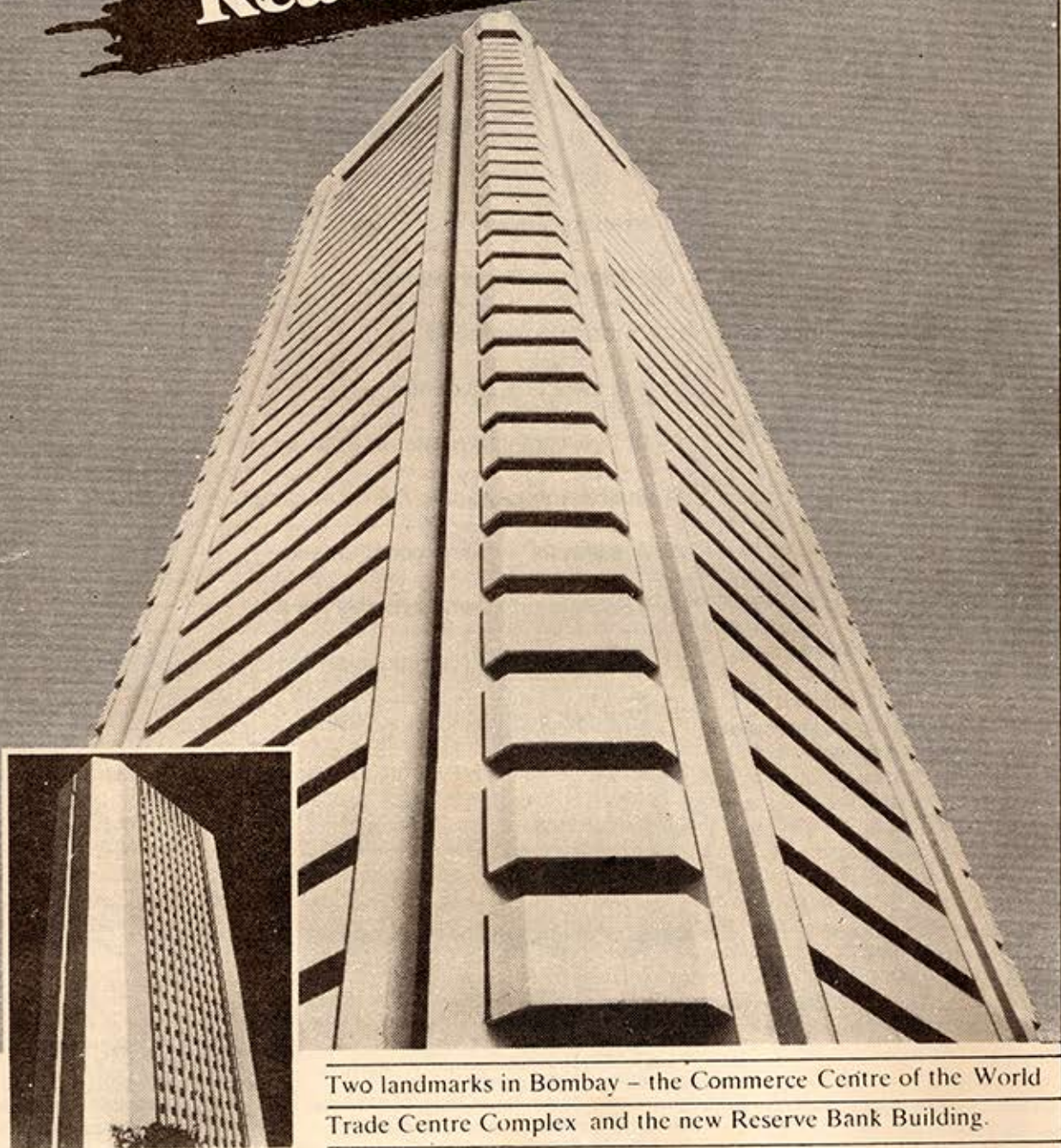
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Cover: Photographs by Gustasp Irani

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 Unsigned letters or those without an address will not be published.

Sasanian coins

The letter ("Sasanian coins," *Parsiana*, July 1992) from Mr Noshir Patel of Middlesex is confused on several points. While Prof A. H. Bivar has an internationally renowned expertise in the numismatic field, it is to limit him unduly in implying that the Zoroastrian House lectures were confined to coins and perhaps stamp-seals. Indeed the good professor lectured amply on Ancient Iranian inscriptions, complete with slides.

Similarly, Drs Kreyenbroek and Sims-Williams just happen to be among the very best scholars of Iranian languages; their lectures too had little or nothing to do with numismatics. All three gentlemen are no doubt Fellows of the Royal Numismatic Society here, but do their Fellowships of the Royal Asiatic Society make them Asiatics?

Fardunji Paruck's large and excellent book is dated, as are the sections on art and history. Scholarship and specialized researches have greatly progressed. For

Parsiana to merely reprint extracts from old books is to do a disservice to the cause of the multifold Zoroastrian interests as well as to the extensive advances in the knowledge of our long history and ancient culture.

Mr Patel must be aware that there exists a thriving London-based World Zoroastrian Organisation (WZO), very active in the areas of amelioration of the conditions of deprived Zoroastrians here and overseas. There do exist a South Gujarat Fund and a Medical Benevolent Fund. The point about "combined resources" falls flat if he cares to recall the clumsy attempts of our local association here to discredit the WZO at every opportunity: attempts that have dismally misfired. Can these be connected with Sasanian coins?

FARROKH VAJIFDAR
London, U.K.

"The Stamp Safari"

Let me congratulate you on the cover of *Parsiana*, June 1992 and the article concerning me, "The Stamp Safari," by Ms Meher Marfatia, which is very well worded.

But I am very disappointed to see my photo on page 20 which looks nothing better than wild life.

D. R. MISTRY

The Editor replies

In deference to Mr Mistry we have reproduced here the photograph he submitted (right) alongside the one earlier published so the readers may judge.



As an enthusiastic philatelist I was happy to see stamps on the front cover and the article "The Stamp Safari" (*Parsiana*, June 1992). However, I would be failing in my duty as a vice president of the Philatelic Congress of India (The All India Federation) and as the Indian delegate to two FIP (World Federation — the "United Nations of Philately") world congresses if I were not to draw the attention of your readers to certain important matters. Stamp collecting is the

most democratic of all hobbies and one can collect whatever one's heart desires; you may do whatever you like in your own house but when it comes to the public eye one has to observe some of the prevalent regulations and practices.

It is unfortunate that the stamps shown in the article are not from philatelically reputable countries but from countries which brought out a prolific number of stamps with the idea of fleecing stamp collectors. Philatelic organizations have long been campaigning against such stamps. The FIP has also taken up the matter with the UPU (Universal Postal Union). Stamps on birds, animals, butterflies, from philatelically reputable countries like Great Britain, Australia, New Zealand, India, etc could have been shown so that the collectors, especially beginners, are not misguided. The stamps displayed are not "rare" stamps. Some of the early issues like Western Australia's "Black Swan" or the other early bird and animal stamps which are not easily obtainable could have been shown.

It is a misfortune that CTO (Cancelled to Order) stamps which have not passed through the postal mail and against which there is much opposition from philatelists from all over the world, have been shown. No commercially used covers, cancellations, etc have been shown which today are very essential.

One cannot also agree with the comment "Otherwise there is rarely any difference between the value of used and unused stamps." There is difference in value in most cases.

The write-up and presentation is also not up to current philatelic requirements. The presentation and write-up for the Polish stamps done by numbers is not proper. The making of black borders around the stamp is long outdated. The album page shown with a non-philatelic photo/picture of a butterfly would immediately disqualify the exhibit at even a state level exhibition — only philatelic items must be shown.

It is regrettable that the pioneering efforts of eminent Indian thematic collectors of the past like the late Mr Jal Cooper, the late Ms Subhalaxmi, the late Mr K. D. Dinsha and Mr M. P. Polson have not been mentioned.

If Indian thematic collectors are to do well at state, national or international events they must properly study the sub-

ject and the present trends. This letter is written purely from the interest of the future of Indian philately and with no other motive.

VISPI S. DASTUR

Hon Editor, India's Stamp Journal

"Largest collection of wildlife stamps — D. R. Mistry of Bombay collects wildlife stamps. Today, he has more than 20,000 wildlife stamps carefully pasted onto 1,200 album pages. Some of the rare stamps date back to 19th century. When Mistry held an exhibition of his stamps in 1961, it was the first exhibition of wildlife stamps in the world."

Thus reads an entry on page 98 of the *Limca Book of Records 1992* under the section 'Post and Telegraph.' It is indeed a great honor for Parsis that in this five-page section the names of only two philatelists appear — one of them being Mr Darabshaw Rustomji Mistry.

His name was proposed by the Governing Council of Baroda Philatelic Society for the award of Padma Shri. He was cited as 'Doyen of Philately' by the South India Philatelists' Association, Madras at BIOPEX-89 Philatelic Exhibition. He was a president of the Empire of India Philatelic Society (EIPS).

Mr Mistry's labor of love has resulted in a huge collection of zoos on stamps, depicting birds, mammals, fish, butterflies, insects, reptiles, amphibians and pre-historic animals. A whole collection is built on each topic, sometimes running into hundreds of pages.

His collection on pre-historic animals was displayed at the Eros Theatre during the show of the movie *One Million Years BC*. In his one man show "Birds on Stamps," at the silver jubilee celebration of EIPS disclosed the fact, that India has not issued a single stamp on birds. This news spread through the newspapers and made the government issue stamps on birds.

The Times of India of December 25, 1966 notes: "To this modest, old man, philately is hardly a hobby — it is a labor of love, a way of life, chosen and cultivated with tender care through the long hard years of manhood and middle age."

CYRUS D. SIDHVA

"Federation lends a..."

While reporting on the proceedings of the meeting of the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India, which was held in Bombay last March, you have erroneously mentioned that "Agra, Jhansi and Jabalpur have jointly agreed

to sponsor a paramobed ("Federation lends a sympathetic ear," *Parsiana*, June 1992)." This was only a suggestion given by one of the members and I disagreed as we already have a panthaky looking after the religious needs of the Jabalpur Parsis. I may mention that Ervad Darabshaw E. Karkaria is about 80 years old — and may God bless him — and he attends to every need here. He attends to the daily prayers of the members, and in addition performs the jashan ceremonies for the Anjuman, which number about 10 every year. He even attends to the muktad table. In his work there is absolute sincerity and dedication, which the Parsis of Jabalpur have been appreciating since 1953.

Ervad Darabshaw is not only the panthaky but he is also the manager of The Jabalpur Parsi Dharamshala which he has been managing very ably, assisted by his wife Banoobai, who, having suffered a hip fracture, manages with a walker, and still turns out the tastiest food which she is famous for. Many passengers come only because of the sumptuous food that is served to them. I might also mention that Banoobai's malida is something out of this world. It is ordered by the kilo and taken out of Jabalpur. The proof of the pudding (malida) is in the eating!

D. C. BAJAN

President, Parsi Anjuman, Jabalpur

Some statements pertaining to the World Zoroastrian Organisation (WZO) and the WZO Trust in "Federation lends a sympathetic ear," (*Parsiana*, June 1992) require to be clarified.

Regarding the work being done in the villages of South Gujarat to rehabilitate poor Zoroastrian agrarians living below the poverty line, Mr Jamsheed Kanga is reported to have commented that "There is a wrong impression being created that the work is done only by the WZO."

There is absolutely no doubt that were it not for the WZO the rehabilitation process would not have reached the stage that it has.

The WZO, in keeping with its policies of accountability towards its donors, releases regular reports on the project. This has been appreciated very much by our donors who have been forwarding contributions from all parts of the globe.

Regular reports on the status of the project not only keep the donors satisfied, but also help in creating greater awareness of this massive problem/project and results in a regular inflow of

funds from all over the world.

A comment has been attributed to our colleague Mr Dadi Mistry that he had been wanting The WZO Trust to get an early tax exemption clearance.

It may be clarified that the application seeking tax exemptions for donors under section 80G(5) was made to the tax authorities on September 20, 1991. The permission has been granted on April 6, 1992 and is retrospective from the date of application.

Donors to The WZO Trust are thus eligible for claiming exemption under section 80G(5) of the Income Tax Act 1961.

DINSHAW K. TAMBOLY

Managing Trustee, The WZO Trust

Parsi calendar reform

I was glad to know that the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India (FPZAI) has taken up the matter of Parsi calendar reform and that the issue has at least found favor with several persons including the chairman of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet ("Federation lends a sympathetic ear," *Parsiana*, June 1992).

It is well-known that all living organisms follow nature in the form of daily (diurnal), monthly (lunar) or yearly (annual) regular variations. These are known as biological rhythms or circadian clocks. Our Shenshahi and Kadmi calendars are all wrong because they have no relevance to the seasonal variations in nature.

Secondly, there is historical evidence that a Zoroastrian from Persia named Jamshid, who arrived in India in 1736 AD pointed out that the calendar followed by the Parsis in India was one month behind the calendar followed by the Iranian Zoroastrians because the community in India had forgotten to add one *Kabisa* (or intercalation of one month after 120 years) (Sanjana J. B., *A Comprehensive History of the Parsis*, 1935, p. 608). It is well known that the orbit of the earth around the sun takes 365.2422 days and the quarter of an additional day is corrected by adding one day every four years as in the Gregorian calendar or by intercalating one month every 120 years as done earlier in the Iranian calendar. The late Mr K. R. Cama was the first to preach this reform in our Parsi calendar as early as 1882, but unfortunately, to date we have not got our calendar right because of the bigoted attitude of some high priests and some trustees of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet. Our religion is the religion of right and

wrong, and if a mistake has been committed in the past, it must be rectified. Even Pope Pius acknowledged about a decade ago the mistake the ancient Christians made of persecuting Galileo for declaring that the sun was the center of the universe and not the earth. Today we know that Galileo was right and Pope Pius had the courage of exculpating the great scientist after about 360 years. Such questions like vernal equinox on March 21 would correspond to spring in the northern hemisphere but autumn in the southern hemisphere are only foolish attempts at perpetuating a wrong calendar, for don't the Christians all over the world celebrate their new year on January 1, be it winter or summer?

About the question of doing *baj* (prayers for the dead) on the *varsi* (anniversary) of a person who dies on February 29 of a leap year, I have already stated that the heavens are not going to fall if the *varsi* rituals in a few cases are done a day earlier or a day later (*Parsiana*, November 1991). Trustee Jamshed Kanga has supported me in my stance by stating that "Whether you pray on one day or another is immaterial. All days are equally holy (*Parsiana*, July 1992)." Dr P. D. SUNAVALA

"Emerging from the..."

I refer to the article by Mr Gustasp Irani about Ms Behroz Vacha, the founder of the Helen Keller Institute for the Deaf and Deaf Blind ("Emerging from the valley of silent darkness," *Parsiana*, April 1992). He has very well displayed Ms Vacha's international eminence in her field of service.

In fairness to her husband Commander Nariman Vacha I would like to add that it was only after he had completed his term with the Indian Navy that he had served as the secretary of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet and the N. N. and R. N. Wadia Trusts. H. N. PATEL

Legal advice for the aged

With the dwindling numbers of our community, it has become quite common today for aged Parsi men/women to live alone in their homes, unable to move about much.

Some of these aged people have respectable savings which they would like to pass on to their kin. But for lack of legal guidance, their papers remain in disorder at their death, and their kith and kin (who are often themselves old) are

unable to get the benefit. Sometimes outsiders step into the vacuum, and much money goes out of the community — into the public exchequer or other private hands.

It would be a good idea if the Bombay Parsi Punchayet were to set up a legal guidance cell, wherein Parsi lawyers/solicitors could give a helping hand to such aged people.

Such a cell could advise the aged on how to regulate their papers (will, etc) so that their assets pass on to their kith and kin with ease and a minimum of legal formality and expense.

There is also a crying need for more social service organizations to arrange visits, assistance and companionship to aged persons living alone.

JAL M. KORKHAO

Old Parsi Gujarati songs

After scrounging in the Chor Bazar, secondhand dealers and old record shops, I have collected several records of old Parsi Gujarati songs of which the new generation of Parsis has not heard.

From the records I made several audio tapes and gave them to my friends at cost. According to their feedback three very important songs are missing from my tape.

I shall be much obliged if some Parsi gentleman or lady can loan me the following records:

- Goola mari gol gol, Boot né maravi sole, Dinshaw sathé thaigai pole...
- Kaka kalinger jéva, Su aven no damam...
- O Morarji Bhai O, Dinkarrao Desai, Mumbai ma rehva hamne bhari padi gai...

Please contact me at Yazdani Bakery, C. P. Street, Fort, Bombay. Z. M. ZEND

Readership blues

I do not understand why you are crying about our community getting smaller. Rather you should be worried about your job as an editor.

What you sow is what you reap. The saying is old, but it holds value even today. Through your editorial columns you indirectly favor conversion and mixed marriages. Is there any doubt that the community will decrease because the majority of those who go out are least interested in the Zoroastrian religion?

On New Year's eve, we had a small get-together. As usual, in the party, conversion and mixed marriage came up for discussion. These topics were raised by those who had non-Zoroastrian spouses, in explaining to their partners the rituals of the great religion they were born into. But none of the preachers are practising Zoroastrian rituals or philosophy.

One of the gentlemen was patting his own back on his success in bribing a priest in Bombay to get his white American wife's navjote done. Now two years after the navjote, neither of them wear the sudreh and kusti. And his wife does not even know the basic prayer *Yatha Ahu Vairyo* and *Ashem Vohu*. Upon my requesting him to subscribe to *Parsiana*, he answered, "Who likes to read garbage!"

The only support for you I got was from the ones who were married to Zoroastrians and their reason for subscribing to *Parsiana* was just to be in touch with the community.

I suggest you take a survey of your readers and ask them their opinion regarding conversion and mixed marriage. I am, confident the answer of the majority would be against it. NEVILLE SARKARI

Gaffney, SC, USA

Edited by Amavaz S. Mama

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Events and Personalities

Gallantry rewarded

Of the 10,000 nominations from the armed forces, paramilitary forces and civil services in India and from 30 countries across the globe, 200 students were selected for the Defence Services Staff



Pithawalla: in hard field, high altitude operations

College course — 1991-92. Among them was Major Cyrus Addie Pithawalla, informs the *Fed Newsletter* of May 1992. Currently posted in the Srinagar valley organizing counter-insurgency operations, Pithawalla started his military career in 1979 as an officer with the 17th Battalion Jammu and Kashmir Rifles. During his 13-year stint in the army, the 35-year-old major has been posted to most of the "hard field, high altitude and active operation areas including Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh, Ladakh and Kashmir," mentions his curriculum vitae. He has also served the Madras-based Officers Training Academy as an instructor.

The Ashok Chakra — the highest award for gallantry in peace time — was conferred on Pithawalla in 1982 when as a second lieutenant he had successfully headed a raid on a People's Liberation Army (PLA) hideout in Manipur. Despite a gunshot in the shoulder, Pithawalla continued to lead the operation until the PLA chief was captured alive and the recovery of arms, ammunition and equipment made possible.

Bangalore-born Pithawalla was at the Air Force Central School in Delhi and later did his masters in commerce from the Delhi University having represented

the university and the state in athletics. He is also an enthusiastic volleyball, basketball and squash player, the curriculum vitae further mentions.

For displaying exceptional gallantry and leadership Brigadier Rustom Kaikhushru Nanavatty won the newly constituted Uttam Yudh Seva Medal, reports the *Fed Newsletter*. This award is believed to rank the second highest in the distinguished service category.

Nanavatty was rewarded for commanding a brigade over a long period at an inhospitable altitude of 21,000 feet in the Siachin sector in Ladakh. As in-charge of Operation IBEX, Nanavatty reportedly succeeded in throwing out Pakistani intruders by his meticulous planning of air and land resources in an area where not even a blade of grass can grow because of the year round frost. Earlier he was the commander of the Junior Leaders School, according to the *Newsletter*.

L&T chair for Pestonjee

Job satisfaction, employee morale and stress management, the sphere in which Professor Dinyar M. Pestonjee has undertaken considerable research and counselling, will be given further attention following his appointment to the L&T chair in organizational behavior at the Indian Institute of Management (IIM), Ahmedabad. This post he will initially hold for a period of three years during which time "he plans to do more intensive work on executive stress and mental health, and the linkages between organizational stress and work motivation and satisfaction," as notes the IIM-Ahmedabad's publication *Alumnus* of May '92.

His present appointment at the IIM Pestonjee combines with several other

responsibilities: member of the Banking Services Recruitment Board, Western Region; member of the Board of Studies in Management at the Banaras Hindu University and at the Pondicherry Central University; member of the academic



Pestonjee: stress within control

councils of the Rajasthan University, of the Indian School of Mines and of Human Resource Development. He continues to be associated with the Aligarh Muslim University where he did his graduate, postgraduate and doctoral studies, his bio data informs.

Formerly active with the Indian Council of Social Science Research, he is now a representative of the International Social Science Council on the UNESCO board of commission for conceptual and terminological analysis. He had previously served the International Sociology Association in different capacities and was also the regional representative on the division of organizational psychology of the International Association of Applied Psychology.

A regular participant at international congresses on applied psychology, Pestonjee has presented more than 60 papers in his field of specialization. His latest book is *Stress Management — A Primer*, due in '92; prior to that he has authored eight other books. He provides training and consultancy services to a number of national and international organizations like the World Health Organisation and has guided 16 PhD theses with five more under way, the bio data further mentions.



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Excellence awards for two

For his rare contribution to equine breeding and for upgradation of the Indian breeding industry Poonawalla's Zavaray Soli Poonawalla was conferred the Rajiv Gandhi Excellence Award '91 by the Shiromani Institute of New Delhi. Outstanding accomplishments in the field of finance and management earned Adi Babuji Rabadi of Calcutta the same award, informs a press release.

Thirty-six eminent personalities chosen for this year's awards were felicitated on August 20, 1992, the birth anniversary of the late Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi. Union finance minister Dr Manmohan Singh recognized the efforts of these dignitaries in promoting the socio-economic advancement of India and emphasized that human resource development should be given top priority to meet the challenges of the next century.

Poonawalla, the managing director of the Poonawalla Stud Farms, is credited for his horses winning 127 classics and five consecutive Indian Derbies, a record unsurpassed in India. He is also the managing director of the Serum Institute of India, the largest manufacturer of quality biologicals in the country, aiding the government of India's immunization and family health scheme, informs his curriculum vitae.

Rabadi, who is the vice chairman and joint managing director of M. N. Dastur and Company, specializes in financial planning, management and industrial cost accounting for which he has earned distinctions like the Vijay Shree Award and the Vijay Rattna, it is reported.

14 select scholars

Of the 14 Parsis selected this year as Tata scholars by the J. N. Tata Endowment for the Higher Education of Indians, 10 were women. "The future of the community belongs to the girls," noted Dinshah Malegamvala, director of the Endowment. "It is a joy to come across such quality... intelligent, studious with serious, steady application and above all with a sense of responsibility," he continued. In its centenary year, the J. N. Tata Endowment selected 120 scholars and expended over 36.40 lakh

rupees to promote advanced studies in universities overseas, according to the press release.

Five of the Zoroastrian girls opted for

Gulshan F. Sunavala (advanced study program in oral and maxillo facial surgery, New York University, Dental College, New York) and Ms Zenobia F. Taraporewala (PhD in cell and molecular biology, University of Maryland, College Park).

Among the remaining girls the choice was varied: Ms Dilshad Billimoria (higher studies in flute, Royal College of Music, London), Ms Dilshad J. Master (masters in telecommunications/mass communications management, Michigan State University), Ms Firooza B. Pavri (masters in geography, University of Toledo, Ohio), Ms Meher Dhondy Saran (masters in business administration, American Graduate School of International Management) and Ms Dilnaz B. Unwalla (masters in audiology and speech therapy, Ohio State University, Athens).

Of the four boys, three were going to pursue a masters degree in science and the fourth, a masters in business administration. Their chosen fields of specialization are: Hormuzd P. Commissariat (masters in electrical and electronic engineering, Michigan State University), Mehernosh Engineer (masters in metallurgy, Pennsylvania State University), Adil F. Mistry (masters in business administration — finance and banking, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor) and Jamshid J. Tata (masters in computer science, Arizona State University).

A brief on each of the students was proffered by Malegamvala:

Billimoria's stay in London will enable her to train as a professional flautist. A self taught flautist, she impressed a visiting British Council conductor who recommended her to study at the Royal College of Music. A gifted musician, she is believed to have enormous potential to enrich the quality of western music in Bombay.

An engineering graduate in electronics from the Bombay University, Commissariat is known for his creative and innovative designs. When doing his masters in electrical engineering he will specialize in communications, digital signal processes and image processing.

Plant physiology and plant molecular biology are subjects which Deboo has



Poonawalla (top) and Rabadi (below) receiving the Rajiv Gandhi Excellence Awards from Dr Manmohan Singh

science related subjects: Ms Gulshan B. Deboo (PhD in biotechnology, Washington State University), Ms Kerman P. Dubash (masters in preventive veterinary medicine, Ohio State University), Ms Shireen C. Pavri (PhD in psychology, Miami University, Ohio), Dr (Ms)

chosen for her doctoral studies. Her MSc was in biotechnology with specialization in plant tissue culture. She switched from chemistry at the bachelors level (she had stood first in the examination conducted by the Pune University) to biotechnology at the masters level. On completion of her postgraduation she was training as a junior research fellow at the National Chemical Laboratory.

International management is what Dhondy Saran plans to master in at the American Graduate School of International Management which is considered the best management school in the US today. A Jamshedpur girl she had passed the personnel management course at the Xavier Labour Relations Institute with a first class. She has subsequently gained work experience at the Tata Engineering and Locomotive Company Limited.

Assistant professor of veterinary surgery, Dubash chose to further qualify in the USA. At the bachelors level she had stood first in Maharashtra and subsequently at the masters in veterinary science, she came first in surgery.

Engineer plans to do his masters and doctoral studies in materials sciences specializing in composite materials. Earlier he had completed his BTech from the Indian Institute of Technology with high grades in metallurgical engineering.

After her commerce graduation from Bangalore University with a first rank in taxation Master switched over to a post-graduation diploma specializing in video and film production at the Sophia Polytechnic. She has worked as a production crew member with a BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation) team in Bombay and only recently completed a year as assistant director with a television unit making prime-time serials for the national network.

Finance and banking is what Mistry will specialize in while doing a masters in business administration. A commerce graduate from Sydenham College, Mistry later did his masters in commerce and completed the chartered accountants and cost accountants examinations winning innumerable prizes and scholarships. While doing his articles with Price Waterhouse, he gained considerable experience of banking in a multinational setup.

1992 Tata scholars (clockwise from top left): Deboo, Dubash, Sunavala, Billimoria, F. Pavri, Unwalla, Engineer, Tata, Mistry, Commissariat, Dhondy Saran, Master, Taraporewala and S. Pavri



While pursuing a masters course in geography, Firoza Pavri will specialize in environmental analysis, planning and computerized cartography. Even when she had studied geography at the Bombay University and secured a first rank, her specialization had been cartography.

Shireen Pavri has opted for a masters in education and a certificate course in school psychology. Earlier she had stood first at the BA as also at the MA level in special education.

Sunavala enjoys the distinction of being a rank student in dental surgery at both the bachelors and masters level from the Bombay University. In addition to her academic excellence which has earned her several medals and scholarships, she is a keen athlete having participated in the javelin throw, shot-put, heptathlon at the college, state and national levels.

After completing her MSc from the Bombay University, securing a first rank in microbiology, Taraporewala has decided to do her doctorate in cell and molecular biology. She was active in all college extra-curricular activities, particularly dramatics, and has also helped in organizing seminars.

A masters in computer science with specialization in software engineering, artificial intelligence and computer graphics is Tata's plan of study after completing his bachelor of engineering in computer science from the Bombay University. Tata trained in software consultancy at the Tata Consultancy Services.

First Unwalla will do her masters degree in speech therapy. Thereafter she will undertake her doctorate on hearing disorders in children. Audiology and speech therapy was also the subject in which Unwalla completed her bachelors from the Bombay University as a rank student. Her work experience has been at Jai Vakil's School where she served as a speech therapist.

As a result of many students being offered financial assistance by the overseas universities, "the award of Rs 36.40 lakhs of Tata scholarships has resulted in the award of Rs 2.64 crores as financial aid from American Universities to Tata scholars," notes Malegamwala. "When the US is in the grip of a recession and university grants have been slashed, we take this generous support to our students to be a recognition of the quality of Tata selections," he adds.

continued on page 25

Zoroastrians prosper in Hongkong

Zoroastrian presence in the area predates the establishment of Hongkong

Arnavaz S. Mama

"We may be among the richest anjumans in the world," says Jimmy Master of Hongkong. Shoring up his statement The Incorporated Trustees of the Zoroastrian Charity Funds of Hongkong, Canton and Macau (ITZCFHCM) will shortly be moving into their spanking new fully air-conditioned granite and glass building whose total construction cost (exclusive of interior decor) is currently estimated at HK \$ 32.43 million (approximately Rs 126.4 million).

The association will occupy four floors of the 22-storeyed Zoroastrian Building which has replaced the original two-storeyed structure in a little more than a year, according to the memo circulated by association president Jal Shroff to community members. This will account for a social hall and kitchen, bar, children's room, ladies' room, prayer hall, library cum meeting room, priest and staff quarters. There is no provision for a guest house or dharamshala.

The rest of the area, amounting to over 33,000 square feet, will be leased out on commercial terms with shops and showrooms at street level. With the occupation permit expected by end November, the official opening of the building will be on March 21, 1993 but Shroff hopes to move in earlier. The project has been financed by mortgaging the association's land to the Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation (HSBC). The 12-year term loan is expected to be repaid from the proceeds of the rental income, according to Master.

With a prominent corner position between Leighton Road and Hoi Ping Road, the Zoroastrian Building stands cheek by jowl with a variety of high-class commercial buildings, banks and hotels in downtown Hongkong. It will be professionally managed by Wayfoong Property Limited, a wholly owned subsidiary of the HSBC, providing 24-hour management service to the occupants.

With the demolition of the original

60-year-old structure in 1991 and its replacement the association that began more than 147 years ago is gearing up for a new life in the avant-garde British colony that is slated to return to China in five years' time. And, in doing so, the Zoroastrians are reverting to their older, confident, venturesome ethos that propelled them into the region in the first place, even before Hongkong was established in the 1840s, as notes the historical outline in the anjuman's directory.

The two schools of thought regarding the future of Hongkong are delineated by Master: "The future may improve dramatically. If Hongkong flourishes, property prices will appreciate, resulting in a healthy income for the trust funds. The negative scenario is that the fall in the asset value of land will continue until it reaches zero by 1997 and the anjuman must earn before that date." Master, who does not subscribe either to the doomsday theory nor to its total-success counterpart, expects the emerging reality to lie somewhere in between. "It is likely that by the time China assumes sovereignty it will have become so involved in Hongkong that Hongkong's success will depend on China's management... Hongkong, Taiwan, Canton and Macau (constitute) a separate region in terms of prosperity and a population bloc of 80 million. These people have experienced the most rapid development, success and prosperity. They will not be agreeable to giving it up," says Master, a businessman whose export-import trade in textiles and garments, like that of other fellow Zoroastrians, is said to be substantially based on sourcing in India for export to other countries. But Hongkong Zoroastrians are too small a community "to make any difference to anybody. We (have to) keep our heads down and get on with living," he adds matter-of-factly.

The older generation of Hongkong Zoroastrians could be regarded as more orthodox, more likely to wear the sudreh kusti and pray daily, says Master. For the

rest, "the people are not out to change the system. No one would object to the performance of rituals... The (resident) priest (Ervad Burjor Bhada, ex Deolali) is under no pressures. The trustees never force him into doing anything not in accord with his own beliefs." As an example Master cites the mobed's refusal to set foot in a crematorium or acquiesce even to the ashes being buried in the 142-year-old cemetery.

Same day burial is the norm, notes Master. Holding the body for a second day is exceptional. Community members serve as pallbearers and the four-day and subsequent prayers are said.

Three to four generations of Parsi families have made Hongkong their home. Nonetheless ties with the host family in India remain fairly strong, says Master and many have bought properties in India as part of their retirement plan or as a second home.

The general pattern in recent years was for the children to complete their secondary schooling in Hongkong before proceeding to the US, Canada or the UK for further education, with the majority opting for the UK and the cream of the community migrating to North America. With the establishment of several new institutions of higher learning in Hongkong, that compulsion may now cease to apply, feels Master who graduated from Hamilton and completed his masters from London University. The older generations by contrast had no such intellectual exposure. They had hardly even completed their schooling before being thrust into the family business. In other cases their career was interrupted by World War II. Conversely, "no Parsi trading house today enjoys the status that Parsi houses enjoyed years ago," he admits.

Today there are 181 Parsis in Hongkong as per the 1991-92 directory, with 50 families and 27 individuals. According to Master many are on short or medium term postings and there may be

several more "who choose not to make their presence known."

An occasional navjote or wedding is held in Hongkong, an additional priest being flown in from Bombay. But the general tendency is to hold the function in India.

Describing his Hongkong brethren as "an insular community," Master explains that there is a great deal of intracommunity contact but little contact on the intercommunity level. "Our primary concern is with India — communities elsewhere have no locus standi. If an appeal (for funds) comes from India, it is considered. If it comes from other places, it's just not considered! (There is a strong belief that) Indian Zoroastrians need preferential treatment and support... Up to two or three years ago everything, the minutes, proceedings of meetings, etc of the association were written in Gujarati and read out in Gujarati at the annual general meeting," he adds, attesting to the conservatism of Hongkong Parsis.

However, "religious issues have never been of burning importance," says Master. "When Khojeste Mistree (founder of Zoroastrian Studies) came a year or two ago, he had a massive response. People sat with him till midnight. When people come, they are well received but there is no active encouragement on a regular basis."

The Hongkong directory traces the history of the anjuman to 1822 when a piece of land was obtained in Macau for the establishment of a Parsi cemetery. Though records indicate that the China Canton Anjuman was established in 1834 it was only in 1845 that the Zoroastrians of the region "met in Canton to create a proper anjuman body for the maintenance of the burial grounds, a place of association and for rendering assistance to the needy," informs the directory. Cemeteries were also established in Hongkong (1845), Whampoa (1847) and Shanghai (1854).

The trust deed of the anjuman dates to 1874. Thereafter there were two major revisions. The first in 1920 was effected by Justice Dinshaw Daver of the Bombay High Court in response to certain disputes and differences, according to the directory write-up. Then in 1989, to accommodate the increasing size and complexity of the trust funds as also the planned redevelopment of its Zoroastrian Building property, the trust was incorporated and its rules and regulations

updated and recognized by the Hongkong government as a charity organization, donations to which are tax deductible.

As the mercantile community prospered, it rented its first property for community use in 1857 and went on to purchase its first house at Elgin Street four years later. This property was later sold and a plot acquired on Leighton Road on which the trust's first one-storeyed building was constructed in 1931, a second storey being added in 1970. During the



Master: "not out to change the system"

Photo: Varghese Fernandez

current rebuilding activity the anjuman is functioning from rented premises on Causeway Hill.

Only recently the trust fund appointed its first lady trustee — Ms Ruby Master. The proposal had been stymied on three occasions before the change was incorporated in the trust deed, says Jimmy Master.

The trust's five trustees (currently Shroff who is president, secretary Viraf Parekh who publishes the directory, Keki Jokhi, Homi Italia and Ms Master) may be elected to unlimited five year terms. But Jimmy Master says, "In my lifetime I can't recall a single contested election." In practice the procedure is one of internal selection of the incumbent trustee which is proposed, seconded and carried in the belief that a contested election is likely to lead to bad blood. In the upshot the inflow of new individuals among trustees is said to be very rare. It was said that the 1980s saw changes only because

the old guard of the 1950s to the late 1970s had aged and required to step down. The social events include a weekly dinner and cards on Friday in addition to 14 specific events in 1992 listed in the directory.

"Adventuresome Parsis... 'went East' for fame and fortune between the two World Wars. Wherever P&O mail/passenger ships stopped there were Parsi families: Bombay, Colombo, Rangoon, Penang, Singapore, Hongkong, Canton, Shanghai, Kobe, Yokohama... World War II packed most of their return to India. And from the 1950s the Parsi going abroad was a different breed — well educated and far better suited to life in the West. Yet today the economic growth of the world is in the Far East," is how Manek Daver of Japan sums up the Zoroastrian presence in the area. The only flaw in Daver's assessment of Zoroastrian settlements in the great cities washed by the China Sea is the timing — they went much before World War I to help in the building of Hongkong. Names such as Mody Street and Kotewall Street attest to the contribution of the Parsi community to the wealth of Hongkong, writes Jonathan Braude in the *South China Morning Post* of October 27, 1991. Jamsetji Jejeebhoy "traded in Guangzhou before the foundation of Hongkong. He became a partner of Jardine Matheson and Company (his portrait by Chinnery can still be seen at the corporate headquarters on the 48th floor of Jardine House) and a director of the Hongkong and Shanghai Bank," informs Kevin Sinclair in an earlier article in the same paper and reproduced in *Hamazor*, the newsbulletin of the World Zoroastrian Organisation. Recounting highlights of Parsi achievements in the colony Sinclair elaborates, "Heerjibhoy Ruttonjee was the first of that noted clan who came to Hongkong in 1843. One of his descendants was the much respected Dhun Ruttonjee, a conscientious and outspoken Legco member in the 1960s.

"The Ruttonjees, closely allied with the House of Jardine over the decades, built the sanatorium named after them and funded a lot of medical care for tuberculosis victims in the era when it was still a major and dreaded killer.

"The first steam ferries that plodded over the harbor in 1888 were operated by Dorabji Nowroji.

"Probably the most famous Parsi businessman was Hormusji Mody, opium auctioneer and land developer. He is re-

membered by Mody Road in Tsim Sha Tsui but he was also active with his Armenian partner Paul Chater in developing the praya along the central waterfront, the engineering work that gave Hongkong at the turn of the century its own character. Mody donated \$ 300,000 to found the University of Hongkong, a stupendous sum in those days and the gift earned him a knighthood. His generosity also helped him construct the Kowloon Cricket Club on Cox's Road, an area where many Parsis and wealthy Indians then lived."

Naorojee Burjorjee Futakia seems to be a typical example of the turn-of-the-century Parsi, going to Hongkong in 1900 at the age of eight. "A tough-minded optimist with implicit faith in Ahura Mazda," he withstood the losses of war, communist insurgence and domestic tribulations with equal fortitude, holding it as his philosophy that "a man never fails until he gives up trying," as notes an obituary of the one-time trustee published in the anjuman's newsletter when he died in 1980.

As Shroff told Sinclair, "We've been in Hongkong a long time. We'll be around for a lot longer yet."

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The 1992 BPP Elections Parties and Pacts

The lead that the ZCWA initially enjoyed is being challenged by the other parties

Gustasp Irani

As the Bombay Parsi Punchayet Anjuman Committee elections eventually get under way, a total of 1,632 candidates out of 4,812 registered voters have their hat in the ring. With 802 seats at stake, about every other candidate will win.

Of the total, 684 are Zoroastrian Cultural Welfare Association (ZCWA) candidates. According to Dr Syrus Irani, president of ZCWA, 19 of his party candidates over four constituencies withdrew their nominations after being, what he describes as "unfairly" influenced by members of other parties. In particular, it is the Committee for Economic Revival (CER-formerly Committee for Electoral Rights) that he holds responsible for a shift in loyalties among 18 of his members in the Byculla constituency who switched sides to join the CER-endorsed Kersi Limathwalla group.

In the Dadar constituency, the Adi Doctor orthodox slate of 81 candidates has the endorsement of both the ZCWA and the Jashan Committee (JC). The other Dadar group of independent candidates, put together by Ms Pervina Doctor and Ms Silla Motivala among others, is being endorsed by the CER. The CER will also support the candidates of the Petrarp Patel group in the Khareghat Colony constituency.

Certain other constituencies have witnessed the emergence of strange bed-fellows with the CER and the JC reaching an understanding to support each other's candidates. In the Colaba and Fort constituencies, these two groups

formed an electoral alliance since the combined strength of the two groups exceeded the number of seats at stake. Each party withdrew some of their nominations to prevent a splitting of votes. This compromise accounts for a large share of the 122 nominations that were withdrawn before the cutoff date, November 15, 1992.

In constituencies where the combined strength of the CER and JC is less than the number of seats at stake, the CER will be supporting independents as well as select persons from the ZCWA slate. "The CER is not a party in the strict sense of the word. We support all individuals who we believe are independent-minded and have the best interest of the Parsi community at heart," Dinshaw Mehta, a key member of the CER, explains their strategy.

Commenting on the CER's alliance with the JC, Mehta observes: "Our understanding is for the Anjuman Committee elections only. For the trusteeship elections, each one will support its own

candidates."

And talking of trustees, will Marazban Patrawala, member of the Maharashtra Legislative Assembly be in the fray? Reports from a number of sources indicate that a group owing allegiance to him will be contesting the Anjuman Committee elections from the Colaba constituency. Initially, the CER is believed to have sounded out Patrawala's group on the possibility of a mutual understanding, but the offer was spurned. The Patrawala group later reconsidered the offer, only to find that the CER had already reached an understanding with the JC. As a result the Colaba constituency has the highest proportion, 2.52 candidates for every seat available. At the other end of the scale, the Worli constituency has the lowest proportion, 1.76 candidates per seat.

The casting of votes will commence December 5, 1992. The schedule and the venue of the different polling centers have been announced: December 5 — Head Office Building, 209 Dr D. N.

Road, Fort; December 6 — Khareghat Memorial Hall, Khareghat Colony; December 12 — Palamkote Hall, Dadar Parsi Colony; December 13 — Recreation Centre, Bharucha Baug, Andheri (W); December 19 — Play Centre, Nowroz Baug, Lalbaug; December 20 — Head office Building, Fort. Voting can be done on any of the six days at any center irrespective of the constituency one is affiliated to.

Electoral distribution of constituencies

Constituency	Denoted by	Allocated seats	Contesting candidates
Colaba	A	74	187
Fort	B	90	181
Kalbadevi	C	79	156
Malabar Hill	D	71	145
Worli	E	84	148
Parcel	F	49	95
Dadar	G	81	190
Borivli, Goregaon and Jogeshwari	H	72	147
Bandra and Mahim	I	69	138
Tardeo and Hughes Road	J	79	149
Grant Road	K	54	96

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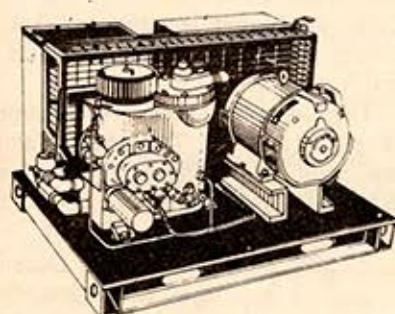
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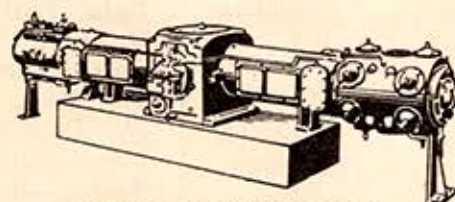


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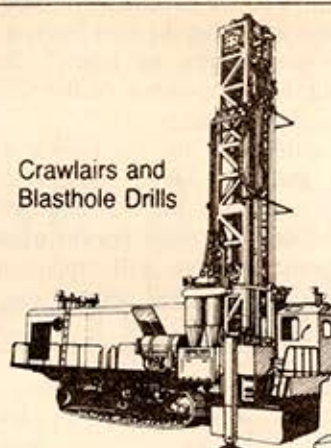
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A matter of trust

Gustasp Irani

Dr Syrus Irani believes he would be better able to empathize with the community's problems than any of the affluent trustees of the Panchayet

To understand 43-year-old Dr Syrus D. Irani, the eighth of 11 children, is to realize that he still lives under the shadow of his father Darvish Irani, the poor migrant Irani Zoroastrian who served as the custodian of Bombay's Towers of Silence for 45 years up to the time of his death in 1980. To Irani, the simple lifestyle of his father is a touchstone, a constant point of reference that keeps creeping into the interview. It is almost as though Darvish Irani is still sitting in the pavilion outside the lower bunglis, a brightly colored Irani hanky tied around his head, worrying his string of beads and watching his son who aspires to be elected to the board of trustees of the Bombay Parsi Panchayet (BPP) — the same body he had served with unfailing dedication and devotion.

Not surprisingly Irani informs us that the idea of becoming a BPP trustee first germinated in events that took place in the household of Darvish at the Doongerwadi in 1988. In April that year, Irani's widowed mother, Goolbanu, who took on her husband's job and responsibilities after his death, received a letter from the BPP office that as she had reached the age of superannuation she was being retired from her duties the following month and should surrender the accommodation which went with the job. Irani immediately moved the courts for a stay order against her eviction and through the legal system worked out an understanding that his mother would stay on at the Doongerwadi till alternative accommodation was provided to her at Godrej Baug. She however died before she could move and according to Irani she lived the last two years of her life in constant dread, for her son had dared to challenge the might of the BPP.

"This lady had worked for 50 years in a thankless job and this was the way the

BPP treated her. What I saw at the Doongerwadi, and not just in my mother's case, made me realize how poor Parsis lived and how little the trustees (of the BPP) understood their problems," says Irani. Little did they under-



Irani: "I shall carry on my fight"

Photo: Gustasp Irani

stand the real needs of the poor of the community: for decent affordable housing, for reservations in jobs and educational institutions, for proper religious guidance and even to have a good meal once in a while. "Why are they not using all those ghambar funds they manage? I know how I looked forward to eating at a ghambar as a small boy. I can still recall how much I loved the dal they served at a ghambar held at Alibag."

The root of the problem with the current lot of BPP trustees, according to Irani, is that they have all come from the affluent segment of the community and are not in touch with the realities and hardships their poorer brethren have to

face. Charity housing, he points out, is for the poor but the rents the BPP is asking excludes them: "How do they expect poor Parsis to pay over Rs 1,000 per month?" On the issue of reservation quotas he observes: "They can afford to say that the community does not need any special benefits because they have comfortable jobs and do not have to struggle for a living, like most others." In religious matters, he believes that their views, which may be commended by their peers, are not necessarily shared by the rest of the community. The time has come, Irani feels, for a complete overhaul of the board of trustees. The new trustees, he hopes, will reflect and understand the fears and aspirations of the community.

The chance of effecting such a change presented itself when the new scheme for election of the Anjuman Committee (AC) and trustees of the BPP filtered through the legal system in December 1991 after a protracted period of wrangling and delays. In February 1992 Irani called a meeting of the Zoroastrian Cultural Welfare Association (ZCWA), a cultural and charitable organization of which he is the founder president, and under its banner set out on the election campaign trail.

For starters Irani obtained the membership list of the new general register of the BPP and started breaking down the alphabetic listing of 19,000 plus names according to localities. "I would work late into the night writing down names and addresses by hand," he recalls. The job done, his band of volunteers started fanning out in the city appealing to Parsis to collect their registration certificates under the new election scheme of the BPP and even offering to do so on their behalf. Often the reward for their efforts was a front door slammed in their face.

"Parsis are fed up with the Punchayet and its trustees. They just don't want to get involved," says Irani pointing out that only about 5,000 bothered to get their new certificates by the middle of October.

To compound their problem they had to convince 802 Parsis, from 11 constituencies spread across the city, to stand for the AC elections on the ZCWA slate. Since the Fort constituency was proving to be a particularly difficult one, Irani and three other volunteers set aside two Sundays in May to comb the area for candidates. From 9 in the morning to 8 in the evening, they went from house to house with their appeal and persuaded 96 Parsis to fill in nomination forms. "We were able to do this because of my father. When people heard I was Darvish Irani's son they would invite me into their house," Irani recalls. As a result of systematic campaigning, Irani claims that the ZCWA was the only party or group which had a slate of 802 candidates ready by end May 1992 — the original cut-off point for filing of nominations (this included a group of 81 candidates from Dadar led by Adi Doctor which the ZCWA proposed to support).

Subsequently, the elections were postponed and September 1, 1992 was set as the last day for filing of nominations. In the weeks that followed the BPP issued a series of notices in the Press intimating the latest development on the election front. Irani monitored and responded to each twist, and as the new deadline approached, his ZCWA was the only group once again that was fully prepared. Of the 1,133 nominations filed, 802 belonged to ZCWA, according to Irani. The election campaign, however, had become an entirely new ball game.

The Committee for Economic Reforms (CER — formerly Committee for Electoral Rights) which had swept the earlier election, moved the courts in an attempt to get an extension of the nomination deadline on technical grounds. Irani saw it as a blatant bid to gain time as the CER had managed to scrape together only about 250 candidates at that time. "Instead of fighting the election over issues that concern the community, the CER was squabbling over dates in the courts," says Irani who likened what followed to a "legal tug-of-war." Technically, the legal battle was between the

CER and the BPP but according to Irani, it fell upon the ZCWA rather than the BPP to counter every move.

Initially the last date for filing nominations was shifted to September 17, then the election of the AC from October to December and that of the two trustee posts from December 1992 to February 1993. The ZCWA challenged the postponements and got them rescheduled to their original dates. Only now the election of the AC was slated for the last two



The bereft family mourns the death of Darvish Irani Photo: Rashid Bamanbehram

days of October instead of the beginning of the month. The CER protested once more. The scheme allowed nominations to be filed up to 30 days before the date of the election. They got the last date for filing nominations fixed at September 30. Since the BPP notice to this effect was issued after this date the CER filed for further postponement of the entire election schedule. On Friday October 23, the day before the courts went on a two-week Diwali recess, they won their case. Once more the AC elections were shifted to December and the trusteeship elections to February 1993. "The three CER trustees, Jamsheed Kanga, Jamshed Guzder and Minoo Shroff, and two CER members, Fali Poncha and Noshir Mehta all filed separate pleas for postponement. This alone shows that these three trustees had put their own personal interest above the interest of the community and fair play," says Irani. But he is not deterred. "God is on the side of the just and I shall carry on my fight for the poor of the community," he declares.

Irani believes that there are three areas the trustees of the BPP should give special attention and priority to — housing of poor Parsis, reservation quotas for Parsis in jobs and educational institutions and religious matters.

"The BPP has done a lot for housing in the past 10 years," Irani concedes, but adds: "However, the system of allotment is not just. It is not the poor and the real needy Parsis who have benefitted." He points out that the merit rating system has been manipulated. "For some there are 10 rules why they cannot be given a flat and for others there are no rules," says Irani. He points out a number of out-of-turn allotments to illustrate his point. He argues that under the current system, a person allotted a flat might be a deserving case but the moot point is that often a more deserving one has been denied accommodation.

To remedy the situation he believes that the trustees themselves should verify each case personally rather than send representatives of the BPP to do the job. "But our present lot of trustees are so busy with their own careers, where do they have the time to do something like that? Many of them do not even have time to attend board meetings regularly." Trustees elected on the ZCWA platform will, according to Irani, make a commitment to check out each application personally and further should they find that they do not have the time to attend board meetings, they will voluntarily resign from their posts. In his personal capacity, he states that should he become a trustee he will resign from the Jain Mahila Samaj charitable trust where he is the honorary medical practitioner and devote the two hours between 2 and 4 p.m. he sits at their clinic every day to trust matters. And more, he will sit in the BPP office on Saturdays and Sundays, if the need arises.

Criticisms also came the way of the BPP staff. In leaflets reportedly distributed by Irani's "well-wishers in and around BPP," a suggestion was made that "All superannuated staff in BPP must resign. These jobs must be given to our knowledgeable youths for the growth of our community."

Irani's 'glass house' which his critics keep reminding him about is that members of his family, himself included, have been allotted five BPP tenements over the years. "But, of course, and I'm not denying that. Punchayet housing is meant for poor families like mine," he retorts. He informs us that his father had 11 children and after 45 years of serving the BPP he was earning a "handsome"

continued on page 24

Leading the court campaign

Gustasp Irani

CER's repeated trips to the court seeking extensions and clarifications has fortified its position in the 1992 Anjuman Committee elections

The 1992 Anjuman Committee (AC) elections of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP) will probably be remembered as the first one held under the new scheme. It may also be an election more hotly contested in the courts of law than at the hustings. The main legal contention appears to have been a question of when the elections should be held rather than reference to the issues that concerned the Parsis. In the ensuing legal tug-of-war the Committee for Economic Revival (CER, formerly the Committee for Electoral Rights) which controlled the outgoing AC, emerged triumphant when the courts allowed for a postponement of the schedule.

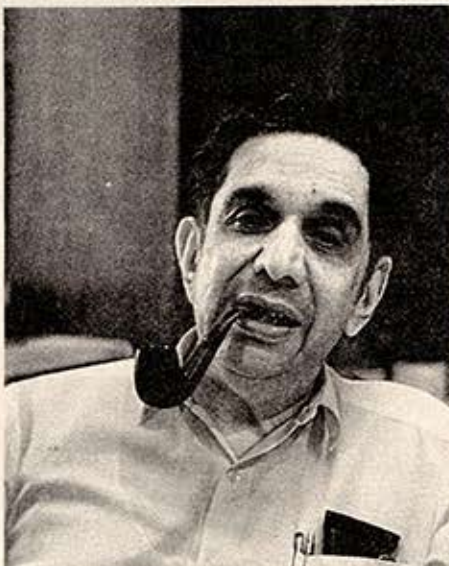
This victory was crucial for, as one active CER member observed: "We would have lost the elections even before the first vote was cast." The dilemma the party faced was that as the original September 1 deadline for filing nominations approached, it found that it was able to scrape up only around 250 candidates to contest the 802 seats at stake.

One of the main persons guiding the fortunes of the CER through the legal maze was reputed lawyer Rusi Sethna of Manekshaw and Sethna, a well-known law firm in Bombay.

Sethna clarifies the position of the party thus: "As I look at CER, its primary objective was fulfilled when it brought about an awareness in the community as regards its electoral rights way back in the 1981 elections. Apart from that, its other aim was that the AC should elect trustees (of the BPP) regardless of the party they belong to. We never looked at ourselves as a party in a formal sense. However, when it came to the election of the present AC I am inclined to agree that we were not as organized as

in 1981; but we were certainly not asleep."

Looking at both sides of the coin of the new election scheme, Sethna sees it as "a bit absurd" that about 4,000 Parsis



Sethna: ensure effective representation

Photo: Gustasp Irani

will be voting for 802 seats (he does not believe that all the 5,000 plus who have collected their new General Register certificates will vote). On the positive side, the sheer size of the AC will make it almost impossible to dictate to it. Sethna refers to instances in the past when the certificates of AC members were held by certain individuals who issued them to members who came to vote and collected them again when the deed was done. "It's extremely difficult to pull something like that when you are dealing with 802 people," Sethna observes.

He, however, clarifies that the new election scheme was not the creation of

the CER though it was undoubtedly a product of its efforts. Personally, he would have preferred a more compact electoral college of an equal number of members elected from the General Register and the Donor Register. Such a scheme, he points out, was in the offing till some of the donors objected.

Returning to the existing scheme, Sethna points out that it has a number of built-in flaws that needed to be ironed out and it was for this reason the CER had to appeal to the courts of law. "The system needed to be rationalized. First, there was the issue of demarcation of constituencies and second, the problem of adhering to the scheme's timetable," says Sethna.

Referring to the first problem of constituency demarcation, he observes: "The idea of having constituencies is that a voter knows the person he or she is voting for. Its main purpose is to ensure effective representation of the community. But all that is lost under the present circumstances." For one, he points out that over the last decade there has been a major shift in the Parsi population from the city center to the suburbs and even other parts of the world. Furthermore, the demarcation of the 11 constituencies has been, at best, arbitrary. "You cannot do that sitting in an office drawing lines on the map of the city on the basis of records that are over 10 years old. Even if it means spending money, I believe you have to go from door to door updating your records," says Sethna. A fallout of such an exercise would be a better understanding of the real problems facing the community, and also a knowledge of the true strengths of the community.

That aside, such an effort would involve time, which leads invariably to the

other problem Sethna identified in the current election scheme — adherence to schedules set by the courts which required the process to be completed within a specified period. In effect, according to Sethna, what the CER was seeking through its legal action was a guarantee that there would be fair and effective representation of the community on the AC (the prime objective of any election process), thus defeating the designs of any single group taking undue advantage of the flaws in the system.

Commenting on the office of trusteeship of the BPP, Sethna believes that it should be devalued. "Don't treat them as gods; view them as servants," he advises all concerned. According to him, to be a good BPP trustee a person must possess three qualities: "One, vision and by vision I mean that he should be able to see far ahead into the future. Two, the ability to take a decision, right or wrong. And three, boldness and persistence to implement that decision."

Sethna refutes the allegation that the present trustees of the BPP are insensitive to the needs of the average Parsi because they hail from the more affluent segment of the community. "Except for possibly one trustee none of the others

was born with a silver spoon in his mouth; they did not come from very rich families. They all have made the grade through their own efforts," he protests. This leads to the question of reservations for Parsis in jobs and educational institutions. "If we can get a minority status with dignity I see no problem in accept-

**"We were not as
organized as
in 1981; but
we were certainly
not asleep"**

ing it. But we should definitely refuse to grovel for it," says Sethna.

Other concessions the BPP should seek, according to Sethna, are from the Rent Act and those tax exemptions which are not available to our community trusts on the grounds that Parsis are a micro community. The specific Rent Act exemption Sethna refers to is that when a Parsi residing in a BPP flat dies and has no relatives living with him or

her at the time, the flat should automatically revert to the BPP to be allotted to another deserving Parsi. "Of course I speak for myself and not on behalf of the CER," Sethna clarifies his position.

One area the trustees should steer clear of is religion. "I am of the view that they should not dabble in religion. These matters should be left to religious scholars," says Sethna. And by religious scholars he refers not only to the priests but all recognized authorities on Zoroastrianism, Parsi and non-Parsi, from India and all over the world.

Finally, Sethna addresses the speculation about his standing for election to the board of trustees of the BPP. "I do not believe in taking on something I know I won't be able to do," he states, referring to his flourishing law practice and other responsibilities like his position as managing trustee of the R. D. Sethna Trust which make it difficult for him to set aside the time he believes such a commitment would involve. "If and when I do ease off on my other activities I will give it consideration," he adds. But, of course, he points out, there is one aspect that might prove to be a problem when and if such a time comes. "My pipe," he says from behind a cloud of smoke.

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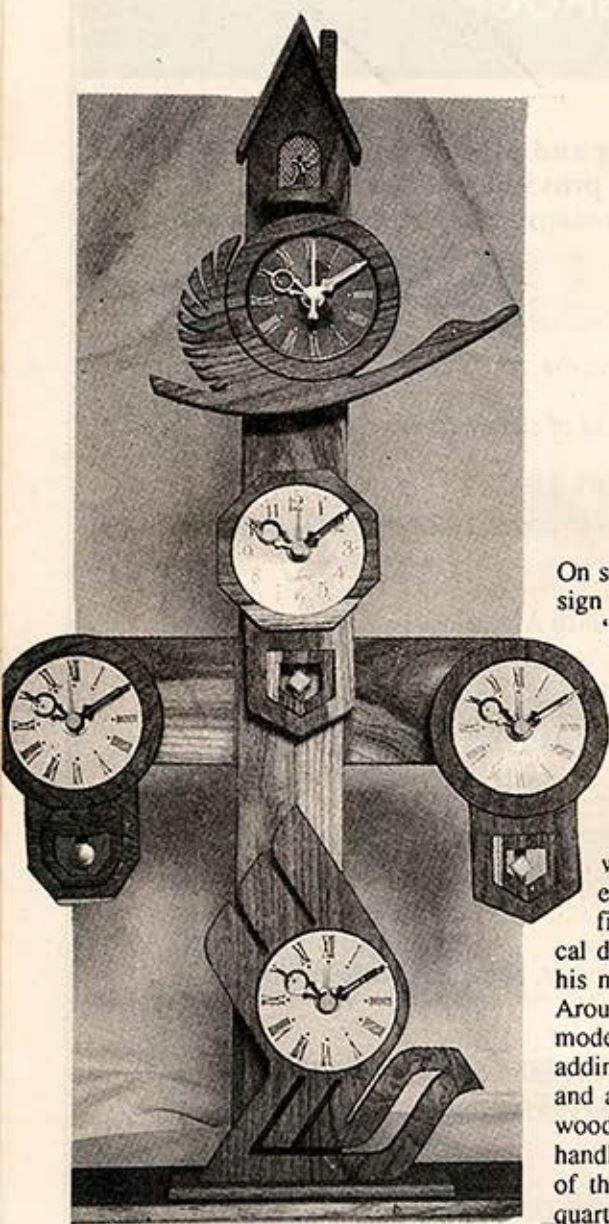
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JUSSAWALLA'S model commitment

Gustasp Irani

On seeing splintered glass — the telltale sign of a road accident — most people 'tut-tut' sympathetically and drive on. Not one Bombay Parsi though. He stops to examine the mess and without attracting too much attention to himself collects fistfuls of the glass splinters in a hanky before moving on.

Back home he sorts out his booty: weeding out the slivers with sharp edges, he matches the rest for a close fit, piecing them together into a conical dome which will house the flame of his model afargan (holy fire container). Around this afargan he constructs a model of the sanctum of a fire-temple, adding details like prayer books, bells and a tray with a pair of tongs, sandalwood sticks and a *chumuch* (long handled, flat spoon). In the upper section of this miniature agiary is embedded a quartz clock. Meet Burjor Jussawalla, wood sculptor and model craftsman of remarkable ingenuity.

But Jussawalla has more than afargans and clock tower agiaries to offer. He fabricates miniature temples and churches with nightlamps and timepieces built into the structures. There are conventional items like model pendulum clocks and calendars with company logos. The more unconventional pieces include handcars and skulls fitted with clocks, and owls with eyes that glow bright red at night. "I can make almost anything. I am always looking for new ideas of what to make," says Jussawalla. The idea of the skull clock, for instance, sprang from the pages of a magazine. "When going to

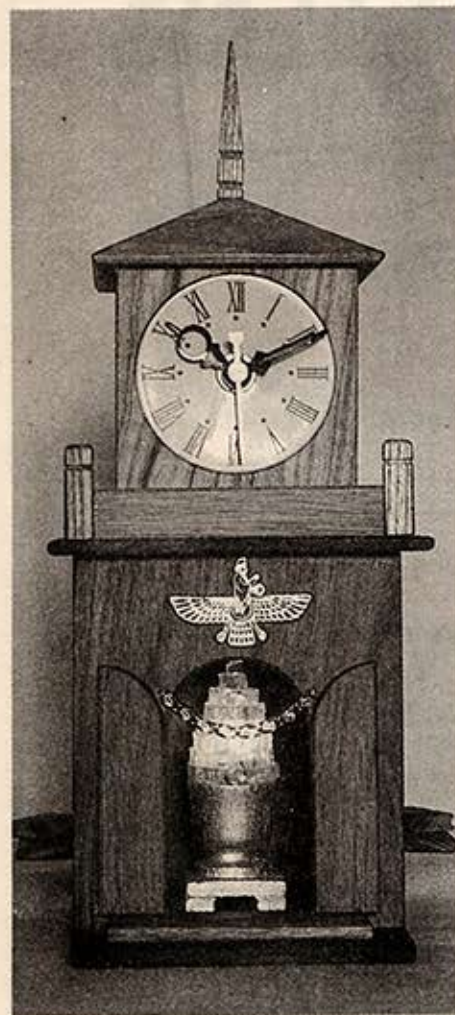
sleep I am always thinking about my work," he says. He seeks ideas for new models or how to refine small details — a cross or maybe the afargan — in the existing ones. "I don't stop. I continuously keep improving on what I am doing. No two pieces are the same, especially since everything is handmade." He adds that he has very little ready stock of the models and most are made to order.

According to Jussawalla, the afargans with agiary clock towers are his bestsellers and can be found in Parsi households in the US, UK, Canada, Australia, Hong Kong, Germany and Sri Lanka. Nearer home they are found in Goa, Mahabaleshwar, and of course Bombay and Pune. He has a list to prove his point. Many buy in bulk — 10 pieces at a time — to distribute as presents. The Hindu temples are particular favorites as gift items, he adds. "The Parsi community may be very small but their business acumen is good. If you do something good and different, they are the first to encourage you," says Jussawalla whose work was on display at stalls in five exhibitions in Bombay city and its suburbs. In most of these exhibitions his models were well received though at one he had to be content with comments like, "how sweet," and "how charming," rather than sales.

Of course, these "sweet" and "charming" displays, Jussawalla explains, are the end result of a lot of sweat and bone-aching toil. He works in his sudreh and kusti at his Bharucha Baug flat with simple and improvised tools. He shows

By his painstaking creations Burjor Jussawalla is rediscovering the dignity of labor of an older generation of Parsi craftsmen

us his hammer which combines an ice pick and bottle opener, and his set of chisels made by filing down the ends of broken saw pieces. Only the quartz clock with dial and hands he buys from outside, the rest he fabricates himself. He uses only teak wood and though the work he does may be delicate, he assures us that it is physically taxing. The steeples, the crosses, the pillars, the doors, all are



Ingeniously designed clock tower agiary

finely carved and demanding. "Do you know how many operations go into this model?" Jussawalla asks as he fondly cradles the clock tower that houses an afargan. No, he does not know himself, but assures us that it is far more than one would imagine.

"Carving is a gift God has given me," says Jussawalla. Nevertheless it took him over 50 years to tap the full potential of this craft; and he was compelled to



Jussawalla: "I can make almost anything"

pursue it because of the circumstances he found himself in. "I was jobless. I might look young but once potential employers learnt my age (I am 55 today), they would say 'sorry.'" So in 1990 he took courage in his hands — also hammer, chisel and improvised tools — and converted what was an indulgence and a hobby into a full-time commitment. With every new piece he made he rebuilt his own self-esteem and rediscovered the dignity of labor his Parsi forefathers had valued. Most of the Parsi youths today, he laments, look down on working with their hands in general, and on carpentry in particular. "Who wants to hammer nails?" that is their attitude," says Jussawalla.

Looking back at his own youth, Jussawalla would have liked to have put his talent to productive use earlier in his life. "If I had started when I was 18..." No, he has no regrets that he did not start young, for he believes strongly in destiny. "Life is like a film, it's predetermined. We are just experiencing it as it unfolds," he observes.

And as the film on Jussawalla unfolds, we find him working on wood carvings in the carpentry shop of Boys Town School in Nasik where he briefly studied. Later he would carve logo calendars for a director of J. N. Marshall, a company he was to join in 1963 as head of the carpentry department. From here he moved to Nat Steel and was transferred to Poona. After 15 years of service he resigned and

returned to Bombay in 1980 only to discover that jobs in the city were not as easy to come by as he had imagined. For 10 years he knocked about doing odd jobs, including one in 1985 which involved the renovation of Late Night, a restaurant in Andheri which belonged to his neighbor Ms Mehroo Irani. When Jussawalla took to full-time model carving in 1990, Irani was one of the first to encourage him in his efforts and even today gives quiet support. And, of course, there is the backing of his wife of 17 years, Banoo.

Over the years Jussawalla has come to accept struggles and battle as part of life, yet he is greatly perturbed by the friction that is part of the Parsi community. "Everywhere you go, you will find two contentious groups of Parsis fighting over everything," he observes. "We have to learn unity if we are to survive today, when everything is changing."

Though he laments over the plight of the community he makes concessions to

With every new piece he made, he rebuilt his own self-esteem

its superstitious beliefs. As a result he no longer carves owl nightlamps as owls are believed to be bad omens. Likewise a steeple has replaced the afargan that earlier crowned his agiary clock tower models as a priest pointed out that the holy fire should not be exposed, but protected. And of course his skull clock is not one of his popular designs. A lady, one of his best clients, advises him each time she comes to check out his work: "*Tari khopdi mané na batao* (don't show me your skull)."

As we travel back after the meeting, we come upon a patch of shattered glass strewn on the road and think of Jussawalla toiling in his sudreh and kusti in his small apartment in Andheri, wood shavings scattered around him: apparently one of the last practitioners of a once proud Parsi tradition of master carpenters. Or does he herald a renaissance?

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Summoned by the sea

Seniormost Zoroastrian naval officer Rear Admiral Keki Pestonji would like to see more Parsi boys and girls in the Indian Navy

Gustasp Irani

1971: Somewhere in the Arabian Sea. Under cover of the night an Indian Navy Ship with an ambitious young Parsi naval officer on board, slips past enemy surveillance. Big guns boom as shells rain down on the port city of Karachi. 1979: Off the coast of Goa. A merchant ship, M V *Nandmayur*, is in distress near the Vengurla Rocks. The Parsi, now the commanding officer of the naval vessel INS *Betwa*, braves the turbulent sea and rushes in to save and salvage the ship. 1980: Bonn, Germany. The same Parsi officer is now posted here as the Indian naval attache.

Rear Admiral Keki Pestonji, tall and unmistakably brisk in his military bearing, has experienced all the romance the sea and a naval career has to offer — and more. He has been decorated with the Ati Vishisht Seva Medal in 1989 for distinguished service of an exceptional order; the Nausena Medal in 1979 for distinguished service as commanding officer of the naval ship INS *Betwa*; and a Mention in Despatches for action off Karachi in the 1971 war. Today, as the Chief of Staff of the Southern Naval Command Headquarters in Cochin, he is the highest ranking Parsi officer in all the three armed forces.

Yet when we first met him and his charming wife Zarin in their sprawling Willingdon Island bungalow overlooking the Cochin harbor, we were embarrassingly unaware of his rank (this despite his no-nonsense demeanor and clipped speech). That was till we drove with him to a naval checkpoint. A military guard marched up to scrutinize the occupants of the car. "Chief of Staff," the Rear Ad-

miral identified himself. The guard snapped to attention, flashed a crisp salute and waved us on. At each checkpoint the exercise was repeated as Pestonji took us on a brief tour of the naval base, a domain he presided over with apparent affection and pride.

His bonds with the base, we were to learn later, go back a long way. As a young lieutenant he was selected, in 1968, to set up a naval academy at Cochin, the first of its kind in India. Building it up from scratch he worked out the syllabus, the administrative structure and organized the inputs required by the institution.

When the Indian Navy launched INS *Godavri*, the first ever frigate of its type designed and constructed indigenously, they entrusted it to the command of Pestonji. As commanding officer of the ship he successfully 'interfaced' a mix of weapons and sensor systems of Indian, Russian, British and Italian origin. Later he was to rationalize the entire weapons inventory of the Navy, a task which resulted in large savings for the government and which won him the Ati Vishisht Seva Medal.

Pestonji's love affair with the high seas began with his infatuation with a lake. "Even as a young lad of nine, sailing fascinated me," he recalls. He first took to the sport in Secunderabad, where he grew up. Ever since he has been a keen yachtsman, was the naval champion in the sport twice and represented India in two international regattas. He has been a member of the Yachting Association of India since its inception in 1960, and has been on its board for the last



many years. "I am still very interested and involved in the sport," Pestonji observes.

He recalls that when he first joined the Navy, there were many Parsis in the services; most had joined during World War II or just after it. A special bond of comradeship existed between them no matter where they were posted. Today, he laments, the number of Parsis in the Navy, or for that matter in any of the three armed forces, has declined. "The Navy offers an honorable profession with bright career prospects. I would encourage young Parsi boys and even girls — the Navy is now open to women too — to join." The total package of benefits offered by the armed forces matches what the commercial sector has to offer, says Pestonji. "I personally feel that young Parsi boys in Bombay don't have what it takes to join the armed forces. They seem to be under the control of their mothers and unable to venture out on open seas."

Open seas aside, Pestonji urges the Parsis to break free of the magnetic pull that metropolitan Bombay seems to exercise on the community and venture out into the heartland of the country if they hope to recapture some of their past glory. He points out that it was their far-sightedness and vision that prompted their forefathers to learn an alien language — English — which enabled them

Pestonji with daughter Anheeta, wife Zarin and Keki Gandhi of Delhi (to his right) at the function to commemorate the memory of Param Vir Chakra Lt Col Adi Tarapore in 1990 in Delhi

to become the brokers of the British, the new rulers of the land. "Their ability to talk to the English and the Indians made them acceptable to both. Even today, those Parsis who have adapted to the local Indian customs have succeeded," says Pestonji. But for most, the equation has changed. "Why are most of the Parsis sitting in Bombay? The greatest thing for them is to get a job in a bank and the sad part is that it is not an easy thing to come by any more."

Referring to his personal experience he observes that in the 23 years he has

A MATTER OF TRUST

continued from page 16

salary of Rs 850 per month. "Just because I stay in a Punchayet flat does not mean that I must remain silent; it does not mean that I cannot fight for the rights of other poor Parsis," he adds.

And his fight against the alleged injustice is not confined to community housing alone. He is of the opinion that much greater efforts must be made to seek reservation quotas. ZCWA trustees will make a concerted push for special concessions for the community. It is not an empty promise, Irani assures us, as he takes out a file of correspondence between the ZCWA and State and Central government departments on this matter. "Reservations can be won but it would become so much easier if the Punchayet, which is the representative body of the community, pushes for them rather than the ZCWA," says Irani.

While seeking special reservation quotas for the community has been a low profile activity of the ZCWA, its religious postures are by contrast high profile, especially so when the Association organized a morcha to the BPP and *The Bombay Samachar* to protest against the controversies that followed the death of Ms Roxan Shah and the decision of the BPP trustees to allow the bodies of Parsi women married to non-Parsis into a earmarked dokhma. "We were protesting against the way the trustees had handled the matter and the bad publicity the community was receiving in the general Press because of it," says Irani in defence of the morcha. Did it not add to the problem in the process? "No. It made the other communities realize that it was a matter that concerned the Parsis and their religion and that they should not interfere in such matters," replied Irani.

Irani's critics charge that some of his tactics such as the morcha are not in keeping with the behavioral norms one expects from a trustee. Allegations have also been made in *The Bombay Samachar* that Irani and his supporters tend to browbeat those who oppose them.

According to him, the ZCWA protest was not against the decision of the trustees in the Roxan Shah case but against the manner in which they reached their decision and the effect it had on the community. "It split the community into two camps. This could have been avoided if they had consulted all the seven dasturs rather than just two (Dastur K. Jamasp Asa and Dastur H. Mirza)." ZCWA trustees will base all religious decisions on

the advice of all seven dasturs and abide by them even if they go against their own personal beliefs, states Irani.

What if they should be of the opinion that the face of a dead Zoroastrian should not be exposed? Irani pauses before he answers — he had insisted that the face of his dead father remain uncovered. "I

"Just because I stay in a Punchayet flat does not mean that I must remain silent"

will accept it," he says but adds: "In my father's case I had acted impulsively but later I discovered that what I had done had not gone against the teachings of our religion. Nowhere does it say that you should cover the face of a dead person."

With the death of his father, Irani found that the mantle of leadership in his immediate family fell upon him even though he was only the eighth of the 11 children. This because he had qualified as a doctor against all odds. "Ever since I was a kid my father wanted that I among his children should become a doctor. Maybe that was because I was the most studious of the lot," says Irani. With the aid, in the form of free text books, from a number of charitable institutions, Irani graduated from Nair Hospital.

At home, he learnt dedication and selfless service from his "illiterate" father. "People respected him because he was always there to help them in a crisis," says Irani. Often he would cut through red-tape and retrieve bodies of dead Parsis before they were mutilated on postmortem tables. To illustrate the point, Irani refers to the tragedy of 1960 when about eight boys and girls of Cusrow Baug drowned in the seas off Bombay and his father recovered their bodies from the morgue immediately after they were found — some four to five days after the tragedy. "I still remember that incident because the smell was bad," says Irani. It was all part of growing up at Doongerwadi. Today Irani lives with his wife Zarin and two children Farzan (11) and Hushang (10) at N. Contractor Baug in Mahim. But he believes his origins gave him a true understanding of the hopes and aspirations of the poor of the community whose interest the trustees of the BPP are expected to protect.

"Young Parsi boys in Bombay don't have what it takes to join the armed forces"

been married he has accepted 10 major postings. "It meant that the entire family had to move and relocate at an average of once every two years. We accepted it as an occupational hazard and both my daughters (Anheeta and Taheera of whom he is obviously very proud) have adapted very well," he adds.

Pestonji believes that while an individual Parsi is the master of his own destiny, the community as a whole is doomed. "I don't think that our decline in numbers has anything to do with Parsis marrying out of the community. We will die out as a matter of natural evolution," he states. Clarifying the term 'natural evolution' he observes: "No educated and progressive community has ever opted for a high birth rate. We Parsis are an advanced, educated and progressive community. Our women don't want to be reduced to baby factories. They would rather opt for a career and have one or two children at the most. It's a thing you can't reverse."

The turning point in the community's fortunes came when they started trading in their farmlands for urban professions. It opened the doors of progress which in turn led to the crisis of numbers the community faces today. "We came to India as farmers and remained farmers for centuries. It was only in the last 200 years or so we started selling our farms and taking up other professions." And some like Pestonji took to the sea, renewing their subconscious bond with the natural elements in true Zoroastrian tradition.

A top LLB student

A remarkable performance at each of the three-year LLB examinations, scoring on an aggregate the highest marks, qualified Ms Tenaaz P. Mama for the Vice Chancellor T. K. Tope Prize from the Bombay University. This academic distinction came to her shortly after she cleared the final examination of the Institute of Company Secretaries of India, informs a press release from the family.

Presently undergoing management training at Cadbury India Limited, Mama's past experience was at vacation jobs as accounts assistant at Master Marine Services and summer trainee at Godrej and Boyce Manufacturing Company Limited.

Her early education was at the Convent Girls High School, Worli and thereafter at the Sydenham College from where she graduated in commerce. During her academic career, Mama has won several scholarships and prizes including the National Merit Scholarship in 1986 for performance at the Higher Secondary Examination, the Glaxo Merit Scholarship and the Zoroastrian Student Teachers



Her other interests are French, having completed the beginners and intermediate courses at the Alliance Francaise, Bombay and western music having passed several Trinity College of Music exams in piano. She has additionally been an active fund raiser for the National Association for the Blind and Helpage, India, mentions her bio data.

Brothers win Veedol rally

Every one of the 33 participants in the Veedol Monsoon Scooter Rally had fallen off their two-wheelers in the course of the 250 km ride from Bombay to Shahapur. However not all like Yezdi Fali Patel would have said, "I was ready to take any kind of injury if I could finish the race." Nineteen-year-old Patel's de-

Association Scholarship, her bio data informs. General knowledge, general proficiency, speech and essay writing are the areas in which she has distinguished herself.

termination won him the first place at the Sportsraft organized Rally on September 13, 1992, informs a press release. The Veedol trophy and a cash prize of Rs 2,500 went to Yezdi while his elder brother Kaizad had to settle for the second place with a trophy and a gift of Rs 2,000.

Consistency in control and high speed on his LML Vespa were Yezdi's chief assets. In the 110 cc to 160 cc class it was once again Yezdi and Kaizad who secured the first two places respectively, the release notes. For outstanding performance in the first part Yezdi was declared the winner of the Car and Bike International Trophy while for the second part the award was shared by Kaizad and his cousin Zubin Kersi Patel. Last year's champion Zubin would have won the race this time too, had he not been penalized for coming in 10 minutes early at time control six, according to the press release.

It was the prompt medical assistance by the Highway Users Club and the Parsi Ambulance Division that ensured the smooth progress of the Rally, acknowledge the organizers.

Compiled by Roxana A. Mirza

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Kharas' burning (com)passion

Homi Rogers

A magnanimous donation of Rs 1.40 crores by Bhikhaiji Kharas has helped create a burns treatment center at the Masina Hospital

The Parsis have never been known for their parsimony. The *sethias* (gentry) have all along sustained the Parsi ethos by doling out the occasional lakh for a meritorious cause. Even the middle-class Parsi, struggling to maintain a good standard of living despite inflation, subscribes to the Gatha-ghambar or the kathi fund in addition to feeding grass to the cow.

In a community celebrated for its charity, Ms Bhikhaiji Sorabji Kharas, fondly known as Bhikhoomai, is yet another member who will long be remembered for her magnanimity. The diminutive, frail-looking octogenarian apparently walked in from the blue and, ever so quietly, put down a sum of Rs 1.40 crores to raise the Kharas Memorial Centre for burns victims.

Who is Ms Bhikhoomai Kharas? And from which wealthy, philanthropic family does this new meteor of munificence hail? Surprisingly, none. Kharas' story is the archetypal rags-to-riches saga, or, in her case, an incredible poverty-to-philanthropy story. And it is this fact that makes her donation so astonishing, so much more laudable.

Born in 1910, Kharas was brought up in Bombay by her maternal grandparents. "I have the fondest memories of them," beams Kharas, recalling the days when

she, along with her two brothers and two sisters, grew up on much love but with little lucre to spare, in the middle-class stronghold of Bombay's Khetwadi area. "My father was employed as an engineer in textile mills" and hence was constantly on the move all over the country to places which offered him job opportunities. Financial conditions were always strained. "At a very early age," recounts Kharas, though without elucidating the reasons in detail, "I had to take the family reins in my hands."

So, enter a street-smart Bhikhoo, who dabbled in anything and everything that yielded legitimate money. "She has made and sold syrups and pickles and exported them abroad," says sister Dhun who resides with her. She even entered the construction scene. Among the buildings that bear her imprint are the twin skyscrapers Venus and Jupiter on Cuffe Parade where she, as one of the builders, is said to have personally supervised the



Above: Kharas (left) witnesses Tata inaugurate the new burns unit at Masina Hospital on May 3, 1992

Photo: Adi F. Suder
The Kharas Memorial Centre (along-side)
Photo: Jimmy Patel

project as also the allotment and sale of flats.

But it was on Bombay's legendary Dalal Street, where paths are paved with gold (or grime), that Kharas made her killing. By 1938, she had become a sub-broker, and traded in stocks and shares. "She could move the sensen up or down, by a twitch of her fingers," gushes a relative, a claim Kharas laughs off dismissively. But, despite her characteristic modesty, there remains little doubt that for a good while she was the uncrowned queen of National Rayon. "Even today," as Dr Jehanbux Chichgar, a consulting physician at the Centre says, "she could tip you with names of companies on

which you could make, your money, without you ever having heard of them before." It was with this assiduously accumulated share portfolio that Kharas built the burns unit, on land made available to her by the Masina (Hospital) Trust. "I had no liquid money," confesses Kharas, a sheepish smile playing on her fragile face. "My well-wishers sold the shares I gave for this cause, and raised the money needed."

But Kharas' story does not end here. For it's not the story of how Dick Whittington-like she amassed a fortune, gave it all away and walked into the sunset. No, it's the tale of how compassion was born within her on the hospital floors of Masina, how it grew and flowered, and today continues to be nurtured by her ever-caring hands and benevolent mind.

It all began six years ago at the Masina Hospital when her kind heart kept her at the bedside of her ailing cook whom she regarded as a family member. It was on one such night that, walking down the passage at around midnight, Kharas bumped into the renowned plastic surgeon Dr M. H. Keswani who now heads her unit. Surprised, she asked him what he was doing in the Hospital at such a late hour. The good doctor, Kharas re-

calls, informed her that he had come to check on one of his patients who was in a serious condition. "And what about your dinner, doctor?" She inquired. "I carry sandwiches in my box," he replied.

"She went round the Hospital talking to patients before she came in to make a donation to us"

Kharas was touched. "It was he who inspired me with his dedication," she asserts simply.

The cook died. But a dream was born. Kharas, who had seen her sister Dhun suffer from 50 percent burns way back in 1929, and had nursed her back to health "within a short span of three months," was inspired by Keswani to do something for burns victims. "Most burns victims are women and children; they get injured in household accidents, their saris catch and spread fire."

Kharas' decision to help members of her sex has resulted in eight of the 10 beds in the general ward being reserved for women and children. "Men get burnt in industrial accidents" but, as a doctor on the panel informs us, they amount to only 12 to 15 percent of the burns cases. "And what about brides burned for dowry?" we probe Kharas. "Yes, that is another matter," she states with equanimity, "though right now," she chuckles, "we have an inverse case: a man with two wives has been admitted in a charred condition."

Kharas knows the names and case histories of all her patients. Even the intensity of their burns. But the knowledge is not only academic. She truly cares for the victims, she makes their concerns, hers, advises them, chides them and counsels them. They return her love in ample measure. Zaverben, who is recovering from burns caused when her stove burst, beseechingly asks Kharas to visit her again tomorrow. Kharas gently takes leave of her to attend to a pressing matter regarding the hospital's administration awaiting her in her spartan cabin. It was a question Zaverben need not have asked, for Kharas is there practically every day attending to the nitty-gritty of

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running the Centre she has built, and dispensing her salve of compassion.

Even when the unit was being constructed, Kharas would be there daily, "from nine to five," supervising everything, according to her relative and administrator Minoo Siodia. "She personally purchased the materials to be used." Kharas also had her say in the appointment of doctors, nurses, and ward boys; she even sent a nurse to England for special training to head the nursing unit on her return.

This minute attention to detail has been a Kharas hallmark. For one who at 82 still scrutinizes the fine print of the stocks page, it is not out of character. "I still recall the time," says a trustee of the Masina Hospital who does not wish to be named, "when she went round the Hospital, as if she owned the place, talking to patients, enquiring about their condition, before she came in to make a donation to us." It was this meticulous approach that led to her decision to donate to the Masina Hospital rather than another Parsi hospital which she also studied for the same purpose, and found disappointing.

The donation was not, as the trustees initially thought (judging by her simple sari and humble bearing), "in the region of Rs 10,000." The soft-spoken Kharas offered Masina Hospital a donation of Rs 10 lakhs which increased to Rs 15 lakhs by the time her accountant and trustees finalized the legalities. "And we nearly dismissed her from our midst," continues the trustee, "by pompously announcing

that we don't take donations less than one lakh!"

For Kharas that was no 'rebuff'. Because, her forte was never cash, but compassion. She had been through such dismissals earlier, too. At the Bombay Parsi Punchayet office she was rebuked by many a junior clerk when she asked to meet the chairman; they mistook her for



One of the operation theaters at the Kharas Memorial Centre Photo: Adi F. Suder

one more woman seeking a home, or some dole, not realizing that she was there as a benefactress.

Kharas is conscious of the housing problem plaguing the community, especially in Bombay. "Give me land," she says, "and I shall build on it." The Kharas Memorial Centre was built on land donated by the Masina Trust. "The price of land today is so high. I cannot

afford to buy it and build on it." If the right people are lending their ears (or reading this), Kharas' wand could give the housing problem a boost. "With her childlike enthusiasm," gushes a neighbor, "she can plunge herself into any new activity and make a success of it."

Enthusiasm, though, is not the only thing Kharas shares with children. She shares her love with them. "When she goes to her bungalow in Thane, the street kids surround her and welcome her. She has a treat in store for all of them," says a friend. And, like a child, Kharas has the rare quality of innocence. "She is even kind to those who do not deserve her kindness."

Like children, Kharas also has her heroes. J.R.D. Tata is one of them. "I very much wanted him to inaugurate the Centre. It was a dream-come-true for me when he agreed." JRD in turn sincerely appreciated the honor and returned the compliment by valuing the welcome address as an award higher than the Bharat Ratna conferred on him. Today one chair is missing from the Centre's conference room. Kharas, we are informed, has taken it home. It was the chair JRD sat on after the inauguration.

We leave the Hospital, having witnessed the largesse of this kindly old lady. To us she reiterates: "Please don't write much about me. Write about the Hospital. I'm not important; the Hospital is." Publicity-shy Kharas has a point: it is the legacy bequeathed by her that will live on. But don't we mortals require a legend to live by too?

An exclusive burns unit

The Kharas Memorial Centre is a three-storeyed building constructed in the compound of Masina Hospital, and dedicated by Ms Bhikhaiji Kharas to the memory of her brother, Eric, who expired two years ago. Inaugurated on May 3, 1992 by J.R.D. Tata, only the ground floor is currently operational. Each of the 11 beds in the general unit is affixed with its own oxygen respirator and other modern devices to monitor and heal burns faster and more effectively.

One of the few exclusive burns units

in Bombay city, its aim is to cater to those who cannot afford treatment at private hospitals and nursing homes due to prohibitively high costs. The Centre charges Rs 100 only per day for stay and food.

The unit has its own skin bank; an intensive care unit with five beds; its own kitchen, toilet and store room. There are two operation theaters — one for the actual operation, the other for dressing. Hence the Centre is not dependent on the Hospital except for the ambulance and the pathological and radiological tests. There are four special rooms with a telephone, a cupboard and a sofa-cum-bed for visitors. None of the rooms are air-conditioned, as the doctors believe that the right temperature

for burns victims is our normal outdoor temperature of 28° to 30° C. Abroad, air-conditioners are used to heat the rooms to the above temperatures, not cool them, a doctor attached to the Centre informs us. Spotlessly clean, the wards look out on a well laid out garden. The accent is on simplicity and cleanliness.

The upper three storeys are not yet operational. "Let's get this going on a proper footing," reasons Kharas. The Centre, it is planned, will have a neurosurgery and cardio-vascular department. The research department, to be headed by Dr Keki Turel, will primarily concentrate on burns and related problems. The Centre will also house quarters for doctors and nurses, and an orthopedic department.

Wedlock's end: 6

K. C. Vajifdar

The discretion of the court determines the grant of alimony as well as the custody of children

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

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

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

In this concluding article Vajifdar deals with the problems of alimony, distribution of property and custody of children which follow on the breakup of a marriage. In his earlier articles Vajifdar had explained such grounds for divorce as impotency, non-consummation of marriage, bigamy, desertion, adultery, cruelty and change of religion.

As far as permanent alimony is concerned, the law on the subject was formerly that the court may, if it thinks fit at the time of passing a decree under the Parsi Marriage and Divorce Act, or subsequently thereto on application made to it for the purpose, order that "while the wife remains chaste and unmarried," the husband should secure to the wife a gross



sum or periodic payment of money for the duration of her life. The wife's own property as well as the ability of the husband to pay determined the amount. The conduct of the parties was taken into consideration and a proper instrument executed by all parties and after that the court granted such monthly payments to the wife for her maintenance and support as it thought reasonable.

It was further stated that in case any such order is not obeyed by the husband, it may be enforced in the manner provided for the execution of decrees or orders under the Code of Civil Procedure.

Further, the husband may be sued by another person supplying the wife with necessaries from the time of such disobedience for the price of such necessaries. However, if the circumstances of either the husband or the wife change, the court may be moved to modify or rescind its earlier order in the interest of justice. For example, if the wife has remarried or has not remained chaste, the court can vary or rescind the order.

Since the amendment of 1988, even a

wife can be sued by the husband for alimony and maintenance with a similar extension of the proviso that if the husband does not remain chaste then the court at the instance of the wife may vary or modify or rescind the order.

There is no guideline for the purpose of granting alimony. The same has been left completely to the discretion of the courts. The courts have given heavy alimony when parties are at fault but low alimony when parties are not at fault. Usually one-third of the income of the spouse is given and no differentiation is made between regular income, or sporadic income or unearned income. The Court would look to the manner in which the other party is accustomed to live.

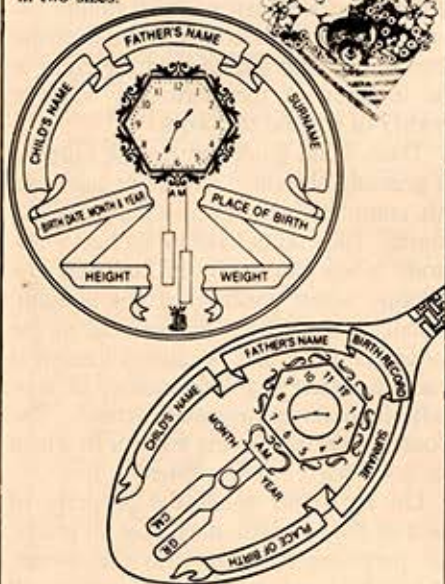
On the other hand, the property of each of the two individuals for all practical purposes remains with the owner. Thus a husband is not called upon to sell his house and give a certain amount to the wife and vice versa. The only consideration is that the husband at the time of divorce has to return all the gifts, ornaments and jewellery that he received from the wife and similarly the wife has to do the same. It is only in extreme cases where the husband has property but no income that the court may compel the husband to dispose of the property in order to give alimony to the wife.

If either party fails to make the payment then it is absolutely necessary that an application should be made to a court of law and the court would issue a warrant for payment of the amount. The court can also award costs to the party concerned. If the husband is not capable of making the payment, a distress warrant could be issued, that is to say an order for the sale of the furniture and movable property of the party concerned. The cost of making such an application would depend upon the status of the advocate who appears. The cost is gener-

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ally borne by the party who makes an application. However costs can be awarded by the court covering minimal cost and not the amount actually incurred.

The divorced spouse has no right at all in the intestate property of the deceased. A divorced spouse is not considered a member of the family but is considered a stranger. However, that is not so in case of the children. If there are children of the divorced spouse and if the spouse dies intestate then the children of the divorced spouse would get an equal amount as the children of the present spouse.

Under Section 49 of the Parsi Marriage and Divorce Act, the Matrimonial Court is authorized to pass interim orders and make provisions in the final decree in respect to the custody, maintenance and education of children under the age of 18 years. But the order is not final and the court can vary the same from time to time. No order can be passed regarding children who have reached adulthood.

There is always a battle between husband and wife for the custody of their children. It is believed that girls are handed over to their mothers and boys are given in their father's custody. This belief is entirely wrong. Usually the court refuses to give the custody of the child to the guilty party. However, under normal circumstances, as children are more attached to the mother, custody is given to her with visiting rights to the father. If neither father nor mother are fit to have the custody of the minor child, the court will be justified in giving the custody of the child to a third party who the court feels is the right person to look after the child.

There is also a misconception that when there are four children, they are divided between the mother and father at the time of the divorce. In fact, it is not so. It is not the right of the parents which would tilt the scale in the opinion of the court but the welfare of the child. It seeks to ascertain where the best welfare of the children would lie, whether they be girls or boys.

What does the word welfare mean under the law? The moral and religious be-

liefs must be considered as well as the child's physical well-being and ties of affection.

It is very important to bear in mind as to whether the child would have good accommodation in happy and congenial surroundings. The health of the child is of the utmost importance. Whenever a minor child is capable of forming an intelligent opinion about whom he or she wishes to live with, the decision of the

child would be taken into consideration by the court.

In a very interesting case, an application was made to the court wherein it was stated that a child was very ill and the visit of the father,

Visiting rights cannot
be denied to
either party, even
if he or she
is living in adultery

who was a drunkard, would retard the recovery of the child. The court ordered that till the child had completely recovered from the illness, visiting rights would not be granted to the father.

It is worth noting that even if the husband were to accuse the wife of adultery, she could still be regarded as a fit person to look after her children. If it is considered that the mother's health would be seriously affected by separation from her child, the court would normally give the custody of the child to the mother.

Visiting rights cannot be denied to either party, even if the mother (or the father) is living in adultery and this fact is proved. The court's order would stipulate where and when the child may be visited.

It is also to be noted that the mother is entitled to a maintenance allowance for the child, apart from the alimony which she is entitled to get under the law. Merely because the wife asks for more money to look after the child is no ground to refuse custody.

In one case, the argument of the father that he had to support his brother and sister and therefore could not spare resources for the child's maintenance was disallowed. It was held that a father's primary duty is to support his own children.

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.

A forum for the faithful

An editor of *Deen Parast* reviews the orthodox organ's mission after a year of publication

Noshir Dadrawala



Community journals and newsletters are a product of their time. They emerge out of a necessity to inform, educate and put forth a point of view. In a democratic and enlightened setup there is no tool mightier than the pen and no force greater than the written word.

Deen Parast (the faithful) was launched in May 1991 to fill a long-standing need to project the conservative point of view in a clear, knowledgeable, informed and effective manner. An editorial in the very first issue of the journal said, "The community today is like a ship without a rudder. The institutional leadership (that) organizations like the (Bombay) Parsi Punchayet and others once provided is lacking. In the absence of any leadership, the only straw a confused community can cling (to) for guidance and information is a Parsi newspaper. Sadly today the leading Parsi managed newspapers and magazines have adopted policies which in the next few years could prove disastrous for the community. *Deen Parast* not only hopes to fill this lacuna but also (to) provide a convenient forum for free and frank discussion on some of the problems facing the community." Over the past one year the journal has succeeded both in terms of its readership (it presently has a read-

ership of 12,000 worldwide) and in mobilizing public opinion.

Deen Parast from the very beginning has been unabashedly orthodox. In a world where people largely feel that being orthodox is untrendy, *Deen Parast* seeks to promote and sustain traditional values that have helped the community survive the vicissitudes of time and maintain its distinct cultural and ethnic identity. "One of the basic ills of the Parsi community," said Prof John Hinnells (of the department of comparative religions at Manchester University) in one of his speeches delivered in Bombay some years ago, "is that it has not been true to itself. Where I believe the community went wrong was in the way it copied or aped the West. The early 20th century generation departed from its own ideals and deserted its traditions; they and those like them are not true to themselves. What Wilson (in the 19th century) and what the Arabs failed to do — crush Zoroastri-

anism -- Western secularism, materialism and religious indifference are doing effectively."

An article titled "Orthodoxy and Heart Attack" published in *Prevention* (August 1986) — an American scientific journal — states, "For years doctors have been observing how the vegetarian diet of seventh-day adventists lowers the risk of heart disease and cancer. Now doctors in Israel have found that religiousness itself, not just diet, may protect against heart attack." The study was based on the degree of religious orthodoxy in over 500 Jewish men and women. A similar study done in the United States in 1979 supported the Israeli finding. To be orthodox therefore is not only a matter of pride but also healthy.

Deen Parast was born at a time when the Roxan Darshan Shah controversy was at its peak. (The young Parsi Zoroastrian, daughter of noted surgeon Dr Adi Nazir, who perished in a highway accident, had been denied dokhmenashini because of her marriage to a non-Zoroastrian.) In fact it was first launched at the historic Hama Anjuman meeting of Parsis held

Key support for *Deen Parast*: Dadrawala (left) and Doctor



on May 30, 1991 at the Birla Matushri Sabhagrah. Week after week the columns of *The Bombay Samachar* (a Parsi managed newspaper with a vast non-Parsi readership) were being filled with heterodox views, both from the readers and the

editorial desk. The views were always one-sided and the orthodox view was hardly allowed to be put forth. This writer and some friends still remember writing several rejoinders to various strongly worded and slanted articles or editorials which never saw the light of day. The *Jam-e-Jamshed* (an otherwise conservative newspaper) maintained a very low profile as far as the Roxan issue was concerned. It took a late start and closed the controversy within a short time. Under the circumstances it became imperative for the large orthodox section of the community to have its own publication. Several private meetings were arranged where leading lights of the community met to plan the creation of a new orthodox journal. At one point it was suggested that the Bombay Zoroastrian Jashan Committee's defunct journal, *Rah-e Zarathushtra* be resurrected. The majority however felt that a new broom would be able to sweep the best. Besides it was not considered desirable to have any (established) institutional branding on the journal. It had to be a fresh start, under a new name and board of editors. A

few silent philanthropists agreed to support the publication for the first few years and an editorial board comprising Ervad (Dr) Rooyinton P. Peer (Jt Principal, The Cama Athornan Madressa),

“Religiousness itself, not just diet, may protect against heart attack”

Ervad Parvez M. Bajan (an Avestan-Pahlavi scholar), Ervad Darius N. Sethna (a practising priest in the UK), Adi F. Doctor (editor of the erstwhile *Parsee Voice*) and this writer took charge. Rohinton Chinoy of the Union Press printed the first issue entirely at his expense.

Nature finally struck a balance and its vehicle was *Deen Parast*. No longer could *The Bombay Samachar* get away

with calling a high priest like Dastur (Dr) Firoze M. Kotwal an “idiot” or a “bandicoot.” Every argument has another side and *Deen Parast* provides the forum for expressing it. Dastur Kotwal is singularly blamed for using the words “adultery” and “illegitimate” (in the context of intercommunity marriages) in his opinion to the trustees of the Parsi Punchayet. However, neither *The Bombay Samachar* nor any other Parsi publication has had the moral courage or sense of justice to admit that Dastur H. K. Mirza, Dastur K. M. JamaspAsa and the late Kawasji Eduljee Kanga have used similar terms in the past.

Dastur Mirza, in 1964, wrote to the trustees of the Parsi Punchayet as follows: “One who marries a non-Parsi, by her very action, leaves the Zoroastrian religion. *Vendidad* Fargard 18.62-66 states that to give or take the *boon* (gene) to or of a non-Zoroastrian is akin to adultery. A Parsi Zoroastrian marrying a non-Parsi cannot observe the *tariquats* and cannot enter a fire-temple. Even the *kusti* of such a person is void.”

Dastur JamaspAsa wrote to the trustees in the same year that “According to

Always remember



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Parsiana
Matrimonial (Sept/40-92)
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Vendidad 16.62-65, it is a sin to marry outside the religious fold."

That great oriental scholar, Kavasji Eduljee Kanga translated *Vendidad* 18.61-62 as follows: "Zarathushtra asked Ahura Mazda. O Most beneficent spirit Ahura Mazda the holy creator of material world! Which person makes you unhappy, O Ahura Mazda, with greatest offence (and) which person keeps malice (with you) with greatest malice?"

"Then Ahura Mazda replied: O holy Zarathushtra. Anyone among the good ones contaminates one's lineage (with one) of the evil ones, anyone of the Mazdayasnis (with one) of the idol-worshippers, or anyone among the sinless (with one) of the sinners (is) indeed adultery; (and such a man or woman with his/her bad character makes me unhappy)." Several other scholars and authors have said the same thing in the past but while *The Bombay Samachar* calls them "enlightened" it calls Kotwal an "idiot." In fact even as late as September 27, 1990 Dastur Mirza and Dastur JamaspAsa have said, "We stand by our opinion given some quarter of a century ago," but while they continue to remain enlightened, Kotwal has fallen from grace and become a "bandicoot."

Deen Parast however is not just a defender of the underdog. It seeks to enlighten the community on various other aspects of the Zoroastrian religion. Month after month, the editors and a few of its correspondents publish well researched essays on topics like "The significance of the navjote ceremony" or "The importance of prayers." Very recently it also took up cudgels for the poor inmates of the Dossibai Home for the Aged.

In May 1992 the journal completed a year of its short yet significant existence. It celebrated the occasion by felicitating Ervad Darabshaw Masani, a very pious, senior and unassuming athornan (presently serving in the Anjuman Atash Bahram, Bombay) at the Dadar Madressa hall on June 21, 1992. Ervad Masani was presented a citation, shawl and a purse.

Deen Parast is mailed free of charge to whosoever may be interested in receiving it anywhere in the world. Its editors work honorarily. Over the years to come the journal will continue to battle the forces of heterodoxy and educate both the clergy and the laity in matters of Zoroastrian history, culture and religion.

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This month *Parsiana* publishes intercommunity marriages registered both at the MHADA office in Bandra (East) and at the Old Customs House for the four-month period of May to August 1992. Civil marriages between Zoroastrians have also been listed. However, names that could not be confirmed as Zoroastrian have been omitted from the list.

There were 12 intercommunity marriages and three civil marriages registered at the Old Customs House whereas at the MHADA office eight intercommunity marriages and one civil marriage was registered.

According to the registers scanned at the Chandanwadi crematorium there were seven Zoroastrians cremated during the seven-month period of January to July 1992. (In *Milestones*, *Parsiana*, May 1992 it was erroneously published that there were no Zoroastrian cremations between January and May 1992. The error is regretted).

As per the data available to *Parsiana* from four hospitals in Bombay, there were 34 births in August as compared to 88 deaths. The major killers last month were heart disease (19, of whom three were above the age of 80), pneumonia and lung disease (11), cancer (nine) and old age and general debility and diabetes (eight victims each). Hypertension took five lives, four patients each fell prey to brain disease and kidney failure and three each succumbed to asthma

and bronchitis, whereas septicemia claimed two lives. Isolated cases registered last month: Tuberculosis, angina, hypoproteinemia (deficient protein in the blood plasma), gastro-intestinal bleeding, gastro-enteritis, filariasis (infestation with filaria, a parasitic, thread-like worm), Down's Syndrome (mongolism), anemia, ulcer, nervous disorder, head injury and Parkinson's disease. The youngest to die was a five-day-old baby boy as compared to the oldest: a 96-year-old male. A 10-day-old baby girl was also lost to the community.

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.

ALLAHABAD

Died

Minoo Jehangir Chinoy (81), husband of Goolbanu and father of Adi, Zarin Amaria and Shireen Nuggud on August 12, 1992

BOMBAY

Born

A girl to *Dolly and Dara Patel*; July 28

A girl to *Aban and Phiroz Dubash*; August 1

A girl to *Dinaz and Marzban Mehta*; August 1

A boy to *Yasmin and Viraf Irani*; August 2

A boy to *Adriane and Dallas Todywalla*; August 2

Twins (girls) to *Farida and Jal Ghiara*; August 4

A boy to *Goolcher and Sharukh Kermanian*; August 4

A girl to *Farzana and Navil Doctor*; August 6

A girl to *Shiraz and Darius Shroff*; August 6

A girl to *Armin and Malcolm Kotwal*; August 7

A boy to *Meher and Nozer Machliwalla*; August 7

A boy to *Anupam and Shahrook Munsiff*; August 7

A girl to *Armin and Narioshang Nava*; August 7

A boy to *Dinaz and Fred Poonawala*; August 10

Twins (boys) to *Mahrukh and Hoshehar Cooper*; August 11

A girl to *Farida and Adil Sahukar*; August 11

A boy, *Khorezar*, to *Jasmine and Rohinton Vania*, brother to *Zanoishta*; August 12

A boy to *Lily and Xercsis Marker*; August 13

A boy to *Shernaz and Jehangir Dalal*; August 16

A girl to *Prochie and Firdaus Khambata*; August 16

A girl to *Firooza and Percy Chhapgar*; August 17

A boy to *Farzana and Kali Bordiwala*; August 21

A boy to *Behnaz and Firdos Irani*; August 22

A boy to *Roshan and Neville Avari*; August 25

A boy to *Tanaz and Keki Kerawalla*; August 25

A boy to *Kashmira and Kaizad Merchant*; August 25

A boy to *Maya and Limi Banaji*; August 26

A girl to *Veera and Bomi Mistry*; August 26

A girl to *Celin and Bomi Patel*; August 27

A girl to *Shehernaz and Kaiwan Kalyaniwala*; August 28

A girl to *Shirin and Sairus Bharucha*; August 29

A boy to *Diana and Kersi Master*; August 29

A boy to *Taruna and Heckter Engineer*; August 30

A girl to *Jasmine and Farokh Mistry*; August 30

A girl to *Daizy and Zarir Mistry*; August 31

Married

Yvonne Kapororo and Neveille Homi Sagar; May 7

Meher Zarir Gagrati and Nozer Barjorji Mehenty; May 11

Elizabeth Alexandra and Feroze Rustom Variava; May 11

Mahafirine Mehta and Rodney Anthony Powell; May 12

Kashmira Nariman Munshi and Bahmanshaw Dhunjishaw Baldawala; May 14

Kunti Krishnaji Ranade and Zarir M. Karanjia; May 18

Rashmi Laxman Pai and Zubin Marzban Nalladaru; May 28

Divya Karkhanis and Sam Palia; May 28

Kashmira Phiroze Banatwalla

and *Dhependra Ramesh Bhatt*; June 2

Mayuri Vijay Kelkar and Behram Jamshed Irani; June 11

Bakhtawar B. Tantra and Kumarakrishnan P. K.; June 12

Yogini Pravinchandra Varma and Sarosh Jamshedji Painter; June 19

Pearl Ronald O'Connor and Hafeez Sorab Contractor; June 22

Delna Dadyburjor and Tarvinder Singh; June 26

Tina H. Saigal and Mehernosh R. Daroowalla; June 27

Zahidabano Mohmadraza Shaikh and Darayes Ardeshir Appoo; July 9

Meher Dinshaw Patel and Ajith V.; July 9

Meenakshi Maya Balachandran and Percy Jamshed Irani; July 14

Roxana Shapur Irani and Pradeep Mohanty; July 27

Farida Parvez Saklatwalla and Cyrus Marzban Gorimar; August 3

Aditi Kantilal Manseta and Faroukh Fali Mistry; August 11

Kashmira Rustom Irani and Rusi Sam Govekar; August 23

Zenobia Farrokh Dalal and Firdosh Sohrah Bulsara; August 29

Armaity Nariman Sahiar and Kanwal Krishna Gopikrishna Wattal; August 30

Shobhana Durgashankar Desai and Adi Khodamurad Irani; August 31

Died

Jiji Jahangir Dastur (80), residing at 1-A, Ashoka Apts, Anandwadi, 3, Maylor Rd, Pune, 411001; January 4 (cremated)

Rustom Framroze Jalanwala (73), Firoz Ara, 160, M. Karve Rd, 400021, January 9 (cremated)

Roshan Sharokh Sabavala (72), Beau Rivage, 77, Worli Sea Face, 400025; March 27 (cremated)

Farida Patel (43), 161-4, Anthony Mans, 29th Rd, TPS III, Bandra, 400050; April 8 (cremated)

Keikhushru Ardeshir Dondy (84), 10, Sindhudurg Hse, 33, Mereweather Rd, 400039; June 17 (cremated)

- Piloo D. Narielwala* (64), 29, Suleman Chmbs, Colaba, 400039; June 28 (cremated)
Fakirji Hormusji Billimoria (73), 13, A-2, New Khareghat Clny, Hughes Rd, 400007; August 1
Shavak Bomanji Choksey (83), Divine Grace, 114, Turner Rd, Bandra, 400050; August 1
Dorabji Maneckji Daruwala (87), Fakhri Manzil, Shankerseth Rd, Grant Rd, 400007; August 2
Minocher Rustomjee Jijina (80), 27, Police Court Lane, Behind Handloom Hse, Fort, 400001; August 2
Rati Fardoonji Billimoria (71), Jehangir Mans, Next to Metro Cinema, 400020; August 3
Sorabji Khurshedji Daruwala (78), B, Yusuf Mans, Khetwadi Back Rd, 400004; August 3
Soli Merwan Irani (80), 204, Shamaldas Gandhi Rd, Dhobitalao, 400002; August 3
Homai Jal Pavri (75), 816, Mistry Bldg (Widows' Chawl), Jame Jamshed Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; August 3
Goses Sheriar Vakil (61), Malegaon Bldg No 1, Station Rd, Mahim, 400016; August 3
Khorshed Sorabji Mehta (80), F-36, Cusrow Bag, S. B. Rd, 400039; August 4
Aranvaj Framroze Tobak (86), 2/A, Soonawalla Bldg, Tardeo, 400007; August 4
Kawasjee Framroz Vakeel (73), Mayfair Gardens, Little Gibbs Rd, Malabar Hill, 400006; August 4
Jal Behramsha Anklesaria (66), 20, Rupa Lane, Chandanwadi, Chirabazar, 400002; August 5
Noshirwan Dadabhai Dalal (80), 2/C, United Chmbs, Charni Rd Jn, 400007; August 5
Morvarid (Motibai) Boman Irani (74), 1, Harganga Mhl Annexe, Khodadad Circle, Dadar, 400014; August 5
Sohrab Dorabsha Korkhau (89), Shroff Bldg, 259, Bazar Gate St, Fort, 400001; August 5
Amy Rustomji Mobedji (60), 815, Engineer Bldg, Jame Jamshed Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; August 5
Piroja Jijibhoy Vaicha (88), Lady N. Tata Bldg, Dhanbaiwadi, Vile Parle (W), 400056; August 5
Nadirsha Fardoonji Wadia (77), 5/3, Tata Clny, Tardeo, 400034; August 5
Savak Rustomji Kanga (78), 1/B/3, Tata Mills Co-op Hsg Soc, Parel, 400012; August 7
Tehmurasp Edulji Mistry (90), 28/2, Malegamwalla Bldg, Mahim, 400016; August 7
Nergish Hormusji Randelia (58), Petit Sanatorium, Kemp's Corner, 400036; August 7
Shirin Pherozsha Elavia (81), 515/B, Ratan Mans, R. P. Masani Rd, Matunga, 400019; August 8
Ardeshtir Pestonji Chinwalla (86), Burjor Bldg, Wadia St, 400034; August 9
Kersasp Nusserwan Dastur (75), Katgara Hse, 15, Nepean Sea Rd, 400006; August 9
Shavakshah Hormusji Wadia (73), F. S. Parukh Dharamshalla, 34, Hughes Rd, 400007; August 9
Tester Minu Udwadia (70), 35/C, Muncher Manzil, Jairajbhai St, 400008; August 10
Allamai Behramji Umrigar (91), 71, Ferena, Arthur Bunder Cross Rd, 400005; August 10
Sheroo Noshir Aibara (75), 639, Rati Manzil, M. Joshi Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; August 11
Piloo Sorabji Gazder (82), Kashinath Bldg, Cadel Rd, Mahim, 400016; August 12
Farrokh Kekobad Mobedjina (64), 794, Family Hse, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; August 12
Khorshed Cawasji Bhandara (62), Karanjia Bldg, Above Nagina Restaurant, Grant Rd, 400007; August 13
Pheroz Dinshaw Khambatta (64), 14/2, Rustom Bag, Victoria Rd, Byculla, 400027; August 13
Manekbai Faramroz Billimoria (92), Rehana Manzil, L. J. Rd, Mahim, 400016; August 14
Framroze Hormusji Dubash (82), 36, Kama Hse, A. Marzban Lane, S. B. Rd, 400039; August 14
Banoobai Jamshedji Sanjana (80), 728, Sorab Mans, J. Vimadalal Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; August 14
Banoo Jal Bharucha (75), 802/B, Gool Villa, Khareghat Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; August 15
Mino Rustomji Damania (79), Master Chmbs, Metro Cinema Lane, Dhobitalao, 400020; August 15
Goolbanu Hosheng Kased (77), Sargent Hse, Allana Marg, Colaba, 400039; August 15
Tehmina Jehangirji Bhagwagar (72), 6/A, Cama Bldg, Kashinath St, Tardeo, 400034; August 16
Keki Nadirshaw Jalnawalla (74), 203, Garden View, Off Hill Rd, Bandra (W), 400050; August 16
Amy Savaksha Khambatta (66), Room no 9, Pandey Sanatorium, Wodehouse Rd, Colaba, 400005; August 16
Rustomji Nusserwanji Marfatia (75), 11, Andheri Kiran Hsg Soc, Amboli, Andheri (W), 400058; August 16
Kety Dara Subedar (73), G/3, S. B. Bharucha Bag, Andheri, 400058; August 16
Soli Maneckshaw Driver (58), Old Chinoy Bldg, Chikalwadi, Grant Rd, 400007; August 17
Katie Rustom Ghadiali (60), Victoria Bar and Stores Bldg, Murbad Rd, Kalyan, Dist Thane, 400601; August 17
Eruch Navroji Elavia (77), 16, Tata Bldg, Parsee Clny, Dadabhai Rd, Vile Parle (W), 400056; August 17
Gustad Behram Irani (80), Post Bawda, Via Chinchin, Dist Thane, Vangaon, 401103; August 17
Pulla Cavas Kerawalla (87), 13, Hampton Court, 125, Wodehouse Rd, Colaba, 400005; August 17
Bapshi Naval Khandadiya (51), At Acchad, Post Uplait, Dist Thane, 401601; August 17
Mani Manecksha Deboo (61), 83/85, Mazda Mans, Dhobitalao, 400002; August 18
Dinshaw Hormusji Talati (75), Kerawalla Bldg, 307, Tardeo Rd, Nanachowk, 400007; August 18
Behram Nowroji Tavadia (72), B/22, Jer Bag, Dr Ambedkar Rd, Byculla, 400027; August 18
Maneckji Nariman Amaria (87), 22, Aderbad, 34, Hughes Rd, 400007; August 19
Rusi Boman Irani (63), 17/4, India Hse, Kemps Corner, 400036; August 19
Dina Burjor Joshi (82), Burjor Bldg, Wadia St, Tardeo, 400034; August 19
Mithamai Kaikashru Singporwala (68), A/12, Nowroz Bag, Lalbaug, 400012; August 19
Roda Rustumji Gandhi (74), Room no 16, Irani Dharamshala, Gamdevi, 400007; August 20
Kersi Kaikasroo Mistry (59), 12/B, Cawasji Petit Bldg, Gilder Lane, Tardeo, 400008; August 20
Behram Rustomji Pavri (75), 204, Old Sitaram Bldg, Princess St, 400002; August 20
Barjorji Sorabji Achhadwala (96), F. S. Parukh Dharamshalla, 34, Hughes Rd, 400007; August 21
Naju Dadiba Banaji (78), A/604, Minoo Minar, Veera Desai Rd, Andheri (W), 400058; August 21
Piroza Sariat Irani (80), Fakhri Manzil, Shankerseth Rd, Grant Rd, 400007; August 21
Jerestine Adil Sahukar (10 days) 14/A, Hammamabai Petit Block, Gilder Lane, Marzban Clny, 400008; August 22
Goola Phirozeshah Sodawaterwalla (77), 603, Goola Mans, Jame Jamshed Rd, Matunga, 400019; August 22
Hoshang Cavasha Cavasji (43), 70/C, Phirojsha Bldg, August Kranti Marg, 400036; August 23
Bomanshaw Dorabji Mistry (87), 2, Shanker Sagar, Sophia College Rd, 400026; August 23
Nadar Dorabji Patel (68), F/17, Cusrow Bag, S. B. Rd, 400039; August 23
Aspi Sorabji Contractor (68), Room no 11, Petit Sanatorium, Cumballa Hill, 400036; August 24
Sheroo Dinshaw Kapadia (73), 648, Kaka Bldg, Firdausi Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; August 24
Tehmi Pesi Udwadia (72), D, Petit Block, Dinbai Petit Rd, Grant Rd, 400007; August 24
Phiroze Rustomji Movdavalala (78), F/27, Cusrow Bag, S. B. Rd, 400039; August 25
Mani Merwanji Batiwalla (90), 686, Vevai Villa, Khareghat Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; August 26
Nargis Naoroji Mistry (70), 69/A, Topiwala Bldg, Supari Bag Rd, Parel, 400012; August 26
Najan Keki Havewalla (73), G/3, Bhivandiwala Ter, 618, J. Shankerseth Rd, 400002; August 27
Burjor Shiavax Pavri (81), Villa

Bem-Vindex, 4, St Alexius Rd, Bandra, 400050; August 27
Minoo Nadirshah Shroff (60), Room no 10, Bhabha Sanatorium, Bandra Band Stand, 400050; August 27
Eruch Homi Bhesania (78), 70/D, Meher Villa, Hill Rd, Bandra, 400050; August 28
Nergish Jehangir Elavia (68), E/34, Cusrow Baug, S. B. Rd, 400039; August 28
Mani Dinshaw Kapadia (55), Wake Mohalla, Chirabazar, 400002; August 28
Rusi Eruchshaw Bengali (68), 511, Kanak Vihar, Adenwalla Rd, Matunga, 400019; August 29
Jeroo Manecksha Bharucha (72), C, Kanta Bldg, Grant Rd, Near Super Cinema, 400007; August 29
Sapal Cawasji Lovjee (73), Malcolm Baug, Jogeshwari, 400102; August 29
Baby of Kashmira Kaizad Merchant (5 days), 12, Jer Mans, Turner Rd, Bandra, 400050; August 29
Flicky Minoo Shroff (48), E/4, Cusrow Baug, S. B. Rd, 400039; August 29
Framji Hormusji Commissariat (84), Sylmoyn, 3, Carmichael Rd, 400026; August 30
Jamshed Sorabjee Kalyanivala (84), 658, Khorshed-Abad, Firdausi Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; August 30
Ratanbai Jehangir Patel (88), C/12, Shapur Baug, V. P. Rd, 400004; August 31

CALCUTTA

Married

Roda Avari and Tarun Das; August 5

Died

Burjor Dorab Mogrelia, husband of Dorothy and brother of Rusi and Phiroze; August 2
Saker Savak Mehta, mother of Katie Dalal and Kerbanoo Bamji; August 3
Bejon Shapurji Tata, husband of Perin and father of Roshan Jeejeebhoy, Roda Bulsara and Navaz Verma; August 13

DELHI

Born

A boy, *Parvez*, to *Aban* and *Aspi Dittia*; July 6

POONA

Died

Noshir Faram Ogra (60), 761/6,

TOTALS FOR 1992

	Bombay		Other Indian cities		Foreign cities	
	A	B	A	B	A	B
BORN						
Boys	18	95	1	4	—	13
Girls	19	91	—	1	1	15
MARRIED						
Parsi	5	144	—	3	—	5
Intercommunal	20	44	1	2	—	5
DIED						
INTERRED						
Male	47	279	15	49	5	26
Female	41	335	14	53	2	18
CREMATED						
Male	4	4				
Female	2	2				

A: Total numbers in this issue

B: Running totals for 1992 (February-September 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.

Taboot St, 411001; August 5
Maneck Burjorji Gandevia (72), 7, Castolino Rd, 411001; August 6
Khorshed Jamshed Nusserwanjee (83), 12, Parvati Villa, 411040; August 8
Shiavax Jamshed Bokdawalla (67), 2414, East St, 411001; August 10
Baby boy of Lily Ghadially (5 days), 302/42, Peninshula Bldg, Gidney Park, 411001; August 12
Yasmin Chirag Anklesaria (1 month), 425/A, Rasta Peth, 411002; August 20
Katty Jimji Baria (61), St Patrick's Town, Hadapsar, 411028; August 24
Dina Nariman Sethna (88), 7, Tulsidas Apts, Dastur Meher Rd, 411001; August 29
Najamai Khurshedji Marker (92), 2, Immamvada, Synagogue St, 411001; August 31

SURAT

Died

Ratanmai Nadershaw Dadrewalla (78), Shanti Niketan, Leprosy Hosp, Tarwadi, Variav; August 1
Najamai Jamshedji Dastur (80), Agiary St, Adajan; August 1
Dolly (Mani) Dinshawji Dumasia (71), Parsi Wad, Saiyedpura, 395003; August 7
Phiroze Dhunjishaw Kharadi (71), Nariman Home and Infirmary, Shahpore, 395003; August 8

Baby boy of Yezdi Aspi Shroff (newborn), Bhimkacchi St, Nanpura, 395001; August 8
Munchershaw Jamshedji Bhagwagar (75), Palia Mohallo, Nanpura, 395001; August 10
Burjorji Cooverji Bhathena (75), Kumbhar Mohallo, Gam Bhatha, 394501; August 15
Alamai D. Patel (78), Nariman Home and Infirmary, Shahpore, 395003; August 15
Baby girl of Cyrus Noshir Jabbar (3 days), Gam Bhatha, Dist Surat, 394501; August 21
Shavaksha Rustomji Ichhaporia (67), Gam Ichhapore, Dist Surat, 395003; August 24
Nariman Cawasji Tamboli (72), Agiary Mohallo, Rustompura,

395002; August 24
Shavaksha Nowroji Baria (93), Malesar Mohallo, Rustompura, 395002; August 25
Colamai Rustomji Mistry (80), Palia St, Nanpura, 395001; August 25
Mani Ratansha Patel (76), Parsi Mohallo, Nanpura, 395001; August 28

VADODARA

Died

Darashaw Edulji Wadia (85), Meher Villa, Alembic Rd, 390001; March 23
Pilloo Dady Muncherji (90), Piroja Villa, B-3, Shakuntal Park, Manjalpur, 390011; May 16

...

CHICAGO

Born

A girl, *Nadia Elisabeth*, to *Karen* and *Daryoosh Tirandazi*; March 18

KARACHI

Died

Burjorji Hoshang Baria (92); July 4
Ratanshaw Dorabji Kapadia (80); July 8
Pilamai Faramroz Bhujwalla (85); July 12
Aspi K. R. Cavina (78); July 13
Eruchshaw Dinshaw Sidhwa (71); July 19
Piroja Nadirshaw Lawyer (87); July 22

NEW YORK

Died

Hoshang Rustom Kakalia of Karachi (58); July 15

Compiled by Roxana A. Mirza

Required Editorial Assistant

For *Parsiana* magazine in Bombay.
 Person must have excellent command of the English language and preferably two years' work experience in a publication. Job responsibilities include proofing, editing, writing, re-writing and production.

Write with full details to:
 The Advertiser (Edit)
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The Open Heart OF KERSI DASTUR

Arnavaz S. Mama



When celebrated surgeon Dr Kersi Nusserwanji Dastur succumbed on August 9, 1992 to the cerebral stroke he had sustained nine days earlier, the medical fraternity in general and the community in particular agreed they had lost not a peer but a lodestar. By all accounts his probity as an individual rivalled his surgical skill which bordered on wizardry.

"A man of few words, gentle in his manners and possessing rare integrity, he made no distinction between the rich and the poor... His degree of concern for the patients was rare and he attended without looking to his own convenience," notes the condolence resolution adopted by the B. D. Petit Parsee General Hospital (PGH).

"Dr Dastur was a surgeon of national renown who was loved and respected by tens of thousands of families... He was felicitated on the 25th anniversary of his first open heart operation at the International Conference of Heart Surgeons in Bombay in February 1985 and named as the Father of Open Heart Surgery in the Indian subcontinent," further attests the resolution taken at the condolence meeting organized by the staff of the Breach Candy Hospital.

"People like Dr Kersi Dastur do not die. They live on in their work, in memories of people in various walks of life, in their acts of kindness, of decency... I was associated with him since 1959 when I returned from studies abroad. We formed a team from the word 'go'... I will miss him sorely," admitted eminent physician and community doyen Dr

Farokh Udawadia in the course of a speech punctuated with pauses as though to subdue the high tide of sentiment.

"I have learnt from him all I know of surgery, the ethics and morality of medical practice," acknowledged Dastur's protégé and assistant of 15

years, well-known surgeon Dr Fardoon Soonawalla. "Although not a student of his, I was an ardent admirer of Kersi as a superlative surgeon with the most polished technique and sound judgement," wrote orthopedic surgeon Dr Jamshed Taraporevala. Commented radiologist Dr M. Tayabali of the Breach Candy Hospital, "Words are inadequate to express one's loss."

On his return to Bombay after a year's study in England for his FRCS (Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons) diploma, Dastur had been appointed assistant professor of surgery, T. N. Medical College (TNMC) and assistant honorary surgeon, B. Y. L. Nair Charitable Hospital. In 1951 he began experimental work in heart surgery in the research laboratories of TNMC with a large team of workers to help him in the difficult task of making a heart-lung machine, informs his bio data. In 1957 the first indigenous heart-lung machine was produced and used for animal experiments. On February 16, 1961 Dastur performed the first successful human open-heart operation using the machine on a 16-year-old girl with a hole in her heart, notes the *Indian Express* of August 20, 1992.

Closed heart surgery, which had been the rule until the 1960s had very limited scope, informs Soonawalla. Open-heart

surgery only became possible with the advent of the heart-lung machine which, attached to the patient, runs the pump and oxygenates the blood which is filtered and returned to the body while the lungs lie dormant during the operation, explains Soonawalla. Everything must be very precise as severe brain damage can result from inadequate pumping, he informs. Since the Indian government would not permit the import of a heart-lung machine which then costed about seven lakh rupees, Dastur prevailed upon the local technicians to make one. Now everybody uses imported machines which cost in the region of 30 to 40 lakh rupees, he adds.

"I was his assistant during the first 20 cases done by us. Everybody came to see how it was done. He did everything here, never went to America... Senior surgeons from all over India would come to see his work. He was always a few steps ahead of them," rejoices Soonawalla, adding, "Dr Lillihie, the first man to do open-heart surgery in the world, had been very impressed. If (Dastur) had been in the US, he would have been on par with (Lillihie)."

Recalling those days of triumph and deflation when a patient suddenly took a downturn, Soonawalla reminisced how there were no electronic monitors in the hospitals in those days and resident doctors were expected to watch the patients closely. Investigations of such reversals led to the realization that the resident doctors were neglecting their job in the night and Dastur produced a characteristic solution to the problem: Thenceforth the resident was required to phone Dastur through the night with hourly reports on the patient. The resident could not sleep and neither could Dastur, but the patient got the requisite attention.

Stories of Dastur's concern for patients are legion. Not only did he refuse to charge professional fees to friends, relations, students, teachers or mobs, he refused to take a single paise from filmstar Amitabh Bachchan throughout the latter's long hospitalization at the Breach Candy Hospital and made three to four cancellations of his own trips abroad in response to requests from the Bachchan family, considering it his "contribution to the happiness of Amitabh's fans," informs longtime family friend Arvind Kaji.

Some of his unobtrusive generosity came to light when the subsidized inmates of the Breach Candy's Godrej Wing came after 10 years for replacement of the original pacemaker that had been implanted for them by Dastur, narrates Soonawalla. They were aghast when asked to pay for the new item — its price ranging beyond Rs 25,000 — noting that on the first occasion the Hospital had supplied it gratis. After much investigation it was established that it was not the Hospital but Dastur personally who had paid (approximately Rs 10,000 each) for the pacemakers installed in such cases!

Indeed, money meant little to Dastur, says Kaji. He remembers how on one occasion Dastur was summoned by an urgent call from the Nanavati Hospital in Andheri when he was not even attached to the Hospital, to attend on a Marwari's son who had met with a road accident that had virtually ripped the boy's entrails out. Dastur drove there, completed the operation, then visited the patient 15 to 20 times. "At the end of it all, the Marwari gave Dastur a packet of Rs 501 for saving his son! Dastur never saw what came. He believed his rewards were accumulating in the Upper Bank!"

The man who went on to establish fine departments of cardiovascular thoracic surgery at the Nair, Nanavati, Jaslok and Breach Candy Hospitals was equally indifferent to ego and prestige and "always available — be it day or night," remembered PGH president Homa Petit, recounting an instance when a female patient — a case of tubal delivery — was in need of urgent aid. "The gynac concerned could not be immediately contacted. A frantic call was sent out to Dr Dastur and within five minutes he rushed the patient to the theater and saved her life," narrated Petit. As vouchered Udawadia, "I haven't met a surgeon so far with as (small) an ego as Kersi Dastur's — and that is saying a lot!" Dastur's wife Nurgish recalls an incident when her husband was called upon to operate on the thyroid of a major-millowner at the Sir Harkisondas Hospital. Dastur performed his usual artistry and left. The accolades were collected by another.

An even more characteristic example of Dastur's humane qualities was an incident when a number of friends met at the home of an ailing man in Tardeo. The patient needed milk; though there were several people present, it was Dastur who went to fetch some.

A model of self-discipline, Dastur would be up at 5 a.m. — even if he had slept just three hours earlier, says Nurgish. He'd be the first surgeon to report at the PGH. After the day's operations, Dastur would reach his consulting rooms in the early afternoon and remained there till 6 p.m. Thereafter, till 9.30 p.m. his working day continued at the Northcote Nursing Home. His faith in God was im-

"He was uncomfortable receiving praise or awards"

mense — there wasn't a day or night that he didn't pray. Indeed, he was known to pray before each operation and used to say, "The greatest surgeon is Dadar Hormuzd. I am only an instrument," as recalls Kaji. Nor did he hold back on training his students, giving them all the chance to work under him. "He would wait patiently for them," adds Nurgish.

"A liberal, good, thoughtful husband (Kersi and Nurgish had first met as medical undergraduates at the Grant Medical College) and a kind father," Dastur wanted his daughters to be well-educated and to pray regularly, says his wife. He had a collection of old religious books and had learnt Persian in later life.

Dastur's one act of religious nonconformity — one that had raised some hue and cry in the community — had been in January 1974 when he had entered the dokhma in Rajkot to retrieve the body of his father which he had then buried in the ground outside. In a letter to the Parsi Press he had explained: "I had occasion to visit Rajkot to pay my last homage to my father who died on January 18, 1974. Along with the volunteers, my brother, Dr Homi, and I entered the dokhma to lay the mortal remains of my dear father to rest. I was horrified to see four dead bodies consigned several months ago inside the dokhma lying untouched in identifiable form.

"In view of this state of affairs, after 24 hours I decided along with my brother to remove the remains of my dead father from the dokhma. When we went inside the dokhma we found my father's body was lying untouched by the vultures. We therefore took him out again and buried him just outside the dokhma (Parsiana, March 1974)."

Dastur's critics had labelled him an

"enemy" of the religion "out to play mischief with our unchangeable laws."

Dastur's own body was confined to the tower of silence.

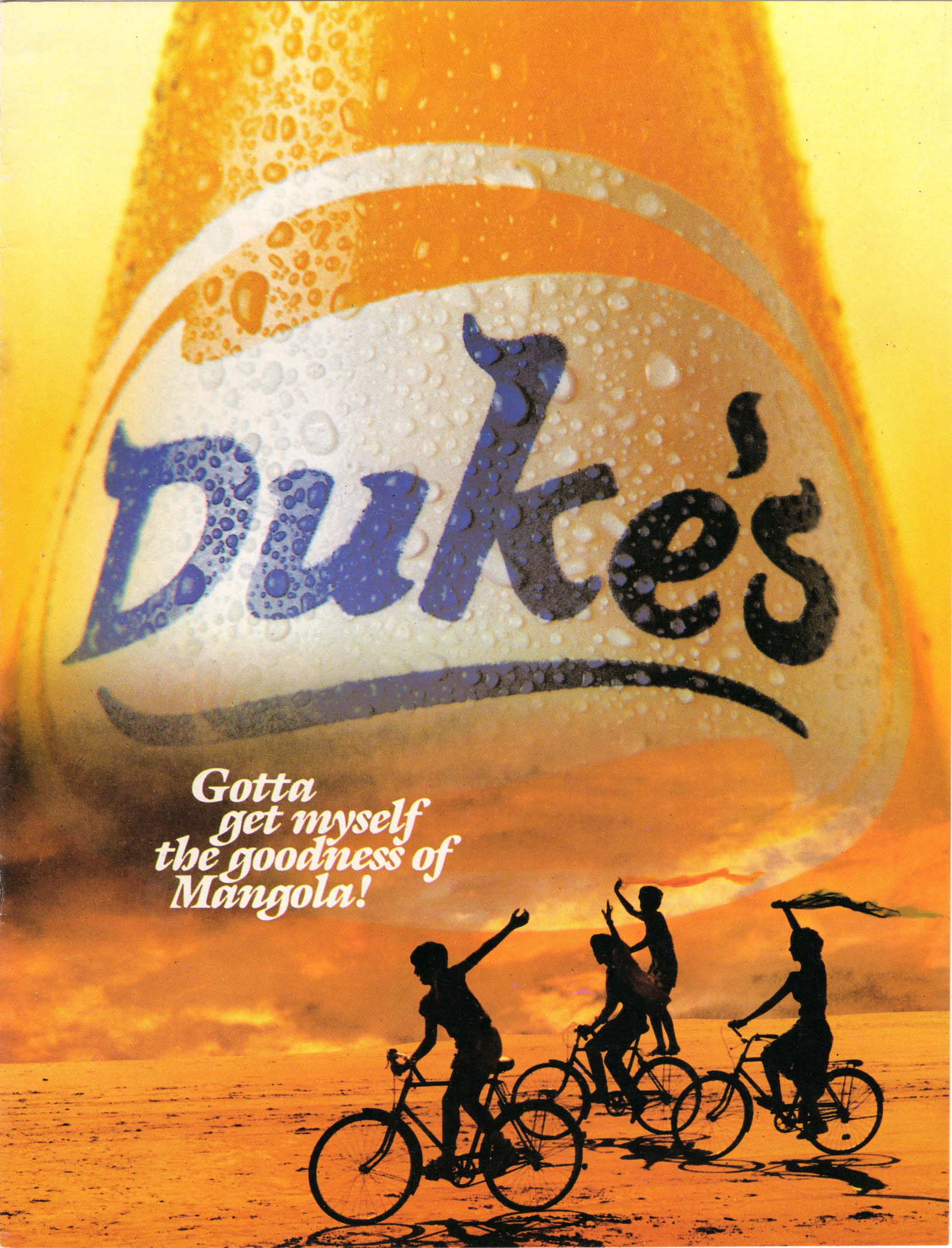
On other issues, especially on the matter of intermarriage and conversion, Dastur's viewpoint was that of the athor-nan scion that he was. That one of his daughters chose to marry outside the community was initially a matter of unhappiness for Dastur, acknowledges Nurgish.

The community and its institutions meant a lot to Dastur and, as Petit acknowledged, "He was deeply concerned for and ever striving to enhance the image of the (Parsee General) Hospital." Discussing the PGH in an interview with *Parsiana* at the time of the Hospital's platinum jubilee Dastur had said, "I'm not in favor of cosmopolitanizing the Hospital because we Parsis are such a small community and once we start this, it will bring in the money but it's not going to be beneficial to the community in the long run... Let Parsis donate. They don't donate enough — they could do better!"

His thinking, in matters other than surgery, belonged to an earlier generation, says Soonawalla of his late 74-year-old mentor. "His only concerns were his work and his family. He had no desire for social life. He was very uncomfortable socializing and would avoid major functions... He was uncomfortable sitting on a stage, uncomfortable receiving praise or awards. He was president of the Cardiac Surgeons' Association because he was nominated to it — he never asked for it or tried for it." Fond of listening to classical music, he used to play the violin in his younger days, informs the family.

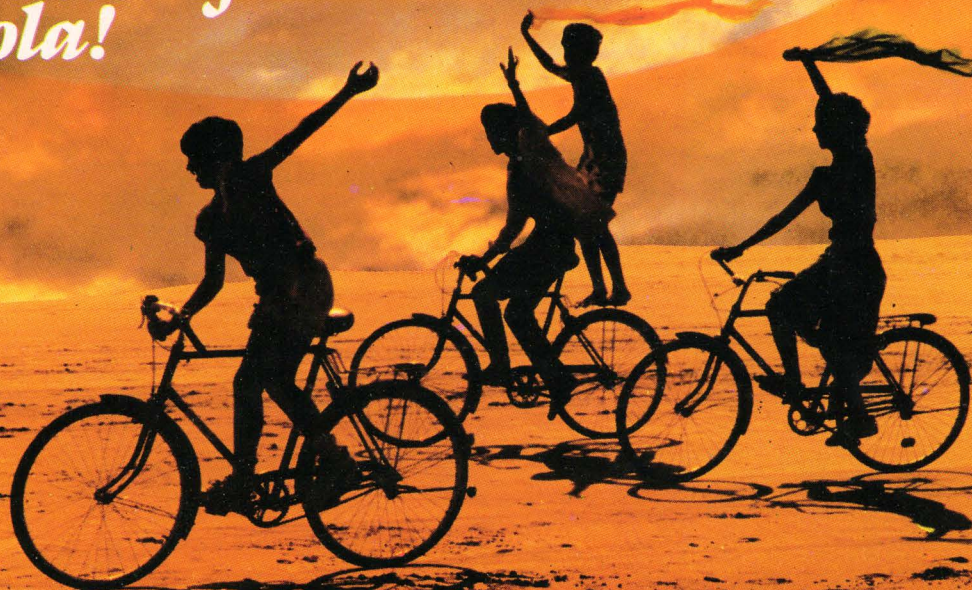
An earlier stroke, a year ago, had left Dastur with one arm impaired, "but he could do more with one hand than what most surgeons could do with two," said Udawadia, adding, "Long hours and stress of work took a toll of his health." It was at the end of his working day at the Northcote that Dastur realized that a second cerebral stroke was approaching and called for help, says Nurgish. He asked for a drink of Horlicks but before it could reach him, he had slipped into coma. He was shifted to the Breach Candy where he passed away without recovering consciousness.

Dastur is survived by his wife Nurgish, daughters Sanobar Ragina, Niloofer Balsara and Firuzan Patel, and five grandchildren.



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