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Cover: A *divo* illumines a well in the Uran agiary compound
Photo: 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 Unsigned letters or those without an address will not be published.

"Three High Priests..."

I have read the learned Dasturjis' opinion ("Three High Priests Opine" *Parsiana*, June 1993) with regard to the navar ceremony of Percy Sam Modi.

The whole order is in a big mess, the full time mobeds by and large are of poor capacity; the Dasturjis are supposed to give practical instruction in order to revamp the whole system. This they have not done.

I am unable to appreciate how hollow words can help at this juncture. I quote verbatim, "In our opinion, the matter is very grave and deserves to be treated firmly... Under the circumstances, we request your good selves to uphold the long-cherished and well preserved norms and values that have sustained the clergy for the past millennium and take such

steps as may be necessary against the perpetrators..."

Nowhere in the whole opinion have they given any practical suggestion as to what is to be done. What steps are to be taken by the trustees? What steps should be taken to stop such ceremonies taking place in future? It is not at all clear. I totally disagree with such an attitude.

I would suggest that all consecration ceremonies be stopped henceforth in Bombay. If the mobeds of Bombay have lost the capacity and the alat, then they should go home.

P. D. MAGOL

Karachi

"WZO: Adapting to..."

In "WZO: Adapting to change" (*Parsiana*, June 1993) it is reported that at a meeting of the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India in Bombay on June 5 and 6, 1993, Mr H. J. Taleyarkhan questioned the use of the entire amount of funds collected for the amelioration of rural Zoroastrians in Gujarat. He contended that only the interest thereon should be utilized. He also alleged that aid was being repeatedly channelled to the same recipients.

It is so very easy to make fallacious statements concerning WZO's work, specially in the absence of WZO officials, and thereby create doubt and cast unwarranted aspersions. Fortunately, Davar Kavasji Modi of Surat was at hand to refute the wrong statements made by Mr H. Taleyarkhan.

From the very outset, WZO had made it very plain to the community at large that the problem of uplifting the Zoroastrian farmers of South Gujarat was such that funds would have to be spent now to pull them out of the quagmire into which they had fallen over the decades. Interest earned on amounts collected could only have been spent a year later and would not be sufficient to meet the demands of the project. For example, up to July 31, 1992, WZO had collected Rs 31,95,505 which at 15 percent interest would have yielded Rs 4,79,326 only whereas the expenditure on farming inputs during this period far exceeded this amount. However, whenever donors have specifically requested us to capitalize their donations and use interest only, we have followed that course.

The statement that the aid was being repeatedly channelled to the same recipients is totally inaccurate. Our report covering the period August 1990 to July 1992, published in *The Bombay Samachar* of August 9, 1992 detailed the measures taken to cover many families in many villages.

Distance in time dims memories and sometimes comments and statements are made which are not accurate. Therefore, we wish to state once again:

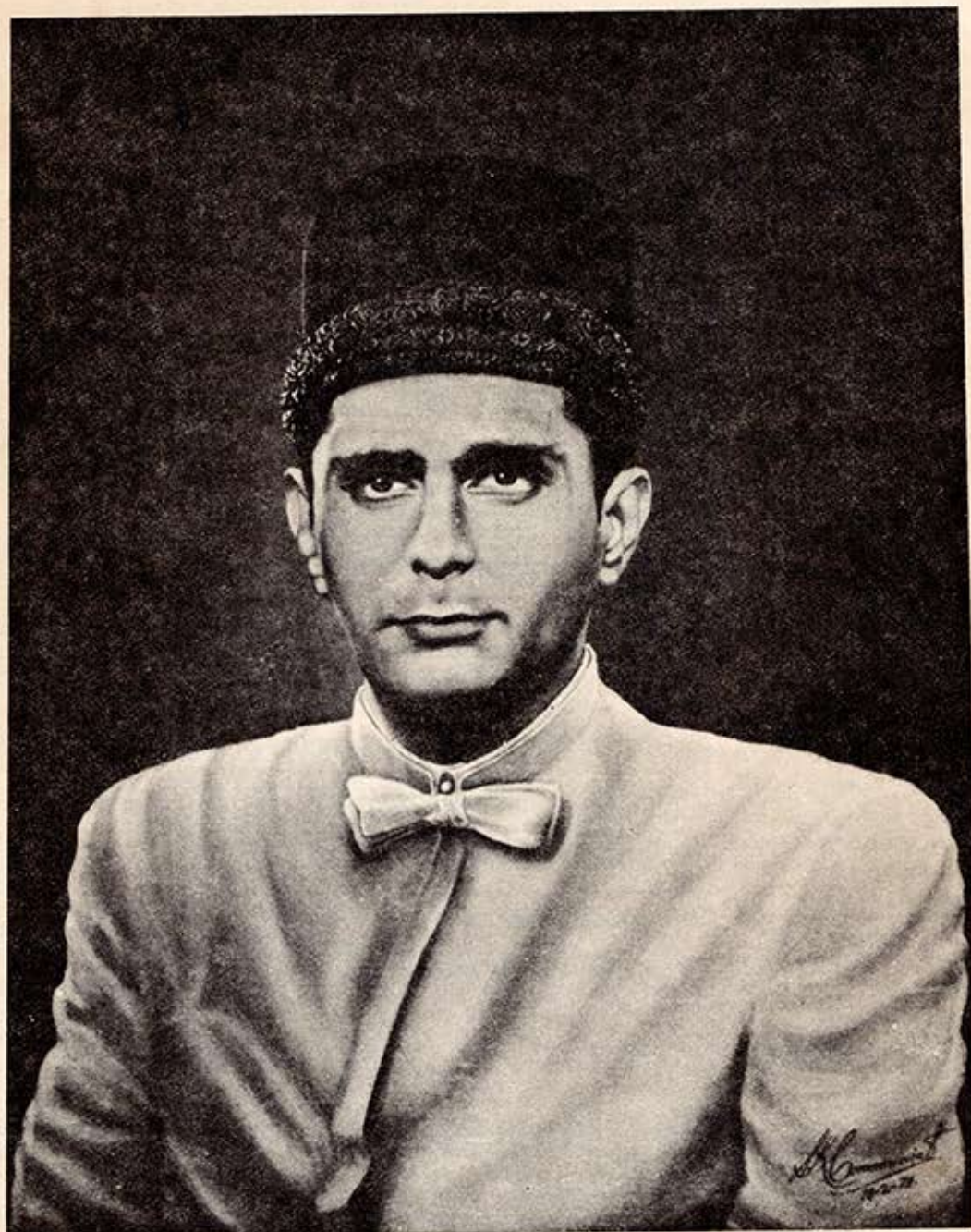
- The survey of the poor Zoroastrian farmers of southern Gujarat was done at the behest of WZO by the Surat Parsi Panchayat (SPP) joining WZO in commissioning the survey and the report by Dr (Ms) Cashmira Bhaya (then Bharrucha). Over and over again, we have expressed our thanks to the SPP for this.

- The actual work for the project, from day one, has been undertaken by WZO personnel who have followed the strategy laid down by the WZO Committee, London. These WZO personnel comprise Davar Kavasji and Ms Roshan Modi from Surat, Mr Dinshaw and Ms Bachi Tamboly, Mr Firoj Panthaky, Mr Farrokh Kasad and the Avari brothers of the Tata Marginal Farm, all from Navsari and Mr Purvez Italia of Fudvel. We are happy to state that this group receives full support and help from Mr Shahpurji Vajifdar of Navsari.

- Every year, two or more members from the WZO Committee, London, visit the villages of Gujarat to see for themselves the work that has been done, the work that requires to be done and discuss matters with the WZO team in India concerning this project and related matters.

- We have acknowledged with grateful thanks the contributions made by the Bombay Parsi Panchayat (BPP) and the SPP of two lakh rupees each in the period up to December 31, 1992. In the year up to July 23, 1993 we understand that further donations of two lakh rupees have been given by the BPP and SPP and we wish to record our thanks to them for the same.

- WZO personnel have travelled to America, Canada, India, the Far East and Australia to make video presentations of the project and to speak to and answer questions from the audiences in these countries. This is being done because



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WZO is dedicated to see that this work, which is of vital importance to the community, is brought to the notice of all Zoroastrians, so that the community may see the need for substantial finances for this project.

We hope that this letter will clarify any doubts that may have been created by the comments made by Mr H. J. Taleyarkhan.

Finally, we believe that a lot of damage is done and minds prejudiced unnecessarily through inaccurate, uninformed and irresponsible statements, specially when these are made by well-known and respected Zoroastrians. It is a great pity!

S. F. CAPTAIN

President, WZO, London

"You have to leave..."

After reading the news article "You have to leave..." (*Parsiana*, August 1992) I was upset at the treatment given to a fellow-Zarthushti by the Saudi authorities, just because it became known that he belonged to our religion.

I am also surprised to see that no one seems to care about what happened to Rohinton Chichgar and his family, in terms of protesting to the Saudis, and petitioning the Indian government to take up the matter on an official level. Why do we accept such humiliation of our community member like submissive dogs?

For my part I have written protest letters to the Saudi Consulate in Los Angeles, their embassy in Washington DC, to King Fahd, president Clinton, vice-president Al Gore, members of the US Congress, the Indian consul-general, Indian ambassador to the US and sent out electronic mail messages to Zarthushtis (including the Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America) informing them about the incident and urging them to write similar protest letters to Saudi and US officials.

This letter-writing is not guaranteed to produce quick action, but it demonstrates that we care for our fellow-Zarthushtis and we do not take insults and injustice lying down.

I urge your readers to ask the Parsi Punchayet officers in Bombay as well as government officials (wherever the reader resides) to communicate the unacceptability of such treatment to Saudi Arabian government officials (directly and through consulates/embassies).

MANECK N. BHUJWALA

President, Zarthushti Anjuman of Northern California

An article about the Parsis was printed in *India Abroad*, an international weekly newspaper printed in New York, USA. I understand from family and friends in Bombay that a similar article had been printed in many Bombay papers. In the beginning I did not take much interest, but it now seems that there is no end to it, and it is definitely spoiling the Parsi community's name.

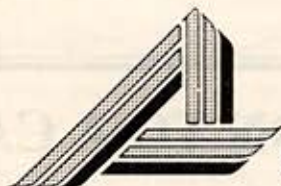
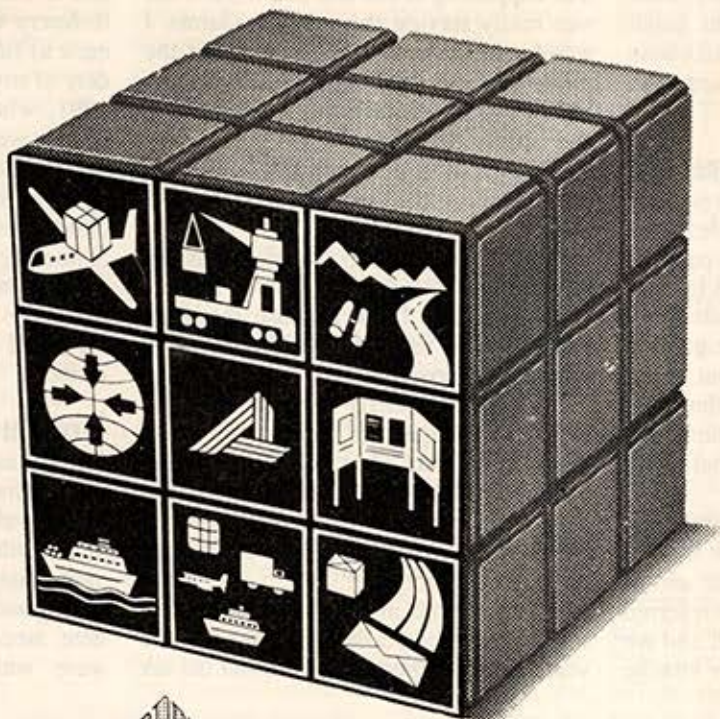
I am a Parsi, and we have just returned from Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. We were extremely happy there. We left as my husband had a better job opportunity here. There are over 50 Parsis in Riyadh, and quite a big number all over Saudi Arabia. All of them are very happy as they are paid maximum — no other place in the world would give them the salary, perks, benefits, etc, that they get there, tax free! Obviously it all depends on one's qualifications and experience. There are many Parsis who have lived for over 20 years, and would prefer their future generations also to work there. The ones who grumble and mumble are the ones never happy anywhere in the world!

For a fact the Chichgars were not thrown out as they were Parsis, but due to some personal problems with their boss in their job. There have been many Parsis who were given jobs after the Chichgars left and many who left of their own wish. Being a small community, most of the Parsis know each other in Saudi Arabia. We used to have lots of parties, picnics, etc, and never forgot Jamshedi Navroze nor Pateti. But it's sad when a family cannot admit the true reason for leaving the job, and blame the host country and their own religion instead. It is a shame we have such people in our community.

Since this article was printed in many Bombay papers, friends and family worried about us when we were in Riyadh. After reading those articles, elderly Parsi parents have visited the Chichgars in Dadar, Bombay, and were in tears to know the truth: that is when the Chichgars themselves admitted that the whole story was not the truth but had no further reaction.

The Saudi kingdom, has its own laws and rules. No one is forced to take a job there. No one is forced to work there. One can leave when one wants to, but once in the kingdom we have to follow their rules, whether one likes them or not! I am sure there are thousands of Parsis just wishing to get a job there.

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Most Parsis working in Saudi Arabia have their own apartments in India, heaps of money in NRI (non-resident Indian) accounts, kilos of gold jewelry, etc; bought from their earnings in Saudi Arabia. This never would have been possible if they had not gone to Saudi Arabia.

Ms FEERUZA SHAH
Wilmington, Del, USA

Rohinton Chichgar replies:

In reply to Ms Shah, I would like your readers to know that I have given only one interview to *The Afternoon Despatch and Courier* and if excerpts or parts of that interview have been printed by others it has been without my knowledge. I had given that interview not for gaining any sympathy or compassion but to let my fellow Zoroastrians know the facts and not suffer as we did. I thank Mr Maneck Bhujwala for at least believing in me.

All the best to you Ms Shah and hope you don't have to go through the trauma that we had to endure. My case and at least three other cases have been referred to the Indian Embassy in Riyadh and we also had a talk with the military attache

who called on us in Jubail. I will not go into the details of this conversation as it would be construed as hearsay. But suffice it to know that the Parsi community in Riyadh was in the know as to what was happening at our end and if Ms Shah was really staying there as she claims, I wonder how she did not hear about the plight of about 15-20 Parsi families staying in Jubail. I have not mentioned in any article that there was a problem in Saudi Arabia but specifically about the problem in Jubail where we were employed.

May I ask at this point what was the religion mentioned in Ms Shah's iquama (work permit)? I ask because there are Parsis whose iquama qualifies them as Hindus or Christians.

As for the "elderly Parsi parents visited the Chichgars at Dadar in Bombay and were in tears... but had no further reaction" I declare that I and my family have never, repeat never, stayed in Dadar and further, no Parsi elders have contacted me or met me.

I know more about the place having stayed and worked there for nearly nine years and everybody knows about the tax

free income and pots of gold. In case you are under the impression that you are talking about some laborer, let me tell you I was a processing superintendent in Hindustan Petroleum Refinery, Bombay and a Shift Manager in Petromin Shell Refinery in KSA and to top that I went back to Jubail (very near the Kuwait border) of my own free will on January 14, 1991, when the deadline served to the Iraqis was January 15, 1991.

The fact that my company took upon itself to keep me till the exams of my children, studying in the Indian Embassy School, got over in April 1992, even though they were being pressured continuously from December 1991, speaks for itself about my relations with my bosses.

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themselves very well. To realize "the American dream" was easy. I remember in 1968 a Parsi couple earning \$ 7,000 per year got a bank loan at four percent and bought a three-bedroom house for \$ 43,000. Today it is worth over \$ 250,000.

From 1960 to 1972, economic expansion was related to the American involvement in the Vietnam War plus a high export of goods and services. Then came the oil embargo imposed by the Arab countries in 1973. Prices of oil and gas (petroleum) shot up overnight, resulting in higher prices for goods and services produced in America. American products became more costly in the international market. The resulting downscale economy lasted until 1980 when the inflation rate was 11 percent and some 10 million Americans were out of a job. Then came the Reagan era (1980-1988) when the mechanics of the supply side economics were introduced. The economy grew at a steady rate but the national debt grew faster. The built-up debt is so huge that it would take two to three generations to pay it back. The prognosis is that for the rest of the 1990s the American economy would not be in a position to create new jobs at the rate that prevailed before 1988.

During the last three years, quite a few global corporations such as General Motors, Chrysler, I.B.M., Kodak, and many others have been struggling to survive. And they are still not out of the woods. Possibly it will take up to 1995 before any substantial improvement in the American economy is visible. Unemployment is on the rise, there are more poor Americans than ever before, and the number of the homeless is increasing at an alarming rate. The influx of illegal immigrants is out of control and the government has been trying its best to curb it but without any success. These immi-

grants are costing the tax payers millions of dollars. Some of them are illiterate and that becomes an added problem for the local and State governments.

"The American dream" is fading for the average American. To add to these predicaments, the corporate culture is changing. More and more corporations have been restructuring their organization in order to be cost effective, and trying to remain lean and mean. Meaning there will be more layoffs by the thousands in the near future. Today, for one middle management job there are 4,000 applicants. Many who lost their jobs that paid them \$ 60,000 to \$ 250,000 are still without a job after two years. This includes some Parsis too. There is no guarantee that an MBA from a prestigious university will secure a job immediately. Some, out of desperation, pick up odd jobs which pay poorly and do not offer any career opportunity. Most foreigners accept such jobs with a view to getting the "green card." But at what cost? Some feel that it would be disgraceful to return to India and start a career. Actually, an immigrant visa allows a person to stay in the country but does not guarantee the right job.

On the other side, the Indian market economy has taken off for sustained growth for another 25 years. It is rightly said by some business leaders that the South Asian market economy will dominate the 21st century in growth and prosperity. This means that those who want to toil and have the right qualifications and attitude will be able to climb up the success ladder. More jobs will be created in various fields as the economy passes through one phase of growth to a more potential area of business activity.

In my professional opinion those Parsis, who continue to believe that going to the States or UK for studies and

getting the degree there would enable them to secure a good job, are misinformed.

The objective of this message is simply to warn individuals aspiring to immigrate to America, UK, Canada, or Germany to safeguard their future. Think twice before you take a mighty step. The grass may not be greener on the other side.

ERACH MUNSHI

New York

Vadodara appeal

On our Panchayat's landed properties in Vadodara urgent work has become imperative:

•In Vishwamitri, which is the site of our dokhma, we have two plots of land. A part of the land has been fenced by cement poles and barbed wire. In view of vast housing development on the west side of the railway lines, this land is being encroached upon and we even find the existing fencing continuously broken at different places. It is therefore imperative that a proper brick and cement wall of suitable height be constructed to prevent such encroachments and to preserve the sanctity of the dokhma. The cost envisaged for this work is approximately five lakh rupees.

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lished the B. N. Seervai Parsi Dharam-shala-cum-Hostel and Shri Pirojsha Godrej Hall. Adjacent to the Dharam-shala and Hall an open ground is attached and this is being used for various functions of the Panchayat and its members. On one side of the open ground, neighboring housing society members are constructing illegal and unlawful extensions which have affected the Panchayat's right for peaceful and free use of its own land. To put an end to such unlawful activities, it is necessary that the Panchayat constructs its own wall on this side of the land. The cost of this work is approximately one lakh rupees.

In addition to the above, we wish to announce that our Panchayat is hosting an all-India meeting of the Federation of the Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India in Vadodara in January 1994. The Godrej Hall and the open ground will be extensively utilized for this two day conference at which more than 100 representatives from all over India are expected to be present. The Godrej Hall is badly in need of face-lifting and reno-

vation to its interiors and also its electrification. The open ground needs proper entrance facilities and a chain link fence and gates to prevent cattle and stray animals from entering. Total costs for the above are envisaged at one and a half lakh rupees.

The financial position of our Panchayat does not allow us to undertake such expenditure from our income. Hence we request you to accord the highest priority to our appeal. Crossed cheques favoring Shree Parsi Panchayat, Vadodara may be sent to the undersigned at Hira Baug, Fatehganj Post Office Road, Vadodara 390002. We assure you that, true to our tradition and past performance, our Panchayat will utilize the monies received through donations in the most efficient manner so as to fulfil the objectives set out.

SHAVAK F. PATEL

President, Shree Parsi Panchayat, Vadodara

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We have at present 27 children who receive free boarding, lodging, clothing, medical aid, etc under the personal supervision of our able superintendent and personal visits of our trustees. Our monthly expenditure ranges between Rs 11,000-12,000. Hence we now appeal to readers and philanthropists to extend their helping hand towards our mission.

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HORMUZZIAR D. CHOKSI

Edited by Amavaz S. Mama

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Events and Personalities

Changes in Bangalore

With the construction of a third storey on the Lady Jehangir Kothari Hall Annexe Bangalore's B. J. Entee Dharamshala will now be functioning from its new premises. The trustees are contemplating demolishing the existing dharamshala structure and replacing it with an apartment complex for the community if the general body approves, according to the annual report and audited accounts of The Bangalore Parsee Zoroastrian Anjuman (BZA) for the year ended March 31, 1993.

Despite extending financial aid for medical causes, awarding cash prizes for scholastic and sports achievements, undertaking electrical work at the dokhma property and constructing a boundary wall around the aramgah territory, "there is an excess of income over expenditure amounting to Rs 2,41,762," announced the treasurer Jamshed P. Unvalla. The expenditure on the new dharamshala complex will however feature in the next year's accounts, he clarified. Higher returns from their fixed and liquid assets, plus increased rentals from the tenants of the Kothari Hall Annexe, and the hire charges of the Kothari Hall were responsible for the hike in revenue this year. Although the rentals increased by over 100 percent in some cases, "all the tenants readily cooperated," noted the report.

The Lady Jehangir Kothari Hall is used for BZA's social, cultural and sports activities. "The money generated from hiring the hall makes it self sustaining and also contributes for the maintenance of the agiary, the dharamshala and the dokhma. Generally 30 percent of the rentals collected is earmarked for BZA social activities," notes the report.

A guiding force and stalwart of the Bangalore Anjuman, Ervad Nadirshah Unvalla has chosen to retire as panthaky due to advancing age, the report mentions. The trustees were on the lookout for a replacement.

The new office bearers of the Anjuman are: Kali D. Cawasji, president;

Bahadur Saher, vice president; Dinshaw N. Billimoria, honorary secretary; Jamshed Unvalla, honorary treasurer; Cawasji N. Dinshaw, Dinshaw K. Cawasji and Phiroze B. Bharda, trustees. Appealing to the members of the Anjuman to "play their role in society to the advantage of our community at large," the president remarked that although some of them raised large amounts of money for services like Lions, Rotary, etc they were not as active

in raising funds for the community.

Urban Heritage Awards

Two Parsi-managed and maintained buildings in Bombay were selected for the Urban Heritage Awards from among 45 nominations received. The Lady Willingdon Building, the headquarters of the Parsee Ambulance Service (opposite Metro Cinema) and the Byramjee Jeejeebhoy Parsee Charitable (BJPC) Institution (near the Banaji Atash Behram at Charni Road) were two of the five buildings honored this year with the awards — white plaques — which were presented on November 23, 1993 by municipal commissioner Sharad Kale.

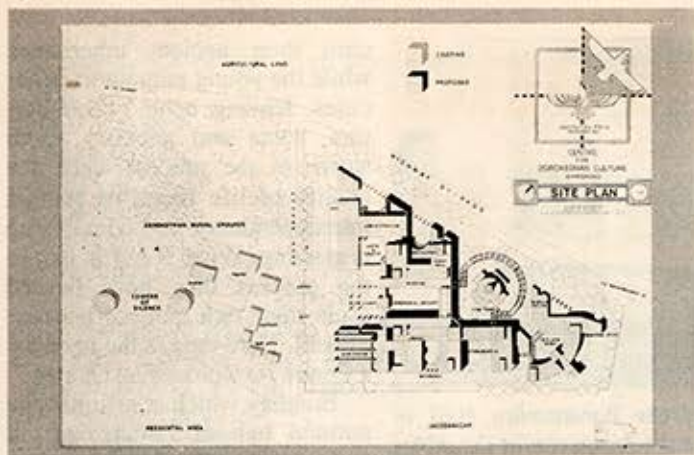
The Awards, instituted by the Bombay Chapter of the Indian Heritage Society, are given annually "to encourage and bring awareness of the city's vast cultural heritage through preservation of its buildings." Elucidating the criteria for selection, one of the judges, Ms Brinda Somaiya remarked that the 1932-constructed Lady Willingdon Building was honored because of the high standard of maintenance and respect it exhibited for the original details. According to Maneckshaw Antia, the superintendent of this grey-and-lemon painted art deco building, "the members of the Parsee Ambulance Service have kept the place as clean and well-repaired as possible."

The BJPC Institution building is a fine



Byramjee Jeejeebhoy Parsee Charitable Institution (above) and Lady Willingdon Building: Bombay's well preserved buildings
Photos: Varghese Fernandez





example of Gothic architecture in the city. The judges commended its trustees for maintaining its pristine beauty. Specially commendable was the BJPC Trust's decision to remove all advertising material from the building (this included the famous 501 Bar Soap neon atop it for years together), despite the acute paucity of funds.

The building was constructed in 1908 to serve as a school for boys of the weaker section of the Parsi community. Today it serves as a cosmopolitan educational institution, thereby retaining a consistency in usage. The building drew additional praise from the judges because the authorities managing the building have been displaying great foresight in undertaking repairs and restoring the building to its original design. Interestingly, the restoration work is being undertaken by the same conservation-architect (Vikas Dilawari) who has been responsible for giving a face-lift and carrying out repair work on the 100-year-old Bombay Municipal Corporation building, also an Urban Heritage Award winning edifice this year.

Homi Rogers

Dear doctor, departed

When a patient dies, his deteriorating health prepares his near and dear ones for the impending end. But when a doctor dies suddenly, as happened in the case of Dr (Ms) Gool Contractor, it is a loss that the patients take time to recover from.

On her way to attend to an ailing patient near Chowpatty, Contractor was knocked down by a speeding taxi. She

Layout and site plan of a Centre for Zoroastrian Culture proposed by Bhagwagar (inset)

was rushed to the Nair Hospital where she breathed her last two hours later, notes a write-up in the *Mid-Day* of August 25. The death of the 64-year-old doctor on August 11, 1993 was a personal loss to scores of employees of Tatas for not only was she the personal physician to J. R. D. Tata, his wife Thelma and other directors, but also to the humble liftman and peon serving the group whom she treated with the same dedication and affection.

Most Tata employees she attended to at her consulting room at Bombay House. The more serious patients were paid house visits even if it meant travelling to Andheri and back, recalls an associate, author Russi Lala. While she gave plenty of time to patients, for herself she had

little, sustaining herself on one or two cups of coffee and a sandwich until dinnertime. It was from the eminent surgeon Dr R. N. Cooper that Contractor imbibed her "goodness of heart, concern for patients and disregard for money."

She has been described as a strong, assertive, fearless and no-nonsense person. Yet she was equally friendly, affectionate and kind. Among her strong dislikes were hypocrisy and injustice of

any kind. She was an allopath but had an open mind to alternative forms of medicine too. She was wary of the medical mainstream being exploitative and in fact did not recommend

pathological tests unless absolutely necessary, acknowledges her patient Ms Meher Pestonji.

Before she had established herself at the Tatas she had worked at the Adams Wylie Hospital, the ENT Hospital and even offered free service at the Oznama Clinic.

Her father too was a medical practitioner but Contractor hardly knew him since he had died when she was barely six. She was brought up mainly by her mother for whom she had tremendous respect (the 90-year-old lady survived Gool) and her grandfather who took it upon himself to look after his young daughter-in-law and her seven children.

Inclined towards sports and games, Contractor had served as captain of the Indian women's hockey team and was to later become president of the Bombay Women's Hockey Association.

As notes a report in *The Afternoon Despatch and Courier* of August 15, "Everybody came to pay their last respects at the Tower of Silence. All the Tatas. And her friends from Air India on whose panel she used to be. The pavilion for non-Parsis was full, the hall had no standing place, the lawn outside was crammed with people... We'll remember her as she was — those spectacles, that smile, that most unusual of voices."

Artist conceives a center

"To instill a sense of pride, belonging and togetherness in the Zoroastrian community on a larger scale," Vistasp Minoo Bhagwagar has come up with an "architectural solution." His vision of a Centre for Zoroastrian Culture, Ahmedabad, reflected in his thesis that he submitted for his bachelors degree in architecture at the School of Planning and Architecture, New Delhi, won him the Nomi Bose Gold Medal for the finest thesis of 1992.

On a nearly five-acre plot of land ad-



Contractor: concern for patients, not for money

joining the towers of silence which was recently acquired by the Ahmedabad Parsi Panchayat (APP), he has envisaged a complex that would accommodate a fire-temple, madressa, head mobed's quarters, dharamshala, home for the aged, ceremony grounds, research cum library, arts and crafts center, culture museum, auditorium, restaurant, administration and services.

"The underlining spirit of the design is to create a complex which would be the cynosure of all eyes... The glory of Persepolis which epitomizes the zenith of Zoroastrian architecture is tried to be captured, albeit on a totally modest scale, with a touch of post-modernism and contemporary influences," Bhagwagar explains his concept. Planning the roof of the proposed fire-temple on the lines of the Pundole Adarian at Udvada, Bhagwagar notes, "For too long the fire-temple has been content in remaining muted ... in expression... It is now time for the fire-temple to assert itself in built form..."

While the fire-temple would be the most important component it would lie in the 'private' zone as also would the mobed's quarters and the service areas which would fall under the restricted entry category. The library, madressa, ghambar hall, dharamshala and the old-age home are deemed 'semi public,' entry being permissible only after screening or identification. The arts and crafts centre, the auditorium, the restaurant and the museum would be open to the public. The largest area in fact is reserved by Bhagwagar for the museum which is located centrally.

Thus various issues have been kept in mind before developing this project: private vs public, functional vs aesthetic,



At the third anniversary of the Zoroastrian Hall in Jalgaon, president Ms Maharukh Adajania (at the mike) gives a report of the Jalgaon Zoroastrian Trust. Also seated on the dais are (from left) Ms Mistry, Parvez Katrak who presented a slide show and songs, and Ms Jalgaonwala.

Zoroastrian vs non-Zoroastrian usage, 24-hour usage vs temporary usage. The clubbing and sharing of functions as also multi use of space has been planned meticulously. His blue print has been appended with other details and particulars relevant to this project like the approach road for each unit, its accommodation capacity and floor space, and complexities like circulation systems, volumetric disposition and landscaping.

A brilliant student throughout his school life at St Xavier's and subsequent studies at the School of Planning and Architecture, New Delhi, Bhagwagar won his Bachelor of Architecture degree with first class honors and was awarded the School's Gold Medal as the best student in the batch of 1991-92. Besides undertaking freelance cartoon work as a hobby he has also studied the piano.

Justifying the development of a Zoroastrian Centre Bhagwagar writes, "There is a need to bring back the harmony between the old and the new generations. Today the elders live in solitude clutching

onto their ancient inheritance while the young migrate to larger cities, leaving behind their culture, roots and ancestry. Both suffer in the process since the quality of life based on mutual interdependence and coexistence is missing. What is sad is that in the process they have pushed aside their rich cultural heritage as well. Here then is the need for a Centre for Zoroastrian Culture."

Bombay which constitutes the cultural hub of Zoroastrians in India cannot afford such a centre in terms of space, says Bhagwagar who finds Ahmedabad ideally suited being centrally located with convenient transport links and a Zoroastrian population which indicates "signs of growing in the future." Further the APP has shown "more than just academic interest" in this assignment. As reported by Bhagwagar, the World Zoroastrian Organisation wanted to study this project as there are plans to develop a center on similar lines in Toronto. Though nowhere does Bhagwagar mention the cost estimates, in a covering letter he notes optimistically, "Who knows, the Parsi philanthropic spirit may surface somewhere and we might be able to build a Centre sometime!"

SPOTLIGHT

On the Indian team which won the World Railway badminton title last year was Poona's 21-year-old Ms Firoza Batliwalla, notes a press release from the Zoroastrian Youth Association, Poona. Twenty teams from across the globe reportedly participated in the World Railway Games in Denmark last May.

Compiled by Parinaz Gandhi

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AZA House, at last!

1994 may be the year of wish fulfilment for Sydney Zoroastrians. "It will be the year when we finally build and be able to enjoy the use of our Darbe Meher and our Annangrove property...Hopefully we can celebrate Navroze in March 1994 at Annangrove!" notes Australian Zoroastrian Association (AZA) president Ms Gulu Bilimoria in *Manashni* (September/October 1993), the newsletter of the Sydney based organization of New South Wales.

On October 17, 20 Association members helped to clear the old Annangrove House, the source and venue of much heartache for AZA members as permission to develop the property has been won in the teeth of opposition from the local authorities and uncooperative neighbors after prolonged litigation. Now the evacuated items including barbeques, a table tennis table, books, etc have been carefully stored in various homes. Once the place had been cleared the construction engineers Glendenning Group Architects were scheduled to call tenders for construction expected to begin in November and finish by March 1994, according to *Manashni*. The Association still faced a shortfall in funds to the tune of \$ 33,514. The struggle continued despite donations of A \$ 10,000 from the Zoroastrian Charity Funds of Hongkong and A \$ 2,000 from Bombay Parsi Punchayet president Jamshed Guzder. The architects' estimate for the project as of December 1992 was \$ 372,187.

The team currently in charge of AZA affairs includes vice president Akhtar Ostowari, secretary Ms Arnaz Bana, treasurer Tim Desai, and committee members Ms Kitty Masalawalla, Ms Frey Kolsawalla and Kersi Meher-Homji. Sports and *Manashni* are back in Meher-Homji's court. Bana is in charge of Sunday School, Ostowari of fund raising; Bilimoria and Desai will pursue the building's progress while Masalawalla and Kolsawalla will be responsible for social events/fund raising and the library respectively.

In the meanwhile Sydney Zoroastrians celebrated the Shehenshahi Navroze with a table tennis tournament: "Trust Sydney Zoros for new ideas," writes Meher-Homji gleefully.

AZA entrepreneurs Adil Sarkari and

Feroze Kapadia have established Spenta Real Estate in association with The Professionals of Campbelltown, Sydney, informs *Manashni*. They have pledged that 10 percent of all commission they earn on the sale/purchase of property by AZA members or through their referrals, will be donated to AZA funds.

The President's man

When Kershasp Choksy was appointed minister for constitutional and state affairs in the government of the Republic of Sri Lanka in May 1993, he became "the first Parsi (Zoroastrian)... cabinet minister in a national government in any



Cabinet minister Choksy

country in the world," as notes a press release sent by Pesi Pestonjee, trustee of The Ceylon Parsi Anjuman Trust Funds.

President's counsel Choksy is expected to be a catalyst and advisor on vital national issues

and to coordinate the polices and programs of the national cabinet.

The people of Sri Lanka have doubts about the suitability of their new constitution and the system of preference votes adopted for national and local elections, states the press release. "They would like to see changes in the role played by the cabinet and parliament under the presidential system." Hence Choksy's long-term objective is to rethink the constitution, advise his colleagues accordingly, and draft the necessary amendments. "Hopefully, these changes may even see the end of the north/south war which has bled Sri Lanka dry," notes Pestonjee.

Choksy's legal expertise has been well known since Ms Sirimao Bhandaranaike's premiership. Pestonjee ascribes Choksy's many legal victories to detailed preparation of his brief, profound and far-reaching knowledge of law and novel arguments and approach. After earning his stripes as "the authority on company law

and contracts," Choksy shifted his interest to public issues, appearing in the appeal courts in cases involving fundamental rights, constitutional claims, challenging elections and election petitions since the election of J. R. Jayawardene in 1978, informs the write-up. He was appointed chairman of the law commission and was Sri Lanka's delegate to the United Nations General Assembly.

When Premadasa became president, Choksy, his long-time counsel and confidante refused his offer of political office. He was appointed member of parliament on the national list nonetheless. Choksy reluctantly accepted the cabinet post pressed upon him by Premadasa's successor, President D. B. Wijetunga, as the need of the hour, at substantial sacrifice to his legal practice and personal fortune as he was director of several companies, informs Pestonjee.

A senior trustee of the Ceylon Anjuman, Kasi (as he is better known) belongs to the second generation of the Choksy family born in Ceylon — his father Nariman and mother Khorshed had both been born there. Choksy's education had been completed in Ceylon where he now lives with his India-born wife Frey and son Vishtasp, attorney-at-law in the family tradition. Son Khurshed was due to return after his masters in business administration from the US while son Jamsheed, a scholar who has authored the book *Purity and Pollution in Zoroastrianism* is assistant professor of history at Stanford College, USA.

The Zaiwalla trail

London based solicitor Sarosh Zaiwalla continues to be in the public eye. Early last September the *Financial Times* carried a report by Andrew Jack which noted that the Bank of England is facing the first full scale challenge to its authority as a regulator to supervise and recommend the closure of banks in the UK. The gauntlet has been flung by Mount Banking, a small Asian owned bank represented by Zaiwalla and Company. Its 3,000 depositors are mainly Asians residing in India and East Africa.

The Bank of England had asked for provisional liquidation of Mount. "The grounds for closure were doubts whether the management of Mount was 'fit and proper,' and not that it might be insol-

vent," writes Jack. However, according to certain documents the international banking group Standard Chartered may make a significant claim against Mount running into several million dollars, informs the *Financial Times* report.

Zaiwalla solicitor Andrew Milne is quoted by the *Financial Times* to the effect that the Bank of England had petitioned for closure of Mount as a result of the Standard Chartered's allegations which were "proved completely false."

As a result of Zaiwalla's presentation "the Lord Chancellor's department convened a three-person banking appeals tribunal under the 1987 Banking Act in what is believed to be the first instance of an institution successfully triggering a formal appeal," writes Jack.

By the end of September the *Financial Times* and Zaiwalla were again making news as reported by *Business India* (October 11-24, 1993). To launch its 24-page survey of India, the London daily invited leading members of the Asian community including Zaiwalla to a sit-down breakfast on September 30. Sometime before the date of the déjeuner Zaiwalla was dropped from the list of invitees, alleg-

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From the Publishers

Change in *Parsiana* Frequency

For the last 13 of *Parsiana's* 28 years of existence we have successfully labored to bring out 12 issues in a year. Despite the financial loss incurred in publishing the magazine, we have attempted to bring the best to our readers within the limited human and financial resources at our disposal.

We are grateful to our subscribers and advertisers for bearing with our publication delays over the last several months. As the September issue was behind schedule by nearly four months we have published a consolidated issue for four months and dated it September-December 1993. We would however like to assure our subscribers that the validity of their subscription period will be extended by three months to compensate for this combined issue.

To ensure that we remain on schedule in 1994, we shall henceforth bring out 10 issues in a calendar year instead of 12. The February issue will hereafter be merged with the March issue, and the July issue with the August one. Since the March and August issues are well over 100 pages, we hope to give you sufficient reading material while ensuring that these special issues reach you in time for the Fasli and Shehenshahi New Years.

Subscription payments for *Parsiana* received before December 31, 1993 will be honored with 12 or 24 issues depending on the period subscribed for. For new or renewal subscriptions received after January 1, 1994, 10 issues will be despatched in one year or 20 in two years.

We hope our valued subscribers and advertisers will appreciate that this change in frequency has been necessitated by circumstances beyond our control. We also hope that you will perceive this change as necessary in the long-term interest of all concerned.

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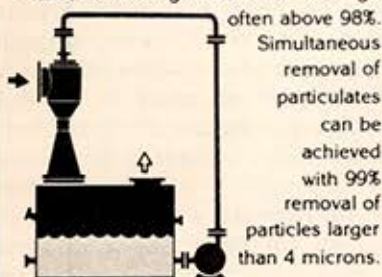
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edly on the express instructions of the Indian High Commission which had lost a law suit to Zaiwalla for unpaid bills amounting to £ 600,000.

Referring to the *Financial Times* imbroglio, *Business India* notes, "Now Zaiwalla promises to take the matter further if the High Commission does not cease its 'vendetta.' And if he makes good on the promise, then it will surely be the costliest breakfast the *Financial Times* has ever had the misfortune to host."

However, by December Zaiwalla was hosting their usual Xmas party at their Chancery Lane office where the guest of honor was the British Attorney General Sir Nicholas Lyell. The other 400 guests included British aristocrats, Court of Appeal and High Court judges, ambassadors including a delegation from the Chinese embassy, mayors and Asian bigwigs as informs *The Afternoon Despatch and Courier* (The ADC) of December 15, '93. Lyell has been quoted by *The ADC* commenting favorably on the distinguished gathering as "a testament to the strength of international business in London."

Yachting for gold

Accepting the unpredictability of the sea as a part of the game, Lt Commander Homi Motiwala steered his state-of-the-art equipment with precision navigation to win the gold medal at the World Enterprise Championships in Zimbabwe last year, reports Ashish Virmani in the *Blitz* (October 30, 1993). Motiwala and mate Pushpendra Garg, both of the Indian Navy, had earlier participated in the Asian Championships held in Hiroshima whence they brought home a silver medal, again in



Motiwala: keen to popularize yachting

the Enterprise class. Ten teams from five countries had contested in this category, informs a report in *The Times of India* (October 9, 1993).

There are about five classes of yachting — the 470 boat, the Enterprise, the Laser, which is run single-handed, the Optimist and the Keel — as notes Virmani. "The Enterprise is a back breaking boat. The Keel boat which is used in match racing is less demanding. So is the 470 class boat in the sense that the second guy stands outside the boat on a trapeze and it is less demanding to maneuver," Motiwala is quoted in the *Blitz* report.

Motiwala is due to take charge of the Sailing Club of Bombay and is keen to popularize the sport among the youth, urging them to join the courses run by the Colaba Sailing Club which anchors its boats off the Gateway of India, and the Sea Cadet Corps, further notes the report.

Compiled by Amavaz S. Mama

JRD: The last rites and wrongs

Arnavaz S. Mama

The uthamna ceremony for JRD Tata causes a divide in the priesthood

Amid the accolades showered on the doyen of Indian industry J. R. D. Tata, an unseemly controversy arose in the press over the patriarch's uthamna ceremony in Bombay.

Tata passed away in Geneva on November 29, 1993 after a brief illness. Ervad Zal Sethna, past president of the Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe, together with a colleague, performed the *geh sarna* before the body was laid to rest in the mausoleum in the renowned Père Lachaise Cemetery of Paris together with other members of his family. Some publications had erroneously mentioned that the body had been cremated.

While 12 priests including Dastur (Dr) Hormazdyar Mirza and Dastur (Dr) Kaikhushroo JamaspAsa performed the uthamna ceremony on December 1, 1993 at doongerwadi which was thronging with mourners both Parsi and non-Parsi, two priests — Dastur (Dr) Firoze Kotwal and Ervad (Dr) Peshotan Peer — who disapproved of the ceremony being performed found their views being splashed on the front page of *The Afternoon Despatch and Courier* (The ADC) on December 2, 1993.

The paper's reporter Cyrus Merchant quoted Peer as saying, "According to our venerated scriptures — and no reformist can challenge my knowledge of them — it is a sin to marry outside the community. The holy book says in no uncertain terms that one who marries outside is an adulterer. JRD is not a full Parsi and in my 50 years of practising, not once have I performed any ceremony for a half-caste. It does not matter to me that his navjote was done. Today forget navjotes, we have priests making the child of a non-Parsi parent a navar (priest). But I am not one of them." Kotwal was quoted as saying, "JRD's mother was not a

Parsi; his wife is also born of mixed blood... Maybe he himself did not want all this, this is all the work of the (Bombay) Parsi Punchayet, sycophants of those in power and position who are trying to curry favor with the Tatas. They use the occasion to cause mischief with our traditions. Mr Tata is being used by the Punchayet. It is sad. For too long they



Dissenting priests Kotwal (left) and Peer

have been trying to silence the orthodox priests because they all have their selfish motives. But we have put up a fight. It would have gone against my beliefs. For I know and have been taught through scriptures that whether it is a man or woman who marries outside, in the eyes of God neither is entitled to obsequial ceremonies."

The Times of India amplified in an article by Ms Bachi Karkaria the next day. *The Times* quoted Kotwal as saying that JRD "had virtually disowned his Zoroastrian faith; that there were occasions when his pronouncements went directly against it" (a reference to his outspoken denunciation of the orthodoxy's exclusion zones); that he is being buried in a Christian cemetery by expressed choice, not merely because he passed away in a place where he could not get an orthodox Zoroastrian disposal. "Why then did the trustees of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet

have to bend over backwards and organize an uthamna? JRD himself would have found it meaningless."

According to reports from Navsari, the birthplace of Jamsetji Tata and the recipient of much Tata largesse, its High Priest Dastur Meherji Meherji-Rana, who is also the ex-officio head of the Navsari Anjuman, refused to hold a jashan or uthamna. The Parsi Prakash (*The Bombay Samachar*, December 29) carried a letter in Gujarati from Shapur Vajifdar to the effect that JRD had donated a sum of money about three years ago, part of which was to be used each year for a public jashan in memory of Jamsetji Tata on his death anniversary. The ceremony had hitherto been carried out in the Navsari Atash Behram under the High Priest and JRD was named in the *farmayashni* (person at whose behest the ceremony is conducted) as "osta Jehangir," attests Vajifdar. As everyone knows, only a man from the priestly class gets the *osta* prefix.

The issue reverberated with letters in the general press for the following weeks and an extended debate continued in the Parsi Press. The coincidence of both dissenters being hospitalized shortly thereafter — Kotwal with a heart attack and Peer briefly with a cracked rib — heightened the drama. And the plot thickened as the news got around that Peer's services as panthaky of the N. R. Tata Agiary and as religious instructor at the Avabai Petit Girls' School, both in Bandra, had been terminated. Liberal letter writers in the press wished Kotwal a similar fate.

According to Peer he was given the choice by the Agiary trustees — to resign or be discharged. "I told them to give me notice. *Dooniyani najare aapre down thai jaiye* (the world may look down on me)

continued on page 26

Uran: harboring hopes

Homi Rogers

To my mind there is a similarity between Ralph, the amiable leader of schoolboys stranded on an island in Golding's *Lord of the Flies* and Kersi Behramshaw Sui, the de facto manager and fire-tender at Uran's Umrigar Sanatorium and Agiary. Sui appears to share Ralph's resourcefulness as he ekes out a living on — hold your breath! — an official monthly salary of Rs 120 sent at erratic intervals, he claims, by the Agiary's trustees.

What strengthens the image is the setting of Sui's humble abode: right off the waterfront, amidst swaying palms, and amphitheatred by the looming hills that run down the coastal strip of western India. Across the gentle blue waters, just eight nautical miles to the west, its skyline marked by highrise buildings clearly discernible from the Agiary's terrace, lies the bustling metropolis of Bombay, home to the largest concentration of Zoroastrians in the world. The journey across the calm water barely takes an hour. But for Sui, seemingly marooned, the journey to the island across could conceivably be a lifetime away.

Sui was born and bred in Uran. His father, Behramshaw Pallonji Sui came here from Navsari over half a century ago with his wife Banoobai to take charge of the Umrigar Sanatorium which stands in the Agiary's compound, overlooking the peaceful bay. Since then much water has lapped against the jetty

at the neighboring Mora Bunder, the sea entrance to Uran.

Sui recalls the days when the Sanatorium would be full, its tables weighed with favorite Parsi dishes as picnickers

Sui claims to have fixed mosquito nettings over windows which have fallen off.

From one of the Sanatorium's windows, we espy the circular shape of a well, perched broodingly atop a hill close to the Agiary. We gather that this was the dokhma. The Parsi Tower of Silence was, interestingly enough, consecrated here on the same day as "the foundation of (a) new fire-temple," reports *The Times of India* of January 7, 1902. Barely a hundred years later, it is hard to understand why on such a remote island the community had invested in building a doongerwadi and an agiary, even if the latter was only a dadgah (household fire, the lowest in the category of fires worshipped).

But a century ago, things were different in Uran. The place bustled with about 20 distilleries (where the local mahua was brewed), all owned by Parsis whose population then ranged around 200. It was an era of prosperity, of Parsi pomp and pageantry — and philanthropy. In response to the request of many Parsis staying in and around Uran, "some of the well-to-do inhabitants of Oorum undertook to supply the want of a tower, and with that object invited subscriptions from the community, which were freely given," notes a report in *The Times of India* of January 6, 1902.

The dokhma is now out of bounds for Parsis (see box, "Uran dokhma: out of



Sui standing at the entrance of the Umrigar Agiary in Uran

and holidayers flocked to it for a spot of *darya ni hava* (sea breeze). Today, the Parsi traffic is practically non-existent: Sui — and the trustees — mention only one Parsi family from Bombay who visit it annually for a fortnight in the summer, and enjoy its diminished yet tolerable facilities, considering the low rent of just Rs 15 charged per day. The stairway has been eaten into by termites ("sambhaljo," cautions Sui, pointing to the caving-in wooden steps during our ascent), the toilets do not function, and

The neglected institutions in Uran have the potential to serve the community of Zoroastrians in nearby Bombay

bounds") the area having been cordoned off by the Navy for their armament depot. Of late, there has been a move by the Navy to take over the doongerwadi land, and one understands that a notice has also been served for its acquisition. It is, however, not clear to whom the notice has been issued. According to a *takhti* (tablet) on the dokhma, the doongerwadi consecrated on Din *roj* in the month of Tir, 1270 YZ (corresponding to January 6, 1902) was set up by the Mora-Uran Zarhosti Anjuman and, like the neighboring *sagdi* (small building near the tower, where the sacred fire is kept burning day and night), would be managed by it. According to a revenue receipt, the doongerwadi land situated in village Kegaon in Uran taluka stands in the name of "Parsi Colony E. D. Umrigar." To hazard a conclusion, the concerned Umrigars may be the same family who built the dadgah here, at the personal expenditure, the *takhti* informs us, of Rs 22,000.

Alas! The munificence of the Umrigars (Behramji Edulji, Pirojsha Cooverji and Pestonji Khurshedji are credited with the dadgah's construction in 1904) and their laudable aspirations were to come to a grinding halt within a few decades. Distilleries were declared illegal, and the exodus of the community to the sheltered isle across, left Uran an isolated outpost. "Today," Sui informs us with a listless air, "there are just around four Parsi families in Uran. And none of them visit the dadgah daily — or even occasionally."

For years now the dadgah has remained uncared for. The roof leaks; the paint has peeled away, and even the portrait of Zarathushtra is cracking. The Bhiwandiwalas who manage the Agiary's trust were, along with the Umrigars and the Barias, one of the most prosperous families in Uran having interests in distilleries and salt pans, amongst other businesses, in villages in the neighboring Raigad district. "Today we have no business, no running source of revenue," states Keki Dumasia, manager of the Bhiwandiwalas who, according to the present trustee and Bhiwandiwalas scion Dosabhai, has been with the family for three generations. One takes that with a pinch of Bhiwandiwalas salt, for Dumasia's gait and razor-sharp memory seem to belie his years, even if his experience and expertise don't.

Dumasia candidly concedes that not much is being done for the Agiary's up-

Uran dokhma: out of bounds

Gustasp Irani

On Daepdin *roj*, Ardibehesht *mah* (Thursday, October 14, 1993), which is the *salgreh* or birthday of the Uran Agiary, the quiet that broods over its verdant, overgrown compound was shattered. A State Transport (ST) busload of about 50 Zoroastrians from Bombay, primarily from the Dadar Parsi Colony, descended on the property to enjoy what might be termed a picnic-jashan. While the priests carried the prayer equipment into the Umrigar Agiary, the laity bore the food into the adjoining Umrigar Sanatorium.

Soon we were plotting our assault on the Uran dokhma located a few hundred yards away from the Agiary. We were a group of 12 (I had gone to photograph the Agiary), determined to visit it even though it fell within the restricted area occupied by the Indian Navy.

The two sentries at the entrance of the navy colony turned down our request to go further in. But we had come prepared. We brandished our *torans* (garlands), glass *divas* (oil lamps) and even pointed to our two accompanying priests in full ceremonial dress. Some of us thundered and protested that our religious and minority community rights were being infringed upon and violated. Others pleaded for sympathy and understanding: we were only going to pay our respects to our dead ancestors. "The dead will bless you if you let us go," said one.

Apparently he had hit the right button. A series of eight to 10 phone calls later, we were granted permission to enter — but on the strict understanding that no photographs were to be taken.

But our problems were not over. On the hill, beyond the navy colony where the dokhma was located, the path that led up to it was choked with vegetation and could not be traced. Undeterred, we started our assault on the hill, brushing aside branches and circling obstacles in our way. Thorns nipped at our flesh. One of our com-

panions started to itch and a red rash broke out on his neck.

At the entrance of the wall that encircled the dokhma property, a marble plaque informed us that the wall had been erected at a cost of Rs 3,500 in 1901 by Manekji Jeejeebhai Shroff in memory of Hormusji Khurshedji Dubash.

The vegetation within the wall was even more dense and most members of our party decided to wait here while four of the more adventurous kind pushed forward. And while we waited for them to return, we drank in the view of the sea below and the skyline of Bombay in the distance. Colorful butterflies fluttered around us and birds chirped from nearby trees. We were tempted to reach for our camera but were reminded that we had given our word as Zoroastrians not to take photographs, and so let the equipment remain untouched in the bag.

Finally, our quartet of adventurers emerged sans *torans* and *divas* which they had left behind for the dead. The environs were wonderful, they said. The dokhma walls were as strong as ever, not a breach to be seen, they added. The question that haunted us, however, was how much longer this dokhma would survive. As one member of the group observed, we were probably the first Zoroastrians in years to have paid our respects to our forefathers' resting place, and would probably be the last to do so.

Not if Merwan Irani, a member of the Uran dokhma expedition, can help it. Irani showed us a land tax receipt of the dokhma paid from his personal account. The problem is that he does not know what to do next; who to approach or how to go about retrieving the property on behalf of an indifferent community. According to him the land can be used for housing Parsis. "The elderly and retired should be persuaded to move here and leave their flats back in Bombay for their children," says Irani. His appears to be a lone voice shouting in the wilderness.

keep and maintenance. "To what avail would it be," he counter-questions, "when there is no one to benefit from it?" It is a commonly held line of argument. A similar observation was made by Noshir Sidhwa, one of the five administering trustees of the Agiary (the others, besides Dosabhai Bhiwandiwalla, being Rusi M. Sethna, F. R. Sarkari and Burjor S. Sidhwa). Such a response from Sidhwa (a director of Grindwell-Norton, whose plant sprawls on both sides of the road leading from the jetty to the Agiary) was rather surprising, considering his association with Uran. On the other hand, "What is made, is to be preserved," asserts Merwan Irani, whose zeal for preserving Parsi properties had led to the establishment of the Council for Protection of Zoroastrian Charities which had intervened against the sale of the Tithal Sanatorium property in 1987. Irani is a regular visitor to Uran's Agiary and a few years ago had its roof of Manglorean tiles repaired.

Sui acknowledges Irani's assistance to the Agiary with gratitude. He leads us up the spiral iron staircase to its terrace, and shows the brick tiles laid by builder Aspi Irani, some six years ago at Merwan Irani's instance. Now, even these have started breaking. Sui points out the different areas where they have chipped or given way, partly due to the inclement weather, and partly due to the stones, etc pelted by hostile neighbors. We, too, were greeted with similar missiles on entering the Agiary's compound, though at first we rather generously attributed the barrage to monkeys.

But, like the deceptive calm on the Mora waterfront (the harbor was said to be the landing point and storage center for many bundles of RDX that Bombay was blasted with), there appear to be sinister designs on the land as well. This is because large areas of land owned by the community are lying fallow — easy pickings for a take-over. The more than two acres of doongerwadi land could be lost if no action is taken. (And no action seems to be taken, as the Trust does not even acknowledge its existence, or possible development, the property not being under their administration.)

A large plot of land standing right next to the Agiary, and belonging to one Minoo K. Sethna, who has since settled in the States with his two sons, is under dispute: a Radhabai Parkar has claimed it on grounds of being a tiller of the soil when her husband, a long-time caretaker

of the Sethnas, expired. Merwan Irani, who claims to have the power of attorney invested in him by Minoo Sethna before his migration, contests the claim as he strives relentlessly to wrest back the disputed plot and offer it, with Sethna's consent, to a builder with the purpose of putting up apartments here for the community.

If Irani, who chanced upon the dadgah due to his involvement with the Sethna property, could have his way, he would alter the Zoroastrian face of Uran. With its easy proximity and access to Bombay (just an hour's journey by motor launch,



Uran Agiary: managing to keep the fire ablaze
Photo: Gustasp Irani

which ply all through the year barring the monsoon months), its re-emergence on the commercial map of the country with the setting-up of Jawaharlal Nehru Port at neighboring Nhava-Sheva, and with the ONGC project at Dronagiri, Uran could be the panacea, Irani believes, for the community's housing problem. Job opportunities in the port and the ancillary industries may not attract the young, but Uran could at least, argues Irani, house the community's elders who could settle by the seaside and give their youngsters more living space within the city across. Such housing would also provide succor for the Agiary, which could become self-reliant and once again a bustling commu-

nity centre. The scheme itself would provide enough incentive for the trustees to spend on it, putting an end to their present reasons for inertia.

How much, in any case, would the trust spend on the Agiary is the moot question. The trust funds, as Dumasia shows us the audited figures, are pretty low and yielded only Rs 15,420 as interest for the currently concluded year. From this amount the trust has to settle land taxes, pay government dues and, to keep the fire burning, buy kathi. According to Farrokh and Hoshang Govadia, who along with their youngest brother Mehernosh manage the century-old H. Sidhwa and Son and supply firewood to all the fire-temples in and around Bombay, the dadgah at Uran requires about five tonnes of kathi per annum. The bawal wood (kind of firewood) used to keep the fire going for a longer time, and hence supplied mainly to Agiaries, costs today Rs 2 per kg. Hence the Uran dadgah's bill would average Rs 10,000 per annum — practically two-thirds of the trust's revenue.

Sui claims that he purchases some of the kathi required for the Agiary himself from his resources which (at Rs 120 per month from the trust) are meagre enough to require him to supplement the income by giving tuitions. But he says it with sincerity, and an abiding sense of duty towards the padshah (holy fire) who, bereft of visitors even on weekends from neighbouring Bombay, is deprived of fragrant sandalwood. We see large blocks of kathi lying around the Agiary's steps. "I brought them in a tempo from Bombay at my own expense," declares Sui, fishing out a bill for the kathi and its transportation charge.

Irani, too, has given his mite, and made his co-religionists and colleagues at the Iranian Zoroastrian Anjuman contribute frequently. The Govadias, who claim to personally contribute to needy agiaries, have occasionally chipped in too. And they recall with a chuckle how, some years ago, when the Hindu munimji of Ardeshir Bhiwandiwalla (father of Dosabhai, the present trustee) came to buy and cart away the kathi, he would insist on the Govadias making their own contribution too.

"But," states Farrokh Govadia "with the escalating costs, sooner or later it will be the panthaky's responsibility to see that the fire is fed with ample kathi." And he cites the names of several agiaries in Bombay, whose panthakies

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have raised their own resources from obliging behdins (laity) to meet the kathi costs which for some years have not been borne by the trustees.

Sui has been treading a similar path. He requests the occasional caller to contribute kathi to the Agiary. Dr Nariman B. Mistry, a visitor from America, was similarly approached. Not only did he comply, but further entreated the community through *Parsiana* (Readers' Forum, March 1993) to contribute likewise. The trustees, according to Dumasia, do not seek financial contributions for the Agiary either, for even a generous donation can yield only a few thousands as interest, which can be expended. The donation of kathi, on the other hand, would keep the ancient fire aglow, and provide for alternative utilization of the trust's finances.

Yet, will Sui's attempts to gather more funds and kathi for the Agiary serve only to endanger his own existence? For Sui is not a mobed: he is not even a paramobed. Sui took charge of tending the dadgah when the trust-appointed mobed/panthaky, a certain Rusi Fatakia, ran away one fine morning after bolting the Agiary from the outside. Sui

The exodus of the community to the sheltered isle across, left Uran an isolated outpost

is not even, as per the trust's records, a manager of the Sanatorium. On the demise of his father, the trust generously continued to let his widow stay on at Mora, and manage the Sanatorium. The monthly payments for this service are sent in her name and Sui, for all practical purposes, is persona non grata as far as the trustees are concerned.

"He has other interests in Uran, which is why he stays on there," states Dumasia, implying that the trust turns a Nelson's eye to Sui's activities and to his occupation of a large portion of the quarters. Sui has a different tale to tell. "No Parsi girl wants to come and settle here," he states wryly, his dreamy eyes gazing at the horizon. But whether Sui, offered the opportunity, would leave Uran, is de-

batable. "I would like the trust to re-settle the fire elsewhere in Bombay where it can be looked after properly, but allow me and my family (now comprising of mother, a young wife and a child of few months) to stay on here, as a reward for our years of unflinching devotion and service."

Sui's existence in Uran, like Golding's fictitious Ralph's on the island, is closely related to the fire. Ralph had set up a fire on the uninhabited island to attract a passing ship to rescue them. Yet, towards the end when Ralph is isolated, and efforts are made to smoke him out by setting fire to the entire island, it is ironically this cloud of smoke that attracts a cruiser.

Sui may be facing a dilemma similar to Ralph's. His attempts — and those of Irani — to make Uran's fire self-reliant, may lead to the building of an atash kadeh which would require the services of a full-time mobed, and not just a fire-tender. Will his efforts to make the fire burn brighter, only smoke Sui out? Or, will Sui ride on the crest of the bay's waves and rescue not just himself, but the community as well when a decade from now the dadgah celebrates its centenary?

JRD: THE LAST RITES...

continued from page 21

but spiritually I don't want to be involved in new karma," he explained, relating how he had been so advised earlier in life by the late Dastur Khurshed Dabu of the H. B. Wadia Atash Bahram.

Peer recounts his meeting with the Tata trustees at an interview with *Parsiana*: "On December 9, Ratan Tata called me. He is a thorough gentleman, noble soul. He said, 'We all trustees have unanimously decided that now we shall part...We differ from your views.' I said, 'These are not my personal views. This is what is said in the scriptures.' He said, 'But the scriptures are interpreted differently.' I said, 'We have made our own translation. We are MA, PhD in Avesta-Pahlavi.'"

The Petit notice dated December 17 and hand delivered on the 20th contains no reason for the termination of service, he notes.

Peer spells out his credo: "Trust in God and do the right," and says his immense faith has been justified.

The Tata connection became tenuous when Naval Tata's brother Shavak died and Naval's non-Parsi wife Simone sat

in as a mourner on the verandah of the Hodiwalla Bungli. "*Tan thi thoru be ravan tau dekhai* (The dead body is partly visible from there)," claims Peer who was the only person there to request the lady to shift to the pavilion where non-Parsis normally sit during funeral ceremonies. According to the community grapevine it was then that Naval who was suffering from cancer decided to opt for cremation to avoid embarrassing those around him.

According to *The ADC* article Peer had declined to perform the ceremonies for Naval but the priest's letter in the *Jam-e-Jamshed* (December 12) notes, "It is unfortunate that the statement is incorrect and far from the truth. In reality, on the sad demise of Mr Naval Tata who was the respected managing trustee of the N. R. Tata Agiary I was neither approached by members of the Tata family nor the Agiary trust to perform the four day ceremonies for Mr Naval Tata... My statement was absolutely general that any Parsi Zoroastrian who wants to be cremated (where the dokhma exists) does not qualify for Zoroastrian rites for four days."

Though the two priests, in their state-

ments, conceded the lofty stature of JRD as an individual, their stand roused much community ire: "Everyone of us stands defamed by the implication that in acknowledging the legality of mixed marriages one is condoning adultery and by doing so is himself immoral," writes Ms Feroza Seervai in *The Samachar* of January 2, 1994. Another pointedly questioned if they would be amenable to perform the ceremonies for a full-blooded but adulterous Parsi Zoroastrian.

In their articles in support of the priests, orthodox lobbyists like Noshir Dadrawala and Faribourz Nariman harped on JRD's acknowledged distaste for rituals and organized religion: "Would he have approved of this uthamna?" they ask.

The uthamna may not have been necessary for "the progress of his soul;" neither were the accolades when alive or dead. But one can imagine him receiving it with grace as he did the other at Cusrow Baug in 1992 when he was felicitated for the Bharat Ratna award: "From the bottom of my heart...thank you for honoring me; thank you for liking me...I am proud of being born a Parsi."

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Annual get-togethers of Zoroastrian youth necessitate "months of effort and tons of money in order to make the show a success... To ensure that the expectations of the majority of the participants are fulfilled to the maximum extent possible" the Federation of Zoroastrian Youth Associations (FOZYA) sought to determine the pulse of the delegates. To obtain "candid views," a questionnaire was circulated to 600 delegates who had attended one or more of the six all-India meets organized in the past, writes then FOZYA president Jehangir Bisney who tabulated the 93 responses that came in from different corners of India.

That the respondents were candid can be gleaned from some of the answers: "The first festival (for me) was very nice (Calcutta). Everything was new and refreshing. The second one (Poona) was an eye-opener. It made me realize I was never going to another one again!" "Once a topic started there was no end!" "Topics are often boring and involve a one-sided conversation." These remarks were elicited by the question "If any of your expectations have not been fulfilled at all or were only partially fulfilled, please indicate why this happened and what you or others could have done to ensure fulfilment of your expectations to a greater extent."

The most popular reason cited for attending youth meets was "to make friends from other locations" as admitted 51 percent of the youngsters. Eleven percent noted that they were chiefly motivated to go to enjoy the company of members of their own group while for 10 percent it was "to have fun." "The fact that 51 percent come to make new friends and 21 percent come for a picnic, shouldn't the future annual get-togethers be made just festivals and not seminars?" enquired Bisney.

A common refrain voiced at youth get-togethers is that "we have no opportunity to air our views." Yet only four percent indicated that expression of their views was a priority with them at such

Signals for seminars

Camaraderie
seems to be
the main reason that
draws Zoroastrian youth
to the all-India
Zoroastrian
meets organized
annually

forums. However, when specifically asked whether they would participate at group discussions during workshop sessions, 93 percent indicated they would like to express their views, 32 percent offered to act as a moderator, 14 percent as a keynote speaker. Eighteen percent said they would only like to listen.

At briefing sessions, the majority, 77 percent, preferred to ask questions to panel speakers, 37 percent said they would only listen, 26 percent were willing to be moderators and only 14 percent undertook to be panel speakers. Three percent admitted they would rather remain absent from such sessions. Noted Bisney, "(This) shows a greater need for organizing workshops rather than briefing sessions. Only 14 percent wish to be keynote speakers... Does this indicate shyness or unwillingness to put in the work required?"

When asked whether they would like to speak on "Youth and their activities in

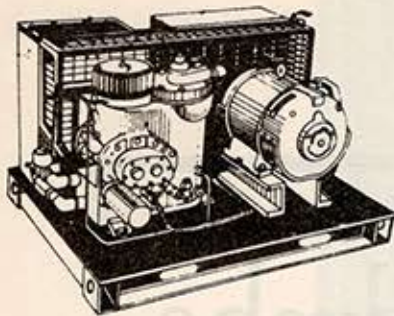
their own location," 48 percent were ready, while 44 percent declined. Many may not be keen to speak themselves but when asked to suggest speakers and topics for discussion, they were willing. The subjects ranged from religion to careers to social issues; and the speakers were mainly those they had heard at earlier youth seminars.

Though 71 percent of the youth who responded to this questionnaire were below 25 years, only 16 percent wanted to hear the voice of their own age-group. The majority, 44 percent wanted speakers from the 25-40 group, 14 percent from the 41 to 50 group, and, yes, 14 percent even wanted to listen to speakers aged 50 and above.

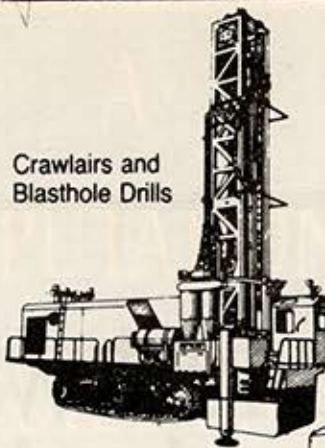
As versus the lavish meals spread out on such occasions, 85 percent indicated they would like "simple homely food." Further saving in costs for the organizers would also be possible if the participants were made to contribute towards their five days' stay: 81 percent offered to pay between Rs 200-500 for the meals provided. Further, 82 percent offered to help collect

funds to defray the costs of the seminar. The financial commitments ranged from Rs 500 to over Rs 2,000.

"Try as hard as they may, it is virtually impossible for the organizers to satisfy the varying expectations of the delegates," observes Bisney. "For many, it is literally a holiday at the expense of the hosts and for the serious few it is normally a case of returning home with mixed feelings," he adds. "As one who has attended all the six annual get-togethers (among the respondents there were 29, 13, 11 and two youths who had attended two, three, four and five meets respectively)" he recommends "that in spite of all (their) shortcomings these annual get-togethers must continue... The reason is simple. For even if a few benefit, even if a few matches are made, even if a few men are separated from the boys to (become) leaders of the future, it is a big achievement for a small community like ours."

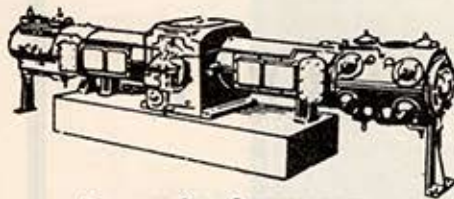


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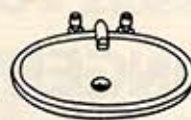


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 22-25 yrs: 25%
 26-30 yrs: 9%
 31-35 yrs: 10%
 Above 35 yrs: 5%
 No mention of age: 5%

Did you attend the annual get-togethers at Delhi, Calcutta, Pune, Secunderabad and Hyderabad, Nagpur, Ahmedabad?
 Not attended any: 3%
 Attended one: 37%
 Attended two: 31%
 Attended three: 14%
 Attended four: 12%
 Attended five: 2%
 Attended six: None

Please indicate through letters, A, B, C, D, E, F your order of preference. If you have not attended any of the annual get-togethers, but would like to attend in future, you should still answer this question. You attended/you would like to attend in future:
 To enjoy the company of members of your own group:
 A: 11%; B: 14%; C: 15%; D: 19%; E: 19%; F: 8%; No reply: 14%
 To make new friends from other locations:
 A: 51%; B: 18%; C: 12%; D: 10%; E: 1%; F: Nil; No reply: 8%
 To have fun:
 A: 10%; B: 14%; C: 27%; D: 15%; E: 20%; F: 3%; No reply: 11%
 To be admired and appreciated:
 A: 1%; B: 8%; C: 10%; D: 10%; E: 11%; F: 47%; No reply: 13%
 To know more about the topics covered:
 A: 32%; B: 25%; C: 12%; D: 12%; E: 11%; F: 1%; No reply: 7%
 To express your own views on them:
 A: 4%; B: 19%; C: 23%; D: 16%; E: 15%; F: 15%; No reply: 8%

The age-group of participants is generally 16 to 40 but most of the participants are in the 18 to 25 age-group.
 Would you like this to continue?
 Yes: 73%; No: 17%; No reply: 10%

Please indicate through alphabets A, B, C, D, E your order of preference.
 Age-group of speakers should be:
 50+ years
 A: 14%; B: 12%; C: 12%; D: 15%; E: 27%; No reply: 20%
 41-50 years
 A: 19%; B: 18%; C: 18%; D: 18%; E:

8%; No reply: 19%
 31-40 years
 A: 22%; B: 26%; C: 25%; D: 8%; E: 3%;
 No reply: 16%
 25-30 years
 A: 22%; B: 18%; C: 18%; D: 24%; E: 2%; No reply: 16%
 18-24 years
 A: 16%; B: 16%; C: 10%; D: 10%; E: 31%; No reply: 17%

In briefing sessions would you like to:
 Be a panel speaker
 Yes: 14%; No: 65%; No reply: 21%
 Act as a moderator
 Yes: 26%; No: 54%; No reply: 20%
 Ask questions to panel speakers
 Yes: 77%; No: 15%; No reply: 8%
 Only listen
 Yes: 37%; No: 47%; No reply: 16%
 Remain absent
 Yes: 3%; No: 73%; No reply: 24%

In group discussions during workshop sessions would you like to:
 Be a keynote speaker
 Yes: 14%; No: 58%; No reply: 28%
 Act as a moderator
 Yes: 32%; No: 45%; No reply: 23%
 Express your views
 Yes: 93%; No: 1%; No reply: 6%
 Only listen
 Yes: 18%; No: 62%; No reply: 20%
 Remain absent
 Yes: Nil; No: 76%; No reply: 24%

Would you like to speak on the topic of "Youth and their activities in your own location?"
 Yes: 48%; No: 44%; No reply: 8%

What kind of meals would you like at these get-togethers?
 Lavish: 11%; Simple homely food: 85%;
 No reply: 4%

How much would you like to contribute from your own pocket for meals to be provided by the organizers for approximately five days of the get-together?
 Nil: 5%; Rs 100: 10%; Rs 200: 23%; Rs 300: 29%; Rs 400: 20%; Rs 500 and above: 9%; No reply: 4%

Would you be able to collect advertisements, donations, raffle tickets, etc from your location to help defray the cost of the seminar up to a value of:
 Rs 500: 34%; Rs 1,000: 24%; Rs 2,000: 10%; More than Rs 2,000: 14%; No reply: 18%

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Echoes of an event

Homi Rogers

As part of the centenary celebrations of the Parliament of World Religions, members of different faiths met on a common platform at Bombay's K. R. Cama Oriental Institute



Exactly a 100 years ago on August 29, a conference was inaugurated in Chicago as part of a world exhibition aimed to bring about a "real fraternity of nations, and unite the enlightened people of the whole earth in general cooperation for the attainment of the great ends for which humanity is organized." The Parliament of World Religions was well received, and was by far the most popular of the congresses held at the exposition. It was well attended by audiences of over 4,000 per session, as 400 persons repre-

sented 41 denominations and religious traditions spoke about their faiths.

The ovation accorded to Swami Vivekananda for his talk on the universality of all religions is too well-known to bear repetition. But a lesser known fact is that Sir Jivanji Jamshedji Modi, author of *The Religious Ceremonies and Customs of the Parsees* and spiritual heir to the Zoroastrian scholar and savant Khurshedji R. Cama, submitted a paper which was read and well received at the same international congress.

It is hence fitting that Chicago's grand centenary celebrations of the momentous event were echoed in the K. R. Cama Oriental Institute's (KRCOI) Sir Jivanji Modi Hall, Bombay. The KRCOI was

aided by the Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP) and the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan in its noble purpose — to "help create a new understanding and approach, which would lead to long-term peace and harmony, goodwill and brotherhood amongst mankind" — as also by the India Iran Cultural Society, the Bombay Parsi Association, the Rahnumae Mazdyasnan Sabha and the Youths' Own Union.

Such a full-throated Zoroastrian support to an event which otherwise would have gone unnoticed in the premier metropolis of India, drew C. N. Sanghavi, founder president of the Jain Social Groups' Federation, to commend the Parsi organizers for calling this meeting. Sanghavi's sentiment was shared and expressed by almost all the learned speakers. "An echo," as Bombay Parsi Association president Vispi Dastur described it, "of the small echo of the Parliament being held once again at Chicago to commemorate the centenary event."

The Parsi presence was not restricted to the sponsorship of the event, but was evident both on the dais and in the audience. The three-hour session started at 10 a.m. with a taped recitation of prayers of seven religions. The Zoroastrian prayers selected for the tape were the *Ahunavar* (*Yatha Ahu Vairyo*) and *Ashem Vohu*. They were sonorously conducted by retired Justice Dinshaw N. Mehta, a trustee of the KRCOI. An invocation followed by a silent meditation were presided over by Dastur (Dr) Hormazdyar K. Mirza of Udvada. Dastur delivered the welcome address in the absence of KRCOI president Jehangir Shroff who was ill.

Jamshed Guzder, chairman of the BPP, started off the speeches by recapitulating the history of the 1893 conference at Chicago where the "basic principles of 41 religions were enunciated," and prayed that at meets like these "a spirit of love and brotherhood was fostered." Guzder, according to Mehta, was invited to attend at the centenary celebrations in Chicago, but preferred to sacrifice his seat there in favor of a Parsi priest to whom he extended all assistance for attending the global event.

The theme of the meet in Bombay was the unifying doctrines of all religions. In short speeches an impressive

Representatives of different faiths assembled at Bombay to mark the centenary celebrations of the Parliament of World Religions Photo: Spectravision

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number of speakers emphasized the fact that though all religions are not the same, they share fundamental beliefs and norms. The meeting served to reinforce one's faith, and worked towards a declaration that mankind can live together despite professing different beliefs.

Among the learned speakers on this occasion were former St Xavier's College principal Fr John Correia-Afonso, who spoke on Christianity's love of mankind and the humanitarian approach, well-known through the much repeated adage of "love thy neighbor as thyself," observed by today's generation in the actions of Mother Teresa.

Speaking on 'Jainism and Anekantwad' Sanghavi enlightened the gathering on the Jain way of life which rules out dogmatism and fanaticism in favor of a broad mind, liberal outlook and reconciliation of conflicts. "If adopted as a universal law, this attitude would lead to a life of peace in the 21st century," asserted Sanghavi.

The teachings of other religions, and how they are tailored to spread goodwill and love for all, were similarly enunciated. Sam Levi, consultant to the Austrian Trade Commissioner in India for western region, spoke on the Jewish approach to universal harmony and peace. Prof S. A. Upadhyaya, director of the Bhavan's postgraduate and research department, dwelt in some detail on the teachings in Hindu scriptures which commend the fight against evil and the promotion of righteous actions. Ahmed Zakaria, founder chairman of the Islamic Cultural

Fight against ignorance and disease to make for a stronger and better society

Centre and author of the faith's rejoinder to Salman Rushdie's *Satanic Verses*, discoursed on the Islamic approach to brotherhood, understanding and peace. Prof S. D. Pawar, vice principal of Siddharth College, interpreted Lord Buddha's teachings on love towards all living creatures. Sardar Balwant Singh laid before the audience the teachings of the 10 Sikh gurus — Sikhism being a religion founded to bring about amity and brotherhood amongst the two main communities residing in northern India.

The last speaker, representing the 'host' religion, Mirza made a short and precise presentation on how the Zoroastrian theology of good thoughts, good words, good deeds promotes righteousness and ameliorates the lot of suffering humanity. Mirza, a professor of Avesta-Pahlavi, spoke of the three-fold duty of man: his duty to God, whose blessings he enjoys; his duty to himself, which may be fulfilled by the discipline of keeping his body healthy and strong; and his duty to society, as all of God's creatures are interdependent and cannot live without one another. Mirza gave a clarion call to the

gathering to fight against ignorance and disease which are evil and which have to be dispelled to make for a stronger and better society.

Mirza's statements and exposition of the Zoroastrian faith echoed a very evocative keynote address delivered by the Hon'ble Sheriff of Bombay, F. T. Khorakiwala, at the beginning of the session. Khorakiwala, who championed the cause of peace and brotherhood, and was able to provide Bombay citizens the required vision at a time when the city was being racked by communal forces, had made a similar observation in his address when he asked people to be knowledgeable. "Do not be a prey to disinformation," he beseeched, maintaining that better understanding could only be achieved if we know the fundamentals of all religions. "We should include the best thoughts of every religion in our children's textbooks," he added.

Former governor of West Bengal A. L. Dias, as chief guest of the conference, panned the leaders for the present state of affairs. "Violence has pitted man against man, religion against religion, and there is a visible lack of leadership."

A century separated the morning's proceedings from that historic meet in Chicago. If in the intervening 100 years mankind has forgotten what Vivekananda and other learned speakers had expounded, the session served to revitalize and rekindle the values of humanity. It was an achievement that the KRCCI can justifiably be proud of, and look back on with satisfaction.

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Z.C. CONVOCATION CEREMONY OCT. 1989, KARACHI; AVARI TOWERS ORGANISED BY MR. BYRAM DINSHAWJI AVARI, M.N.A. FOR THE ZOROASTRIAN COMMUNITY. THE DEGREE CONFERRED ON PRIME MINISTER BENAZIR BHUTTO BY DR. MEHER MASTER-MOOS ON BEHALF OF O.I.U.C.M./Z.C.

Zoroastrians living in the settlement of India during the era of the British Raj would recall that the old BOMBAY PRESIDENCY area encompassed what is today parts of Pakistan, including Karachi, and the Colleges in Karachi issued Degrees of the University of Bombay. Several thousands of Parsis & Irani Zoroastrians, having their family and relatives in Bombay, and other cities on the West Coast of India, including Navsari, Surat, Udvada, Poona, etc. were suddenly cut off from the mainstream of the Parsi Community about 45 years ago at the time of Indian Independence. Those living in Karachi, Lahore, Quetta, all cities having Fire Temples facilities, continued to fan the flames of faith and clung to the Zoroastrian religion. In this work ERVAD GODREJ SIDHWA played a key role, teaching Zoroastrian Religion to the Parsi children at both the Parsi Schools, the Mama Girls School and B.V.S. Boys School - Karachi. In this he received the wholehearted support of the Parsi community, the Karachi Zoroastrian Youth Association Late Mr & Mrs DINSHAW & KHORSHEDBANOO AVARI and their family members, Mr & Mrs FAREDOON & GOOLCHER DADACHANJI; Late Mr. TEHMURAS R. SETHNA and others. Numbering in 1980's at about over 4000, the Karachi Parsi Community being homogeneous and united, was far better preserved as a community group than any others of the Parsi Settlements in India. In 1950's Late Mr. JEHANGIR S. CHINIWALLA was invited to give a series of lectures in Karachi, and after that an embargo was clamped on visits of Scholars from India. It was not until January 1980, almost after a quarter of a century, that the Parsis of Karachi, starved of religious scholarly contact with Bombay, were able to resume watering their spiritual roots once more. Late Mr. DINSHAW B. AVARI, the founder of the Beach Luxury and Avani Towers Hotels in Karachi invited Zoroastrian College President Dr. MEHER MASTER MOOS to deliver a series of 13 Lectures under various organisations auspices

in Karachi; and the response was overwhelming with the great hall in Jamshed Baug overflowing to over a thousand audience seating capacity. The Zoroastrian Community in Karachi is amongst the best preserved of all in the World. The Leading Parsi hoteliers were Late Mr CYRUS MINWALLA and Late Mr. DINSHAW B. AVARI. Their families continue their Social Service work.

In 1989, Dr MEHER MASTER MOOS was thrice invited to give a series of Lectures in Karachi, April 1989; Lahore in May 1989; and in October 1989 for a Zoroastrian College Convocation a grand function Organised by Mr. & Mrs Byram & Gospi Avari for conferring the Degree of Doctor of Science Honoris Causa on Madame BENAZIR BHUTTO on her achievement on being elected the first lady Prime Minister of any country in the Muslim World. It was a glorious felicitation function from the Parsee Community to honour her, arranged entirely thanks to the goodness and generosity of Mr. Byram Dinshaw Avari, then Member of the Pakistan National Assembly at the AVARI TOWERS HOTEL in the presence of a glittering assembly of Members of the Sindh Assembly, Judges, Ministers, Consuls of many Countries and his beloved Karachi Parsi Community. Zoroastrian College through its President & Governing Body expresses its sincere appreciation for all the wonderful warmth support and friendship and thanks all the Zoroastrians of Pakistan for all their steadfast help with the construction of the Zoroastrian Building at Sanjan and their generous help for a hall in memory of LATE JAMSHED NUSSEERWANJEE MEHTA.

Zoroastrians of Karachi and Lahore had played a pivotal role in the educational programmes of Zoroastrian College. The eminent distinguished persons who specially deserve to be thanked are ERVAD GODREJ & MRS. DINAMAI SIDHWA, Mr & Mrs. FAREDOON & GOOLCHER DADACHANJI, Justice RUSTOM & Mrs. ROSHAN SIDHWA, Late Mr.

TEHMURAS R. SETHNA; Mr. VISPI MEHTA and Mrs. ARNAVZ DINSHAW. ERVAD GODREJ SIDHWA of Karachi was destined in December 1986 to deliver the first lecture of the first "monthly lectures course" when Zoroastrian College opened its doors in December 1986, in the hall of the SOUND TRAVEL CORPORATION Office at Nariman Point, Bombay. ZOROASTRIAN COLLEGE expresses its thanks to Rtn. Dr. KHUBOO AND Rtn. MANOJ GURSAHANI, themselves staunch followers of Sufi Saints of Northern parts of Pakistan, for all their generous and steadfast support for the educational work of Zoroastrian College. ERVAD GODREJ SIDHWA'S book "Discourses on Zoroastrian Religion" is useful as a basic teaching text for Navjote aged children. It has become a favourite in India, and is now available only in xerox bond copy format from Zoroastrian College Office; together with Late Mr. TEHMURAS R. SETHNA'S book on "Instructions in Zoroastrian Religion". The 2 books form an indispensable set for all parents faced with the task of teaching Zoroastrian Religion to children at home. The yeoman service rendered by the Late TEHMURAS R. SETHNA in transliterating and translating into English all the basic Zoroastrian Religious texts of Khordeh Avesta, Yashts, Yasna, Gathas, Vendidad from the Scholarly Gujarati Texts of Late ERVAD KAVASJI KANGA, has made this set of books the daily use prayer books in many Parsi English speaking homes world wide. These books, together with Mr. FAREDOON DADACHANJI'S Classic "PARSIS ANCIENT & MODERN" which is now in its 3rd ed are all available in xerox binding format from Zoroastrian College Office.

The Lahore Parsees, under the able stewardship of Justice RUSTOM SIDHWA of the Supreme Court of Pakistan, ERVAD RUSTOMJI PAVRI and Mrs TEHMINA BHANDARI have also given great support to the Zoroastrian College building construction work and through ERVAD RUSTOM PAVRI, Zoroastrian Religious Discourses with ILM - E - KSHNOOM content are conducted at the Lahore Agiary. Zoroastrian College also expresses its grateful thanks to Late Mrs. MEHER JAMSHED PATEL and Mrs. NERGISH GIARA Mrs. ROSHAN and Mrs. FRENA N. BILLIMORIA, Mrs. PERIN S. DINSHAW and all other friends and well wishers amongst the Parsis of Pakistan for all their kind support over the years.

OTHER ZOROASTRIAN CENTRES IN ASIA
In MALAYSIA through Dr. PUNAMCHAND RATHI and Dr. LIEW Zoroastrian College has affiliated a Centre with its ALTERNATIVA MEDICINE Dept. for teaching Magneto Therapy and Herbal Medicines. Over a dozen Malaysian Doctors qualified with the Zoroastrian College Diploma Course in these subjects during 1992/93. In KOREA The SU JOK INTERNATIONAL ACADEMY of Dr. PARK JAEWU has established collaboration with Zoroastrian College for training persons in the SU JOK ACUPRESSURE/ACUPUNCTURE methods for Diploma Courses.

In TAJIKISTAN in Central Asia The TAJIK TECHNOLOGY UNIVERSITY in DUSHANBE/KHUJAND has established a special department for Avesta and Zoroastrian Religious Studies for the students to take Zoroastrian College DIPLOMA & DEGREE Courses and translate the Scriptural books into Persian & Russian.

In KRASNODAR, RUSSIA The HERBAL NATURE CURE UNIVERSITY has established collaboration with Zoroastrian College ALTERNATIVA MEDICINE DEPT. for exchange of information of students/professors.

If you are interested in supporting ZOROASTRIAN COLLEGE BUILDING CONSTRUCTION/pursuing a DIPLOMA/DEGREE COURSE by RESEARCH or Books on Zoroastrian Religion & Health - please contact ZOROASTRIAN COLLEGE PRESIDENT at Mustafa Building address.

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Instrumental to Indus Creed

The Indus Creed group with whom Zubin Balaporia performs won the 1993 American MTV award for the Best Asian Video

Gustasp Irani



The music hit us with physical force. The drums and electric guitars seemed to pound their rhythm against our chest, the keyboards wailed and the singer belted out song after song with all the vigor and ferocity he could muster.

This live performance two years ago at Bombay's Rang Bhavan was a trifle too rich for our middle-aged ears as we floundered in a sea of wildly screaming fans. On stage Rock Machine, India's leading rock band, now renamed Indus Creed, punched out melodies in a frenzy; the long flowing locks of the musicians swung wild in the dazzle of spotlights to keep pace with their swaying bodies. Sweat streamed down their faces and drenched their garments. On the electronic keyboards or synthesizer Zubin Balaporia, the only Parsi member of the group, pounded the ivories with savage dexterity. Modern music, we realized as we watched and listened, was more than a matter of harmony, it was a physically taxing exercise.

Let me stop the tape here. Then, fast forward it through the years. We now encounter the lanky 27-year-old Balaporia during the quiet of the day in his Bombay apartment on Warden Road and discover that his rebel image has been neatly wrapped up and tucked away along with his keyboards. The Balaporia we meet here is an amicable family man, married to Tanveer and looking forward to the birth of their first child. Thrice a week he relaxes with a good game of football at the Priyadarshini Park.

But in many ways it is to the non-conformist world of music that Balaporia

conforms. "I'm comfortable with my hair," he says as he gathers his flowing locks behind his head in both hands. "You don't expect a banker to go to office in casual clothes. You don't expect a musician to perform in a suit," he adds. And music, he informs us, is not just an indulgence with him: it is his full-time occupation.

The group, Balaporia informs us, has released two records: *Rock-n-Roll Renegade* and *The Second Coming* and are currently working on their third. Over 80 percent of the music they play at live performances is original. Two of their videos were aired on MTV and the second, *Pretty Child*, won the 1993 American MTV award for the Best Asian Video.

"We are not into statement music. Our songs don't have deep messages like saving the planet or the rain forests. Our songs are fun tunes that people can relate to," says Balaporia. Of course the song *Die For Your Country*, he explains, is a little different. The piece was inspired during their visit to Kohima in Nagaland where they had performed live and later visited a graveyard lined with tombstones in memory of Indian, British and Japanese soldiers who had died there during World War II. "It seemed so pointless. Young men dying for what? You realise the absurdity of war when you read messages on tombstones like: 'Here lies so and so who never got to see his unborn child.'"

Back home, like in any other job, the six-members of the group go through their paces and practise between 4 p.m. and 8.30 p.m. each day, Sundays ex-

cluded. An occupational hazard of the profession is that there is no permanency in the location where they rehearse. "We are constantly moving from one place to the next as we are constantly being thrown out. Our music is way too loud," says Balaporia.

But their audience cannot seem to get enough of it. Cries of 'encore' followed them as they toured the country from Bombay to Madras, Calcutta, Bangalore (a very receptive audience), Pune, Goa and even the far-flung north-eastern states of Assam, Meghalaya, Manipur and Nagaland. Abroad, they have entertained audiences in the UK, Europe, the Middle East and the former Soviet Union. "There is a certain energy about a live performance: the lights, the volume, the atmosphere... The beauty of it is that you can't duplicate the excitement of it at home," says Balaporia.

Then along came MTV and added a new dimension to music. With the aid of visuals, rock stars gatecrashed into the living rooms of millions of families across Asia. "MTV has changed the business of music for all of us. At one time the only way you could promote your record was by giving live performances. Now our videos are aired in 30 countries all over Asia and if good, they are shown as often as five times a day," says Balaporia. The video *Top of the Rock* was ranked by Asian viewers as 17th on the Asian Top 20 charts and 33rd among the top 100 videos released worldwide in 1992. Ranking ninth in the latter group in 1993, *Pretty Child* also won the MTV Asian Viewers' Choice Award.

Though it merited just a fleeting moment on the worldwide telecast of the award ceremony, Balaporia and his colleagues are not complaining. "It was an American show and even the European award winners were not called on stage," he explains. And only two members of the group, the singer and lead guitarist attended the function, and, that too only because an airline gave them three complimentary tickets. Three tickets? Yes. The third was used by their newly acquired British manager Russel Mason, based in the Middle East.

With Mason taking over the headaches of the commercial side of music, the future of the group looks even more promising. But first he insisted they change their name if they hoped to make it big in the West. "Rock Machine is too naive," Mason said, and the musicians agreed. They did not like the name either, but had got stuck with it from their college days and did not know how to shake themselves free of it. But finding a new name had its own problems. "We fought over it for three months," says Balaporia. As equal members they all had one vote each. And being temperamental musicians, the baptism proved to be quite a problem.

"In fact it's been quite an achievement that we have held together for so long. Most other music groups disintegrate," says Balaporia, giving us an insight into the functioning of individuals within a unit. In such a situation, something unusual had to happen to resolve the name game. Someone suggested 'Indiscreet' and the six tore the word apart into 'Indus Creed.' "It's Indian, it's catchy, it's different and we all liked it," says Balaporia.

The bonding of the group goes deeper. It started in 1985 when young college kids from H. R. College and Jai Hind College (from where Balaporia graduated) banded together and started out on their journey down melody lane. As they soon became the best group around, other performers, notably singer Gary Lawyer, would request them to provide backup accompaniment at their performances. "It reached a stage when it became Gary Lawyer and the Rock Machine, which was quite unfair to our lead singer. So we sat down and worked out

our identity and destiny and made a conscious decision not to perform with any other singer."

The words from their song *Top of the Rock* sums up the group: "They started out like any other hard rocking band. Together we're gonna conquer every corner of this land." And rock the land they did with crackling live performances, a



Balaporia (second from right) with members of Indus Creed

truckload of equipment and the PA system trailing them from one stop to the other. "There are about 120 lights alone and the power we require for a performance is enormous. In small towns, like the ones in the north eastern states, there is a virtual power blackout in the surrounding area when we perform," says Balaporia.

And goof ups are part of the show. Balaporia recalls the time they travelled by train to perform in Kanpur. At Kanpur station they found that their music system had been loaded into the luggage compartment for a station down the line. The station master refused to open the doors, so they jumped back on the train and rode down to the next stop where the station master refused to hand over the equipment as it was booked for Kanpur and not at his stop. Only after a great deal of pleading were they able to free their goods from the red tape they had got entangled in.

More disastrous were the bloomers on stage. Balaporia tells of the time they had been performing on a beach in Dubai before an audience of Asian and European expatriates ("Arabs don't care for rock music") on a hot day in May, and the light displays on his keyboards went blank. He had hit the wrong switch.

"The audience probably thought that it was part of the song. But the band knew and I knew that this performance was different from the rest."

Back home in Bombay, Balaporia relaxes not by listening to music or the MTV as one might imagine, but with a rousing game of football or by watching the Prime Sports channel on TV. "When you play music six days a week, the last thing you want to do is listen to more music," says Balaporia who admits that he is not a great 'rap' fan but is quick to add: "But it does not mean that that is bad music. All it means is that it is not my kind of music. To each his own. As a musician, I realize that you can't appeal to all tastes. All I can say is that if you don't like what you hear, don't listen to it."

When he tunes in to music from a professional standpoint, he instinctively listens to the background. "Maybe I am missing the message in the words, but I prefer to see what's going on behind the voice. In our group I come in after the song is written. My contribution to the piece is on the production side," says Balaporia. When he does listen to music for pleasure it is the rock and roll of the '60s and '70s. "The Beatles and the Rolling Stones are my favorites," he states.

Has his choice of career been the cause of headaches for his parents? "No, my parents (Russ and Vispi) have been most encouraging. They have always maintained that I do what I want to do. Everyone has their ups and downs and it is knowing that they will stand by you through your downs that makes the difference."

Their more substantial contribution to his music was when they sent him for piano lessons when he was six years old. "I did it for four to five years and hated it," says Balaporia. He wishes he had stayed with it longer though, for in the years to come the training would have provided a solid foundation on which to build his glittering career under the spotlights and before appreciative audiences.

"To perform live is thrilling," he says. "It's kind of realizing your childhood dreams: You imagine yourself performing before 10,000 people and never believe that it will really happen to you." It happened to Balaporia.

The wisdom of ancient Iran

Homi Rogers

Journal of the K. R. Cama Oriental Institute (No 58). Published in 1992 by H. J. M. Desai and Ms H. N. Modi for the K. R. Cama Oriental Institute, 136 Bombay Samachar Marg, Bombay 400023. Pp: 60. Price: Rs 25.

Is it the aim of the K. R. Cama Oriental Institute (KRCOI) to become reader-friendly? If so, this may cause the pedants to fret, but for the rest of the community interested in Zoroastrian matters (hitherto rebuffed by the closed-door attitude of scholars) this heralds a refreshing change.

We are referring to the current proliferation of books and journals from the KRCOI, set in a bold and very readable type, and put together without the diacritical marks associated with works of scholarly study in Zoroastrianism. The most recent case in point is *Journal No 58*, a slim volume of four contributions of which the first two are based on lectures delivered under the Institute's auspices in May 1991 by Professor Emeritus Richard N. Frye, Aga Khan Professor of Iranian Studies at Harvard University.

Frye's papers are titled "New Views on the Homeland of the Indo-Europeans" and "Zoroastrians in Central Asia in Ancient Times." Unfortunately Frye, like most scholars secure in their ivory towers, writes not for mass consumption but for academia. This is an impediment to the enjoyment of scholarly works, as opposed to journalistic fare which, even when addressed to an exclusive audience, is concerned with providing a background to the piece. A scholar holds no such brief, perhaps because he believes he is addressing only an informed coterie. Thus Frye's "Homeland of the Indo-Europeans" expounds the theory of V. V. Ikonov and T. V. Gamkrelidze on the homeland in Anatolia and includes sentences like, "Any group moving from Anatolia should go south to the Fertile Crescent rather than through high mountains to

the east and then onto the plains of the west... Neither the theory of the Tokharian remnants of a greater Gutti land, nor that of a long migration to the east of a group of Gutti from Mesopotamia makes geographical or archeological sense." Sorry, Professor, but it makes no sense to the lay reader who is not aware who the Gutti were or what the Tokharian theory is. Similarly, what can one make of the "identification of the Tokharian



Frye (left) and Vajifdar

speakers with the Yueh Chih who are first reported in Chinese sources as living in Gansu province of western China?"

This is not to criticize Frye, or exhibit one's own ignorance; it is a plea that when bodies decide to publish scholarly works, it would be fitting to publish brief notes on the theories being referred to by the learned authors. Also, as in the case of Frye's talk, a map which he may have used when delivering the lecture should be incorporated to help the reader visualize the migration patterns, and see the places mentioned. Only then will works aimed for a wider readership get across to the new audience. Innovations like handy size and clearer type face, as adopted by the publication under review, are not enough to encourage lay readers.

Yet another failing of scholars, and one which comes to the fore in the present set of papers, is their penchant for building new edifices on the demolished premises of an existing theory. Frye suggests four different homelands of Prophet

Zarathushtra and a set of probable dates in which he lived, thus dismissing, amongst others, W. B. Henning, Mary Boyce, Shapur Shahbazi and ancient Persian texts, to conclude: "So we are left with the pre-Achaemenid period which cannot be further determined, which is what one should expect in prehistory before written records in eastern Iran."

A similar strain pervades the other two essays, though each imparts a new and distinctive approach to its theme. Farrokh J. Vajifdar's paper on "The Glory and the Victory" considers at length the concept of *khwarrah*: "the divine incarnation in man manifesting itself as an effulgence... allotted to an individual to render him capable of (assuming) the task incumbent upon him in the great cosmic battle." Vajifdar's strength lies in the fact that he peels the onion-like layers of history, literature and symbolism to consolidate his theory on the activation of the *khwarrah* and its spiritual motivating power to release the latent energy embedded in the moral ideas of the *Gathas*.

It is indeed interesting to note that our ancestors linked the increase of one's *khwarrah* with one's temperament: "Ever fortunate is he who is ever joyous. Ever sound of body is he who is sound of soul... Never depressed is he who, by reason of his daily apportionment, is content with his lot. He who makes his *khwarrah* to increase is the one who does his duty." It is a thought that centuries later the metaphysical poet William Blake was to echo: "Man was made for joy and woe/And when this we rightly know/Through the world we safely go."

As interesting as Vajifdar's lengthy piece (38 pages) is Shahab Setudeh-Nejad's exposition on "Persepolis as Japan's Destination." His paper examines the similarities between the two eastern civilizations from the standpoint of their common ideals as assimilators of

diverse backgrounds. At a time when the management world looks to Japan, and politically as well as economically she is viewed as a contender in world affairs, it is interesting to note the author's conclusion that he views Japan's destiny as being the same as that of Persepolis as envisioned by our tolerant Achaemenid ancestors: the embodiment of a nation which Herodotus considered unique in its ready adoption of foreign customs.

All the three authors through their four essays in this book have broken fresh ground which is fascinating for both the layman as well as the scholar. The slim work is the result of profound study and research, and hence a substantial contribution to documenting the wisdom of ancient Iran. Additional notes and maps, as suggested earlier, plus short resums about the authors would have heightened its impact.

Can love be so blind?

Burjor Karanjia

Sakshi by Sarala Barnabas. Published for the Writers Workshop by P. Lal, 162/92 Lake Gardens, Calcutta 700045. Pp: 280. Price: Hardback Rs 250, Flexiback Rs 100.

"I've always loved to tell stories," says Dr (Ms) Sarala Barnabas. And judging by her novel *Sakshi*, people must have loved listening to them.

Sakshi, protagonist of the novel, is witness to happenings that are fairytale-like. And a fairytale ambience permeates the unlikely locales — an advertising agency in the beginning and a stud farm owned by some friendly Parsis later.

Sakshi, too, in spite of herself, is very much a fairy princess, almost Wordsworth's "perfect woman, nobly planned, to warn, to comfort and command." The Crown Prince (CP), otherwise Ice Machine (IM), whom she falls in love with and marries, is owner of the advertising agency in which she lands her first job.

There are no wicked stepmothers, no dragons, but there is the efficient, sophisticated, sexy and wicked Ila who works in the same agency and casts her spell on Jai (CP alias IM) so that, foolishly infatuated, he is ready to divorce Sakshi. Of course, as in all fairy stories, Jai discovers in no time at all how Ila is brazenly deceiving him with a member of his own

staff. But by this time it is too late. Sakshi leaves his home — and his life. The happy ending takes its own time coming, so that the happiness-ever-after is hard-earned.

Barnabas' strong narrative sense and instinct for character ride smoothly over the story's rough edges. It makes credible even what is difficult to accept as, for instance, when on a shopping spree Jai leaves the car with the keys dangling from the ignition. Sakshi, sitting inside, is tempted to take the wheel. The car "leaps forward like a restive horse." Jai, coming out of the shop a moment later, is panic-stricken. He follows and overtakes her in an autorickshaw. He starts blaming himself — refusing to acknowledge that it wasn't his fault, that she knew driving and chose to do so — as if the car had a will of its own instead of she willing it: "Was I so careless as to leave the engine on, or the brakes off?" Can even love be so blind?

Credibility takes a knock again at the suddenness with which Jai decides to divorce Sakshi and marry Ila. Even infatuation has its doubts and hesitations. Such things do happen, but it is the novelist's job to make them seem to happen, to make them credible. The decision is taken too soon, and even his discovery of Ila's deception follows too quickly after. But in the reading, this doubt is subdued and overwhelmed by Sakshi's typical but still unique reaction. She doesn't argue. She doesn't protest. She leaves behind all the clothes, all the gifts and trinkets, everything he had given her as his wife, which she no longer is. The very next morning she leaves his parents' home without a word as to where she is going. She leaves without even telling her husband about the gift she in turn has for him, the most wonderful of all, now growing in her belly.

Sakshi does leave behind a letter, not for Jai, but for his parents. Having lost hers early in life, she has made his parents her own, just as having no daughter of their own, they have "adopted" her. This heartbreaking letter is the high point of her engrossing story. It reveals her deep hurt made more poignant by the fact that there is no recrimination or bitterness.

"Last night Jai asked me for a divorce," she writes. "You must not be angry with him. The failure is mine entirely." This she says because of a nagging doubt in her that her lack of social graces had made Jai leave her for the

more sophisticated Ila. After explaining why she is returning everything given to her, as their daughter and their son's wife, she adds: "If my mother was still on earth, she would pray for me now. Since she is not, I ask you to. I need a mother's prayers."

There are others who people this

To the central character courage is second nature and dignity more than anything in the world

homely, simply told and warmly old-fashioned story: Sakshi's grandparents Dominic and his Scottish wife Fiona who left him because she was homesick, but who lives long enough to play a crucial role in Sakshi's life when she and Jai call on her on a visit to Scotland. Her own parents are Adrian and Rebekah, the latter of Dutch ancestry so that Sakshi has "gold-flecked green eyes and hair shot full of russet highlights." Jai's own parents are Ketan Samarth, with his rather forbidding exterior hiding a warm and affectionate nature, and his gentle Parsi wife Piroza. Then there are Binti, godmother and midwife, Sohrab and Gulnar Dubash, a homely and wise Parsi couple, whom Sakshi calls Uncle and Aunt, and who readily come to her rescue by providing her with a job on their stud farm. Their son Aftab, three years her senior, shares Sakshi's love for horses which, not so strangely, are a formative influence on her character.

In her first novel Barnabas, who has written other stories too, reveals an uncanny knack of pulling at her readers' heartstrings. *Sakshi* is deeply and warmly sentimental, but not mawkishly so. Dominating is the central character to whom courage is second nature and who respects dignity more than anything in the world.

When Jai, repentant, recognizing the child she has brought up all by herself as his own flesh and blood, returns to her, she accepts him without upbraiding him or in any way humiliating him. It is a mark of her character that, taking him back, she respects his dignity as much as she did her own when leaving him. Knowing her, sharing her daily vicissitudes and the niceties of her imagination, becomes an enriching experience.

The age of Zoroastrian brides — as listed in this issue — ranged between 21 and 33 years, the arithmetic mean (the total number of individual ages divided by the total number of brides) being 28 years. The corresponding figures for the grooms were 29 and 35 years, averaging at 32 years.

There were 90 Zoroastrians consigned to the Towers of Silence in Bombay as compared to 32 births in November. Twenty-four victims fell prey to heart disease of whom nine were above the age of 80. The other major killers were cancer (14) and pneumonia and lung disease (13). Old age and general debility, brain disease and septicemia took the lives of five patients each whereas three Zoroastrians each succumbed to kidney failure, malaria and accidents. Two deaths each were ascribed to asthma, liver disease and anemia. Ulcer, premature birth, diabetes, hypertension, angina, Parkinson's disease, ulcerative colitis and epilepsy were some of the isolated cases registered. In the case of one death, the coroner's report was still pending.

A four-month-old baby boy and a 29-year-old man were also lost to the community. The eldest to breathe her last was a 92-year-old woman as compared to a three-day-old female baby, the youngest age at death.

The data on births, marriages and deaths has been compiled from information supplied by various newsletters and anjuman in India and abroad, courts and hospitals. This information is not always complete or consistent. For example, the birth figures for Bombay are supplied by four hospitals; births in suburban hospitals and 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.

A boy to Nazneen and Faridoon Gamadia; November 22
A girl to Nilofer and Rayomand Karkaria; November 22
A boy to Maharukh and Minoo Balsara; November 23
A girl to Kulsum and Perviz Poonawala; November 23
A girl to Pearl and Homayr Madan; November 24
A boy to Farida and Jesse Readymoney; November 25
A boy to Maharukh and Maneck Painter; November 26
A girl to Maharukh and Percy Dalal; November 28
A boy to Pervin and Noshir Goila; November 30

MARRIED

Franak Noshir Pastakia and Cyrus Jal Bulsara; November 5
Farahnezh Kaikhosrov Narimanizadah and Jamshed Merwan Falhazada; November 5
Farah Khurshed Pardiwalla and Farrokh Bhikaji Jijina; November 16
Jeroo Eruchsha Katila and Porus Soli Sheriar; November 18
Armede Aspy Rana and Kairoos Minoo Bhaya; November 19
Anahita Rohinton Mistry and Jehangir Behram Katrak of Poona; November 19

DIED

Sorabji (Soli) Rustomji Anklesaria (59), residing at A/1, S. B. Bharucha Baug, S. V. Rd, Andheri (W), 400058; November 1
Jeena Cursetji Antia (72), 77, Jehangir Mans, Hughes Rd, 400007; November 1
Behram Ruttanshah Bodhanwala (71), 11, Wadia Block, Malcolm Baug, Jogeshwari, 400102; November 1
Keki Dinshaw Irani (70), B. N. P. Bldg, N. A. Sawant Marg, Colaba, 400005; November 1
Vistasp Darayas Mistry (4 mths), 4, Bai Hirabai J. N. Petit Bldg, 189, Alibhai Premji Marg, 400007; November 1
Rustom Fardunji Vakharia (85), Silvern Roche, 21, Carmichael

Rd, 400026; November 1
Keki Jalejar Mistry (58), B/503, Shangrila Premises Co-op Soc, Sqn Leader Harminder Singh Rd, 7 Bglws, Andheri, 400058; November 2
Piroja (Pilamai) Bhikaji Variava (75), C/o Maharukh J. Katgara, C/1, Rustom Baug, Victoria Rd, Byculia, 400027; November 2
Nariman Jehangirjee Mistry (90), 3/16, Kashinath Bldg, Kashinath St, Tardeo, 400034; November 3
Gool Fali Bamji (75), La Emerade, 14th Road, Khar, 400052; November 4
Naja Maneck Kutar (77), Shirin Manzil, Balaram St, Grant Rd, 400007; November 4
Adi Jamshedji Naddowalla (74), 3, Sayeed Bldg, 324, Maulana Shaukatali Rd, 400007; November 4
Minoo Fakirji Boyce (61), 803, Mount Bldg, J. P. Rd, Versova, 400061; November 5
Minoocher Jehangirji Jasawalla (76), 8/B/1, Patel Bldg, Marzban Clny, Gilder Lane, 400008; November 5
Jinjan M. Kuri (60), 52, Jawahar Ngr, 6th Rd, Goregaon (W), 400062; November 5
Tehmina Jalejar Mehta (85), Union Bldg, 54, Sleater Rd, 400007; November 5
Jehanbux Dadabhoy Mistry (73), A, Bhatia Bldg, 286, Princess St, 400002; November 6
Amy Faramroze Rogers (69), Q/275, Tardeo Rd, 400007; November 6
Jehangir Darabshah Aibara (59), 39/5, Godrej Staff Qrs, Hill Side, Lal Bahadur Shastri Rd, Vikroli, 400079; November 7
Phirozeshaw Limjibhoy Elavia (91), 515/B, Ratan Mans, R. P. Masani Rd, Matunga, 400019; November 7
Mani Behram Talati (71), 661, Serenham, Rd no 12, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; November 7
Behram Rustomji Adajania (52), 5, Turner Bldg, Gamadia Clny, Tardeo, 400007; November 8
Rumi Framji Banker (61), M/23, Cusrow Baug, S. B. Rd,

ALLAHABAD

DIED

Khorshed Faramroz Ghandi (67) on September 22, 1993

BOMBAY

BORN

A boy to Niloufer and Kurush Baria; November 1
A boy to Shiraz and Jal Mandviwalla; November 1
A girl to Zinobia and Neville Dadrewalla; November 2
A boy to Rukshana and Feroze Titina; November 2
A girl to Rachel Ann and Sohrab Bhot; November 3
A girl to Yasmin and Tehmtan Engineer; November 3
A girl to Binaifer and Firdosh Homavazir; November 3
A boy to Methoo and Keki Surty; November 4
A girl to Khorshed and Soraab Frenchman; November 6
A girl to Simone and Marazban Bhungara; November 8

A boy to Rashna and Godrej Mistry; November 8
A boy to Nilofer and Jim Lakadia; November 9
A boy to Tushnamaiti and Percy Sasuri; November 10
A girl to Mehnaz and Yazdi Bhot; November 12
A girl to Jerestin and Cyrus Watchmaker; November 12
A boy to Prescilla and Sammy Major; November 13
A girl to Benaifer and Aspi Bilal; November 14
A girl to Rashne and Carl Athaude; November 17
A girl to Yasmin and Homi Sopariwalla; November 17
A boy to Rukshana and Cyrus Cardmaster; November 18
A girl to Nilufer and Sharukh Dubash; November 18
A girl to Manek and Dhagi Pithawalla; November 18
A girl to Benaifer and Noshir Surveyor; November 20

400039; November 8
Rustom Faramroze Screwvalla (75), 42/B, Paradise Apts, Nepean Sea Rd, 400036; November 9
Dara Nussurwanji Marshall (87), 18, Military Square, 400023; November 10
Baby girl of Nilu Kushroo Udwardia (3 days), Ratan Mhl, Shradhanand Rd, Ghatkopar (W), 400086; November 10
Keki Dadabhoy Bhathena (79), 5NW, Venus Apts, 40, Cuffe Parade, 400005; November 11
Dhun Jal Daruwalla (82), 347/A/11, United Chmbs, Grant Rd, 400007; November 11
Naval Khursedji Kapadia (71), New Petit Mans, Co-op Hsg Soc, Nana Chowk, 400007; November 11
Goola Shapurji Avari (71), 133/19, Old Mody Khana, Dinbai Petit Widows' Chawl, Mody St, Fort, 400001; November 12
Gool Jasi Bomanji (66), C/o Ms Dolly K. Khambatta, 684, Lalkaka Hse, Khareghat Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; November 12
Nargesh Byramji Secretary (84), 5/524, Commissariat Bldg, Adenwalla Rd, Matunga, 400019; November 12
Sorabji Hormusji Mirza (71), 43/K/2, Shivaji Ngr, 400043; November 13
Dina Dhunjishaw Sarkari (89), E/1, Mandar Co-op Soc, Raut Lane, Juhu, 400049; November 13
Shera Navalsha Daruwalla (78), Piroja Ter, Near Zanda Chowk, Vapi, (Dist) Valsad, 396191; November 14
Hilla Jamshed Motiwala (77), B, Mota Mans, Opp Bhatia Hosp, Tardeo Rd, 400007; November 14
Firoze Munchersha Photographer (73), Soonawalla Bldg, Khetwadi, 12th Cross Lane, 400004; November 14
Rustomji Meherjibhai Sethna (72), 13, Khareghat Clny, Hughes Rd, 400007; November 14
Dolat Hormuz Irani (86), C/4, Bhabha Sanatorium, Bandstand, Bandra, 400050; November 15
Nariman Phirozshah Kapadia (66), 71/A, Vikas Finlay Tower, G. D. Ambekar Marg, 400033; November 15

Jamshed Pirojsha Majoo (81), 42, Jamasji Apt, Sleater Rd, 400007; November 15
Kersi Rustomji Amrolia (55), G/14, Nowroz Baug, Lalbaug, 400012; November 16
Phiroze Rustamji Karkaria (63), Tehmi Ter, 805, Dr B. A. Rd, Dadar, 400014; November 16
Minoo Nusserwanji Khari (76), V, Dalal Est, Bombay Central, 400008; November 16
Banoo Framroze Mehta (86), Neela Hse, Off Peddar Rd, 400026; November 16
Arnavz Behram Sukhadwala (77), D/44, Cusrow Baug, S. B. Rd, 400039; November 16
Rusi Nusserwanji Billimoria (65), 53, Panday Sanatorium, Wodehouse Rd, Colaba, 400005; November 17
Freny Jamshedji Dastur (59), 104, Kavarana Bldg, 3rd Marine St, Dhobitalao, 400002; November 17
Homi Kaikhushroo Elchidana (81), 9, Pudamjee Bldg, M. M. Chotani Rd, Mahim, 400016; November 17
Erach Boomanshaw Major (67), Queens Chmb, 89, M. Karve Rd, 400002; November 17
Soona Phirozeshah Mistry (85), D/5, Shapur Baug, V. P. Rd, 400004; November 18
Farrokh Furdoon Mody (58), West Breeze, V. Patel Rd, Santa Cruz (W), 400054; November 18
Aban Dali Parekh (44), 1/17, Dhunbai Wadi, Dadabhai Rd, Vile Parle (W), 400056; November 18
Mehera Ardeshtir Vasania (75), Karani Widows' Chawl, Marzban Clny, Gilder Lane, Lamington Rd, 400008; November 18
Jal Khurshedji Wadia (82), H/3, Captain Clny, Tardeo Rd, 400034; November 18
Keki Manecksha Dastoor (81), Mohamadi Minar, 14th Khetwadi Lane, 400004; November 19
Homai Ardeshtir Merchant (78), Gulshan, 3rd Pasta Lane, Colaba, 400005; November 19
Pesi Jalejar (Jalbhoy) Mistry (63), 20, Mistry Bldg, Old Khareghat Clny, Babulnath Rd, 400007; November 19
Lawaji Munchersha Mithaiwala (55), 204, Destiny, Ambadi Rd, Vasai (W), 401201; November 19

Kaikhushroo Burjorji Singporwalla (77), A/12, Nowroz Baug, Lalbaug, 400012; November 19
Dinshaw Kavasji Dastoor (85), 12, Poho Villa, Malcolm Baug, S. V. Rd, Jogeshwari (W), 400102; November 20
Maneck Minocher Talaty (50), Commonwealth, Nariman Point, 400021; November 20
Homi Jehangir Davierwalla (72), A/15, Jer Baug, Dr Ambedkar Rd, Byculla, 400027; November 22
Bacha Jal Khajotia (80), Ness Baug, Annexe-2, Nana Chowk, 400021; November 22
Peshotan Sorabji Kuka (86), 96/D, Villa Modern, Worli Sea Face, 400018; November 22
Minoo Khurshedji Palkiwalla (63), 44/D/113, Manish Ngr, Andheri (W), 400058; November 22
Nusserwanji Ardeshtir Bulsara (89), Mody Hse, Near Dreamland Cinema, 400004; November 23
Noshir Maneckji Engineer (84), 3, Kashinath Bldg, Kashinath Rd, Tardeo, 400034; November 23
Motibai Faredoon Irani (80), Petit Block no 2, J. Petit St, Balaram St, 400007; November 23
Burjor Shavakshah Dubash (61), 779, Daruwalla Hse, Jame-Jamshed Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; November 24
Burjor Sorabji Mehta (87), 4/North, Spenta, Little Gibbs Rd, 400006; November 24
Dhun Behramji Motiwalla (86), Fern's Mans, Hill Rd, Bandra, 400050; November 24
Shirinbai Rustomji Panthaky (86), Dawoodi Manzil, Gogha St, Fort, 400001; November 24
Homi Rustomji Vachha (62), 18, Guru Nanak Bldg, Grant Rd, 400007; November 24
Homai Rustam Irani (79), 1/104, Shangrila, 7 Bglws, Andheri (W), 400058; November 25
Aloo Jamshed Parbhoo (71), 617/B, Cooper Bldg, Girgaum Rd, 400002; November 25
Piroja Bapuji Rabadi (92), 660, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; November 25
Dossamai Dinshaw Anklesaria (86), 61/B, Meher Apt, Anstey Rd, 400026; November 26
Ketty Jimmy Adajania (49),

599, Sharma Nivas, Jame Jamshed Rd, Matunga, 400019; November 27
Banoobai Dhunjishaw Daji (79), 112/A, Rockside, Walkeshwar Rd, 400006; November 27
Shavakshah Bhikaji Mistry (87), 20, Yusuf Manzil, Khetwadi 12th Lane, 400004; November 27
Kersi Dinshawji Rana (62), 15, N. M. Wadia Bldg, Malcolm Baug, Jogeshwari (W), 400102; November 27
Homi Merwanji Randeria (62), Sethna Bldg, Wadia St, Tardeo, 400034; November 27
Mareban Pervez Vimadlal (29), 7/6, Old Khareghat Clny, Hughes Rd, 400007; November 27
Framroze Cawasji Austin (87), 3/32, Tata Mills Co-op Hsg Soc, Elphinstone Rd, Parel, 400013; November 28
Eruchshaw Nariman Contractor (73), Vaibhav Apts, Old Prabhadevi Rd, Worli, 400025; November 28
Nari Kaikhosru Rustomji (74), 96, Wodehouse Rd, Colaba, 400005; November 28
Minoo Maneckji Vania (83), B, The Reward, Next to Ganga Jamuna Theatre, Tardeo Rd, 400007; November 28
Najoo Burjor Chehna (74), 3, Wadia Blocks, Malcolm Baug, Jogeshwari (W), 400102; November 29
Pheroza Siavax Wadia (90), 102, Citadel, 18, L. D. Ruparel Marg, 400006; November 29

CALCUTTA

DIED

Freni Sohrabji Kiash, mother of Rohinton, Khushroo and Shahnaz Parvez Guard; November 22

DELHI

BORN

A boy, *Darius*, to *Behroze* and *Navdeep Jaikaria*; November 25

NAVSARI

DIED

Kavasji Pestonji Ravji (80), father of Jamshed; September 10

SURAT

DIED

Shirinbai Navroji Karanjia (86), Gam Bhatha, Dist Surat,

394510; November 2
Framroze Kaikhushroo
Dadina (72), Shirin Engineer
 Block, Shahpore, 395003;
 November 5
Gustadji Ukadji Kadodwala
 (73), Gam Kamlapore, Taluka
 Mandvi, Jilla Surat, 394160;
 November 9
Pirojshaw Burjorji Sethna (80),
 Nariman Home and Infirmary,
 Shahpore, 395003; November 13
Najamai Kekobad Masalawala
 (72), Nariman Home and
 Infirmary, Shahpore, 395003;
 November 22
Bachamai Manakji Doctor (87),
 Parsi Wad, Siganpore, Dist
 Surat; November 22
Savakshaw Dinshawji
Daruwalla (70), Por Mohalla,
 Nanpura, 395001; November 24
Dhurnmai Jamshedji
Amalsadiwala (81), Gam
 Amalsad, Via Kim, Dist Surat,
 396310; November 25
Shaparast Ardeshir Elavia (22),
 Gam Saroli, Bapa Barimal, Dist
 Surat; November 25

...

CANADA

Ontario

DIED
Aloo Batliwalla, mother of
 Piloo Bahadur Deboo;
 August 14

Toronto

MARRIED

Shiraz Bagli, daughter of Freny
 and Jehan of Princeton, New
 Jersey, and Alistair Macfarlane;
 July 10

Lydia Capsan, daughter of
 Thelmar and Phillip, and
Farhang Pedram, son of
 Katayoon and Shahriar;
 August 7

Binaifer Hosie Surti and *Rustom*
Mirza, son of Putli and Noshir;
 August 8

DIED

Khorshed Jamshed Pardiwalla,
 mother of Soli, Godrej, Katy
 and Tehmi; July 20

Vancouver, British Columbia

BORN

A girl, *Jillian*, to *Jane* and
Kershaw Nanavaty; July 25

GERMANY

Dusseldorf

BORN

A boy, *Jahan*, to *Frenaz* and
Kersi Mogrelia; November 29

IRAN

Tehran

DIED

Ardeshir Jehangir Khosravi of
 Ontario, husband of Daulat
 and father of Sohrab, Manijeh,
 Fereshteh and Farideh; May 22
Zomorod Rashid Bastani of
 Ontario, son of Shirin and
 Bahram and brother of Farshid
 and Fariedoon; May 31

PAKISTAN

Karachi

BORN

A girl, *Dilshad*, to *Roshan* and
Asphandiyar Mondegar;
 May 19

A girl, *Shirin*, to *Mehnaz* and
Feroze Irani; September 18

A girl, *Aurina*, to *Ninaz* and
Jahangir Yazdani;
 September 23

A girl, *Daleara*, to *Perveen*
 and *Khursheed Katila*;
 September 30

A boy, *Danish*, to *Jessica*
 and *Jamshed Dubash*;
 October 10

A girl, *Vera*, to *Tashnumaity*
 and *Jamshed Minwalla*;
 October 5

DIED

Mehroo Gustad Irani (57);
 September 6
Dhurnmai Godrej Majainah
 (76); September 17

Jamshed Jehangir Mehta (70);
 September 25
Khurshed Pestanji Minwalla
 (69); September 26
Nanabhoy Hormusji Patel (73);
 October 2
Minoo Maneckji Patel (71);
 October 7
Dina Vispi Daroga (72);
 October 12
Tehmurasp Khurshedji Mody
 (70); October 12
Homai Homi Hansotia (72);
 October 16
Jamshed Sohrab Dhatigara
 (68); October 26

Multan

DIED

Homai Hoshang Bomanji (54),
 mother of Peshotan and
 Mehmosh; November 6

USA

Bethesda, Maryland

DIED

Esfandiar Jamzadeh, husband
 of Shirin Mazdai;
 October 9

Dallas, Texas

BORN

A girl, *Farah*, to *Pearl* and
Poras Balsara; July 28

Garden City, New York

MARRIED

Scherazade Merwan Kham-

batta of Forest Hills, New
 York, and *Anil Parthasarathy*
 of McLean, Virginia;
 May 30

Hialeah, Florida

DIED

Navroz Palanji Dastoor (32);
 July 29

Los Angeles

DIED

Adi Shroff (45), son of Soona
 and Pesi and brother of Behram;
 August 7

Northern California

BORN

A girl, *Zar*, to *Arbez* and
Hoshang Patel; May 31
 A boy, *Cyrus*, to *Dilnawaz*
 and *Kaizad Rustomji*;
 August 2

North Texas

BORN

A boy, *Aaron*, to *Naju*
 and *Bomi Bharucha*;
 August 9

Tinton Fall, New Jersey

BORN

A boy, *Darian Anthony*, to
Delna and *Terence Edwards*;
 June 12

Compiled by Roxana A. Mirza

TOTALS FOR 1993

	Bombay		India		A World B	
	A	B	A	B		
BORN						
Boys	14	122	1	5	5	24
Girls	18	120	—	2	8	32
MARRIED						
Parsi	6	236	—	8	1	11
Intercommunal	—	54	—	2	3	5
DIED						
CONSIGNED						
Male	55	515	6	82	11	44*
Female	35	483	6	66	7	31*
CREMATED						
Male	—	2	—	—	—	—
Female	—	5	—	—	—	—

A: Total numbers in this issue

B: Running totals for 1993 (February 1993-January 1994 issues)

NB: In *Parsiana*, August 1993 and September-December 1993, the running totals include the data listed in the respective issues.

* Overseas deaths are listed in the consigned column as *Parsiana* does not have a breakup of those cremated. 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.

Avant-garde architect

Parinaz Gandhi

This beach house will have no doors. Fearless himself, architect Nari Dossabhai Gandhi had envisioned a house that would blend with the surrounding natural scenario. "A house shouldn't have things which can be stolen. It must have memories; it must have ambience," Gandhi tried to convince those whose security was threatened by such an outlandish design concept. Whilst this unusual house did take shape many more of Gandhi's dreams died with him when the 59-year-old avant-garde architect was killed in a road accident near Khopoli on August 18, 1993 on his way to Ahmednagar to visit one of the project sites.

One of his cherished ambitions was to create Madhusthali in Orissa, a campus akin to Tagore's Shantiniketan geared with classrooms, dormitory, amphitheater, etc where those with an artistic bent of mind could draw inspiration, mentions Pravin Bhayani whose relationship with Gandhi had spanned several decades working as his "coordinator/trouble-shooter" during the execution of his projects. Some clients and associates who swear by Gandhi have remained with him over the years; others have sworn at him for not adhering to schedules, for not complying with their specifications, for leaving jobs incomplete.

"A strong personality, difficult to work with," is the appraisal Gandhi had earned from some of his associates. Others who understood him regarded him as "God's own man... A wonderful soul who cared for what he was doing, making others push themselves to attain that same standard." His unmatched "simplicity and sincerity," have been referred to oft and on.

He would respect a client's needs but would brook no interference. Deadline reminders would annoy him. "A house, to him, was a work of art," sums up Sadruddin Daya, chairman of Dawood and former sheriff of Bombay who has had the distinction of having Gandhi design several of his houses. For those who are concerned with the functional



Gandhi: simple and sincere

aspects of a house, its bedrooms and bathrooms, Nari Gandhi would not have fitted the bill, notes Daya, adding, "Once you are comfortable in such a house (as

created by Gandhi) it becomes difficult afterwards to live in a normal house." Referring to his Versova house that Gandhi redesigned as "the most comfortable" and the Madh Island resort (the one without doors) as "the most interesting" Daya recalls how 20 years back he had commissioned Gandhi to do the interiors of his Versova home within a budget of Rs 25,000. Gandhi chose to use that amount to create a chandelier of mother of pearls. "I was so delighted with the chandelier that after that I would allow him to do what he wanted..." mentions Daya. As new ideas struck him, he would be constantly breaking and remaking things but Daya did not mind: "I found that he was not expensive. He would use discarded glass, wood... to create things in an artistic manner."

Supplements Bhayani, "He would have beds of onyx or bricks, windows of plastic beads, doors without shape..." These innovative features that reflected his creativity had a scientific basis too. "For example when designing doors with a weight of 500 kg he would keep in mind the wind and the pressure load, use pivots of brass, lead, marble as deemed necessary such that even with a push of a finger the door would swing open," points out Bhayani. Giving attention to every minute detail, he was even known to monitor the growth of the plants, often talking to them if he felt they were not faring well.

The environment conscious Gandhi would never chop trees to build a house but instead build the house around the trees, compliments Kishore Bajaj, proprietor of Badasaab, for whom Gandhi designed a farmhouse in Karjat which after seven years is now nearing completion. The house, which to Bajaj is "divine or heavenly," bespeaks not only "a piece of art but a piece of Nari's heart." Since the site overlooks a lake, Gandhi had developed the house such that from every corner, whether one is sitting or reclining, you feel you are on the deck of a ship in the midst of the water. Bajaj had originally planned for an architect from



Houses created by Gandhi with an eye for detail and perfection

Switzerland or Italy to design the area but says that once Gandhi's name was recommended, he opted to try out this Indian architect who after 71 calls in around six months finally answered the line. For Bajaj, the persistence was worth it. "I worshipped the ground he walked on," he adds admitting to certain very pleasant and certain agonizing moments he shared with Gandhi when for instance Gandhi initially refused to agree to airconditioning in the bedrooms saying "I was not commissioned to build the Juhu (Vile Parle Development) Scheme."

In his vision of a house every item had a rightful slot — the position of the flowering pots too had to be exactly so and Gandhi would not like it if some client changed the setting, informs Suresh Sethi, project designer of Circus Design Studio who had been working with Gandhi on the sites for the last three years. Often drawing a parallel between a painting and a house Gandhi, as remembers Sethi, was wont to question: "After you buy a painting would you change its contents and color? Why then should you alter things in the house?" Sethi's colleague Ms Armin Driver refers to an incident when Gandhi once refused to fix window grills for a client and the impasse that resulted when he insisted that he had completed the job on the house, and the client maintained that he was leaving the assignment midway.

Since he had not set up his own firm of architects, in the last few years he would be in and out of Circus Design Studio's premises where he had established a close rapport with Sethi, his wife Simran and Driver. "We never felt overawed by him. Yet his presence brought a certain serenity and peace in our work," acknowledges Sethi. There was never an official business arrangement amongst them. However they functioned well as a team — working together, sharing

jokes. "We never talked commercial," mentions Sethi who remembers Gandhi's words that art was God's gift which should not be commercialized. At the same time he used to advise his young colleagues to be wary of clients who take undue advantage.

On his part, whether he accepted payments for all jobs is not known. Generosity came effortlessly to Gandhi: treating friends to gifts, sponsoring education costs, giving money to families in Udvada on his frequent trips there, or raising funds for animal welfare, particularly the dog pound, as recount different sources.

Always dressed in kurta-pyjama with a Parsi *topi* covering his head, Gandhi's own needs were few. He was a vegetarian; eggs too were taboo. Featuring regularly on the bachelor's diet was bread because of which some of his friends used to tease him by addressing him as 'pau (bread)'. Not for him tea or coffee or chocolate as Gandhi believed he did not need artificial stimulants in life. For a watch too, he had no use, telling others that each should be a clock unto himself. Starting his day with a trip to the fire-temple and ending it too the same way if that was possible, Gandhi would be seen working every day of his life.

There was always a prayer on his lips. Even whilst entering a work site he could be seen praying, recalls Driver who mentions that despite her 23 and his 59 years, she regarded him as "a really good friend" with whom she could share her joys and sorrows. In fact she was among the few trusted by him to translate his visionary plans into blueprints. "In the two and a half years that I have been close to him, I have gained more from him than my entire college education or my whole life. There was always something you could learn from him," says Driver.

An avid reader who is believed to

have been conversant with almost every topic, Gandhi's hobbies were photography, ceramic pottery, gardening. After completing his school education from St Xavier's, he put in a year's study of science at St Xavier's College before switching to the J. J. School of Art. Daring to be different in his architecture while yet a student, Gandhi, as a story goes, had drawn houses without ventilators. His instructor apparently wanted this anomaly corrected but to prove his point Gandhi walked home to Dadar from Crawford Market because along the way he wanted to count the houses that had open ventilators. He came to the conclusion that barely one percent had open ventilators. The promising student later got an opportunity to study extensively at the Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation. On his return he taught at the Baroda University, at the Bombay University, and was for a while employed with Tata Consultancy before he chose to be self-employed, informs Gandhi's sister Dr Khorshed Adrianwala.

Gandhi's brilliance over the years has been recognized in different quarters. Sethi mentions that his Italian friends wanted to write a book on him. But the self-effacing architect was only comfortable if people wrote on his work, not if they chose to focus on him. "From what I have seen internationally, I find his work exceptionally original," Sethi pays Gandhi a tribute. And being in the same field and knowing the limitations in this country, he is better able to value Gandhi's talent. The accolades that he received the master architect used to graciously share with those who assisted him in his work saying frequently, "Vision is one, hands are many."

Gandhi is survived by his mother Najamai, brothers Jimmy, Dali, Pesi and sisters Khorshed Adrianwala and Zarin Vachha.

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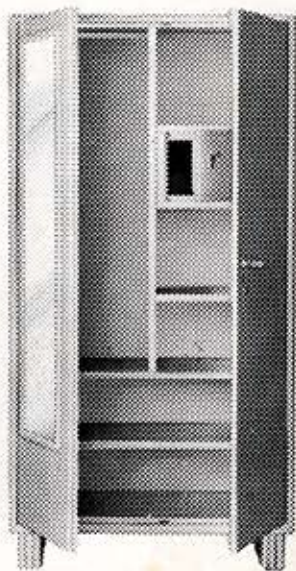
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