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 Unsigned letters or those without an address will not be published.

"Beseeching the Lady"

Homi Rogers asks the question, "What is it that leads Zoroastrians to join the throngs at Mahim's St Michael's Church every Wednesday ('Beseeching the Lady,' *Parsiana*, July-August 1994)?"

Apart from the legend of the Lady of Perpetual Succour's prowess at granting favors, the article attributes two main reasons for this as given by Ms Firozi Khan: •I can relate to the prayers being said in a language I can understand, as against our Zoroastrian mumbo-jumbo, and •the service offers extreme peace of mind, and you can't help being moved with the serenity of it.

I can think of a third reason: the creation of vibrations through a unison of timing and concord of sounds. Unfortunately with us, although we talk of creating divine vibrations through our prayers, in practice we do just the opposite. Take our muktad

prayers as an example, wherein 20 dasturs pray at the same time — different prayers, at different speeds and at different pitches — creating discord, destroying any vibrations that may have emanated from any one prayer. But then discord is the hallmark of our community, which reflects even in our prayers.

It is this fusion of sounds that creates the serenity, the peace of mind, and the majesty of any Christian church service, and not just the one at St Michael's, which Khan is referring to. **Brig N. B. GRANT (Retd)**
Pune

"Of baronets and knights"

The names of two Karachi knights may be added to Ms Freany J. Ashburner list ("Of baronets and knights," Readers' Forum, *Parsiana*, June 1994).

•Sir Jehangir Hormusji Kothari, the globetrotter who, in the late 1890s and early 1900s circumnavigated the world seven times besides gifting to Karachi the beautiful Lady Lloyd Promenade and Sir Jehangir Kothari Parade at Clifton, building a beautiful marriage hall and residential flats and donating munificent sums for educational scholarships for Parsis. In his will he bequeathed all his wealth to the widows and orphans of the world.

•Sir Kawasjee Hormusjee Katrak, a young ervad who commenced his career as a teacher in the Navsari Madressa and then served the Jassawalas in Peshawar, Kabul, had landed as a young entrepreneur in Karachi with just Rs 100 in his pocket. He opened a shop and in course of time not only earned a fortune, but practised the Zoroastrian ideal of charity by giving all he could. He gave in the name of his mother, father and wife to build the first building in the old Punchayet Wadi, maternity wings in the Lady Dufferin Hospital, secured the magnificent land for the now well-known Katrak Parsi Colony which was developed as a cooperative housing society, and built for the YMZA the Hormusjee Katrak Hall and the Sohrab Katrak Library. Incidentally Sir Kawasjee also beautified the Lady Lloyd Promenade and Sir Jehangir Kothari Parade with a beautiful Jodhpur stone bandstand. Both these Karachi knights had helped the British government generously during the World War I and also left behind cosmopolitan charities.

BEHRAM S. RUSTOMJI
Karachi

With reference to Ms Freany J. Ashburner's list "Of baronets and knights" (Readers' Forum, *Parsiana*, June 1994), I seem to remember that there was also Sir Pudumjee Ginwalla, who was a friend of my family. I may be wrong about his being a knight, but as he was from Calcutta, someone from there would know if I am right.

Sir Dhunjibhoy Bomanji was also a family friend. He was not Sir Bomanji Dhunjibhoy.

My father was Pheroze Kharegat, not Feroze. **Ms KHORSHEED R. GHANDHI**

'Ahd-nameh authentic?

Both Ervad (Dr) Kersey H. Antia of Illinois and Dr Ali A. Jafarey of California have simultaneously pitched in to refute Ms Coorlawala's research on the authenticity of the 'Ahd nameh and its relevance to Salman Pak ["How authentic is the 'Ahd-nameh?" and "In defense of..." (Readers' Forum), *Parsiana*, April 1994].

Leaving aside the so-called scholarly arguments, I wish to emphasize the following points:

•Dr Jafarey's dedication to and defence of Islam, its Prophet and the *Quran* are sincere. I only wish he could have displayed the same commitment and had labored just as sincerely when he wrote the so-called scholarly information about "gomez" in a past issue of *Parsiana*. Then he obviously and deliberately suppressed facts from the relevant passages from the Vishtasp Yasht to mislead the gullible Zarathushtris.

•Conquerors always reported not authentic, factual history but what they wanted others to believe as partial records of events seen through their eyes. The *Quran*, Hadiths and the early biographies referred to by Dr Jafarey would only account for very predisposed, subjective experiences through the eyes of Islam. They would not be objective or factual.

Why then, do Dr Jafarey and Ervad Antia rely on Islamic sources for Salman, or rely on other foreign scholars who have only borrowed from Islamic sources which are unreliable and prejudiced?

•Dr Jafarey's statement that Muhammad ibn Jarir al-Tabari authored two books in Arabic: *The Annals of the Prophets and Kings*, a kind of *Shah Namah*, and the oldest surviving commentary on the *Quran* on the pattern of the commentary on the *Avesta* by the Pahlavi commentators of the Sasanian and post Sasanian days, proves

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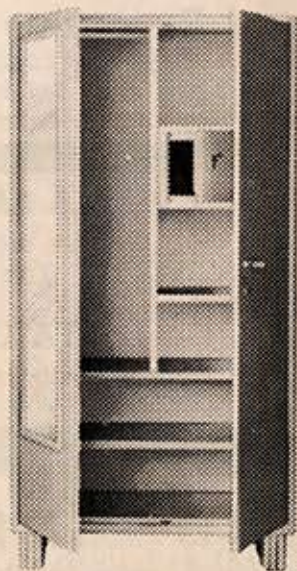
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that the Arabs borrowed and imitated a lot from the Zarathushtis without acknowledging or giving any due credit.

Dr Jafarey's own words, that the *Quran* does not mention either the Iranians or Iran, also proves the point that the Arabs were responsible for biased history by omitting important events and personalities from their religious records. How can any Arab or convert to Islam mention the true history of the Persian Zarathushtis or Iran in their books — especially the *Quran* — after all the sufferings, torture, blood-bath caused by Islam on the conquered? Would the Arabs ever acknowledge that all Arabic achievements in arts, literature, architecture, sciences were almost entirely due to the Iranian converts to Islam?

•The most important issue I wish to emphasize is that "scholars" are not at all reliable! To wit, Prof Nigolian, of the University of Toronto, has written a book, *The Zoroastrian Faith*. In it, along with other meanings, the name of the Holy Prophet Asho Zarathushtra is also translated as "a thief of camels... a tormentor of camels." Future generations, specially the so-called scholars from North America will surely quote these meanings and subsequently, such writings will be acclaimed "scholarly!" Therefore, it is time that Zarathushtis bag the scholarly garbage and follow the religion with faith and devotion.

•Antia's statement that the *Shah Namah*, written by a Moslem, has not the least mention about Salman is yet another indication that the Islamic zealots did not record history accurately or even adequately. It is also a fact that many parts in the *Shah Namah* are missing and some parts dealing with Prophet Asho Zarathushtra and the Zarathushti religion are grossly sanctioned (sic) and deliberately altered. The Pahlavi books written around the ninth century, guardedly mention the "evil times" and "the wicked rule" [*Outlines of Parsi History* by Dastur (Dr) H. K. Mirza].

Firdausi's predecessors Danishwar and Daqiqi, from whom he continued the narration of his immortal epic, were both Zarathushtis. Scholars are not unanimous if Firdausi himself was a Zarathushti. Whether a Zarathushti or not, Firdausi, writing in the 11th century, was hardly in a position to express his religious opinions freely. Besides no one knows if the omission of Salman's name occurred later or not.

•Dr Jafarey's scholarly intent displays the mysterious habit of quoting and suppressing quotes from individual scholars and

writings as and when it is suitable to his personal inclination. In promoting the Fasli calendar, he relies on Omar Khayyam. But in Dr Jafarey's own words, Omar Khayyam, a Sufi, was a drunkard and led a lecherous life! How can one trust a drunkard to compute? And, was Omar intoxicated with alcohol or love for his beloved Creator?

All this emphatically proves that scholarly research is oft directed to mislead the gullible, and "scholarly" need not be factual. Recently, *Parsiana's* image is of a tabloid, full of myth and gossip; promoting not facts, but fiction: and in substance, it is definitely becoming anti-Zoroastrian. Is *Parsiana* trying to promote the preservation of our religion, or is it trying to speed up its destruction through scholarly myths and faith-killing lies? Ms PERVIN J. MISTRY

Mississauga, Ontario

"Towers of silence reform"

Dr Kaekhosru Kabraji, former director of meteorology, Government of India, writes from London that the towers of silence must be replaced by electric crematoria to eliminate the class of nassessalars who have to handle decaying corpses partly eaten by vultures ("Towers of silence reform," Readers' Forum, *Parsiana*, February-March 1994). This gives the impression that crematoria are more efficient in disposing of the dead.

In this connection, I would like to draw the attention of your readers to the Environmental Protection Act 1990, promulgated in the UK, which states that to ensure complete combustion of the corpse and eliminate potentially toxic substances in the exhaust fumes, all crematoria should be fitted with a secondary combustion zone in which the gases must be held at 850°C for two seconds, and that these standards must be reached by April 1, 1998. The toxic substances mentioned would probably refer to carbon monoxide, soot, nitric oxide and the stench from other organic vapors.

The crematoria authorities estimate that this new law will push up the gas consumption (probably natural gas), and hence the cost of cremation, 3.86 times after April 1, 1998.

Calculating the energy consumption in terms of firewood and electricity, allowing for differences in thermal efficiencies, I have got figures of 219 kg firewood and 205 KWh electricity per body cremated. If one takes the revised rate for non-residential heating at about Rs 2.20 per KWh, this would amount to Rs 450 per electric cremation. When the costs increase 3.86 times

this would amount to Rs 1,737 per cremation after April 1, 1998. Dr Kabraji should realize that our dokhmenashini, apart from being economical and efficient, is independent of any future energy escalation costs.

Dr P. D. SUNAVALA

Aid from the USA

The Udvada Anjuman has received a donation of Rs 1,01,977 from the members of the Zoroastrian Association of Greater New York and other American Zoroastrian associations. Every year they hold a lunch get-together in honor of the Iranshah, when Zoroastrians make generous donations.

This amount is to be used for distribution to the Iranshah Kathi Fund and for helping poor mobeds, behdins and nassessalars.

Our Udvada Anjuman and the poor resident Zoroastrians are grateful to all those who have donated generously for this very deserving cause. May Iranshah bless them always, is our sincere prayer.

Dastur KAIKOBAD DASTOOR

President, Udvada Anjuman

Restoring our cemeteries

On behalf of the Parsis of Dehra Dun I appeal for help for our old cemeteries in Dehra Dun and Mussoorie.



A grave at the Dehra Dun cemetery with headstone broken and marble slab removed

Right up to the 1950s the Parsi population in Dehra Dun consisted of 20 to 30 families. Now there are less than five

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families here (none in Mussoorie), with the result that we have very little money (approx Rs 30,000) to take care of the cemetery. The petty traders and kabariwallas who surround the cemetery have broken down the outer walls, cut the water pipes, damaged and desecrated the graves and brought their cattle in to graze. The cemetery is now a pitiful sight with cowdung everywhere, headstones broken and the bungli vandalized with doors, windows and electrical fittings removed.

With some influence and pressure we have managed to get the intruders removed, but this is not a lasting solution as district and police officials are subject to frequent changes. Therefore, unless we can build strong high walls with a good gate which can be securely locked, and install a chowkidar-cum-mali to stay there, the vandalism will start all over again. This will also involve making modest quarters for the chowkidar.

Dehra Dun cemetery's pitiful sight
Below left: Entrance to the cemetery
and the desecrated graves
Below right: Vandalized bungli and
the filth in the compound

We would like to restore the cemetery, rebuild the graves, repair the bungli, and make it once more a place of peace and sanctity for those whose loved ones rest there. Since 1935, most of the Parsi students of the Doon School enjoyed the hospitality of Dr N. N. Kapadia, the school dentist. He and his wife are now in their late eighties. His father-in-law, Mr Guzdar, was also very generous in allowing Parsi boys free entry into his cinema. Mr Guzdar is buried here in this cemetery, and Dr Kapadia's little girl and brother lie here as well. The graves of Gen K. Masters of the Indian Medical Service — who was even senior to the late Field Marshal Cariappa — and Brig J. Dalal are also here, and there are many others.

With financial help and support the Parsis of Dehra Dun could once again make the Parsi cemeteries in Dehra Dun and Mussoorie places of peace and sanctity, and a source of comfort for those left behind. The approximate requirement is to the tune of six lakh rupees.

A cemetery should be a sacred, inviolate space — a refuge for those who visit it; a coming home of the spirit, a luminous journey of the heart. Please help us to

make it so by giving a meaningful donation. The cheque/bank draft in the name of "Parsi Aramgah Fund, Dehra Dun" may be sent to me at Faryas, 157 Vasant Vihar-1, P.O. New Forest, Dehra Dun 248006 (UP), India [Tel: (0135) 83222]. Donors' names will be suitably inscribed on a plaque in the bungli. Exemption under Section 18G of the Income Tax Act has been applied for.

LT Gen F. N. BILIMORIA (Retd)
 President, Dehra Dun Parsi Anjuman

Udvada and the sea

Just after the first week of the monsoon I was in Udvada strolling from Globe Hotel, down the meandering muddy streets, to the seashore.

It was a bit dark in the late evening as I walked down the sandy slope to the beach. Suddenly I dropped five feet to the sand flat below. In just one week the sea had denuded the shore, leaving an excavated shoreline five feet high.

I walked along the beach as I had done in my childhood, observing the old landmarks. Majestic Hotel was there; Sohrab Mody's boat-like bungalow was replaced by a building; the King Hotel front is



washed by the sea — the four-feet high rock wall made along the shoreline had disappeared. Along the Mangalwada village border a sloping concrete embankment had been made to stop the onslaught of the sea. But the sea has made several breaches in the slope.

A concrete effort is needed by a committee so formed to protect Udveda beach. Historically, the name Udveda was derived from Unt-vada, the grazing ground for the local raja's camel, or Udann vas, meaning low-lying areas covered by sea and converted into kharis or salt pans.

I pray to Ahura Mazda to provide a leader who will stop Udveda from reverting to Udann vas.

Z. M. ZEND

The first rationalist

There is an assumption by western historians and scholars that concepts of morality and man's responsibility for his actions originated with ancient Hebrew prophets, and that western rational thinking originated with the ancient Greeks. I would like to correct this wrong impression based on the conclusions of two well-known philosopher-scholars — Friedrich Nietzsche and Joseph Campbell.

In his introduction to Nietzsche's teaching — *An Interpretation of Thus Spoke*

Zarathushtra (Yale University Press, New Haven and London) — author Laurence Lampert examines the reason why Nietzsche, the German philosopher who wrote *Thus Spoke Zarathushtra*, chose our Prophet's name for the protagonist of his book.

Lampert answers the question 'What did Nietzsche want to do by choosing Zarathushtra as his mouthpiece?' "Zarathushtra, the ancient Persian prophet, is better known by the inaccurate name the Greeks gave him — Zoroaster. Zarathushtra/Zoroaster is not just any ancient prophet, and in order to understand what is at stake in Nietzsche's *Zarathushtra*, it is helpful to know what his namesake had accomplished. Therefore, because no one had asked, as they should have asked, what the name Zarathushtra meant to him, Nietzsche felt constrained to ask this question of himself in *Ecce Homo*, a book that could be counted among the prefaces to *Zarathushtra*. Nietzsche says that Zarathushtra/Zoroaster's uniqueness lies in his being the first thinker to see morality, the battle of good and evil, as the very wheel in the machinery of things. He is the first Prophet to proclaim that a happy immortality is to be gained by moral behavior, by enlisting on the side of good

cosmic forces, which are pitted against the evil cosmic forces in the great drama that is the meaning of history.

"He is the author of the grave view of personal responsibility, according to which one will be held accountable for all one's deeds on a coming Day of Judgement, when those deeds will be weighed, and eternal bliss or eternal woe meted out to their doer. He is likewise the author of the grave view of the passage of time, according to which time is history and moves morally toward its consummation, when time will be arrested and the whole drama of a thousand acts brought to a welcome end. Zarathushtra is the founder of the linear view of time, the first to formulate the mighty vision that time is the progressive escalation of the struggle of good and evil, culminating in utopia for the worthy."

Lampert states that "Prophetic religions, both sacred and profane, that appeal to an authority higher than the ancestral or the civil and that speak for the great march of history are customarily thought to have originated with prophets of the *Old Testament*. But, as Nietzsche holds, they originated with Zarathushtra/Zoroaster; they are 'his work,' work that was taken over as their own by the Hebrew prophets, servants of a jealous God during their

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Babylonian captivity, just as it was taken over by Greek philosophers. His work was also appropriated by later, modern apocalyptic preachers who aimed to turn the world upside down to set it right. The revolutionary tradition of the West reformulates again and again the moral vision and religious mission of which Zarathushtra is the founder."

Also, a more recent philosopher-scholar of eastern religions, the late Joseph Campbell, in his television series on eastern religions which was broadcasted on public TV channels in the United States, stated in one of the episodes, that he considered the Iranian prophet Zarathushtra as the real originator of western rational thinking, not the Greeks, as commonly thought. Ancient Greek philosophers, such as Plato, were known to have studied the teachings of the Persian prophet Zarathushtra and incorporated them in their own philosophical works.

Our community leaders, priests, parents and teachers need to be aware of this information and should take the time and trouble to propagate it to our youth, so that they maintain their self-esteem and pride in their centuries-old religious heritage. Instead of getting turned off by the endless arguments on controversial topics, our

youth should feel motivated to read translations of the *Gathas*, the *Khordeh Avesta*, the *Vendidad*, etc and understand the significance of our rituals, so as to judge for themselves and incorporate this treasure-store of knowledge and wisdom in their individual lives and in the upliftment of our community.

MANECK NAWROJI BHUJWALA
San Jose, CA, USA

Tell us about Pithawalla

When we go to atash behrams and agiaries, the first thing that strikes our eyes is the imposing figure of our Prophet, Spitman Zarathushtra, in the main halls.

When we lift our heads after bowing before our Prophet in reverence, we read the legend "Copyright reserved by Sorab M. Pithawalla, 1939" painted on it.

It set me wondering whether we know anything about Pithawalla. Is he still living? Has Pithawalla painted other awe-inspiring pictures, besides those of our Holy Prophet? After a passage of 55 years, Zarathushtra's glory has remained as vivid and fresh as ever. Has he been honored by the community?

I will be much obliged if readers were to throw some light on artist Sorab M. Pithawalla.

BIHKAJI M. ADENWALLA

Unknown to Zoroastrians?

I have been intrigued why there is not even a small trace of Zoroastrian influence anywhere in the Gulf States or in the regions comprising the other side of the Persian Gulf.

Prophet Zarathushtra and his emissaries spread the Zoroastrian faith to the distant areas of Central Asia and Afghanistan. Darius the Great and his fleet conquered areas up to Greece in the Mediterranean.

The active Iranian ports in those days were the present-day Bandar Abbas and Bandar Shapur. The distance between these ports and the Arabian Peninsula on the other side is only about 40 miles. In the Straits of Hormuz, leading out of the Persian Gulf and into the wide open Arabian Sea, the distance between the two shores is barely 12 miles. I find it hard to believe that the fleet commanders of Darius did not know of the existence of this Arabian landmass and did not capture it and spread the faith there. The entire Arabian landmass — from what is present-day Kuwait in the Upper Gulf to the Musandam Peninsula of Oman in the Lower Gulf — was practically barren and hardly had any population. It would not have been difficult at all for the Iranian kings to grab the entire coastal regions and then push inwards to-

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wards the modern-day Riyadh and beyond.

Instead, what we are told these days is that excavations on the Failaka Island of Kuwait and the Sitra region of Bahrain, have shown traces of the ancient Dilmun (Christian) civilization. The Kuwaitis even claim that some kafalas (caravans) of Alexander the Great had passed through Failaka on their way to the conquest of India.

Why the Prophet Zarathushtra, and the Iranian padshahs who followed him, totally failed even to touch the Arab side of the Gulf, is a mystery which I believe needs to be probed now. Our holy books and historic records imply that the world at that time consisted only of Asia Minor, India, China, Turkey, Mesopotamia, etc, but not the present day Arab areas — particularly the Gulf States and the Arabian Peninsula. Even a passing reference to them is missing everywhere.

Can our historians provide some convincing explanations? DARA KADVA

Stand up and be counted

Time and again I have read in *Parsiana* many of our community members deriding and ridiculing Shri Sai Baba of Shirdi. I also know that most of them are his devotees, but they fear to acknowledge the truth and hide under the hypocrisy of their religion. The truth is that Shri Sai Baba of Shirdi had no religion. No one knows whether he was a Hindu or a Muslim.

But before we come to him, I would like to say a few words about our own religion. It is the oldest religion and our prophet's message is simple — follow the truth; burn all forms of falsehood; be liberal; love one another; appreciate the bounties of nature; be honest, illustrious and hardworking; in short lead a pure life. He did not say "my followers will only be Parsis or Iranis" or any such thing. Anyway certain rules are always enforced by the followers of all prophets. They usually apply to those people living in that century and under different conditions from today.

As knowledge increases, it is time to reevaluate the old rules and dogmas and make them conform to the present times. In the process of doing that, many of us go off in different directions and are either lost to the community, or have integrated ourselves in other faiths and beliefs. During such a time, a different type of savant comes to show the way. He does not advocate a conversion to his religion. He only gathers the scattered flock and reminds them that their religion is the best, and following it in spirit and form is the only

salvation.

Only a liberated soul can preach such a message. Sai Baba was such a soul. He had all the qualities of saintliness — the uncanny ability to solve the difficulties of his followers, by giving them support and solace when in pain or disease. Forget the fact that artis and poojas are performed in his mandir. He has not asked you to attend them. Just remember that Shri Sai Baba was an illuminated human being, whose sole purpose in life was to preach love, humanity for all living beings and to bring you face to face with your own religion, which so many of our own priests have forgotten to do.

Instead of preaching hatred for other communities — allowing only for Parsi-panoo — these people can do so much good work for the common Parsi who finds Babaji's message of love more caring for his spiritual needs than the ravings and rantings of our own so-called keepers of faith. They argue whether it was right for JRD's (late J.R.D. Tata) uthamna to be performed or whether a Parsi married to a non-Parsi can be allowed to be consigned to the tower of silence and pass strictures against our own community members entering the fire-temple!

Is it therefore any wonder that so many of our community members are attracted to Sai Babaji, and not to our so-called scholars whose only job seems to be to harp on outdated rules and dogmas, totally out of synchronization with the present times? Is Mr Nani Palkhivala an outcaste because he is a staunch believer of Shri Satya Sai Baba? I have seen him sit on the dais with Baba and extol his virtues. Will he, or others like him, be denied admission to the agiary or the tower of silence?

There is something basically wrong with our thinking. Our attitude is warped and tangled in the skeins of worn-out traditions and wishful thinking. The hands of time have moved on and not all the pompous pontifications of our priests can bring back the so-called oldie-goldies. We need new ideas in keeping with the times — acknowledgement of the role played by many liberated beings whose only purpose is to reinforce our tottering beliefs and make them conform to the present age. We need thinkers, intellectuals, scholars, many of whom are living abroad and doing commendable work for the furtherance of the Zoroastrian religion. Instead of acknowledging their work, which is inspired only by the extreme purity and the timeless message of Zoroaster, we go about ridiculing them, mocking them and spewing

venom and hatred for the work they have undertaken. How long can such a state of affairs continue?

Very soon our community will be relegated to the dusty archives of history. If you can read the writing on the wall, please stand up and be counted. (Ms) G. R. MEHTA

Whither, Parsiana?

At the moment *Parsiana* is just a newspaper dealing with mundane topics concerning the Parsi community. But, how long can you go on reading the same old themes again and again? It is like reading an old newspaper. Why do you waste pages on births, deaths, marriages when it is known that the information given is not total. Of what use is it?

Instead the community would benefit from articles on spiritual matters of concern specially for the youth, and also comparative religious articles which would broaden their vision. In my opinion this is one way of increasing your circulation, not only in India but also abroad.

Dr ERUCH B. FANIBUNDA

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Events and Personalities

Fort fire

The two heritage buildings that were engulfed in a fire in Bombay's Fort area in the early hours of August 2, 1994 were both Parsi owned. While the Eruchshaw Building owned by Dr (Ms) Dina Hakim was completely ravaged by the fire that smoldered for days after the outbreak, the adjoining Saroosh Building owned by Ms Ketayun Irani of Poona saw its central portion cave in, leaving the front and the rear portions intact. No life was lost; however extensive damage was caused to property as many of these buildings which have stone exteriors often have their beams and columns made of wood. Another hazard is the proximity of the buildings which necessitated that fire fighting operations be conducted from Dadabhai Naoroji Road, bringing traffic to a halt on this arterial street.

Barring the top floor of Eruchshaw Building which Hakim used as her residence, the other premises in these two buildings were the offices of concerns as diverse as Tata Housing, Mazda Color

Lab, Clifton's Departmental Store, Himalaya Drugs Company, Advance Commercial, Light of Asia restaurant... Parsiana Publications which was a tenant of Saroosh Building used to store its records and documents there which have been lost to posterity. The irony of the situation is that both these old structures were repaired at substantial cost over the last few years. Tata Housing in particular has been credited for putting in considerable amount and effort to restore the facade of the Eruchshaw Building "to its pristine beauty."

A short circuit. A burst gas cylinder. Deliberate mischief played by miscreants who wanted to destroy some evidence with the Central Bureau of Investigation — speculations were rife regarding the cause of the fire that reportedly started before 2 a.m. that Tuesday. Whatever the source, Eruchshaw Building was enveloped in flames in a short while. The staircase as also the majestic lift, believed to be the oldest in the city, were ravaged and the only escape route available to Hakim and her daughter who were on the premises

when the fire broke out, was to cut across the terrace of Saroosh Building on to another neighboring building with the assistance of some residents. The exquisite antiques and carved furniture that adorned the Hakims' home are now but a memory for those who remember the scenes from Ms Vijaya Mehta's feature film *Pestonjee* which was shot in this house.

Charitable concerns

The 87 cosmopolitan trusts referred to in *A Directory of Philanthropic Organisations in Bombay* include 11 that have been named after Zoroastrians or where the majority trustees are Zoroastrians. Barring the Tehmina Lakdawala Foundation which shows an income of Rs 25,858.15, the other 10 trusts show an income exceeding Rs 1,00,000.

"A staggering Rs 4.93 crores constituting 43 percent of the total annual income of the public charitable trusts listed in the *Directory* remains unutilized," was the finding of the Consumer Education and Research Centre (CERC), Ahmedabad which has worked on this compilation from the funding provided by the International Development Research Centre, Canada. The 67-page booklet gives an alphabetical listing of only those trusts which are secular, working for the spread of educational and research activities and expending monies on charitable objects rather than undertaking welfare activities themselves, explains the accompanying literature. In the second concise list these trusts are grouped according to their income in descending order.

The highest income as recorded by the Sir Dorabjee Tata Trust was Rs 18,764,565. Next among Parsi trusts came the Sir Shapoorjee Burjorjee Broacha Charitable Trust showing Rs 22,73,386. In the Rs 10 to 20 lakh income category

Firemen trying to douse the fire that enveloped Eruchshaw Building and Saroosh Building Photo: Varghese Fernandez



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Senior civil engineer Ratan Surveyor (right) was presented the Hind Rattan Award by Ramrao Adik at a function in Bombay on May 13, 1994. This award conferred by the NRI Welfare Society of India recognized Surveyor's "outstanding services, achievements and contributions." Barely a month earlier, it was his firm Ratan Surveyor and Company that bagged the Udyog Excellence Gold

Medal instituted by the Industrial Economic Forum. This distinction recognised "their excellence in the field of civil engineering" and lauded "their distinguished contribution (to) the industrialization of the country," mentions the citation. On September 8, 1994 Surveyor was conferred the Business Excellence Award by the Global Business Forum.

fall the Nanabhoy Jeejeebhoy Charitable Trust and the Jamshed and Shirin Guzder Trust. Concern (India) Foundation, The Kunverji Hosmosji (sic) Bhabha Foundation and the Forbes Charitable Trust are listed in the five to 10 lakh rupees category, and the Mancherji Edalji Joshi Memorial Trust Fund, The Maki Taraporewala Foundation and the Bai Navajbai Shavakshaw Dubash Charity Trust in the one to five lakh classification.

The figures reported do not relate to one uniform accounting year. But as explained in the booklet, they are based on the data available at the charity commissioner's office in October 1993.

The CERC which is a non-political, non-profitable, voluntary organization registered as a research institute by the central government, is distributing the *Directory* free of charge to consumer groups, journalists, government institutions and select individuals. There is a special appeal to public charitable trusts to expend their surplus funds on the objects of the trust. The charity commissioners have been requested to periodically publish information on trusts in the public interest.

Pocket Avesta

"It is not and certainly cannot be a substitute for our regular prayers in Avesta as prescribed by tradition," but the Pocket Avesta "can still be a band-aid or a bridge leading towards it by focusing the mind on our prescribed life-style," notes the foreword to the 136-page booklet in English compiled by Homi B. Minocher Homji of Canada.

Realizing that an individual's preoccupation with his daily routine leaves him little time to meditate or pray meaningfully, Minocher Homji felt that a compact, 4½"x5½" book comprising the essence of Avesta would induce an individual to utilize his commuting time familiarizing himself with the religion, and staying "attuned to our great heritage of wisdom and virtues." New initiates, students, non-Zoroastrian spouses and their children too may be able to grasp the basics of the religion, its obligations and ethics, "and hopefully some day fully accept the Good Reli-

gion," mentions the foreword. Thirdly during periods of stress and strain, distress or confusion, "a random opening of this pocket book may render guidance, solace, solution... to the ruffled spirit," it is hoped.

"These gems or quotes are not intact selections or true translations of Avestan words and phrases," cautions Minocher Homji. "Rather they are selected potent ideas which represent the essence of our prayers...and also include some supportive scriptural/scholarly quotes from well-known scholars and priests" like Khurshedji Cama, Dasturs Khurshed Dabu and Maneckji Dhalla, John Hinnells, S. Insler, Ali Jafarey... "Even in our daily prayers there is much variance in translation. Therefore in several cases I have reproduced the views of different scholars on the same passage," the author clarifies. Certain explanatory notes in parenthesis are the author's personal views.

The book is divided into eight sections with a chapter each devoted to Ahura Mazda and Zarathushtra, and another to the Amesha Spentas and the Yeshts (sic). Introductory devotional prayers and invocations are clubbed in one chapter, the *Gathas* and *Yasna* in another, and *Khordeh Avesta* and *Niaishes* separately. One chapter concerns philosophy, and the last, ethics.

In one of the succinct summations in the book, Zoroastrianism is defined in the words of Dr Haug as "a theology of monotheism, philosophy of dualism and morality of the triad of good thoughts, good words and good deeds."

Priced at Rs 50, the book is available from Ms Homai Modi, c/o the K. R. Cama Oriental Institute, 136 Bombay Samachar Marg, Fort, Bombay 400023. Rs 5 are to be added for mailing charges and Rs 6 if a cheque is drawn on a bank outside Bombay. The proceeds of the sale will be used by the Institute for its repairs and maintenance, specifies Minocher Homji.

Marriage made meaningful

In the course of the ashirwad or wedding ceremony the officiating priest takes the assent of the two witnesses, the groom and the bride. Do Zoroastrians know what they are consenting to? As explained in the booklet *Nuptial Blessings*, a bilingual booklet in English and Gujarati pub-

Minocher Homji (left) and Panthaki





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lished by Ervad Rustomji Panthaki, principal of the Dadar Athornan Boarding Madressa, the groom's witness is asked, "Have you therefore agreed in consideration of this match to give 2000 Nishapur dirhams and two gold dinars?" To this query he is supposed to reply, "Yes, I have agreed." Next the bride's witness is asked, "Have you sincerely given a pledge to give in marriage (this maiden) for life with a view to the advancement of your family, with truthful thought, for threefold word, and with the promotion of your own meritorious actions?" The forthcoming response should be: "Yes, I have given a pledge." Finally the priest seeks a conformation from the couple: "Have you accepted with truthful thought this contract for life?" They are jointly supposed to respond, "*Pasand-e kardim* (Yes, we have accepted)."

The 69-page booklet has a foreword in English as also in Gujarati by Dastur (Dr) Kaikhusroo JamaspAsa wherein he explains that Zoroastrianism views marriage as a sacred religious institution. He divides the Zoroastrian wedding ceremony into four parts: holy ablution, a symbolic union of the pair, a solemn affirmation, and admonitions and benedictions.

The chapter on the introductory ceremony provides a brief insight into the hand clasp, the seven rounds of cotton thread, the throwing of rice grains, etc. Then follow three chapters giving the English transliteration of the ashirwad ceremony prayers with the corresponding English translations of the nuptial blessings, nuptial benedictions with the names of the illustrious, and health benedictions.

While there are several spelling errors, the language used is poetic: "May the angel Rashna grant you truthful progress.. May the angel Fravardin grant you growth in spiritual strength..." or "Be profusely stored up like the winter season, Be blooming like the spring season, Be sweet-scented like the musk..."

For further enquiries regarding this booklet contact the principal, Athornan Boarding Madressa, 651/52 Firdosi Road, Mancherji Joshi Parsi Colony, Dadar, Bombay 400014.

Oldest Cricket Club

The Young Zoroastrian Cricket Club (YZCC) whose membership roll boasts such names as Polly Umrigar, Nari Contractor, Sunil Gavaskar, Sachin Tendulkar,

Vinod Kambli, Dara Dotiwalla, Piloos Reporter and many others, recognizes that "during the last two and a half decades, Parsi cricket has slowly declined. Today there is not a single Parsi cricketer who is of test level." "The Parsi youth... have taken to activities other than cricket..." regrets YZCC president Tehmul Kandawalla. This lacuna, they hope will be filled once they commence with their cricket clinic — a coaching program to give intensive training to promising youngsters. The estimated cost of this new scheme will be Rs 1.5 lakhs of which Rs 40,000 have already been raised, a sizeable donation coming in from businessman Jamshed Guzder, informs Pesi Paghdwalla, secretary of the YZCC.

Considered to be the oldest cricket club in the country, the YZCC has been in existence for the last 127 years. Functioning from a tent at Azad Maidan, besides cricket, the YZCC offers table tennis, chess, draughts and cards amenities to its members. Electricity connections in the tent were installed barely 10 years ago. The Club is now making efforts to replace their tent with a semi-permanent structure if permission is granted to them.

Their corpus of Rs 3.5 lakhs has been

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built over the years from the subscription fees contributed by members, the sale of tea on a commission basis, and the fund raising program organized by them when the Club completed 125 years in 1992.

Presently they have 288 members of whom 175 are life members, 35 ordinary members, 30 associate members, 20 honorary life members and 28 net members.

Service to SSI sector

Managing director of White Cloud Filter Pads Private Limited, Rusy Kapadia has been inducted as chairman of the SSI Wing of the Pune based Maharashtra Chamber of Commerce and Industries (MCCI). His nomination as chairman for the current year was made by the executive committee of MCCI "as a gesture of recognition of your services to the SSI sector and to your fellow entrepreneurs," he was informed in a letter issued by the MCCI deputy secretary Pramod Thombre.

There are over 2,500

At the YZCC's 125th year celebrations (from left):

Kandawalla, Ajit Wadekar and Paghdiwalla

(Below): Umrigar (left) and Contractor

MCCI also took the initiative to promote an Electronic Manufacturers Estate on Pune Satara Road where 40 small scale entrepreneurs are operating.

A management graduate from the Symbiosis Institute in Pune, Kapadia's own specialization is in the field of filter sheets which his firm has been manufacturing for the last 29 years, reportedly the pioneers in the line. Besides catering to the pharmaceutical, chemical, paints, breweries, beverages and other industries in the private and public sectors, continuous emphasis on research and development has now given their filter sheets the status of import substitutes which are also being exported to the foreign market, notes a press release.

Killers on the prowl

Elderly Zoroastrians in Bombay, alone at home during daytime, have been increasingly victimized by criminals who enter their homes, kill or injure the unsuspecting individuals and then flee with whatever valuables and jewelry they can lay their hands on.

In end September, 86-year-old Dr Marzban Rustomji Havelivala and his 75-year-old wife Piloo were murdered in their three-bedroom flat in Kaiser-e-Ayesha building on Motilal Street in Agripada. In early September, 70-year-old Ms Soonu Darabsha Master's decayed body was found at her house in Jogeshwari. In end August Ms Jaloo Nazir was attacked by hoodlums at her residence but the gutsy octogenarian survived the assault. In early July,

75-year-old Ms Paridokht Ardeshtir Bakhshay was killed at her son's residence at Heera Meher on Colaba's Wodehouse Road.

Both the husband and the wife appeared to have been strangled to death in the case of the Havelivalas, according to a report in *The Times of India* of September 28, 1994. The servant who brought home the grandchildren from school found the man, a paralytic, tied to his easy chair, his mouth gagged. The wife was in the bedroom, hands and legs tied, gagged and strangled with her nylon dupatta. The motive seems to be robbery as the safe and jewelry box had been emptied, according to *The Times* report. Presently suspicions have been pinned on two former servants.

More fortunate than the rest was Nazir.

The Club retains the name Zoroastrian even though since 1952 it has opened its doors to members of all communities. The YZCC takes pride in reporting that Sachin Tendulkar and Vinod Kambli had played for this Club when they were in their early teens. In fact as writes Mansur Ali Khan Pataudi in the souvenir brought out two years ago, "I can't think of many cricketers who have lived in Bombay, who do not recognize the Young Zoroastrian Club's contribution to the game for more than a century."

Founded in 1867 by Hiraji Costa, the man who is considered the father of the Club is Jeejeebhoy Billimoria who was in command for several decades until his demise. The annual tournament that is organized by the Club is financed from the donation of the late past president Manekji Bharucha. These tournaments were essentially meant to prepare 'colts' for the quadrangular and pentagonal matches which because of their communal nature, were later discontinued. Since then, interest in the tournaments has waned. The YZCC does however hope to bring fresh zest to their tournaments. "As per our Club's motto of 'slow and steady' we hope that our new cricketers will one day retrieve our past glory..." states the souvenir.



members of the 60-year-old MCCI of which nearly 80 percent are affiliated to the SSI, states Kapadia. The MCCI under the present presidency of industrialist Darius Forbes focuses on trade and industry around Pune. The services it offers to its members include a commercial reference library, conference facilities, energy conservation advice, excise and customs advice, services to importers and exporters, agricultural division... The SSI Wing concerns itself with the difficulties encountered by small scale industries throughout Maharashtra on matters involving the central and state government officials, sales tax, excise and customs departments, electricity board, etc. Besides helping upcoming entrepreneurs by introducing them to financial institutes and potential customers, the

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Preparing to go to the fire-temple on the morning of the Shehenshahi New Year on August 23, 1994, she had sent her servant down to fetch her a cab. She answered the doorbell to a couple of strangers who sought entry on the pretext that they had brought her some gifts. When she was knocked down, she pretended to lie unconscious until the hoodlums left with some booty. She was however left with a fractured arm, reports her son Dr Adi Nazir. The criminal who was nabbed by the police proved to be the servant who had worked for her for two to three years, he states.

Master's body was found by the police when some neighbors in Malcolm Baug complained of an obnoxious stench. According to police investigations as reported in the *Jam-e-Jamshed* of September 18, she had apparently been attacked several days earlier.

Following an eye operation, Bakhshay had been brought to her son Aflatoon's residence for recuperation. But while he was away at work and his wife had stepped out to run an errand some thief broke into the house and decamped with valuables after killing the old woman, mentions *The Bombay Samachar* of July 9, 1994.

Compiled by Parinaz Gandhi

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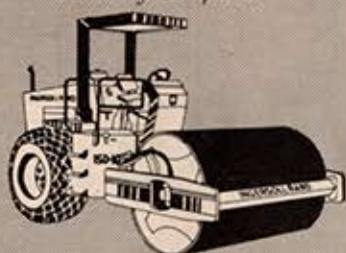
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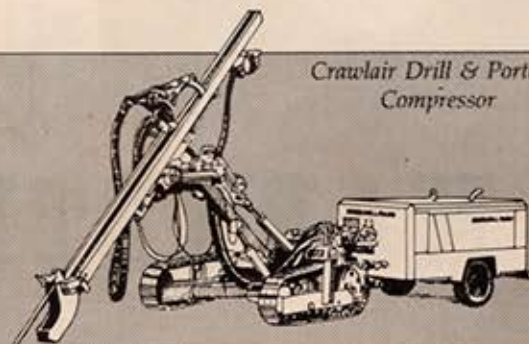
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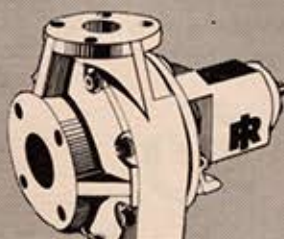
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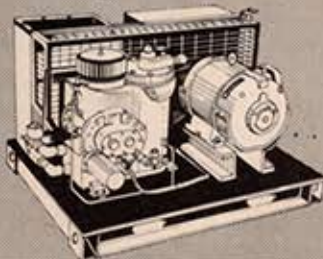
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HONG KONG'S Ruttonjee Hospital

Arnavaz S. Mama

When Hong Kong Governor Christopher Patten formally declared the new Ruttonjee Hospital open on April 22, 1994, he was treading ground made sacred by service to humanity, this being the fourth edifice there to tend to the changing medical needs of Hong Kong.

The 614-bed Hospital jointly financed by The Hong Kong Tuberculosis, Chest and Heart Diseases Association (TCHDA) and the colony's Hospital Authority in a 20 to 80 ratio, offers holistic patient care as a general hospital. It incorporates state of the art diagnostic radiology and pathology with 24-hour service in the departments of general and chest medicine and surgery. Supporting services like physiotherapy, occupational service, pharmacy, dietetics, speech therapy, computerized patient services, and 50 day beds add to its versatility.

The Hospital, which has cost over \$ 300 million, specializes in geriatric care and concentrates on providing early detection and treatment of disease among the elderly through its district based outreach geriatric assessment program, notes the *United Daily News*. Additionally, the Hospital's large rehabilitation garden with 400 trees and 5,000 flowering plants, well laid out in the grounds with benches and fishponds, will help its patients to convalesce and the staff and visitors to work in a pleasing atmosphere. According to the *Eastern Express*, the Ruttonjee Hospital has already eased the pressure on the other Hong Kong hospitals by taking in 4,000 patients in the past six months.

Between two spells of incarceration in Japanese occupied Hong Kong, Jehangir

Hormusjee Ruttonjee watched helplessly as his eldest daughter Tehmi succumbed to tuberculosis in 1943. Though his business was in shambles and both he and his son Dhun were each sentenced to five years of imprisonment (for humanitarian aid to other Hong Kong residents), Ruttonjee conceived the idea of a sanatorium where TB patients could receive treatment, writes his grand nephew Rusi Shroff, currently chairman of the TCHDA.

Hardly was the Pacific War over when Ruttonjee gathered together a number of

and stripped during the war and the ensuing Japanese occupation. With Ruttonjee's donation of Hong Kong \$ 800,000 the Association was able to rehabilitate the former hospital into the new Ruttonjee Sanatorium in early 1949.

Assessing the contribution of the Sanatorium to the control of TB in Hong Kong, Sister M. Gabriel, former consultant chest physician and medical superintendent of the Ruttonjee Sanatorium, refers to its "significant role in the research that led to the discovery that with the introduction of newer drugs...the duration of the treatment could be considerably shortened. This is now known as short course chemotherapy which can be completed in four months for most patients. This discovery was of tremendous significance because up to the 1970s the drugs had to be given for at least 12 months. Short course chemotherapy has now been adopted as routine practice for patients with tuberculosis throughout the world." Together with an efficient BCG program accounting for the inoculation of more than 99 percent of the newborn, this led to a dramatic drop in TB cases.

Gabriel and Sister Aquinas (the Sanatorium's first medical superintendent) were both honorary lecturers in the University of Hong Kong's department of medicine from 1952 and the curriculum of medical students included clinical training on the management of TB in the Ruttonjee Sanatorium, notes an article on Ruttonjee's contribution to the control of TB in Hong Kong in a special souvenir brought out on the occasion of the inaugural of the new Hospital.

The site, with its old buildings—among



In its second incarnation as the Royal Naval Hospital (1880)

close and influential friends to form the Hong Kong Anti-Tuberculosis Association with himself as chairman of the board of directors.

By then TB was a raging killer in the island colony, accounting for 50 percent of its fatalities. Looking around for a suitable site, Ruttonjee homed in on the dilapidated Royal Naval Hospital — bombed, looted



Jehangir Ruttonjee's legendary concern for the health of the people of Hong Kong continues in the island's newest hospital



*The new Ruttonjee Hospital – same site, changed environment
Governor Patten with Shroff and Hospital trustees at the formal inauguration
J. Ruttonjee: a synonym for compassion*

the first to be constructed in the island as notes former consultant chest physician Michael Humphries — had been built as a seaman's hospital financed by Jardine Matheson and Company (of which Sir Jamsetji Jejeebhoy had been a director — see "Zoroastrians prosper in Hong Kong," *Zoroastrians Abroad*, Parsiana, September 1992) plus a public subscription of \$6,000. For the next 29 years it treated seamen and government servants, with venereal disease accounting for a third of its cases. Incurring regular losses despite being rebuilt by Jardine Matheson and Company in 1866, it was sold by the latter to the British Admiralty in 1873. The delighted naval authorities described it as "perfect as it is possible to conceive." Its original 58 beds were soon increased to 106 and during the Franco-Chinese hostilities of April 1885 the sick and wounded of both sides were admitted here. After almost 14 years of seeking, the navy secured the aid of female nursing staff in 1904, recruiting from the Royal Naval Nursing Service — an association that continued up to 1942. The Hospital was the target of Japanese shelling which wrecked its staff quarters and operation theaters. Gas, electricity and water supply failed. "Some surgical operations were performed in the corridors by candlelight. Although there was an extensive network of air-raid tunnels under the hospital, most staff were too busy to use them. (These were filled up before the new Hospital was built.) Food and water were scarce; at one point there was one bowl of water available to wash 12 patients," writes Humphries.

After the war the Admiralty abandoned the Hospital, preferring to build anew on another site and in 1947 the old Naval Hospital was handed over to the Hong Kong Anti-Tuberculosis Association and was rehabilitated as the Ruttonjee Sanatorium.

The enormous problem of staffing the Sanatorium was solved when a fortunate meeting led to a connection with Ireland's Columban Sisters dedicated to the treatment of TB. The Sisters manned the Sanatorium for 40 years, withdrawing only in 1988. As doctors, nurses and administrators, they served the TB patients at the Sanatorium, their knowhow and efficiency being tapped by the Hong Kong University for the training of medical graduates and undergraduates.

In 1956, Jehangir donated towards the building of a convalescent home in memory of his second daughter who died of cancer

in 1953. The Freni Memorial Convalescent Home provided 110 patients a place to convalesce after their chemotherapy before going home.

Dhun was a pioneer in the planning and formulation of the 625-bed Grantham Hospital — the foremost heart hospital in South East Asia. He remained chairman of the TCHDA until his death in 1974.

Thus, the site which once catered to the needs of seamen, the navy and the tubercular infected is now the first in the colony to perceive and provide for a new need — that of an aging population. It is remarkable too that Hong Kong's Health Authority has maintained the Ruttonjee name — and the presence of his two family members, Shroff and grand-daughter Vera Ruttonjee-Desai, on the board of directors — in salute to one who sublimated his personal tragedy to fight — and win — the battle against a pestilence that menaced the community among whom he lived.

Shanghai revisited

"The first glimpse of Shanghai seen from outside the railway station was unimpressive — the usual hustle and bustle, crowds of people, bicycles and vehicles weaving through the teeming humanity, and beggars. Underlying all this was a vibrancy and excitement that a metropolis often holds for a first time visitor. For the 21 members of the Parsi Anjuman from Hong Kong this was a historical moment because some of them had spent a better part of their youth in this city before the Chinese Revolution," writes Ms Dina Shroff of Hong Kong. For some of them the trip "brought back nostalgic memories of Shanghai of the 1930s, then known as the

'Paris of the East' — a melting pot of British, French, Russian and other nationalities blended together — all vying for commercial power and the wealth that shipping property and opium brought them...

"We visited the Indian consul general, Mr Subramanian and the vice consul Mr Vora. We were welcomed to his modest but comfortable house and made to feel at home. A splendid dinner made up of South Indian and Chinese dishes was laid out for us and we spent a pleasant evening drinking, chatting, eating and taking numerous photographs for posterity. Jal Shroff, president of the Parsi association of Hong Kong thanked the consul general for his hospitality and presented him with an asho farohar and an inscription commemorating our visit to Shanghai after 45 years!

"A few of us proceeded by coach to Fuzhou Street to see if we could locate any traces of the Parsi buildings which once stood at the corner of the intersection. It was a bit too optimistic on our part but we persevered and finally located Site 539. Gone was the prayer hall, garden and cemetery. In its place stood a children's education center. As we were contemplating the site a group of rosy-cheeked children came out and regarded us with quiet curiosity — a few smiled and returned our waves. It was gratifying to feel that our premises were now used to educate the lovely young children of New China! This visit was not in vain because we did discover part of the prayer hall building behind the education center. The

Hong Kong Zoroastrians in Shanghai



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facade, though dilapidated, bore the emblem of our afargani and atash.

"Returning to Hilton Hotel we met Burjor Guzdar—the only resident Parsi in Shanghai at present. Guzdar is with Lloyd Shipping. History repeats itself, though on a different scale. The Parsis were shipbuilders and Sir Jamsetji Jejeebhoy way back in 1890, was also connected with shipping but in a rather different way. He operated a fleet of ships for Jardine Matheson and Company—one of the big hongs in China and the Far East."

Saluting Dotivala

Rutgers University's assistant registrar Ms Zarine T. Dotivala was uniquely honored when the US flag was flown for her on the US Capitol, Washington DC, at the request of Bob Franks, member of Congress, informs George White, architect of the Capitol. Dotivala has been on the job in New Jersey for nearly 20 years, notes a press release. In 1982 Dotivala had been honored with the degree of master of education by Rutgers University.

Be aware and healthy

Natural hygiene is not only a way of life but also a way of looking at life, Dr Keki Sidhwa of the United Kingdom told the Zoroastrian community of Southern California. The focus of his talk was the blending of western scientific methods with the ancient healing therapies of other cultures, notes the report from Meher Amalsad.

The dagli-clad speaker (Sidhwa wears the dagli at all international conferences, informs Amalsad) advocated the homogenous fusion of mind, body and spirit to activate awareness which then overhauls the human system. This awareness, which comes from pure observation sans judgement, is normally developed through meditation and prayer, informs the write-up.

"Modern medicine plays a vital role in treating emergency illness, but even with all its scientific technology it has failed to emphasize the preventive side of keeping a nation or an individual healthy," Sidhwa said. He advocated love and laughter for the development of a healthy life-style, shored up by wholesome foods that are high in complex carbohydrates and fibre, moderate in protein and low in fat, cholesterol, sugar and salt.

Over the past 30 years Sidhwa's Shalimar Health Home in UK has helped more than 25,000 people to overcome their

ailments by following a hygienic life-style, notes Amalsad. It offers chiropractic and osteopathic assistance, nutritional and emotional counselling, relaxation and meditation classes, and massage therapy. Sidhwa is said to have offered his expertise to set up a similar health clinic for the benefit of Zoroastrians in southern California.

W. Georgia selects Sethna

"We have selected an outstanding educator as president of West Georgia College. He will bring a high degree of leadership to the presidency."

Dr Stephen Portch, chancellor of the University System of Georgia thus announced the appointment of Dr Beheruz Sethna as the new president of West Georgia College after a 10-month search. Sethna, who fills the vacancy created by the demise of former president Maurice Townsend, thus becomes the first member of an ethnic minority to be so appointed.

Portch's memorandum on the appointment further notes, "We consistently heard that he (Sethna) had a superb intellect, was a caring individual, was a total professional, was quick to give others credit, was a consensus builder, was totally dependable, was extremely hard-working, was a leader, and had 'truth as his strongest ethic.' The community members particularly praised his family's contribution to the Beaumont community."

A PhD from Columbia University who has completed post doctoral programs at Indiana and Harvard Universities, Sethna's initial education took him through the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Bombay and the Indian Institute of Management (IIM), Ahmedabad. Among the distinctions that have come his way is the unique US honor for instructional innovation from the Decision Sciences Institute for six consecutive years: for innovations in marketing, product management, management information systems, decision support systems, computer integrated manufacturing and communications across the curriculum, informs the press release. The son of Mithu and Nariman Sethna of Bombay has been a senior Fulbright scholar



and has authored 35 papers and a book titled *Research Methods in Marketing and Management*.

"People are the most important resource we have; they are our greatest strength," says Sethna, adding, "I strive to build consensus around a clear vision. My leadership style is by example and by motivation."

Sethna's last appointment was as interim executive vice president for academic and student affairs at Lamar University, Beaumont, Texas. Prior to that he was dean of Lamar's College of Business and had held appointments at Clarkson University and multinational corporations like Procter and Gamble and Lever Brothers. Sethna's wife Madhavi is an assistant professor of computer science at Lamar University in Orange, Texas. They have two children: Anita (16) and Shaun (13).

Academic distinction

The President's awardee for educational excellence, Cyrus Mistry of Michigan, USA, had the pick of Ivy League universities for his further education and has chosen to enter the Johns Hopkins University to pursue studies in medicine/medical engineering, informs a press release.

The son of Jehangir and Arnaz Mistry, Cyrus graduated with top grade and first rank from Michigan's Novi High School. The valedictorian for his class, debater, pianist and thespian, Cyrus held office in a number of the school's groups and societies including the French and International Clubs, informs his bio-data.

The varied school activities were buttressed by an equal commitment to social service which included participation in the child day care program, the public library, tutoring, volunteering in operation theaters and emergency rooms of the Annapolis Hospital and teaching English to foreign students. Cyrus' dedication has been recognized through a harvest of awards, among them being the University of Michigan Alumni Scholarship, Cornell University National Scholarship and the National Honor Society Outstanding Service Award as notes the press release.



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"A Zoroastrian again"

With the concurrence of five high priests, octogenarian Neville Wadia was initiated into the Zoroastrian fold

Before his initiation into the Zoroastrian fold on September 24, 1994, the octogenarian doyen of the Wadia family Neville Wadia consulted the high priests in India. Five of the seven high priests whose permission was sought consented to his navjote being performed; two had reservations. Parsiana reproduces here the unedited exchange of correspondence between Wadia and the high priests, the text of the notarized certificate issued by noted solicitor Shiavax Vakil, and Wadia's declaration to the Bombay Parsi Punchayet that "my dearest desire and wish has now been fulfilled and that I am now a Zoroastrian."

Dear Dasturji Dr Firoz Kotwal

It was very kind of you to receive me this morning and enabled us to have such a full and free discussions on the possibilities of my reappointment to the Zoroastrian faith.

While I see your point in objecting to my having a Navjote, I am particularly grateful to you for finding an alternative method of my becoming a Zoroastrian again.

I am following this suggestion of yours by writing to all the High Priests. I am enclosing a copy which is for you in particular.

I have spoken to Dasturji JamaspAsa, who also agrees with your suggestion, and will support my request, and I trust all your colleagues will also accept your suggestion and welcome me back into the faith. With kind regards and Gratitude

Yours sincerely

NEVILLE N. WADIA

April 11, 1994

Dear Dasturji JamaspAsa, I am deeply grateful to you for all the assistance which you have given me in my desire to become a Zoroastrian.

As suggested by Dasturji Kotwal, I am writing to all the Head Priests, requesting them to support Dasturji Kotwal's suggestion, as per copy attached.

I am very pleased that I was able to talk to you again on the 'phone, and that you agreed to the idea put forth by Dasturji Kotwal.

I shall look forward to my return to Bombay, and hope that, with everybody concurring, I shall have the blessings of the Head Priests of the Zoroastrian faith.

With kind regards

Yours sincerely

NEVILLE N. WADIA

April 11, 1994

Dear Dasturji

In spite of my being brought up in the Church of England, I have all my life, and particularly later, been a strong believer in the teachings of Lord Zoroaster, particularly because of its positive attitude and its emphasis on good thoughts, good words, good deeds, and charity.

Ever since I finished my schooling in England, I came back to India. I have since then felt and have been accepted by the community as a Parsee, irrespective of my religion. My own roots are purely Zoroastrian, and under certain circumstances which were beyond my control, this deviation has come into my life. So my desire is to come back into the original Zoroastrian



PHOTO: THE BOMBAY SAMACHAR

fold. I have always tried to follow the teachings of Zoroaster and act accordingly, especially in the Parsee community.

For many years I have not only regretted that I am not a Zoroastrian, but had a strong desire to resume the religion of my ancestors, and I felt more a Zoroastrian than the religion in which I was brought up. Even then, in my life-time I have never gone into an Agiary, although I am very anxious to do so, because I did not like to hurt the sentiments of the community; and if you will agree to the suggestion of Dasturji Kotwal, I trust that I will be able to enter into any Agiary or Atashbehrum. When I go to London, and particularly to Toronto, which I do several times a year, I have always said openly how I would have liked to be a Zoroastrian, and many of my good friends there openly asked me "why do not you become one".

After discussing the possibilities with those good friends of mine, they aver that there is nothing to stop me, and the Priest, particularly in Toronto, said he would be agreeable to perform my Navjote.

As I do not want to cause any disruption in our little community, I have referred this question to Dr Kaikhushroo M. JamaspAsa and later to Dr Mirza, who said that they will not oppose but they will be in favour of my having my Navjote. But I asked Dasturji JamaspAsa if he would be good enough to have a word with Dasturji Dr Firoz Kotwal. The answer which Dasturji JamaspAsa gave me was that Dasturji Kotwal was not in favour of my having a Navjote.

So I went to visit Dasturji Kotwal to explain my desires to become a Zoroastrian, and after a considerable discussion he said he would be in favour of my having a 'nan' or ablution Bath. After that and suitable prayers, I could put on my Sadra-Kusti and be like any other Zoroastrian. He said Navjotes were limited to children up to the maximum age of 15. He told me I would then be free to enter Agiaries and Atashbehrams, particularly the WADIAJI's Atashbehram. I also inquired whether if I died in Bombay, I could be taken to Doongerwadi like any other Zoroastrian, to which he confirmed that that would be perfectly in order. I happen to believe that it is not only a part of our religion, but it is God's natural way of disposal of the dead.

Dasturji Kotwal said that he would like me to write to all the High Priests, and that if the majority of the learned Priests were agreeable to this solution, then I could have this 'Nan' or ablution ceremony, and take my place amongst the believers in Ahura Mazda and the teachings of Lord Zarathushtra.

I am, therefore, writing this letter to each one of you, asking you to support the suggestion of Dasturji Dr Kotwal and accept me into my own ancestors' Zoroastrian faith after these special ceremonies have been completed. I might add that I have repeated my discussions with Dasturji Kotwal to Dasturji JamaspAsa, who also agreed that this would be a proper solution.

I believe you know what my Family have done for the Parsee community and what staunch Parsees we are.

I am, therefore, writing to you to seek your support. I hope I have a positive response from you and allow me to rejoin the faith of my ancestors in which I believe. With kind regards

Yours sincerely

NEVILLE N. WADIA

April 11, 1994

1) Dasturji Hormuzdiar K. Mirza 2) Dasturji Kaikobad Ferozeji Dastur 3) Dasturji Meherji Rana Dastur Kaikobad Dastur Meherji Rana 4) Sardar Dasturji

Hormuzdiar Noshirwan Dastur 5) Dasturji Dr Firoz Kotwal 6) Dasturji Dr Kaikhushroo M. JamaspAsa 7) Dasturji Noshirwan M. Dastur

Dear Mr Neville Wadia

We acknowledge receipt of your letter dated 11 April 1994 in connection with the solution proposed by Dasturji Dr Firoze M. Kotwal regarding your rejoining the faith of your ancestors, as you sincerely so desire.

We appreciate the services rendered by your illustrious forefathers to the Zoroastrian community. We appreciate also your honest and genuine desire to rejoin the faith for the sake of the doctrines of our religion and for no other ulterior motive.

It has been stated in *The Persian Rivayats* that it is proper and allowable to take back a Zoroastrian man or woman who wishes to revert to his/her religion which he/she has abandoned under certain circumstances and accepted an alien religion.

Your letter carries terms of solution laid down by Dasturji Kotwal. We do agree with the said terms but we firmly believe that the Navjote ceremony should be performed as an exceptional case. In fact, the *nahn* ceremony (sacred ablution) precedes the Navjote ceremony proper.

Regarding your entry into an Atashbahram and/or Agiary, we state that in India, particularly in Bombay and towns of Gujarat, entry into such places of worship will be determined by the concerned authorities and/or the Anjuman of that place. With kind regards

Yours sincerely

H. K. MIRZA

K. M. JAMASPASA

April 19, 1994

Dear Mr Wadia

This will acknowledge receipt of your registered letter of the 11th instant which was received by me a few days back, but due to heavy pressure of ecclesiastical work it was not possible for me to reply to the same before this, for which I hope to be excused.

I am very happy to note from your letter that you have met Dasturji Dr Feroze Kotwal of the Wadiaji's Atash Behram regarding your desire to re-join the faith of your ancestors and you have my full blessings.

It is a well known fact in the Persian Rivayat that it is quite proper and allowable to take back a Zoroastrian man or woman who wishes to revert to his/her religion which he/she has abandoned under certain circumstances

and accepted an alien religion.

Your above letter carries terms of solution laid down by Dasturji Kotwal and I am of the firm belief that the Navjote Ceremony should be performed as an exceptional case, in fact the Nahan ceremony (sacred ablution) precedes the Navjote ceremony proper.

After your Navjote ceremony is performed your entry in the Atash Behrams and Agiaries in India particularly in Bombay and towns of Gujrat, will have to be determined by the concerned authorities or the Anjumans of that place, but so far as I am concerned after the Navjote ceremony is performed as mentioned above I will be only too glad to receive you in my Agiary. With kind regards

Yours sincerely

HORMAZDIAR DASTUR

April 28, 1994

My Dear Sir

I am very grateful to you for your letter of 11th April 1994. I greatly admire and esteem the cravings and feelings expressed in it, for our Daena, and our Community. Surely, it is a sign of a spiritual elevation and even an inner emergency that has prompted you to arrive at the thinking you have so touchingly set out in your letter. I would not be fit to be called a Dastur if I fail to appreciate this.

However, I have to invite your worthy attention to this truth that good thoughts, words and deeds are not the only essential ingredients of our religion. This moral and ethical aspect is inseparably inter-woven with certain spiritual Disciplines and institutions. Navjote, Sureh Kushti, Manthra Prayers, Holy Fires, Dokhma, Rituals and Ceremonies, and Boonak-pasbani constitute the equally crucial and indispensable part of our Religion. It was more to save, preserve and protect these Disciplines and Institutions than mere moral principles that our forefathers left the land where we had ruled for centuries. Here in India we have survived in the midst of all the storms and upheavals because of our tenacity to preserve and live by these divine exercises and exertions.

In particular, we the Dasturs and Mobeds were and are ever anxious to see that the tenets and practices are protected in their pristine traditional forms without any dilution or compromise. Sir, it was (and is) this unflinching urge that has made us survive as a small but distinct community. Otherwise, all the great Religions do teach, and some of them more vehemently, good thoughts, words and deeds; and no Religion has a negative

attitude; all subscribe to, and prescribe for, the ultimate Aim of merging with GOD.

We, the Dasturs and Mobeds nurtured in these spiritual disciplines, are taught that they are not merely symbolic, as some West Oriented people believe; they have certain positive divine effects within us as well as out in nature. Since we are ignorant of these subtle forces and energies operating in Nature, all that we can do is to preserve and protect them in their traditional forms without any deviation.

Having examined the matter from this angle I am extremely sorry that I am most reluctantly compelled to disagree with the suggestion mentioned in your letter. I say this with profoundest respect and admiration towards your esteemed self.

The suggestion is based on a traditional rule that no Navjote can be performed at your venerable age. That far, there is an anxiety to preserve a tradition. But to say that Nahn can be substituted for a Navjote ceremony is a much larger breach of the tradition. Perhaps your august presence and a sincere anxiety to help you, have placed a glossy cover on this grand contradiction.

There are several other reasons. For instance, the tradition requires that you have to untie and tie the Kushti reciting certain set of prayers before entering any Holy Fire Temple. The question will be: How would you do this, if you have not passed through the Navjote ceremony.

Thus the matter involves two traditions. One is that, no Navjote can be performed and the other is that Nahn cannot be a substitute for Navjote. What "suitable prayers" are to be recited after the Nahn are not specified in your letter. In any case, no tradition has come down regarding such prayers. The two traditions put together, thus create an impasse.

As regards Toronto priests, I will say, without intending any offence, that most of them have, in the guise of the alleged "circumstances in North America", broken traditions after traditions of our Daena. I will not elaborate this, but just mention that they are the least qualified to express anything about the ritualistic aspect of our Religion and any reliance on them is bound to lead us astray.

Once again, Sir, with extreme humility and deepest respect for your noble sentiments, I would urge you not to create a controversy in the Community. Looking to the general tendency of our community I have no hesitation to say that a large part of our community is tradition-oriented or to use an over-worked word, orthodox.

I end with fervent prayer that may God help you in arriving at the truth.

With the deepest affection and admiration
I am

Yours very sincerely

M. MEHERJIRANA

May 2, 1994

Respected Sir

Received your letter 11th April '94 but I am sorry that I am unable to reply you soon as I was very busy in my work.

We are very happy that you had got great respect in our religion and you are anxious to accept our Zoroastrian religion.

Whatever our Bombay's scholars Dasturji Dr. Firoz Kotwal, Dasturji Dr Hormujdiyar Mirza & Dasturji Dr. Kekhusru Jamaspasha had given the answer and guide you

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properly. The same answer is mine that you take the nahan (sacred bath) and do navjote and afterwards you will enter in our Zoroastrian religion.

With best regards
Yours Sincerely

N. M. DASTUR
May 11, 1994

Dear Mr Neville Wadia

I acknowledge with thanks receipt of your letter dt 11th April and apologise for not responding to it promptly due to ill-health.

I confirm here what you have stated faithfully in your letter about our cordial meeting and free discussions, and consequently your august return to our ancestral faith has been considered by me favourably as an exceptionally unique case.

You are an octogenarian, and speaking from the scriptural point of view the Navjote ceremony would be the most farcical element in the entire process of your coming back to the Zoroastrian fold. What you have to do is to undergo a 'nahn' or ritual ablution, perform your own Navjote yourself with proper ceremonial rites prompted by a competent priest, and finally recite the 'patet' or penitentiary prayer before a high priest.

I thank you once again for the letter and pray Ahura Mazda to grant you health and long life in the service of our noble Zoroastrian faith and illustrious Parsi community.
Yours in His service

FIROZE M. KOTWAL
May 27, 1994

Dear Mr Wadia

I was in due receipt of your letter of 11th April 1994, and also your Secretary's letter dated the 7th June 1994, and I regret I could not reply earlier, as I was operated on my fractured leg and was Hospitalised for over a month.

In reply to your above letters, I have to inform you that I cannot agree to your request to convert you in the Zoroastrian Religion, as the same is not permitted in our religion.

With regards and Blessings of Iranshah
Yours sincerely

KAIKOBAD P. DASTOOR
August 9, 1994

Dear Mr Neville Wadia

I hope this letter finds you in the best of health with Ahura Mazda's Blessings.

I have given more thought and consideration to your wanting to embrace the noble Zoroastrian faith. I wish to reiterate that in recent Parsi history, yours is a unique case of desiring to return to the faith of your ancestors. I have made an exception to my stated beliefs and doctri-

nal position due to the very strong mitigating circumstances prevailing in your case:-
i) You seem to have a genuine love for the Zoroastrian Religion including your unequivocal support to respect our time-tested rituals and traditions which I have gleaned from the discussions which we have had.

ii) You are a descendant from the illustrious Parsi Zoroastrian Wadia family known for its yeoman service rendered to the community.

iii) You have always been a staunch supporter and well-wisher of the Parsi Community through the vast charities which your forefathers founded and which you have associated yourself with, throughout your life.

iv) You have never ever sought to create controversy or cause any "disruption to our little community", despite your eminent position of power and wealth.

It is for these four main reasons that I believe your case merits special consideration.

Please note that I do not wish to set up a doctrinal precedent or generate a controversy about your desire to rejoin our great faith, and I would urge you to ensure with all that is at your command that your personal religious conviction should not be misquoted or whipped into a controversy by the Press. However, if you envisage a controversy as I do, arising over your initiation, then I would request you most humbly to drop the idea of initiation in India. I am sure that you will agree with me that in no way should the feelings of our community be unnecessarily aroused or inflamed.

After much reflection and thought I have come to the conclusion that it would be in your best interests to perform the full Navjote ceremony as you have expressed to me in our discussions. I am concerned that if a ritual exception of not performing the full Navjote ceremony is made in your case as an exception, then a dangerous precedent might arise which other vested groups may seek to exploit in the future; this in turn, I believe, would result in wrong inroads being made into the ritual life of our community. As a traditional high priest, I do not want members of our community to seek alternative forms of rituals, since we must preserve, at all costs, the ceremonial sanctity of our religious heritage.

Your initiation into the faith might well open up the proverbial "Pandora's Box", but I am hopeful that through your consummate skills and influence you will be able to thwart the politicisation of your

personal religious commitment. I hope that you will always be guided by the best interests of the community and that you shall be able to work with greater dedication and zeal for the wellbeing and betterment of our noble faith.

With sincere prayers for your good and robust health in service of the Parsi Community

Yours in Ahura Mazda's service

FIROZE M. KOTWAL

CERTIFICATE

I, SHIAVAX RATANSHAW VAKIL, of Bombay Indian Inhabitant, Advocate, Supreme Court of India, Solicitor and Notary, having my Office at Bombay House, 24 Homi Mody Street, Fort, Bombay-400001, DO HEREBY CERTIFY that I personally know Mr Neville Ness Wadia for over fifty years.

That I was present on Saturday, 24.9.94, at the house of Mr Nusli Wadia (Beach House) along with Mr Wadia in the morning when his Navjote Ceremony was performed by a Zoroastrian Priest in my presence.

Dated this 26th day of September 1994.

S. R. VAKIL

The Chairman and Members of the Parsi Panchayet Funds & Properties

Dear Jimmy

As you know, for many years I have been very interested in our Parsi community and have expressed my views frankly for the last three decades at the annual function at 'Cusrow Baug' on the 21st of March. I clearly stated my admiration and belief in the Zoroastrian religion, and to the effect that "I believe that if I had the choice, I would choose to be a Zoroastrian". When I said these words I did not think that it was possible then that I could revert back to the Zoroastrian religion of my ancestors, who for hundreds of years if not thousands, have always been of this one faith. I personally believe implicitly in Ahura Mazda and in the teachings of Zarathustra and the Zoroastrian Religion.

I have many friends who told me that it could be possible for me to fulfil this wish. But before making any such move, I wrote a letter to the seven senior High Priests (copy enclosed), and I am glad to say that I have received support of five of them that I could become a Zoroastrian. I am enclosing copies of the letters I have received from these seven High Priests. From these letters you will see that five out of seven confirm that I could be re-inducted into the Zoroastrian faith.

continued on page 48

The Journeys from Iran

The Jadirana Story of Sanjan refers to but one among a series of migrations from Iran to India

Ali A. Jafarey

The report by Homi Rogers on Dr (Ms) Roxana Irani's doctoral thesis on Zoroastrian settlements in India under the title "Surface evidence" (*Parsiana*, April 1994), has made me reflect on a few issues. Roxana came to Los Angeles some four years ago and we had a lively talk on Bahrot and other relevant subjects. I am glad that, although still a spade work, she is on the trail to archeologically finding out the truth about Zoroastrian settlements in India.

Born in Kerman city, of Kermani parents, and brought up in Karachi, as a boy I listened to my mother recite and relate the *Shah Namah*. It was very absorbing. It was she, daughter of an army officer, who told me that her ancestors were Zarthostis. My father said that his parents hailed from the Bârez-Bashkard mountain range in southern Kerman province, that he and his elder brother had a cattle and cultivation farm in the lowlands of Roudbar, close to the mountain range, and that he had extensively travelled through the southern and southeastern parts of Iran — Kerman, Pars, Luristan, Baluchistan, and the Persian Gulf littoral.

When I grew up and became a research student, I probed into my family past. Among other matters, I found out that my paternal ancestors were also Zoroastrians and had held the mountains and adjoining lowlands for at least 400 years after the Muslim conquest of Iran and carried on a successful guerilla war with the rulers until 970 C.E. They were condemned by contemporary historians as "accursed infidels who, even after submitting to Muslim forces, revert back to fire-worship

and rebuild their fire-temples." I wrote an article which was published in an issue of *The Asiatic Society Journal*, Dacca now in Bangla Desh.

Many of the Iranian seafarers in the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean continued to be Zarthostis for long and they, after being converted to Islam, followed a Fasli calendar with Zoroastrian names of months until the days of Reza Shah Pahlavi when Iran officially adopted its current, Fasli, calendar. I had the opportunity to travel on four occasions by Iranian *dhow*s — seafaring sailing boats which plied between the Persian Gulf and western Indian ports until the 1950s. It goes without saying that the crews were Muslim. The first time I boarded one was in the Karachi harbor. I was told to take off my shoes because "the boat carries the sacred fire... which cooks *né mat-e Khodâ* (God's favor i.e. daily food)... It is never put out." I had more experiences, some lasting a few days,

on board the boats plying between Bandar Abbas, Dubai and Bahrain. The ever-burning hearth was in every boat I boarded.

I followed my father's trail in Kerman, particularly the southern parts, and found that Hormoz was the name of modern Minab, the major port of Kerman during Sassanian and early Islamic periods. Today, it is silted up because of its river and lies a dead port. However, it continues to be lush green with its cattle farms and mango, lime and date gardens. It lies 160 kilometers (100 miles) east of Bandar Abbas. The present island of Hormoz, some 48 kilometers (30 miles) west of Minab, became a later refuge of Hormozi merchants when the conditions on the mainland became dangerous for their safe sea trade. It got its present name from the

refugees after Minab's decline and Bandar Abbas' rise.

Note the names Bârez (Avesta *berez*, Pahlavi and Persian *borz*, high, height); Bashkard (Pahlavi and Persian *Balashkard*, built by Balash, the name of one Sassanian and several Parthian kings); Hormoz (name of several Sassanian kings) and Minab, (name of the river flowing by the port, meaning spiritual water).

This prompted me to do some research on *Qisseh-ye Sanjan*,

the Story of Sanjan. [*Qissah* (pronounced Qisseh or Ghesseh in Persian) is an Arabic loan word. The pure Persian word, more often used than Qisseh, is *Dâstân*. One would have rather expected the title to read *Dâstân-e Sanjan*.] The Zarthostis coming from Khorasan had Zarthosti helpers not only from Kerman to Minab but even Zarthosti seamen with their sailing boats who would thoughtfully land them in Gujarat



"well outside" the "enemy" territories which in those days extended along the Sind and Kutch coasts of the Indian Ocean.

And most of the fair Parsis did (and do) look like the people of Khorasan (modern Central Asia) particularly those in and around modern Mazandaran, which incidentally has a city with an ancient history. It is called, Sari, enough to remind one of Navsari. Their ancestors must have come from Khorasan.

I painfully prepared a paper on *Qisseh-ye Sanjan*. Then came the surprise. *The Story of Sanjan* by Lt Col Mehraban S. Irani (Poona, 1943)! It concludes, after careful and convincing arguments, "that the whole of this childish composition is nothing more than an imaginary account of Parsi immigration to India." Convinced, I gave up. The paper is lying somewhere in my old files.

Nevertheless, the thought has never left me, and whenever there has been a point, I have noted it down. I have profited from Dastur Hormazdyar Dastur Kayoji Mirza's *Outlines of Parsi History* (Bombay, 1974). It has been quite informative. At present, after careful consideration of all the points noted and thought over by me, I have, more or less, come to the following conclusions:

- Zoroastrians did emigrate from Iran to India and China.

- The emigration was not in one isolated wave but in many waves, over centuries.

- They went to the places known to most of them where small pockets of Zoroastrians, both Iranian and natives, existed in India and China.

- Some, especially those in China, were forced to embrace the local religion, Buddhism.

- Some, aided by their coreligionists in southern Kerman, particularly the seamen, went by boats from Hormoz to ports on the Gujarat coast where Zoroastrian maritime merchants were living since Sassanian and earlier days. They, with the support of earlier Zoroastrians, settled in small pockets in the region.

- These pockets were much augmented by fresh arrivals by much safer land routes from Khorasan (meaning eastern part of Greater Iran), especially Sistan which remained a Zoroastrian stronghold till very late. It is these immigrants who have given the Khorasani look to many Parsis.

- It was the maritime residents and the seamen plying between Iranian and Indian ports who, coming as they were from Pars, the southern part of Iran along the Persian coast, were originally called Parsi (Sassanian Persian *Parsik*,

Sanskrit *Pārsika*). Later that name clung to every Zoroastrian, whether a Parsi, Sistani or Khorasani in Gujarat just as every man and woman who came to India from the British Isles was known as *angrez*, and never distinguished as Scot, Irish, Welsh or English. Until a few decades ago, every Iranian who came from Iran was called Persian from Persia in English i.e. Parsi from Pars!

The emigration was not in one isolated wave but in many waves, over centuries

- Zoroastrian pockets in Sind and Punjab, who mingled with the local people because of loose and relaxed caste barriers and because of renewed domination by Muslim rulers coming from Khorasan, lost their identity in a few generations.

- Those who settled in Gujarat with its Hindu dominance, and a caste system which was strictly observed, consequently had to form a "fifth" caste to live in segregation and peace. The Parsis owe their survival more to the rigid Hindu caste system in Gujarat and less to their own self-preservation.

- *The Story of Sanjan* is in fact the mixing of the above facts, and more, with the fiction and fancy of the poet. They are pieces, each belonging to a separate group, that have been fancifully linked into one story. The points to note are:

- The narrator/s and the poet did not have any maritime knowledge, that an Indian Ocean sailing boat could, at most, carry 50 persons, a number which could not explode into the population the Parsi community had until a few decades back. There must have been many boats, arriving on different occasions and at different ports.

- Even this would still give a few hundred immigrants from the coastal region of Iran.

- The majority, arriving earlier in Sassanian days or from overland, were already living in settlements in different districts of India, particularly those like Gujarat which lay outside Muslim territory.

- One group of immigrants living in Diu left for Sanjan in order to find a better haven there.

- One or two settlements suffered the Muslim onslaught and had to flee to other parts. Bahrot was one of them.

- Those in Bahrot, if the archeological

evidence proves their presence, must have been a small group of priests, perhaps one or two families, who could survive in the cave until the danger passed.

- Regarding the conditions laid by the "Jad Raya (sic)" that (i) explain "the custom of your religion, both secret and open," (ii) "give up the language of the country of Iran...and adopt the language of India," (iii) your "women should put on the dress as that worn by our women," (iv) "you should remove the weapons and swords, and should not wear them in any place," and (v) "when (you) do any good deed for (your) children (marry them), (you) should do it in the evening. And "being helpless, (they) accepted all the conditions," before they were given shelter in the raja's region. These conditions were reportedly imposed on the party which sailed and landed where the reported raja ruled, and not others, immigrants or earlier residents, who were settled in other places.

Childish as the conditions look, nevertheless they were imposed upon the immigrants — not by a ruling raja, but by the prevailing environment. It is the environment which, within a few generations, makes all immigrants explain their beliefs to the dominating natives, give up their mother tongue, take to local dresses, and to perform certain festivals according to the traditions of the adopted land. This is nothing new. It has happened and is happening all over the world, and needs no elaboration.

But how far have the Parsis kept to the promises their immigrant ancestors reportedly made? Linguistically, the Parsis never gave up Persian and continued to pray in the "language of Iran," both in Avesta and Persian (Pazand is the archaic form of modern Persian spoken at the time the immigrants came to India). The literates, particularly the priests, wrote in Pahlavi and Persian. Some, like our poet of *The Story*, composed poems and *munâjâts* in Persian. Parsi Gujarati writings are a hybrid of Gujarati vocabulary and Persian words.

With the arrival of the colonizing British, the picture underwent a drastic change. The Parsis were the first to expound their religion on the pattern introduced by Western scholars and are still taking great pride in quoting these scholars when presenting any treatise; to adopt English, an alien language as their first language, to get into Western dress, both men and women, except for special occasions; and to join the imperial army to defend British interests in India. Fortunately, the wedding ceremony in the evening was not in conflict with the

With
best wishes
from

Farah
&
Tanya

British fashion. As far as the Hindus are concerned, the Parsis have barred the very people who gave them shelter from entering their temples and other holy places, and have kept non-Zoroastrian Indians as much outside the ethnic enclave as possible. In fact, should we believe The Story, they persuaded the raja, right in the beginning, to forcefully clear the natives from the ground they had chosen for building their temple.

The "only" condition the community is rigorously told to maintain with full faith, that of non-conversion, is not mentioned in The Story! The reason is simple. While those opposed to spreading the Divine Message of Zarathushtra "to all the living beings" (*Gathas*: Yasna 31-3), cannot provide one single evidence from the Avesta or Pahlavi scriptures or the Persian *Rivayats* that clearly prohibits religious propagation/acceptance/conversion, and continue to go in bewildering circles, some clever person successfully marketed his "invention" to a people totally ignorant about The Story of Sanjan. It is alleged that the immigrants promised not to convert any one. Today many Parsis believe that they are keeping the "promise" their ancestors made, a promise not alluded to at all in The Story of Sanjan or any other source. Hardly any one raises the point that were Zoroastrians well-known for not practicing conversions, the raja would not have imposed such a condition!

To conclude, The Story, more fiction than fact, more slight than salient, is a linkage of several episodes, true or not, put together at a late period by a person who was a simple priest with a poor sense of Persian poetry and a high flight of fancy. Yet it does show some glimpses of early settlements of the Zoroastrians in Gujarat which have grown into the present prominent Parsi community. Hopefully, Irani as a young, ardent archeologist and a few competent scholars of Indo-Iranian history could take note of all that has been written about The Story, particularly by Irani, and collectively produce a better picture. It may prove worthwhile. At least the common Parsi will then clearly see his/her roots on firm ground rather than as a barely believable bedtime story!



Ali A. Jafarey, who studied Avesta and Pahlavi under Dr Manek Pithawalla and Dastur (Dr) M. N. Dhalla, obtained his doctorate in Persian literature from Karachi. He has authored 11 books on Zoroastrianism in English and Persian.

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THE AND THE GROUNDING MOUNTING

Parinaz Gandhi

Erecting a roof without a supporting column or pillar might sound similar to building castles in the air. So to explain how the system works, Pessi Dadina, chairman of KND Engineering Technologies Limited, draws us a sketch of these prefabricated space frames that are ideal for auditoria, stadia, airport hangars where columns would be an obstruction. KND was recently appointed the sole licensee in India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Nepal for Harley Systems, the pioneers in the field of space frames.

These space frames can span up to 120 meters or more without the support of a single column. Resembling a large mechano set, in this network of steel girders steel consumption is reduced by almost half of what would have gone into a conventional structure. Besides there is also a substantial saving in time—what would have originally taken 10 months can now be completed within 10-12 weeks. Dadina highlights the salient features. To illustrate the aesthetic appeal of these roofing systems Dadina shows us visuals of major landmarks throughout the world where the Harley Systems models have been used: National Tennis Centre in Melbourne, Cheras Badminton Stadium in Kuala Lumpur, Joe Cannon Baseball Stadium in Maryland USA, Chunnel Tunnel at England's UK Terminal, Toy Town in Dammam, Saudi Arabia...

"Dreams have to be made into reality. Let them fructify," reinforces Dadina who himself is constantly on the move heading a public limited company whose turnover for the year ending September 1994 was in the region of Rs 24 crores and whose shares are quoted in the stock exchange at around Rs 90. He touches base, Calcutta,

for barely one week in a month. There is a discreet reference to KND starting another project in another state. But no further details are divulged. Only the day prior to the interview he had returned from Bahrain. Some business expansion in the offing? He once again gives his disarming smile and diffuses further enquiries by stating, "You will be the first to know." He is at his Bombay office almost every month but it was after nearly three months that we

provided in a company brochure where the preamble quotes Henry Thoreau, "If you have built castles in the air, your work need not be lost; that is where they should be. Now put foundations under them." The firm's expertise in geotechnical investigation and pile foundation was solicited on projects of national importance like Calcutta's Metro Railway where the firm's cautioning on the possibility of floods alerted the railways well in advance and enabled them to take suitable action. The naval base project at Visakhapatnam as also projects of the Steel Authority of India Limited, the Tata Iron and Steel Company Limited, the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre, the 42 bridge sites along the East-West Highway in Nepal were among the other prestigious assignments handled by KND. More recently, a foreign consortium with Spiecaphe Consultants enabled them to do the ground work for the 23 ton river crossings that would bear the pipelines at Hazira.

Since Dadina joined the firm in 1979, its activities have been steadily diversifying, and in different regions. "You have to see where your market is and also where the raw materials are... Certain states have departments to take quick decisions... Work discipline is not there in West Bengal..."

Dadina may not have time for community activities but he says he would always prefer to employ Parsis, all things being equal. "As it is, our community is small. Why not help our community?" he asks, convinced as he is that "Parsis are more dedicated to work."

An employee turned entrepreneur, Dadina did his graduation in science from the Nagpur University, postgraduation in nuclear chemical technology from the



Dadina brothers: Kersi (left) and Pessi

finally got an interview appointment. And that too it was only when he had taken time off from work to have his tooth extracted that we were able to extract news and views from him.

Dadina was catapulted into the steering position of KND following the premature demise of his brother Kersi Nanabhoy Dadina in 1980, in an accident, when a balcony he was inspecting collapsed. Among the first in India to practice soil mechanics and foundation engineering, Kersi had, with a capital of Rs 50,000, started his proprietorship concern in Calcutta in 1964.

An outline of KND's activities is pro-

The Calcutta-based KND Engineering Technologies' expertise has been sought on major projects like the Metro Railway and the laying of pipelines at Hazira

Imperial College, UK, another masters in organic chemistry from the Nagpur University, following which he was absorbed by ICI Limited where he worked for over seven years, first as their production manager and subsequently as research manager. "The exposure, the grounding which one gets in a company like ICI is tremendous. That was essential," acknowledges Dadina. When he joined his brother in business he was supposed to handle the KND operations from Bombay. But Kersi's death changed the course of his life.

Among Parsis, the pioneering spirit has always been there, observes Dadina. The opening up of the Indian economy recently and the foreign involvement in the building of infrastructure he perceives not as a

threat but as an opportunity for Parsis to fare even better. For prospective entrepreneurs he has words of encouragement: "Start off with whatever one can afford on a small scale. Don't give up despite drawbacks. For an empire to be built takes decades. There are no quick bucks. Train people; develop systems within the organization..."

Despite all the planning and management, one venture that Dadina had to surrender, one which he had personally nurtured since its inception in 1992, was Ushtate Biotech Limited, a joint sector company in Tamil Nadu. The manufacturing company that was conceived to produce starch based products faced a delay in commencement of operations and a consequent cost overrun. When they sought to make up the deficit from a rights cum public issue, the Tamil Nadu Industrial Development Corporation, which also held a sizable equity in this company, withheld consent on government pressure. The Dadinas were there-

fore compelled to sell off their stake. Determined to sell their share to a genuine buyer interested in running the project, the Dadinas finally settled on Square D. Dadina now will have no say in the management



Navzer Dadina

although he has opted to retain almost 10 percent of the stake "for sentimental reasons." Sadder and wiser, Dadina has since turned his attention to other projects.

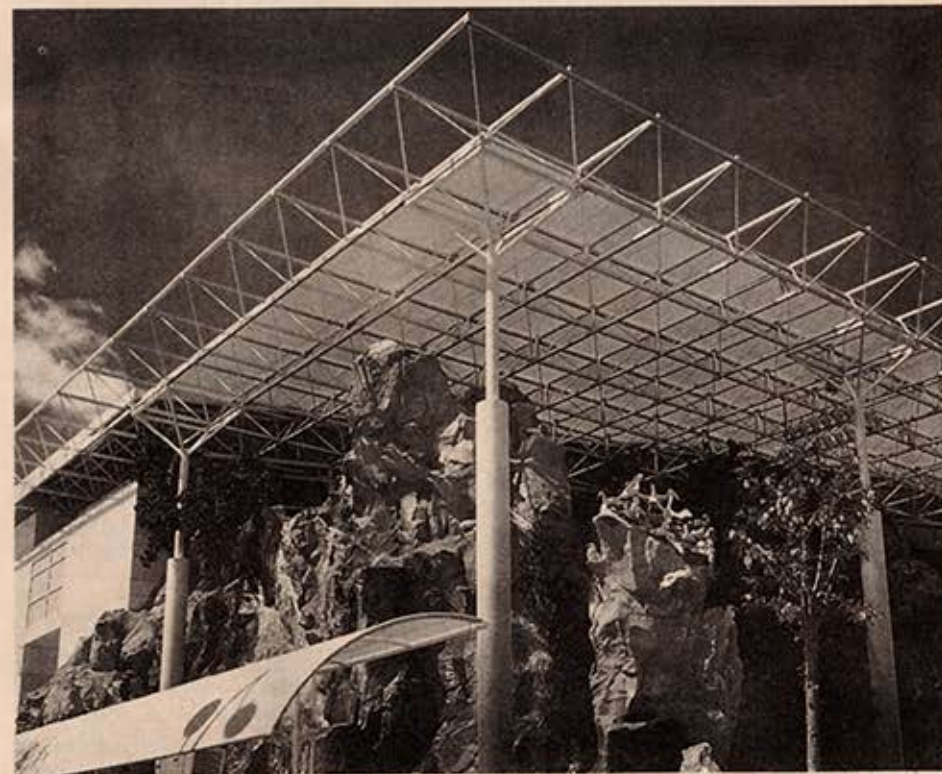
Others in

Dadina's family who are involved in the decision making at KND are Kersi's son Navzer who as director manages the Bombay office, daughter Varez who is presently doing her MBA, and widow Zarin who has since married Pessi. A pediatrician by profession, as a director of the company she keeps herself abreast of KND's activities.

Family support does give Dadina some free time to pursue his leisure time activities. His hobbies? "Playing music," he says, and then elaborates, "playing the radio." His merry eyes sparkle as he clarifies after a while that he plays the piano and earlier used to play the violin too. (He had shown the same mirth when he told us that his early education was at Nagpur's J. N. Tata Parsi Girls School before he studied at St Francis de Sales High School.) "Fingers have to be kept nimble," he rationalizes the need for regular practice. He makes time for reading too, inclined towards philosophical and spiritual books. What the high-powered businessman yearns to do "is learn flying" but that he realizes would require "four months of free time."

When such a luxury is available to Dadina he will readily avail of it. Until then he is concentrating on applying himself to new inventions and technologies, remarking, "There is always joy in doing something different."

New Zealand's Expo'92 Pavilion in Spain with the roof structure, standing four storeys above ground level, typifying one of Harley Systems' space frames





Marshall (left) and Desai at Surat in 1970

Marshalling thoughts

Bejon N. Desai

Monghun Gharenun (collection of essays) by Dr Ratan R. Marshall. Published in 1993 by Gurjar Granth Ratna Karyalaya, Gandhi Road, Ahmedabad 380001. Pp: 8+230. Price: Rs 49.

The Parsi contribution to the advancement of Gujarati language, literature and journalism is special, at times even unique. Pioneers in many fields of endeavor, the Parsis are also considered to be responsible for the first casting of Gujarati types, the starting of Gujarati printing presses and the printing of Gujarati newspapers, almanacs and books. Dr Ratan R. Marshall is also a pioneer of sorts, having acquired a doctorate in Gujarati journalism for the first time in the history of the University of Bombay.

A disciplined writer, he is recognized as a pundit in the fields of Gujarati journalism and dramatics, and an experimenter in the field of Gujarati biographical literature. Marshall has revived with his pen some of the best known historical and literary figures of Gujarat like Ardeshir Kotwal, Bhimji Hadvaidd, Dadabhai Pandya, Durgaram Mehtaji, Behramji Malbari, Madam Bhikhaiji Cama and Nusserwanjee Vakil. His numerous books attest to his stature as a litterateur, historian, biographer, reviewer, critic and dramatist. At present, he is the vice president of the most prestigious Gujarati literary society, the Narmad Sahitya Sabha, with which he has been actively associated for many years.

Monghun Gharenun (Precious Ornament) consists of 43 chapters in which Marshall examines such diverse thought-

provoking subjects as human understanding, happiness and humor; religion and faith; our historical heritage; and the glory of our motherland.

Marshall's love of the Gujarati stage is evident in his biographical essay on Chandravadan Mehta, the noted playwright of Gujarat, and in his piece on the enactment of the first Gujarati drama. His literary pursuits are reflected in his chapters on old Parsi poets and writers, his meditations at the grave of Malbari, and in his essay on the honor to be accorded to artists by society. And he devotes a chapter to Narmad's stimulating articles in *Dandio*.

His attitude towards women is reflected in his comments on the working ability of a woman — especially a daughter. He also deals with God's purpose in creating woman. He has fond memories of Parsi collegians of 50 years ago, and gives a lively portrait of Hormajsha Amba, a unique teacher.

The book also treats of sundry other subjects like the importance of constant activity in life and of the pursuit of your desired goal till it is reached. There is a chapter on the graceful acceptance of gifts; on the huge men-of-war built for England in Bombay; and one compares the decrease in population figures of the white community in the USA with the depletion of numbers in the Parsi community of India.

Essentially a poet, Marshall writes a strong prose. He is also an orator of repute and his voice has been recorded for a number

of audiovisual programs.

Besides these activities, he is a tireless worker in the fields of social service and youth activities. The Pragati Mandal, the Union High School, and many other dramatic societies in Surat owe much to this young man of 83. He was as indefatigable as ever when I saw him a couple of years ago, as an organizer and speaker at Udvada where, with his group of young and middle-aged social workers, he helped celebrate the anniversary of the sacred Iranshah fire.

The Surat Parsi Panchayat (SPP) owes much to him for his selfless service to the Parsis of Gujarat. Stalwarts like the late Nusserwanjee Vakil and the late Maneck Gheyara always sought guidance and support from this quiet administrator and writer. I find even the present chairman of the SPP, Dr Sam Bhacca, working hand-in-hand with Marshall who, for the last 60 years, has been giving his services and guidance to the SPP.

Marshall's wife, Frenie, is an eminent gynecologist of Surat. Rustom, their only son, practises in the Gujarat High Court as an advocate. It is noteworthy that Marshall and his son Rustom studied law at the same time. The elder Marshall, being a 'life-time student,' passed his LLB at the age of 70!

Spiritual garb

Roni K. Khan

The Divine Science of Navjote and Sudreh-Kushti by Ervad K. N. Dastoor. Published in 1993 by The Mazdeyasnie Connection, 9528 Walker Street #5, Cypress, California, 90630 USA. Available in Bombay from M. J. Giara, Dhunmai Bldg, 667 Lady Jehangir Road, Dadar, Bombay 400014 or The Parsee Vegetarian Temperance Society, Noble Chambers, 4th floor, Janmabhoomi Marg, Fort, Bombay 400001. Pp: 40. Price: US \$ 5, India Rs 30.

At a time when, largely for reasons of ignorance or convenience, many of the lofty ceremonials and rituals of the Zarathushtrian religion are scoffed at or disregarded, it is something of a fortunate anomaly that the navjote *kriya* still remains

a fixture on the agenda of even the most "progressive" Parsis. It is a moot point, though, whether this grand ceremony is perceived more as a social than a religious engagement, judging from the forlorn rows of empty chairs during the investiture itself, in contrast to the swashbuckling dash for every available seat to do the honors to the *saas nimachhi*, a spectacle that puts the Charge of the Light Brigade to shame.

Not to be a spoilsport, however, one must take the balanced view that there is nothing wrong with festivity so long as it does not steal the show from the immense religious import of the exercise. But there is cause for deep concern that, in the wake of excessive materialism and westernization, religious imperatives are all too often cast to the winds.

What sense does it make to go through the motions of a navjote, when the sudreh and kusti, the living heart of its performance, are frequently viewed as cumbersome peripherals to be discarded soon after? One is painfully reminded of the case of a prominent overseas Parsi who ensured that he was kept regularly provisioned with stocks of his favorite *achaar* (pickle) from India, but made it clear that he found it too much of a bother to make similar arrangements for his requirements of sudrehs and kustis.

It may be said that ignorance is the only sin. One of the many blind spots clouding today's Parsi psyche is the perception that the navjote is an attractive but token formality, with the attendant sudreh-kusti merely outward symbols of identification value. Ervad K. N. Dastoor's succinct treatise on the subject sets out to disprove this armchair misconception of an increasingly faithless and irreverent community.

A lawyer by profession Dastoor jogs our common sense with this irrefutable logic: "If it is an identification mark, why do we not affix a fine, gold colored badge on our dress, rather than a complicated shirt with nine (seams) and a cord with 72 threads to be worn beneath our clothes?" Touché!

As expected from a leading Khshnoomist, Dastoor takes us on an esoteric journey through the divine science that underlies navjote and sudreh-kusti, which are certainly to be counted among

the most ancient, hallowed and potent weapons in the spiritual armory of a Zarathushtrian.



Dastoor (right): an esoteric journey

tion" and equates with the Zarathushtrian *daena*.

In the second chapter, "The Kriyaa," Dastoor takes us step by step through the navjote ceremony itself, providing explanations of the inner spiritual significance of certain important stages of the proceedings. To good effect, he argues that in accordance with the tenets of our religion, the navjote should be performed within an atash behram or agiary, and during the early morning hours of *hoshbaam*. "It is not an occasion where catering is more important than the *kriya* itself," is the devout ervad saheb's mot juste on this issue.

The third chapter, "Structure and Design of Sudreh Kushti," is an all too brief attempt to convey the great truth that these twin devices are spiritual instruments or *aalaats* of the highest practical potency, and are not to be ignorantly mistaken for mere symbols. Dastoor does give some basic explanations about the role of sudreh-kusti in capturing and circulating spiritual energies to activate the *chakhras*, but this is just a glimpse that cries out for more.

Indeed, there is much more to know and tell about the inner properties and functions of sudreh-kusti, to demonstrate how and why these sacred *aalaats* are absolutely fundamental for every practising Zarathushtrian. In all fairness to him, Dastoor makes it clear that a fuller exposition is "beyond the scope of this small book," but this does not prevent one from wishing that this pivotal aspect had been treated in greater depth and breadth.

The fourth and final chapter, "The Meaning of the Kushti Prayer," is, as Dastoor puts it, an attempt to "indicate the basic

The first of the book's four short chapters deals with "The Basics," where the author scans matters like the elements of cosmogenesis, the constituents of the macrocosm and the microcosm, the 16 centers of spiritual energy known as the *chakhras* (Sanskrit *chakra*) located in our ultra-physical bodily vestures, and the mighty pav-mahal or storehouse of spiritual energy established by Lord Zarathushtra, which he calls the "Z-Power Station"

thought contained in every passage." What this amounts to is a very free rendition of these manthric prayers by the author, without the stringency of a direct translation which would have also been appreciated, just as one would have liked to see the inclusion of the *Sarosh ni kusti*, a slightly more elaborate variant of the standard ritual.

For the convenience of those who may unfortunately miss reading this enlightening little volume, the central messages that the author seeks to convey are outlined below:

•Navjote: "The *ruvaan* (soul) of a Parsi child is connected with the Z-Power Station right at birth, and a small current of Zarathushtra's light already starts flowing. During the navjote *kriya*, these currents are intensified and entwined for life."

•Sudreh-kusti: "Sudreh and kusti are the *aalaats* that perform the function of absorption and emission of divine energies."

And for those who do get to read this latest esoteric offering from the erudite pen of Dastoor, this golden maxim should, as always, be borne in mind: "Read the things of the flesh with the eyes of the spirit; not the things of the spirit with the eyes of the flesh."

Twist in the tale?

Homi Rogers

Hymns Of Ecstasy by Cyrus S. Meherji. Published by The Parsi Zoroastrian Association, 1, Saklat Place, Calcutta 700072. Pp: 56+xii. Price: Not mentioned.

A folk tale, replete with Latin American imagery, tells of an aged woman who had heard many stories but never told a single one herself until the throttled stories finally escaped one day.

Reading Cyrus Meherji's *Hymns of Ecstasy* one is reminded of the above tale. A marine engineer by profession, Meherji tells the life story of Prophet Zoroaster with such fervor that the act of disgorging the many stories he must have heard in his childhood seems to devour him. And we are left with a well-worn tale with a lot of literary flourishes.

Lauded by Nani Palkhivala in the preface for its "preeminently readable form," *Hymns of Ecstasy* is a fictionalized account

of the life of Prophet Zoroaster. A slim book, it is mounted by Meherji with de Mille-like magnificence. Religious thoughts are couched in high drama accompanied by a crash of cymbals, and we have lines like "the sun's rays stabbed the darkness," and "the first stabs of labor began."

Meherji even packs in nuggets of sex, as when he describes the union between Zoroaster's parents or the awakening of manhood in Zoroaster. All this is palatable stuff, especially if one has to make a choice between reciting the *Ahunar* prayer 21 times or reading the world of Zoroaster according to "apro Cyrus," as Burjor Framroze Modi, president of The Parsi Zoroastrian Association of Calcutta, calls the new chronicler.

But for all the high drama and literary swirls, Meherji is no Charles Potter providing an illuminating interpretation of religious history. Potter's *The Great Religious Leaders*, which included a slightly blasphemous biography of Zoroaster, is a milestone for its vivid narratives, judicious

comments and general reliability. Unfortunately, the same cannot be said of Meherji's work. He mixes up the chronology of the attempts made to kill young Zoroaster. The chief villain who tries to bump off baby Zoroaster is called Bratrokesh, as against the commonly known name of Durasrun, while most other names remain unchanged.

For those looking for the proverbial twist in the tale, however, Meherji provides an unusual yet extremely credible interpretation of the Prophet's death. Contrary to legend, Meherji does not show Zoroaster as the avenging angel who kills his assassin by casting his rosary at him. Here, the assassin stares stupefied as the Prophet's lips continue to move in prayer after the knife has been plunged deep into him. "The murderer cried out in shock, and lost his mind. In a frenzy, he pulled down the Holy Fire setting the carpet ablaze. He screamed as the blaze caught him."

Similarly, Meherji deserves to be commended for deviating from the story of how King Vistasp's horse was cured, generally narrated to depict the conversion to the

faith by the Iranian king and his family. Meherji substitutes this miracle with another: that of Zoroaster curing Vistasp himself, and seeking four boons in return. Since the horse legend has been debunked by scholars, one wonders if this was the real miracle. But with Meherji delivering a potent mix of fact and fiction, the reader is never sure of where one ends and the other begins.

It is when Meherji delivers homilies on Zoroastrian matters that he falters badly. His comments (eight pages of them) after the Prophet's story is told are confused and unsubstantiated. Is Zoroaster really silent on the theory of reincarnation? (Refer "Does Zoroastrianism teach reincarnation?" *Parsiana*, August 1988 where 23 scholars deliberated on this subject.) What does Meherji mean by "Sufism is Zoroastrianism in code?"

Hymns of Ecstasy is Meherji's first "labor of love," with the blurb on the back cover promising that it "will not be my last." Evidently there are more arrows in his quiver.

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This month *Parsiana* publishes intercommunity marriages registered both at the Old Customs House and at the MHADA office in Bandra (East) for the six month period of March to August 1994. Civil marriages between Zoroastrians have also been listed. However, names that could not be confirmed as Zoroastrian have been omitted from the list.

There were 12 intercommunity marriages registered at the MHADA office and 16 at the Old Customs House plus two civil marriages between Zoroastrians. There were no civil marriages registered at the MHADA office.

A scanning of the Chandanwadi crematorium registers showed 12 Zoroastrians who were cremated between March and August 1994.

The age of Zoroastrian brides (as listed in this issue) ranged between 25 and 39 years, the arithmetic mean — the total number of individual ages divided by the total number of brides — being 32 years. The corresponding figures for the grooms were 33 and 47 years, averaging at 40 years.

As per the data available to *Parsiana* there were 82 Zoroastrians consigned to the Towers of Silence as compared to 12 babies born in the month of August this year. Heart disease was the major killer claiming 24 lives of whom 11 Zoroastrians were above the age of 80. The other major killers were lung disease and pneumonia (15) and cancer (11). Six victims fell prey to old age and general debility and four to kidney failure. Liver disease, diabetes and septicemia took a toll of three lives each whereas two deaths each were attributed to bronchitis, hypertension and gastro-intestinal bleeding. Malaria, anemia, nervous disorder, brain disease, haematemesis (vomiting of blood), arteriosclerosis (degenerative arterial change associated with advancing age), laryngeal odema (abnormal infiltration of the laryngeal tissues with fluid), gangrene, atherosclerosis (deposition of fatty substances in the arteries), uremia and head injury were the isolated cases registered in August. The youngest to breathe her last was an 11-year-old girl as compared to the oldest:

a 96-year-old female.

The data on births, marriages and deaths has been compiled from information supplied by various newsletters and anjumans in India and abroad, courts and hospitals. We are unable to carry data from areas where the anjumans do not furnish the particulars. 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. There may be an inadvertent repetition of names in the marriage list when a civil marriage precedes a religious ceremony. 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.

Tahzeeb Gulabbhai Bhagat and Furrokh Roosi Panthakee; July 23
Joanna Pramod Shelkar and Rusi Keki Cooper; July 28
Anaheeta Minoo Daruvala and Priyavrat R. Goenka; July 28
Pinkie Chinoy and Vikram Rege; July 29
Pervin Jehangir Balsara and Aspi Jal Patel; August 6
Sylvia George and Barjor Maneksha; August 16
Pervin Rusi Manekshaw and Homi Godrej Karanjia; August 28
Monty Salvadori Cutinho and Godrej Borjorji Davierwala; August 29
Lily Jehangir Mungaseth and Debiprasad Nandlall Goenka; August 29
Henrietta D'Cruz and Feroze H. Mithiborwala; August 31

DIED

Perin Homi Bardi (72), residing at 201, Mistry Chmbs, Colaba, 400005; March 2 (cremated)
Farshostar Ratanji Ratnagar (95), B, Empress Court, Churchgate Recl, 400020; March '1 (cremated)
Karl No-hir Mehta (32), Mayfair Gardens, Little Gibbs Rd, 400006; March 14 (cremated)
Soonie Kavasshaw Powwala (86), 162, Silver Arch, 662, Jagmohandas Marg, 400006; March 21 (cremated)
Aoy Gaev Dalal (73), 12/D, Harbour Heights, Colaba, 400005; March 31 (cremated)
Kaikhshroo Rustamji Masani (85), 5, Sorab Minar, Carmichael Rd, 400026; April 11 (cremated)
Rustom Ardesher Narielwala (88), 347, C-12, United Chmbs, Grant Rd, 400007; July 6 (cremated)
Chastina Farukh Khambatta (22), 201, Meena Mhl, Manuel Ghonsalves Rd, Bandra 400050; July 9 (cremated)
Dadi M. Kateli (78), 2, Malcolm Baug, Jogeshwari, 400102; July 24 (cremated)
Noshirwan Kaikhushroo Kershaw (80), 12/A, Rustomji Bldg, 17, Sleater Rd, 400007; July 31
Piroja Pallonji Panthaki (85), 42/7, Shyam Nivas, B. Desai

AHMEDABAD

BORN

A boy, *Brandon*, to *Binaifer and Firdaus Lalkaka* on August 30, 1994

DIED

Aspi Cooper (72), husband of Dina and father of Xerxes and Yasmin Narielwala; June 21

BOMBAY

BORN

A boy to *Nergish and Ratansha Gilder*; August 2
A boy to *Shernaz and Jehangir Dalal*; August 4
A boy to *Navaz and Porus Disawala*; August 9
A girl to *Navaz and Dara Dordi*; August 9
A boy to *Armaity and Cyrus Ktrak*; August 9
A girl to *Kashmira and Percy Fouzdar*; August 15
A girl to *Nazneen and Percy Billimoria*; August 17
A boy to *Nilufer and Vispi Damania*; August 26

A boy to *Navaz and Rumi Umrigar*; August 26

A boy to *Jasmine and Nozer Sutaria*, brother to *Paraztaar*; August 27

A boy to *Rupi and Viraf Chinoy*; August 30

A girl to *Jasmine and Rumi Cooper*; August 30

MARRIED

Helena Sales and Reyaz Ratan Mama; March 4

Ramona Rebeiro and Adi Dara Ghaswalla; April 2

Yasmeen Khan and Hoshang Jimmy Pardiwalla; April 7

Kerman Dhunji Poonjiaji and Sandeep Jyotirmoy Sen; April 9

Tanaz N. Warden and Aspi M. Mandviwala; April 16

Persis Jal Bhathena and Minoo Pesi Boocha; April 19

Suneeta Inder Sodhi and Sean Ronny Kanga; April 23

Nirmala Chandulal Pandya and Sohrab Rusi Kotwal; April 29

Krishna Jankinath Sharma and Hormuz Minoo Katpitiia; May 5

Dilnavaz Piròjshaw

Minbatiwalla and Shamalji Parshotam; May 13

Niloufer Engineer and Rajesh Rohira; May 21

Dolly F. Bulsara and Kamaluddin Tejani; May 23

Reena Ronny Mistry and Girish Radhakishen Asrani; May 24

Mangeela Kamalkar Abhyankar and Sarosh Firoze Bana; May 27

Anahita Fallahzade and Bharat Shivdasani; May 29

Persis Dara Daruwalla and Manoj Balkrishna Gidithuri; May 30

Manisha Shamlal Narang and Shajad Sheriar Rustomji; June 5

Manjusha Manohar Raut and Sharookh Bomansha Daruwalla; June 6

Isabelle Reinhard Maier and Sohrab Homi Pavri; June 10

Katayun A. Mazrai and Nobert K. D'Cruz; June 17

Gulzar Behram Govewalla and Sampath Kumar S. K.; June 23

K. N. Wadia and P. Rajendran; June 27

Rd, 400026; July 31
Homi Sorabji Shroff (83),
 Godavali Education Centre,
 Panchagani, 412805; July 31
Homai Homi Treasurywala
 (74), Khan Bldg, Golanji Hill
 Rd, Parel, 400012; July 31
Dali Hormusji Battiwalla (76),
 Jivanji Hse, 162, Khetwadi
 Back Rd, 400004; August 1
Minoo Dhunjisha Chinoy (67),
 D-12, Shapur Baug, V. Patel
 Rd, 400004; August 1
Jeroo Shavak Damania (65),
 O-12, Bharucha Baug, S. V. Rd,
 Andheri (W), 400058; August 1
Soona Soli Irani (82), 12,
 Mandlik Rd, 4, Colaba
 Causeway, 400001; August 1
Dinshaw Ardeshir Khodaiji
 (89), 14, Phiroze Irani Chawl,
 286/C, Sopari Baug Rd, Parel,
 400012; August 1
Perin Keki Bharucha (78), 79,
 Kaizar Manmaji Bldg, 14th
 Khetwadi Lane, 400004;
 August 2 (cremated)
Shavaksha Naoroji Contractor
 (88), 1, Kashinath Bldg,
 Kashinath Rd, Tardeo, 400034;
 August 2
Ratanshaw Manchershaw
Doctor (76), G-7, Captain Clny,
 Tardeo, 400034; August 2

Aspandiar Tirandaz Azarmi
 (75), Shirin Manzil, Walton Rd,
 Colaba, 400039; August 3
Cavas Jehangir Bode (81),
 87/A, Shirin Manzil,
 Chandanwadi, Dhobitalao,
 400002; August 3
Perin Eruch Dastoor (65), Mota
 Parsee Wad, Balsar, 396001;
 August 3
Mani Dorabji BamanBehram
 (54), F/8, Evershine No II,
 J. P. Rd, Andheri (W), 400058;
 August 5
Dossan Navroji Mehta (79),
 Meher Mans, Below Tardeo
 Bridge, Lamington Rd, 400008;
 August 6
Sherie Darabshaw Doongaji
 (80), 8, Goolshan, N. Gamadia
 Rd, 400026; August 7
Khorshed Phiroze Kutar (65),
 51/A, Hill Rd, Bandra (W),
 400050; August 7
Jala Fali Shroff (94), B,
 Vasiamul Bldg, Grant Rd,
 400007; August 7
Minoo Edulji Dastoor (63),
 T/19, Ava Baug, S. T. Depot,
 Navsari, 396445, Dist Valsad;
 August 8
Minoo Bhickaji Dhalla (81),
 F. S. Parukh Dharamshalla, 34,
 Hughes Rd, 400007; August 8

Rustomji (Russi) Fardoonji
Batiwalla (83), D-18, Jer Baug,
 Dr Ambedkar Rd, Byculla,
 400027; August 9
Bokhtar Munchershah
Bhumgara (61), 623, Marker
 Mans, Parsi Clny, Dadar,
 400014; August 9
Burjor Pirojsha Godrej (79),
 40/D, Ridge Rd, Malabar Hill,
 400006; August 9
Jinabhoy Dinshawji Mistry
 (73), 10/A, Sir Avsar Bldg No
 2, Marzban Clny, Gilder Lane,
 400008; August 9
Rodabeh Sawhny (84), Taj
 Mahal Hotel, Apollo Bunder,
 400039; August 9 (cremated)
Coomi Babubhai Shah (77),
 204, Hassamahal, Dalamal
 Park, Cuffe Parade, 400005;
 August 9
Sohrab Dinshawji Pardiwalla
 (85), 35/D, Belmont Apts,
 Napean Sea Rd, 400026;
 August 11
Dina Jehangir Khambatta (77),
 A/26, Jer Baug, Dr Ambedkar
 Rd, Byculla, 400027; August 12
Eruchshaw Nadirshaw Bamboat
 (83), 10, Sidhwa Bldg, Balaram
 St, Grant Rd, 400007;
 August 13
Dhunjishah Nusserwanji
Dadachanji (70), 12/A, Godrej
 Bldg, N. C. Baug, Mori Rd,
 Mahim, 400016; August 13
Firoze Kaikhushroo Master
 (78), 41/A, Bharat Ngr, Grant
 Rd, 400007; August 13
Cawasji Kaikobad Batlivala
 (81), 27, Rupal Apts II,
 Dadasaheb Phalke Rd, Dadar,
 400014; August 14
Piroja Rustomji Mehta (95),
 D, Empire Ter, N. Petit St,
 Grant Rd, 400007; August 14
Khorshed Jehangir Daruwala
 (76), 347, C-11, United Chmbs,
 Charni Rd Jn, Grant Rd,
 400007; August 15
Tehmina Homi Sethna (90),
 584, Jilubai Wadia Bldg, Lady
 Jehangir Rd, Matunga, 400019;
 August 15
Tehmina Hoshang Dastoor
 (90), Mazda Chaman, 13,
 Dattatray Rd, Santacruz (W),
 400054; August 16
Sheriar Manekshaw Palia (54),
 Path Gam, Madh Island,
 Versova, 400061; August 17
Gustad Cawasji Patel (70), 1/3,
 Baria Bldg, Gamadia Clny,
 Tardeo, 400007; August 17
Dinaz Bejonji Sidhwa (73), 281,
 Sidhwa Bldg, Princess St,
 400002; August 17

Jahangir Mancherji Daruwalla
 (68), 22/G, Nawab Tank Rd,
 Bomanji Dhunjibhoy Bldg,
 Sakerwadi, Mazagaon, 400010;
 August 18
Bhikoo Minoo Kapadia (72),
 15/1, Kashinath Bldg,
 Kashinath St, Tardeo, 400034;
 August 18
Jehangir Ardeshir Taraporewala
 (91), 203, Panorama Bldg,
 Walkeshwar Rd, 400006;
 August 18
Jalan Jehangirji Bhesania (87),
 Petit Widows' Chawl, 133,
 Mody St, Fort, 400001;
 August 19
Jer Pestonji Gotla (80), 696/A,
 Dinshaw Master Rd, Parsi Clny,
 Dadar, 400014; August 19
Jamshedji Nasarwanji Sanjana
 (87), 22/A, Wellington Ter,
 Wellington St, Dhobitalao,
 400002; August 19
Mehera Hirjibhoy Kavarana
 (86), Kavarana Mans, 178,
 Dr Ambedkar Rd, Dadar,
 400014; August 20
Banoo Phiroze Mistry (79),
 Navyug Chmbs, 165,
 Lamington Rd, 400007;
 August 20
Alamai Nusserwanji Bacha
 (85), 5, Jyoti Mhl, 13, Sleater
 Rd, Grant Rd, 400007;
 August 21
Jal Araeshir Bamji (77), C-21,
 Cusrow Baug, S. B. Rd,
 400039; August 21
Banoo Shavaksha Bharucha
 (70), 144, Mody St, Fort,
 400001; August 21
Mervanji Shavaksha Khambata
 (80), 13/4, Shroff Bldg,
 Gamadia Clny, Tardeo, 400007;
 August 21
Hirji Rustomji Chaina (88),
 F. S. Parukh Dharamshalla, 34,
 Hughes Rd, 400007; August 22
Nariman Pirojshaw Gheyara
 (84), 17-B, Tardeo Chmbs,
 Kashinath St, Tardeo, 400034;
 August 22
Dossa Firoze Karwa (50), B-53,
 Meghdoot, Kol-Dongri, Sahar
 Rd, Andheri (E), 400069;
 August 22
Homi Dinshawji Mistry (71),
 1, Jamshed Hall, 49, Forjett St,
 400036; August 22
Meheroo Firoz Screwvala (64),
 Mehra Mans, 33, Forjett St,
 400036; August 22
Dady Curshetjee Baxter (82),
 Baxters Bglw, 52, Pali Hill,
 Bandra, 400050; August 23
Thamina Darabsha Dadina
 (70), C, Shakti Sadan,



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Mani Darshaw Master (96), Firuz-ara, 160, M. Karve Rd, 400021; August 23
Parviz Homi Banaji (91), 5, Vijay Niwas, Sleater Rd, 400007; August 24
Persis Cyrus Khambatta (11), Pallonji Apts, 389, Linking Rd, Khar, 400052; August 24
Maneck Solee Sukheswala (84), A/18, 806, Empire Mhl, Khodadad Circle, Dadar, 400014; August 24
Kekobad Homi Doctor (44), 8/589, Lashkari Wad, Tarota Bazar, Navsari, 396445; August 25
Aspi Kaikashroo Katrak (67), 1, Sleater Hse, Sleater Rd, Grant Rd, 400007; August 25
Zarine Jehangir Khambatta (75), 36, Hampton Court, 154, Lower Colaba Rd, Colaba, 400005; August 25
Feradoon Rattansha Mehta (79), 6, Rustom Baug, Victoria Rd, Byculia, 400027; August 25
Gool Jehangir Nagla (83), 6, Old Khareghat Clny, Hughes Rd, 400007; August 25
Nergish Faramroze Aibara (67), 31, 3rd Marine St, Dhobitalao; 400002; August 26
Aban Hormasji Fatakia (61), F/17, Contractor Baug, Mori Rd, Mahim, 400016; August 26
Kharsedji Manchershah Patel (76), X-103/20, Godrej Clny, Station Rd, Vikhroli (E), 400079; August 26
Perin Jamshedji Patel (89), 795, Dosal Mans, Jame Jamshed Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; August 26
Shavak Phirozeshaw Patell (85), Tardeo Chmbs, A/18, Kashinath St, Tardeo, 400034; August 26
Filly Jamshed Bulsara (59), D/404, Gurudarshan, 7, Samartha Ngr Cross Rd no 2, Andheri (W), 400053; August 27
Jal Dadabhai Havewala (81), 34, Wodehouse Rd, Colaba, 400005; August 27
Gool Sorabji Satha (70), 42, Patel Apts, Agyari Lane, Jambali Naka, Thane, 400601; August 27
Shirin Fareedon Irani (Nooshi) (76), Shrishti Bldg, Above Raj Oil Mills, 400008; August 28

Minocher Bejanji Bana (84), Dhun Mhl, Garden Rd, Colaba, 400005; August 29
Dinamai Nawal Boyce (92), D-6, Captain Clny, Tardeo, 400034; August 29
Manijeh Eruchshaw Daruwala (82), 305, Shiv Ashish, Opp Taj Cake Shop, Andheri (W), 400058; August 29
Shiavak Kaikhushru Daruwala (70), 18, Khareghat Clny, 34, Hughes Rd, 400007; August 29
Ardeshtir Maneckshaw Daver (73), B-13, Ginwalla Bldg, Captain Clny, 27-A, Tardeo Rd, 400034; August 29
Pirojshaw Dadabhoy Wadia (89), 20-A, Talukdar Bldg, Marzban Clny, Dr Nair Rd, 400011; August 29
Savak Faramroze Desai (84), Q-5, Cusrow Baug, S. B. Rd, 400039; August 30
Kersi Rustom Irani (63), 16/382-B, Powwala Bldg, Grant Rd, 400007; August 30
Rohan Kersi Elavia (19), Sunit Apts, Carmichael Rd, 400026; August 31 (cremated)
Dina Jehangir Makidallal (71), 2/3, Lady Ratan Tata Bldg, Gurunanak Rd, Bandra (W), 400050; August 31

CALCUTTA

DIED

Victor Framjee Viccajee (91), husband of Jer and father of Roshen Gazdar and Shernavaz Bhesania; July 10
Aban Vesuvala, wife of Dali and mother of Xerxes, Cyrus and Nilufer; August 16

LUCKNOW

DIED

Amy K. Jailor; July 29

POONA

DIED

Perin K. Cooper (73), 2001, St Vincent St, 411001; February 7
Banoobai Darabsha Doctor (88), 305, K. P. Towers, Fatima Ngr, 411013; February 9
Gulla Khushroo Irani (85), 900, Sachapir St, 411001; February 9
Goolistan Rashid Irani (87), 5, Codayi Rd, 411001; February 11
Dina Behram Merchant (85), 2, Salisbury Park, 411001; February 12
Merwan Rustom Irani (84), 2/7, Ardeshtir Baugh, A. Irani Rd, 411002; February 14
Eruch Ardeshtir Patel (87), 59,

Universal Apts, Gen Thim-mayya Rd, 411001; March 6
Bapai Burjor Sidhwa (93), 3, Mody Clny, Synagogue St, 411001; March 8
Jal Pestonji Karanjia (73), 4, Indralok Soc, Todiwalla Rd, 411001; March 12
Jer Rustom Irani (74), Marble Konark, Koregaon Park, 411001; March 14
Perin Ardeshtir Parekh (63), 29/A, Khan Rd, 411001; March 17
Phiroze Noshir Anklesaria (73), Mulla Gali, St Rd, Daund 413801; March 28
Jehangir Jamshedji Ranikhetwala (65), 105, Himalaya Hse, Fatima Ngr, 411013; April 28
Piroja Jehangirji Hatara (92), 2422, Gen Thimmayya Rd, 411001; April 29
Mehera Erach Balsara (87), 206/A, Mehta Towers, Khadki, 411003; May 5
Hormusji Jehangirji (93), 12, Boat Club Rd, 411001; May 5
Jerbai Dorabji Pudumji (77), 72, Koregaon Park, 411001; May 11
Allanmai R. Darukhanawala (93), 503, Neena Apts, Synagogue St, 411001; May 12
Jeroo Minoo Patel (72), 15, Stavely Rd, 411001; May 17
Gaimai Dinshawji Bajina (89), 858, Dastur Meher Rd, 411001; May 22
Dolly M. Irani (Unani) (70), 410, Panchratna Apts, Bhairoba Nala, 411001; May 22
Daulat G. Irani (85), 8, Vivekanand Park, 411001; May 24
Tehmina Burjorji Vesuna (76), 12, Bangla Rd, Lonavala, 410401; June 14
Banubai Jal Dorabji (87), 20, Sasoon Rd, 411001; June 9
Jalamai Bamanji Taraporewala (72), 1166/E, Sykes Extension Kholapur, 444802; June 24
Perinbanoo Minoo Contractor (78), 462, Elphinston Rd, Khadki, 411003; July 3
Darayus M. Darukhanawala (78), Guruprasad Apts, 411001; July 4
Najamai Erachshah Taraporewala (82), 6, Mody Clny, Synagogue St, 411001; July 4
Homai Sorab Irani (57), 4/4, Ardeshtir Baugh, Ma-Perviz Rd, 411002; July 22
Kaikhushru Dinshaji Madan

(75), 1967, Guffer Bag St, 411001; July 22
Shirin Bamanshah Dangur (74), 18, Mody Clny, Synagogue St, 411001; August 8
Hilla Rustomji Mistry (85), Mody Clny, Synagogue St, 411001; August 13
Goolcher B. Varia, 2401/A, East St, 411001; August 28
Ratan Kaikhushroo Panthaki (76), 9/3, 3/98 Sadhu Waswani Kunj, Sadhu Waswani Rd, 411001; August 29
Baby girl of Sorab Daruwala (newborn), 908, Synagogue St, 411001; August 30

SURAT

DIED

Roshanbanoo Ratansha Tata (70), Malesar St, Rustompura, 395002; July 3
Percy Adi Patel (30), Timalia Wad, Nanpura, 395001; July 9
Camaji Rustomji Daruwala (82), Main Rd, Nanpura, 395001; July 12
Rati Dosabhai Bhagat (64), Nariman Home and Infirmary, Shahpore, 395003; July 15
Bachamai Eruchshaw Shroff (65), Allahi Baug, Rustompura, 395002; July 19
Ketty Darabsha Karanjia (65), Nariman Home and Infirmary, Shahpore, 395003; August 10
Dina Nariman Kelawala (60), Athugar St, Nanpura, 395001; August 11
Freny Sorabji Daruwala (52), Village Bhatha, Dist Surat, 394510; August 18
Piroja Darabshaw Kapadia (92), Nariman Home and Infirmary, Shahpore, 395003; August 22
Noshirwan Rustomji Vakil (86), Nariman Home and Infirmary, Shahpore, 395003; August 23
Kaitayun Nusserwanji Mehta (65), Nariman Home and Infirmary, Shahpore, 395003; August 25
Pillamai Barjorji Malasaria (89), Adagara St, Nanpura, 395001; August 26

AUSTRALIA

Sydney

DIED

Binaifer Adaggra (14), daughter of Bapsy and Percy and sister of Cyrus; March 15

Victoria

BORN

A boy, *Bejaan*, to *Benafsha* and

Sarosh Khariwala, brother to Zaal; July 20

CANADA

Burnaby

MARRIED

Fariba Kaviani and **Sirus Oshidari**; June 25

British Columbia

BORN

A boy, **Aidan**, to **Nancy** and **Zubin Amrolia**; June 15

DIED

Hira Dubash (89), mother of **Fali** and **Daulat Hamer**; August 4

Ontario

BORN

Twins (girls), **Elyse** and **Alana**, to **Lori** and **Khushru Mistry**; April 20

Vancouver

BORN

Twins (girl and boy), **Cyra** and **Cyrus**, to **Mahdokht** and **Shahriar Shahriari**; March 20

HUNGARY

Budapest

DIED

Aspy Darabshah Adajania (52), husband of **Persis** and father of **Zia** and **Homi**; July 17

PAKISTAN

Karachi

BORN

A girl, **Charlene**, to **Gulmohar** and **Mehryar Bharucha**; May 5

A boy, **Afshad**, to **Sheeraz** and **Yezdi Wania**, brother to **Kaezad**; June 15

DIED

Peshotan Byramji Kotwal (95); May 7

Najamai Jehangirji Sidhwa (86); May 7

Mani Minoo Karanjia (60); May 12

Shera Khurshed Daroga (75); June 8

Dolat Pesi Clubwala (82); June 9

Roshan Savak Khajotia (74); June 11

Rati Jehangir Karanjia (63); June 17

Jeejbhoy Muncherji Elavia (75); June 19

Meheramai Faramroze Mobed (90); June 30

UK

London

BORN

A girl, **Arnaz**, to **Freni** and **Yadgar Marker**, sister to **Rustom**, **Phiroza** and **Shirin**; January 7

A boy, **Kayzad**, to **Nazneen** and **Jamshed Dumasia**, brother to **Mahrukh**; June 11

A girl, **Haizarya**, to **Kashmira** and **Khuzista Dastoor**; July 10

A girl, **Jahanara**, to **Ava** and **Vistasp Jamooji**; July 31

MARRIED

Gita Hakhamaneshi, daughter of **Katayoun** and **Dinyar** and **Rustom Farahmandi**, son of **Parvin** and **Shahpur**; April 23

DIED

Zeena Ralph (60), wife of **Brian** and mother of **Omar** and **Yasmin**; January 30
Phiroze Dorabji Mehta (91), father of **John** and **Robert**; May 2

Jamshed Mistry (82), husband of **Jaloo** and father of **Noshir** and **Rasheed**; June 8

Khodad Jamshed Irani (75), husband of **Doreen** and father of **Freny**, **Jamshed** and **Cyrus**; June 22

USA

Beaumont, Texas

MARRIED

Tannaz Machhi of **Bombay**, daughter of **Soona** and **Keikhushru** and **Debashish Chakraborty** of **New Delhi**, son of **Ranjana** and **Sushilkumar**; January 19

California

BORN

A boy, **Jamshed**, to **Nilufer** and **Sarosh Vesuna**; January 11

DIED

Khodamorad Sioshansi (75); July 7

Chicago

BORN

A girl, **Sara**, to **Yasmeen** and **Malcolm Bilimoria**; June 29

A boy, **Zaal**, to **Farzana** and **Darius Wania**; July 2

A girl, **Benaz**, to **Rieana** and **Hiraz Medhora**; July 5

A boy, **Cyrus**, to **Rashna** and **Adil Pooniwala**; July 15

Dallas

MARRIED

Keshmira Bhada and **Mehelly Bam**; July 4

Houston

BORN

Twins (girl and boy), **Cyra** and **Cyrus**, to **Bakhtavar** and **Kershaw Byramji**; June 2

Los Angeles

MARRIED

Armita Jahanian of **San Jose**, daughter of **Merengeez** and **Rustam** and **Hormazd Dalal**, son of **Dhunmai** and **Phiroze**; August 20

Pennsylvania

BORN

A girl, **Zenia**, to **Tenaz** and **Kaizad Sunawalla**; July 17

Richmond

BORN

A boy, **Rizwan**, to **Seema** and **Zehyari Bankwala**, brother to **Danesh**; April 17

San Francisco

DIED

Aloo Randelia (84), January 2

Compiled by **Roxana A. Driver**

TOTALS FOR 1994

	Bombay		India		World	
	A	B	A	B	A	B
BORN						
Boys	8	72	1	6	10	21
Girls	4	68	--	3	11	17
MARRIED						
Parsi	4	189	--	7	4	6
Intercommunal	28	52 ^A	--	2	1	3
DIED						
CONSIGNED						
Males	44	330	14	44	7	32*
Females	42	319	37	68	11	25*
CREMATED						
Males	6	11	--	--	--	--
Females	6	7	--	--	--	--

A: Total numbers in this issue

B: Running totals for 1994 (February-March 1994-October 1994 issues)

*Males married out -- 28

Females married out -- 24

*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.

DR DINSHAH MEHTA: Midwife at the birth of a nation

Arnavaz S. Mama

"Next to doctoring and spiritual perfection, I would like to work for Hindu-Muslim unity," Dr Dinshah Kaikhushroo Mehta had once announced to his most famous patient, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi.

Years later, after the pioneer naturopath had successfully helped him through several historic fasts, the Mahatma sought out Mehta and another Zoroastrian, industrialist Jehangir P. Patel. To them Gandhi entrusted the laying of the groundwork for his most ambitious mission — sowing the seeds of Hindu-Muslim amity in newly created Pakistan. Their partner, in the work "to unite the hearts of the people," was Jamshed Mehta who dominated the public life of Karachi. But, as the doctor had long feared (and hopefully sought to prevent by walking behind Gandhi, a revolver in his pocket), Gandhi was assassinated during his absence.

In the years that followed, the naturopath slowly divested himself of his duties as a doctor and as a householder and, founding the Servants of God Society, dedicated himself increasingly to spiritual work. Thus, when the nonagenarian Mehta breathed his last in Delhi in September 1993, it was only the devout few who were aware of his 'samadhi.' He was cremated as per his desire.

Recounting the clash of faith and apprehension in his mind, Gandhi had written in *Harijan* magazine (March 25, 1946): "The still small voice within me whispers: 'Why bother about what others say? I have given you a colleague like Dr Dinshah who understands you and whom you understand.'" A similar compliment had been paid by the late Jayaprakash (JP) Narayan who undertook a 21-day fast in 1952 under Mehta's supervision. JP spent five months at Mehta's Nature Cure Clinic in Poona and the inner transformation which he experienced there was credited to Mehta: "I cannot say how fortunate a decision it was for me to do my fast at the Clinic and Dr Mehta's physical and spiritual ministrations made a profound impression on my life."

Mehta established his Nature Cure Clinic and Sanatorium in Poona in 1929, "with a galvanized tub and a cold water tap" as notes the introduction to the author on the cover of the book *Mahatma Gandhi the Beloved Patient* [compiled and edited by Dr (Ms) Sundri Vaswani and published by the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay 400007 in 1992]. Though Gandhi started to recommend the institution to his friends and acquaintances almost from its inception, it was only in January 1932 that



Mehta received a summons to Mani Bhavan, Gandhi's Laburnum Road headquarters in Bombay. The beginning of the bond is recounted in Mehta's book: "We talked, I spoke. He replied in writing (Gandhi maintained periods of silence). I must still be having the scraps of paper on which he wrote his replies."

The relationship had its ebbs and flows. "One freedom I crave from you however. Whenever I differ from you, permit me to express my viewpoint freely, and satisfy my 'innermost self' in your own way (sic). This will enable me to obey you not only in 'manifestations' of your instructions but also in the 'spirit' of it," Mehta had once written to Gandhi. At the time of the Stafford Cripps Commission, Gandhi's initial response to the Englishman almost led to a breach in the doctor-patient rela-

tionship as Cripps was Mehta's patient too. Mehta, according to the book, had accused Gandhi of egotism, leading to a more rational and contrite response from the Mahatma.

Replying to Gandhi's letter Mehta had noted on November 13, 1932, "I beg to be excused for replying in English to your letter written in Gujarati. This discrepancy is due to (I am ashamed to say) first of all my Gujarati being poorer than my English and secondly I could not have expressed well a few technical things you wish to know..."

"Regarding your enquiry about myself... I am fairly well occupied with my work but I am yet very far from achievement of my ideal in the line, what with financial difficulty facing me every month and all the more so for future expansion. But for a kindhearted and generous patient of mine — Mr Kekhushro H. Bhiwandiwalla — I could not have expanded the concern even to the present stage... The whole crux is that poor as well as rich are equally afflicted. They both need treatment for their ailments. But the poor can't pay for their treatments and the rich won't pay for them. I have yet to find another Bhiwandiwalla from among my rich patients."

In 1934 Gandhi wrote to K. M. Munshi. "I have had the kindest service from Shri Dinshah Mehta and his staff during my 21 days' fast and after. It was all voluntary labor. I believe him to be a sincere lover of his profession. He has a passion for naturopathy. I am deeply interested in his experiments. He is in financial difficulty. The friend who has hereto supported him liberally is unable to do so much longer. His minimum expenses are, in round figures, Rs 3,000 per month. His loss is half that amount. He therefore wishes to make a public appeal for funds. If the help forthcoming is large enough, he will use the fund as an endowment. He keeps accounts which are open to inspection. This appeal deserves the support of all who are interested in the nature cure method."

One reason for Mehta's losses was that he even gave free in-patient treatment inclusive of the prescribed diet, which was often very costly. Mehta's interest in research into the subject continued in later years and the book reveals that even at the age of 85 he continued to guide scholars who had been accepted by him to research the link between the pineal gland and cancer which he felt would be the source of the eventual cure for the dread disease.

Mehta supervised his patients' diet and

elimination, exercise and rest, massage and other therapies like the baths. At a time when the wonders of Vichy water from France was the miracle cure, Mehta substituted the water from the natural springs of Sinhagadh (14 miles from Poona at a height of 4,500 ft) where he had a bungalow, and huge containers of the water were brought down daily for the benefit of his patients.

Mehta's wife Gool (née Poncha of Poona) often accompanied the doctor on his trips to Gandhi and Kasturba at the Aga Khan Palace where they were imprisoned. These trips had been cleared by the British government with much difficulty and were restricted in time and number. A dedicated Gandhian herself, the book notes that though a vegetarian Gool cooked non-vegetarian meals for various people at Gandhi's bidding. (Gandhi had declared that it was the duty of the vegetarian host or employer to feed his guest/employee the food to which he was accustomed.) Gool predeceased Mehta in 1975.

In 1936 Mehta had fasted for 50 days, notes a conversation recorded in the book: "It was with a view to end my life due to worries which haunted me for two years before the fast. These worries brought suicidal ideas of ending life with a bullet fairly continuously during that period. So, I thought why not die fasting?"

"On the 36th day, certain changes in my psyche had taken place which, for want of other words, I would describe as flashes of revelation, simultaneously relieving my mind of the whole load... Still I did not break the fast (until) on the 45th day another flash occurred which revealed to me that I must break the fast on the 50th day.

"Because of these revelations during the fast my whole viewpoint on life underwent a revolutionary change. I firmly believe that it is as a result of that fast and revelations that I am living today without a breakdown."

Mehta had suffered malaria as a young boy in 1920. With the techniques of fasting and naturopathy, without using any drugs, he first cured himself and the other members of his family. Mehta's contention was that drugs which are not food, or contain substances which cannot become part of the human body however good they may be for overcoming the disease processes including infections, need to be eliminated from the body. Otherwise they get logged somewhere or the other and produce chronic diseases.

By 1944 Gandhi had decided to go to Poona to stay at Mehta's Clinic on a permanent basis which prompted the doctor

"to spend money like water" to ensure Gandhi's convenience. Eventually Gandhi divided his time between Sevagram and Poona. The stature of Mehta's national and international patients (a veritable who's who of Hindu, Muslim and British politicians, industrialists and socialites) led to his Clinic being referred to as the de facto capital of India. The Clinic which had begun in Cama's bungalow on Todiwala Road and had subsequently shifted to larger premises across the road in Laxmi Nivas became the nucleus of the All India Nature Cure Foundation Trust founded by Gandhi. Enthused by Mehta's work Gandhi sought to spread the knowledge of nature cure and make its benefits available to all people, especially the poor. To this Trust Mehta bequeathed all he had, including his personal properties and professional equipment. The Foundation's trust deed was signed by Gandhi, Mehta and Patel with Sardar Vallabhai Patel, free India's first home minister, and Dr (Ms) Sushila Nayyar, its first public health minister as witnesses. With the registration of the deed, Gandhi took over the complete administration and financial control of the institution. After Gandhi's demise, Mehta became its chairman for life.

The good doctor in his youth was wont to pose as a Greek statue, clad in nothing but a fig leaf as notes his nephew, poet and writer Adil Jussawalla in a review of the book in *The Times of India* (October 3, 1993). He had also been a shikari in earlier years. Thereafter he confined his shooting to panthers who ran amuck and harassed the villagers. Among their many conversations Mehta asked Gandhi whether such shooting was violence or nonviolence. After appropriate thought Gandhi replied, "*Hoon éné ahimsa ma muki déun* (I would classify it as nonviolence)."

In his preface to the book *The Mahatma and the Netaji*, author Samar Guha has referred to Mehta as one who "is now living as a saintly recluse in Delhi and is known to his admirers as Revered Dadaji." In a foreword to the book Mehta notes, "Even now, as then, I am not involved in any party politics. My interest in politics is to introduce spiritual values in politics as part of the second mission of the Society of Servants of God, which is to introduce and propagate spiritual values in all walks of life, which includes politics, economics and social activities in general."

Mehta is survived by his son Ardeshtir, a linguist in Ottawa and his Coonoor based daughter Shirin Sethna.

"A ZOROASTRIAN AGAIN" *continued from page 34*

I realise that a small minority may have a different view. However, I felt perfectly justified as I had the support of five of the High Priests, to proceed to have my 'Navjote'. This ceremony was performed last Saturday, the 24th of September 1994, (Ardibehst Maha, Ardibehst Roj) at 'BEACH HOUSE', in the early morning, and I feel very happy today that I am a Zoroastrian. The people who witnessed this ceremony were the absolute minimum, only very close friends. I did not wish to have a public ceremony, which could cause any embarrassment to any member of the community. Mr Shrivastav Vakil has given me a Certificate as a Notary in the State of Maharashtra, confirming that this ceremony took place at which he was himself present.

I sincerely hope that whatever discussions or disputes that might arise will be minimal, and will cause no disturbance in the community. I hope you, Jimmy, and the other Members of the Parsi Panchayet, will welcome this news and will accept the reasons which I have stated that my dearest desire and wish has now been fulfilled and that I am now a Zoroastrian, following the Religion of my ancestors.

With kind regards

Yours sincerely

NEVILLE N. WADIA

September 26, 1994

Dear Dasturji Kotwal

I am writing to tell you that my wishes have now been realised and that I had my 'Navjote' on last Saturday morning, the 24th September 1994 (Ardibehst Maha, Ardibehst Roj) at 'Beach House'.

I am enclosing a copy of the letter which I have written to the Bombay Parsi Panchayet, informing them officially and I am hoping that everything will be kept as quiet as possible and that nobody will make any issue out of it. I have been as quiet and discreet as you had advised me.

I am leaving tomorrow night to go to Europe, and will be back, I hope, before the end of the year. I shall certainly contact you again.

My best thanks to you for your help and support. With kind regards

Yours sincerely

NEVILLE N. WADIA

September 27, 1994

Similar letters also addressed to: 1) Dasturji Dr Kaikhushroo M. JamaspAsa 2) Dasturji Dr. Hormuzdiar K. Mirza 3) Sardar Dasturji Hormuzdiar Noshirwan Dastur 4) Dasturji Noshirwan M. Dastur

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