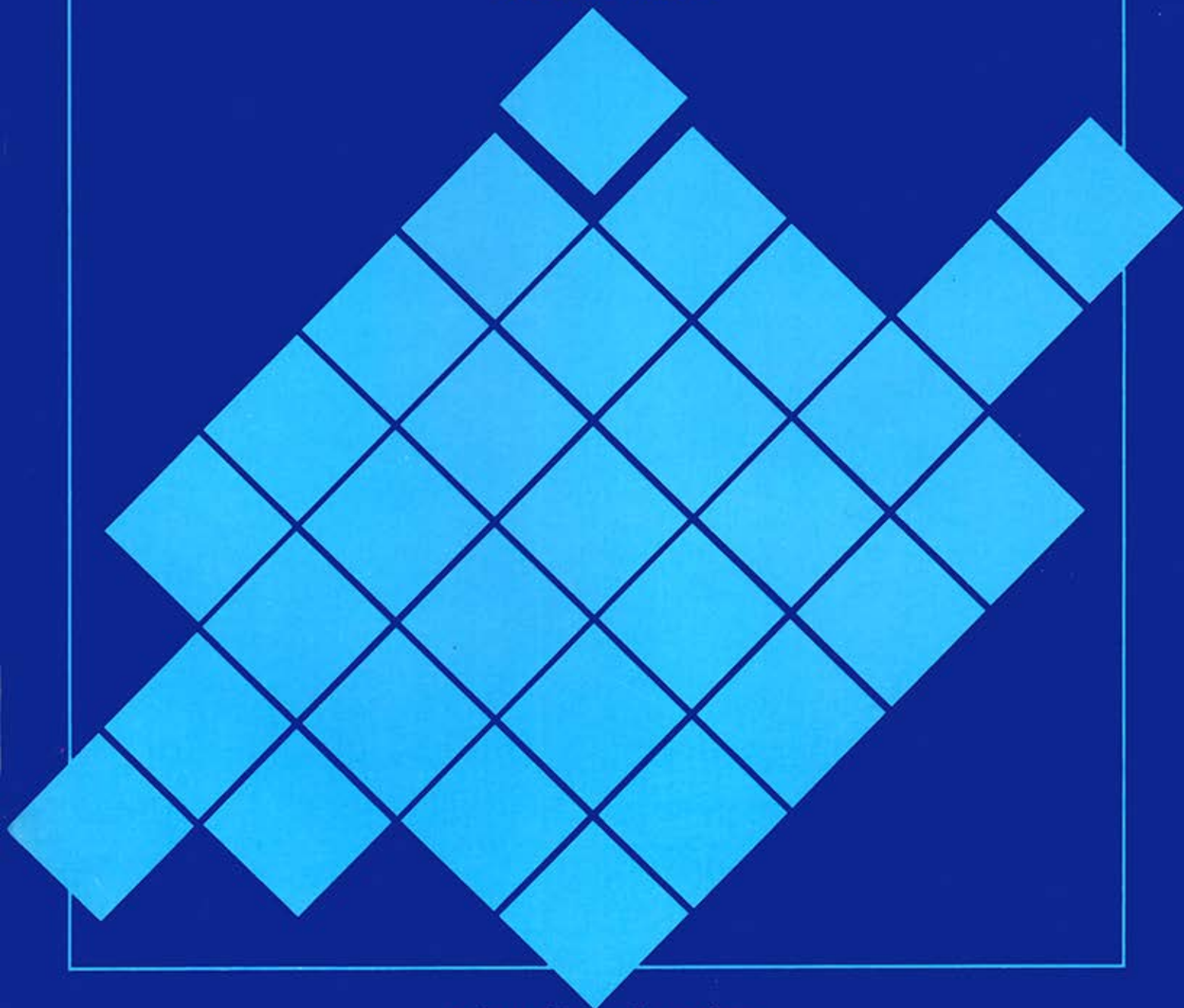


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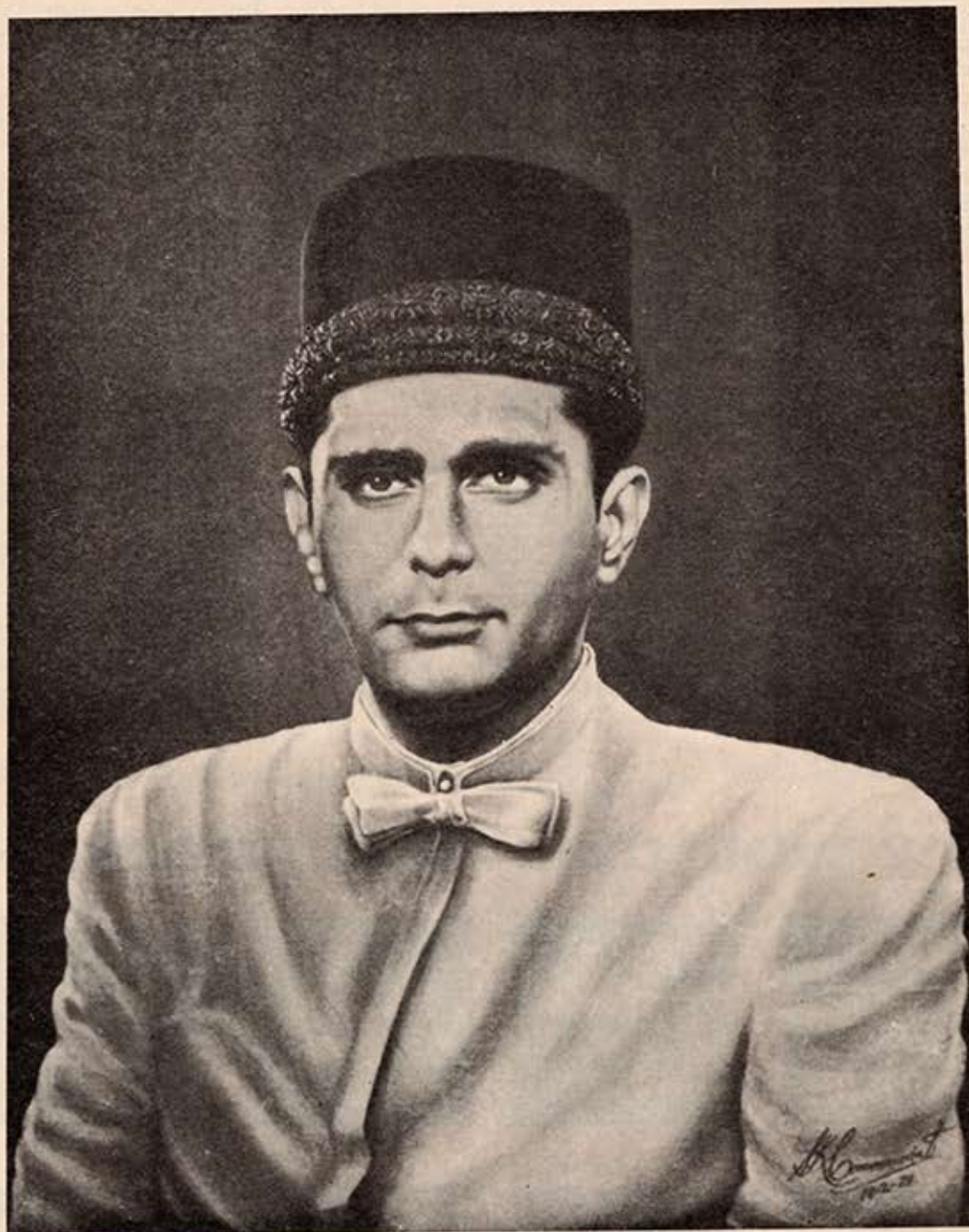
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In Memoriam
Mr Fali Meherji Variava
Ex-Director

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To THINK anew

We can study history but how do we study the future? We can look back at 30 years of *Parsiana's* existence and state that the major changes that took place were not so much in the community the magazine covers but in the technology used to produce the publication, a technology without which the magazine may not have survived all these years.

If one views the next 30 years in a historic perspective of a religion that has lived for 3,500 years or more, then it is unlikely that anything drastic would take place in the coming three decades. Yes there will be fewer Parsis in India but the Zoroastrian population in Iran and the west may increase. After all, Iranian Zoroastrianism survived the fall of the Persian empire and the onslaught of Islam; they may yet thrive. While the dominant Zoroastrian community is the one in India at present, if the pendulum swings back to the west it is in the order of things. But where does that leave those in India and what will be the fate of their community institutions?

Even here much of the future can be predicted. As our numbers dwindle so will our institutions. Only those institutions whose trustees or managers have considerable foresight and vision will continue, the rest will languish and eventually perish. The institutions under the greatest threat are those reserved exclusively for Parsis. The number one institution in this category are our fire-temples. Here because of the decreasing priestly population and the bar on the entry of non-Parsi Zoroastrians their future becomes a question mark. Unlike the schools that were at one time only for Parsis and today are cosmopolitan (with the exception of the madressas), fire-temples even if thrown open to other communities may not find devotees. And which trustees would in the first place attempt to throw open the doors to all? At best they

may permit entry to the non-Parsi family members and to the converts to Zoroastrianism but these would be too small and insignificant a number to support the present number of fire-temples in India. So what then?

We have several examples of fire-temples falling into disuse which may serve as pointers to the future. The fire-temple in Diu has been converted into an old peoples' home run by Christian nuns. Diu is therefore the best possible scenario the community could hope for: a situation by which the fire-temple structure and appurtenant



*Present and erstwhile community assets:
(Above) Zoroastrian Building at Hong Kong
(Left) old fire-temple and dokhma at Diu*

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lands are used for a socially useful purpose. But Diu is also the exception to the rule. In most other cases the fire-temple structures stand desolate and vandalized with cattle and encroachers settled on the land. Or they stand in ruins serving more as an abode to a priestly family rather than as a house of worship.

Another option is to shift the flame as was done to the Cowasjee Dinshaw Adaran in Aden whose fire was transferred to Lonavala in 1976 and housed there next to the existing fire in a separate kebla. The agiary structure in Aden had been standing till the last civil war as the Yemeni government reportedly had left the property alone. In the aftermath of the war its status is unknown. A similar attempt to move the fire from Bharuch's Pestonji Aslaji Doongaji Agiary to the new agiary under construction at Godrej Baug has been stalled by legal opposition from a handful of Bharuch residents.

As with our fire-temples so with our lands for the disposal of the dead. Old dokhmas stand abandoned in many towns and villages in Gujarat and elsewhere which once had thriving Parsi populations. Today the wooden doors and frames have been stolen and probably used for firewood or sale while graffiti is scrawled on the walls. In some even the bricks or stones have been carted away. In the aramgahs the grave stones have been stolen, cattle wander freely and squatters use the grounds as a toilet or abode.

These institutions stand mute testimony to the inability of the local community to anticipate the future and to then prepare for it. But what could they have done? Appointed non-Parsi trustees? Converted the land into a playground or a cosmopolitan burial ground? Could they have converted the agiaries into schools or libraries or could they have sold the property and channelled the money to the community elsewhere? Or could they have handed it over to the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India? And had they attempted any of these steps would there not have been strenuous opposition? Would the charity commissioners and the trust deeds and the laws of the land permit change? And even if they do, would the trustees have the energy and the resources, both financial and intellectual, to pursue the battle in the various courts of law over decades and possibly generations?

In Kashmir the Pestonjee family wisely associated the Federation with the aram-

gah lands so even if no Parsis were left in Srinagar, at least the Federation could keep an eye on the place. This is to the credit of the Pestonjees and the willingness of the Federation to undertake the task. But what about all the trusts, both communal and private that would rather see their properties and assets rot than hand them over to representative community bodies? And finally even if they had that foresight how many such assets can the Federation or any other such body manage? A very small number allowing for the present infrastructure. And to what use would the Federation put these properties to?

Another problem area, though not necessarily in the next 30 years, will be the housing colonies constructed for Parsis. With the community dwindling and some members migrating, more and more flats will lie locked or be occupied by unauthorized occupants. The flats that are willingly surrendered to the concerned trust may lie unused if no Parsi comes forth seeking tenancy. What then are the trustees to do with the property? In the absence of Parsis who should the flat be given to and on what terms?

So the problems for the next 30 years come into sharper focus. And we realize that if the community does not have a long range plan for coping with its dwindling numbers then what has happened in parts of Gujarat, Maharashtra and other states of the country will become the trend

The first issue of Parsiana and its then editor Warden



of the future.

We are where we are because we have lost the ability to think anew. When our forefathers faced persecution and discrimination in Iran they journeyed eastward to a freer, more hospitable land. And when things grew difficult, they once again sought greener pastures. It is human nature to opt for the best possible life not only for ourselves but for our families. If Parsis had not ventured out to China, Africa and other lands we would not have the assets and institutions we have today. And yet moving away does not solve the problem for the place we leave behind.

So we need new solutions for old problems. What happens to this wealth when there are only a handful of Parsis left? In Calicut, the Marshall family manages well a prayer hall and an aramgah. The funds from the trust are used for community and cosmopolitan purposes. Calicut shows that where able people remain there is much they can do. But what happens when the Marshall family migrates or their offspring cease to procreate? Can the Federation ensure that a neighboring anjuman will manage the affairs of Calicut? Or will the neighboring anjuman itself be so besotted with its own agenda for survival that no one will be in a position to regularly visit Calicut? And then what?

The community has to give a lot of thought to its beating of the retreat. Today in India publications like *The Bombay Samachar*, the *Jam-e-Jamshed Weekly* and

Parsiana exist as professionally run publications focussing on the community. *The Samachar* has a tradition of appointing Parsi editors. But how many Parsi journalists are there fluent in both English and Gujarati? And if a non-Parsi were appointed would he or she be knowledgeable in community affairs as the present editor Jehan Daruvala? But *The Samachar's* reading base is not the microscopic Parsi community. It is the Gujarati speaking communities. So *The Samachar* has a large base to subsist on. The same would not hold true for the *Jamé* and *Parsiana*. The economics of publishing are based largely on numbers. Whether you print one copy or one million, the cost of researching the article, typesetting, processing and platemaking remain the same. Only the cost of printing, paper and binding increase in proportion to the numbers printed.

Even assuming that the population in the west increases, and therefore the potential readership, the fact remains that both these journals are published in Bombay and the pool of talent they can draw on is limited and diminishing. This could mean that the publications in the west could one day become more dominant and influential. Already the *FEZANA Journal* ably copublished by Ms Roshan Rivetna on behalf of the Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America, has emerged as a major community publication with around 60 pages of text and photographs. The desktop typesetting system makes it possible for them to produce the *Journal* with minimal voluntary staff, scattered though they are over the North American continent.

It is also possible, as technology advances, that the print media will give way to other forms of communication that may be faster and yet less costly to disseminate. Paper and print may be substituted with a diskette or a computer network.

If the community continues to function as a community in the next century it may be only by combining the energy and vigor of its leadership with new technology.

Zoroastrians in the west have demonstrated a remarkable ability to create community associations and in the span of about 20 years have hosted nine North American Congresses. The planning and execution of these Congresses is done on sound managerial lines. And we must keep in mind that the Zoroastrians in the west do not have the benefit of household help other than from family members nor a battery of peons to do their bidding. So how do they manage? One answer is that

life in the west, though hard, is not as difficult as life in India where on any given day you cannot be sure if you will get water in your taps, whether the gas cylinder will be replaced, whether the power may fail or the trains derail or some political party call a bandh or a plague be upon all. Just the process of getting to work and returning saps our energies. The uncertainties leave us drained.

The communications system in the west, the reliability of services and the plethora of choices ensure a higher return on energy spent than in India. And of course overseas Zoroastrians do not have to expend as much time and effort on maintaining and governing immovable properties such as baus, buildings and fire-temples. They are free to plan, concentrate and think about the future.

Slowly things should improve in India as the markets open up and competition from foreign companies force Indian firms to improve their products and services. And once the government gets off the backs of people, India can achieve its potential.

In the case of the government we want less controls and more freedom. In the case of the community we need an awakening and involvement. A patient visits a doctor for treatment and if the prognosis is uncertain prepares a will. As a community we have still to realize we are ill. The treatment has yet to begin and we have not even thought in terms of a will.

Milestones

What were the major milestones in the last 30 years of the community's history? As the present editorial board of *Parsiana* was not covering the community from 1964, when Dr Pestonji Warden founded *Parsiana* as a "new medium for old wisdom," till 1973, when he 'sold' the beleaguered publication for one rupee to the present owners, we cannot speak authoritatively for the period. Perhaps some of our readers can enlighten us as to what they feel transpired which was of significance. But in 1973 the main news event was the then Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP) trustee Shiavax Vakil's disclosure on the unhygienic state of the dokhmas in Bombay following an inspection by him and trustee Dr Aspi Golwalla. Vakil's findings, and the publication of them not only in the anglo-vernacular Press but also in *Parsiana*, created a stir unlike any other during the time.

Around 1974 also saw the emergence of Khojeste Mistree on the community scene.

With organizational assistance from people like lawyer and social worker Katie and noted economist Freddie Mehta, community members packed public halls to hear the Oxford educated scholar-cum-teacher. The ghambar tradition was also revived in Bombay for the March 21st Navroze celebrations with volunteers like Ms Homai Modi contributing to their planning.

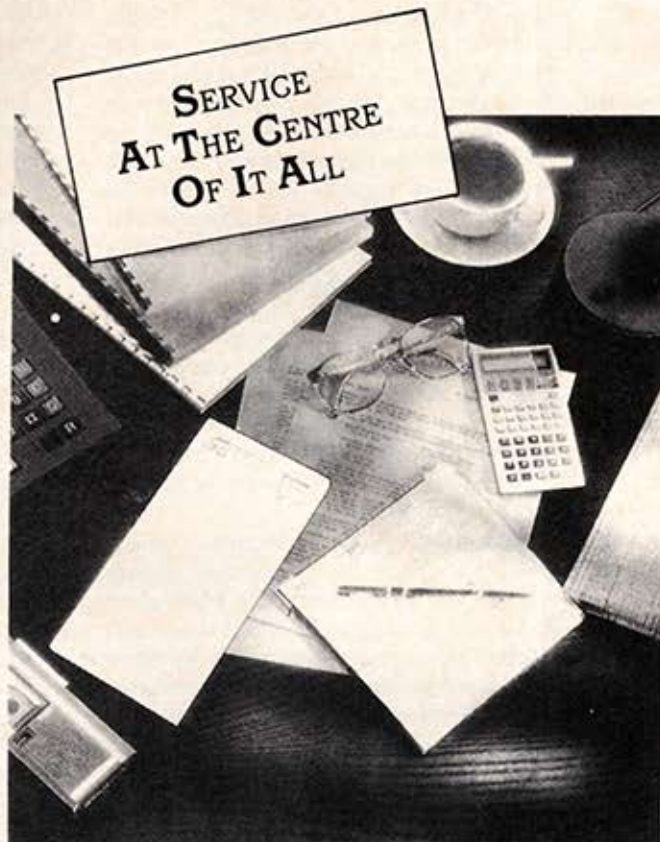
Overseas Zoroastrians began to formalize their loosely structured informal groups into regular associations. The advent on the global Zoroastrian scene of Iranian millionaire philanthropist Arbab Rustam Guiv, who donated the finance needed to build the dar-e-mehers, made the dreams of several of the overseas associations a reality. The first community center was acquired by the Zoroastrian Association of Greater New York.

In 1976, for the first time, the Parsi Press was invited to cover the executive council meeting of the nascent Federation. Maneck Gheyara, the tireless president of the Surat Parsi Panchayat, started the trend with the meeting held in Surat in 1976.

In 1978 the third World Zoroastrian Congress was held after a gap of nearly 14 years. The Congress was an organizational success but barely two weeks later the BPP voted six to one to withdraw from membership of the all-India body. The lone dissenting trustee was solicitor Eruch Desai. The BPP's ostensible reason was the criticism levelled against the BPP election scheme by the Delhi Parsi Anjuman president Shiavax Nargolwala. The main reason was BPP chairman B. K. Boman-Behram's and BPP trustee Jal Vimadlal's dislike of the liberal and outspoken Nargolwala.

But perhaps the most notable development in Bombay during the last 30 years was the voter awakening drive spearheaded by the Committee for Electoral Rights (CER). Founded by two dissenting members of a BPP committee commissioned to recommend changes in the antiquated BPP electoral system — high ranking government official Jamsheed Kanga and noted lawyer Dadi Engineer — the group succeeded in enrolling over 20,000 voters. The election also saw Parsi women married to non-Parsis assert their right to vote. Represented by Gagrut and Company, the ladies fought their case and won in the Bombay High Court.

The 1980s then saw a more active Punchayet and a more participative community. Golwalla became chairman of the BPP after Boman-Behram, both as the seniormost trustee and by an election



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amongst the trustees. This new precedent resulted in a legal tussle 12 years later when Jamshed Guzder and Desai clashed over who should be chairman (the matter is still pending in the courts).

As the Federation in India gained in stature after the BPP rejoined in 1983, the associations in North America came together to form a body called the Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America (FEZANA). This was in 1987.

In London, the leaders of the Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe (ZTFE) along with the Zartoshty brothers of Iran founded the World Zoroastrian Organisation (WZO) in 1980 to aid Irani Zoroastrians fleeing fundamentalist Iran. In the process, there began a tussle as to who truly represents the Zoroastrians of the world which is yet to be resolved. The WZO received a setback when the orthodox groups in the United Kingdom elected their representatives on the ZTFE board following a dispute over the presence of non-Parsis at the annual muktad prayers. While the split initially was a setback for the WZO leadership, they subsequently channelled all their energies to the new body and soon found a cause that proved dear to many community members: assisting the poor, rural Parsis of Gujarat.

The navjote of Joseph Peterson in 1983 led to much hand wringing by the orthodox groups who opposed conversion and the middle-of-the-road Zoroastrians who were uncertain whether such entrants should be accepted or encouraged.

Perhaps the biggest community news event in the '90s was the unseemly controversy that surrounded the tragic death of young Roxan Shah (née Nazir) in a road accident on the Bombay-Poona highway, one of the bloodiest roads in the country. Her wish was to have her body consigned to the towers of silence upon her death but the chairman of the BPP refused permission. In the aftermath of the controversy, the BPP rescinded its hasty stand and conceded that Parsi women married to non-Parsis who continued to profess the Zoroastrian religion could have their bodies consigned to a dokhma if an affidavit was filed stating that they remained Parsi Zoroastrians until their death.

As an offspin of the embroglio, Parsis married to non-Parsis formed the Association of Inter-Married Zoroastrians (AIMZ) to advocate their cause while some of the orthodox started a monthly publication titled *Deen Parast* to air their views.

From Hong Kong came Shapurji Jokhi who at a cost of two and a half crore rupees

built Ava Baug in Navsari, making it the first city in Gujarat to have an increasing Parsi population. In Bombay with the support of donors and the house of Godrej, the BPP built Godrej Baug, the newest colony in the community. The other colonies built in the past 30 years include Panthaki Baug, Dhunbai Wadi and Gilder Baug.

Perhaps one of the most heartening developments over the last eight years has been the hosting of the annual all-India youth festivals and the formation of the Federation of Zoroastrian Youth Associations. Amongst the first projects the youth undertook was to canvas for subscriptions and advertisements to bolster *Parsiana's* revenue. The impetus for the youth involvement in the Federation affairs as well as the hosting of the conferences came from Keki Gandhi, the indefatigable joint honorary secretary of the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India. The BPP also initiated a holiday camp since 1987 and accepted participants from other parts of the country as well. North America too has been regularly holding youth conferences with the seventh one scheduled in 1995 in California.

Amongst the other milestones over the past 30 years are: the appointment of Sam Manekshaw as the first Field Marshal of India, of Aspi Engineer as chief of air staff, of Jal Cursetji as admiral of the Navy; of Soli Sorabjee as the attorney general of India; of jurist Nani Palkhivala as the Indian ambassador to the USA and Jamshed Marker of Pakistan as that country's representative to the United Nations; the selection of Kershasp Choksy to the cabinet in Sri Lanka and of Dr (Ms) Freni Ginwala as the speaker of South Africa's first non racial parliament; the accomplishments of Farokh Tarapore and Zarir Karanjia of Bombay and Byram and Gospi Avari of Karachi in the sailing regatta at the 1982 Asian Games; the appointment of Aspy Adajania to the Olympic jury in 1984; the emergence of ace sportspersons Cawas Billimoria on the judo scene, Ms Jasmin Arethna as the country's best woman cyclist, Meherwan Daruvala and Darius Pundole as squash champions, Ms Diana Edulji as captain of the Indian women's cricket team; music conductor Zubin Mehta designated director for life of the Israel Philharmonic; novelist Rohinton Mistry shortlisted for the prestigious Booker prize; Ms Sooni Taraporevala adjudged best scriptwriter at the 1991 Venice Film Festival for *Mississippi Masala*...

The other events of note: Meher Mistry (Castelino), Persis Khambatta and Mehr

Jesia being selected Miss India; the controversy over J. R. D. Tata's uthamna ceremony; the communal riots in Bombay that saw an elderly Parsi couple burnt to death; and perhaps one of the smallest Zoroastrian global communities — the Hong Kong Zoroastrians — constructing a new community center cum commercial complex the income from which will one day make it the richest Zoroastrian association in the world. The Hong Kong anjuman (The Incorporated Trustees of the Zoroastrian Charity Funds of Hong Kong, Canton and Macao) demonstrated what wise and judicious utilization of assets can gain for the community.

The list of milestones is endless and readers are welcome to send their views on what they consider the highlights of the past 30 years.

But before concluding, a few words about *Parsiana* itself. *Parsiana* is truly a community created and supported institution. With almost no resources the magazine has managed to survive all these years because so many community members, associations and well-wishers have lent their assistance. Friends, acquaintances and family members went out of their way to enrol subscribers or gift subscriptions, procure advertisements and raise donations and many gave generous monetary support themselves. Over the course of the last 30 years both Parsis and non-Parsis have worked on the magazine not so much for financial remuneration (which would be meager compared to what the large publishing houses would pay) but out of a sense of mission and concern. The magazine's continued existence is owed to their efforts.

Parsiana requested a few renowned and knowledgeable individuals in India and abroad who are involved with the community to state their views as to what the next 30 years foretell for the community. Their articles appear in this issue.

In order to gauge our readers' views on the future, *Parsiana* has prepared a questionnaire which is printed in this issue and bound in the center of the magazine to make it convenient for readers to pull out and send. No postage stamp on the envelope is required. We look forward to hearing from readers how they view the future.

Finally, to answer the question that hangs on our minds: Will *Parsiana* be around 30 years from today and in what form? That will depend on whether the next generation comes forth to work on this small but significant international Zoroastrian link medium.

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well let's not get into that. The bottomline is that I spent every paisa I had. It's not my fault. The prices were too reasonable to resist. Besides there was such a staggering range of clothes for me, him and the kids. I just got lost in the amazing atmosphere. I felt like I was in Harrods or Marks & Spencer. And a superb service staff - kind, helpful and sincere. They even had a parking area. I think I'll go back. Where do I get the money from, though?"



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Appreciation and appeal

The origin of this appeal and appreciation are almost theatrical. Periodically, I used to send very small donations to Mr Keki J. Gandhi, the honorary secretary of the Federation of the Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India, towards sending me the *Fed Newsletter*.

Please permit me to reproduce just two paragraphs from his long letter of March 5, 1992:

"Your letter bears ample testimony of your keen desire to help community institutions and I would therefore venture to invite your attention to the plight of *Parsiana* which has been rendering yeoman services to the community for many years and in the process suffering huge losses mainly because of a serious lack of community support in the form of subscriptions and advertising.

"Today there must be at least 25,000

Zoroastrian families in Bombay of which only 1,325 subscribe to *Parsiana*. In Poona out of nearly 4,000 families *Parsiana* has only 145 subscribers. In the Tata Colony in which you reside the number of *Parsiana* subscribers are less than 15."

That triggered some action on my part and I sent out personal appeals to friends, relatives and a few neighbors whose response has been excellent, to say the least: 37 donors gave Rs 45,767 averaging Rs 1,237 per donor.

Substantial contributions came from Mr and Ms Roosi Lakdawala (Bombay), Mr and Ms Pessi Dadina (Calcutta), Mr and Ms Behram Dubash (Bombay) and Mr and Ms Pervez Chavda (Bombay).

As with any appeal, so with this one, some substantial parties did not even care to reply, but that did not stop the caravan from marching on.

In my personal capacity I want to thank all the donors, small and big, who responded, through the courtesy of this column.

What *Parsiana* needs is not donations but more and more subscriptions and a meaningful support in the shape of advertisements.

Like the *Jam-e-Jamshed*, it is one of the two surviving publications of our microscopic community, and we need to do everything within the community's means to save them. We can do it. I'm compelled to quote Pessi Dadina who said, very rightly, that if we stood together we were capable of doing anything.

We Zoroastrians must do everything conceivable within our financial competence to keep *Parsiana* and *Jamé* going, and hand them down to our children and grandchildren, as an ongoing legacy.

My fervent appeal is that please request all those you can to subscribe to *Parsiana* (and *Jamé*) and give these two institutions of the community meaningful, financial support.

Once again my profuse thanks to all the donors.

B. T. DASTUR

The Editor replies:

Parsiana is exceedingly grateful to Mr Behram Dastur for having espoused our cause with vigor and perseverance over so many months. We take this opportunity to thank all those who have contributed to *Parsiana* at Mr and Ms Dastur's request: Mr and Ms P. M. Antia, Mr and Ms B. S. Bacha, Mr and Ms F. D. Banaji, Mr and Ms

M. D. Banaji, Mr and Ms R. D. Banaji, Mr and Ms Fakir Bardoliwalla, Mr and Ms Pervez Chavda, Ms Coomi B. Chinoy, Mr and Ms D. B. Chinoy, Mr and Ms F. B. Chinoy, Mr and Ms P. N. Dadina, Ms Dhun D. Dastoor, Mr and Ms B. T. Dastur, Ms G. C. Dastur, Mr and Ms Rohinton Dhalla, Mr and Ms Roosi Dotiwalla, Mr Feroze Driver, Mr and Ms Behram Dubash, Dr and Ms R. F. Eduljee, Mr and Ms E. A. Engineer, Ms Nazneen D. B. Engineer, Mr and Ms Adi Heeramaneck, Mr and Ms J. P. Irani, Mr and Ms R. P. Irani, Dr and Ms Rumi Jehangir, Mr Eruch D. Kalpita, Mr and Ms Yezdi Kohiar, Mr and Ms Roosi Lakdawala, Mr and Ms D. K. Malegamvala, Mr B. D. Mistry, Mr and Ms R. D. Mistry, Mr Sam M. Mistry, Ms Zenob B. Patel, Mr and Ms S. E. Songadwala, Cawasji and Sorabji Framji Titinoo' Charity Trust, Mr and Ms Adi Vasaigara and Ms Tiny Wadia.

A stamp in JRD's memory?

On November 29, 1994 will fall the first death anniversary of Jehangir Ratanji Dadabhoi Tata who was also known as Jeh to his friends and more popularly as JRD.



J.R.D. Tata was the father of civil aviation in the country, doyen of Indian industrialists, recipient of

the Bharat Ratna and a legend in his lifetime.

To mark the above occasion, the Central Government should release a special J. R. D. Tata postal stamp.

BHIKHAJI M. ADENWALLA

"Iranian pilgrimage"

Mr Farrok Vajifdar is correct in stating that the bas reliefs on the rocks at Naqsh-e-Rustam are from the Sasanian times (Readers' Forum, *Parsiana*, July-August 1994). According to *Persepolis — the Archaeology of Parsa, seat of Persian Kings* by Donald N. Wilbur, T. Y. Crowell, N. Y. (1969) the majority of these carvings were made during the first century of Sasanian rule, i.e. between 224 and 309 A. D. When I wrote the travelogues in Aleppo, Syria ("Iranian pilgrimage," *Parsiana* April 1994) I did not have access to books on Persia and hence I could not know that the tombs and rock carvings were created several centuries apart.

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The "guide" at Naqsh-e-Rustam did not provide any information; he was there merely to collect the entrance fee. Consequently, after consulting several books here at Davis, California, I have now much more information on Naqsh-e-Rustam. One of the books even has photographs of the interior of the Achaemenian tombs showing an open sarcophagus, quite empty and completely looted.

Several *Parsiana* subscribers in Bombay, England, Canada and the US have told me that they enjoyed reading my informal account of travels in Iran last year. My trip was not actually part of any "pilgrimage" but a mission to collect seeds of traditional and/or indigenous varieties of farmers' crop plants for conservation as a sample in the gene bank of the International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA), Aleppo, Syria, where I used to do research. Hence, I could visit only those areas of Zoroastrian history which were close to the predetermined route of my mission to the central plateau. My Muslim Iranian hosts went out of their way to take me wherever I wished to go but I was never left on my own. I was aware of many more places worth visiting, as mentioned by Mr Vajifdar, but my official visa was issued for two weeks only and if I had devoted any more time to visit Takht-e-Bostan or Takht-e-Soleiman then the official objectives of my mission would have been certainly unfulfilled.

Dr ARDESHIR B. DAMANIA
Davis, CA, USA

"Bharat Nirman awardees"

This is with reference to "Bharat Nirman awardees" which mentions that Ms Meher Master-Moos was the first Parsi woman to



Sorabji: first woman to read law at Oxford

read law at Oxford University (Events and Personalities, *Parsiana*, July-August 1994). Ms Master-Moos might well be the first Zoroastrian Parsi woman to do so, but the first Parsi woman was Cornelia Sorabji who was the daughter of a Parsi father, a Zoroastrian turned Christian.

What should be a matter for great pride for us Indians is that Ms Sorabji was the first woman ever to read law at Oxford; and changes in their rules, for her even to sit the examination with men students, had

to be made. All this, was after she had become the first woman to graduate from Bombay University. Ms NAIRA AHMADULLAH

"Planning a new center"

The steering committee of the promoters of the New Zoroastrian House Premises, London has made a plea for handsome donations from all Zoroastrians to meet a target of one million pounds sterling for just the first phase involving only land purchase ("Planning a new center," *Zoroastrians Abroad*, *Parsiana*, June 1994). The basis for stipulating one million pounds has not been clarified and remains a mystery to those not privy to the machinations of the committee's inner circle. There are claimed to be a total of three phases in this scheme. Hence, very substantial additional funds will expectedly be required for completion of this exceedingly ambitious scheme. It is significant that this program has been lodged without obtaining the consensus of the Zoroastrians concerned.

It may not be widely known that this very commendable scheme was first mooted quite a few years ago by some forward-thinking members of the managing committee of the Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe (ZTFE), London. At that time a vast parcel of ground with a playing field, car parking space, etc was available in/around Wembley in London — a location considered most accessible to members of the ZTFE — at a cost of a quarter million pounds only i.e. just about one quarter of the current target. To clinch this very inviting deal a speedy initial down payment of only about £ 2,500 was understood to have been required. It is unfortunate that the current chairman of the steering committee maintains an unexplained silence and seems to fight shy of duly clarifying this weighty issue.

It seems evident that no meaningful overture/approach was made at that time to any of the more dedicated and generous members of the ZTFE. Had such a positive action been taken, without doubt the requisite cash requirement would have readily ensued. Due to this crass inaction, the Zoroastrian community mainly in the UK, and to a lesser extent in mainland Europe, has been deprived of benefitting from an unrepeatable offer (the Armenian community in London ere long collared this deal with commendable promptitude) and are now being asked to foot a bill that is more than four times the original amount.

Despite sedulous requests, explanations are not forthcoming clarifying the reasons for this shortfall of the then managing

committee indicative of being devoid of a wider vision of meaningful service to the Zoroastrian community which it had of its own free will pledged to serve. This has resulted in the recall of some £ 35,000 by the respective donors, principally in mainland Europe, who rightly feel deprived of a template of criteria against which aptness of the plea for handsome donations could be measured.

In the zeal to attract funds the launching of a gambling night, entitled "Las Vegas comes to Zoroastrian House," renders suspect the underlying motives associated with such an event which do not accord with the accepted precepts of Zoroastrianism.

A careful and objective analysis of the usage of the present premises (Zoroastrian House, 88, Compayne Gardens, London) by the members of ZTFE reveals:

- The number of occasions in the year when the observed attendance at Zoroastrian House has tended to be a little in excess of available capacity are mainly confined to events during Navroze, Pateti, New Year's Eve and perhaps, Christmas Eve.
- The Satayash Gah in the current premises has been known to have witnessed a good complement of devotees principally during Navroze and Pateti only. For the remainder of the year the said premises are virtually empty and on limited occasions there have been only a handful of visitors in evidence, all comfortably located in the ample accommodation available.
- In and around Central London there are municipal or comparable halls of large capacity with parking and bar, etc facilities available for hire at affordable prices. There does not appear any reason why with the exercise of sufficient forethought these halls cannot be reserved and hired for occasions/events that have been known to draw large attendance. The cost of hire can be readily recouped from the sale of tickets, etc.
- It is believed that the location of the contemplated new premises is several miles distant from Central London involving persistent traffic-jams (almost consistently of an hour or more especially on the M25 motorway to be traversed) in travel to it. This factor together with the expected introduction of toll charges on UK motorways will positively discourage many Zoroastrian members from making frequent visits there.
- In view of only these few realistic (as opposed to emotive) evaluations it remains an irrefutable rational conclusion to:
- retain the existing premises at 88 Com-



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payne Gardens, London, refurbishing it to the extent considered warranted, probably from out of the accumulated pertinent funds, •arrest the seemingly futile pursuit of New Zoroastrian House Premises which, in the current state of the art, has the clear makings of a white elephant, and as such, probably a distinct financial, etc liability in the long run;

•abandon the declinist trend of tapping the pockets of gullible Zoroastrians and instead, pursue a more heroic Zoroastrian truth; •make available the balance of the accumulated relevant funds for the welfare of our mobeds, underprivileged Zoroastrians on the Indian subcontinent, etc and effectively channel them towards the upliftment of the Zoroastrian community as a whole to receive the blessings of Ahura Mazda instead of hoarding the mounting funds, perhaps to depict an aura of wealth.

FURHOK K. TANGREE
La Roche-sur-Foron, France

Ms Freney Writer, honorary secretary of the Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe, replies:

We thank you for the opportunity offered to us in responding to a letter to *Parsiana* pertaining to the New Zoroastrian House premises. The managing committee has no desire to respond point by point to various false statements made in the letter. It is obvious that the writer is hostile to the cause and his letter speaks for itself.

All our members and the community are well aware for the need of a larger Zoroastrian House with adequate facilities. The booklet called *The Unimpeded March of Zoroastrian Spirit into the 21st Century* was circulated to all our members, laying out clearly the objectives and the goal to be achieved. Our last two years' annual reports have incorporated reference to the new premises and these annual reports have been adopted by the membership without any questions at the AGMs.

Our fund raising functions have had tremendous response and, with the backing of generous donors, we have collected well over £ 100,000 in this very short time. We realize that we have a long way to go, but a journey of 10,000 miles starts with the first step and we have taken just this first step.

In any good work there is bound to be opposition and we all are aware of the opposition we will have to contend with, but we are confident that with the grace of Ahura Mazda we will achieve our goal. One day our children and their children will be proud of the purpose built place of their own, with the holy fire burning in perpetuity. The Zoroastrian people will witness history in making and will join us to be a part of that history.

"Outmarriages: Fact and Fiction"

It was unfortunate that Dr (Ms) Huzan Kharas had to undertake a study of "Intermarriage of Zoroastrian Women in Bombay" at the University of Manchester (*Parsiana*, June 1994). One of her conclusions is questionable. For example, she says that inter-community marriages on the whole were more successful than inmarriages due to the need to work harder to make the relationship succeed in the face of family opposition and due to the longer courtship period. The general view is always that inmarriages are on the whole more successful, irrespective of the courtship period because of the factors of a common culture, language and religion. A reason for this dichotomy may be due to her small sample of only 61 intermarried women. When there were 590 intermarriages in a decade in Bombay, a sample of 61 over a period of say three decades would mean that only 3.44 percent of intermarried women were interviewed which is statistically insignificant.

Nevertheless I would suggest that a copy of Dr (Ms) Huzan Kharas' PhD thesis be deposited in the library of the K. R. Cama



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Oriental Institute for perusal by those interested in this demographic study.

Every month *Parsiana* publishes details of births and deaths within the community as also the calculated average age of brides and bridegrooms in Milestones. An added useful parameter would be the average age at death because that will provide a value for Life Expectancy at Birth (LEB) for the Parsis.

The LEB for India as a whole was 27 years in 1940 (Minoo Masani, *Our India*). Over the years the LEB has increased to 44 years in 1960, to 52 years in 1975, and to 59 years in 1987 (UNDP Report, 1990). According to the said UNDP Report the



Jhansi's well maintained institutions

highest LEB is for the Japanese at 78 years. This may be due to their hardworking nature and their staple diet of rice and fish, amongst of course other factors like less tension at work due to an assured lifetime of employment.

A perusal of Milestones over several months seems to indicate that for the Parsis the LEB may be 80 years or over (a regular added computation by *Parsiana* in this respect would be useful) and thus probably the highest in the world.

In spite of our community having one of the highest LEB, yet we have one of the lowest birth rates per thousand and the highest death rate per thousand in the world (see "1989: The Telling Figures," Readers' Forum, *Parsiana*, August 1990):

Country	1960		1989	
	Birth rate	Death rate	Birth rate	Death rate
China	40	7	19	7
Japan	17	6.5	10	6.5
World	35	9	26	9
Parsis in Bombay	11.5	22.4	9.7	22.4

These conclusions are clear. Our high LEB is due to our good healthy stock, good nutrition and good sanitary conditions of living. The high death rate, the low birth

rate and declining population are basically due to emigration by boys and intermarriage by girls.

To arrest these trends, I suggest that all postgraduate scholarships for higher education should be only within India. This by itself will increase the availability of marriageable boys in India and consequently lower the chances of intermarriages.

Dr P. D. SUNAVALA

At the Jhansi Dharamsala

The centenary celebration of the Jhansi Aramgah was held on September 25, 1994. Substantial donations were given on the occasion to bore a tube well in the Parsee Dharamsala.

The tube well is functioning well and the residents of the Jhansi Dharamsala join me in thanking the generous donors: Mr J. N. Guzder, president of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP) and the chief executive Mr Rusi K. Anklesaria who made personal donations of Rs 10,000 and Rs 5,000 respectively,

the BPP Rs 7,000, Dr Sam S. Bhacca, President of Surat Parsi Punchayet Rs 5,000, the Delhi Parsi Anjuman Rs 2,000 and the Thana Parsee Panchayat Rs 2,000.

RONNY J. DICK

President, Parsi Anjuman, Jhansi

Any information on garas?

Since some time I have been considering the possibility of printing a coffee table book on garas giving as much information on their embroidery and history in the introduction. I wonder if through your columns, readers who know anything about garas, however insignificant, which will be mainly oral history, would be kind enough to pass this information on to me at 2A, Mary Road, Karachi 75530, Pakistan (Phone: 5867088, Fax: 2850908 and 2851849).

For readers in USA, the same can be sent to Ms Roshni Rustomji-Kerns, 467 Poplar St, Half Moon Bay, CA 94019, (E mail — Rustomji @ AOL. COM) who is assisting me with the introduction. If anyone has an exceptional gara please send a color transparency to me, giving some background as to who or where it came from and this will be published with the name of the owner.

Ms TOXY COWASJEE

Karachi

Edited by Arnavaz S. Mama

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Events and Personalities

Jhansi aramgah's 100

There is a small anjuman with limited resources. Nevertheless the large-hearted Jhansi Parsi Anjuman played hosts to the invitees who had come from different parts of India to grace the centenary celebrations of their aramgah on September 25, 1994. Presiding over the anniversary function was the Bombay Parsi Panchayat (BPP) chief executive Rustom Anklesaria while the other guests in attendance were a team from Gwalior led by their president Adil Bapuna, the joint honorar / secretary of the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India, Keki Gandhi, and the Young Farohars from Delhi.



Commemorating Jhansi cemetery's centenary: (from left) Dorabjee, Dick, Gandhi, Rustom Anklesaria and Bapuna



Happy to associate himself with the Anjuman, Maj F. H. Merchant, adjutant to the 4th Assam Regiment sent a message for the occasion, as did Homi Taleyarkhan, former member of the Minorities Commission. Taleyarkhan perceived the celebrations as "a dedication to our dear ones," and further wrote, "The Jhansi Parsis over the years have played a notable role in keeping the consciousness of our community's contribution to the country proudly alive. Though now reduced in numbers, Jhansi Parsis have a reputable history of their own, particularly in producing the finest train drivers in the country over the decades... I am confident that the ghambar which will follow the celebration will give food for thought on how to continue to play our role in our great country..."

A large component of the Jhansi Anjuman membership comprises of retired persons, noted the secretary Ms Mani Anklesaria who remarked that the community was close-knit and helpful but declining as in most other regions. She attributed this to three factors: lack of suitable jobs, lure of city life and want of initiative and competition among the youth.

The funds needed for their activities and maintenance being in short supply,

recently when a bore well had to be installed in their dharamshala, president Ronny Dick appealed to community benefactors for funds earning a positive response from the BPP, the Surat Parsi Panchayat, the Thana Parsi Panchayat, and the Delhi Parsi Anjuman totalling Rs 16,000. Personal contributions from the BPP president Jamshed Guzder and Rustom Anklesaria augmented the total by another Rs 15,000.

The credit for the well-maintained Jhansi aramgah goes to several individuals, particularly the benefactor Merwanji Eduljee Boyce who provided for the cemetery, enclosure wall, well, etc, as notes a plaque. The granddaughter-in-law of Merwanji, Freny Boyce, represented her family at the centenary function.

On the occasion Ervad Shapurjee Dorabjee performed a jashan and led a humbandagi in memory of the departed souls. The invitees then got to view the models and charts exhibited by the Young Farohars of Delhi at Jhansi's Jehangir Baug Hall. The dignitaries were later presented with a garland and a special memento bearing the impression of Rani Laxmibai of Jhansi. The day's program concluded with a hearty repast before the guests were seen off to their respective trains.





At the inauguration of Damania's catamaran: (from left) Tytler, Pawar and Damania

who was the guest of honor on the occasion commended Pervez Damania, "It is unbelievable that it took

only five months for the entire project to get started. If a similar project were to be undertaken by the government, it would take not less than five years..."

The cost of such a vessel, estimated at Rs 21 crore, plus an additional four crore rupees is expected to be financed by a foreign term loan of Rs 15 crores and an equity of Rs 10 crores, adds the press release. After obtaining the necessary sanctions the promoters have signed a contract with a Norwegian company Kvaerner Fjellstrand (S) Pte Ltd for the purchase of this vessel where the safety principle is also sound. In light of the Shipping Corporation waterway service between Bombay and Goa being discontinued, for the present the Damania's face no competition on this route.

In the meanwhile the Damania's are also fortifying their position in the sky. They have signed a memorandum of understanding with the Indian Oil Corporation whereby the latter will be responsible for the handling of its fuel requirements, its discharge at the ports of landing, its storage and transport to the Damania Airways' fuelling stations, it was reported in

the *Jam-e-Jamshed* of October 2, 1994. With their annual consumption estimated at 54,000 kilo litres, this arrangement will involve a substantial saving in operational costs. So too will the recent clearance by the Director of Airworthiness, Bombay entitling them to carry out checks on their aircrafts and thus saving substantially on foreign exchange.

"Servant of science"

The prime architect of the Indian atomic and space research program Dr Homi J. Bhabha's contribution to the nuclear progress in India has been chronicled in Hormazdyar Shahpurshah Dalal's booklet, *Prophet of the Atomic Age—Dr Homi J. Bhabha*. The 40-page booklet published by the Bombay Parsi Punchayet sums up Bhabha's faith and foresight in paving the way for the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (TIFR) and the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC).

"I have made efforts to see Dr Bhabha through his outstanding work in various fields of physical science. Also through the expressions of men—scientists and friends—who had known him intimately," writes Dalal. "At this distance of time, I still see a vision in his eyes... Dr Bhabha was always found lost in his thought," adds Dalal.

Bhabha and his creation, the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research

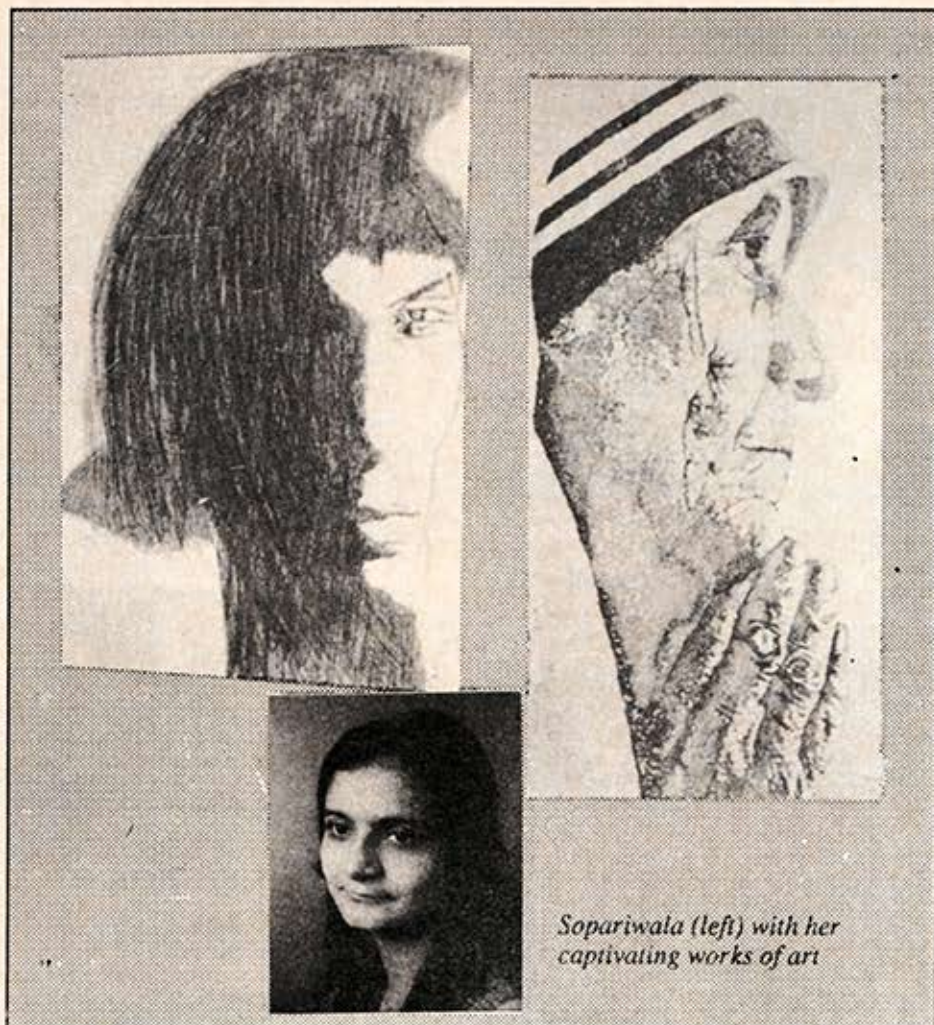
Illustration courtesy: The Heartbeat of a Trust



Damania's sea service

Their airworthiness established, the Damania's are now set to sail on the sea of success. Beginning November 14, 1994 they are to introduce a catamaran service between Bombay and Goa. With air fares proving rather prohibitive and the land route being tiresome and time consuming, the convenient journey across water will be covered within seven hours at a speed of 34 nautical miles per hour, as notes a press handout.

To ensure that the entire journey of 225 nautical miles from Ferry Wharf in Bombay to Fisheries Wharf in Panjim, Goa is comfortable for their passengers who will be paying Rs 700 for the economy class (capacity 266 passengers) and Rs 1,200 for the club class (capacity 125 passengers) on the upper deck, as per their press release, Damania Shipping India Limited have pressed into service a 40m Flying Cat Passenger Catamaran—Version M2. Fully airconditioned with spacious interiors, a music system and video entertainment, this twin hull ferry is meant to combine high speed, limited motion and low noise level. The catering will be by the Taj, according to a report in *The Bombay Times* of November 8, 1994. Chief Minister Sharad Pawar who inaugurated the boat on November 7 said the rates could not be viewed as "steep considering the service associated with the Damania's." Union minister for surface transport Jagdish Tytler



Sopariwala (left) with her captivating works of art

"The future of modern civilization will depend on scientific progress, and that progress itself will continue to depend on pure research," Bhabha had stressed when conveying his hopes that the TIFR "can make a great contribution to the scientific knowledge of mankind." Until his demise Bhabha held three posts simultaneously: director, TIFR; chairman, Atomic Energy Commission; secretary, Atomic Energy Department. "Homi Bhabha sought to create the right environment and right conditions for work," was Prof M. G. K. Menon's tribute. "He succeeded in enthusing those who worked around him with the same spirit of dedication in national endeavor which motivated him," he added.

Bhabha was of the view, "It is one's duty to stay in one's own country." As a young graduate from Cambridge University, Bhabha had written to J. R. D. Tata, "Lack of proper conditions and intelligent financial support hamper the development of science in India at the pace which the talent in the country would warrant." He was keen to see a pioneering research institute in India. The Tatas accepted the

gauntlet and gave their financial and administrative support to the Institute conceived by Bhabha. The artist in him made Bhabha involve himself not only in scientific pursuits but also in the architecture and design of the building.

His scientific pursuits and achievements have been elaborated upon in the booklet as also his ability to recognize talent in others but not much is known about his personal life. While we know that he died in an aircrash we are not even informed of his age at death. That he was a close associate of the Nehru family may be known to the Parsis but an interesting nugget that may not be as familiar is Bhabha's detestation of the practice of stopping work as a mark of mourning. To him the best token of homage was to work even harder, a sentiment which was respected by his colleagues on his untimely demise.

The condolence resolution adopted by the Atomic Energy Commission mentioned that "it was in recognition of his international stature as a scientist, diplomat and man of peace" that he was called upon in

1955 to preside over the first United Nations international conference in Geneva on the peaceful uses of atomic energy. There was also reference to his "vision, energy, patriotism and warm humanity (which) made him a great servant of science and of his country."

"Art for art's sake"

"It is different, bold and captivating," is the description proffered for Ms Tanaz Freddy Sopariwala's works of art that were on exhibit for the first time. "The exhibits do not have a common theme. The medium for each work is different. The rendition is different," states Sopariwala, listing some of the exhibits, "from the living loving God Mother Teresa to the legendary Lord Krishna; women in anger to women in dance; pretty stark faces to pretty bold faces (like) Mona Lisa..."

"Painting and graphics relax me as well as tax my brains and my creativity. (They) are my own creation... not made to order as in advertising... It needs no approval... You experience all the pleasure yourself, at least till it is exhibited," says the artist whose works were on view at the ANZ Grindlays Bank from September 26 to October 8, 1994. While the realistic portrait of Mother Teresa with folded hands and loving eyes has been done entirely with fine dots made possible by a rotting pen, more brazen colors were used to depict Mona Lisa. The hair cascading down the face of the angry woman seems to denote an angry female partially blinded by rage.

From visualizing advertisements to paintings and graphics has been a "very long soul searching route," notes Sopariwala who has worked with Sainath and Pen-A-Trait advertising agencies for clients like Benetton, Jealous Jeans, Ashtech Computer. She has additionally freelanced with prestigious establishments like Leela Kempinski and Mazda Foods. Sopariwala's qualifications include a diploma in commercial arts from the Nirmala Niketan Polytechnic and another in photography from the Garware Institute, notes her curriculum vitae.

Keen on art since a young age, the upcoming artist remembers her student days at the J. B. Vachha High School when she would cover her textbook with doodles which would invariably invite the teachers' wrath. Her present achievement she attributes to an understanding mother and a supportive husband as she looks forward to a time when she would be able to pursue "art for art's sake."

Compiled by Parinaz Gandhi

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A time to part

"Tears were shed by many of us who are really going to miss them. Behram's return to Bombay is going to leave a tremendous void," writes Ms Behroze Daruvala, president of the Singapore Parsi Association (SPA). Behramgore Vakil — the Association's founder, secretary and president, the island colony's high priest, host and father figure — and his wife Katy were relocating in India after 46 years in Singapore. The community gathered at a farewell lunch at the residence of Ms Nergish Medora, one of the oldest Parsi residents of Singapore, to bid them adieu on September 11, 1994. Their daughter Khorshed and son Ratan, who have now settled in the US, had returned to share in their parents' moment of glory.

Recalling their long association, Vakil's "dearest friend" Rutton Patel noted in an address to the assembled community, "Behram and I are the last two of the group of about half a dozen Parsis who came to Singapore in 1948 — I in January and he in December. With him leaving Singapore, I shall be alone from the group of 1948."

The Zoroastrians of Singapore and Malaysia had celebrated the silver jubilee of the Parsi Association on July 29, 1979 "by honoring and decorating Vakil for the dedicated and selfless service rendered to the Parsi community," said Patel.

Vakil had convened the first meeting of the Association on May 29, 1952. Since then he had been their representative at the First World Zoroastrian Congress in Bombay, the World Conference on Religion and Peace in Kyoto and was the Zoroastrian delegate on the Council of the Interreligious Organisation of Singapore. He had conducted religious classes for Zoroastrian children, performed navjotes and weddings. "Single-handed and at great personal sacrifice he performed the last rites of the departed Parsis in Singapore and Malaysia. All these departed souls are remembered at least twice a year by his performing the all souls' day jashan ceremony followed by the ghambar which invariably took place at his residence and now at the residence of Ms Nergish Medora," Patel noted.

A past president of the Lions Club, a member on the advisory committee of the Ramakrishna Mission, a council member of the National Kidney Foundation, Vakil has had varied interests. He organized the first Parsi stage show in Gujarati in Singapore on the 2,500th anniversary of Cyrus

the Great in 1968. The \$10,266 that the show generated were distributed among three charities, Patel added.

The Vakil family had substantially shared the burden. "In addition to being a social secretary of the Association for many years, Katy is also a trustee of the Davar Fund. Single-handedly she has arranged ghambars after the jashans which the community has enjoyed so much," writes Daruvala. Amplifies Patel, "Katy would keep track of the addresses and telephone numbers of all the Parsis and perform the painstaking job of ringing everyone whether they would be attending the Parsi Association functions." In time their daughter Khorshed took over as the social secretary, introduced the Association's newsletter and became the SPA president. Ratan, an ordained priest, shared his father's duties while he was in Singapore and now carries on with them in the US.

Vakil, a lawyer by education whose business interests included textiles, travel and transport, had come to Singapore from Tientsin, where he had represented Karanjia and Company, being transferred to Singapore when the Communists overran China. Patel reminisced about those times: "He was first introduced to us by the late Keki Medora. All of us were funloving and visited the cabarets quite frequently, but Behram stayed at home like a saint and said his prayers and spent his spare time doing crossword puzzles! In those days the only recreation in Singapore was to play games, for which we had no time, go to a cinema or to the cabaret where one could have three dances for a dollar with the dance hostess of (one's) choice.

"It was always easy to spot Behram, a commanding personality in his uniform of white trousers, white shirt and a bow

tie...The highlight and proudest moment of his bachelor days was when he would literally march around Raffles Place at lunch time with the two Pestonji girls clinging on each arm and everybody would give them the right of way.

"We both got married in 1958 and Behram was the best man at our wedding. After his wedding to the very friendly Katy in Bombay, their home in Singapore was a dharamshala to any and every Parsi visiting or passing through Singapore."

Unfortunately, a stroke that Vakil suffered some time ago left him incapacitated, and the information from Singapore makes no mention of the Vakil's own response to the encomium they received from the community they had served with such abandon.

As notes Daruvala, "They have been excellent role models but theirs is an act which is going to be hard to follow."

Old world contributions

The proposed Zoroastrian Center in Houston has its roots in Karachi. It is the \$1,00,000 donation from Feroze Bhandara and his wife (ex Lahore) which will enable the Houston Zoroastrian Association to proceed with construction on a plot it had earlier acquired. "Our Dadi Surti is the architect for this Center," triumphantly notes the Karachi Zarhosti Banu Mandal (KZBM) newsletter, *What's on* (October 1994).

When the Lord Mayor of London visited Salt Lake City in the course of his appeal for St Paul's Cathedral, Zane Dalal conducted the Utah Symphony at a special concert,

Singapore's oldest residents: Medhora, Ratan, Behram, Katy and Khorshed Vakil, Patel with wife Joyce



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beginning with *Land of Hope and Glory*. Dalal then put down his baton and began to sing, winning a standing ovation and a spontaneous chorus from a full house of 2,000, informs the newsletter. The concert then proceeded with Beethoven's *Symphony No 5* and Tchaikovsky's *Concerto No 1*.

Three outstanding achievers from Karachi are now making waves in the US: Dr Noshir Behli Dubash's doctoral thesis focussed on superconducting microwave detectors. He has published papers in the *IEEE Journal of Microwave Theory and Techniques* and the *IEEE Journal of Ap-*

plied Superconductivity.

A senior actuarial analyst for the Chicago based Allstate Insurance Company, Behram Mehelli Dinshaw is studying for the Fellow of the Society of Actuaries examination.

Dr (Ms) Rubina Patel Lovelace has been an instructor and research fellow in

the department of Tropical Public Health at Harvard and a research associate at the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology working on the molecular biology of mycobacteria, winning seven honors and publishing nine papers and extracts.

Compiled by Amavaz S. Mama

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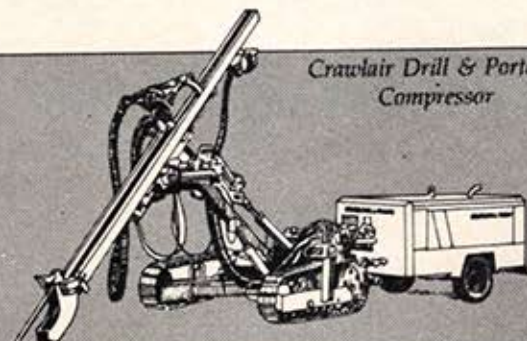
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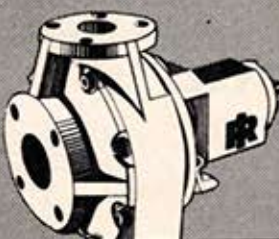
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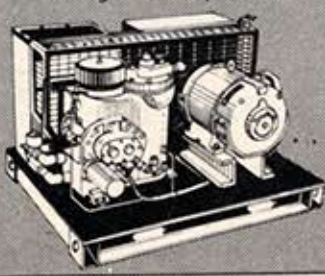
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Let the boundaries give way

The community needs to tackle its problems with modern scientific tools

Ava Khullar

Does the Parsi community have a death wish? Does it, consciously or unconsciously, take decisions, even the most crucial ones that pertain to its very survival, which push it towards self annihilation? Is it cynicism or pragmatism to voice such a desperate thought?

Ever since the bells tolled for the British raj, the community's vigor and dynamism have sagged. The downward

slide was first recorded by Sapur Desai in *A Community at the Cross-Road* (1948). It highlighted the biological and socioeconomic factors that were leading to an alarming drop in fertility rates and eventual diminishing numbers.

Looking back to that first alarm signal, we may consider three stages of approximately 25 years each and examine where the community is heading. I will be taking essentially a micro view of Zoroastrian communities in India, rather than a global overview. The three periods would be a) 1948 to 1974 b) 1975 to 2000 and c) 2001 to 2025.

In the late 1940s and 50s our parents were still with one foot in the Raj period, and the euphoria of past glories lingered to tickle their pride in being Parsi. The community lived an insular existence. Remembering my days in Nagpur, I am now amazed to recall that until my last year of college in the mid 50s, I had never entered a non-Parsi home.

Our horizons never extended beyond the communal group, yet there was little awareness or interest about the path the community was taking. The only visible sign of concern was of losing the edge in education and the professions due to



growing competition in India, which gave impetus to emigration to the West. These were all personal decisions — at no stage was any thought given to the Parsi identity; that came later when, settled in far off locations, the hankering for roots began.

In the midst of this complacent scenario, Sapur Desai's book came as a rude shock and acted

as a catalyst, leading to a special survey of the Parsis of Bombay during the 1961 census operations. The survey was intended to understand the reasons for their marital and fertility behavior, which confirmed the fears in the book.

From the mid 60s what was apparent was that in their individual capacities, Parsis were adapting to a changing socioeconomic situation for their economic and emotional satisfaction by seeking educational and occupational opportunities abroad, marrying outside the community when suitable partners within could not be found, etc. However, as a distinctive group we had failed to adapt and work out strategies to ensure progress and survival. While the liberal-minded young felt that their personal advancement was crucial and "so what if the community dies," the orthodox withdrew behind the protection of the sentiment, "Ahura Mazda has looked after us for 3,500 years and will continue to do so."

The 1960s and early 70s saw a small but growing number of receptive minds responding to the impending crisis. Perhaps the publication of *Parsiana* was a response to this situation.

When we move to the second stage, from 1975 onwards, we find these concerns getting more dispersed and activated

at various levels. The Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India brought the various anjumans in India to a common forum; the World Zoroastrian Organisation (WZO) was formed which later started doing good grass-roots level work in rural Gujarat. In 1976, *Parsiana*, *Kaiser-E-Hind*, and *The Bombay Samachar* sponsored the "Lost Generation" essay contest (funded by the Zoroastrian Foundation) to throw the debate open, especially among the younger Parsis. Periodic World Zoroastrian Congresses discussed the various dilemmas confronting the Zoroastrians in India and globally.

Though for the average Parsi, the apathy and indifference continued, the issues were getting so widely discussed, so frequently, at so many forums — the Parsi Press, Federation meetings, religious lectures, etc — that they were slowly seeping into their consciousness.

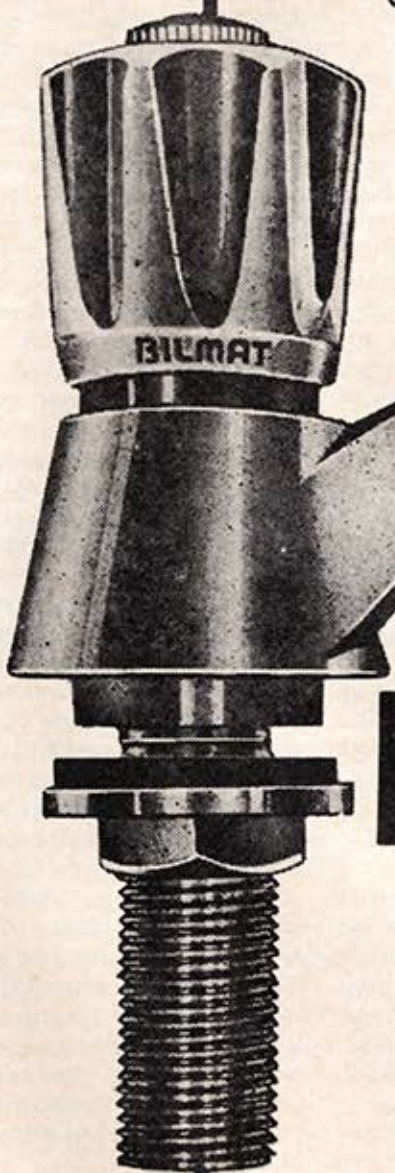
The Federation encouraged the formation of youth groups in various anjumans and brought them together at annual youth conferences to discuss youth concerns and establish links of friendship and support. Regrettably, a serious thrashing out of ideas and possible routes to direct youth effort were not forthcoming. Most participants came for a socially happy time and one wonders if the real purpose was served. Nevertheless, such exposure helped to create a consciousness of Zoroastrian identity.

Public lectures on religion filled a long felt void, and went to packed audiences. Gatha Study Groups were set up in some anjumans. Religious classes at the school level, using innovative techniques, were growing. The Zoroastrian Studies and its band of dedicated teachers brought religion to the young in a "play and learn" curriculum.

We had moved a step ahead in awareness. From the time when a few shouted and nobody listened, now the cry in the wilderness was reaching a growing number of targeted ears.

But do we see in this the seeds of a rejuvenation? In spite of the overall gloom, there are positive signals as we approach the third stage, and what is significant is that these are coming from the younger age-groups.

Spearheaded by concern for their children's Zoroastrian identity, young couples, including the mixed marrieds, are



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organizing and running religious classes for the young with support from their anjumans. In Delhi, the "Young Farohars" starts with the five-plus age-group and is doing a marvelous job. Last Navroze day they staged a poster exhibition with explanations of the basic prayers, tenets and symbols of Zoroastrianism. Dressed in traditional Parsi attire with kor-ni-sari and dagli-topi these youngsters enthusiastically related the significance of the exhibits to all visitors, shaming many an adult with their learning.

Attendance at agiaries and atash behrams has increased in Bombay, the young coming in good numbers, not only to bow before the fire, but to sit and pray. This turning to religion may be a double-edged sword, on the one hand creating a Zoroastrian identity and on the other leading to a fundamentalist reaction to social issues of marriage, adoption, etc. This should be discouraged.

While mixed marriages are inevitable, there is a noticeable trend among the young to make a conscious effort to select partners from within the fold, instead of unconsciously drifting into marriages outside as happened earlier. This trend is also growing among the Parsis settled abroad. Also, signs are discernible among the more open-minded couples, often from the higher strata, to aim for more than one child.

Support from parents and parents-in-law in childrearing, especially for working mothers, would encourage this trend further. Thus Sapur Desai's prediction that the better off classes will produce less and less while the poor who cannot afford the proper upbringing of children would outpace them, can hopefully be stemmed. I was told of three couples in Kanpur who are planning on three children each!

Couples without children now openly adopt children from non-Zoroastrian backgrounds as Zoroastrian children are scarce, but would like the community to permit their acceptance into the faith.

We cannot reverse marital and child-bearing practices, but a judicious mix of emphasizing the positive aspects of remaining within the fold, as well as accepting children of mixed couples and being more open on the adoption issue, would help preserve our health and survival. Let us face it: if 20 to 30 percent and in some places even 40 percent of couples are of mixed marriages and their children are lost, it is not an insignificant number! In this context the formation of the Association of Inter-Married Zoroastrians to assert the rights of Zoroastrian women married

out, needs to be nurtured and encouraged with a view to drawing their children into the fold.

My impressions regarding the growth of awareness and a social consciousness, however, are based more on trends seen in up-country anjumans. But a few drops of color do not make a complete picture. Such signs need to be visible in Bombay, where the community's future lies, and community watchers there could look into it.

We have to ultimately look within the bounds of our cultural and religious heritage to find solutions that will help us adapt to a changing world. We may try comparing our situation with other minority groups, for example the Jews or Ismailies; they, however, have been able to sustain cohesion and growth with stable community institutions under strong religious leadership. They are rigorous and dynamic groups while we have become listless and apathetic, drifting almost rudderless. We have to work within a different framework — assessing our assets and activating them for rejuvenating the community.

Where do we find this? To whom do we turn to show us the light? Our strength lies in the professional field. We have some of the best minds in medicine, law, sciences, social work, business management and in hi-tech areas. Among them are those held in great respect by the community. For too long have we expected leadership in all matters from the trustees of the BPP. This is unfair and unproductive, for these seven are entrusted with managing the funds and trusts and do not have the specialized expertise to guide us in other matters. The professionals have this ability.

I believe it is this potential that we have to tap if we are to face squarely our socioeconomic problems. As (management expert) Aspi Moddie has pointed out in his global overview of Zoroastrian communities, "We have failed in bringing the leadership in line with its best intellectual talents in all fields."

We need our medical experts to chalk out and implement programs of healthcare and fertility counselling; our social workers to help in family welfare and marital counselling; our legal brains to streamline Parsi laws, especially the adoption law to facilitate adoption of non-Zoroastrian children if Zoroastrian children are not available; our educationists and management experts to guide us in education and professional training and job opportunities; and our social scientists to take stock of our declining numbers and work out its institutional implications.

A beginning has been made by entrusting the task of carrying out a total census-type household survey, followed by an attitudinal inquiry in Bombay, as the first step towards setting up a Zoroastrian Demographic Data Center, to professional demographers and social workers including Dr Armaity Desai, Dr Malini Karkal, Dr Shireen Jejeebhoy and others. The Demographic Data Center would monitor population trends and ascertain attitudes of various age-groups on community issues to help plan future strategies effectively.

Why have our professional men isolated themselves from the community? Their busy work schedule and the climate of controversy and unsavory politics that dogs the BPP may well discourage their involvement. Let us accept that the existing leadership has only a specific role and for more crucial tasks it is moribund. The professionals need to work outside this in parallel structures in NGO (non governmental organization) type operations, each group led by men with a vision.

The community, through periodical Federation and WZO awards, has honored these men and this must give a tinge of pride to their Zoroastrian identity. Now it is time for our famous lawyers, doctors, industrialists, social scientists, to take the initiative. Unlike the much maligned trustees, respected professionals framing positive plans would prove more effective.

Perhaps, under such stewardship the fictitious walls of exclusivity can be chipped away with the tools of modern scientific approach. Closed systems which build high walls can only, in the final analysis, suffocate through lack of new life-giving forces.

As we look 30 years hence, some signs of the community coming out of its stupor, especially among the better off strata in the more progressive anjumans around India (and hopefully in Bombay), are discernible. But these can be seen only as the first tentative steps; and this awareness and a positive social response need to be nurtured and spread to wider and wider strata of the community.

In a micro sense then, there are going to be some positive changes; but in the overall macro sense the community's future looks bleak as we direct our vision 30 years hence.

Ms Ava Khullar (née Kanga) has a master's degree in political science from UCLA. She has worked with the research officer at the Centre for Study in Developing Societies, Delhi, participating in the program for the study of minority communities, where she had undertaken the study of the Parsi community.

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"Zoroastrians have forgotten how to govern themselves"

Zoroastrians need a competent global body to regulate their affairs

Rashna Writer

It has long been a matter of some amazement to me that the contemporary Zoroastrian world expends such vast amounts of energy on debating religious issues yet seldom, if ever, engages in serious discussions on the regulation of its internal communal structures. I would suggest that it is the latter which is of growing urgency to the long-term viability of the Zoroastrian fraternity.

The current state of managed anarchy in Zoroastrian affairs: religious, social, transnational, cannot realistically be sustained without the edifice ultimately crumbling. The need of the hour and the imperative for a more secure Zoroastrian future is the sine qua non of an international governing body which addresses itself to 'international' and 'domestic' concerns facing the community now spread on five continents.

The present peculiar position of the Zoroastrians stems from the seminal event of the seventh century Arab destruction of the Persian Empire. Following the loss of their political empire, small bands of the faithful endeavored to safeguard their religion and came in time to stress the religious dimension of their group identity as a counterpoint to the major religious groups among whom they subsequently lived, the Hindus and Muslims.

The Islamicization of Iran and the consequent diminution of Zoroastrian religious and temporal vigor are central historical factors in the decline of contemporary Zoroastrians. They have instigated communal complexities, not the least of which are the cultural differences between Iranian Zoroastrians and Parsis; and the second major Zoroastrian migration and



creation of a Western diaspora in the 20th century.

The self-perception of the group as descendants of a civilization which propounded a 'superior' religious message, and as inheritors of a magnificent historical legacy, their 'glorious Persian heritage,' has engendered in contemporary Zoroastrians a nebulous

national spirit. It is generally accepted that the religious beliefs and values of members of a society are essential in determining their attitudes vis-a-vis its political system. Even though the position of Zoroastrians in the Old Countries is that of being a minority on the margins of society, which renders their relationship to the political systems of Iran and India more complex, their very responses to Shi'ite Islamic Iranian nationalism, and the neo-Hindu renaissance movement, have been defined in terms of their Zoroastrian identity.

For a sizeable number of Zoroastrians their membership of the group is virtually a badge of congruity. It matters little whether they practise their faith, subscribe to the essentials of the theology, or are even cognizant of its metaphysical intricacies. What matters is that they identify as Zoroastrians, members of a particular group. The very particularity of their history following the Arab conquest, and their relegation to minority status, as well as their numerical paucity which made highly questionable their survivability, has resulted in a heightened sense of self.

Yet the developments in Zoroastrian society are somewhat perplexing. A plurality of discourses is a core element of the community; indeed, it is not a monolith. At its most fundamental, there is a quest for identity, a re-defining of the parameters of

the group which must take into account the demands of the national environments in which it finds itself. It is now the external variables which are major determinants in the reevaluation of the contemporary Zoroastrian world.

The issue of regulating communal affairs across international borders is confounded by the continuing inability of the established community to create and sustain any form of organizational infrastructures that would be acceptable to the disparate regional, cultural and ideological components within the group. What is in place in lieu of unified organizational structures are local anjumans and associations. The responses to diverse issues are necessarily on an ad hoc basis. The contemporary Zoroastrian world, therefore, operates as a fractured entity with a minimal degree of unity.

While federated bodies in North America and India have recently been established, overall, whether intellectually or in recognition of its functional necessity, Zoroastrians observably demonstrate little or no interest in the creation of communal infrastructures to deal with the challenges confronting them. While there continues to be a lack of comprehension of the socio-political dimensions of contemporary Zoroastrianism, there can be no realistic expectation of the creation of a Zoroastrian world body with the charter and competence to address the broad spectrum of issues: religious, social, cultural, economic, political and legal which impinge on the Zoroastrians in their various countries.

The contemporary Zoroastrian community thus presents an immensely complex face to a world barely aware of its presence. The compelling task facing the Zoroastrian world today is to regulate its affairs. The need to create a workable global body which is truly representative of Zoroastrian diversity and is vested with authority so that it evolves as the body with the mandate and skills to represent Zoroastrian interests worldwide, as well as being the 'spokesperson' on matters Zoroastrian at a global level, is an urgent requirement.

Such a body would comprise of the apex Zoroastrian bodies representing the global population. In order to make the global organization truly representative of the Zoroastrian population (and thereby give it a degree of credibility that no other

Zoroastrian self-governing experiment since the demise of the Sasanian dynasty has achieved), adult one-person one-vote elections would need to be instituted. The immediate communal response to this will be a palpable incredulity, yet the endeavor has a great deal to recommend it. (Zoroastrians living in India, Pakistan, the UK, North America and Australia are accustomed to participating in their national democratic processes; the development and nurturing of a democratic tendency within our communal body politic cannot logically, therefore, be deemed to be excessively far-fetched.) A system whereby all local (city/town-based) anjumans/associations would hold elections based on universal (Zoroastrian)

adult franchise ought to be introduced. The local anjuman presidents would serve as their representative on the 'national' federal body; and the federation would elect its representative to the global body.

The global body ought to evolve as a major organization which is empowered to speak on Zoroastrian matters, but it can only do so with competence and authority if it receives a mandate from the people themselves.

The establishment of a global confederation would, over time, come to protect and promote Zoroastrian interests at the international level. It would be empowered to speak with national governments and international organizations on issues of direct and indirect relevance to the Zoroastrian fraternity worldwide. It would establish a corpus of expertise relating to specific issues of pertinence to Zoroastrianism and the Zoroastrians, so that it could deal on an informed basis with questions that might arise from governments, the media, educational institutions, etc. Its goal would be to oversee the interests of the Zoroastrian people globally.

The negative impact of the lack of a properly-structured world body mandated to speak on behalf of Zoroastrians was brought home in the case of the Zoroastrian refugees fleeing Iran in the aftermath of the 1979 revolution. Without a unified global voice to speak to governments and international organizations on their behalf, it was left to the generosity of individual Zoroastrians to assist them in relocating

and re-establishing themselves in their new homes overseas. It cannot be foretold what future difficulties Zoroastrians may have to face, but an institutional body to work on their behalf will be one major step in the right direction.

It may be suggested that over the past 1,300 years the Zoroastrians, once a proud, imperial people, now relegated to minority

status, have forgotten how to govern themselves. The social upheavals which have disrupted the group have appeared irreconcilable, owing to a conspicuous absence of strong, informed leaders. Twentieth century Zoroastrians have failed to produce men of the stature of Keikhosrow Shahrokh of Iran and Dabhai Naoroji of

India: to think strategically and for generations unborn.

Few societies can survive long without internal structural cohesion. The Zoroastrian community of the present has even less such scope. Its meager dwindling numbers; the reality of compromises minority groups must continually make in the society in which they find themselves — which applies equally to Indian Parsis and Iranian Zoroastrians as it does to American or British Zoroastrians — are accelerated phenomena. The contemporary Zoroastrians remain enmeshed in the tensions of the composite of cultural polarities, and the attrition of their intrinsic Zoroastrianism is taking place. As a result, contemporary Zoroastrianism needs an urgent and substantial reevaluation of its communal structures which alone would be capable of reflecting and fulfilling the requirements of a culturally diverse peoples, who are, fortuitously, held together as members of a distinctive religious fraternity.

A PhD in international relations from the London School of Economics, Ms Rashna Writer completed a stint at the International Institute for Strategic Studies and in-depth structured work with the British Zoroastrians on behalf of Manchester University. Apart from contributions to learned journals Writer has authored *Contemporary Zoroastrians: An Unstructured Nation* and co-edited *Memoirs of Keikhosrow Shahrokh: A Historical Survey of Iranian Zoroastrians in the late 19th/early 20th century*. Writer teaches at London University's Birkbeck College and will shortly begin a part-time research fellowship at the School of Oriental and African Studies.

The
contemporary
Zoroastrian
world operates
as a fractured
entity with a
minimal degree
of unity



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Another dawning of Zoroastrianism

By the year 2024 the author envisions the number of Zoroastrians in North America to be over 50,000

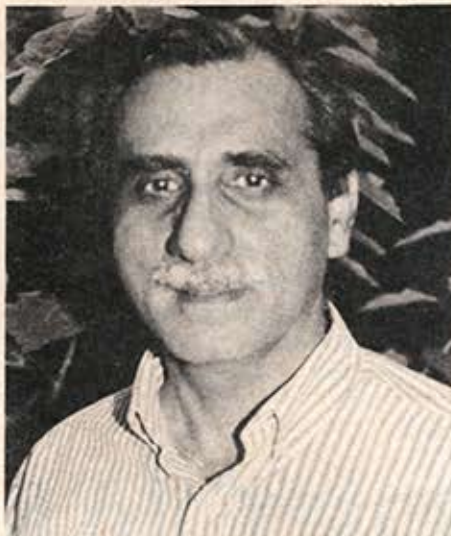
Rohinton M. Rivetna

On the occasion of its 30th anniversary we, North American Zoroastrians, convey to *Parsiana* and all its staff members, past and present, our sincere gratitude and admiration for inspiring Zoroastrians worldwide with knowledge about our faith and our communities; and, I would also venture to say, playing a significant role in ushering in a Zoroastrian re-awakening.

Little did anyone know in 1964 that this slim monochrome magazine, as it was then, would become, under the present management, the community's global voice. And little do we know today where *Parsiana* will be 30 years hence! But we do know that in North America, 30 years hence, the name *Parsiana* will conjure up happy, nostalgic memories because, in deference to other Zoroastrians from all over the globe who have settled in North America, we have chosen to call ourselves Zoroastrians rather than Parsis.

The dawn and twilight periods in the history of Zoroastrianism are well known to scholars and students of our religion, and I shall not delve into them here. At the risk of sounding presumptuous, however, I would like to state that here in North America is another dawning of Zoroastrianism. By 2024, in my estimation, Zoroastrianism will have reached a critical mass, with the North American population being well over 50,000 and bound upwards, not just in numbers, but in all its past resplendent glory — truly a Zoroastrian renaissance. We, the first generation of North American Zoroastrians, feel particularly privileged to witness it happening and have the opportunity to propel it to fruition.

As we look to the future, I see a flowering of the religion of Zarathushtra in North America. Our vision is of a growing community of Zoroastrians here, a noble com-



munity, with a reputation for truth and integrity. Our vision is of a prosperous community, noted for its enterprise and industry. Our vision is of an erudite community, devoted to learning and scholarship. Our vision is of a righteous community, that cares for its own and those around it. A community that has a deep and abiding love and respect for others.

Our vision is to make the name Zoroastrian synonymous with integrity, industry and charity, through the application of the principles of our faith, as we have done in our mother countries of Iran and India. We, the first generation of Zoroastrians, have vowed not to rest until our foundations are secure and our mission is on the right track. Our labors appear to be bearing fruit. It is most heartening to see our youth taking their first steps on the long journey, with enthusiasm and confidence, unencumbered by much of the baggage that the first generation carried.

Our community is blessed with a di-

verse population. We have among us Parsis and Iranis; Zarthustis from nations across the five continents; we have Zoroastrians professing a spectrum of beliefs, views and convictions. We must respect diversity, for diversity is organic — it gives us the life-sustaining energy to grow. Stifle the diversity and you stifle the organism. It is for us now to embrace them all, to respect them all, and to be enriched by them all. It is for us to celebrate our diversity, to have the wisdom to see unity in diversity.

As we begin to set up our infrastructures in North America, our respect for the mother countries grows year by year; we are just now beginning to appreciate the complexities of bringing together Zoroastrians, each of whom is an individual unlike any other, while at the same time transforming from a godfather-like stewardship to self-directed organizations.

One thing we must understand is that funding our institutions is the personal responsibility of each and every able Zoroastrian. It is not the responsibility of a few well-endowed philanthropists, as in the days of yore. The power of collective funding (not unlike collective wisdom) is not yet clearly understood. Our human resource in North America is unparalleled. And that unleashes unparalleled enthusiasm. Our challenge is to channel this enthusiasm and harness it towards our common goals.

As I look at the global scene, and project the present growth pattern, I see Zoroastrians establishing themselves in large numbers in England, Australia and North America, outside of India and Iran. We are often reminded that those Zoroastrians who migrated to Europe, China and other places over the centuries, including those who migrated to Europe in the late 19th cen-

tury, have been completely assimilated or engulfed by the dominant culture and religion. That to me frankly is not a great surprise. There are many reasons, of course: lack of a strong communal infrastructure; pressures from the dominant culture; the then prevailing non-cosmopolitan atmosphere, and others.

Chances of complete assimilation today are rather remote. There is, however, no room for complacency. To avert the threat of assimilation, we must keep connected. Primary among our challenges is to keep all Zoroastrians in North America and around the world, connected. Make every Zoroastrian feel a part of the larger community, and make every member feel fulfilled that he or she is contributing to the advancement of our community and our religion. We must keep connected, either formally through well-established organizations such as anjumans and associations or, when our numbers are small, informally through social get-togethers. With associations sprouting everywhere (there are 21 in North America), we must then establish a global network. That need was evident five years ago. Today it has become urgent.

Politics aside, for the community's well-being, a global network among Zoroastrian associations must be given our num-

ber one priority. Already, associations in North America and India have bonded themselves together into federations; the London-based Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe, and the Tehran Anjuman, also serve to some extent, in a federated capacity. These bodies must come together to form a global network, be it under the umbrella of the London-based World Zoroastrian Organisation or be it under another Council of Federations or whatever else we may choose to call it, and whosoever chooses to orchestrate it. The need is imminent.

As the world's earliest revealed religion, with Zoroastrian thought reflected in the religions that followed — Zoroastrians hold a unique position in the inter-religious arena. While there is strife between the Hindus and the Muslims, and the Christians and the Jews, Zoroastrians can, and must, be the uniting force to end religious discord on this globe. Zoroastrians almost have that responsibility, as the world's first, to make this happen. This will be a test of our universality and in time Zoroastrians themselves will come to recognize the universality of our faith.

The world of religion has come a full circle. The time from Zoroaster and Moses to the time of Prophet Mohammed has been termed the Axial Age, when human-

kind received wisdom from these sages. From those times to the present, the trend has been towards secularization and marginalization of religion. People of faith are questioning this trend. Religions have not been without fault, for they have been the root cause of much strife, environmental degradation and war, but there is a growing voice on the world's religious stage that beckons religions to (a) celebrate their diversity — respect all religions and ideologies, though they may not share the same beliefs; and (b) collectively, bring the weight of religion to bear upon the travails faced by the world today, such as hunger, poverty, strife, environmental deprivation and war.

Last September, Zoroastrians made a respectable niche for themselves at the 1993 World Parliament of Religions in Chicago. That effort is ongoing. Events are unfolding rapidly. At the Council for a Parliament of World's Religions which orchestrated the 1993 event and of which I have been a founding trustee, we are taking the first steps towards the formation of a permanent World Council of Religions, structured much like the United Nations, with representatives from the world religions. How will Zoroastrians be represented there? We must have our infrastructures well established, in order to take

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our rightful place on the world stage. We need a strong, cohesive global organization. And the time is now.

Grim population statistics and projections for Zoroastrians on the Indian subcontinent emerge from time to time. Statistics, albeit suspect and manipulable, are based to some extent on fact, and form an important planning tool. With the migration of Zoroastrians worldwide, global statistics, rather than local, emerge as the need for planners. Population shifts are bound to occur as the world globalizes. What is important is to understand the forces causing those shifts and take those into consideration as we plan for the future.

India and Iran will always remain, wherever Zoroastrians may settle, as our lands of origin; Iran as the birthplace and the land of our heritage, and India where our forefathers preserved our faith. No matter where Zoroastrians may be, we shall always be heading back home for sustenance. It therefore behoves the diaspora across the seven continents to ensure that the light in both those countries shines the brightest. The diaspora owes that eternal debt.

So far its lukewarm attention to the mother countries is somewhat excusable, as the first generation needed time to get settled. But that period is now behind us. It will be remiss if it did not now divert its

attention to the mother countries. In my mind Udvada will emerge and must emerge, not only as the spiritual center for Zoroastrians, but also as the repository of all that the Zoroastrians hold sacred. The dust that has settled on Udvada will soon, I hope, be cleared, and the gem hidden below will shine through. Padma Shri Homi Taleyarkhan has given us the initiative. It is for us to pick up the challenge — revitalize Udvada and transform it into a center for learning and pilgrimage.

What is unique about Zoroastrians we shall never fathom. The world's smallest community and also the world's most ancient living tradition, Zoroastrians habitually surface to the top in the most unexpected places and will continue to do so. This is the Zoroastrian destiny from times immemorial — Khshnothrae Ahurae Mazdao, in the name of Ahura Mazda—moving creation forward towards perfection. We owe it to the world. This is our obligation.

Finally as we strive to move creation forward, let us not forget the spiritual needs of our community. We must have in time a cadre of priests and perhaps priestesses who are trained, not only in the ritualistic aspects of our faith (which is an absolute necessity to maintain centuries of tradition), but also educated in the minis-

terial aspects of service to the community and, most importantly, educated in the doctrinal aspects.

In Iran and India we have well established institutions to train young priests in the ritual aspects, and there are any number of divinity schools attached to universities and non-denominational seminaries, that can provide the ministerial training. What is lacking is the facilities for doctrinal studies, be it as a department attached to a university, or well-staffed Zoroastrian facilities. It was Ervad Sheriarji Bharucha's dream in 1893 to have a pulpit in every temple, and for our priests to regularly give sermons. I see that vision fulfilled 150 years later, in 2024, as our priests, enlightened in all three aspects — ritual, ministerial and doctrinal — rise to their well-deserved position as leaders of the community.

These are my dreams, my vision. But reality is founded on dreams and visions. We can and must make all this and much more, come true. I know that Ahura Mazda wills it so, and it will happen. Amen.

Rohinton Rivetna has just stepped down after eight years as president of the Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America, a body whose constitution he had been delegated to create. Earlier he had been president of the Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Chicago.

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The little boat and the sinking ship

The Zoroastrian emigrants to the West have managed to retain their distinctive ethnic flavor

Lovji Cama

Twenty years ago I wrote an article "Westward Ho," for *Parsiana* in which I expressed my hopes and fears about the Zarathushtrian community that was just getting established in the USA and Canada. Recently the editor of *Parsiana*, Jehangir Patel, asked me to write a sequel to it and in the process to pass some kind of judgement on whether the hopes are being fulfilled and the fears have materialized or were unfounded.

There were then about 4,000 Zarathushtrians in North America, mostly Parsis; today there are more than 15,000 with a large contribution of Iranian Zarathushtrian to that number. Twenty years ago we were fresh immigrants to this continent, now we are established here, a majority of the Parsis are American or Canadian citizens and most of us have children born on this North American continent.

We are less homogeneous, we are Parsi Zarathushtrians, Iranian Zarathushtrians and a new breed which for lack of a better name I call North American Zarathushtrians. These are our children, born and brought up here who go to North American schools and colleges. Being North Americans, their Indian (Parsi) or Iranian Zarathushtrian identity is not the same as their parents'. Yet many of them will be no less Zarathushtrian than their parents, even though they will be more American. I will come back to this later.

Even though we are four times as many as we were then, we are still scattered over a large area that prevents us from getting together often enough. We have gotten used to the idea that we have to travel fairly large distances to come together to reinforce our Zarathushtrian identity. The excellent North American phone system helps.

I mentioned in "Westward Ho" that we

were totally cut off from the ritualistic aspects of our religion and that we had no atash behrams or atash adarians. I had felt then that our children would not know Zarathushtrianism as a living religion. This fear was unfounded. A miracle has happened in the last 20 years.

A great Iranian Zarathushtrian couple, Arbab Rustam Guiv and Khanum Morvarid, guided by Dr Rostam Sarfeh, donated large amounts of money to build Darbe Mehrs all across North America, of which ours in New York was the first. There are seven Arbab Rustam Guiv Darbe Mehrs in North America, one each in New York, Toronto, Chicago, Los Angeles, Vancouver and San Jose and a new one, in the nation's capital, Washington DC. All these Darbe Mehrs have come into existence because of Arbab Guiv's donation and the tremendous dedication of a relatively few Zarathushtrians in these areas who have worked to make this miracle happen.

All the Darbe Mehrs have an atash dadgah, where Zarathushtrians can offer prayers, and they also serve as community centres. These are vital and vibrant institutions where Zarathushtrians have regular jashans, navjotes and weddings; ceremonies for the remembrance of the dead, an occasional uthamna ceremony, and some even have the muktad celebrations. The Darbe Mehrs are also places where we celebrate the festivals of Jamshedi Navrooz and the Shenshahi Navroze, Tir Gan, Mehr Gan and Sadeh, among others.

They are places where all Zoroastrians can come together and meet socially. This makes it possible for the Zarathushtrian child growing up here to experience the ritualistic aspects of our religion and be aware of the festivals. Navjotes are our

special occasions. Unlike our Parsi navjotes in India, in North America, there are the same number of guests at the time of the ceremony as there are at the dinner afterwards!

Every Darbe Mehr is also a center for religious instruction for the young; and even in those cities where there is a large enough population but a Darbe Mehr is not yet available, religious education is not neglected. In Houston

and Boston, for instance, religious education classes are conducted in private homes. Very importantly, Darbe Mehrs and the religion classes bring Zarathushtrian children together so that they realize that they are not alone. They share their experiences of being the only Zarathushtrian in their whole school, and thus lessen the burden of being so unique.

In 20 years the Zarathushtrian community in North America has changed. There are now 21 established Zarathushtrian associations (anjumans) in North America, and a number of other cities where Zarathushtrians meet informally. They have an umbrella organization in the Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America (FEZANA) which, among other activities, publishes the excellent newsletter *FEZANA Journal*, and arranges for the North American Zoroastrian



Cama (Photo circa 1974)

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These congresses are exceptionally well attended: the latest in Valley Forge, Pennsylvania, hosted by the Zoroastrian Association of Pennsylvania and New Jersey was attended by almost 500 delegates of whom 125 were between the ages of 16 to 30. In addition to these congresses, the Zarathushtrian youth have their own congresses every year. Local associations arrange youth camps during the summer for children and young Zarathushtrians so that they can spend some time together. These are the signs of a dynamic community only dimly imaginable 20 years ago.

Twenty years ago we were worried about the community blending into the melting pot of North American society. It is not likely to happen soon. The melting pot itself has now become a salad bowl. A mixture of different cultures, yes, but each with its individual flavor, shape and color. Now this salad bowl even has a slight but definite Zarathushtrian flavor.

I think the community has made an excellent start. With its usual flair for excellence, it has established itself financially. This flair for excellence seems to have been passed on to the next generation. A truly surprising number of the North American Zarathushtrians attend the most

prestigious colleges and attain outstanding academic achievements. That in itself does not guarantee survival, because it is a fact that the success of individual Zarah-

**We have to
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identity**

thustrians does not reflect the success of the community as a whole.

When the community transplanted itself on this continent, it brought with it its fascination for a high standard of living. With that desire for a high standard of living comes a desire for small families. Very few seem to take on the challenge of having more than two children. Many marry too late to be able to have more than two. And the new generation growing up here, the North American Zarathushtrian, is too young for me to make a judgement on what it will do.

The picture looks a lot better than it did 20 years ago. There are still some dangers that the community must come to grips with. We are a small community with a very low birth rate. At present our numbers are growing because of two factors:

- Continued immigration into North America from the East, but at a cost to the mother countries.

- Because we immigrated here while quite young, the vast majority of us are below the age where the death rate would become significant.

In a decade or two this will change and a more normal death rate will certainly become apparent.

Aside from the low birth rate, the greatest danger to growth is interfaith marriages. Though exact figures are difficult to come by, the number is greater than 25 percent. The danger from interfaith marriages is that most often the children of these marriages do not grow up as Zarathushtrians. Let me give you a true story. In one family of six children, five emigrated out of India and got happily married and amongst them had nine grandchildren. Only one of these grandchildren is brought up as a Zarathushtrian. The rest of them, being the progeny of interfaith marriages, have either the religion of the

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other faith or have no religion at all. All of us know similar stories amongst our friends and relatives. To me this is a devastating situation, not as it affects the persons involved, but as it affects the community.

What are some of the reasons why children of interfaith marriages do not grow up as Zarathushtrians?

- Conflict between the two faiths and a failure of the Zarathushtrian spouse to pull the child towards our faith.
- The negative attitude of our community which often treats the children and spouses of interfaith marriages as outsiders, turning off both spouses and children from wanting to join the Zarathushtrian community.
- Given the choice, the preference of children to belong to the majority community rather than belong to a unique minority.
- The presence of a larger extended family from the non-Zarathushtrian side of the marriage, with its non-Zarathushtrian influence.
- The absence of a commitment on the part of the Zarathushtrian spouse to want the children to grow up as Zarathushtrians. This often is due to lack of knowledge of the Zarathushtrian faith and the absence of support from our community.
- The erroneous belief in some of our women

that their children cannot become Zarathushtrians if they have married outside the faith. This in spite of the fact that there are many instances of such navjotes being performed here!

How can we correct this situation?

The most important step is to create in our young the desire to grow up as Zarathushtrians and to want their children to do so. This can be done by proper religious education. First by teaching history, both of our glorious past and the sacrifices made by our forefathers when the going became tough. They must know that their generation is not the first to belong to a small endangered community, and earlier generations have had to bear the same burden.

Secondly, we must teach our religion in a way that enables our children to see its relevance to their lives. We must stress its high demand for responsibility from each individual, the personal choice that each person must make between good and evil. We must stress its fundamental beliefs that ring true through all time. We must point out its contribution to Western religious thinking and the contributions of Zarathushtrians to society both ancient and modern. We must make our children proud to be Zarathushtrians and not make them

feel that they are part of some arcane old-world religion that is just about to die.

We must explain to them that marriage within the community is the easiest and surest way of bringing up their children as Zarathushtrians. We must point out the issues that an interfaith marriage could give rise to, such as choice between two faiths and two cultures and two sets of values. Above all, we must teach our children that marriage is not something one goes into without proper thought, hoping that things will just work out. Things always work out but not necessarily as one desires. If they choose an interfaith marriage they should discuss and decide upfront the faith of their children.

This is what one can do to minimize the occurrence of interfaith marriages. However, interfaith marriages will happen. To lose the children of such marriages to our community is a disaster for us. My early example shows what can happen within two generations. So we must change our own attitudes, which originated in a different time and place. We must welcome the families of interfaith marriages. We must welcome them to our religion classes, our religious ceremonies and to our social functions. We must make it easy for their children to be initiated into our religion.

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irrespective of which spouse is a Zarathushtrian, if the family so decides. We must make them a part of our community.

As a community we must encourage those families that have interfaith marriages to try their best to make sure that the children are brought up as Zarathushtrians. We have strong families; occasionally family pressure is used to discourage the child who marries out from becoming a part of our community. It should be the other way around. The family should make special efforts to integrate the non-Zarathushtrian spouse into the family and the community.

Lastly there are a number of interfaith marriages where the children have been brought up as Zarathushtrians and the families are very much a part of the community. The children have had their navjote done, they have primarily Zarathushtrian friends and do not consider themselves as outsiders. We must make a study of the factors that have led to these success stories so that we can profit from them. Once we know what works, we can use the knowledge to our advantage.

Whether we like it or not, the issue of interfaith marriage is part of living in North America. It cannot be wished away; it must be adjusted to in a positive way. Not to do so is the way to extinction.

We do not know how the American generation will handle this problem. On the one hand they will not have the hang-ups of the immigrant generation; yet on the other hand they may not see the importance of within-faith marriages for our community. Though the community can absorb some interfaith marriages it is quite certain that if such marriages become the norm, there is a great danger that the community will split apart because its ethnic structure will be so diverse that there can be no cohesiveness.

In the last 20 years, the immigrant generation of Zarathushtrians has established an infrastructure for the community's existence in America. It is for the American generation to take charge and build on this so that the community ensures its survival and growth. This task will be more difficult than that which challenged the immigrant generation.

Every generation must examine what needs to be done for the community's growth and survival and make the right choice. The right choice is always the one that is morally correct, and one that is honestly made from a proper base of knowledge—a choice according to the principle of Asha.

continued on page 70

“At a crossroad”

With the impending change
in sovereignty the
community in Hongkong
is apprehensive about the future



Jimmy Master

A few years ago, just before the community reconstructed the old Zoroastrian Building, a group photograph was taken of its members. And the snapshot encapsulates the major problem facing us today — an aging community, with just a small percentage of members in the active years of their lives.

Thirty years hence, when Hongkong will have become a special autonomous region of China, how our community will figure in the scheme of things will depend entirely on what future the young parents and their children see for themselves in the city. In the march of time, irrespective of what happens in Hongkong for better or worse, our numbers here will shrink along with the sheer decline in the number of Parsis worldwide.

Our forefathers came to China in the footsteps of the British raj. As the raj established spheres of influence in several Chinese cities, so too did the Parsi community. With the gradual retreat of the raj from China, this protective influence waned, and the community also dwindled. And with the final chapter of British raj coming to a close in Hongkong in 1997, history is likely to repeat itself.

Parsis have been in Hongkong since the mid 1850s. Stability under British administration provided for an environment within which trade flourished. The past 40 years in particular have witnessed the community growing from strength to strength. Our robust anjuman trust funds, and the new Zoroastrian Building, all stand testi-

mony to this prosperity, and we in Hongkong are in the unique position of having a community asset base totally disproportionate to our numbers and financial requirements. How best to preserve and deploy these assets to benefit the wider community interest will become a major issue for us, and we shall ultimately be judged on this score alone.

Entrepreneurship formed the base of our community during the early years. Whilst previous generations had trading backgrounds, most of our young are being encouraged to move into the professions. The trading firms of which there are only a handful left, gave our community a sense of permanence as their socioeconomic lifeline was tied here. These firms will survive as long as there are trading opportunities and offspring capable of taking over the management in future. With the bias shifting towards professional employment, the community's sense of permanence will depend more and more on the local job market and opportunities arising thereof.

With the impending change in sovereignty in 1997, our community stands at a crossroad. It is highly improbable that the tensions and anxiety leading up to 1997 will subside once 1997 is past. China has had a turbulent past, and will probably have a turbulent future. Under British administration, Hongkong has been relatively insulated from China's previous turmoil, but

once we become part of China, I cannot see how we can continue

to be isolated from the mainland. With this in mind, young parents are going to think very hard about whether there is really any future for their children in Hongkong or, indeed, for themselves and the self-preservation instincts of individual families will take precedence over community obligations. Despite putting on a brave face, community members of all ages are very apprehensive and nervous about the future, and many have spent the past few years securing a bolt hole overseas.

It is likely that the community in Hongkong 30 years hence will be smaller, and will have a much higher number of mixed marriages. Whether we allow all to embrace the religion will depend on the conviction of those in Hongkong and how they wish to alter and modify current practices to suit their needs of the day. Changes will be brought in more by default than by conviction, and the practice of the religion as we know it today will be diluted. I envisage a broadening of our community to encompass spouses and offspring of mixed marriages, as these may well comprise the majority 30 years hence.

When our forefathers set sail for these shores 150 years ago, we were a much larger community. Our sheer decline in numbers will in itself prevent any new surge of Parsis into Hongkong and China. Parsi migration out of India today is west-

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wards towards areas of stability and continuity.

In India, I feel that our number will continue to decline to the extent whereby we may no longer even qualify for our present privileged minority status. Our community's biggest failing has been our overwhelming preoccupation with maintaining exclusivity and the racial purity of the tribe, and denying opportunities to others to enjoy and partake of the goodness of our religion.

Our priesthood is aging, it is gradually being reduced to penury, and is incapable of providing any sort of effective leadership. At the same time, the priesthood as a career/vocation is perhaps least desirable for young Zoroastrians in India. Intermarriage is on the increase, and how rapidly this will affect and influence the practice and continuance of the religion, will depend entirely on the willingness of these (non-community spouses) to embrace our religion or adopt an alternate religion.

Zoroastrians in the rural areas of Gujarat face poverty, the likes of which have never been experienced by our community before. Rural de-population, and the drift towards metropolitan cities in India, particularly Bombay, have also not helped improve

the lot of the community, as housing and job opportunities are limited. Community charity funds and institutions are also shrinking due to the inflationary effect on their dependence on fixed income investments.

India will, as a result, become less and less important as a source of influence on

India will become less important as a source of influence on our community in Hongkong

our community in Hongkong, as well as other overseas communities. The decline in numbers, community institutions and the priesthood, will lead to a shift in emphasis towards overseas communities whereby each community will independently attempt to evolve in a manner best suited to its own needs. Within the North American

anjumans, there are already divisions between Parsi migrants from Bombay, Karachi and Iran, with each group finding little in common with the other, and each attempting to establish its own place of worship and community gathering. Perhaps after a generational change, these disparate groups may eventually come together again due to the Americanization of the younger generations.

Large numbers of people professing to be Zoroastrians have also recently come forth from the former southern Soviet states. How these people will be integrated into the community, if at all, has yet to be seen.

I envisage that the Parsi community as a racially exclusive group will continue to decline. It will in time become an oddity, perhaps only of sociological and anthropological significance, and in its place we may have a much richer mix of Indo/Iranian/Anglo-Saxon people who may be encouraged to embrace the faith and carry it forward.

Jimmy M. Master graduated in economics from McMaster University in Canada and completed his MBA from London University's City Business School. He has been an active member of The Incorporated Trustees of the Zoroastrian Charity Funds of Hongkong, Canton and Macau.



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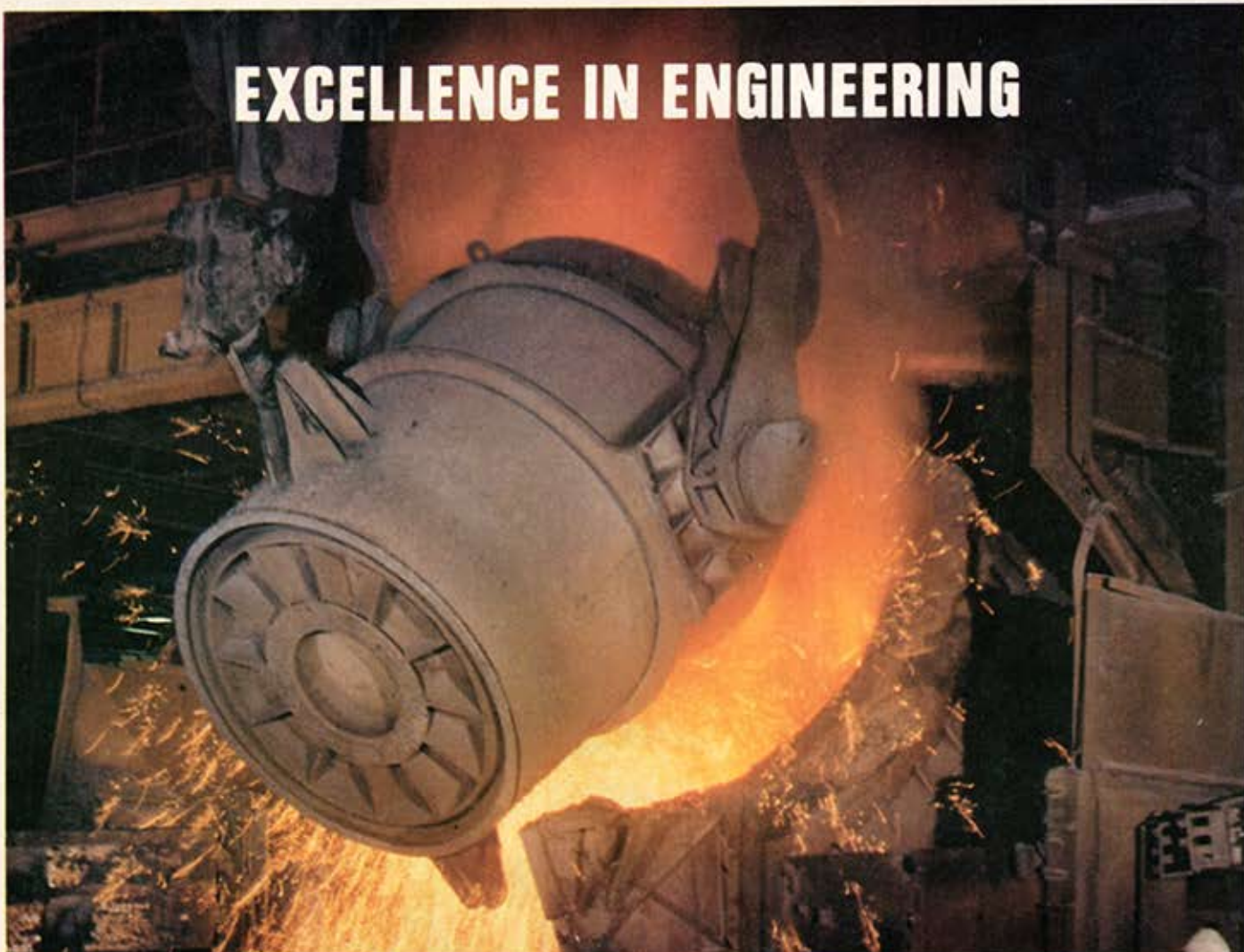


A reporter recording an Executive's call to the Chairman for Bonus Shares.

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Parsiana

Questionnaire: Into the Future

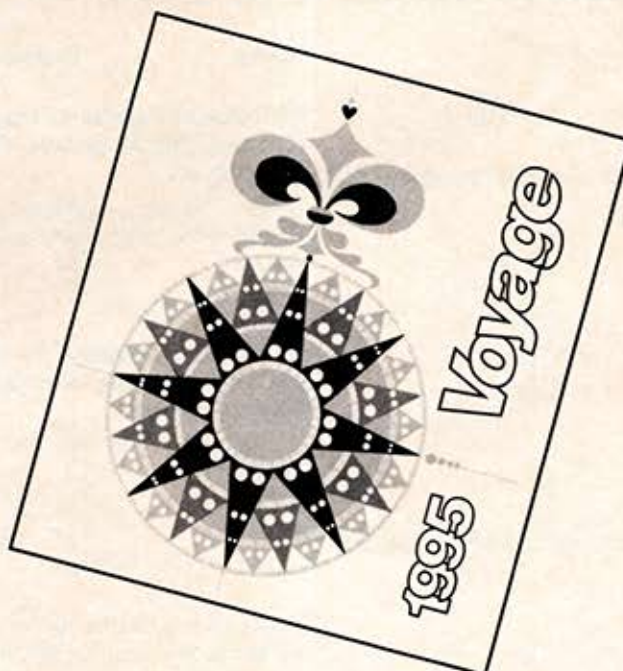
Dear Reader,

What the next 30 years hold for the international Zoroastrian community is anybody's guess. Thirty years ago few could have predicted the events that have shaped and molded the community's well-being. But perhaps the collective wisdom of the community may provide some insight as to what the future will hold.

In order to gauge our readers' reactions, *Parsiana* has formulated a questionnaire covering the social, religious, cultural and economic aspects of the community. May we request readers to fill out the questionnaire and mail it to us latest by February 28, 1995 so that we can tabulate the results and publish them shortly thereafter. In appreciation of the time and effort spent, *Parsiana* will send each reader who responds a 1995 *Voyage* pocket date diary. (*Voyage*, a magazine focusing on travel, is a sister publication of *Parsiana*.)

If more than one member of a reader's family or any of their friends wish to answer the questionnaire, they are welcome to xerox the questionnaire or write to us asking for additional questionnaires.

THE EDITORS



Thirty years from today...

1. i) Do you think the total population of the Zoroastrian community worldwide will:

Increase ☐ 1 Decrease ☐ 2

ii) The number of Zoroastrians in the world, including Iran, would be: *Please tick the appropriate box.*

10,000 to 20,000 ☐ 1
21,000 to 50,000 ☐ 2
51,000 to 1,00,000 ☐ 3
1,00,000 to 1,50,000 ☐ 4
1,50,000+ ☐ 5

iii) The population of the Zoroastrians in India will be: *Please tick the appropriate box.*

Less than 10,000 ☐ 1
10,001 to 20,000 ☐ 2
20,001 to 30,000 ☐ 3
30,001 to 50,000 ☐ 4
50,001 to 1,00,000 ☐ 5

2. Do you think converts will be accepted into the religion?

In India Overseas
Yes ☐ 1 Yes ☐ 1
No ☐ 2 No ☐ 2

3. Do you think Zoroastrians will wear the sudreh and kusti?

In India
Yes ☐ 1 No ☐ 2

If yes, what percent? *Please tick the appropriate box.*

Less than 10% ☐ 1
10%-20% ☐ 2
21%-50% ☐ 3
51%-75% ☐ 4
Above 76% ☐ 5

Overseas
Yes ☐ 1 No ☐ 2

If yes, what percent? *Please tick the appropriate box.*

Less than 10% ☐ 1
10%-20% ☐ 2

21%-50% ☐ 3
51%-75% ☐ 4
Above 76% ☐ 5

4. Do you think dokhmenashini will continue as a method for the disposal of the dead?

In Bombay In India
Yes ☐ 1 Yes ☐ 1
No ☐ 2 No ☐ 2

5. Do you feel that more Zoroastrians will opt for:

In India Overseas
Crematoria Crematoria
Yes ☐ 1 Yes ☐ 1
No ☐ 2 No ☐ 2

Burials Burials
Yes ☐ 1 Yes ☐ 1
No ☐ 2 No ☐ 2

6. Will Zoroastrians continue to observe the muktad ceremonies?

In India Overseas
Yes ☐ 1 Yes ☐ 1
No ☐ 2 No ☐ 2

7. Do you feel the number of fire-temples in India will:

Increase ☐ 1 Decrease ☐ 2

8. i) There are 44 agaries and four atash behrams in Bombay. Will this number: *Please tick the appropriate box.*

Stay the same ☐ 1
Increase ☐ 2
Decrease ☐ 3

ii) If you feel the number of fire-temples will decrease then how many will remain? *Please tick the appropriate box.*

Less than 10 ☐ 1
11-20 ☐ 2
21-30 ☐ 3
31-40 ☐ 4

iii) Why do you feel the number of fire-temples will decrease? *You may tick more than one*

box if required.

Fewer Zoroastrians ☐ 1
Fewer priests ☐ 2
Lack of wood for fire ☐ 3
No funds to maintain the structures ☐ 4
Loss of faith ☐ 5
Worshipping at institutions of other religions ☐ 6

iv) Will converts to Zoroastrianism be allowed into fire-temples in Bombay?

Yes ☐ 1 No ☐ 2

v) Will converts to Zoroastrianism be allowed into fire-temples in India excluding Bombay?

Yes ☐ 1 No ☐ 2

vi) Will sandalwood still be offered in the fire-temples?

Yes ☐ 1 No ☐ 2

9. i) Will there be any institutions (like hospitals, clubs, etc) left exclusively for Parsis in India?

Yes ☐ 1 No ☐ 2

ii) If yes, which ones? Specify.

10. Will behdins be inducted into the priesthood?

In India Overseas
Yes ☐ 1 Yes ☐ 1
No ☐ 2 No ☐ 2

11. Will women be accepted into the priesthood?

In India Overseas
Yes ☐ 1 Yes ☐ 1
No ☐ 2 No ☐ 2

12. Will Zoroastrians adhere to menstrual taboos?

In India

Yes ☐ 1

No ☐ 2

If yes, then by what percent? Please tick the appropriate box.

Less than 10% ☐ 1
11% to 25% ☐ 2
26% to 50% ☐ 3
51% to 75% ☐ 4
76% + ☐ 5

Overseas

Yes ☐ 1

No ☐ 2

If yes, then by what percent? Please tick the appropriate box.

Less than 10% ☐ 1
11% to 25% ☐ 2
26% to 50% ☐ 3
51% to 75% ☐ 4
76% + ☐ 5

13. Will children of Parsi women married to non-Parsis be considered as Parsis?

In India

Overseas

Yes ☐ 1

Yes ☐ 1

No ☐ 2

No ☐ 2

14. When at home, which language will Zoroastrians prefer to converse in? Please tick the appropriate box.

Only English ☐ 1
Only Gujarati ☐ 2
Only Dari ☐ 3
Mixture of English and Gujarati ☐ 4
Mixture of English and Dari ☐ 5

15. i) Will Parsi residential colonies be occupied by more non-Parsis?

Yes ☐ 1

No ☐ 2

ii) If yes, then by what percent? Please tick the appropriate box.

Less than 10% ☐ 1

11% to 25% ☐ 2
26% to 50% ☐ 3
51% to 75% ☐ 4
76% + ☐ 5

16. Which calendar will Zoroastrians follow? You may tick more than one box if required.

In India

Overseas

Kadmi ☐ 1 Kadmi ☐ 1
Shehenshahi ☐ 2 Shehenshahi ☐ 2
Fasli ☐ 3 Fasli ☐ 3
Gregorian ☐ 4 Gregorian ☐ 4

17. Will people still wear:

i) Pugree and Pheta?

Yes ☐ 1

No ☐ 2

ii) Dagli and Parsi coat?

Yes ☐ 1

No ☐ 2

18. Will the tradition of a baug wedding/navjote still continue in India?

Yes ☐ 1

No ☐ 2

19. Will food still be served on patras?

Yes ☐ 1

No ☐ 2

20. Will birthdays be celebrated with dhandar and sev?

In India

Overseas

Yes ☐ 1

Yes ☐ 1

No ☐ 2

No ☐ 2

21. Will Parsi households continue to display chalk and floral decorations on auspicious days?

In India

Overseas

Yes ☐ 1

Yes ☐ 1

No ☐ 2

No ☐ 2

22. Will parabhs, ghambars continue to be celebrated?

In India

Overseas

Yes ☐ 1

Yes ☐ 1

No ☐ 2

No ☐ 2

Personal

23. Which age group do you fall into? Please tick the appropriate box.

Up to 24 years ☐ 1 45-54 years ☐ 4
25-34 years ☐ 2 55-64 years ☐ 5
35-44 years ☐ 3 65 + years ☐ 6

24. Which of the following describes your educational qualifications? Please tick the appropriate box.

Up to SSC/HSC ☐ 1 Graduate ☐ 3
Undergraduate ☐ 2 Postgraduate ☐ 4

25. Which of the following would best describe your total personal annual income? Please tick the appropriate box.

Over Rs 2 lakhs ☐ 1
Rs 1.5 to 2 lakhs ☐ 2
Rs 1 to 1.5 lakhs ☐ 3
Rs 75,000 to 1 lakh ☐ 4
Rs 50,000 to Rs 75,000 ☐ 5
Below Rs 50,000 ☐ 6

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"This 'tribal' consciousness is crucial"

Scholar-priests are unable to match the influence of the electronic media on the minds of the people

Dastur (Dr) Kaikhusroo M. JamaspAsa

Many coreligionists believe that our lethargy and attitude of indifference, if not callousness, to the many ills facing our community is the cause of its fall in stature. But there are some who think that Parsis are notably successful worldwide even today.

It is true that in ages past they were at the helm in all fields — agriculture, commerce, industry and science. They were also good traders; they sailed to China and the Far East to carry on trade. We may say that the fundamental characteristics of these Parsis of yore were thrift, hard work, honesty, respect for elders, education, entrepreneurial skills and a strong sense of duty. The Parsi paradigm of *xwēškārīh*, (doing one's duty), is quite the opposite of fatalism. If one's *xwēškārīh* is to be an industrialist and to amass wealth with integrity, there is scriptural sanction to do so.

Parsis have been castigated for being clannish and reserved. But like the Hindu, the Japanese or the Jew, the Parsi is loyal to his unit — the extended family or community. This 'tribal' consciousness is crucial in a rapidly shrinking world, and we can learn from the success of the overseas Chinese.

We also revere knowledge and wisdom, and since the advent of the Portuguese in India we have shown tremendous entrepreneurial skills. We did so in East Africa, and presently we do so again in the United Kingdom, North America and even in India.

What has changed is that in the ancient system in India and Iran, the fundamentals and dictates of religion were preached by the priests. These teachings were transmit-



ted to the masses by disciples and seers and religious principles were popularized by word of mouth. But due to the enormous impact of the electronic media on the minds of the masses today, it has become well-nigh impossible for scholar-priests to match the aggression of this media by traditional methods. The result is there

for all to see: a universal trend towards violence, hatred and total disregard of the sacred principles of faith in God and reverence for elders.

It is unfortunate that television, which can be put to good use for propagating diverse religions, now serves a contrary purpose. And the younger generation, who should have been taught how to worship God, respect elders, honor truth and justice, is swayed by wrong media invasions. The increasing conceit of youth towards religion will cause much greater harm in future. Violence will bring about the downfall not only of the individual, but also in time destroy the basic fabric of society. The present crisis in religion is due to lack of moral

character. This character is the outcome of a strong faith, which in turn is the outcome of religious knowledge disseminated by priests. Without such knowledge people fail to dedicate themselves to maintaining moral conduct and discipline in society.

Science, which is supposed to promote

the welfare of society, is also being misused to misguide people and upset the very basis of faith. This creates confusion in their minds. If the crisis of religion is not checked, it will bring about the doom of any community. It is therefore the duty and obligation of our elders, institutions and individuals dedicated to the cause of sustaining the community, to contain this deepening crisis. Strong steps should be taken to protect the community by powerful presentation and practice of the faith by its members, in particular the younger generation.

In 1978, Dastur (Dr) Hormazdyar K. Mirza delivered a lecture at Harvard University in which he set out at length the difficult and complicated problems facing the community. Besides the dwindling Parsi population, he listed intercommunal marriages, conversion of non-Zoroastrians, problems of the priestly class and disposal of dead bodies.

If anything, these problems have become more knotty with the passage of time, so that our fervent hope is that they are tackled immediately by all those who have the welfare of the community at heart. Especially the upliftment of the priestly class needs top priority, since in the absence of this class there is certain danger of erosion of the religious institutions and rituals, and hence of the community itself. We have the wherewithal, the

infrastructure — we fortunately have two fine Madressas left to us by benevolent and farsighted community members to train youngsters for priesthood.

But there seems to be something seriously lacking: dedication, devotion and sacrifice on the part of the initiates; liaison between their parents and the authorities; and the welfare (housing, medical care, children's education, gratuity, pension) of those

joining the profession which is not spelled out or guaranteed.

If we are to save ourselves, basic things have to be tackled in their logical sequence: First, of course, the dedication, direction, sincerity and grit to combat and solve the problems must be there. Sec-

In the absence of the priestly class there is certain danger of erosion of the community itself

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ondly, we need the involvement of all those who want to bring about a rejuvenation in communal affairs. Thirdly, experts in each discipline must be identified who can then act as advisers and guide the youngsters in their respective fields. Fourthly, we must hunt for fresh talent at various levels. Finally, competitiveness in entrepreneurship among the youth must be promoted. The youth need to be informed how this can shape their future, and the rewards they can look forward to in terms of economic gains and position in life.

The priests should be looked upon with more affection and respect and should be adequately compensated for their service and sacrifice, else no youngster will come forward to embrace this noble profession.

Petty squabbles should be set aside both by orthodox Zoroastrians and their less devout brethren, to enable them to solve the grave problems facing our community, which threaten its very existence. Then alone will the Zoroastrian faith survive, and the realization of our goals be achieved. However, there are limiting factors to growth like environmental degradation, diseases, drug abuse and AIDS. Imported American television programs, teaching violence, indiscipline and immorality, also do much harm.

In the concluding remarks of his address Dastur Mirza had observed: "If the present trend prevails, the long-term future of the community is bleak unless it is miraculously saved... In short, so far as the long-term existence of the Parsi community is concerned, the proverbial candle is not only burning at both ends, it is blazing on all sides."

I am not a pessimist, but the situation is certainly frightening, and unless something is done there are chances of a catastrophe. There is the apprehensive speculation that the community may eventually die out due to dwindling numbers. Yes, the community is precariously perched on a time-bomb which is ticking quite fast! Only if we can avoid most of the pitfalls outlined here can we hope to survive the next 30 years. And may Ahura Mazda save us and our future generations.

Dastur (Dr) Kaikhusroo JamaspAsa has been the High Priest of the Anjuman Atash Bahram since 1956. In the course of a distinguished academic career, he has also been guest professor at the Johannes Gutenberg University of Mainz, secretary and trustee of the K. R. Cama Oriental Institute and has coedited 50 Pahlavi texts in English and Persian at the University of Shiraz at the invitation of the Shahbanu of Iran. Dastur JamaspAsa was one of 14 religious dignitaries worldwide, invited to preside over the second Parliament of the World's Religions in Chicago in September 1993.

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Applying Asha

Community members are morally responsible to solve community problems with a Good Mind

Kaikhosrov D. Irani

Reflecting on the condition of the Zoroastrian community today, one is troubled by the sad state of public debate on issues concerning the community. Often it ends on a note of unreconciled diversity on such social concerns as housing, education and unemployment; on interminable dissensions in the administration of communal institutions; and with raucous arguments on what are believed to be religious issues, which often (though not always) turn out to be social issues.

The main impulse in such discussions is to view differences as irreconcilable, and to consider the task before one as the refutation, if not demolition, of positions one does not favor. There is no social solution to this problem, which I believe is rooted in the character and personality structure of the disputants.

Zoroastrians, both Parsi and Iranian, are raised in a way which generates extremely sensitive self-images. They grow up to believe that they are, and more importantly are to be taken by others to be, defenders of a privileged religious community, the maintaining of the traditions of which requires a stance of belligerency. Often such personalities believe that rational discourse may perhaps lead to concessions of change or adjustment, or the possibility of reconciling differences, which may be viewed as conceding on time-honored, if not eternal, principles.

The above is admittedly an over-simplified account of a complex problem. Regardless of its degree of validity, there is an approach to the situation which is not



only significant, but should be close to the heart of one who justifiably calls himself or herself a Zoroastrian. That is what I shall discuss now.

In the history of civilization one of the earliest insights into the way one should think about such social problems and resolve them, was offered in the teachings of Zarathushtra. Unfortunately, a good part of the

Zoroastrian community is ignorant of it.

This is the socio-moral theory of Zarathushtra. There is an ideal form of existence in both the natural and social worlds, which if actualized would be seen as the perfect world. The way in which the world is to evolve to perfection is a divinely ordained scheme, called the principle of Asha; translated as Truth, but really meaning the Ideal Truth. Its implementation is blocked or interfered with by the spirit of opposition to Truth, that is the spirit of evil. The spirit of good promotes the actualization of Asha. How is morality derived from this conception? It is achieved by the operation of the Good Mind, Vohu Mana, a divinely given aspect of humanity, which is capable of grasping the Ideal Truth. It is also capable of seeing where in the world Asha is actualized, and where not.

With the inspiration of right-mindedness, Spenta Armaity, another divine essence in humanity, we are motivated to do the right thing, i.e., implement Asha, to bring the state of imperfection toward perfection. It is with our Good Mind that we recognize the flawed situation, the problem being how to repair it. What is it that

ought to be done? The Good Mind enables us to see what the situation ought to be — the state of Asha. This realization is Good Thought. We then formulate a policy of action, articulate it, express it in discussion and receive the views of others. These are called Good Words. After due consideration we act to bring about the situation as it ought to be. That is Good Deed.

This scheme of moral decision-making places great responsibility upon the individual. For each one of us must apply the highly abstract conception of Asha to specific situations. We don't have an indefinitely large number of principles of Asha ready-made for application to the various problems faced. A moral agent must use his Good Mind to apply the conception of Asha to the exigencies of the specific situation, and conceive of an outcome as close to the ideal of Asha as the situation permits.

This view is easy to grasp, and rather obvious, which leads us to ask why people do not act in accordance with it. The reason is that so very often people do not seek the implementation of Asha. They seek not the ideal situation, but various outcomes desired for personal satisfaction. Their moral perceptions have failed them. Their thoughts come not from the Good Mind, but from inclinations of greed, fear, hatred, anger and even love, when it becomes destructive.

Often people are motivated to protect their personal interests, to extol their self-images in the eyes of the public, or denigrate and vilify their opponents. What they are doing is to follow some personal agenda, not solve the problem objectively before them. Here is failure of Good Thought. This is what is known in the Asha's theology as the internal working of Druj, the opposite of Asha.

If we could enlighten people and educate them to focus on the actual problems objectively described, ignoring the desire for personal vindication and personal hatred; exchange views with opponents regarding adequacy of solutions, then we might solve problems without friction. Because if there is Asha, there must be an ideal solution. And if there is the right-mindedness of good will, there is a socially viable avenue for resolving the problem.

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The enemy within

Indifference to our religious literature could lead to Zoroastrian decadence



Arnavaz Chubb

If, as Shakespeare said, all the world's a stage, Zoroastrians have been players on that world stage from its earliest days. To the tragic and comic moments of this epic performance they have made their contribution. Although once the protagonists, they are now relegated to relatively minor "one amongst the crowd" roles; but they are nevertheless still around and holding their own. It really is a hard act to follow, and it does not look like it is about to end in a hurry either.

Sure, the Zoroastrian has his problems like every other player on that world stage; but wouldn't you say the worst is over? When the monster Zohak tyrannized Iran, the valiant Faridun overcame him and bound him up in chains for eternity, freeing the people from his oppression. Alexander the accursed, looted, burned and pillaged, destroying the Persian empire and devastating its traditions. That might have put the Zoroastrian spirit down for a while, but it did not take long for it to revive and surge forward to build an empire grander than the Roman. Along comes a new player, Islam, and delivers another devastating blow. The Zoroastrians lost a homeland then, but knowing that home is where the heart is, they continued to stoke the fires of their faith within their breasts wherever they made a home.

Today, the Zoroastrians are a liberated people. No one wants to behead them for their religious beliefs. They are free to settle in any part of the world and they have spread far and wide and done well for themselves. They are liberated, too, in the modern sense of the term: they are educated, they are achievers, they are free-thinkers — the next golden age should have arrived. It seems that what Alexander and Islam could not succeed in doing, the Zoroastrians themselves will now attempt to complete. So, exit the external aggressor and enter the more insidious

villain, the enemy within.

Alexander burnt Zoroastrian libraries and destroyed their religious literature. For this heinous act he has gone down in Zoroastrian history as the accursed. What word would we ascribe to the modern Zoroastrian who, while not actually burning libraries of religious literature, is nevertheless leaving a priceless heritage to rot and decay? Money for housing, money for places of worship, these are priorities but, sadly, the serious study of the Zoroastrian religion appears to be a lost cause.

Traditionally, education in general and religious education in particular, formed part of the duties of a priest. Ahura Mazda is the lord of wisdom, and as such the priests' chief attribute was also wisdom. The teacher-priest was an important member of society. Wisdom, learning and education are important virtues for every Zoroastrian. Zoroaster himself advocated the use of reason and logic, the asking of questions and the pursuit of knowledge as opposed to blind acceptance. In Zoroastrian Iran, the practice of religion was a way of life, education centered around the scriptures and the priest was only next to the king on the social scale.

With the commercial importance of secular subjects for study, religious education amongst Zoroastrians is virtually nonexistent. The condition of the priestly class being what it is, they are unfortunately no longer considered to be teacher-priests. An infrastructure for the scholarly study of the Zoroastrian scriptures was set up at the turn of this century, but apathy has left the structure all but falling apart. In the 20th century Iranian studies is an established branch of religious studies, not only in India and Iran, but at all the major world universities, for it is now accepted that Zoroastrianism was the single most influential religion in shaping the ethics and

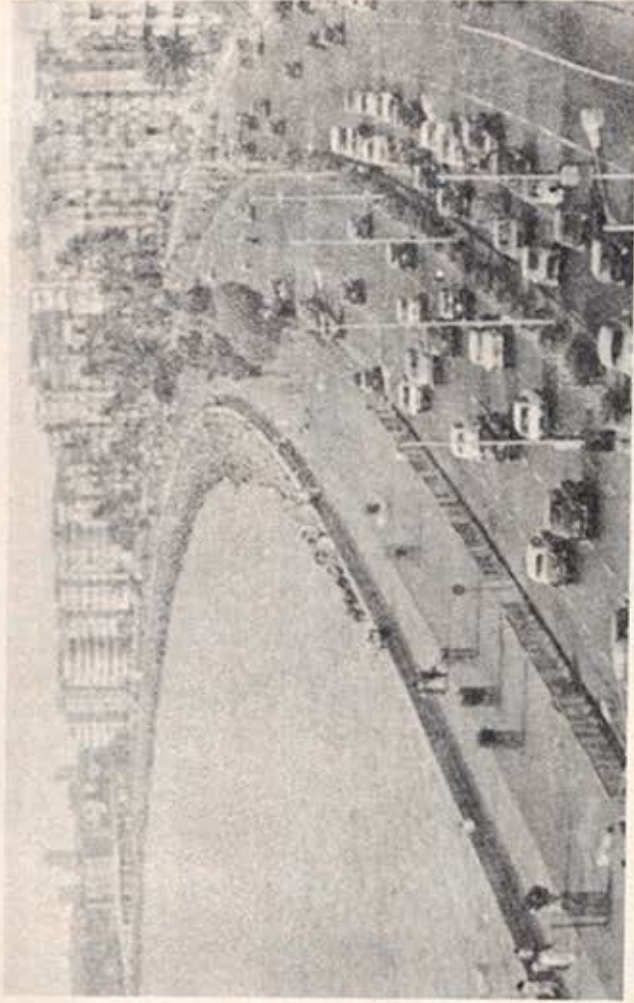
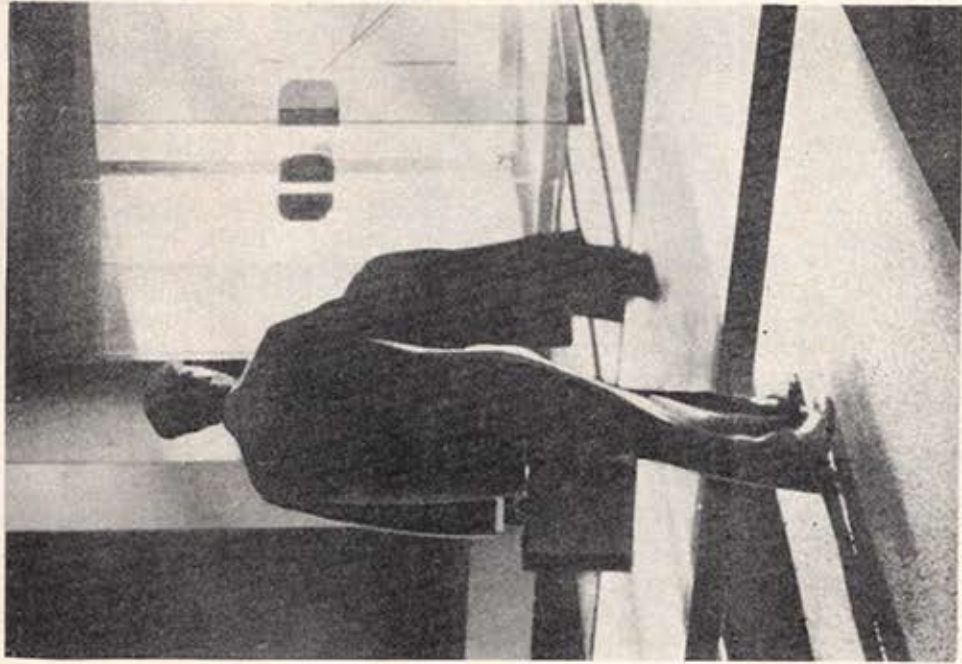
beliefs of all the major religions that originated in West Asia.

In the academic world, Zoroastrianism enjoyed a revival during the time of the last Shah of Iran who handsomely funded scholarship and research. Much work was done and then left undone when the government changed in Iran. But pockets of Zoroastrian scholarship continue at a few universities. In India, lack of funding for scholarly pursuits is perhaps the reason for the lack of pupils, as also perhaps the lack of encouragement and respect afforded to the few who do choose to study Zoroastrianism. Religious education on a less formal basis for children and adults is at best sporadic and uncoordinated, which adds to the general misinformation and/or total lack of information on even the most basic aspects of Zoroastrianism.

Zoroastrians have an ancient and glorious heritage that needs to be preserved and, more importantly, understood. If there is a chance that Zoroastrianism will die out in the future, it will not be because of a dwindling population or not allowing conversion. The catchword for the future seems to be change. We have to change our ways, we need to update our practices, we ought to shed our incomprehensible traditions. We have to do all these things because we do not understand them, we have made no effort to understand them, we have kept ourselves in ignorance; and are we about to let ignorance, the tool of Angre Mainyu, be the weapon of our destruction?

Her appetite for knowledge about Zoroastrianism whetted by her work as associate editor of *Parsiana*, Ms Arnavaz Chubb (née Patel) opted to join the J. J. Madressa under Dasturs (Dr) Hormazdyar Mirza and (Dr) Kaikhosroo Jamasp Asa, completing her Avesta-Pahlavi studies with a gold medal at the M.A. level at the University of Bombay. Having migrated to Australia, Chubb has been the president of the Zoroastrian Association of Victoria where she has been conducting religious classes for children.

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Future Tense But Perfect

The advent of a savior will redeem the community, says the author

Adi Doctor

As the past is supposed to be 'the best prophet of the future,' let's put our time machine first in the reverse gear.

"Auharmazd spoke to Zaratusht the Spitaman thus: 'That root of a tree which thou sawest (in a dream) and those four branches which will come: That of gold is when I and thou converse, and King Vishtasp shall accept the religion, and shall demolish the figures of the demons... And that of silver is the reign of Artakhshir the Kayan king, and that of steel is the reign of the glorified Khusro son of Kevad, and that which was mixed with iron is the evil sovereignty of the demons with dishevelled hair of the race of Wrath, when it is the end of the tenth hundredth winter of thy millennium, O Zaratusht the Spitaman!'" (This translation from the Bahman Yasht and others to follow are by Dr E. W. West, in the *Sacred Books of the East*.)

To the Prophet's query as to what is the token of those evil times, Ahura Mazda replies, inter alia: "This pure religion of the Mazdayasnians, and the fire of Vahram (atash behram), which is set in the appointed place, encounter annihilation, and the direst destruction and trouble will come into notice... All men will become deceivers... and regard for the soul will depart from the world... and the religious, who wear sacred thread-girdles on the waist, are then not able to perform their ablution (padiyavih), for in those last times dead matter and bodily refuse become so abundant, that one who shall set step to step,



walks upon dead matter; or when he washes in the barashnum ceremony, and puts down a foot from the stone seat, he walks on dead matter... and the fire of Vahram, which will come to nothing and collapse, falls off from a thousand to one caretaker, and even he does not supply it properly with firewood and incense... and the prayers and the ceremonies that he orders

of priests and disciples they do not fulfil... of the sin which men commit, out of five sins the priests and disciples commit three sins..." and so on. A remarkably canny description of the present state of affairs in our community!

What of the future then? Before we invoke the Zand-i-Vohuman Yasna (Bahman Yasht) once again, a peep into the near-future is called for, with help from that great hierophant, Ustad Behramshah Shroff.

1995-2000 AD: The most critical period in the history of the community in India. While the world reels under the onslaught of diseases and epidemics emanating from the earth (e.g. intake of slow poison through food grown with the extensive use of fertilizers, chemicals, etc; also earthquakes, famines, etc), and those relating to fire (leukemia caused by exposure to the harmful ultraviolet rays of the sun, etc), the number of the truly faithful in the community will dwindle to the lowest ever: about 11,000.

Many agiaries will be locked up and perhaps an atash behram too! The mag-

netic fields of the dokhmas will be severely eroded, thanks to the callous indifference of all those concerned in maintaining and protecting them. Many more Zoroastrian men and women will find their life partners from outside the community. Respect for elders and traditions will diminish further. Only lip service will be paid to genuine orthodoxy.

However, according to the law of duality and polarity operating in nature, in all this welter of irreligiosity, a beacon of light will come in the form of a forerunner to the Savior, who is due early in the 21st century. This *Pesh Ravan* will be an athraivan of a very high caliber who, with his piety and lofty spiritual powers, will convince the existing Parsi priests of the disastrous consequences of their follies and foibles, their *ashmogih* and blasphemy. He will perform the yasna, the ceremonies the way they should be, and demonstrate to them their efficacy and the results obtaining therefrom in nature. That will herald a new chapter in the annals of orthodoxy.

Just as in the beginning of this century Behramshahji came at a critical juncture, when Western philology and rationalism played havoc with the minds of orthodox Parsis, so at the end of the century this great forerunner will drill some sense and devotion into the recalcitrant mobs of today. If a fictitious Jal Bawa could attract droves of gullible Zoroastrians to the Banaji Atash Behram today, one can well imagine what a truly pious Zoroastrian sage will do to the Parsis. All those who now specialize in scoffing and mocking at Zoroastrian traditions and customs, particularly Parsi journalists and proprietors of such journals, will have to sit on the stool of repentance and cover themselves with ashes!

And so, back to Bahman Yasht's final prediction regarding savior Shah Behram Varjavand, who is expected any time between 2002 and 2032 AD, but not before the world has faced a holocaust — either natural or manmade. "O Zaratusht the Spitaman! When the demon... comes into notice in the eastern sector, first a black token manifests, and Hushedar son of Zaratusht is born... It is when he comes to his conference with me Auharmazd, that some have said among the Hindus (i.e. in India) is born a prince; it is his father, a prince of the Kayan race, approach the women, and a religious prince is born to him; he calls his name Vahram the Varjavand..."

continued on page 68

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The Zoroastrian community is at the crossroads at the fag end of the 20th century. These crossroads are demographic, religious, cultural, educational and socio-economic. From small communities in Asia and Iran, we are now spread and fragmented in the major continents, with various diverse problems of maintaining our traditions, our cultural and religious roots, our cohesion and identity.

We now stand poised to face the uncertain prospects and challenges of the next century. But the million dollar question is: How many of us will remain in our community 30 years hence?

The late J. R. D. Tata, lamented thus when he spoke on April 7, 1992 on the lawns of Cusrow Baug, Bombay when the Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP) honored him on his being conferred the Bharat Ratna by the Government of India: "I am distressed when I learn of the extent of the decline of our population. When I first became active before Independence, say in the 1940s, our population was 1,20,000 or so. It is less than 80,000 today, and if this goes on, a time will come, I hope long after I am gone, when there won't be a Parsi community to be proud of..."

At the 5th World Zoroastrian Congress held in Bombay in January 1990, a paper presented by Ms Ava Khullar gave a dismal picture of the projected figures of the Zoroastrian population in the year 2021.

Even though the projected world Zoroastrian population would be 9.37 percent lower in 2021 than it was in 1991, the Zoroastrian population in India would reduce by an astounding 47.44 percent in 2021 as compared to 1991. The population in Bombay itself could tumble by 42.82 percent in 2021. A sad picture indeed!

The reduction in the Zoroastrian population of India can be attributed to several factors, but Ava Khullar's projections reveal that migration tops the list. The irony of it all is that today Zoroastrians in Bombay claim that housing shortage is the main reason of the decline in population; but, 30 years hence, will there be enough Zoroastrians living in Bombay to avail of the then existing housing accommodation?



Losing count

The youth of the community can change the present trend of declining numbers

Jehangir Bisney

A study by Peshotan Nargolwala revealed that while 1,000 Zoroastrians die every every year in Bombay, only 500 were born. Thus we lose 500 persons of our community every year. Our death rate is 19-20 and birth rate 9-10 per 1,000. We lose another couple of hundred every year due to other causes. Unless our birth rate goes above 20 per 1,000 (it had been around 25 between 1901 and 1931) there is hardly any hope of stabilizing the Zoroastrian population.

The survival of our community depends on the present youth. On an average 346 Parsi marriages were solemnized annually between 1982 and 1990 according to the Chief Matrimonial Court, Bombay High Court. A total of 219 divorces took place in this period. During the same period, an average of 27 Parsi girls and 29 Parsi boys contracted intercommunity marriages under the Special Marriage Act each year. In percentage terms, intercommunity marriages among Parsis in Bombay was 21 percent in 1990.

The age pattern shows that while one out of five Parsis is over 65 years of age, only one out of every eight is

under 14 years of age.

The attitude of the Zoroastrian youth towards the community is slowly changing for the better. They are realizing the problems facing them and are gearing up to meet the challenges. However, the task is enormous and a fresh outlook is required.

The decline of the Parsi population over the years has been attributed to various factors. The research by demographer Dr (Ms) Ketayun Gould showed interesting facts:

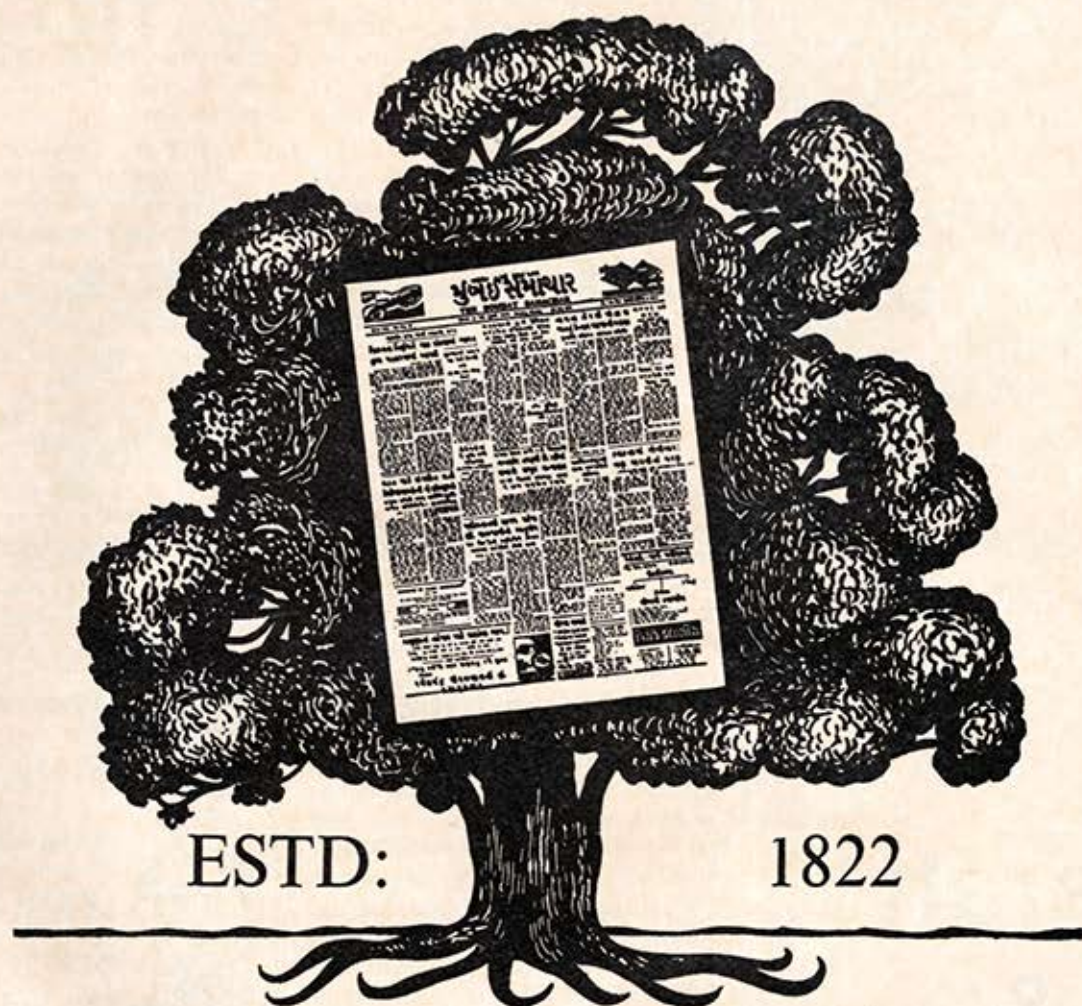
- The Parsi birth rate has been declining over 100 years and the chances of reversing that trend are remote.
- Providing houses might get the people to marry a little earlier, but only the ones who are postponing marriage for that reason. But even if houses are provided for everyone, the number of single people will not go down.
- Three major aspects contribute to the community's fertility decline:
 - 20 percent of the population never marries;
 - those who do, marry at a very late age (about 27 years, which is amongst the highest age at marriage in the world); and
 - the number of offspring are controlled to an average of 2.2 per couple.
- Other communities live in joint family systems and one room houses, and yet are able to have many children. Therefore, it is not just housing by itself but the attitude

Projected figures of the Zoroastrian population up to 2021

Year	Greater Bombay	Rest of India	Total of India	Pakistan	India & Pak.	North America	Europe	Australia	Western World	Total
1991	41544	15967	57511	2975	60486	9700	5000	940	15640	76126
2001	34482	11816	46298	2603	48901	16000	6420	1550	23970	72871
2011	28620	8744	37364	2278	39642	20544	7095	1990	29630	69272
2021	23754	6470	30224	1993	32217	26380	7842	2555	36776	68993

(Excludes Zoroastrian population of Iran)

(Source Ms Ava Khullar's paper, presented at the 5th World Zoroastrian Congress)



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that goes with that kind of urban situation that has played a part in affecting Parsi fertility.

- Thirty-six percent of rural women marry consanguinously (cousin marriages) as against 22 percent of urban women.

- Contradicting many popular beliefs, it was found that rural folk married as late as city dwellers and sometimes even later, as suitable mates are more difficult to find. The number of pregnancies among rural couples was lower than among urban couples and there was a large interval between marriage and the first child.

- Bachelors and spinsters over the age of 45 from the rural areas stated "need of parents" as the most frequent reason for not getting married. Urban bachelors and spinsters most frequently quoted "dislike of marriage" or "don't feel the necessity of getting married."

- As the number of aging people in the community goes up, our total number will go down. As fertility declines, there will be more aged people who might not have any resources, any family to take care of them. The community will need more resources for the aged than things like education for the children.

To conclude, our community leaders must not remain in a sense of stupor leading to inaction due to the enormous dimensions of this problem. Our community has had a glorious past and the youth look forward to an even brighter future. What is required today is nothing short of a master plan which can stop the slide that the community is going into. A coordinated master plan and a strong long-term program that meets the needs of today's youth can turn this trend around gradually.

A chartered accountant with overriding community concerns, Jehangir R. Bisney has been the founder-president of the Federation of Zoroastrian Youth Associations and of the Twin Cities' Zoroastrian Youth League.

FUTURE TENSE BUT PERFECT

continued from page 64

If 30 years from now *Parsiana* is still around, it may be published from Tehran (most of the Parsis will have settled in Iran) with a circulation of say, 30 million copies, because the Zoroastrian population by then would be much more, Mr Jamshed Guzder notwithstanding! And of course, all the Parsi punchayets would have been wound up by then, as in that golden era for the world in general, and for Zoroastrians in particular, there will be no need for them. Fire-temples of the highest grade will flourish in all their glory. Iran and India will be world powers at this time when spiritualism will be at its zenith. All this and much more, thanks to the advent of Shah Behram

A freelance journalist and former bank official, Adi Doctor has ardently propagated the Ilm-e-Khshnoom version of Zoroastrianism (a mystical explanation of the rituals as first propounded by Behramshah Shroff) for the past 20 years. Doctor, a graduate of Bombay University, had studied Avesta-Pahlavi under Dastur (Dr) H. K. Mirza and the late Dr Jamshed M. Unvala.

Always remember



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On the streets where you live

As the Parsi population increases there may not be enough flats to house them in, says the author tongue-in-cheek

Keki J. Gandhi

In 2024 AD this writer will either be 94 not out or already run out, *che sarà, sarà!* That is where the uncertainty ends.

The trend of the steeply declining Parsi population will definitely be reversed — thanks to the Nariman Mogrelia scheme of sponsoring every child throughout its first 18 years, which will be successfully implemented by the committee comprising of stalwarts like Jimmy (Jamshed) Guzder, Areez Khambatta (the Rasna man), Minoo Davierwala, Dadi Mistry and Mogrelia himself.

The disbursements of promised benefits for the first few years will reduce the Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP) crores to mere thousands, and the impoverished BPP will not be able to fulfill its commitments in later years.

The present scenario of the BPP instituting legal proceedings against unauthorised occupants of its flats, will therefore give way to a new one: the BPP will be defending thousands of breach of promise and damages suits filed by those who were lured into increasing their family size by the Mogrelia scheme.

The paucity of accommodation will become so critical that Parsis will be living in *zopadpattis* (hutment) and on pavements. Since dwellers in *zopadpattis* and on pavements tend to multiply like rabbits, the Parsi population will increase in geometrical progression.

The have-nots living in *zopadpattis* and on pavements, frustrated by the usual delay in judicial proceedings, will turn into unruly *goondas* (hooligans), make mincemeat of Mogrelia and Mistry, guillotine Guzder, dissolve Davierwala and modify the 'I love you Rasna' slogan to one which cannot be printed or shown on television.

The dispute as to whether the BPP chairmanship should be decided by senior-



ity or by election will still be pending in the Supreme Court, but it will be irrelevant to the times, because no elections would have taken place for several years due to the BPP trusteeship no longer wielding

power with no funds to disburse and no flats to allot. What it will have to face is plenty of litigation and the ire of *zopadpattiwallas* and pavement dwellers.

Outside Bombay more and more centers will have become defunct. The Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India will therefore have fewer members, but will become custodian/owner of the properties of several dwindling/defunct anjumans. Its coffers will be filled to the brim by the sale proceeds of the properties of defunct anjumans.

No more approaches or pleas will be made to the police and other government machinery for removal of encroachment on Parsi properties. Instead, the *zopadpattiwallas* and pavement dwellers, placing their faith in the theory 'attack is the best form of defence,' will recapture by force the properties that once belonged to the community.

The interfaith movement will gather great momentum and flourish. The Zoroastrian tenets of righteousness for its own sake, helping the poor and the needy, and bringing happiness unto others will be universally acclaimed. Concrete steps will be taken to restore Zoroastrianism to its pristine glory and once again it will become a universal and living religion.

Zarathushtra will cease to be the prisoner of bigots and will once again be revered by millions.

The joint honorary secretary of the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India, Keki J. Gandhi is a chartered accountant with a commitment to community welfare tempered by his sense of humor.

THE LITTLE BOAT AND...

continued from page 44

The choices for the immigrant generation were simpler: to build Darbe Mehrs where possible, to hold religious classes, to observe our festivals and customs, to teach Zarathushtrian values of honesty, righteousness and hard work. They were guided by their own experiences in the old countries. For the American generation the choices will be more difficult as they will have to develop solutions to questions that are societal in nature. They will also have to build a new relationship with Zarathushtrian societies in the old countries whose customs and experiences will be less relevant in the society in which they live. They will have to assimilate Zarathushtrians immigrating continuously from the old countries, whose customs and ideas will be different from theirs.

One may not expect the American generation to look for guidance for survival and growth to the Zarathushtrians in the old countries when they know that the communities there are shrinking at an alarming rate. This little boat may not see any safety in tying itself to a sinking ship!

Yet in what appears to be a sinking ship lies all our treasure and our history and our connection to our glory long past. Perhaps that ship will not sink after all but just become a smaller ship, while this little boat will just keep on growing in surprising ways. However different the North American Zarathushtrian community becomes, the two must respect each other and learn from each other.

As I said 20 years ago, "The fire of Zarathushtrianism is no longer a huge conflagration, attracting thousands to its way of life. It is rather a candle in the heart of each Zarathushtrian. Only if these candles remain together will there be a viable fire which will be passed on from generation to generation. If we go our separate ways, then these candles will gradually get extinguished and the fire that Zarathushtra started thousands of years ago will slowly but surely die away. Not because our religion was not good enough, but we were not good enough to support it."

A senior scientist researching the chemistry of antibiotics, Lovji D. Cama, PhD is a founding member of the Zoroastrian Association of Greater New York, one of its past presidents and founder trustee of the Darbe Mehr Zoroastrian Temple of New York. Involved in organizing religious educational classes and camps for Zoroastrian children over the past 20 years, Cama teaches Zoroastrian history, culture, philosophy and religion to children in the 10-15 age-group, has lectured on Zoroastrianism on both sides of the Atlantic and contributed to a book for US scouting.

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To be good and happy

The path to happiness has been clearly etched in Zoroastrian scripture

Dastur (Dr) Hormazdyar K. Mirza



"May in this family
Discipline overcome indiscipline,
Peace discord,
Charity lack of charity,
Humility arrogance,
True-spoken word false-spoken word."
Yasna 60.5

As depicted in the *Avesta*, the ideal Zoroastrian is one who observes Asha, who is healthy in mind and body, who is advanced in good thoughts, good words and good deeds. With a sincere, devoted heart, he or she recites the holy words of prayer, is self-sacrificing, leads a life of wisdom and promotes prosperity in the world by good deeds.

Zoroastrianism inculcates active virtues. It is the duty of a Zoroastrian to lead a life of virtue and industry, and to find spiritual happiness in such a life; and also to teach and instruct others to so live. To be good and happy is essential, but it is not enough. We have to be good and happy, and also to make others good and happy.

According to Zoroastrianism, marriage is a pious duty, and married life is preferable to unmarried life. It is incumbent on all able-bodied Zoroastrians to marry and establish a happy home, where a husband and his wife may live with their children and the members of the family. Happy married life depends on virtue, duty and devotion to each other. In the words of Zarathushtra (*Yasna* 53.4):

"These holy words of admonition
Do I utter unto you —
The bride and the bridegroom,
Do you engrave them in mind:
'Being girded with religious virtues,
Do you lead a life of Good Mind;
With holiness and virtue,
Do you love devotedly —
That indeed shall lead you both
To a good, happy married life!'"

Zoroastrianism teaches dignity of labor. The proper use of hands and feet is

advocated. To till and cultivate land "with the left hand and the right, with the right hand and the left," and to grow corn is as good as to increase holiness. Work is worship, and idleness is a sin against religion and society. It is stated that an idle man is a burden on human society, and he has to wander from door to door in search of food.

Thrift and economy are also important virtues in Zoroastrian daily life. It is enjoined that one must not waste even a trifling thing (*Vendidad* 5.60): "Not, indeed, has Ahura Mazda given acquired property to waste — neither of full value, nor (even) a trifle as much as a spinster is rejecting (while spinning)."

While thrift and economy are virtues, stinginess and miserliness are vices. A charitable disposition is specially extolled. Charity is the essential virtue of a Zoroastrian. The divine gifts of Good Mind are specially meant for those who work for the welfare of the poor and needy. It is specially enjoined (*Visperad* 15.1): "Let us here do good industry to render the needy unneedy."

Among the other virtues of a Zoroastrian household may be mentioned sincerity, respectability, obedience, peace, liberality and humility. The Zoroastrians pray to God for these household virtues.

According to Zoroastrianism, all creatures of the world are sacred creations of God. A Zoroastrian in his daily prayer, and also in religious ceremonies, pays homage to spiritual beings and respect to human beings and even to good animals; to places, cities, fields, abodes, water, land, trees, to 'this earth and that sky'; to the atmosphere, the stars, the moon, the sun, and the endless light (*Yasna* 1.16). The Yazats promote the welfare and prosperity in the entire living world (*Yasht* 11.16, 21); and a Zoroastrian prays for the prosperity of the living world (*Yasna* 68.4).

Similarly, all human beings are creations of God, and they deserve respect and

goodwill from each other, and they should live in peace and amity among themselves. Ahura Mazda pours down the rain so that "my man may eat corn, and fodder (may grow) for the animal" (*Vendidad* 5.20)."

Similarly, also the Pazand prayer: "May goodness pour down from the sky, may goodness grow from the earth." This is the prayer for the prosperity and welfare of all the people of the country, and of all mankind.

In the Pazand *Patet* (the prayer of repentance), a Zoroastrian repents for remissness, for sin and crime he or she may have committed knowingly or unknowingly, in relation to his or her family members, to other citizens and countrymen, and to the members of humanity. A Zoroastrian prays:

"If any sin has arisen by any unlawful conduct towards (my) father, mother, sister, brother, wife, child, husband, master, near relatives, (also towards) people of the world, partners, neighbors, countrymen, (and) in relation to the guest, and if I have been guilty of the sin (committed) by (my) thought, word, deed, by body, by soul, physically, spiritually, (then) do I repent for it."

Further in the *Patet*: "Do I repent for every kind of sin, every kind of most grievous sin... every kind of sin arising from the sin, which might have arisen in relation to Hormazd, in relation to mankind (mardom), in relation to man species (mardom sardagan), all species (hama sardagan)."

Similarly, in the Pazand prayer, a Zoroastrian prays for "prosperity of mankind, of man species, all species."

Dastur (Dr) Hormazdyar K. Mirza, High Priest of Udvada, is the seniormost of the Zoroastrian scholar-priests on the scene today. He was for many years principal of the J. J. Madressa. He is the author of the *History of Ancient Iran* and several other authoritative books and publications on the Zoroastrian religion and its history.

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JAMES DARMESTETER

The French Dastur

Arnavaz S. Mama



James Darmesteter's monumental translation of the *Avesta* was celebrated in Bombay on the eve of his death centenary

He died 100 years ago on October 19, 1894, a diminutive Frenchman of Jewish ancestry with a weak heart and a gargantuan appetite for intellectual work. The imprint of James Darmesteter's contributions to the understanding of Iranian languages, history and scripture in his all-too-brief 45 years of life was commemorated jointly by the French Embassy, the Asiatic Society of Bombay and the Alliance Française at Bombay's old Town Hall in December 1993.

The celebration marked the centenary of the publication of his crowning achievement, the French translation of the *Avesta* (*Le Zend Avesta*), described as "a work of 20 years, a monument to scholarship" in the monograph jointly authored by oriental scholars Philippe Gignoux and Eric Phalippou, both of whom were present to honor the great Iranist. Others who shared their admiration for Darmesteter and their scholarship in the three-day symposium

included French professors Gilbert Lazard, Pierre Lecoq, Dr Frantz Grenet and Ms Nahal Tajadod. Dastur (Dr) Kaikhusroo JamaspAsa led an array of local Zoroastrian scholars who participated in the discussion: Khojeste Mistree, Homi Dhalla, Sam Doctor, Ervads (Dr) Peshotan and (Dr) Rooyintan Peer, (Dr) Ramiyar Karanjia and Pervez Bajan. A retrospective of films dealing with Zoroastrian themes, organized by Phalippou, countervailed the scholarly discourses.

Not content to be a desk bound scholar, Darmesteter had travelled to India, visiting the Parsi communities of Bombay and Navsari, becoming acquainted with the dasturs. "In Bombay," he wrote, "I found more and less than I was looking for. I was not admitted to the sacrifice (ecclesiastical ceremonies), because I was not a behdin (born to the Zoroastrian faith) although I had the honor of being considered a dastur in partibus (honorary dastur); nowhere did

I find a systematic corpus of doctrine on the liturgy and the organization of the cult. But I got valuable information on both in my conversations with the dasturs. By looking around and visiting the main Parsi centers, especially in Navsari, the priestly city, I got a feeling for past and present realities that lifeless texts cannot give... The too short hours I spent with Tahmuraz (Anklesaria) in the printing house of Fort Bazar, in December 1886 and January 1887, reading old manuscripts whose names even were unheard of in Europe...taught me more than months of personal study."

Darmesteter has described Bombay as "the city where Europe and Asia meet without struggle or conflict; where all races, all religions juxtaposed live peacefully without enmity; where God speaks without anathema in the mosque, in the Hindu temple, in the fire-temple, in the synagogue, and in the church. Hospitable

Bombay where I found so many helping hands, so many friends of different origins, English, Parsi, Muslim and Hindu!" Darmesteter's lecture on Mazdaism to a Parsi audience, exalting the moral value of the Zoroastrian faith, was published in the *Bombay Gazette* in February 1887. His suggestion for the establishment of a fund for the publication of Pahlavi texts was soon put into operation by rich Parsis among the audience, noted Lazard.

During his stay in India Darmesteter made a foray to Afghanistan, collecting Afghan folklore from Peshawar and Abbottabad, working with Muslim munshis to write down a number of songs in Pashto. *Letters sur L'Inde* (1888) showcase his interest in current affairs and living societies.

The same year was also eventful for personal reasons: His elder brother Arsène, also a scholar whom he admired and to whom he was devoted, died of heart disease at the age of 42. Darmesteter, whose interests included English literature, married an English poetess. He had come across her work in Afghanistan, the previous year, had liked it and translated it. They met, fell in love and married in 1888. Their six years together prior to his death were said to be happy ones.

Darmesteter initially translated the *Avesta* into English at the bidding of Friedrich Max Mueller for inclusion in the *Sacred Books of the East* (SBE). The first volume, published in 1880, contained the *Vendidad*. "All competent scholars admired the unprecedented quality of this translation, uniting faithfulness to the text, skilful recourse to both tradition and etymology, exceptional insight into the intricacies of the religious doctrine," noted Lazard. The translation of the Yashts — the second part of his contribution to the SBE — was published in 1883. In quick succession followed *Les Essais Orientaux* and *Etudes Iraniennes*. "Iranology is a particularly difficult field, for it requires acquaintance with very diverse kinds of knowledge," said Lazard. Darmesteter himself had called Persia "a crossroads of races, religions and civilizations," and to study its language and scriptures, therefore demanded a simultaneous knowledge of Iranian, Semitic, Arabic, Greek and Indian languages and culture. As Lazard admitted, "To be a competent scholar in the whole field of the Iranian civilization, able to use and criticize all the necessary sources of information, has become an impossible task in our century after the discovery of new data. A hundred years ago it was not

exactly so, but it was already a formidable challenge."

"It is in the footnotes of his works that we see most of Darmesteter's scholarship...extending to the later Persian Rivayets and modern traditions. These footnotes open to us a mine of information and references for comparison," agreed Gignoux. But he had reservations. "In his

"It is in the footnotes of his works that we see most of Darmesteter's scholarship"

Zend Avesta Darmesteter does not offer us a systematic treatise on the Amesha Spenta. (He) described their nature, their role, the elements they patronize and the diverse secondary divinities who assist them...But he did not go much into explaining the theory of the seven entities."

Darmesteter's first publication in the field of Iranology was *Haurvatât et Ameretât*, investigating the relationship between the material qualities and abstract values of the two Amesha Spentas. The work displayed a width of information, accuracy of interpretation and boldness in the building of theories that were to be Darmesteter's hallmark, Lazard said. It had been Darmesteter's contention that "a mistaken view determinedly adopted and clearly expressed may be more profitable than being too cautious." Gignoux's view was different: "Darmesteter was outspoken and a man of his time...subject to the prevalent Eurocentrism which looked down with disdain on the oriental cultures they were studying."

Gignoux's own concept of the Amesha Spenta was that the seven immortals "would simply be related to the seven days of the week or to the seven planets. In other words, the idea originated from the calendar or from astrology or from both put together...Basing ourselves on the datings of the biblical scholars it is possible that the Zoroastrians, in their relations with the Jews in exile during the Achaemenian period, borrowed the biblical speculation for themselves...It is then quite probable that the Iranian myth of the seven creations

was fashioned in the crucible of Mesopotamian cosmogony."

Countered Rooyintan Peer, "Alien scholars miss out on the spirit of the scriptures... The preachers of those times had to personify spiritual entities for the benefit of the common man. The seven ministering angels supervise and maintain aspects of creation, (are) administrators in the divine hierarchy."

Early in his working life Darmesteter had realized the value of the comparative method of study: "Just as only the comparison of the different forms of a word allows us to classify them, to distinguish old and new forms, to find out in what order they succeeded one another and finally, to recognize or restore the primitive form or forms wherefrom they were derived, similarly the comparison of the different attributes of a god is the only way to classify them, to distinguish old and new attributes, to find out in what order they succeed one another and finally to recognize or restore the primitive attribute or attributes wherefrom they were derived...When one investigates a Mazdean deity or conception, one must ask whether this deity or conception was Indo-Iranian or purely Iranian. In the first case, Vedism, which has remained closer to the religion of the time of unity than Mazdaism, often, either directly or inductively, supplies the Indo-Iranian form, which gives the possibility of reconstructing the path followed by the Mazdean form. In the second case, the question is more limited and knowing the environment where the new fact emerged, it becomes possible to define the relevant factors and how they took effect."

"Darmesteter is rightly celebrated for his translation of the *Avesta* but...it would be a great injustice if posterity was to disregard his achievements in modern Iranian languages," pleaded Lecoq. Darmesteter's objective was "to show the evolution of Persian in the largest meaning of the word, inside the specific linguistic branch to which it belongs," Lecoq added.

"The Pahlavi script is no doubt one of the most intricate scripts in the world, a real puzzle that deserves to be considered an ahrimatic creation; specialists still discuss the reading of some words," rued Lazard. Darmesteter established that Zend (as Avestan was then called) and Persian are independent branches of the Iranian family, neither being a stage in the development of the other. He demonstrated that Pahlavi was descended from Aramaic — the language of the Achaemenian inscriptions.

Iranian concepts, Indian presentation

It is generally accepted that Indians and Iranians had a common history as Aryans before they split into two branches. The refuge that Zoroastrians sought on Indian shores was another meeting point between the two cultures. Between these two events in history, there was a third encounter, according to Dr Frantz Grenet, dating back to between the second and eighth centuries AD in Central Asia.

Based on archeological discoveries of the past 20 years, Grenet, director since 1989 of the Franco-Uzbek Archeological Mission, presented "this still little known subject." The picture that emerges is one of a conscious synchronizing of Zoroastrian and Hindu deities, including an assimilation of Indra with Ahura Mazda under the name Adbag, representing in Grenet's words "a surprising revenge for the great Vedic god whom early Zoroastrianism had turned into a demon!" (Zarathushtra had preached against the worship of the amoral, might-is-right cult of Indra.) Among others were Manaobago (a variant of Vohu Mana), Wesparkar (incorporating Vayu, Avestan god of the atmosphere), Nana (incorporating Anahita).

Grenet reasons that this syncretism occurred partly because none of the successive overlords of Central Asia after the Achaemenians professed Zoroastrianism personally and hence cared little about Zoroastrian ritual or its doctrinal purity. When the Sasanians conquered Bactria (Northern Afghanistan), Buddhism was an established religion there. "With its monasteries, its schools of thinking, its synods (governing councils), Buddhism probably looked like a more foreign and challenging force than Hinduism, which in Bactria presented itself rather as a collection of various local cults," speculates Grenet. Therefore a tactical alliance with local worshippers of Hindu cults was acceptable to fight the common enemy — Buddhism, he adds.

The only exception to the overall religious tolerance of Sogdiana (currently the Uzbekistan/Tajikistan area) was an anti-

Buddhist reaction fomented by Zoroastrian priests in the beginning of the seventh century, said Grenet. An almost democratic society on the main commercial crossroads of Asia, the materialistic people of Sogdiana enjoyed pomp and display. This could explain why "some Hindu forms of worship were eventually borrowed by the Zoroastrians themselves... Had they kept to their sober and secluded rituals, they might have lost their positions in the towns and progressively receded into the countryside," speculated Grenet. For the dramatic and visual appeal that Sogdian society then craved, "Hinduism surely provided the best model available on the international religious market of the time," according to Grenet.

"In fact, paintings show that altars of Indian type, umbrella-shaped and fitted with hanging bells, were used in Zoroastrian ceremonies addressed to yazatas... It appears also that music was introduced in religious ceremonies: on an ossuary one of the priests, dressed like those of today with their mouth-masks and performing the funerary service of the *chahrum*, seemingly agitates a rattle-type instrument in order to put some rhythm into the recitation of his prayer to fire..."

"Sogdian religious artists largely used two iconographic formulas devised by their Hindu predecessors in order to express the various functions of a particular god: the multiple arms and the regular association of each god with his *vahana* — his animal mount or seat... The symbolic use of animals each linked to a particular deity continued a tradition already found in the Yashts of the *Avesta*, Hindu iconography simply enriching the stock of possible associations. The most spectacular example of this animal code can be seen on a monumental painting which once adorned a cave sanctuary at Dokhtar-i Noshirvan, not far from Bamiyan. The enthroned god can be identified as Mithra, as he sits on a horse throne like in Sogdiana. He wears a complicated crown surrounded by a halo from which eight animal heads protrude.

Only six are preserved: an elephant, a goose, a bull, a lion, an ass and a wild goat. Although everybody agrees that these animals had not been chosen arbitrarily, their significance has long remained a puzzle. But if one takes into account the documented equivalences between Hindu and Sogdian gods, and also the planetary functions of the last ones, each of the surviving figures finds an immediate explanation. The elephant stands for Indra, hence Ahura Mazda, hence Jupiter. The goose stands for Brahma, hence Zurvan, hence Saturn. The bull usually draws the chariot of the Moon. The lion is the vehicle of Nana-Anahita, hence Venus. The ass is explicitly associated in Pahlavi texts with Tistrya, patron of the planet Mercury. The wild goat is the ninth incarnation of Vahram, hence Mars. As for the two missing figures, one surely was a horse, the Sun as a planet being repeated in the halo of his god Mithra. The eighth figure was perhaps the Earth added to the planets, or perhaps again the elephant of Jupiter repeated at the lower left end for reasons of symmetry."

To what extent could this Central Asian mixture be called Zoroastrianism? (The question has clouded the minds of mainstream Zoroastrians when informed of Kurdish and Tajik beliefs.) "If the question was asked to a Sogdian worshipper of Adbag or Wesparkar, there is little doubt that he called himself a Zoroastrian or Mazdean," says Grenet. Also, the increasing Muslim pressure at the time led to a rapprochement between the Zoroastrians of Iran and those of Sogdiana. "We know that in 830 the latter appealed to their brethren in Fars for advice about the reconstruction of a Silent Tower which had been beaten down. One century later the Parsi founding fathers chose India as their refuge. They came from Sanjan, not far from Herat, and probably also from other Eastern Iranian regions. It cannot, therefore be excluded that a living memory of long and fruitful contacts with Hinduism played a part in their choice (of refuge)," concluded Grenet.

tions — and considered written Pahlavi "an artificial language."

The two volume *Les chants populaires des Afghans* published in 1890 was one of Darmesteter's major works. In a long introduction of 218 pages he proved that Pashto, hitherto classified as an Indian

language, belonged to the Iranian branch, though it was not a direct descendant of Persian. He had claimed that "Pashto is a descendant of the Avestan language or another very similar dialect." Lazard, however, qualified that with subsequent discovery of other middle and new Iranian

languages "we know that Pashto is one of the many East Iranian languages while the old Avestan language remains difficult to classify."

Tracing the history of Zoroastrian studies in Europe, Lazard recalled that the intrepid explorer Anquetil du Perron had



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brought back 180 manuscripts from India and lodged them at the National Library in Paris in 1762 and published the first French translation of the *Avesta* in 1771. As Dr D. R. Sardesai, president of the Asiatic Society of Bombay mentioned in his welcome address, du Perron was one of the scholars who had accompanied Napoleon Bonaparte on his Egyptian campaign (when Europe first learnt about the glories of the Egyptian civilization). That's where he learnt about the Zoroastrians, coming to India thereafter to pursue the search. The scientific study of the Avestan text and its correct interpretation began in 1833 with the publication of Eugene Burnouf's *Commentaire sur le Yasna*. After Burnouf, it was the Germans who took over Avestan studies with 25 years of vivid controversy as one school relied on the tradition transmitted by Pahlavi commentaries and the other, adapting the science of comparative linguistics, interpreted Avestan words and notions by recourse to Vedic Sanskrit and etymology, informed Lazard.

In one major area Darmesteter was subsequently proved wrong. He had argued that the *Gathas* were influenced by neo-Platonic ideas and therefore had been composed in the first century AD. "It is believed today that they are indeed considerably older than the rest of the *Avesta* and that, contrary to Darmesteter's view, the tradition cannot be of any use in their interpretation because their meaning was lost very early," admitted Lazard. However the non-Gathic part of Darmesteter's *Avesta* translation continues to be authoritative, according to Lazard, and was reprinted with a foreword by the famous orientalist Emile Benveniste in 1960.

Apart from his work in Iranian scriptures and language, Darmesteter's prolific contributions include a history of the Jews, literary works including philosophical poems in prose and writings on art, especially Chinese art, apart from his reports as a long standing secretary of the Asiatic Society of Paris. In the last year of his life he was cofounder of *La Revue de Paris*, a fortnightly literary and social journal wherein he expressed his faith in peace and progress in the context of contemporary French politics.

Darmesteter bequeathed his personal collection of books to the Institute of Iranology in Paris and its library, in tribute, bears the name James Darmesteter Library. More recently the James Darmesteter Association has been founded to preserve his grave and perpetuate the memory of this great scholar, writer and gentleman.

From TPK With All Good Wishes

The PLAGUE of 1896... and after

The epidemic galvanized courageous doctors and far-sighted philanthropists and led to the establishment of three major institutions for community welfare

Sapur F. Desai



The recent visitation of the plague brings to mind an earlier, deadlier occasion and the manner in which it was then faced. This extract from Sapur Desai's monumental History

of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet 1860-1960 recounts that perilous episode through which the community emerged richer and stronger, thanks to its leaders.

Parsiana salutes Desai on his 10th death anniversary on October 24, 1994. The high-minded, low profile secretary of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet for 38 years, Desai, historian and demographer, had sought to preserve and highlight the community's multifarious past, even as he focussed attention on its depleting numbers.

"For you will grant that it is odd to live four weeks a 12-hour journey from a devastating plague nest and remain baffled and defeated all that time in your efforts to get at the state of the case there. Naturally one flies to the newspapers when a pestilence breaks out in his neighborhood. He feels sure of one thing, at any rate, that the paper will cast all other interests into the background and devote itself to the one supreme interest of the day... and that it will even leave out the idle jaunts of little dukes and knights to make room for the latest plague item."

Mark Twain, Essay on The Cholera Epidemic in Hamburg.

Who knows not of the scourge, the bubonic plague, that plagued London in

1665, until its vestige was destroyed by the Great Fire of 1666. Two hundred and thirty years later — to be exact in 1896 — it struck Bombay, Poona, Gujarat and other areas.

The scourge was universal affecting the whole populace and the Parsis were no exception, except Europeans. It all started in November 1896 and ended in August 1897. But no sooner had the epidemic ended than did the recrudescence (a new outbreak after a period of abatement) begin. It lasted from September 1897 to May 1898. At that time, the Parsi population living in Bombay was 47,458. During this period some 828 persons died, 380 in the first epidemic period and 448 in the recrudescence period, about 27 percent of the total mortality. Besides the plague the other causes had led to a mortality of 3,098.

Had it not been for the special relief measures undertaken by the trustees of the Parsi Punchayet, in which many influential members including doctors cooperated, the mortality would have recorded a still higher number. The following were the measures adopted by the trustees:

- provision of special hospitals;
- provision of segregation camps;
- monetary assistance to the poor to enable them to shift into camps;
- assistance to poor families for disinfection and cleansing of houses;
- monetary assistance to those left destitute on account of bread winner's death;
- equipment of quarantine camps.

As soon as the epidemic showed up the trustees organized a Fever Hospital and segregation camps. The community opened its purse and gave Rs 29,041-13-0 (rupees,

annas and pies) for the Hospital and Rs 9,140-9-6 for the camps. This was used up during the epidemic period and when the recrudescence occurred, a meeting of the leading members of the community was called on February 10, 1898 under the presidency of Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy, third baronet. A fund called Sankat Nivaran Fund (Fund for the Relief of Distress) was opened and the Parsis responded most liberally, the trustees netting Rs 1,12,077-6-1. Parsis from far away places like Calcutta, Madras, Hubli, Aden, Colombo, Shanghai, Hongkong and other places also contributed. At the same time the Fever Hospital Fund also got Rs 12,841-8-0. Ultimately the Distress Fund touched over Rs 2,00,000.

The Parsi concentrations were mostly in Fort, Dhobitalao, Khetwadi and Baharkote. District committees consisting of prominent Parsis were appointed for these places as also for Mazagaon and Parel.

These committees had the following duties to perform:

- finding out houses of the sick, and places where death had occurred;
- assisting and providing for segregation;
- rendering pecuniary assistance for removing to segregation camps;
- giving monetary help to the needy for the disposal of the dead;
- looking after disinfecting of houses and giving advice on hygiene, sanitation, etc.

Starting of Fever Hospital

There were two more committees, viz, the segregation committee and the hospital committee. Both these committees were led by Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy and all the

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trustees were members along with other prominent Parsis. On the recommendation of the district committees these two committees were supposed to provide accommodation. During the epidemic and recrudescence periods the trustees had to strain every nerve and be on the qui vive all throughout. There were two hospitals. One was at Parel in the commodious bungalow of the Cama brothers, Merwanji and Hormusji. At first a rent was charged but later it was given entirely free with its vast compound, where sheds could be and were later erected to receive more persons. In the beginning of recrudescence the Arthur Road Infectious Hospital was used. A separate ward was specially opened for the Parsis, the trustees supplying beds, furniture, etc. from the Fever Hospital, as it was closed on August 31, 1897. But as mortality began to rise the Fever Hospital was again opened on December 13 of that year. Dr K. N. Bahadurji was the honorary physician of this Hospital from the very beginning.

The segregation camps during the epidemic period were located in Matunga and Dadar, providing 26 sheds erected under M. C. Murzban, besides the Cama Baugh and Hormuz Baugh and Batlivala Wadi. Dr Tehmulji B. Nariman and his son Dr Ruttonshaw looked after the Dadar-Matunga Camps, while Drs Framji Shapoorji and K. E. Dadachanji looked after the Cama Baugh, Hormuz Baugh and Batlivala Wadi Camps.

The recrudescence demanded a far larger effort and the following will give an idea of the Camps opened and maintained by the trustees:

Locality	No of sheds	Person in charge
Waudby Road	15	Dr H. J. Dadysset
Marine Lines	50	N. M. Cama
Churney Road	9	-do-
Chowpatty	43	Dr. A. H. Ghaswala
Parel	17	Dr. F. N. Bisni
Chinchpokly	47	Dr H. K. Tavaris
Dadar-Matunga, Cama & Hormuz Baughs & Batlivala	75	-do-
Wadi	51	Dr. Framji Shapoorji
Andheri	27	None
Uran	25	Dr. Nusserwanji Pallonji
Total	359	

Except Andheri and Uran the camps were full. Uran had provision for 15 families. At that time Uran and Andheri were supposed to be far-flung places, what today appears to be at a stone's throw. Bomanji Edalji Kashinath had placed his launch at the disposal of the trustees, yet people cared less for the amenity in such salubrious places.

For incoming and outgoing persons an inspection camp was opened in Bandra and on the trustees' request a special ward was reserved for Parsis, the trustees providing the beds, furniture and other accessories.



Top: Bahadurji

Above: Sorab Nariman (left) and Gilder

Later when the same steps were taken for long distance passengers and quarantine camps were opened in Palghar on the B.B. & C.I. Railway (now Western Railway) and in Kalyan on G.I.P. Railway (now Central Railway), the trustees got special privileges for Parsis in reserved wards. Outward inspection by rail was later extended to Anand on B.B. & C.I. Railway. At the worst period Bombay population had fallen from 850,000 to 750,000 and Bombay was virtually a prison camp. And all this was aggravated by famine all over the country. Poor from different parts tried to come to Bombay in search of work and food, and government and municipality were hard put to look after them. Parsis did not suffer less.

Railway inspection was very rigid and it involved the following:

- All trains arrived with carriages locked at the inspection stations.
- The examination of first class passengers, except in the case of delicate or sickly

persons, was not generally considered necessary.

- Season-ticket holders were generally exempt from inspection.

- Second class passengers were examined in their carriages.

- Third class passengers were examined on the platform, one compartment being emptied at a time by the Railway Police who searched the carriages while the passengers were being examined by the inspecting officers.

- Special tact and discretion were ordered in the examination of females, and in the case of purdah women who objected to their wrists being felt, they were allowed to proceed without examination on their names and addresses being given.

- Local passengers were examined before the arrival of trains and kept in a barricaded

portion of the station until after the inspection of passengers arriving by trains.

- Station Masters were requested, as far as possible, to keep the platforms clear of all except officials on duty.

- No train was allowed to leave an inspection station unless the guard

got an all-clear certificate.

Besides the above the daily returns were being called for from all medical inspection officers and a close watch kept.

Soonawala's Generator

An enterprising Parsi D. J. Soonawala was responsible for the disinfecting of houses by chlorine gas generated from his generator manufactured by him. Cowasji Dinshaw of Aden had given a special donation of Rs 1,000 for this purpose.

There were many men who had helped in these difficult times but it is a great credit to the community to note that even a number of women had also helped. Dr Bahadurji records the services of Ms Bhikhaji Rustom Cama, the lady later famous as Madame Cama, Ms Dinbai C. Mehta, Ms Serene K. Patuck, Ms Goolbai N. Patuck, Ms Navajbai J. Padshah, Ms Dossibai Boyce and Ms Banoobai Khambatta. Dr Bahadurji says their names 'deserve to be recorded in Parsi history' and the present trustees of the Parsi Punchayet do so here with legitimate pride. Dr (Ms) Maneck Turkhud was a constant

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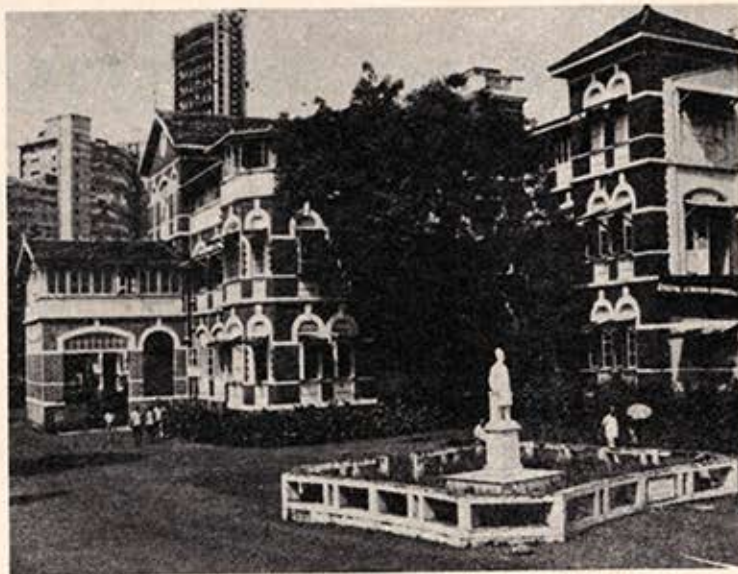
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companion of Dr Bahadurji and he has always spoken in his reports in glowing terms about her.

As for men we have given some names above but besides them there were a legion of others. Nevertheless, those who find special reference in the Punchayet report are Hormusji Shapoorji Chothia, Merwanji and Hormusji Muncherji Cama, Ruttonji B. Dubash, Dinshaw Dorabji Mistry, Ardeshir Jehangir Banaji, Cowasji Cursetji Mehta, Bomanji Behramji Patel (of *Parsi Prakash* fame), Cowasji Edalji Batliwala, Sorabji Hormusji Batliwala, Nusserwanji Cowasji Shroff, Pallonji Dorabji Chowna, Khan Bahadur M. C. Murzban and Hormusji Maneckji Bhiwandiwala.

For the first two years of the plague Dr K. N. Bahadurji was the principal physician in charge and after him Dr Sohrab K. Nariman, on the death of Dr Bahadurji, which occurred on August 15, 1898, following upon the passing of the third Sir Jamsetjee.



B. D. Petit Parsee General Hospital

Photo: Homiyar Mistry

In the Statement of Plague Operations for the period November 1896 to May 1898 we find the following reference:

"Following that of Sir Jamsetjee, the death of K. N. Bahadurji has added considerably to their grief. In him the Parsi community particularly, and the city generally, has lost a most able, conscientious,

straightforward and honest citizen whose public services including the very excellent work done at the Fever Hospital for two successive years at a most critical time in the history of the community and at a great personal sacrifice will ever be cherished with gratitude."

Dr S. K. Nariman proved another able physician. In his report dated August 6, 1900 he had tried to show that the poor hygienic conditions, bad housing facilities, etc in which the poor lived were responsible for plague incidence. But in a later report he found that more plague cases came from

bungalows in posh localities than from the poor localities and thought the poor had already acquired immunity. Later he forecasted that the plague had worked itself out and it would diminish in the next few years and since 1910-11 we have not heard of any plague incidence as an epidemic, though some stray cases might have occurred till about 1912 or so. Nevertheless the trustees kept their eyes on this nefarious disease for another

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score of years to come.

Dr Bahadurji used to say homorously that the Parsis thought they were like 'sahibs,' i.e. Europeans, immune to the attack of plague. But the plague committee in its Report on Plague in Bombay (July 1, 1897 to April 30, 1898) has the following to say for the Parsis (pp 56-57):

"The Parsis suffered considerably during the second epidemic. A few stray cases, some of them doubtful, occurred in the Fort and in Chowpatty in August and September 1897. But the Fort remained healthy till about the middle of January 1898... During the latter part of January, the high death rate in Fort North attracted notice and several concealed cases were found among the Parsis. When it was known that search parties were at work in Fort North, several sick Parsis were secretly conveyed to houses in the Marine Street of the Dhobitalao district. In consequence of this disregard of the rules the Marine Street Parsis suffered severely.

"...To avoid these (search) parties, the Parsis secretly moved their sick to Breach Candy [Breach Candy was the area near Chandni Wadi where there are cemeteries and burning grounds, not what we know as Breach Candy today at Bhulabhai Desai (Warden) Road] or Girgaum Road and spread plague North along Girgaum Back

Road, where it worked severe mischief. How far the Parsi plague-current was the only element in this serious evil cannot be determined. That it was the main element is beyond question. Between February 18 and 24, from the Marine Streets in Dhobitalao, infected and plague-stricken Parsis moved to Nos. 4 to 6, Dhanji Street, the street which runs south from Mumbadevi Tank. In this large colony of poorer middle-class Parsis, up to the middle of April, when plague was in the neighboring sections, fresh cases of a severe type continued to spread terror. Although the Parsis have, as indicated, on occasions caused the spread of plague by neglect of established rules and facilitating concealment, they have shown foresight and energy in building hospitals and camps and good sense in using the hospital accommodation, and in willingly turning out of their houses into camp. The Parsi Punchayet Hospital on Parel Road, under the management of Dr Bahadurji, has proved a success."

This is both a left-handed and a right-handed compliment and we think the Parsis of those days fully deserved it.

Modikhana Hospital

Since Fort patients found Parel Parsi Fever Hospital too far, another one was built at

Modikhana by Mr N. N. Wadia at his own expense and was known as Modikhana Hospital. Under the supervision of Mr N. N. Wadia and Mr M. C. Murzban it was fitted up well to afford comfort to the patient. This hospital was destroyed in the fire of February 21, 1898. The Parsi patients were then conveyed to the Maneckji Sett Wadi, which the report calls 'Seth Sanitarium.' Within three weeks the Hospital was rebuilt from a donation of Bai Dinbai Nusserwanji Petit and refurnished. But the plague in that area had by then abated.

As to the health camps built by the Parsi Punchayet, the report says:

"It was not expected that Parsi families who are accustomed to houses full of furniture and ornaments would agree to camp in ordinary huts. The Punchayet therefore built a costly type of hut, one for each family, each having two living rooms, a cooking and a bathing room. These huts on the Kennedy Seaface were bespoke before they were finished. With the exception of one case of plague, the families who moved into them have enjoyed unbroken health, and many families would at once move into camp if dwellings of a similar class were available."

The above bespeaks the efforts made by the Parsi Punchayet in no uncertain terms.



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Virulence Period

The virulence lasted from 1896 to 1902 and the actual visitation was during summer months. The official reports of the Punchayet are for the periods November 1896 to May 1898, June 1898 to June 1899, June 1899 to June 1900, July 1900 to June 1901 and July 1901 to June 1902.

Drs Bahadurji and Nariman feted

The thankful trustees of the Parsi Punchayet were quick to realise the services of the two able physicians-in-charge, Dr K. N. Bahadurji and Dr S. K. Nariman. On November 13, 1897 at a meeting held in the Sir J. J. P. B. Institution called by the trustees of the Parsi Punchayet the elite of the Parsi community lauded the services of Dr Bahadurji in most eloquent terms. Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy, third baronet, had presided. Dr Bahadurji was presented a token of gratitude in the form of a silver cup and tea set. Sir Jamsetjee in his speech said it was only a token and the real gratitude came from the very bottom of the hearts of grateful Parsis. The presented articles would only keep the memory green.

Similarly Dr Nariman's services were appreciated at an Anjuman meeting held on April 12, 1902, when the Anjuman had specifically met to approve of the

felicitation address to King Edward VII on his coronation in June of the same year. After the Anjuman approved of the address Sir Jamsetjee said that before they dispersed the community would like to express its thanks to Dr Nariman for his selfless services for three years to the Parsi community absolutely honorary. The president, then, under cheers and thunderous clapping, garlanded Dr Nariman and presented a silver tray and a vase. Both these articles had the following inscription: "Presented to Dr Sorab K. Nariman, MD, BSc, DPH, by the trustees of the Parsi Punchayet on behalf of the Parsi community of Bombay, as a token of the appreciation of his valuable services, as Honorary Physician of the Parsee Fever Hospital during the plague epidemics of 1900, 1901 and 1902 (12th April 1902)."

[Dr Nariman was the recipient of two more gifts, silver vases, for his services as honorary physician of the Parsee Fever Hospital, to which reference follows, bearing the following identical inscription: "Presented To Dr Sorab K. Nariman, MD, BSc, DPH Honorary Physician, Parsee Fever Hospital, on behalf of the Parsee Community of Bombay, as a token of their appreciation of his valuable services in conducting the hospital effectively and

economically, for a further period of 10 years from 1903 to 1912 (March 1913). In the 1950s Dr Nariman's daughter and son-in-law Mr and Ms Adi K. Munshi presented the said gifts with a bell jar and stand to the Parsi Punchayet trustees to be kept in the Museum in the Khareghat Memorial Hall. The trustees accepted the same with thanks.]

After the presentation Dr Nariman thanked the trustees and at the meeting mooted the idea of a Parsee General Hospital to be called Coronation Hospital for Parsis. We had better say that in his own words from his last report dated July 1, 1902 made to the Parsi Punchayet before closing the Parsi Fever Hospital. He wrote:

"I cannot allow this opportunity to pass but to thank most sincerely the trustees of the Parsee Punchayet for the great honor they did me in presenting silver vase and tray on behalf of the Parsi community in appreciation of my humble services as physician to the Parsee Fever Hospital during 1900, 1901 and 1902. As the presentation was made to me by Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy on the auspicious occasion of the adoption of the coronation address to His Majesty, King Edward VII, Emperor of India, I in my reply suggested that the coronation of our beloved sover-

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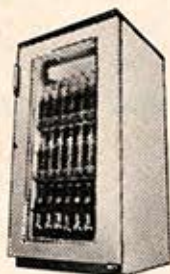
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eign may fitly be commemorated by the establishment of a Parsee General Hospital under the name of Parsee Coronation Hospital. I am glad to learn that Messrs Merwanji and Hormusji Muncherji Cama, the proprietors of the bungalow and extensive premises of the present Parsee Fever Hospital, are willing to place the same at the disposal of the Parsi Punchayet free of rent for a period of 10 to 15 years for the purpose of the Parsee General Hospital. About 30 patients can be accommodated in the bungalow; provision will have to be made for infectious diseases cases by putting up a temporary building in the compound at a sufficient distance. I am now trying to get a staff of Parsi medical gentlemen to work as honorary physicians, surgeons, etc., and as soon as these medical arrangements are complete, a detailed scheme will be submitted to the trustees of the Parsi Punchayet for their kind consideration."

Prophylactic measures

Before this black episode of plague is closed, let us see if the Parsis of those days took to the new-fangled idea of prophylactic measures. Dr Jarsin (pronounced Yarsin) had invented or discovered some serum, which was being freely administered in

government hospitals. Dr Bahadurji refused to use it and opted for Haffkine serum. It may be stated here that where Jarsin serum was used the plague deaths of Parsi patients were 75 to 80 percent but in the Parsee Fever Hospital the death toll was 63 percent. Dr Bahadurji believed more in proper sanitation, hygienic conditions, nursing and other ancillary services. He laid more stress on that and that was what had paid dividends.

Since inoculation did play a healthy part we would here like to say a few words about some gentleman who had made a sort of postmortem study of deaths and made a report. This report is entitled *Anti-Plague Inoculation among the Parsis of Bombay from February 1897 to July 1900*. It is a very scientific work and is worth a perusal. But here we shall deal with its important findings only. The report says that when Haffkine announced a prophylactic in January 1897 the Parsis were the first to avail themselves of it. The total number inoculated were over a fifth of the community. Not counting infants and the aged the percentage was about 28. The investigation period was from February 1897 to July 31, 1900, when the Government Gazette returned 11,646 Parsis as having been inoculated. The rate of plague

death rate varied with age and the analysis of cases found that in general children were not susceptible to plague. As such very few had been inoculated.

The report goes on to compare the inoculated with the uninoculated and shows that inoculation saved 70 percent of those patients who might have otherwise died. In fact the real immunity was taken to lie between 79 and 91 percent. This report of 14 printed pages has been signed by: Jamsetji N. Tata, D. E. Wachha, W. M. Haffkine, N. N. Katrak, Sorabji R. Bunshaw, Rustom N. R. Ranina, Sorab K. Nariman, Jivanji Jamshedji Modi, Sorabji E. Warden, B. J. Padshah, Shapurji D. Saklatwala.

Dr Bahadurji's death condoled

As briefly stated earlier, the man who fought valiantly against the scourge, the man who, without any experience of running a hospital except his English experience, created a Fever Hospital from scratch and ran it successfully for two years, succumbed to his hard work and labor of love at the age of 38 on August 15, 1898, a prey to the same disease he cured many of. To mourn the death of the savior of humanity, Dr. K. N. Bahadurji, a sorrowing community met in the Albless

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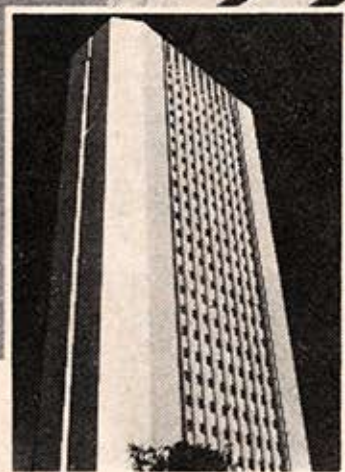
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Baugh on September 18, 1898, when the first resolution was moved by Pherozechah Mehta. He spoke in eloquent terms of the services rendered by the young doctor who had sacrificed himself in the cause of humanity. Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy, fourth baronet, who presided, recounted Dr Bahadurji's services to the community and the country. Dr Bahadurji was the recipient of the Gilchrist scholarship for further studies in England, a scholarship which Pherozechah Mehta said was an eminent honor. One of the resolutions at the meeting was to start a fund to perpetuate Dr Bahadurji's memory. A large number of eminent persons including the trustees of the Parsi Punchayet were appointed on the committee for raising the fund with Messrs Rustomji Dhanjibhoy Shethna, Fardunji Manekji Kanga and Ratanji Bomanji Dubash, and Drs Framji Edalji Davar and Jehangir Jamshedji Cursetji Lilauwala as honorary secretaries.

The memorial fund was kept open to Parsis all over India. The committee decided to use the net balance towards the 'establishment and in maintenance in perpetuity' of an institution to be called "Dr Kaikhushru Nusservanji Bahadurji Sanatorium" at Deolali or any other place. The committee to carry out the object

comprised Jehangir B. Murzban, Jehangir J. Cursetji, Nusserwanji Hormusji Choksey, Sorabji Edalji Warden, Nusserwanji D. Mirza and Fardunji Manekji Kanga. A piece of land was bought in Deolali and the

The scourge was universal, affecting the whole populace, and the Parsis were no exception

trust declared on August 6, 1902. The declarants were J. B. Murzban, J. J. Cursetji, N. H. Choksey, Framji Rattanji Surveyor, S. E. Warden and F. M. Kanga. The Sanatorium at Deolali still serves the Parsis with its convalescent and TB blocks.

Fever Hospital at Doongerwadi premises
We have, talked a lot about a Parsi Hospital and want of a permanent one in the community. Indeed the experience gained right through 1896 onwards was a forerunner of what was to come. Dr Bahadurji's death and Dr Nariman's insistence on a

permanent organization was the acorn that grew into a mighty oak a few years later. In 1905 the Hospital at Parel was closed but the necessity to have one in a central place was badly felt. Bai Jerbai Wadia, the widow of N. N. Wadia and mother of the two well-known brothers Sir Cusrow and Sir Ness Wadia, answering Punchayet's appeal donated Rs 30,000 from which the Hospital took shape. The trustees allowed a site on the spur of their Doongerwadi premises, where now stands the extended Khareghat Colony, and the Fever Hospital came into existence. In 1918-19 and for some subsequent years the world-wide scourge influenza, which started from Germany, took a heavy toll of the Parsis and the opening of the Parsi Fever Hospital was necessitated. But there was not sufficient room. The B. D. Petit Parsee General Hospital, which had already come into existence six years before, was not in a position to take on a large number of patients as it was in a hired house (the Hospital premises having been rented to the military during the First World War). On their suggestion a subcommittee consisting of M. P. Khareghat, Sir Hormusji Wadiya and J. B. Petit, all of them trustees of the Parsi Punchayet, assisted by the Punchayet secretary, medical officer Dr M. D. D.

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Alternative Medicine Dept. of the College. The **Ardibesht Yasht**, one of the ancient **Avesta** prayers gives 5 different methods of maintaining health. One is by **Asha**—purity and holiness practice.

Second is by **Herbal Medicine**. Third is by **Surgery** and the knife. Fourth is by **Law and Order**, to heal Spiritual and social

disorders. The fifth is by **Man-thras**; the power of the sound vibrations of **Avesta** which affect the **Chakras** in the **Aura**, and bring about balance of good health of body, mind and soul. And this is considered to be the best method as it is "Holistic", it balances the whole being.

Since 1986 through the Zoroastrian College **Holistic Health Dept.** **WORLD CONGRESSES** have been held in **Bombay**; to bring together on one platform all different kinds of special knowledge. People from many countries and from all over India who are specialists in Methods of 21st Century of Vibrations meet at these Congresses. The **Aquarian Age** is the age of **Vibrations**. The experts come together to share their expertise for the benefit of the public. Ancient Chinese **Acupuncture System**, ancient **Tamil Nari Vaid** and **Siddha Systems**; ancient **Sanskrit Vedas**, **Ayurveda**, **Yoga**, **Raj Yoga**, **Herbal Medicinal Systems**, ancient **Persian Avestan methods**, old **Hakimry/Unani systems**, **Food**, **Diet**, **Nutrition**, **Colours**, **Magnets**, **Music** and **Sound** and all the different kinds of methods of preserving good health, preventing disease, and curing illnesses, are shared on this great unifying platform so that the cumulative total wisdom can be used in the present modern times for alleviating the suffering of present day humanity.



The next **WORLD CONGRESS** is to be held in **Bombay** from **27th to 31st January 1995** at the **Russian Cultural Centre**. It is open to all persons interested in good health. Persons having health problems are also welcome to attend to get the benefit of meetings specialists in a wide variety of methods all in one place at the same time. If YOU are interested, please contact the College at the **Mustafa Bldg office address**.

The **College building** is in a scenic rural setting near the banks of the **Sanjan river** about 100 kms North of **Bombay city**. It is in the midst of green fields and fruit orchards which make it a peaceful place for reviving and refreshing the weary spirit and inspiring original research. The College library has over 16,000 books, including many rare books in various languages—**Avesta**, **Pahlavi**, **English**, **German**, **Russian**, **French**, **Gujarati**, **Sanskrit** etc. If you wish to visit **India/Sanjan** to stay at the College building for one to six months to avail of the **Research facility for Degree and Diploma Courses**, please write to the College at the **Mustafa building address**.

The College provide facilities to persons from any country, without restriction of caste, creed, colour, race, nationality, sex, or age, to do independent and original Research in any subject of benefit to humanity. The College specially encourages research in **Parsi Culture and History**, **Mazdayasne Zarathushtrian Ilm-e-Khshnoom**, **Avesta grammar**, **Scriptural books and studies**, **Inter Faith Peace Dialogue**, **Holistic Health and Alternative Medicine Methods**, **Ecology & Environment studies**, **Astrology**, and the **Cosmic Laws**. The facility is provided for doing **Degrees by Research Thesis of B.Phil; M.Phil; and Ph.D.** The College is affiliated to the **Medicina Alternativa International/O.I.U.C.M.** of **Alma Ata/Colombo**; and to the **United Nations Peace University** and the **Albert Schweitzer Open International University for Minorities and Refugees**. The **Degrees Research work** may be undertaken whilst residing at home in any country. The College also offers **Diploma Courses** in a wide range of subjects. **Zoroastrian Priests** are specially encouraged to improve their quality, for the practice of **Priesthood**, by availing of this liberal **International Educational Facility**.

The **Shah Behram Baug Society** is registered in **India** and holds the **Sec. 80G. Income Tax Exemption Certificate**. **Corpus Donations to complete the College Building construction work** are most welcome.

The Society thanks all its **Patrons, Supporters, Well wishers**, who have donated generously for the **College Building**. Please write to the **Mustafa Building Office address** stated above.

ADVERTISEMENT

Gilder and architect K. P. Davar, selected a site near the Parsi Fever Hospital and new structures were built. Dr Gilder rendered yeoman service during the years the influenza epidemic raged and the trustees had thanked him publicly in 1926 at the time of the Sir J. J. Zend Madressa convocation.

Prior to 1903 although piecemeal efforts at opening and closing the Parsi Fever Hospital were resorted to, a need was felt for a permanent organization. By his letter dated October 8, 1903, Dr Nariman requested the trustees to start a regular hospital and name it 'Coronation Parsee Hospital,' referred to earlier. He envisaged 40 normal beds and 20 infectious diseases beds. He expected the monthly expense at Rs 1,200 including medical, paramedical and non-medical personnel. The trustees referred the matter to a committee consisting of Bomanji D. Petit (one of the trustees), Dr Nariman, Dr (later Sir) Nusserwanji H. Choksey, Surgeon Lt Col Dhunjishah N. Parukh, Dr (later Sir) Tehmulji Nariman, Dr Ardeshir P. Cama, Dr Hormusji M. Masina, Khan Bahadur Muncherji C. Murzban, Khan Bahadur Darabshaw Chichgar, Jehangir B. Murzban and Ervad Dr (later Sir) Jivanji Modi. The Committee reported on April 27, 1904

after holding four sittings and recommended that:

- A General Hospital for Parsis is a must.
- It should be both for paying and free patients.
- A start should be made with 40 patients, of whom 15 should be free, the rest paying according to their means.
- The annual expense would be about Rs 30,000.
- There should be an endowment of Rs 3,00,000 yielding an annual income of Rs 12,000, Rs 14,400 to be recovered from patients, and Rs 3,600 to be made up from donations.
- Those who pay Rs 5,000 could reserve a bed and recommend patients free for that bed.
- Those paying Rs 30,000 could have a ward of their own and recommend three patients.
- Anyone paying Rs 5,00,000 would have his name given to the hospital.
- In the beginning a building might be rented but as soon as possible a separate building must be built.

The Petit Parsee General Hospital

A prospectus was issued by Mr Jehangir Petit, but none came forward to donate Rs 5,00,000. Ultimately, by his letter of April

2, 1906 Bomanji Petit offered to the Panchayet his Cumballa Hill Family Hotel property worth Rs 5,00,000 and cash of Rs 50,000 through an ad hoc committee called the provisional committee. The trustees accepted the offer and the trust became a fait accompli on April 12, 1906, when the instrument was signed by all the trustees and execution admitted on April 18, 1906.

The pioneers, who thought first of the health of the community, had been at it since early 1890s and succeeded in a little over a decade to have a permanent hospital now past its diamond year, the B. D. Petit Parsee General Hospital, a jewel left in the service of the community by the jewel of a trustee of the Parsi Panchayet. Those were the years of travail, turmoil and thought. The pioneers of those days never had a word called 'can't' in their dictionary. Eliza Cook's *King Bruce and the Spider* were writ large in their minds.

"Pay goodly heed, all ye who read,
And beware of saying, 'I can't';
'Tis a cowardly word, and apt to lead
To idleness, folly and want."

Reproduced by courtesy from *History of the Bombay Parsi Panchayet 1860 — 1960* by Sapur F. Desai. (Published in 1977 by the Trustees of the Bombay Parsi Panchayet Funds and Properties, Bombay.)

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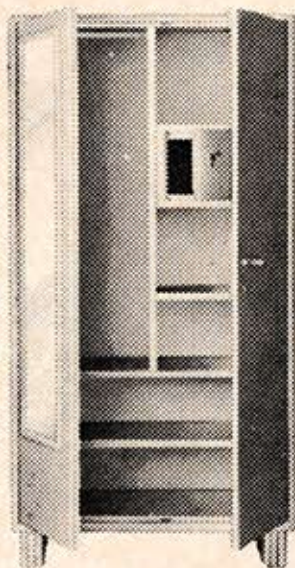
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insects can't come in. There is plenty of storage space too. What's more, the adjustable shelves allow me to reorganise the storage space according to my needs.

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MILESTONES

In response to a request made by Dr P. D. Sunavala (see "Outmarriages: Fact and Fiction," Readers' Forum, page 15) to calculate the life expectancy at birth (LEB) of the Zoroastrian community every month, *Parsiana* publishes the first such computation.

Fifteen of the 27 Zoroastrians who fell prey to heart disease were 80 years and above. Old age and general debility was next on the list of major killers claiming 11 lives whereas nine victims fell prey to pneumonia and lung disease. Six deaths were attributed to brain disease, five to cancer and four to accidents. Three Zoroastrians were victims of assault. While kidney failure took three lives, two each succumbed to gastro-intestinal bleeding, nervous disorder, malaria, asthma, hypertension and liver disease. The coroner's report was still pending in the case of two deaths. Bronchitis, oesophageal varices (dilated or tortuous veins), pancreatitis (inflammation of the pancreas), anemia, haematemesis (vomiting of blood), ulcer, damage to the spinal column, septicemia, diabetes and Parkinson's disease were the isolated cases registered in September. A 16-year-old girl and two youths aged 20 were lost to the

community. The highest age at death was 99 years. The Zoroastrian LEB in September, in Bombay, was 76 years.

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.

BOMBAY

BORN

A girl to *Hufiz and Rumi Sethna* on September 2, 1994
A girl to *Nushin and Farrokh Bharda*; September 4
A girl to *Gulrukh and Behruz Irani*; September 4
A boy to *Arnaz and Cyrus Panthaki*; September 4
A boy to *Roshni and Russi Kutar*; September 5
A boy to *Avan and Naval Oonwalla*; September 5
A girl to *Delna and Arvinder Babber*; September 6
A boy to *Roshni and Girija Sahoo*; September 7
A girl to *Farnaaz and Burjor Sethna*; September 8
A girl to *Arnavaz and Jamshed Bhor*; September 9
A boy to *Yasmin and Rushad Udvardia*; September 14
A girl to *Daisy and Danesh Irani*; September 15
A girl to *Hoofrish and Sarosh Dastur*; September 18

A boy to *Ereen and Mehernooz Pithawalla*, brother to Friyana; September 19
Twins (boy and girl) to *Persis and Aspi Colah*; September 21
A boy to *Parizad and Hoshang Randelia*; September 21
A girl to *Mahrookh and Rumi Tangri*; September 21
A boy to *Kamal and Nevel Tata*; September 22
A boy, *Arish*, to *Niloufer and Darayus Panthaky*; September 23
A boy to *Gulshan and Percy Daruwalla*; September 25
A boy to *Kerman and Nitin Nadkarni*; September 25
A boy to *Ziya and Kairus Tarapore*; September 25
A boy to *Zarin and Keki Hiloo*; September 26
A boy to *Shernaz and Tehmtan Dumasia*; September 29
A boy to *Sifra and Jamshed Lentin*; September 29
A boy to *Hutoxi and Rohinton Navdar*; September 29

MARRIED

Mahrugh Firoz Bharucha and Berzis Jimmie Engineer; September 25

DIED

Bomansa Fakirji Bam (93), residing at 8, Kavarana Bldg, Dadar Cross Rd, Dadar, 400014; September 1
Jerroo Jimmy Cooper (65), 212/C, Theresa Apts, Lepora St, Bhayandar (W), Dist Thane, 401101; September 1
Mani Dali Daruwalla (81), Pehelvi Bldg, Lamington Rd, 400007; September 1
Silloo Pirojshah Dordi (80), 55, Banu Mans, Forjett St, 400036; September 1
Muhamad Shavaksha Mehta (85), 1, Saidunisa Hse, Sleater Rd, Opp Grant Rd Stn, 400007; September 1
Tehmi Firoze Meherji (60), 5/3, Sir Ratan Tata Clny, Tardeo, 400034; September 2
Kali Minu Modi (63), C/16, Cusrow Baug, S. B. Rd, 400039; September 2
Tehmurasp Nariman Patel (54), 4, Bai Ratanbai Tata Bldg, Bandra, 400050; September 2
Ferida Edul Shroff (50), 32, Khushnuma, 29-A, Carmichael Rd, 400026; September 2
Shirinbai Framroze Irani (86), Gangadevi Bhavan, Uranwalla St, Grant Rd, 400007; September 3
Soonu Darabsha Master (70), 4, Malcolm Baug, Jogeshwari, 400102; September 3
Tehmi Keki Balsara (76), B/16, Shapur Baug, V. P. Rd, 400004; September 4
Hormusji Dinshawji Chinoy (85), 5/53, Sangam Bldg, 160/170, Perin Nariman St, Fort, 400001; September 4
Meheru Ardeshtir Daruwalla (79), Sentinel Hse No 2, Arthur Bunder Rd, Colaba, 400005; September 4
Binaifer Bejan Dariashaw (16), Ganga Bldg, Ambani Rd, Vasai, Dist Thane, 401201; September 5
Kersi Jamshedji Bhatena (70), Mahalaxmiwala Bldg No 19, Sleater Rd, 400007; September 6
Jaloo Nanabhai Elavia (70), Mody Hse, Pavwalla St, 400004; September 6
Doulat Jijeebhai Pastakia (73),

Rattan Manor, Colaba, 400039; September 6
Cyrus Faredoon Amrolia (20), Puspavati Bldg, 568, J. S. Rd, 400002; September 7
Mani Fakirji Duggan (80), B/18, Nowroz Baug, Lalbaug, 400012; September 7
Ratan (Ratansha) Bomanji Mazgaonwala (91), 630, Khareghat Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; September 7
Freny Framroze Tachakra (78), Sushila Sadan, 367, Moghal Lane, Mahim, 400016; September 7
Jehangir Ardeshtir Baker (53), Mehru Mans, Balaram St, Grant Rd, 400007; September 8
Kawas Nowroji Baria (77), Dhun Mhl, Garden Rd, 400039; September 8
Darabsha Shapurji Hatara (80), Petit Blocks, 5, Balaram St, Grant Rd, 400007; September 8
Katy Ratan Karanjia (51), 4/B, Cassius Apts, I. C. Clny, Cross Rd No 1, Borivali (W), 400103; September 8
Homai Khurshed Minocherhomji (60), 503/C, Poonam Apts, Dr Annie Besant Rd, Worli, 400018; September 8
Burjor Framroze Bandrawalla (73), Chateau Merdeka, 19/A, Pali Rd, Bandra, 400050; September 9
Shirin Edul Soonawalla (62), 605/B, Venus, Lodhandwala Complex, 4th Cross Rd, Four Bglws, Andheri (W), 400058; September 9
Khorshed Faramroze Marolia (78), Dr Freny Cama Hostel, Gamadia Clny, Tardeo, 400007; September 10
Naza Nusserwanji Vakeel (99), 37, Goolestan, Cuffe Parade, 400005; September 10
Darashah Rustomji Bharucha (89), 6, Alexandra Rd, Near Gamdevi, 400007; September 11
Goolbai Palanji Pavri (90), A, Aidun Bldg, 1st Dhobitalao Lane, 400002; September 11
Shera Manchershah Cooper (93), A/9, Ness Baug, Nana Chowk, Grant Rd, 400007; September 12
Tehmi Manek Gotla (72), 9, Lady Meherbai Tata Bldg, Tata Blocks, S. V. Rd, Bandra, 400050; September 12
Nergish Savaksha Peddar (78),

Peddar Villa, Opp Central Railway Stn, Khandala, 410301; September 12
Cawasji Jamshedji Dalal (92), 681/A, Khareghat Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; September 13
Keki Burjorji Daruwalla (84), Ruddy Villa, Tardeo, 400007; September 13
Jeroo Dara Meherji (61), 4/6-A, Boran Rd, Bandra (W), 400050; September 13
Merwanjee Burjorjee Workingboxwalla (88), RH II, D/2, Sector 7, Vashi, 400703; September 13
Firoze Kaikhushroo Bulsara (77), 804/B, Sai Niketan, Dr B. Ambedkar Rd, Dadar, 400014; September 14
Merwan Mahiar Irani (82), Destitute Irani Charity Dharamsalai; Gamdevi, 400007; September 14
Mehra Tehmuras Marfatia (92), Ratan Mans, Forjett St Rd, 400036; September 14
Rutonsaw Nusserwanji Anklesaria (87), A, Diwan Bhavan, Manikpur, Vasai (W), Dist Thane, 401201; September 15
Perin Shavakshah Patel (78), Banoo Mans, 55/57, Forjett St, Gowalia Tank, 400036; September 15
Minoo Bhikaji Tadiwalla (65), 8, Hendre Bldg, Sleater Rd, Grant Rd, 400007; September 15
Shirin Meherji Vakil (76), 732, Dinshaw Hse, J. Vimadlal Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; September 15
Pulla Bhikaji Bugwadia (88), 275/A, Tardeo Rd, 400007; September 16
Piroja Hormusji Colah (83), 651, Karanjia Bldg, J. S. Rd, 400002; September 16
Dhunmai Hormusji Gotlaseth (90), F. S. Parukh Dharam-shalla, 34, Hughes Rd, 400007; September 16
Minoocher Rustomji Dandiwalla (82), 29, Purushottam Bldg, Corner of Grant Rd, 400004; September 17
Amy Minoo Magra (67), 17/94-D, Madhav Bhuvan, Parsi Wad, Delisle Rd, Lower Parel, 400013; September 17
Sorabji Cawasji Panthaki (80), 668, Desai Bldg, Katrak Rd, Wadala, 400031; September 18
Darabsha Cawasji Bhatgara (81), F. S. Parukh Dharam-

shalla, 34, Hughes Rd, 400007; September 19
Khorshed Jehangir Nallaseth (86), 3/66-K, Soonaiji Mans, A. K. Marg, 400036; September 19
Amy Ardesher Mehta (85), 15, Wadia Bldg, Khareghat Clny, Hughes Rd, 400007; September 20
Dhun Nariman Patel (75), Habib Mans, Gowalia Tank, 400036; September 20
Homai Nariman Kapadia (82), 64, Tardeo Court, 251, Tardeo Rd, 400007; September 21
Banoo Nariman Navroji (70), 4/22, Hormuzd Bldg, Sussex Rd, Byculla, 400027; September 21
Keki Edalji Shroff (81), Fariyas, Cumballa Hill, 400036; September 21
Shirin Rustom Desai (83), 3, Jai-Kismet, 4th Pasta Lane, Colaba, 400005; September 22
Firoze Maneckji Khan (84), G/10, Munsiff Bldg, Tardeo, 400034; September 22
Homai Kekkoshru Vesmavala (84), 10, Park Haven, Malcolm Baug, Jogeshwari, 400102; September 22
Darab Faramroze Arsiwalla (72), Mistry Bldg, 635, J. Shankarsheth Rd, 400002; September 23
Bepsy Keki Bharucha (72), 68, Heera Cottage, Raja Ram Mohan Roy Rd, 400004; September 23
Piloo Nariman Bharucha (77), M/9, S. B. Bharucha Baug, S. V. Rd, Andheri, 400058; September 23
Minoo Kaikhushroo Sahiar (78), 17, Mahalaxmiwala Bldg, Sleater Rd, 400007; September 23
Coomi Cawasji Sarkari (84), Nusserwanji Bldg, 157, Alibhai Premji Rd, 400007; September 23
Framroze Pestonji Cardmaster (73), Marine Mans, 1st Marine St, 400002; September 24
Danesh Minoo Khosravi (20), 6/E, Wadia Bldg, Princess St, Opp Parsi Dairy Farm, 400002; September 24
Jerbai Nusserwanji Librarian (99), 271/A, Dhun Lodge, Next to Bhatia Hospital, Tardeo Rd, 400007; September 24
Nadir Fakirji Master (72), 2/B, Neptune Apts, Juhu Tara Rd, 400049; September 24
Homi Nadirshah Vazifdar (80),

Sandhurst Hse, Mereweather Rd, 400029; September 24
Minoo Kaikhushroo Bhagwagar (70), 84/A, Nawab Bldg, Sleater Rd, Grant Rd, 400007; September 25
Dossibai Rutonsha Bharucha (91), Dr Engineer Hse, Kashinath St, Tardeo, 400034; September 25
Dolly (Freny) Jehangir Daruwalla (69), K-3/34, Cama Park, Cama Rd, Andheri (W), 400058; September 26
Mehru Maneckji Dubash (64), Dhunbaiwadi, Dadabhai Rd, Irla, Vile Parle (W), 400056; September 26
Marzban Rustomji Haveliwala (86), Qasr-E-Ayesha, 30, Motlibai St, 400008; September 26
Pheroza (Pilloo) Marzban Haveliwala (76), Qasr-E-Ayesha, 30, Motlibai St, 400008; September 26
Perin Kaikhushroo Irani (90), 57, Jame Jamshed Bldg, Jame Jamshed Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; September 26
Jehangir Merji Mistry (91), E, Sai Roshan Co-op Hsg Soc, 4th, Kasturba Lane, Borivali (E), 400060; September 26
Tehmina Minocher Mukadam (87), K/10, Dalal Est, Bombay Central, 400008; September 26
Maneck (Manecksha) Cawasji Barsivala (84), 489, J. Shankerseth Rd, Girgaum, 400002; September 27
Soonamai Sorabji Godawala (75), 648, Kaka Bldg, Firdoshi Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; September 28
Jal Khudabux Irani (66), 1, Ahmed Bldg, Gunpowder Rd, Mazgaon, 400010; September 27
Ardesher Dadabhoy Tavadia (82), B, Sanjana Bldg, Forjett Hill, Tardeo, 400007; September 27
Piloo Nariman Vazifdar (76), Ness Baug Annexe 1, Nana Chowk, 400007; September 27
Thrity Keki Soonawalla (65), 1/35, Jawaharbad, Off Prof Almeida Rd, Bandra (W), 400050; September 29
Nergish Nadershaw Bhôt (73), Patel Chmbs, Rustom Sidhwa Marg, Fort, 400001; September 30
Dhunmai Dadiba Gowadia (84), 709, Parashara, TIFR Hsg Soc, Navy Ngr, Colaba, 400005; September 30

Alamai Dadabhoy Karkaria (91), 6/B, Readymoney Blocks, M. Joshi Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; September 30
Rustom Dadabhoy Nadirshaw (82), 53/A, Paradise Apts, 44, Nepean Sea Rd, 400036; September 30

CALCUTTA

BORN

A girl, *Delna*, to *Kamal* and *Noshir Wadia*; August 24
 A girl, *Rhea*, to *Ira* and *Parvez Kaikobad*; September 10

POONA

MARRIED

Mahrugh Rusi Minocherhomji and *Neville Sarosh Bharucha*; January 6

DIED

Khorshed Dadiba Billimoria (94), 5, Dr Coyaji Rd, 411001; September 1
Khodabanda Boman Irani (82), 275, Sholapur Bazaar, 411001; September 6
Homi Eruchshaw Mehta (90), 303/2, Thakkar Apts, 411001; September 12
Rusi R. Daruwalla (70), A/1, Konark Puram, Kondhwa, 411040; September 19
Sorab Gustad Irani (73), 844, Dastur Meher Rd, 411001; September 24
Homi Maneckshaw Irani (Chinoy) (75), C/o Khorshed S. Canteenwala, A/128, Somwar Peth, 411011; September 25
Rati D. Madan (72), 1967, West St, 411001; September 29

SURAT

DIED

Tehmina Fakirji Jafaria (71), Nariman Home and Infirmary, Shahpore, 395003; September 11
Nariman Beharamji Siganporia (65), Village Siganpore, Dist Surat, 395003; September 19
Godrej Sorabji Khurshigara (54), Palia St, Nanpura, 395001; September 20
Dolatbanoo Shapurji Dadrawala (83), Nariman Home and Infirmary, Shahpore, 395003; September 24
Coonverbai Eruchshaw Tadiwala (92), Mota St, Rustompura, 395002; September 27

...

AUSTRALIA

New South Wales

BORN

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Bahman Gheibi; July 27

UK

London

MARRIED

*Sharon Umrigar, daughter of
Freny and Noshir and Rumi
Talati of Bombay, son of Dina
and Eruch; September 3*

USA

California

BORN

*A boy, Sohrab, to Rati and
Nadir Godrej; July 21*

Chicago

MARRIED

*Selena Elavia of Prattville,
Alabama and Vistas Jijina;
September 2*

Los Angeles

MARRIED

*Katayun Mavandadi and
Khodayar Khodayari; July 29*

Washington D. C.

BORN

*A girl, Ayesha, to Ava
and Darius Lilaoonwala;
August 22*

Compiled by Roxana A. Driver

TOTALS FOR 1994

	Bombay		India		World	
	A	B	A	B	A	B
BORN						
Boys	17	89	--	6	1	22
Girls	10	78	2	5	2	19
MARRIED						
Parsi	1	190	1	8	3	9
Intercommunal	--	52 [^]	--	2	--	3
DIED						
CONSIGNED						
Males	38	368	7	51	--	32 [*]
Females	54	373	5	73	--	25 [*]
CREMATED						
Males	--	11	--	--	--	--
Females	--	7	--	--	--	--

A: Total numbers in this issue

B: Running totals for 1994 (February-March 1994-November 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.

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Dinshah Madon courting justice

Parinaz Gandhi



Died: Dinshah Pirosha Madon, 73, the first Parsi judge of the Supreme Court of India, and former chief justice of the Bombay and the Goa High Courts, on June 24, 1994 at Bombay's Jaslok Hospital following cardiac arrest he had suffered three days earlier.

Known for his fearless and fiercely independent judgments, Madon was honored with full court references in the Supreme Court as also the High Court of Bombay when leading members of the legal fraternity paid their tributes. As noted M. N. Venkatachaliah, then chief justice of India, "His pronouncements were marked by a clarity of thinking and expression and displayed great legal acumen and scholarship... (His) penchant for justice, rule of law and cleanliness of public life was well-known. He was a meticulous person and set his own standards for things."

"One remembers Justice Madon as a judge who never hesitated to use strong language with a no-nonsense approach," mentioned the attorney general for India Milton Kumar Banerjee. "But we were all assured in the conviction that whatever may be the situation, the words were spoken by a person who was kind and soft-hearted... I understand that at Bombay every junior advocate felt safe in his court," added Banerjee.

Corroborated Justice S. A. Deshmukh, president of the Bar Association, "The counsel who had the privilege of appearing before him will definitely recollect with nostalgic pleasure his unfailing courtesy, his unfeigned humility and his innate graciousness." Grateful for Madon's guidance when she was a junior judge, Ms Sujata Manohar then chief justice of the Kerala High Court acknowledged, "He was responsible for my initiation into tax laws."

The judge who hated hypocrisy, cant and humbug was also noted for his razor-sharp wit both in and out of court, ready to diffuse tension with a timely joke. His reprimands too were laced with humor. On one occasion he was disturbed by the shouting of a senior lawyer but Madon just

sat through the loud outbursts appearing not to have heard him. Annoyed at not being able to elicit any response from the judge the lawyer finally asked him, "My lord, are you listening to what I am saying?" Responded Ma-

don calmly, "Oh, you were addressing this court? I thought it was the one next door."

His ability to look "with an indulgent eye on the follies and foibles of others" had prompted Madon to write in one article: "I hated tension in court and wrangling between counsel. I generally dissipated the one and smoothed over the other. In this I

was helped by a sense of humor, at times ironic and satirical, and an ability to see the incongruity and absurdity of a situation. A number of counsel always used to be in my court though they had no matter before me. I have been told that they found my court a lively and entertaining place to be in. The reason can best be expressed in these words of Beaumarchais, in his play *The Barber of Seville* which when translated, reads, 'I force myself to laugh at everything for fear of being compelled to weep.'"

"His erudition was recognized not only in India but abroad as well," mentioned K. K. Venugopal, president of the Supreme Court Bar Association, who elaborated, "The extracts from his judgment in the Censorship Case were published in *The (London) Times* as well as *The New York Times*. His judgments have also been reported in the *Reports of Trade Marks and Patent Cases* and in the *Commonwealth Law Reports*." It was the famous Censorship Case, where he had upheld the freedom of the Press, that is said to have been responsible for his delay in promotion to the Supreme Court. In this case [Binod Rao vs Minocher (Minoo) Rustom Masani] during the Emergency in 1976 the government had appealed against an earlier judgment where the judge had set aside several orders passed by the chief director, information and public relations, Government of Maharashtra, prohibiting the publishing of certain articles in the monthly *Freedom First*. Soli Sorabjee had argued the case on behalf of Masani. Madon's decision to set aside the appeal was commended by Iqbal Chagla, president of the Bombay Bar Association: "In the darkest days of the Emergency, Justice Madon, on behalf of the Division Bench over which he presided, sent out a message of courage and hope couched in language clear, literate and



Madon(right) being sworn in as the chief justice of the Bombay High Court by then governor Idris Latif

magical, that the citizen's voice could not be stifled... It is hardly surprising that *The (London) Times* and *The New York Times* should have published excerpts from that judgement to highlight the fact that democracy in India could not be destroyed as long as such judges sat in our courts." "He has left an untarnished reputation for being an upright and forthright person," summed up Jangoo Gagrath, president of the Bombay Incorporated Law Society.

"His name shall be heard and he shall be remembered so long as the constitutional and administrative laws of India shall continue to be taught, referred to, administered and applied," declared chief justice A. M. Bhattacharjee at the full court reference to Madon in the Bombay High Court. "As the One-Man Commission of Inquiry he went into and ascertained the causes of the unprecedented communal disturbances which took place in Bhiwandi and Jalgaon and other places in the State of Maharashtra in 1970. The report submitted by him was a masterpiece... incisive, analytical and extraordinarily brilliant in conclusions, sparing no one who was in one way or the other responsible for the holocaust," the chief justice added. Madon received several threats to his life; copies of his report were burnt; but an undaunted Madon continued to maintain his stand.

"His elevation to the Supreme Court in 1983 was widely acclaimed," reported Tehmtan Andhyarujina, advocate general for Maharashtra, who further continued, "In the Supreme Court he distinguished himself by his independent outlook and openly disagreed with the set approaches of some of his colleagues in some fields of litigation. During his short tenure in the Supreme Court he wrote some notable judgments: In the Tulsiram Patel case (1985), in an exhaustive judgment, he held that a government servant had no right to be heard if he was dismissed on a ground leading to his conviction on a criminal charge... I remember he considered this judgment so important that he gave up a part of his summer vacation and took his old Bombay staff to write the judgment in New Delhi. In the Central Inland Water Transport Corporation Case (1986) he blazed a new trail in administrative law by bringing about a fusion of private law and public law in holding that a contract of service between an employer and an employee can be held to be unconscionable" when there is an unfair and unreasonable clause in a contract between parties who are not equal in bargaining power. Citing

the example of a lion and a lamb, he showed that the two cannot be considered equals though they may both be free to roam the forests.

This multi-faceted man was fond of literature and poetry. He could read and write French with fluency. He was a lover of animals, particularly dogs. To him goes

"I hated tension in court and wrangling between counsel"

the distinction of being the only Freemason in India to be elected thrice as the Grand Master of Freemasons in India. "My encyclopedia" was the label conferred on the judge by his wife Dr Khorshed Madon, principal of Davar's College of Commerce, Banking and Language Studies. She related how she could always rely on him if she needed some clarification on astronomy, astrology, history, literature, poetry... having endowed himself with a phenomenal memory and a wonderful collection of books. The navar-martab is also known to have studied the Zoroastrian religion and assisted community trusts when his legal advice was sought.

Prior to graduating in English literature from the Elphinstone College and in law from the Government Law College, Madon had studied at the Dastur School in Poona. According to his curriculum vitae, he was enrolled as an advocate on the appellate side of the Bombay High Court in 1944, as an advocate on the original side a year later, and as an advocate of the Supreme Court seven years later. He also had opportunities to practice in the Court of Appeals of East Africa, and the Crown Colonies at Nairobi and the Supreme Court of Aden. He was elevated to the Bench of the Bombay High Court in 1967 and appointed permanent judge two years thereafter. He took over as chief justice of the Bombay High Court in 1982 and was appointed a judge of the Supreme Court a year later where he continued until his retirement in 1986.

Besides practising law, Madon also made time to teach law and author a book, *Principles and Practice of Sales-Tax*. He

officialled as chairman of the legal advisory committee of the Bombay University for the maximum statutory period. Acknowledges Dr (Ms) Mehroo Bengalee, former vice chancellor of the Bombay University, "All my six years of vice chancellorship he was the Governor's nominee on the Academic Council and Senate and a tower of strength for me." Remembers Dr (Ms) Jyoti Trivedi, former vice chancellor of SNDT University, "He never got excited nor participated in the chaotic proceedings or verbal duels. But gave his opinion like a true judge."

His affiliation with the Bombay University continued almost till the end. On the day of his last heart attack on June 21, 1994 he was busy preparing for the Kashinath Trimbak Telang Lectureship in Law and Politics at the invitation of the Bombay University. These memorial lectures were entitled, "The evolution of the constitution and the judiciary — a historical and legal survey."

His own evolution as a judge was marked from the first time he took his seat on the bench, announcing: "I begin my work with a prayer to the great Judge above us all, who alone seeth truly between equity and inequity, fair deeds and foul doings, right and wrong, to guide me along the difficult road that lies before me and to assist me to be true to the solemn oath that I have taken, so that when I shall come to lay down this robe of office I may have the approval of my conscience, the satisfaction of a duty honestly and faithfully performed and in after years to have those who may recall my days on the bench say of me, 'He was a just judge.'"

The judge is survived by his wife Khorshed, daughters Deena Thacker and Homai McDowell and son Dinyar.

APPLYING ASHA *continued from page 60*

We must not permit our minds to be clouded with emotional irrelevancies and thereby fail to do what is right, for that is the very heart of evil.

Such was the teaching of Zarathushtra — the need for our times.

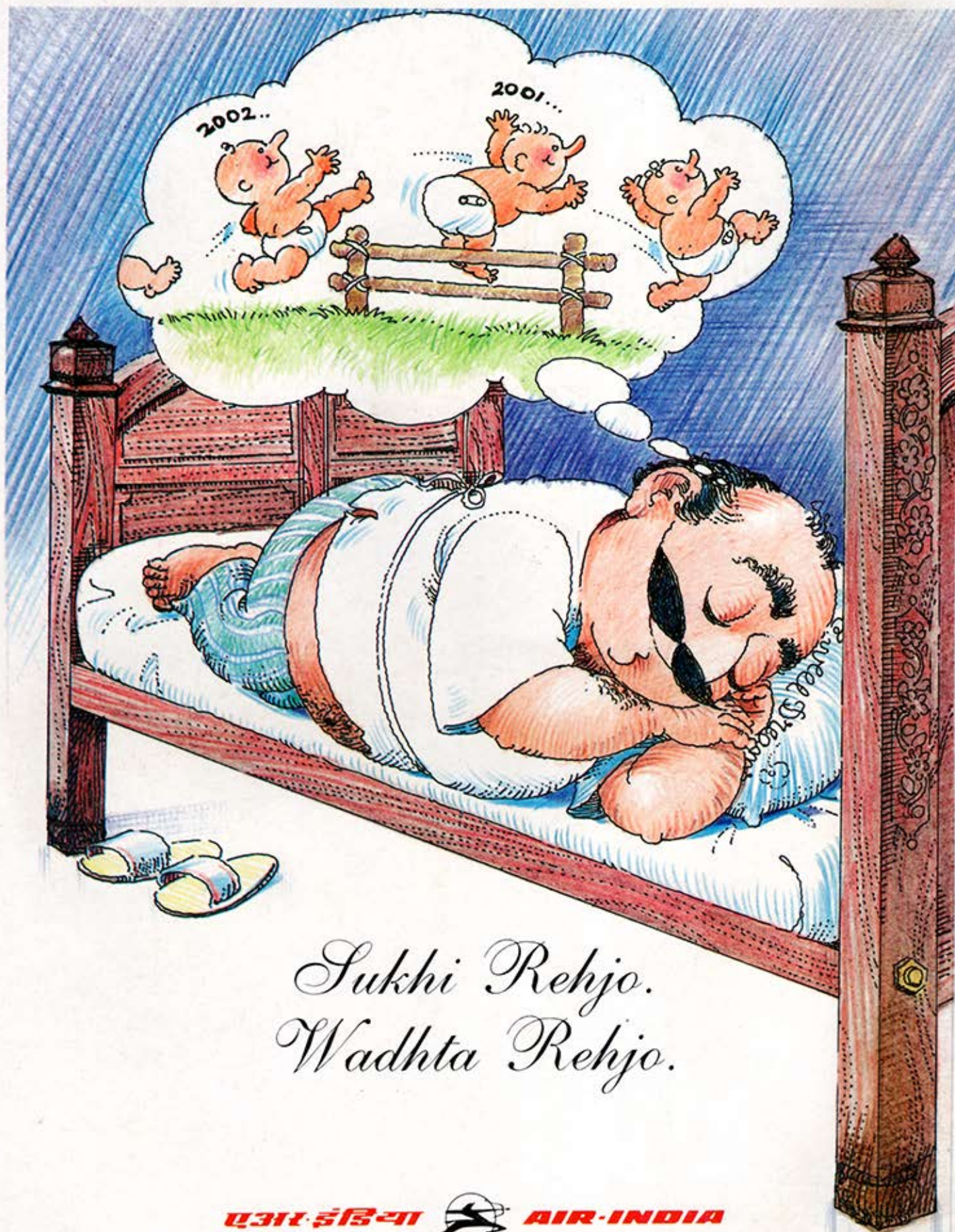
Professor Emeritus of philosophy at the City College of New York, Kaikhosrov Dinshah Irani is a favorite guest speaker on the philosophy of ancient Iranian traditions and the ethics of Zarathushtra in many parts of the world. His areas of interest cover the philosophy of science, religion, ethics and ancient thought. His contributions have been published in the *Journal of the K. R. Cama Oriental Institute* and in intellectual publications abroad.



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Words *can't* describe it.



*Sukhi Rehjo.
Wadhata Rehjo.*

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