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Parsiana

February-March 1995
Volume 17 Number 7

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Parsiana is published by Jehangir R. Patel
for Parsiana Publications Pvt Ltd at C/o H. L.
Rochat, Navsari Chambers, ground floor,
39 A. K. Nayak Marg, Fort, Bombay 400001
and printed by him at Kaiser-E-Hind Pvt Ltd,
300 Perin Nariman Street, Bombay 400001.
Color processing, Comart Lithographers;
black and white processing Samir Scantech.
All rights reserved. ISSN: 0971-3786.
Phone: 2048730 Fax: 2042922. For editorial
enquiries 2048183. Tlx: 11-85716 RABO IN.
For subscription enquiries and payments:
C/o Kaiser-E-Hind Pvt Ltd, 300 Perin Nariman St
(Behind Reserve Bank of India), Bombay 400001;
Phone: 2658619, 2665661.

Annual inland subscription for one year
(10 issues) Rs 150; for two years (20 issues)
Rs 275. Foreign subscription rates: Seamail for
one year Rs 375/US \$ 14/UK £ 9; for two
years Rs 600/US \$ 22/UK £ 15 (please allow
six months or more for delivery from the time
of publication). Airmail for one year
Rs 625/US \$ 23/UK £ 15 (for Pakistan,
Indian Rs 350); for two years, Rs 1,150/US \$ 40/
UK £ 27 (for Pakistan, Indian Rs 650).
For Indian upcountry cheques add Rs 10 for
bank charges; for US cheques add \$ 5;
for UK cheques add £ 3. Cheques and drafts
are to be drawn in favor of Parsiana and posted
to GPO Box 892, Bombay 400001.

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Cover: The B. D. Petit Parsee General Hospital
Photograph by Varghese Fernandez



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 Unsigned letters or those without an address will not be published.

"Appreciation and appeal"

Further to my letter ("Appreciation and appeal," Readers' Forum, *Parsiana*, November 1994), I would like to add the names of Navroze and Nina Eduljee whose international money order for \$ 50 was received much later — on December 27, 1994.

B. T. DASTUR

"James Darmesteter..."

How enterprising of *Parsiana* to devote its November 1994 issue to The Future. What we didn't realize was that poor Anquetil du Perron would be retrospectively made its victim ("James Darmesteter, the French Dastur," *Parsiana*, November 1994).

"Boney" Napoleon's expedition to Egypt was in 1798; Anquetil's to India, in quest of the *Avesta*, was in 1754. The latter had been made aware of the existence of our sacred texts through tracings of some sheets of the *Vendidad* manuscript kept chained to a wall of the Bodleian Library

(Oxford) and shown as a curiosity to foreigners!

The article on "The French Dastur" has allowed Dr Sardesai's time-warp to register that Anquetil's *Avesta* was published in 1771 when Boney would have been exactly one year and seven months old — a mite too early, we think, for a general even of his genius to have mounted an Egyptian campaign!

Of course *Parsiana* will be around in 2024 (p 8, same issue) — how else and who else is going to channel our bluster and boloney, foibles and fantasies into our community conscience? The real question remains: will there be any Zoroastrianism left to systematically explain to those Parsis, and, if yes, will *Parsiana* at last take up cudgels on its behalf?

One thing we do learn about ourselves from the printed contributions is that we have an infinite capacity for analysing and statisticizing situations, real or imagined. The other thing, which we never learn, is that we have done nothing about them.

FARROKH VAJIFDAR

London, UK

Arnavaz Mama replies

I incorporated Dr Sardesai's comment without checking on the dates. Thank you for putting the facts straight.

"To think anew"

You are absolutely correct in predicting that many of our fire-temples will be extinct in the next 30 years — I would say even 25 ("To think anew," *Parsiana*, November '94).

However, I have to differ from you on one salient point. There is no apprehension of many of our housing colonies becoming vacant. Presumably Godrej Baug may not have so much demand in future because of its high rents; but there is no doubt that the other colonies will be fully occupied, because still there are hundreds of Parsis residing uncomfortably in crowded colonies like Chikalwadi.

I also wish that you had elaborated more on the youth of our community. I perceive an awakening or a 'new thinking' among them. Quite a few among them have become enterprising and are not seeking only clerical jobs in banks as of yore.

At the farewell function of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet's last Holiday Programme for Youth in Khareghat Colony, the candi-

dates gave eloquent testimony to their changed outlook. Your reference to the conferences organized by youths in other parts of India also substantiate my conviction that they breathe a new spirit of adventure, enterprise and ambition.

As Ms Dolat Doongaji and Ms Roshan Driver, respective principals of the New Activity and BJPC High Schools, will bear me out, Parsi students, particularly the girls, are doing extremely well at the ICSE and SSC examinations at which many of them have scored distinction marks. In sports also Mr Baji Bharucha, the young sports journalist of Cusrow Baug, will give you dozens of names of Parsi competitors who have excelled in various fields such as football, cricket, table tennis, etc.

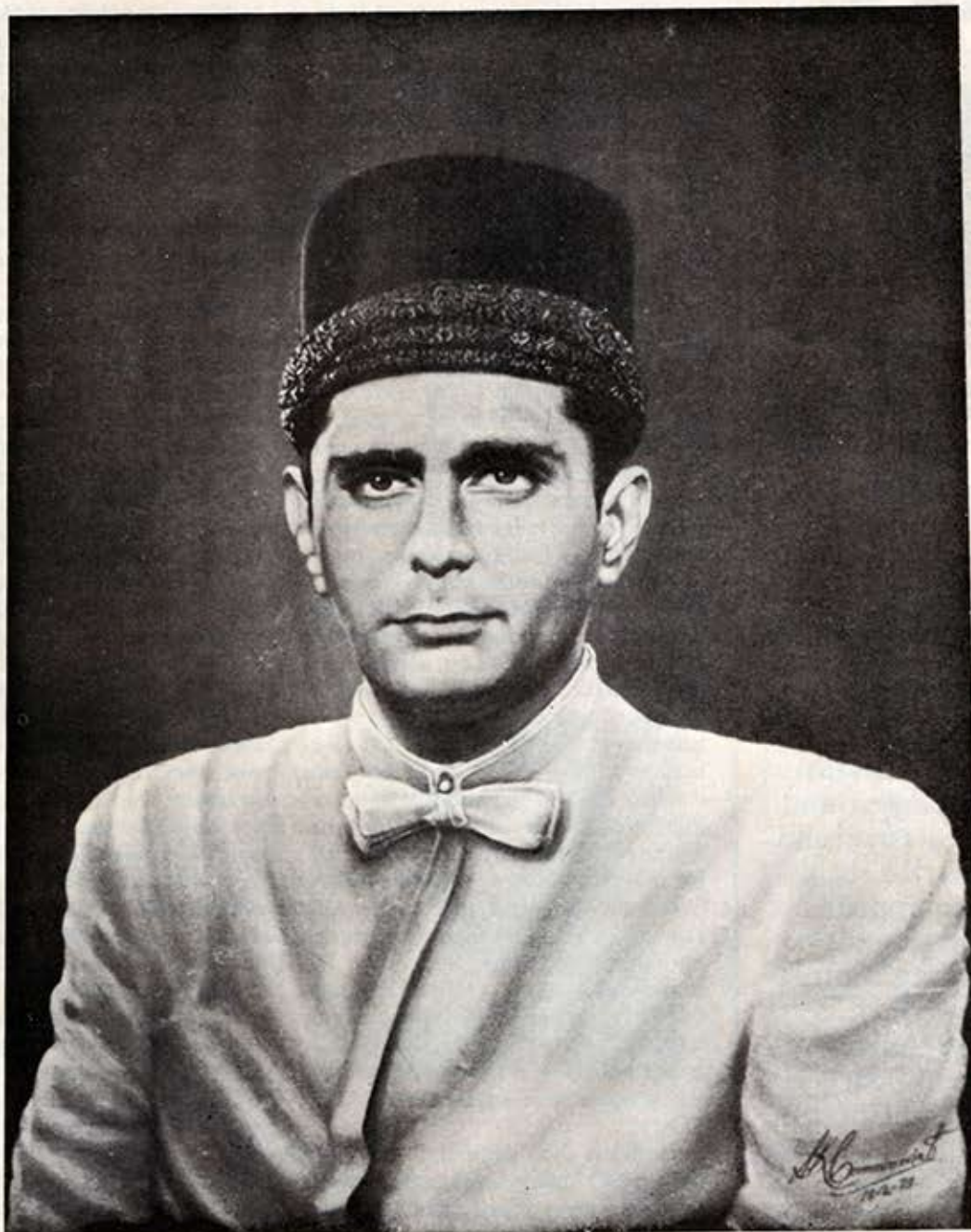
I personally believe that the performances of Parsi youths in all spheres, including journalism and music, yield sufficient evidence of their bright future. But as the late Mr J. R. D. Tata said (quoted by Mr Rusi Lala in *Beyond the Last Blue Mountain*), "nothing can be achieved without deep thought and hard work." Parsi youths must be encouraged by Parsi industrialists to look forward to creative and promising careers in their organizations. The BPP can assist small scale enterprises among the youths by not only providing initial finance, preferably through the Small Scale Financial Corporation, but also by furnishing schemes drawn up by experts like Dr F. A. Mehta, Mr Minoo Shroff and others.

So also our Parsi educationists like Dr (Ms) Mehroo Bengalee should stimulate Parsi youths to shed listlessness by instilling in them the spirit of enterprise and adventurous activity.

HOSHANG DOONGAJI

"A Zoroastrian again"

Being the head priest of the Bangalore Parsee Zoroastrian Anjuman for over 50 years and a priest with strictly orthodox views, established by religious dogmas and customs, I come across many problems in my day-to-day duties amongst the small Parsi community of Bangalore. I therefore took the opportunity of a visit to Bombay last December to call on a few elders of our community for advice and guidance on religious matters. I called on Mr Jamshed Guzder, president of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP), Dastur (Dr) Jamasp Asa, Dastur (Dr) Firoze Kotwal and Dastur (Dr) Hormazdyar Mirza after



In Memoriam
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I was very warmly received by Mr Guzder. After some pleasantries, my first question to Mr Guzder was why the body of a lady married to a non-Parsi allowed to be consigned to our Towers of Silence. To this he replied that he had acted as per the resolution passed by a majority of five to two by the trustees of the BPP. He further stated that the dead body was consigned in a particular dokhma, not in regular use, and the Punchayet took no responsibility for the performance of the obsequial ceremonies. However, he said, some last rites were performed by some priests. To this statement I remarked that those priests might have been influenced by money power.

My next question to Mr Guzder was regarding the mockery of the navjote of Mr Neville Wadia who was brought up as a Christian. How can a Christian be converted to Zoroastrianism, which practice was taboo in our religion? To this he replied that permission for this special navjote was given by our learned dasturs ("A Zoroastrian again," *Parsiana*, October 1994). I then brought up the subject of the letter addressed by Mr Wadia to Mr Guzder, as president of the Punchayet, wherein he requested permission to take advantage of the Parsi institutions in Bombay. A reply to this letter has not yet been sent to Mr Wadia. Here I emphatically told Mr Guzder, if permission is granted to Mr Neville Wadia, a precedent will be set and this will create a problem for me in Bangalore as well as to mobeds all over India with views similar to mine. For example, a family in Bangalore who had openly renounced our Zoroastrian faith some years ago may, in a foreseeable future, demand to take advantage of our religious institution in Bangalore. I am head priest of Bangalore and will fight tooth and nail if this situation ever arises during my lifetime.

With the short discussion I had with Dastur (Dr) JamaspAsa, I gathered that he was not in favor of any obsequial ceremonies being performed on Parsi ladies married outside our community. Regarding the so-called navjote of Mr Wadia the dastur said that he had only endorsed the opinion earlier given by Dastur (Dr) Kotwal in this matter.

I had lengthy discussions with Dastur (Dr) Firoze Kotwal. Regarding Parsi ladies married outside the community he still stood by his earlier view that he was against the performance of any religious last rites on such ladies after their death. These ladies cannot claim to be Zoroastrians after marrying outside our community. Then the

question of Mr Wadia's so-called navjote was discussed. Here there appeared to be a complete volte-face. The Dastur spoke very highly of the nobility of Mr Wadia and the entire Wadia family, who have done so much for our community charitywise. He gave his opinion as to how the navjote can be performed as he felt that Mr Wadia had expressed his genuine desire to embrace the Zoroastrian religion. Here I sadly said to myself that our holy scriptures were overlooked, as an exceptional case for a wealthy and highly placed individual.

After meeting Dastur (Dr) Kotwal, I called on Dastur (Dr) Mirza whom I found tight-lipped and noncommittal regarding the so-called navjote of Mr Wadia. We talked about very old matters like the performance of navjotes of Parsi offsprings at Vandsa by the late Dastur Framroze Bode.

I returned to Bangalore with a sad and heavy heart, with a strong feeling that our present senior dasturs are unable or unwilling or spineless to guide our community strictly according to our scriptures. Whom are we to look forward to for guidance? It is therefore imperative for straightforward and fearless orthodox mobeds like me to act according to our beliefs and conscience.

We revere the memory of the benevolent sethias of yesteryears, who acted as true *akabars* of the community, donating generously of their time as well as money for the good of the community. Are we not able to produce *akabars* today of a similar stature? Do we have to depend on *akabars* who are willing to accept donations for the Parsi community from non-Parsis, which in actuality is nothing but "consideration" for services rendered?

I pray to Ahura Mazda that the community does not have to stoop to this form of begging or largesse for its existence.

Ervad NADIRSHAH P. UNWALLA
Head Priest, Bangalore Parsee Zoroastrian Anjuman

"Restoring our cemeteries"

Every few issues we have appeals for funds, for the upkeep of aramgahs ("Restoring our cemeteries," Readers' Forum, *Parsiana*, October 1994), dokhmas, bunglis or closed dadgahs from which the sacred fire has long since been shifted.

Now, the question before the community is, or should be, whether to spend money on the betterment of the living or the peace of the dead.

To my mind, and I know I am treading on sentiments, let us come to some profitable solution about these immovable properties, spread all over India. The people who should be looking after them have

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moved to greener pastures. So, should not these immovable, unused properties be converted into gardens, parks, hostels, monuments and handed over to the municipalities of that region, in memory of the Parsis who once lived and prospered there? It will be good public relations — the Parsis' proverbial charity will be forever immortalized. Moreover, the future upkeep of these properties will be the responsibility of the municipalities concerned.

The funds can then be utilized for housing, scholarships, free food, or any other need of the community wherever they have congregated specially in Bombay.

Without public participation and care, these immovable properties will be vandalized again and again and their looking after become a recurring expense to the community. Or they may be just appropriated by hooligans.

Examples I can give are of the Jewish Cemetery at Marine Lines, Bombay, which is now a park where all people come for rest and recreation. There is a Parsi *bawdi* (well) in Neemuch from where all people used to fill water — now the land around it has been enclosed with a park and water distributed by pipes to some parts of the town.



Meherjirana at Akbar's court

Immovable properties, belonging to institutions or individuals have become very difficult to maintain. A rational policy will have to be thought of so that they can be used for the greater good of the greatest number.

Ms SOONU JAL
Neemuch

"Priestly tales"

I read about Dastur Meherjirana and Dastur Kookadar in "Priestly tales" by Homi Rogers (Books, *Parsiana*, April 1994) and have some more information about Dastur

Meherjirana for the readers of *Parsiana*.

Dastur Meherjirana was a son of Rana Jesang whose real name was Hoshang. He was also an adopted son of his uncle Ervad Vachha. Though his date of birth is not known, we know that his son was Ervad Kekobadrana.

The first signature on a document of 1566 AD in which the priests of Navsari agree to perform religious ceremonies properly, is that of Dastur Meherjirana himself. Again, a document of 1570, which bears the signature of Dastur Meherjirana, confirms that no

priests should drink toddy when engaged in the atash behram.

As chief dastur of Navsari he was well known in the surrounding areas as well as in Div and Iran. The behdins of Navsari presented him a piece of land at Piplaiwadi in 1571. In a letter brought by Faredoon Marzban from Iran to the Zoroastrians of India the first addressee is Dastur Meherjirana. When Emperor Akbar invaded Surat in 1572 he came to Surat and camped at Konkra Khadi. There is no record of a meeting between Akbar and the Dastur but Akbar might have heard about Meherjirana. So when Akbar held a meeting at Sikri to

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discuss aspects of different religions (1576-79), Meherjirana was invited and he impressed Akbar by explaining the Zarthoshti religion.

Meherjirana died on November 1, 1591. In 1595, the 40th year of Akbar's rule, the Emperor presented 100 bighas of land to Meherjirana's son Kekobadrana. The documents also reveal that before that 200 bighas of land had been presented to Dastur Meherjirana by Akbar at Arli, three km west of Navsari.

Dr KERSI BILIMORIA
Bilimora

"Tell us about Pithawala"

In response to my letter, under the above caption, published in your esteemed journal of October 1994, I have received a letter dated November 30, 1994, care of your address, from the well-known architect, Mr Jamshed Burjor Aga, throwing light on the artist Sorab M. Pithawala.

I quote below a few extracts from Mr Aga's letter:

"I have to state that Sohrab is no more but to the best of my knowledge is survived by his wife who is a social worker and, possibly, by a daughter. Mr Pithawala and I studied together over 50 years back in Sir J. J. School of Art (architectural section) and I think that we passed out together in 1937 as diploma holders in architecture.

Even at that time he was a most efficient artist and used to do a lot of paintings. To my knowledge the Parsi community has not done anything to honor him."

I agree with Mr Aga that our community should posthumously honor an outstanding artist like the late Pithawala. In this, eminent persons like Mr Aga and Mr Jehangir Sabavala should take the lead.

BHIKHAJI M. ADENWALLA

Into the Future

Our racial heritage, our temperament and the vicissitudes of time have built our communal characteristics. We Parsi Zoroastrians take life cheerfully and strive to make the most of it. Our culture is exotic, receptive and imitative. The virtue of charity preached by our holy Prophet Zarathushtra has been built into the tissues of every individual, and has spread all over the world.

Parsiana has played a very active part in this process and contributed its share to the cultural and religious heritage of our community.

I congratulate the monthly publication of *Parsiana* for completing 30 years' service to the community and I am sure it will complete another 30 years with the same zeal and devotion. It was heartening to know during my various lecture-tours to

Dubai, London, Canada and USA that *Parsiana* is read by both young and old with great interest and enthusiasm.

I only wish that your magazine does not encourage too many controversies. Because of my experience of 50 years, I have noticed that controversies divide the community and do not unite it. I rather hope to see more scholarly articles about our religion, culture and history as were published during the first eight to 10 years.

Also, I would suggest that you should not forget Karachi and Pakistan. Karachi comes next to Bombay in importance for here, too, we have a sizable community and you should print more news about Karachi, since quite a number of Karachi Parsis have migrated to all parts of the world, and they would like to get Karachi *khobar*.

May Ahura Mazda give you strength, vigor and endurance to work with a cheerful heart and a resolute will all your life! Amen. I wish you all the success you so well deserve during the next 30 years and beyond. *Hazaran hazar afrin bad!*

Ervad GODREJ D. SIDHWA
Karachi

Whither, *Parsiana*?

I think all of us know more or less about our past history and if not, we can go and read

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the history that the late Rashid Shahmardon and I have published in Persian magazines and books for the last 40 years. But you Parsis who have been compulsorily away from Iran, the birth place of Zoroaster, know Gujarati, Urdu, Hindi, Marathi, English and other local languages better than Farsi. So is it not better to have our Farsi writings and articles translated by some Farsi language scholars so that you could get informed about your ancestors?

We are familiar with the present Zoroastrian position and status but we have to act in such a way that a Zoroastrian in any part of the world knows the needs of his brothers and sisters at the other end of the world. The information each newspaper and magazine obtains from here and there leads automatically to a knowledge of the conditions of our co-religionists and their whereabouts, including those who have prestige and position, and hence the possibility of guiding and helping other less fortunate Zoroastrians. Zoroastrians at all levels will build our community into the future — specially the youths — and we have to lead them the right way and prevent them from erring and being misled, keep them away from the minds and thoughts of bandits!

If you intend to have more Iranian subscribers and more readers, please try to have some pages of your publication in Farsi as do *Pak-e-Mehr* and *Pak-e-Kankash* magazines published respectively in Canada and USA. These publications are Farsi publications, yet they have some pages in English for the interest of other readers. I also emphasize and recommend that you have Farsi historical, cultural and religious writings translated into English to increase your readership.

Mobed (Dr) JEHANGIR OSHIDARI
Tehran

Adoption among Parsis

It is a misnomer amongst Parsis that a Parsi can adopt a child: adoption is unknown to Parsis. If at all a child is adopted, it does not inherit the estate of the adoptive parents as a matter of right, but only through the instrumentality of a will.

In the case of Jehangir vs Kaikhushru reported in *ILR 39 BOM 296 (PC)* a claim as a "son" was made by a *palak* son under the will of a Parsi, but his claim was negated. The case went up to the Privy Council and the question was raised whether such a *palak* could inherit under a will. But their lordships decided the case on other points and observed that however interesting the question, it was not necessary for them to pronounce any opinion on it.

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In the Kersaji vs Kaikhushru case reported in 31 BOM LR it was observed that although in Baroda State the custom of adoption prevailed, such a custom could not be recognized in British India in respect of succession to immovable property.

Parsis have largely contributed to the progress of the nation. This microscopic community has produced world renowned personalities in the last 100 years.

Unfortunately, the population of Parsis is dwindling day by day and it is becoming a dying community. To preserve the population the government should immediately pass a legislation in Parliament to allow Zoroastrian Parsis to adopt a Zoroastrian Parsi child. It should clearly ban or prohibit the adoption of a non-Parsi child.

For example, under the Hindu Adoptions and Maintenance Act, 1956 even a bachelor or unmarried female Hindu can adopt a child. A corresponding right should be given to a Parsi bachelor or unmarried female to adopt a child.

By such proposed legislation the adopted child will get all the rights that an adopted child gets under the Hindu Law and the rich tradition and heritage of the Parsis will be preserved in the country.

It is for the present generation of Parsis to think whether they will create condi-

tions to produce great men or whether they will become a decadent community with a glorious past, a perilous present and a dim future.

H. N. VAKIL

Save our (Parsi) souls

Irrespective of our divergent leanings on scriptural matters, all of us Parsi Zoroastrians are now convinced that demographically our days are numbered and that the demon of death is staring us in the face. If we continue our lackadaisical communal attitudes and leadership, in the next few decades the demon will only have our history to stare at, with a smile of glee and sarcasm, that the scions of such a noble Prophet proved to be mere paper tigers and could not save even their own souls while fantasizing about a perfecting world order!

I ask you, Mr Editor, where are our leaders and where are their followers? If the Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP) is blissfully concerned only with housing the (doubtfully) poor of the community and settling their (personal) scores, and the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India is concerned with small-town stability and salvaging derelict properties from encroachers, who is going to be concerned with saving our Parsi souls?

Parsis are alive and kicking in North

America, the UK, Pakistan, Australia, the Middle East, Hongkong and (soon) China. They are fast learning their own lessons in survival tactics. Are we then not capable of constituting a global Zoroastrian body (think tank), with representatives of all shades of views from these countries, to work out the ways and means of surviving through the next century with our Zoroastrian identity intact? Can we not include therein our Iranian brothers and sisters who, no doubt, are better able to survive because of their regenerating capacity and liberal views, and can therefore teach us a thing or two on survival?

I have said this before but will repeat that this objective of survival should be made the primary responsibility of the BPP jointly with the Federation, as they constitute our primary and traditional leadership and are globally recognized as such. It is imbecility to argue that they are only managers of trust funds. If there are no Parsis left in the next few decades, who will be the managers and who will be the beneficiaries of such trusts? They both must change their constitutions and election mandates so as to effectively assume global leadership responsibilities, and democratically constitute this think tank jointly with our fragmented global communities, including



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therein scholars and clergy. Otherwise all these communities may tend to evolve in their own way, and leave behind a legacy of total bankruptcy for future historians who will research the causes of our inertia.

Pending the information from such a think tank, we should start with some drastic socio-religious reforms as appropriate to stem this slide into oblivion. Our orthodoxy, and its associate leaders and sects responsible for this debacle, have so stretched themselves on a limb, after a century of negative attitudes, that now that the chickens have come home to roost they have lost all credibility in a vanishing community. Historically, this collapse of the community will squarely rest on their shoulders, as also on our tradition-bound clergymen who only now, at this late hour, appear to be relenting to retrieve lost ground.

I urge that now this matter be dealt with seriously and expeditiously. Once formed, this global Zoroastrian think tank will have five major issues to resolve, each hopefully by a separate international representative committee which will:

- Conduct scientific research into the historical causes responsible for our spiritual degeneration and demographic annihilation;
- Isolate and emphasize the positive factors for our future restoration and totally reject the negative aspects;
- Draw up a balance sheet of the assets or potentials we can muster and the dead-weight liabilities that we can no longer carry (This may need a careful review of all our community institutions, with a strong bias in favor of our need to survive worldwide);
- Look carefully and deeply into the future to decide what changes in the socio-religious norms of the community must be introduced to harmonize with rapid global changes, and how our available assets can best be deployed to promote such changes;
- Draw up a global Zoroastrian project for survival which must be implicitly carried out by Zoroastrians everywhere, without unnecessary chatter, arguments or diversion.

Every alternate year we must then scientifically assess the progress made towards survival and, if necessary, readjust our priorities.

If such an inclination does not exist within the BPP and Federation bodies, then let our social and business leaders like the Wadias and Palkhivalas be persuaded by the BPP to assume this noble responsibility and initiate our revival in a businesslike manner. If even that is not done, then all

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our fragmented community groups the world over will, I fear, independently evolve into the shape and form viewed by them as pertinent to their individual survival, with a modicum of cultural and religious identity.

If there are some better ideas, please let us hear from your learned readers and, if necessary, modify the above drill.

HOMI B. MINOCHERHOMJI

Toronto

Dharamshala expansion

The Mengusi Dharamshala of the Delhi Parsi Anjuman (DPA) was established in 1950 and the Kaikhushru Pallonji Katrak Dar-e-Meher in 1961. Both these institutions continue as a meeting point for the Zoroastrians of Delhi and surrounding areas.

Much before the establishment of these two institutions, however, our forefathers had the vision to establish a small plot of land as an aramgah which is still being maintained by the DPA.

The first grave in the old, now disused graveyard behind the Dar-e-Meher dates back 103 years when some of the Zoroastrian settlers in Delhi had come in a bullock cart from Aligarh/Hathras, which were then prosperous cotton trading centers in North India. The Parsis were working in various cotton mills there.

In our endeavor to give better amenities and facilities to our anjuman members, the surrounding area has now been spruced up by levelling 5,000 sq ft. This additional land has been made available, equipped with flood lights, for members to hold their functions.

The facilities at the Dharamshala are continuously upgraded and renovated from time to time. Recently, thanks to a Zoroastrian philanthropist, the entire electrical wiring and fixtures of the agiary have been renovated and the latest up-to-date equipment installed.

It is further proposed to increase the facilities and rooms at the Dharamshala to enable it to be of greater assistance to fellow Zoroastrians. In this effort the DPA would welcome donations as the Dharamshala is used extensively by visitors not only from India but from various parts of the world.

DADIE MISTRY

Vice President, Delhi Parsi Anjuman

Tribute to a father

At the time of his demise on September 8, 1994, Dr Kawas N. Baria, 77, had retired from his private practice and the hospitals with which he was associated: St George's, B. D. Petit Parsee General and Breach Candy. A product of St Xavier's College

and G. T. Hospital from where he obtained his MD degree, Baria faithfully gave of his services to all sections of Bombay society, irrespective of class or community.

We, his family as also his many patients and friends, will remember him for his



integrity, his strict adherence to principles, his impeccable honesty. To me, he was a beloved father, a cherished companion. My most vivid memories of childhood are of everyday experiences with

him, some poignant, others humorous, but all having the same underlying message: that truth and honesty had to be upheld at all costs, that success had no meaning if the means used to achieve it were immoral. Today, he remains a constant source of inspiration for the achievement of the same goals: a role model.

But apart from this beautiful personal relationship, he will be remembered by his patients who, on his passing, spoke of him as "God's man," of his immense kindness, and compassion for their vulnerability in sickness. To the staff in the hospitals he was courteous and polite, believing that this achieved more than impatient, high-handed and dictatorial behaviour. And to the poor and needy he was one for whom the desire to alleviate their suffering had become almost an obsession.

He was a man loved by many but, above all, respected by all. He died — as he had lived, especially in his last years — gently and peacefully. We, his wife Viloo and immediate family, will forever love and miss him deeply.

Ms SHIREEN ISAL-BARIA

Edited by Arnavaz S. Mama

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Events and Personalities

Damania Airways sold

The rumors were flying as thick as the jets over Santa Cruz airport. Damania Airways was not doing well. An aircraft was being impounded for non-payment of taxes. Jehangir Damania, the company's joint director and the chairman's cousin, was resigning. The airline was for sale.

According to one front page newspaper headline titled "Damania takeover to be clinched soon?" the Singhania's were to buy the ailing airline.

Initially the airline's chairman and managing director, the dapper Pervez Damania denied the airline was for sale, stating in a press release, "It is very much a Damania group company."

However, by mid May, front page newspaper reports stated the airline had been sold to the Madras based NEPC group which also runs the NEPC Airlines.

Jehangir Damania, who was looking after the financial matters of the Damania group of companies, resigned from the companies "in pursuit of better prospects," according to Pervez's brother and director Vispi Damania. "We acknowledge his services with gratitude and wish him all success in his future endeavors," said Vispi according to a news report in *Mid-Day* (March 1, 1994).

In mid-December 1994 the Damania group had extended its brand equity into financial activities, taking over the dormant Tristar Leasing and Housing Finance Company, and entering the capital market with a public issue of 1.14 crore shares (of Rs 10 each) at a premium of Rs 20 to aggregate Rs 34.20 crores capital. The Damania's were to contribute 40 percent after the public issue.

The Company, re-christened Damania Capital Markets Limited (DCML) "pro-

poses to expand the scale of operations and become an active player in the financial market," notes *Business India* (December 5-18, 1994). The finance raised from the public will be used by DCML to "strengthen the capital base, augment the long-term resources required to meet the needs of the

financial services. The Company also plans to enter the fee-based activity of offering advisory service to its clients.

DCML has projected a total income of Rs 23 crores for the first year of its operations. The corresponding net profit is estimated at Rs 9.7 crores, with an earning per

share of Rs 5.11. The level of investor confidence in the new Damania venture can be gauged by the fact that firm allotments for 30.11 lakh shares have been made to NRIs/OBCs, Tourism Finance Corporation of India, State Bank of Hyderabad and CRB Associate Management Co Ltd.

With its "team of expert financiers, backed by a unique and powerful research department," as per

the advertisements released, DCML hopes to make quick evaluation and render the applicants' proposals into powerful project reports that would make their dream a reality with "intelligent financing" and a "fresh perspective." Plus, of course, as the Damania's remind us, the usual Damania courtesy.

Any takers for seed capital amongst Parsi entrepreneurs?

KRCOI's essay contest

"But for them Zoroastrianism would have been extinct in Iran."

Prizes totalling Rs 55,000 are to be offered by various donors for the best essay on this subject.

"The K. R. Cama Oriental Institute (KRCOI), the World Zoroastrian Organisation (WZO), London and the Zartoshty Brothers Charitable Foundation is organizing a global essay competition in English and Persian," notes a press release issued by Ms Homai N. Modi, trustee and joint honorary secretary of the KRCOI.

"Competitors are requested to cover



Damania Airways : now a part of NEPC Airlines

expanded scale of operations of its activities, such as lease and hire purchase, stock market operations, and inter-corporate advances," states *Business World* (December 14-27, 1994).

According to Vispi Damania the Company will finance second-hand vehicles that are less than six years old, thus displacing financiers in the unorganized sector in a market segment valued at Rs 1,900 crores.

DCML also plans to float a 100 percent subsidiary to undertake brokering in shares, debentures, bonds and government securities listed on the National Stock Exchange. The company hopes to earn a 10 percent dividend in the first year and 20 percent in the subsequent years from its investment of three crore rupees in this fully-owned subsidiary.

A further sum of Rs 55 crores is proposed for deployment in leasing and hire purchase, investment banking and allied

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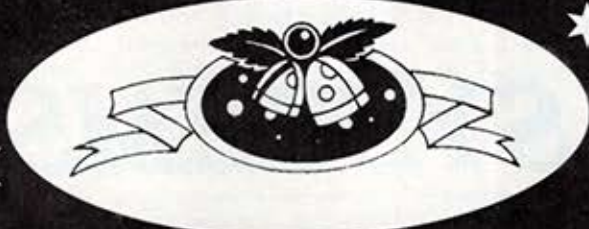
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outstanding contributions from social reformers like the late Mr Maneckji Hataria, India, who did a tremendous lot for bringing about religious awakening among the Zoroastrians of Iran; Arbab Kaikhushru Shahrukh and Master Khudabakhsh of Iran who did a lot for religious awakening by starting religious classes and writing small books; and Prof Aga Pour Davoud who devoted over half a century of his life to the study of *Avesta* and the translation of the holy *Gathas* and *Yashts* in Persian. Social reformers upto the Pahlavi regime may only be covered," states an explanatory note.

The prizes will be awarded by an international panel of judges. The first prize of Rs 25,000 is sponsored by the World Zarathushtrian Trust Fund through the offices of the WZO; the second prize of Rs 20,000 is sponsored by the Zartoshty Brothers Charitable Foundation and the third prize of Rs 10,000 is sponsored by Babubhai Shah. Essays must be submitted by post or in person, on or before July 31, 1995 to the Joint Honorary Secretaries, K. R. Cama Oriental Institute, 136 Bombay Samachar Marg, Opposite Lion Gate, Fort, Bombay 400023. One or more consolation prizes may be recommended by the panel of judges.

Anyone is eligible to enter. The essays should be in English or Persian and should not exceed 25 typed double spaced foolscap pages. Contestants are required not to mention their name on any page of the essay but to write it on a separate piece of paper. For further details, participants should write to the KRCCI.

Parsi Pukar

"We, a band of few earnest workers, are contemplating to publish a fortnightly newsmagazine, which will express the views, beliefs, feelings, opinion and sentiments of the large part of our community generally called 'orthodox.' The news magazine will be named *Parsi Pukar*."

With these words the orthodox group of K. N. Dastoor, C. M. Patel, Ms Pervin Mistry, B. K. Mistry, Noshir Dadrawala, Adi Doctor and others circulated an eight page circular announcing the launch of the newsmagazine "shortly."

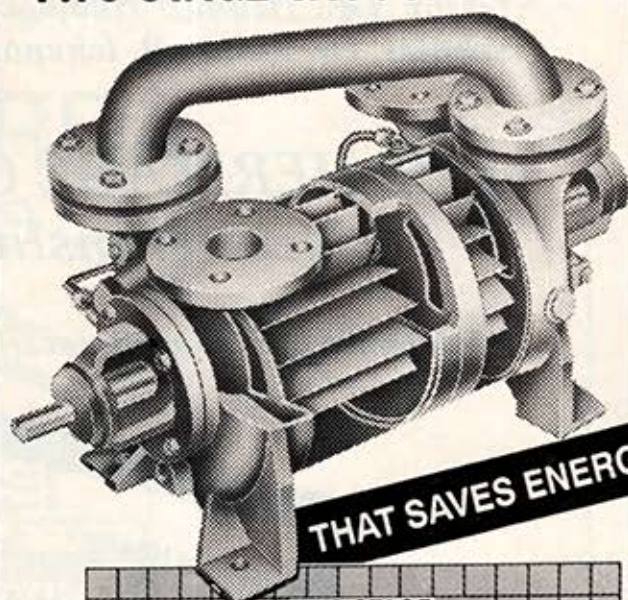
"The term 'orthodox' means those faithful of the community, who have the earnest craving to preserve and protect the Parsi religious way of life with all its components, tenets and traditions, viz, sudreh kushti; manthra prayers; the divine atash; the dokhma; the rites and rituals; the stringent moral code prescribed by our holy scriptures; and *boonak pashani* — the preservation of the racial gene by resisting conversion and mixed marriages," says the brochure which was published with "a view to determining how far and how much the orthodox of the community are prepared to back us up in our venture."

In answer to the query "why an orthodox newsmagazine?" the leaflet states: "Orthodox organizations are in plenty; but they are disorganized and fail to rise to the occasions due to lack of conviction, a burning desire to serve, and courage to stand against the yellow journalistic attacks of the faithless."

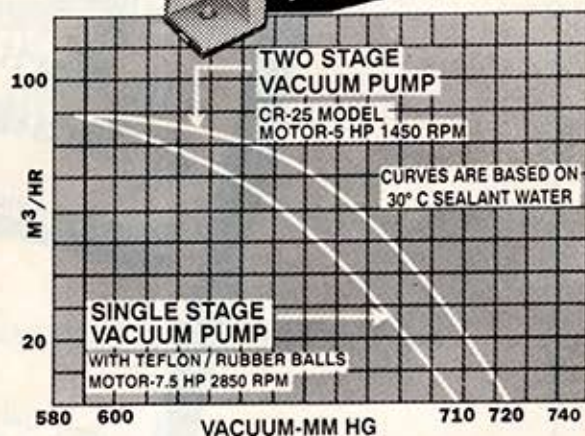
"Time has come when the community needs an orthodox weekly or fortnightly newspaper or newsmagazine with a clean and honest policy of preservation and protection of our way of life and our religious tenets and traditions, which alone can avoid our extinction."

A policy statement in the brochure states that the publication will provide material, information and knowledge on common topics, the religion, rituals, Ilm-e-Khshnoom. The publication also proposes to have a children's column and will present stories from the *Shah Namah*, the *Ramayana*, the *Mahabharata* and other lores and legends. Those desirous of more information

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(Top) Medora with his Parsi flag and athlete Engineer

(Below) Coins between the 31st and 40th year of Akbar's reign. Patel and sprinter Daruwala

should write to: *Parsi Pukar*, C/o K. N. Dastoor, 4B, Dhun Apartments, 66, Worli Hill, Bombay 400018.

The present orthodox organ *Deen Parast* is a monthly edited by Dadrawala and Doctor.

Medora's Parsi flag

"The Macedonians have their own flag, the Israelis have theirs, why not the Parsis," reasons 75-year-old Jehangir Medora, a Canadian Zoroastrian of Indian origin, who has designed "a Parsi flag for Parsistan," as per a report in *The Afternoon Despatch and Courier* dated January 27, 1995. Though it is nations who have flags, not communities, Devlali-emigrant Medora thinks otherwise.

The flag has three stripes of red, gold and blue with the Asho Farohar symbol in the centre of the flag on its golden strip. Medora, who unwrapped the flag in the office of the Behram Contractor-edited evening paper during his recent visit to Bombay, claims to have carefully selected the colors. The blue (bottom strip) is the Persian blue, representing the original homeland of the Zoroastrians; the gold "is for India, a color as rich and evocative as the nation"; and the maple red is the color of Canada, the adopted home of Medora for some 40 years and, as held by him, "the new home of the Parsis," 4,000 of whom stay in Toronto. The report notes that Medora has been in some way responsible for the large influx



of Parsis into Canada, for which he may receive the Order of Canada, "something like a knighthood."

Homi Rogers

Tops in sports

Parsi girls dominated the 101st inter-school athletics meet held in Bombay from January 21 to 23, 1995. Eleven-year-old Ms Feroza Z. Engineer of Girton School "ran away with the girls' junior and intermediate individual titles," while Ms Nazneen Shah of Dadar Parsi Youths' Assembly won the girls' senior individual title, as per a report in *The Times of India* dated January 24, 1995. Shah also shattered the senior 400 meters record of 63.2 seconds by running the course in 62.5 seconds. Another record broken at this three-day meet organized by the Bombay School Sports Association was of the 100 meters run by senior girls. Ms Zenia Daruwala of St Agnes covered the distance in 12.9 seconds, eclipsing the



old record of 13.1 seconds.

Engineer followed up on her winning streak with a sensational win at the Inter-city Athletic Meet held on February 23 on the synthetic track of Bombay's Priyadarshini Park. She ran the 100 meters run for girls under 14 in a record 12.4 seconds, picking up in the process, not only the top prize of Rs 500, but also a bonus of the same amount for creating a new record.

The Inter-city athletic meet had sports-persons from Bombay, Thane and Pune participating. All Parsis sprint champion Homi Gowadia came second in the 100 meters and 200 meters run for boys under 17 at the same meet.

H.R.

Numismatist Patel

Restaurateur Pervaz Patel of The Wayside Inn doffed a numismatist's topi when the Prince of Wales Museum, in collaboration with Mudra Bharati, put out in Bombay "the first exhibition of its kind in the country" to quote *Mid-Day* of November 12, 1994, on "2500 years of coinage in India."

Patel, who was inducted into this hobby by his grandfather since he was 14, displayed around 48 coins of the Mughal period at this 13-day exhibition held from November 15 to 27, 1994. Patel's coins were of a rupee size, because Patel only collects coins of rupee denomination, paying attention to the clarity of inscription on the coin.

Emperor Akbar is said to have switched

from the lunar Hijri computation to a solar Elahi one in the 29th year of his reign. The two-digit Elahi reckoning marks the reign of each king beginning with the ascension to the throne (Akbar's coins go on until his death in the 50th year of his reign) which, notes Patel, was also used by Jehangir, Shah Jehan and Murad Baksh. During the Elahi period, old Persian month names were in use: Farwardin, Ardibehisht, Khرداد, Tir, Amardad, Sherwar, Mihir, Aban, Azar, Di, Bahman and Isfardarmaz. Hence these Mughal coins are much sought after by the community as gifts for children. H. R.

Stamped for posterity

Philatelists Burjor B. Paymaster and Vispi S. Dastur were invited to participate in the Mahapex '94 held in Bombay from December 28 to 31, 1994. An extremely prestigious and eagerly awaited biennial event (though the 1992 exhibition was not held), Mahapex showcases collections of philatelists in the Maharashtra Postal Circle, comprising of Maharashtra and Goa states.

The Eighth Mahapex held as "a concluding event in the bicentenary celebration of Bombay GPO" as per Ms Aparna Mohile, Chief Postmaster General and chairperson of its organizing committee, was "the largest stamp exhibition ever held in Bombay." The four-day exhibition displayed around 540 frames (a frame, in philatelic terms, means 16 album pages) and over 6,000 stamps, besides holding workshops and seminars.

Dastur, one of the five organizing committee members, conducted a workshop for

juniors on postal history and, in the absence of Brigadier Wirk, as president-elect chaired the regional meeting of the Philatelic Congress of India held during Mahapex. The first Parsi philatelist to be elected to this high office, Dastur contributed eight frames to the exhibition showing Indian cancellations and "India Used Abroad" stamps. These stamps, as Dastur explains in his article published in a souvenir brought out by Mahapex, "are stamps of one country used in another." Dastur's collection showed stamps brought out by the GPO and used in the Persian Gulf and adjacent areas, particularly Aden.

Paymaster, also on the organizing committee, displayed his rare collection of 'Scinde Dawks' and lithographs on four frames. The Scinde Dawks, as Paymaster informs us, were the first adhesive stamps issued in India in the 1850s. One of these stamps is estimated at Rs 90,000 today. Paymaster's 'lithographs' are a strip of blue and red litho stamps, said to be the first colored stamps in the world. These were produced in India in 1854.

An eminent philatelist and president of the Philatelic Society of India, Paymaster has pledged to donate these stamps and others from his collection to a philately museum which the department of posts proposes to set up at the Bombay GPO by end-1995. The museum, in addition to its permanent hall, will have a gallery for exhibits of individuals, so as to encourage the hobby of stamp-collecting.

A further contribution of the community to Mahapex came in the competitive class,

where Eruch E. Mehta of Pune displayed five frames on the theme of Mahatma Gandhi in stamps. His collection was appreciated, and Mehta was awarded a silver medal in the competitive class. H. R.

Waiting for Gopal

Early this year G. D. Somani Memorial School presented a new play by Ms Dina Mehta. Directed by Ms Raëll Padamsee, *Waiting for Gopal* was staged at the Patkar Hall on January 11. The cast consisted of 72 schoolchildren (if one counted, apart from the main actors, the dancers, the chorus, the village children at play and another lot at the *gurukul*), a whopping number for any director to manage. And Padamsee managed valiantly.

Was the title a take-off on *Waiting for Godot*? we asked Mehta. "My title seemed to give off a familiar ring when I chose it," laughed Mehta, "but no, *Waiting for Gopal* was not an adaptation of Samuel Beckett's title. Though in a sense," she went on thoughtfully, "my play is also about patience... a kind of dogged waiting for... answers, for the kind of certitude we all need that there is someone out there who cares what happens to us."

She went on after a pause: "But in place of the tramps in Beckett's play, mine features a child, Gopal. And where we adults fail, a child's faith can make the miracle happen."

We learnt that *Waiting for Gopal* is based on a Bengali folktale which used to be Swami Vivekananda's favorite story in his childhood. The narrative line is simple.

Below: Dastur receiving a silver memento from actor Shashi Kapoor at the Mahapex '94
Right: Paymaster and a scene from *Waiting for Gopal*



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Gopal, a son of a poor Brahmin widow, is afraid to walk alone through the dark, teeming forest which he must cross every day to get to his school in the next village. His mother assures him that his cowherd brother, also called Gopal (one of Lord Krishna's names), will be with him on the trail: "You only have to call him." The boy's faith condenses the blue god into form, and Gopal trustingly walks the jungle with his newfound 'brother' every day.

At school, teacher Premadasa is a clever, tubby, avaricious man and on the anniversary of his father's death his pupils are expected to bring expensive gifts for their guru. Gopal's gift, a small pitcher of curds given to him by his forest companion, is at first scorned by the teacher and his wife — till they discover that it cannot be depleted but fills up with curds every time it is emptied.

The astonished teacher and his wife set out for the forest with Gopal to find this 'brother' who can 'give in such inexhaustible measure.' But this time the cowherd will not appear, though Gopal calls him again and again. Furious, Premadasa has just branded Gopal a liar, when a voice is heard: 'For you I am always here, little brother, but your teacher has many rounds to go before he can see my face.'

We point out to Mehta that she has introduced other elements in the simple tale: like communal harmony between neighbors, a girl's right to her childhood.

"I had to flesh out the tale," explains Mehta. We talk of the moving friendship between Gopal and Kabir. And the episode in which Gopal's father is evicted from his land and property by a landlord who victimized him because he refused to give false evidence against a Muslim tenant.

"By introducing the character of Noopur," we ask Mehta, "haven't you given vent to your feminism?"

Mehta is up in arms. "One doesn't have to be a trendy feminist to speak up about the trauma of cancelled childhood. Noopur is a child bride, awaiting with dread the day a total stranger, her husband, will come to take her away from her parents' home."

What did Mehta think of the school production of the play? "There was a wealth of talent on stage," she said. "Some of those children are natural actors. Sadiq Saboowalla and Bijal Ambani were remarkable as Gopal and his mother. As the teacher's garrulous wife (whose tongue runs on 'like Draupadi's sari') Radhi Mehta did very well. And Akshay Halwe made a che-rubic Krishna."

With such a huge cast Padamsee's main problem, as Mehta saw it, was maintaining discipline, and in this perhaps the school could have been more supportive. "Teachers could have been deployed during rehearsals to collect the children, set the scene and maintain order, leaving Padamsee free to make her creative choices." And she added, "Working with children is a most challenging and rewarding experience."

Expansion for ZCB

The Zoroastrian Co-operative Bank Limited (ZCB) has turned in fine figures for the year ending March 31, 1994. According to its 67th annual report, the bank has posted profits of Rs 29.83 lakhs, against Rs 27.81 for the year '92-'93. It has also doubled its authorized capital from Rs 50 lakhs to Rs 100 lakhs, by a unanimous resolution passed by its members at a special general body meeting held on April 8, 1994. The subscribed and paid-up capital of the ZCB also doubled in the year under review from Rs 20.16 lakhs to Rs 41.74 lakhs.

The Bank aspires to raise its shareholdings by another Rs 33.27 lakhs by March 31, 1995 to reach Rs 75 lakhs, the amount prescribed by the Reserve Bank of India to continue the Bank's licence to carry out bookings under section 22 of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949, notes the report of J. J. Gandevia, ZCB chairman. With the grant of licence under this section, the ZCB will be able to open new avenues in banking. The ZCB has more than 5,000 members and hopes for greater participation from members in introducing new members and expanding its capital. It is also actively pursuing the opening of two new branches in Bombay — at Bandra and Andheri — subject to fulfilment of certain norms of the Reserve Bank.

H. R.

SPOTLIGHT

Ms Bachi Karkaria, editor of *The Metropolis on Saturday (MOS)* and the bi-weekly *Bombay Times*, has been conferred the Mary Morgan Hewett Fund Achievement Award — instituted by the Honolulu based Friends of the East-West Centre — in recognition of her "impressive, powerful reporting on human tragedy such as AIDS and riots" and the diversity of her interest in all aspects of human life, notes a write-up in the *Indian Express* of December 9, '94.

Prof Nowshir Jungalwalla is a nominee for the American Biographical Institute's Man of the Year 1994 title for his contribution to public health, informs a press release.



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ICS scholarships

The International College, Spain (ICS), a picturesque institution 10 km north of Madrid, "is rated as one of the best English medium schools in Europe and also one of the most expensive," notes Dr Dinyar Pestonjee, professor of organizational behavior at the Indian Institute of Management in Ahmedabad, in a letter to *Parsiana*.

Pestonjee has written to Jamshed Guzder, Bombay Parsi Punchayet chairman, and to *Parsiana*, enclosing a letter from ICS founder Manouchehr Farhangi, offering scholarships to two young Zoroastrians—a boy and a girl—aged between 13 and 16 years. The candidates should have very good levels in English, maths and science, stipulates Farhangi. The scholarships will include boarding costs in the school and will cover up to grade 12, provided the students behave well and maintain their academic performance.

Pestonjee further notes that Farhangi is willing to provide his knowhow for the establishment of a non-sectarian international school and is keen to launch a foundation for ancient Iranian/Zoroastrian cultures to be managed by scholars. According to Pestonjee, Farhangi has already identified 14 scholars from Europe and elsewhere who are doing good work on Zoroastrian culture. His aim, it is said, is to build linkages with Zoroastrians in Hongkong and the countries of the erstwhile USSR as also to get information about Indian research on Zoroastrianism.

Writing in the 10th anniversary souvenir of the ICS in 1990 Farhangi had explained the motivation behind the establishment of the school: "(I) had often wondered what particular factors motivated

nations to go to wars which decimated millions of innocent people and devastated whole nations. Was it fanatic nationalism? Religious differences? Racial prejudice? Territorial ambitions?...

"I do not subscribe to the view that human beings are naturally aggressive and that violent conflicts are unavoidable. I believe in the basic decency of human beings irrespective of our colors, creeds, countries or cultures. I believe that the most effective way of eliminating conflicts among individuals as well as nations is for them to meet, to exchange views, to begin to understand one another's aspirations and to try and sympathize with one another's problems. My own very small contribution towards realizing this common understanding is this international school. Here you meet students from 40 other nations and study and talk and play together and exchange views in an atmosphere of friendship... During the past 10 years I have never heard of a quarrel among students, connected with racial or religious or national differences.

"I hope we, in this school, are contributing to international understanding, and I wish there were thousands more of such schools as ours."

The school offers courses that lead to the American College Board tests, the International General Certificate of Secondary Education, the International College Spain Graduation Diploma and the

International Baccalaureate Diploma and Certificates.

Housed in a splendid modern building with three hectares of landscaped campus, the boarding and day school offers primary and secondary education for children aged three, upward to 18.

The faculty of the ICS comprises multilingual international teachers directed by an independent board of 'trustees' chaired by Farhangi. There are no religious or other affiliations. Its facilities include four laboratories for biology, chemistry, physics and general science, a computer center, art and drama studios, a music hall, a library, an indoor gymnasium, a self-service cafeteria and dining room, apart from the general classrooms. Basketball, volleyball, tennis, football and athletics can be enjoyed outdoors.

When a group of Iranians and one American left Iran in July 1980, they decided to set up a school for Iranian children who had been attending international schools in Tehran. The Iranian government had closed all foreign schools, notes Ms Hykondookht Sahakian in the souvenir. When the school opened, initially in Estepona on Spain's southern coast, on October 1, 1980 there were 87 Iranian students and one American, 12 full-time teachers, six part-time teachers and one copy of each text book which had to be photocopied, recalls Sahakian. But, she adds, "the school ran smoothly

Sahakian (top), Anoushiravani (left) and Farhangi and the ICS Campus near Madrid: Students from "40 nations study, talk and play together"



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because of dedicated personnel and the students."

J. V. Hutchinson, director of the ICS (1983-86) recalls the May 1983 transfer of the school to a bitterly cold Madrid. "Three semi-retired lorries brought all our worldly belongings from Estepona to Madrid... Fariborz Anoushiravani confronted a unique and magnificent central heating apparatus whose spare parts were simply no longer on the market and the building workers drank brandy at regular intervals to keep warm..."

"In early September 1983 we all stood outside to welcome 43 rather apprehensive students. The conversion of a startling building into a school which did not look like a school — a staggering and successful achievement with the exception of the central heating apparatus and the dining room door — in four months, was a great factor in our eventual success," notes Hutchinson's good-humored account of initial problems and the spirit in which they were circumvented or solved.

Those early adventures have since been replaced by a thriving student body and a qualified faculty. Field trips, drama, skiing and other activities depicted in the souvenir reflect the changeover to a well-settled

routine and an academically sound base.

Now, who will be the lucky two Indian Zoroastrians to benefit from Farhangi's offer?

WZO calendar

For more than ten years the World Zoroastrian Organisation (WZO) has published its unifying Zoroastrian calendar for all the three sects of Faslís, Kadmís and Shahenshahís. Providing the days and months according to all the three reckonings together with their Gregorian counterparts, the WZO calendar was delivered, as usual, on the eve of Jamshedi Navroze — new year's day according to the Fasli dispensation.

Each of the 12 months has a quoted tribute from a scholar of Zoroastrianism or some teaching from the scriptures.

During the four years 1992-95 Hormuzd *roj*, had coincided with March 21 for all the three systems of reckoning. There had been hopes that the opportunity would be seized by an enlightened community to arrive at a single, unified system of calibration. Except for North America and Karachi where some tentative progress has been effected in this direction, the world community has chosen to remain divided. Next Jamshedi Navroze the calendars will

cease to synchronize even for the short duration of four months.

FEZANA's seventh AGM

The FEZANA annual general meeting preceded the Ninth North American Zoroastrian Congress in Philadelphia. With 17 of its 21 member associations represented, Ms Dolly Dastoor of Montreal was voted in as the Federation's second president. Sarosh Contractor of Houston is the incoming treasurer and Mehran Sepheri of Northern California is assistant secretary. Minoo Treasurywalla and Ms Katayun Kapadia of Philadelphia continue as vice president and secretary respectively. Outgoing founder treasurer Framroze Patel was presented with a plaque in appreciation of his eight years of dedicated service.

Although the census survey is yet to be completed, a preliminary analysis was submitted by Ms Anahita Sidhwa. A sample survey of 1,319 Zoroastrians revealed a preponderance of males in the community (51.7%), with those in the 20-40 age range comprising the largest segment of the population. Females have a slight edge below the age of 20 and over the age of 60 years.

The funds and finance committee chairman K. Harvesf has sent out a fund-

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raising letter. Welfare, religious, student aid, properties and general are proposed as the five endowment accounts. Interest on the corpus would be used for programs under these heads. While the member anjumans have agreed with the suggestion, according to the *FEZANA Journal*, they have argued that the appointment of a fund manager to monitor the funds, must precede fund-raising. The urgent need for a corpus was underlined by the welfare committee chairman Kaemarz Dotiwalla as more appeals were received than could be met, as reports the *Journal*. One proposal was the celebration of a community Zoroastrian Unity Day by all the Federation's member associations.

The Youth Helping Hands and Sports Committees are being consolidated under a single committee: Zoroastrian Youth of North America. While the Zoroastrian Association of California (ZAC), the California Zoroastrian Council (CZC) and the Traditional Mazdayasni Zarthosti Anjuman (TMZA) have cooperated in the drafting of the new committee's terms of reference, Mazda Antia and Jim Engineer of Chicago are in the process of developing a strong youth network. The 1995 Youth Congress is being planned in San Francisco under the combined auspices of the Persian Zoroastrian Organization (PZO) and the Zoroastrian Association of Northern California (ZANC).

FEZANA is now a recognized publisher, having been allocated the ISSN and ISBN numbers thanks to Dr Pallan Ichaporia of the Research and Preservation Committee. Ichaporia, who conducted field research in Israel on the Dead Sea Scrolls, urged FEZANA to launch a research journal to publish such findings.

Information on a unified Zoroastrian calendar was distributed by Dastoor, as per the mandate of the 1993 AGM. Member associations were urged to publicise the same, hold discussions at the grass roots, conduct a referendum and submit the results to FEZANA.

Rohinton Rivetna chairs the council on inter religious affairs with the aim of increasing Zoroastrian involvement in interfaith dialogue. He has also been asked to pursue the aim of forming a World Council of Federations and seek UN recognition as a non-governmental organization (NGO).

The first six months of 1994 witnessed a shortfall of about \$ 1,610 for the *FEZANA Journal* despite advertisement revenue and small donations. The 64 page fall issue notes that the goal of 80 percent paid



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The team of Ms Roshan Rivetna, Jim Engineer, Adel Engineer and Dr Hooman Sotoodeh led by chairperson Dr Rustom Kevala give freely of their time and facilities which include computers, fax and telephones. It produces four issues a year with a wealth of information on activities, studies and a cross section of opinions on the continuing involvement of the Zoroastrian community in NA. Each issue has a theme, announced well in advance, on which interested readers may contribute. The cover story thus reflects many shades of opinion and a variety of aspects of the central theme. In addition there is in-depth news about FEZANA itself, several pages reserved for the youth — their concerns, ideas, opinions, etc — letters to the editor, milestones and sundry news items of global interest.

Worldwatch for the CNN

"Producing each story, setting up interviews, talking with reporters, directing the crew — all the details that go into the making of a news story for a global TV network" is routine for Ms Parisa Khosravi, international assignments editor for the CNN network in Atlanta, USA.

The Iran born, Chicago and Paris educated journalist has thrice been nominated for the Emmy Awards. Her 1992 nomination for *Famine in Africa* had won her the Robert F. Kennedy Foundation Award and was shown at the New York Film Festival, informs the *FEZANA Journal* (FJ).

Khosravi's seven-year tenure with CNN has taken her to major world events. She lived in Moscow for the six months leading to the coup that undermined the integrity of the Soviet Union, covered the environmental summit in Rio de Janeiro, the Gulf War, the dismemberment of Yugoslavia, the famine in Somalia...

A particularly poignant assignment was the coverage of Iran's presidential election in 1993. Working 19-hour days Khosravi and her crew covered the election, the economic situation, the status of women in Iran and was herself interviewed by anchorwoman Susan Rook for an interesting perspective as an Iranian woman journalist, informs the *FJ*. Though Iranian women are required to cover the body and hair, Khosravi found them working alongside the men as engineers, doctors (women outnumber men in medical schools), scientists and teachers. There are nine female legislators in the country and women drive, vote and walk safely on the streets, reported Khosravi who had left Iran with her family in 1979 just prior to the revolution.

Local politics in London

The London borough of Redbridge elected Labour candidate Filly Maravala by a thumping majority of 1,600 votes over his closest Conservative rival last May, informs a letter to *Parsiana*. He has been allocated work on three committees in local government — that of social services, education and of the management services committee of which he is vice-chairman — during his current four-year term.

A communications analyst with an American insurance company based in the City of London, Maravala was secretary and house secretary of the Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe (ZTFE) between 1986 and 1992, notes his biodata. Currently involved with the



New Premises Committee in fundraising for a larger property to replace the present Zoroastrian House in Compayne Gardens, Ma-

ravala writes, "My dream is to see an established place of worship, preferably an agiary, which would be the first of its kind in the Western hemisphere." Along with his wife Hutokshi, Maravala organizes musical functions and social evenings to raise funds.

Aden-born Maravala's parents had hailed from Navsari. Settled in the UK since 1967, the Maravalas have two sons and two daughters. Joining the British Labour Party in 1985 Maravala became secretary for the Loxford ward and then its organizer, before he was elected vice president of the Ilford South Constituency of the party. According to his biodata, Maravala represented his constituency at the annual Labour Party conference in 1993 where he had the opportunity to exchange views with the late John Smith, then party president.

Though Maravala's ward constitutes 8,500 people, his sphere of representation is said to extend cover 234,000 constituents of Redbridge.

His election manifesto stated he favored "more nursery provisions in local schools, lower charges for meals and home help for the elderly and handicapped, traffic management to ease all traffic problems in residential roads, improved street cleansing, cleaner environment and lower rents for Council tenants."

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Community survival in North America

The Zoroastrian Society of Ontario task force examines the chances of Zoroastrians surviving as a viable community in North America

A task force of five was set up by the executive committee of the Zoroastrian Society of Ontario (ZSO), pursuant to a resolution passed at their annual general meeting in 1993. It was empowered to address the problem of assimilation and preservation of our identity in North America, to examine the issue in all its aspects and to report back to the community with a list of recommendations and an action plan.

After deliberating on its own, the task force, consisting of Yezdi Antia, Homi Homji, Jamshed Mavalwala, Vispi Patel and Keki Shroff held two open forums. At these the problem was defined and analyzed with a view to compiling a list of recommendations for consideration and implementation by the community.

The Problem Defined

While the focus and mandate of the task force is in the context of North America, a global view was deemed necessary to understand the demographics of the community. In India, which is where the largest number of Zoroastrians reside, the slide in our number has gone from a high of approximately 1,15,000 in 1941 to about 60,000 or less in recent times. At the present rate, the Zoroastrian population in India is expected to decline to 22,000 by the year 2020, which may lead to a loss of official status as a recognized community for census purposes in India.

While the decline in India is partly attributable to migration to the West, the major factor continues to be a low birth rate, unable to generate "replacement population" to offset the triple or quadruple number of deaths in any given period. Currently, there are no reliable statistics for Zoroastrians in Iran or Western countries. Perhaps with the contemplated global survey of the community, pursuant to a

directive of the last World Zoroastrian Congress (in Bombay in 1990), a more comprehensive picture will be forthcoming.

Analysis

Apart from the extremely low birth rate, the task force took cognizance of the other historical factors which seem to have restricted the population growth of our community. These include population decimation, with potential adverse long term effects on future growth, caused by massacres in the past centuries and other major tragedies in the form of natural calamities like the famine and plague in India.

Other sociological, biological, economic and psychological factors include an unfavorable age distribution (the mean age indicating an increasingly ageing community), fall in marriage frequency, education and advancement of women, advent of prosperity and desire to maintain a high standard of living by limiting births, a desire to afford higher education to a smaller number of children, late marriages and extreme urbanization.

While some of these factors hold true in the North American context, in the absence of regular social interaction within the community resulting from a lack of vibrant community life and few social and cultural institutions, the risk of being assimilated by a dominant host culture is more pronounced.

In India and in Iran, we lived in large enough groups so that our children could find a supportive Zoroastrian atmosphere and culture. Quite a substantial part of the religion was transmitted by public institutions and frequency of public rituals. In North America, contacts between families are few and far between. Even in the same city, it is difficult to meet for educational or religious purposes due to the distances involved. The transfer of the religion and

values to children is not automatic through the community. It can mainly be done by special efforts made in individual homes and for this, the parents need a lot of support.

The increasing trend towards mixed marriages, a phenomenon not peculiar to the North American scene, is a further cause for concern, especially as there is a perception, and only a perception, that even in the absence of significant social barriers in North America, the offspring of such unions tend to drift away, both in the religious and social sense, from the community. Only a more scientific study can establish whether such perceptions are indeed valid.

Recommendations

From its preliminary review of past events and current trends, the task force confirms the view that unless miraculously saved, the community is in real danger of losing its identity, characteristics and individual existence over the next couple of generations. This fact must be forcefully ingrained upon the consciousness of the community so that above all else, they are constantly aware of the fact that if our demographic numbers are lost, then all else that we are currently engaged in doing will also die a natural death.

Unity within the community is absolutely essential if we are to meet this challenge together. As one member of the task force wrote elsewhere, "neither blind orthodoxy nor rabid liberalism should be tolerated" in the search for solutions. These arguments "have been divisive, regressive factors leading to our present predicament," generating more heat than light in the process. "No excessive weight need be given to change for the sake of change whether in ecclesiastical or social matters. Care should be taken not to throw out the baby with the bathwater and not to lose sight of the forest for the trees."

There is a crying need for a strong religious revival movement within the community, with a deeper appreciation of our history, culture and heritage. What is needed is a shift away from western materialism and moral values, to a reorientation towards the principles of simplicity, frugality, honest hard work, public service and dedication, as the guide posts of our daily life as inculcated by the Zoroastrian religion and

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Some more specific recommendations emerged from the task force's deliberations:

1. A detailed census and demographic enumeration should be initiated by FEZANA through its member associations to keep an accurate count of our demographic change every two years.

2. Our youth must be actively encouraged to be an integral part of the mainstream of all our community activities. More particularly, they must be inducted to serve on the governing bodies, such as the executive committees and sub-committees of FEZANA and member associations. This will heighten their awareness of the critical issues facing the community and enhance the process of their identifying with it as they gradually assume greater responsibility for the future preservation of our community.

3. Parents should encourage their children to marry early and to marry within the community. To that end they should take a more pro-active role in subtle match-making, otherwise the potential of marriage outside the community will become a self-fulfilling prophecy. A defeatist attitude in this regard should be replaced by a more positive outlook.

4. An intensive educational program should be launched to raise the awareness of the community to the real threat of impending extinction, and to counter the general apathy and indifference by a program of studies in our history, religion and culture, so that there is better appreciation of the reasons why our heritage and noble religion are worth preserving at all costs.

5. Consideration should be given for the production and distribution to all households of a steady stream of booklets, tapes and videos suitable for various age groups pertaining to our history, culture and religion. The material has to be accurate, brief and simple for the average reader. To create interest, seed money must be found to distribute this free of charge in the first instance and then continuing the program by asking for donations.

6. A central Zoroastrian Information Service must be established which keeps a stock of all old and new publications, periodicals and pamphlets at a central well-publicised location in North America, with a catalogue and pricelist to sustain that service. Seed money will also be required before it becomes financially self-supportive.

7. Creative thinking must be applied to devise more opportunities to bring about

constant and frequent social interaction, especially between the younger members of our community, so that they develop a sense of belonging, affinity and loyalty to their community. Events like religious forums, youth recognition nights, career information seminars, fund-raising activities, etc., should be organized to bring our young people together as often as possible.

8. Most importantly, to offset the all pervasive effects of Western culture, community members, particularly parents of young Zoroastrians, must be provided with a list of suggestions regarding daily routines and observances which can be introduced and implemented to impart a distinctive flavor and identity to a Zoroastrian household. These can be in the form of religious and social activities and customs, practised individually or as a family unit when appropriate (see box).

9. There should be a closer and closer integration between Zoroastrians from Iran and India, not only for the sake of unity but because both groups can learn from each other's experiences. Those from the Indian sub-continent can take a leaf out of the book of their Iranian counterparts in their attempts to preserve their language (Farsi) and culture. Those from Iran could revive and resume certain religious practices and

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observances which, due to past religious persecution and political oppression, may have fallen into disuse in recent times.

10. More open forums should be held periodically to deal with this issue of survival, so that it remains in the spotlight as a high priority issue. Such forums will serve to provide an opportunity to constantly assess and re-evaluate progress made to date and to introduce new ideas that may be forthcoming. Members of

other communities, such as the Jewish community, who have more experience in dealing with a similar situation, should be invited to share their experiences and solutions with us.

11. The community should appreciate and recognize the role played by the mobeds in the service of the community at much cost of time and money. They are the vital thread that holds the community together and a mainstay for our preservation and

identity. Our appreciation should go beyond expressions of verbal gratitude to more tangible means of support.

12. Our community organizations, especially our youth, should be encouraged to take part in interfaith activities so that the Zoroastrian faith has a higher profile and respect in the North American environment, our children learn more about our own faith as they learn about others and they are instilled with a sense of pride which comes with the awareness of Zoroastrianism being recognized as one of the world's major religions.

13. Finally, we need to evaluate the experiences of our past in juxtaposition with the needs of the future. The community needs a well thought out action plan as it charts its way through the earlier critical decades of its existence on this continent. No such plan can be devised in the absence of a scientific assessment and study of its socio-religious needs for the future. To that end, serious consideration should be given to invite a researcher like Dr (Ms) Huzan Kharas, who has already expressed a desire to be involved in such a project, to North America to undertake, at a minimum, a pilot study at a major North American Zoroastrian center of population such as Ontario.

Suggested Daily Observances for a Zoroastrian Household

It is recommended that the community rediscover and observe within each home such domestic, cultural and socio-religious practices as are our derived heritage and viewed as our particular identification. This should be done while the first generation of immigrants are still around or it will be irretrievably lost for good.

More specifically such suggestions include:

- * Setting aside a religious corner or room in the home where religious artifacts such as an oil lamp, portrait of the Prophet, incense burner, etc are

kept. Such a place could serve as a focal point for religious observances where family members can individually or collectively pray at appropriate times.

- * Wearing the sudreh and kusti and reciting the kusti prayers each morning and night and, where practicable, before meals and after using the washroom.

- * Encouraging family members to recite at a minimum, the *Sarosh Baj* prayers before embarking on the day's activities and before retiring at night.

- * Lighting a fire and censuring the house by burning incense and sandalwood on appropriate days.

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THE CASE FOR ACCEPTANCE

Intermarried Zoroastrians can no longer be denied membership of the Poona Parsi Panchayat

Amavaz S. Mama

"The trustees of Poona Parsi Panchayat... are hereby directed to manage the trust affairs as per the provisions of the scheme settled by the deputy charity commissioner (with appellate powers) vide his orders dated February 14, 1980.

"The trustees are hereby directed to consider the application of Shri Mehta as per the provisions of the scheme and intimate the final decision to him within one month's time.

"A report is hereby submitted to the first joint charity commissioner, Pune for considering of starting suo-moto inquiry under section 41D of the B.P.T. (Bombay Public Trusts) Act 1950 for removal and suspension of the trustees who have taken a contentious view in respect of the implementation of the scheme..." reads the order of S. S. Pendse, deputy charity commissioner (DCC), Pune, dated February 25, 1993.

Though the Poona Parsi Panchayat (PPP) trustees contested the decision before the joint charity commissioner (JCC) the rebuke from the DCC paved the way for the eventual acceptance of Cmdre Lovji Mehta, director of the J. N. Petit Technical High School, as a member of the PPP. Born of Parsi Zoroastrian parents, professing the Zoroastrian faith, Mehta's entry had been barred by the PPP trustees because of his non-Parsi spouse on the strength of article 5(i) in the original Gujarati constitution of the Panchayat of 1951. More than that, the judgement exposed the fact that the PPP was functioning under a constitution that had been nullified and replaced by the DCC 14 years ago.

The new streamlined constitution had been provided when the PPP and the Burjorjee Manekji Talukdar Building Fund sought permission to amalgamate under the PPP banner as both trusts provided nearly identical services to the same set of beneficiaries. The DCC M. G. Madan had noted in his judgement of February 14,

amalgamated trust. However, I am unable to accept the said contention. I have gone through the said constitution and I find that the provisions of this constitution (are) not quite proper to manage the day-to-day affairs of the trust. Moreover, the mode is by way of election. Now when the trustees are to be appointed by election it is necessary to

lay down detailed rules and regulations as to the mode and manner in which the elections are to be held, otherwise it is likely to create disputes and confusion at the time of holding elections, leading to unnecessary litigation between parties. I therefore feel that there should be a comprehensive scheme laying down all these rules in detail so that there is no difficulty in the management and administration of the said trust. I therefore hold that it is necessary to frame a separate scheme for the amalgamated trust..."

The DCC whittled down the old anjuman committee system of trustee elections comprising four registers to a single vote per adult member. He provided for three classes of membership viz ordinary, life and donor members. The board of seven trustees was required to elect a chairman, vice chairman, secretary, treasurer and assistant secretary from among themselves each year of its three-year tenure, shortened from the original five.

Pesi S. Anklesaria, Pesi A. Chindy, Maneck N. Anklesaria, Nozer H. Homeji, Dr (Ms) Roshen N. Minocher Homji and Ms Homai Pudumji were named as the first board of the amalgamated trust and were charged with the implementation of the



The main protagonists in the battle of the constitutions: (left to right, top) Mehta and Eruch Irani (below) Anklesaria and Davierwalla

1980. "It is suggested on behalf of the applicants that this constitution of the PPP should be treated as the constitution of the

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new scheme. The new constitution changed the terms of membership. It declared, "Any male or female adult person belonging to the Parsi Zoroastrian community and residing within the vicinity of Poona district shall be eligible to become member of the said trust and eligible to apply for election of trusteeship and vote at the time of election and attend general body (meetings) of the trust." The anti-intermarriage bias of the old scheme had been rejected. So also was clause 28(ii) of the 1951 scheme which required trustees to be a minimum 35 years of age. Under the new dispensation any adult Parsi Zoroastrian who has been a member of the PPP for two years continuously, and has no arrears of subscription, is eligible to stand for election as trustee.

These two aspects of the new scheme may have rankled with the then trustees of the PPP, known for their conservatism on socio-religious issues as well as the stand-off between themselves and Poona's youth body, the Zoroastrian Youth Association (ZYA).

The then PPP board had the options of appealing against the new scheme or of going its own way and forgetting about an amalgamation with the Talukdar Fund. It chose a third: It proceeded with the amalgamation, accepted the Talukdar Fund

property, and swept the new constitution given for the amalgamated trust under the carpet. After 14 years however an appeal against the 1980 constitution is time barred, as notes former trustee Jamshed Bokdawalla.

The matter came to light when youth activist Eruch Irani petitioned the charity commissioner (CC) under the 1951 constitution in early 1992. He claimed that monies collected by him as member of ZYA for the specific purpose of providing a tube well at the doongerwadi had been amalgamated by the then trustees under the 'miscellaneous' head and no account of the collection was provided despite several reminders.

Served with a legal notice the PPP trustees (Minoo and Parveen Davierwalla, Boman Amaria, Murzban Kekobad, Dinshaw Anklesaria, Dara Irani and Bokdawalla) sought the authentic copy of the original constitution and, not finding it, applied for a copy from the CC. The CC's office informed them that the PPP was required to function under its 1980 constitution and that the 1951 constitution no longer applied, informs Eruch.

"It came as a shock to the board. We were elected according to an invalid constitution," Bokdawalla recalls the reaction of

the PPP trustees when they first realized that the 1951 constitution had been replaced years ago. "At one time the board decided we'd resign voluntarily and seek the charity commissioner's advice. (Maybe) function as an interim board until a new election under the 1980 scheme is held. Subsequently, due to external interferences from people who were not Panchayat members, they stated that this (1951) constitution is still valid and that the DCC had no powers to reject it... There were two groups, each wanting to follow a different scheme," Bokdawalla recounts some of the ideas that affected his cotrustees.

Davierwalla's board, by a majority of five to two (Bokdawalla and D. Irani dissenting), refused to accept the 1980 scheme. Being in the minority, "we accepted the majority view but minuted our objection in each and every meeting," says Bokdawalla. Two legal opinions were taken on which scheme was valid — one from A. J. Castelino, an advocate of standing and the other from Justice Jamshed Sanjana (retd). The first opined in favor of the new scheme; the second of the old one, informs M. Davierwalla. It is said that subsequently noted solicitor Burjor Antia was consulted who also advised the acceptance of the new scheme.

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The increasing controversy claimed its casualties. Anklesaria resigned from the board in end 1993 for personal reasons. A by-election to fill the vacancy was held in June 1994 with nominations from Firdosh Kayani and Farokh Irani, a donor member of the PPP who has been divorced from his non-Zoroastrian spouse. "Kayani came to know that the election was according to the 1951 scheme which was invalid and withdrew stating that he didn't want to participate in what was illegal. Therefore F. Irani came in uncontested," says Bokdawalla.

On the heels of F. Irani joining the Panchayat board, both the Davierwallas and Kekobad resigned. Davierwalla says he did not want to work with a man who was married outside the community. It may be noted however that F. Irani was divorced from his non-Zoroastrian wife some years ago. [F. Irani says that when he became a donor member of the Panchayat in 1986, "the old trustees knew I was married to a juddin." He says that objection was first raised against him in 1991, when he wanted to contest for trusteeship though he was by then a divorcee. "They blackmailed me to withdraw my form — talked me into withdrawing my nomination, made it into such a public issue, I knew (there was) no way I'd get the seat... When Dinshaw Anklesaria resigned (in 1993) the seat was vacant for six months. In June '94 there was election for one post from the donor register. Firdosh Kayani and myself gave our nominations. By a majority decision (we were) both declared eligible to contest. Subsequently Kayani withdrew in my favor and I was declared (elected) unopposed."]

Thus a truncated Panchayat board of only four trustees faced the DCC for the final hearing of Mehta's application for membership on July 18, 1994. "Out of the seven trustees of the trust four trustees have resigned and one is newly elected and therefore there are only four trustees at present. And out of them three trustees have filed the application ... that the trustees accept the scheme of 1980 passed by Deputy Charity Commissioner M. G. Madan, and they have stated that it is legally binding on Poona Parsi Panchayat and they are prepared to administer the trust under this scheme," states the judgement of DCC R. V. Mogare. It further notes, "The applicant has stated (in writing) that now that the majority of the board of trustees of the PPP have accepted in writing to the court that they accept the scheme of 1980 the court may take cognizance of this acceptance. No further action

is therefore deemed necessary and he has requested to file his application.

"In the circumstances, I feel that it is not necessary to turn the miscellaneous application into an application under section 41A as directed by the learned Joint Charity Commissioner Pune. As the trustees of the Poona Parsi Panchayat have accepted the scheme of 1980 and assured to administer the trust accordingly, there is no necessity to issue directions in the matter. Hence...the inquiry is ordered to be dropped with no order as to costs."

Mehta's membership was accepted by the PPP board on December 29, 1994. The next day, the penultimate day of his term, the only dissenting trustee, Amaria tendered his resignation from trusteeship. His letter to the JCC notes,

"I, the undersigned life member of the PPP duly elected as one of the trustees under the abovesaid constitution of 1953 (sic) for a five-year term 1992-96.

"We on taking office under the same old constitution 1953 (sic) to our surprise discovered the existence of a scheme dated February 14, 1980 by Shri M. G. Madan, Dy Charity Commissioner, Bombay the legality of which is questionable and in practice has never been implemented and followed till date.

"Now in Misc Enquiry Appl No 40/1993, three trustees (of which one again is NOT eligible having been married to a non-Parsi/Irani Zoroastrian) of a full authorization of seven trustees who constitute a board of trustees have taken it upon themselves to follow the scheme without valid authority of the general body and therefore illegal and invalid.

"It is the paramount duty of an elected trustee to uphold in letter and in spirit the wishes of the author trustees who were all men of eminence and highly respected by our Parsi/Irani Zoroastrian community.

"Of the six trustees left, three more elected trustees resigned in protest on eligibility of membership. In spite of that my cotrustees have recently admitted as a member who is not eligible being married to a non-Zoroastrian which even under the scheme could have exercised their discretion in the best interest of the trust.

"Following the scheme I will fail in my paramount duty as an elected trustee to uphold our constitution of 1953 (sic) in letter and spirit and the best interest of the trust...

"In view of the above I hereby submit my resignation for acceptance to you Sir, direct, the acceptance of which may kindly be communicated to me at the earliest, please."

Mehta takes on the PPP

The ding-dong battle between Commodore Lovji Mehta and the PPP had been going on for nearly five years. Mehta had brought the issue before the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India's executive council meeting in Delhi in 1990. There the PPP trustees had registered themselves bound by their 1951 constitution, clause 5(i) of which specifically debars Parsi Zoroastrians married outside the community from membership of the Panchayat. Faced by such an irrefutable argument the Federation had demurred from interfering in the "internal affairs of its members." Mehta had promised that if he got no redress from the community, he would pursue his claim through the media and the courts.

Accordingly Mehta says he put up a public interest representation to the DCC announcing that he was being deprived of his rights as a Parsi Zoroastrian because he was married to a non-Zoroastrian. Shortly thereafter he learnt of the existence of the 1980 constitution in which it "became very clear that I could be made a member without any hitch."

About the same time PPP's Dara Irani had also discovered this scheme, says Mehta. "So I put up a second letter to the DCC saying there is a later scheme of 1980 under which membership cannot be denied to me... and I would like to know what the DCC had done to my original letter (as) I had received no reply from him or the PPP... As a follow up on my letter the DCC asked for comments from the PPP and there was a difference of opinion between the existing trustees at that stage."

A blow by blow account of Mehta's pursuit of his PPP membership:

November 10, 1989: Mehta applied for membership and paid his subscription

May 19, 1990: membership refused and subscription returned

June 6, 1990: Mehta wrote to PPP asking for grounds of refusal

June 13, 1990: PPP replied justifying refusal on grounds of intermarriage

July 31, 1992: Mehta's first letter to the DCC

September 15, 1992: Mehta's second letter to the DCC

"The DCC decided the case on the basis of documents I produced (and) the reply the PPP made in writing — two trustees said they accepted the 1980 scheme and the (five) others said the 1980 scheme was not applicable to them and the DCC had no business to put up a new scheme. At the initial hearing when I was heard — I argued



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my case in person and they were heard through their lawyer — (some) eminent Parsis (Brig Noshir and his wife Mini Grant, Ms Tehmi Grant, Brig and Ms Jambusarwalla, Maj Edulji, Dr Sam Dalal, Yezdi Marker, Eruch Irani) were present in court and said they wanted their presence recorded because as members (of the PPP) they wanted to see the 1980 scheme accepted. DCC S. S. Pendse said, 'There's no question — the 1980 scheme is the only legal scheme,' quotes Mehta.

The matter however did not stop there. Narrates Mehta, "A little later (on March 17, 1993) the five aggrieved trustees put up a case in appeal to the JCC saying the DCC had no business to pass the order that he did and that they were not heard in full and arguments on both sides by lawyers had not been carried out. They tried to bring in a stay order, that being married to a non-Parsi I couldn't be considered a Parsi and therefore had no locus standi in the matter. In between they raised the red herring of asking my name to be removed from the case. I argued that I'm the prime mover. Only on my application that the whole case started and therefore most essential that I be a party in the case. On March 23, 1993 the JCC gave an ad interim status quo until the case could be heard and passed it back to the

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DCC saying that the applicants say they were not heard fully and they should be given full chance to be heard again."

By the time the case came up before the DCC for the second time, Pendse had vacated the office and there was a new incumbent. Also, Anklesaria had resigned and Farokh Irani had become a trustee in his place, triggering the resignation of the Davierwallas and Kekobad.

"So at the time of finalizing the second time at the DCC's court (on July 18, 1994) there were Dara Irani, Jamshed Bokdawalla, Boman Amaria and Farokh Irani. Of these four, three (D. Irani, Bokdawalla and F. Irani) told the DCC that they accepted the 1980 scheme by majority vote. When I was asked, I said if they accepted the 1980 scheme and gave it to the court in writing, I had no objection.

"The judge signed that it has been accepted in his presence. I gave in writing on the same paper that I had no objection to the case being dropped now that they had accepted the 1980 scheme.

"After this order was passed I put up my letter to the board that in view of the 1980 scheme being accepted by them I be made a member and gave a fresh life membership subscription to which I was told my membership would be considered only after I

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withdrew the other case pending in the small causes court which I had simultaneously filed. I did that and my membership was accepted on December 29, 1994 — two days before the existing board's tenure ended."

Mehta took up his assignment at the J. N. Petit Technical High School eight years ago, after 33 years in the Indian Navy. Nisha and he have been married 32 years and have a daughter Scheherezade (30) and son Rayomond (28) who are well into their respective careers with Thomas Cook and Nerula's Fast Foods. Both children had been duly initiated into the Zoroastrian faith.

A major contention in the debate is the PPP's hitherto ambivalent application of article 5(i) that pertains to the bar on intermarriage. [Article 5(i) in translation notes,; 'Parsi' signifies any male or female Parsi/Irani who professes the Zoroastrian faith. However, any Parsi or Irani man whose wife or mistress is a juddin and any Parsi or Irani woman with a juddin husband or paramour are debarred from membership of the Panchayat along with their spouse/paramour and the children of such unions.] "They conveniently forgot that they had members married to non-Parsis to whom they said nothing at all. There was no

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break in that membership," says Mehta alluding to the American wife of Perviz Grant, the son of Dr Keki and Tehmi Grant.

According to Bokdawalla, "Dastur Hormuzdiar Noshirwan Kaikobad Dastur (High Priest of the Deccan) when consulted, said 'How does the question of membership of Lovji arise when two nassessalars on the Panchayat payroll have juddin wives?'" The senior one enjoys all the benefits of the Panchayat including free quarters and educational help for the children, informs Bokdawalla. "The head nassessalar was married 22 years ago. Since then so many boards have come and gone and nobody objected. Subsequently a second nassessalar with a juddin wife was employed seven or eight years ago... The nassessalar performs the sachkar and there is no overt objection from the priests," says Bokdawalla noting that these are "double standards... What we were always stressing is, have one yardstick... Why don't you say '*Humara ghera sachkar karsé, humara ghera khand marsé*' (Our family members will do the sachkar, our family members will act as pallbearers) and not the nassessalars?"

The conservatives' case

Minoo Davierwalla, erstwhile chairman of the PPP board, voiced his perception of the imbroglio to *Parsiana* on January 10, 1995. Noting that the trustees of the PPP and the Talukdar Fund had "applied for amalgamation with the request that the constitution of the PPP would be used," Davierwalla voiced his dissatisfaction with the DCC's stand that the (original) constitution was not exhaustive enough and that a new scheme was required. "The old constitution had an elaborate scheme. Each register had a representative on the Anjuman Committee. The DCC felt it was not good enough and made it one man one vote and (that) any adult Parsi could be a member of the trust. The old constitution had made Parsis married outside ineligible. Accordingly (the Panchayat) did not take such persons into the membership," he explained.

"When the new board came in on January 1, 1992 we were in search of the original constitution (and we) laid our hands on this (one). The majority on the board — five of us — felt that this scheme (of 1980) was not good for the community. So we sought legal opinion from two luminaries — Judge Sanjana and Advocate Castelino. Sanjana was of the opinion that the DCC had no jurisdiction to frame a scheme since the original one was in existence. Also he (the DCC) had failed to define a Parsi. The old constitution had the

correct definition. The old framers had in mind that when people marry out the facilities would be diluted," Davierwalla voiced his conviction.

Davierwalla said that in trustee meetings they had sought to sort out the matter by incorporating amendments based on the old constitution into the new scheme and applied to the JCC in May 1994. "The office of the charity commissioner is very slow. The matter did not come up for hearing and in the meantime there was another development," Davierwalla alludes to Anklesaria's resignation.

"The case is still pending with the JCC. We asked for specific hearing. We were given the date February 1, 1995. We are trying to see that the old constitution is reinstated. We feel that we have the backing of the silent majority. The general body is ultimately the sole arbiter of its fate... We got both schemes printed and circulated so that the general body would know... It was a major change which should have been presented to them. In February 1994 I called a (general body) meeting for June 94."

However the election of Farokh Irani in the casual vacancy election on Anklesaria's resignation led Davierwalla, his wife and Kekobad to resign. His reason: "I did not want to sit on the board with a person who had married out."

Referring to Mehta's application for membership Davierwalla notes, "In 1992 Cmdre Mehta filed a case to be admitted as member under the 1980 scheme. The assistant charity commissioner passed an order directing the trustees to call him for an interview and decide about his application. We filed a revision application to the joint charity commissioner that he cannot be admitted as member in terms of the old constitution which had hitherto been followed. The JCC gave a ruling that Cmdre Mehta can't insist on the trustees to admit him as member and the case reverted to the Assistant CC for hearing. They (the new trustees) may have withdrawn the case."

PPP — the restructuring

Following the DCC's order of July 18, 1994 the PPP board declared elections for a new board of trustees on November 27, 1994. However, of the original eight nominations received, one was declared invalid on the ground of subscription arrears, noted Bokdawalla and hence the remaining seven were declared elected unopposed for a three-year term from January 1995 to December 1997.

"Two people filed cases against the PPP that this election as per the 1980 scheme

was invalid. One withdrew. Then the second withdrew stating that because of old age he can't pursue the matter," further informed Bokdawalla.

In his second term as trustee, advocate and notary Dara Irani leads the new team at the PPP whose predominant qualities at first call are enthusiasm and youthfulness. The other members are vice chairman Farokh Irani, secretary Eruch Irani, joint secretary Ms Shiraz Anklesaria, treasurer Kersey Daruvala, members at large Boman Irani and Firdosh Kayani.

According to the priorities they voiced in the course of an interview with *Parsiana* on January 9, 1995 the utilization of the Panchayat's land at Lullanagar by construction of flats for the weaker sections of the community, a hostel for out of town Zoroastrian students and a dharamshala are projects under consideration. Most notably they hope to expand the membership of the Panchayat and get the community actively involved in its workings.

The PPP currently has about 1,21,900 sq m of land, says Eruch of which they would be allowed to develop 56,750 sq m on rental basis for the community's weaker sections. "Of the rest, allowing some land for roads, 52,270 sq m would remain of which 30 percent would need to be ceded to the government free of charge if the rest (36,589 sq m) is to be developed on ownership under the town planning requirements."

"Come what may, we are going ahead with the construction," says Dara. The aim is to construct about 1,000 flats of 550 to 600 sq ft for the poor of the community. "Why make a profit?" he asks. His aim is to recover the cost of construction in instalments from the lessees. Once the CC's permission is in hand Dara says "the PPP will invite tenders and involve the community youth in supervising the construction, not *ké trusteeo karya karsé* (that the trustees alone will do everything)."

Eruch believes it is "most important that we save the land. If we sell flats (on ownership) we have to give away 30 percent (to government to obtain permission to build ownership flats under the Urban Land Ceiling Act)... We are bound to receive donations. We have been promised funding but we must start the project."

"We have written to the Hongkong anjuman for help," says Dara. "We can take off within six months provided the community is with us... People have an eye on the land. If we don't go ahead we'll lose it in the next town planning act." The trustees say "we are not against transfer (of tenancy/lease) but not to a non-Zoroastrian."

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Dara retraced the various schemes and suggestions that over the years had been pursued by the PPP for the development of the Lullanagar land. The first intention had been to sell plots of the land but the people had objected. Hence the Panchayat decided, by a majority, to give the land to Tata Housing to develop. The negotiations reached the draft MOU (memorandum of understanding) stage which was then rejected by the PPP as Tata Housing were asking for over Rs 600 per sq ft on which they would charge interest at 21 percent. "We asked for simultaneous construction of ownership and lease rent flats for the poor. They were to recover the cost of construction of the lease flats from the ownership flats but they asked for 15 percent supervision fee as against the market rate of five percent. They then came down to 10 percent. Then in the MOU they wanted the PPP to liaise for permission."

"Tata Housing's terms were not acceptable. The deal got knocked down at the MOU stage... That was one point when there was general agreement among the trustees," notes former trustee Bokdawalla with a laugh — an oblique comment on the dissensions that rocked the 1992-94 board.

Eruch's description of the present board, as "full of youths and positive thinking people" ready to serve the community, is echoed by his co-trustees Kayani, Farokh Irani and Anklesaria. Boman Irani makes it a point to note, "We have trust in each other" and adds that his service will be "for

**"I will fail in my
paramount duty as
an elected trustee
to uphold our
constitution of
1953 (sic)"**

Zoroastrians, not for Parsis or Iranis." Daruvala wants to use "the good offices of the PPP to see that in colleges our boys get admission, give them infrastructural facilities (like hostels), provide educational information. Secondly, we're all young. Definitely we have our ideas. We respect

the experience of the old. They have the right to rectify us when we go wrong but not to put us down. Everyone should have the chance to put one's thought forward."

Dara says they have been promised donations for the object of building a dharamshala and a hostel. "There's never been a time when Parsis don't donate when work is done. From centuries it's been so," adds Eruch. Describing his work as a youth activist in getting washbasins, toilets, underground and overhead tanks and a pump for the J. J. Agiary, Eruch noted, "We went to the community and asked for so many bricks, so much cement, etc and got the work done in the Agiary. (I) had excess funds, so I came to the PPP to do work. That's the main reason why I'm sitting here — to do work."

According to Dara every month about five Parsis are buying flats in Pune. This influx could strengthen the community. Though not everyone is aware of the events which have been shaping the PPP in the past months Dara notes a tremendous increase in membership of the Panchayat from about 1,000 in July 1994. "In the past six months about 300-400 members have joined," he says.

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THE PUNCHAYET'S PRIORITIES

The BPP press conference covered a range of topics including the issue of recognizing Neville Wadia's navjote

Five months after Neville Wadia, octogenarian philanthropist and doyen of the Wadia family, had his navjote ceremony performed at his son's Juhu residence, the trustees of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP) have decided to accept the five high priests' opinion and recognized his initiation in the Zoroastrian faith. This means Wadia is entitled to enter the Godavra Agiary, managed by the BPP, and have his body consigned to the towers of silence at his death.

A month earlier, speaking to members of the Press at a mammoth three-hour conference held at the BPP offices after a gap of exactly one year, BPP chairman Jamshed N. Guzder and trustee Eruch Desai both said the question of Wadia's admission to the two punchayet run institutions was "under consideration." Guzder informed the Press that he had raised the subject of Wadia's navjote at the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India meeting in Delhi on January 28 and 29, 1995 at which, though conflicting points of view were offered, more delegates seemed to favor accepting Wadia into the fold.

Zoroastrian Studies (ZS) founder Khojeste Mistree, who represented the ZS newsletter *Ushta*, asked the trustees if they were going

"adjudicate" on religious matters when five high priests had already said Wadia's navjote was permissible. Desai pointed out that the BPP trustees had taken religious decisions both in the case of Joseph Peterson's navjote and the Roxan Shah episode.

The BPP had passed a resolution expressing their disapproval of the American engineer's navjote in New York and said he would not be given the benefit of any of the BPP run institutions meant for Parsi Zoroastrians; while in the case of Ms Roxan Shah, a Parsi Zoroastrian woman married to a Hindu, the BPP had refused her family the right to consign her body to the towers of

silence. Subsequently however, despite objections from the orthodox and people like High Priest (Dr) Firoze Kotwal, the BPP had resolved that if the family of the Zoroastrian woman married outside the faith filed an affidavit stating that the deceased was a Parsi professing Zoroastrianism and had been married under the Special Marriage Act, the body could be consigned to a specially earmarked dokhma.

Guzder noted that the trustees were discussing the Wadia issue with a wide-ranging segment of the community, but that in the meantime Wadia had been welcomed into the portals of the H. B. Wadia Atash Bahram as well as in the Nusserwanji Hirji Karani Agiary at Cusrow Baug, of which Guzder is the chairman. "Neville phoned and asked me if he would be permitted admission and I said of course," Guzder told the Federation executive council.

The subject of Wadia's navjote was raised by Maneck Chena of *The Bombay Samachar* when he enquired why Guzder had not answered, even after four months, Wadia's letter informing him of the navjote and enclosing a statement by public notary and former BPP trustee Shiavax Vakil that the navjote ceremony had been duly performed. The discussion took place at the tail end of the meeting. "Neville wrote the letter to me and



Wadia addressing a gathering at Rustom Baug after being felicitated by the colony residents on becoming a Zoroastrian



Godavra Agiary: the only one under the BPP

then he left for London," explained Guzder. He believed the purpose of the letter was to confirm the discussion and "no reply was necessary." As an individual trustee he did not feel he should write.

At this point BPP trustee Ms Silloo Kavarana interjected that Wadia had not sought the advice of Guzder or the other trustees prior to having his navjote performed.

When asked by the Press when a decision would be taken in Wadia's case, Desai replied, "Within a month's time."

Mistree was asked to state his views on the navjote but refrained from doing so as he felt this was not the correct forum. Mistree also criticized the role of the Press at the conference stating that members of the Press were imparting advice to the trustees in instead of restricting themselves to asking questions.

Rumors of Jamsheed Kanga resigning as a trustee were unconfirmed by Guzder at the press meet. Kanga who was not present at the

conference due to business commitments, "has to travel consistently," said Guzder as he was the managing director and vice chairman of Tata Housing. "Whether he chooses to resign or not is not for me to state," said the chairman. According to informed sources Kanga has resigned from the CER (formerly the Committee for Electoral Rights and now named the Committee for Economic Revival) over differences with Fali Poncha and BPP trustee Dinshaw Mehta, both office bearers and party activists of the CER that Kanga co-founded with lawyer Dadi Engineer 15 years ago. One major point of difference was over whether the House of Godrej should pay for the development costs of Godrej Baug.

A debate took place at the conference on the development cost aspect with the trustees airing their differences. According to Guzder the trustees by a vote of four to two, with one abstention, had decided against charging Godrej for the costs. A decision to seek the advice of a legal counsel on the subject was also turned down by a majority, said Guzder. Desai, Kanga, Minoo Shroff and Dr (Ms) Mehroo Bengalee carried the majority.

Poncha, representing *The Zoroastrian*, said that not levying a charge on Godrej meant a loss of revenue of around Rs 50 lakhs to the BPP. Land development costs pertain to levelling, sewage, parking, roads and such costs, explained Poncha. Desai, however, explained that in 1979 when a housing colony adjacent to the doongerwadi lands was first proposed, few donors came forth. In those rather bleak days when the Punchayet's image was at a low ebb, Navroji Godrej came forward and constructed several buildings. On the flats constructed and paid for by them, they had a 50 percent allocation right. Relations between Godrej and some of the trustees and members of the CER were strained when in 1985 Navroji Godrej decided to stand against Guzder, a CER supporter, who was seeking a second term as a BPP trustee.

The happy tidings of a 23

lakh donation by the Zartoshty Brothers for fostering Zoroastrian scholarship was announced by Guzder. "I opened this envelope addressed to me and found inside a cheque for 23 lakh rupees," said Guzder. According to the Punchayet press release, the two objects of the trust are "helping persons who are willing to study (the) Zoroastrian religion on a higher basis to become scholars" and secondly, "helping persons who become scholars in the said field and will continue serving the community by ... teaching and preaching."

A committee has been formed consisting of the high priests, priests and scholars to frame a scheme. A sub-committee has also been formed, chaired by lawyer and YCZA (Young Collegiate Zoroastrian Association) co-founder Nadir Modi; the other members include Ervad (Dr) Rooyintan Peer, principal of the M. F. Cama Athornan Madressa; Ervad Ramiyar Karanjia, vice principal of the Dadar Athornan Boarding Madressa; and scholar Dr Homi Dhalla.

Guzder asked if the Press had persons to recommend, which caused one of the representatives to point out the absence of any person from ZS on the committee.

"We were not even consulted," stated Mistree, "even though we are the premier educational institution" teaching the religion.

Poncha said he was amazed at the exclusion of Mistree while Noshir Dadrawalla, representing the *Jam-e-Jamshed Weekly* and the *Deen Parast* monthly claimed there

continued on page 73

The agiary under construction at Godrej Baug



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Oh Calcutta!

The controversy over the navjote of two children of Parsi women has split the Calcutta community

Can a community institution hall be used to perform the navjote ceremony of a child born of a Parsi mother and non-Parsi father and at what price? This is the question that confronted the Zoroastrians of Calcutta a few months ago.

According to a report in the Calcutta Zoroastrian Community's Religious and Charity Fund (CZCRCF) newsletter, the *Calcutta Gavashni* of October-November 1994, "the community's mind is exercised at present about the navjotes of two children of Parsi mothers and non-Parsi fathers." The two cases involved the children of Ms Soona Dilip Dhankani described in the newsletter as "a young Parsi widow" and Shirin and Swapan Poddar.

Dhankani's father Dinshaw Medhora wrote to the CZCRCF asking to book the hall to which P. T. Dustoor, the office manager, replied that "the hall is at present available for 8th January, 1995." Medhora was requested to personally call at the office to confirm the booking by signing the special booking register. The letter noted, "the amount payable for Parsi booking is: donation Rs 101, use of kitchen Rs 250, total amount Rs 351." Accordingly, Dhankani called on the office and confirmed the booking, states a letter addressed to the trustees of the CZCRCF by Medhora: "Some time later your office phoned that I should call on them. I was not in good health (so) I asked my daughter to call. She was informed that

the navjote ceremony of (her) son Rahul could not be performed in the Hall as the Mehta Agiary panthakis have protested and they would not work any more in the Agiary.

"For your information I have to state that I had contacted a Parsi priest from Jamshedpur to perform the ceremony. I had

also discussed this matter with our Mehta Agiary high priest. Reverend Bapuji is a saint and if there were more high priests like him our community would have a longer life and prosperity. I then contacted the Anjuman authority and handed over my application for the Hall, stating at the same time that the Hall was for the navjote ceremony of my grandson Rahul and that I had discussed the matter with the Agiary high priest. From this it

will appear that I had not tried to hide my motive for reserving the Hall. Further, my daughter had also intimated to your Anjuman office about the navjote ceremony.

"My daughter Soona was further informed by your office that if I paid Rs 20,000 the navjote ceremony can be performed. I am surprised that a demand of such a nature has been made when the Olpadvala trust (deed) states that it is free for... Parsis. What would your panthakis do if the ceremony is performed by such a payment. Would they not protest and stop work in the Agiary?

"I shall be obliged if you will reply to this letter in detail and let me have the relevant rules of the Anjuman... I am not

asking Mehta Agiary panthakis to perform any navjote ceremony and what connection they can have with the Hall.

"I write this letter with a heavy heart as I had consulted all the authorities in this matter before I had contacted you."

According to the trust deed dated December 19, 1955 between Edulji Shapurji Olpadvala and the trustees of the CZCRCF the ground floor of the Olpadvala Memorial Trust Hall is to be "used and occupied by such members of the Parsi Community of Calcutta and its suburbs as may require the use thereof for the purpose of giving lectures, holdings meetings, celebrating marriages and navjote ceremonies or of any other ceremonial functions of the said community free of any rent fee or charge whatsoever except a reasonable charge for the use of electric lights and fans therein or thereon provided however that the allowing of such use of the said ground floor and garden and grounds for the purposes aforesaid or any of them by such members of the said community shall be under the control and at the absolute discretion of the trustees and they shall be entitled at their absolute discretion either to allow or disallow such use or impose any conditions on any individual member or members of the said community in respect of such use except the charging of any rent or other monetary consideration for such use."

The trust deed further specifies "the word 'Parsi' as used in these presents shall ordinarily mean a person born of Parsi parentage and also professing the Zoroastrian religion and in all cases of doubt and difficulty as to whether any person deserving to have the benefit of the said charitable institution is a Parsi or not or otherwise arising from or in relating to the use of that word the opinion of the majority of the trustees shall be final and conclusive and shall not be liable to be called into question on any account whatever."

As the two Calcutta priests Rusi Dustoor and Soli Kotwal, objected to the ceremony being performed in Calcutta even though the third priest Ervad Bapuji Desai reportedly raised no objection, Dhankani (and the Poddars) decided to get the navjote performed in Jamshedpur by Behram Zarolia, a senior officer in the New India Assurance Company who during the muktad used to pray with Bapuji in the agiary. In a letter Homi P. Bodhanwalla, vice president of Jamshedpur Parsi Association, noted, "I



At the Dhankani navjote (L to R) Nilufer Prakash, Dinshaw, Dhun & Neville Medhora, Soona Dhankani and Rahul

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have arranged with Mr Zarolia and everything in Jamshedpur is lined up. The Hall at the Parsi Hostel will be reserved on December 28, 1994 either in my name or Mr Zarolia's name and you may kindly reimburse the charges accordingly.

"Regarding accommodation we can only reserve the guest room in the hostel for 27th and 28th as two rooms are not available. The charges may be paid accordingly.

"Kindly note that the parents of the child have to give an undertaking in writing that the child will practise the Zoroastrian prayers and will perform the basic ceremonies. Kindly note that without this undertaking the navjote cannot be performed. The undertaking must be signed by the parents."

Zarolia had earlier, on November 6, 1994, performed the navjote of Ms Sonia Poddar at the Jamshedpur Hall. As this event led to a controversy in Jamshedpur, Dhankani's navjote was held at Zarolia's residence on December 28, 1994, instead of at the Hall as originally intended.

According to *Gavashni* "The subject was raised at the recent Anjuman meeting. Arguments for and against were intense and cogent but, fortunately, not heated. The mobed sahibs have insisted on the tradi-



Navjoting Rahul: Zarolia (left) and Meher Modi

tional point of view, and the majority of Parsis follow their lead. A minority group, however, is pressing for a change. This has been happening in other cities in India as well as abroad. Delhi, London and American communities follow their own rules. Our community has accepted alteration in social customs. Hardly anyone wears Parsi dress at navjotes, weddings, funerals and on visits to the Agyari. We have forgotten many of the 'purification ceremonies and customs' that prevailed earlier in this century,' and traditional rites on auspicious occasions. Change is inevitable. The question is, has the time come or is it yet too

early for interfaith marriages involving Parsi women to become more acceptable?

"Speakers, both for and against, at the AGM that Sunday called for a full-fledged discussion on the subject. Our trustees cannot call such a meeting. They are elected only to administer the Calcutta Zoroastrian Community's Religious and Charity Funds and allied trusts. The initiative will have to be taken by one of our Calcutta institutions. The Parsee Club may have its own disputes to settle at present, but what about the PZA or the Stree Mandal, or even the Youth League or the CPADC? Main speakers could be invited, the discussion thrown open to the assembly (hopefully a very large assembly of Calcutta's Parsis), and a vote taken at the end. After that the trustees could be requested to act according to the general verdict.

"Another subject also needs the community's consensus. The dokhma. The Vada Dasturji of Navsari has said that we cannot follow both dokhmenashini and burial in the same city. Where there is no dokhma, other methods can be followed. The mobeds have abided by that ruling and do not perform the funeral ceremonies on such occasions. A meeting could empower the trustees to find a suitable solution.

"Both decisions have to be taken by the

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community. Just blaming the trustees is not the way out. Zoroastrianism calls on us to exert our Vohu Mano. Stalwarts in the community can take up the challenge and help us to use our minds...

"A lively question and answer session followed the Chairman's main speech. We give below, not the sum, just the substance of what some of the speakers said.

"Jimmy Majoo

An elderly Parsi gentleman and his daughter, a young Parsi widow married to a non-Parsi, wanted to have her son initiated into the Zoroastrian religion. For that purpose the Zoroastrian gentleman wanted to hire the OMT Hall for the navjote ceremony and reception.

"The person concerned was advised that due to objections from the priests of the Agyari, the ceremony could not be performed at the Hall.

"Bowling to the wishes of the learned priests, the family has decided to have the ceremony performed elsewhere, and there was no reason why the Hall should not be given for the purpose of the reception at the concessional rate for Parsis. To this the trustees replied that even then the Hall could not be given.

"The trustees decided that the navjote in

question was not a 'navjote' according to the present Parsi laws but that it became a 'conversion.' This could not be equated with tenets of the trust deed and, accordingly, they could not provide the Hall to the party in question as is usually done for Parsi ceremonial purposes at the usual concessional rates.

"Jimmy Majoo continued, laying stress on three points:

"1. There should be no discrimination by the trustees with regard to the use of the Hall, which is meant for the Calcutta Parsis, on account of sex, and both male and female should be treated equally.

"2. There was no rationale in refusing the use of the Hall for the purpose of reception on the occasion of a navjote ceremony which was not recognized by the learned priests, when the Hall is being given freely for celebrating wedding receptions of weddings which are also not recognized by the learned priests.

"3. The Parsi community is a dying one. Last year there were 26 deaths and only 5 births in Calcutta. According to *Parsiana* magazine, during the period February/March 1994 to September 1994, there were 563 deaths and only 128 births in Bombay. Therefore, it was a pity that in case where

female Parsis, who married outside the community, not only wanted to retain their religious beliefs but also wanted to bring up their children in the Zoroastrian faith, were prevented by orthodox views from doing so.

"Pinkie Lilaoonwala

Marriages between Parsis and non-Parsis had taken place at Calcutta. These are not recognized by the authorities concerned. Nevertheless the Hall had been given at concessional rates.

"Jimmy Italia

My nephew and niece have also married outside the community. We have to settle such matters among ourselves. If rules are there they should be followed.

"The board at the Agyari reads: 'Entry for Parsi Zoroastrians only' and this should be respected. Invite eminent speakers to enlighten us.

"Minoo Writer

The trustees should not be burdened with changing of the rules and regulations. If this was done in Delhi and Jamshedpur, it must have been done with the full consent of the community.

"If this has to be done, a proper forum

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should be formed and let the community give their votes to the trustees who will then decide whether the rules should be changed or not.

"If the trustees are backed by the community's decisions, then posterity will not point a finger.

"Deena Ardeshir

There should be no reason why one person should be discriminated against when the Hall is given freely to Parsis at practically no cost. After all, it is for the old man and his family who want to celebrate a happy occasion.

"Homi Gotla and Nuni Mehta drew attention to our dokhma. The trustees explained why their suggestions could not be implemented. Since the trustees and the speakers were of the same basic view, there was no controversy.

"The AGM ended in understanding and harmony, and everyone proceeded happily to the refreshments that had been laid out at the OMT Hall."

In the December 1994-January 1995 issue of *Gavashni*, a writer, Phiroze Edulji, offered "a legal view" of the incident.

"The recent meeting of the Calcutta Anjuman saw a rather fierce and emotional

contest on the issue of the justifiability of the refusal of the trustees to let the hall to a Parsi lady, wed to a non-Parsi, for the navjote of her children. Adopting the present interpretation of the law, there seems to be little force in the arguments against such action.

"This may be supported on two grounds. Firstly, the deed creating the trust confers 'absolute discretion' upon the trustees 'either to allow or disallow' the use of the hall. Such a provision conferring absolute power on the trustees is valid in law, provided that the discretion is exercised in a manner keeping with the purpose of the deed, and without arbitrary action or unjust alienation of any of the intended beneficiaries.

"A trust is after all an arrangement for (the) benefit of a certain class of people, and if the trustees, who have taken up the obligation, in their discretion and wisdom, act in a certain manner, there is nothing wrong in it, per se, as long as it does not serve to contravene the trust. Moreover, the trust deed, which is the supreme document, itself confers 'absolute' discretion on the trustees, no legal norm can be said to have been sacrilegied. So, as long as the trustees uphold the sanctity of the objective of the trust, and are in good faith, impartial,

none of their acts can be challenged. The trust deed, in this regard has created an impenetrable legal shield for the trustees, which can be pierced only if the trustees act mala fide, which is not the case here. The impugned action being based on long-standing custom cannot be said to depart from any of these requirements, and hence is obviously a valid exercise of their discretion, in law.

"Secondly, it should be noted that the deed refers to the 'Parsi Community.' Whatever may be the emotional arguments on the Parsi identity, a question of law cannot be decided thereby. The long-standing custom has settled the law on this point, that the Parsis in India do not proselytise, that the community is a closed one, and that only a child of a Parsi father may be admitted to the community. This has been accorded judicial recognition by the Privy Council in *Saklat v. Bella*, AIR 1925 PC 298, following the judgement of the High Court of Bombay in *Dinshaw Manekji Petit's case*, 33 Bom. 509. It is not our place to consider the rationality of such a custom. By its existence, the child of a non-Parsi father and a Parsi mother is excluded from the community and hence from all benefits available to members.

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*Please make sure the reply envelope bears the reference number cited here.

MATRIMONIAL

Parsi boy, aged 31, interested to migrate, commerce graduate and doing business in Bombay, invites correspondence from girls in UK, USA, Canada or Australia.

Please write to:

The Advertiser

Parsiana, Matrimonial (Feb-Mar/8-95)*
GPO Box 892, Bombay 400001

*Please make sure the reply envelope bears the reference number cited here.

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Parsi parents seek alliance for daughter, 31 years, fair, slim graduate with cultured tastes and a generous and affectionate nature, with Parsi bachelor, under 38 years, having a Green Card or citizenship of USA. Please reply with a photo and phone number to:

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There is no dispute as to the existence of this custom at the time of the settlement of the Olpadvala trust; hence it cannot be argued that such children were within the contemplation of the settlor as possible beneficiaries. Hence the action of the trustees cannot be faulted upon any ground."

(Editor's explanatory note: In *Saklat vs Bella* the Privy Council ruled that the trustees had the right to grant entry to Bella, the daughter of a Parsi mother and a Goanese Christian father. The discretion lay with the trustees, stated the Privy Council.)

A mother's anguish

Zoroaster spread a wonderful religion. He did not distinguish between anyone or anything.

Neither did my parents. I grew up with the belief that there is one God and that the relation between man and God is personal and wonderful.

Ten years ago, I married a man whose religion was not the same as mine. I had a son -- Rahul. A child with whom my bond is equally wonderful.

I wanted him to grow up as I did, in my faith, in my religion. I am a Zoroastrian parent and wish that my child be a Zoroastrian too.

I approached the concerned authorities of Calcutta to do his navjote. But despite talks and reasoning, some of the mobeds in the agiary felt it was "unheard" of, "unholy" and that I was "spoiling my son's life" by doing his navjote.

I was greatly pained by the attitude taken by the parties concerned. The Parsi community is diminishing and one would have thought that any steps taken to bring more of our children, born of one Zoroastrian parent, would be in our interest to maintain our heritage. Why then, was the burning question, do we perform the navjote ceremony of the girl if later we are going to totally disregard her contribution to the community?

However I did not wish to unnecessarily complicate matters and in deference to the mobed sahibs' wishes I had my son's navjote done outside Calcutta -- at Jamshedpur in December 1994.

My family and I were made to feel very welcome there and we wish to thank the Jamshedpur community for braving the change and for taking steps to save our ancient and wonderful heritage and culture.

My son and I feel very happy and blessed.

Ms Soona Dhankani

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Sing a song of MATRIMONY

The joy of a wedding lay in the active participation of the guests

Adi Doctor

Wedding is said to be "a significant event. Before it the woman cries, and afterwards the man." That may be today. But in the good old days of *goyans* (female singers) and grandmas, things were different. The bride and the groom joined family members in singing special songs for the occasion.

Alas, today, while the *lagan nu custard* (special dessert served at wedding feasts) still holds its ground, the other relic of the past, *lagan na geeto* (wedding songs), have, by and large, disappeared from Parsi weddings, barring a few exceptions in the mofussil areas of India or some regions like Karachi where customs of yore continue to be observed. A timely collection of some of these little known songs on audio cassettes, issued by the Cowasjee Foundation

and Zoroastrian Studies (ZS) have, as I learnt later, also sought to preserve this legacy.

When the Editor inquired if I would do a piece on the subject, I, a hardboiled bachelor, gleefully said 'Yes,' little realizing what I was in for. Visits to libraries were of no use, except for a slim booklet. A few kind souls directed me to some not-so-young ladies in various Parsi colonies, most of whom went blank after the first line of the verse. One nonagenarian, however, did remember a couple of tunes but not the lyrics. But the poor thing was barely able to let out an emphysemic croak.

Thus, I was about to press the panic button and chuck in the towel when help came from a totally unexpected quarter — my memory!

During my school days, my late-lamented father used to sing songs from old Parsi *nataks* (plays), Hindi films and some old wedding songs. He would chortle with gusto at the oddest of moments: after returning from work, before retiring for the night, etc.

One such old festival song that has rolled down memory lane is *Movanaji*. To this day, I don't know what it means or whether it is the refrain or the title of the song. But it was my favorite. It went something like this: *Arré, pèhlan éna pug peelo né galé golab no har ré, Movanaji*. (O, first apply the turmeric to her feet and place the



garland of roses round her neck). It went on and on, every time ending with the word, *Movanaji*.

Another favorite was, *Arré, aajé to hamé adarayaan, né kalé to hamé parwana; Dharaa paraa bahu kartaa nau né parni né pastata naa. Aadosi paadosi né bhulta naa né parni ne pastata naa...* (Oh, we have got engaged today and will be married tomorrow. Do not fuss too much, lest you regret it after marriage... do not forget your relatives and friends, lest you repent later...)"

One of my prized possessions of childhood was a hand-wound HMV gramophone that was brought out from the cupboard only on festive occasions. While most of the 78 RPMs were more than welcome, the very first mandatory record that had to spin on the turntable was looked upon with dread. In spite of all my pleadings, it was compulsive listening to Soonamai Goyan's *Sakhi Suraj bhalé ugiya ré* (the benevolent sun has risen). Father would turn down all protests against playing this disc, saying, "*Pahélé sagan nu geet to joiyé* (it is necessary to begin with an auspicious song)." Since there were four members in our family, it was played almost every quarter on each birthday, and also on Pateti, Navroz, etc. Many years later I realize that it was one of our wedding songs!

It went like this: Soonabai Goyan was late for her appointment. The old lady of the house kept grumbling, "*Barné dholiyo bi aavi né beth né char bi waga* (the drummers have already presented them-



selves at the door and it's four o'clock)." Then the crowing of the cock is simulated by a girl's voice. Suddenly a female voice pip-squeaks, "*Maiji, maiji, aain Soonabai Goyan aayan!*" ("ma'am, ma'am, here comes Soonabai Goyan!") Promptly is Soonabai reprimanded: "*Oh mai Soonabai, kétlun badhun avvarun keedhun. Chalo wéki jaav.*" (Oh my, Soonabai, how late you've made it! Come on, begin immediately!)"

Then in almost one breath, Soonabai lets out a shrill cacophonous yell: "*Sakhi Suraj bhalé ugiya ré...*" Words start pouring ceaselessly, making one wonder at Soonabai's phenomenal lung power. Alas, the voice that could shatter glass wouldn't allow me to catch the words, except for an occasional "wadi" or "atah behram." It was only very recently that I stumbled upon the lyrics which run into pages! No wonder the singer was in a tearing hurry to complete as many verses as possible on a 78 RPM!

According to a rare book, *Gujarat Parsis — From Their Earliest Settlement To The Present Time (AD 1898)* by Kharsedji N. Seervai and Bamanji B. Patel, *Sakhi Suraj* was "one of the most popular marriage songs." Only a few lines therefrom are given here:

"*Sakhi suraj bhalé ugiya ré. Wariman ugiya ré! Dadaar Hormazné baaré, Kehvenaala-bhale veyashe! Sakhi suraj bhalé ugiya ré! Atash Behramné Baaré-Kehvenaala-bhalé veyashé.*"

Avan Izadané baaré-Kehvenaala-bhalé veyashé.

Shanhanjeeaainé baaré-Kehvenaala-bhalé veyashé.

Bawa sasrané baaré-Kehvenaala-bhalé veyashé."

("The luck-bringing sun has risen, he has risen over our garden; he has risen at the gates of God. Now the cool west wind brings blessings and the luck-bringing sun shines over the atash behram, over the gates of Avan Yazad, over the marriage porch, over the gates of the father and father-in-law...") And so forth, on and on.

Some of the other marriage hits sung by the women of the house comprised *Vahu avi ré avi, Gota gulab champano haaar, Shubha sundario, Dhanya dhanya chhè divas aajno*. These songs for festive occasions have been recorded for posterity on an audio cassette, *Khushali Na Geet Ne Garba*, brought out by ZS. Most of these verses are redolent with advice, admonition, guidance and tips. "Besides serving as a mode of entertainment, these songs provide a rich source of information about

A hand-wound HMV gramophone was brought out from the cupboard only on festive occasions

the socio-religious cum cultural life-style of the 19th century Parsis," notes an introduction to the cassette. "Often the lyrics reflect various aspects of Zoroastrian doctrine which have been interwoven into the fabric of these melodies," it is further clarified.

Prior to this effort by ZS, the Cowasjee Foundation in Karachi had introduced an audio cassette, *Zoroastrian Religious and Cultural Program* featuring *lagan na geeto* on one side of the tape with some basic prayers and devotional songs on the other side.

The wedding songs of yore had such simple, catchy tunes that they were sung by young and old. What's more, one felt that there was a wedding in the house and joined in the festivity. What a far cry from the present day local clones of Madonna, Tina Turner and Michael Jackson, belting out senseless, dissonant noise at Parsi weddings. Will some resourceful Parsi take it upon himself to start the fashion of playing *lagan na geeto* at Parsi baugs, so that the right ambience is created once again?

Snatches from three wedding songs:

Vahu avi ré Vahu bhalé ré avi:

Vahu avi ré Vahu bhalé ré avi

Vahu avi ré Vahu saré ré daharé —

Vahu avi ré Vahu muharat varé

Vahu avi ré Vahuna haathma loto,

Vahu avi ré Vahuno martabo moto.

Vahu avi ré Vahuna haathma loto,

Beejé saalé haathma ramshé galgato.

["Welcome to the daughter-in-law on this auspicious day,

She has come as per the *muharat* (auspicious time).

She has come with a *lota*

She has come and her status is big.

She has come and she is carrying a *lota*

The next year in her hands will be a *galgota* (a cute babe)].

Gota Gulab Champano Haar

Gota Gulab Champano Haar, Bhali mijlas shobhavva kaaj;

Mali chhé thaath lokoni aaj, Juo aa hall ma aaje.

Aavsé maaro vaago laine, Paherse pyara saparasji

Ké chakchakti phool thaal bhariné, Novar vahu shangarva kaaj.

Hira maneck, motino haar, Paheravvyo tam jodané kaaj;

Melavyo haath novar vahu saath, Janamnu sukh jované kaaj.

("There's a garland of marigolds, roses and champa, so that this good assembly is adorned; the ladies will come with new clothes which the groom will wear. For the new bride a shining tray laden with flowers. You will offer the couple necklaces of diamonds, rubies and pearls; the groom will hold the bride's hand so that they may enjoy lifelong happiness.")

Mubarak, Mubarak, Mubarak

Shubh ghadi, shubh din, aaj mubarak

Roj mubarak, mubarak, mubarak.

Anand harakhthi vadhavo umberné.

Chok-chadanthi sajavo gharne.

Phool, toran saath sangaar mubarak.

Shubh ghadi, shubh din aaj mubarak,

Roj mubarak, mubarak, mubarak.

Tan ni dorosti né man ni abadi,

Dadar apé tamone

Sukh samp, dhun apé mubarak.

Shubh ghadi shubh din aaj mubarak...

Bhali a din ni rahé abadi,

Gharma tamara khushali,

Sarveni duaao thae mubarak.

Shubh ghadi, shubh din, aaj mubarak...

("May this auspicious day and moment bring fulfilment for you. Decorate your household with flowers and chalk design, and may happiness always cross your threshold. We wish you good health, peace of mind and prosperity. May the Good Religion flourish and may all your good wishes be granted.)

Statement of Ownership
& Other Particulars about Parsiana: Form IV
(See Rule 8)
Place of Publication: Bombay
Periodicity of Publication: Ten issues in a year
Printer, Publisher, Editor: Jehangir R. Patel
Nationality: Indian
Address: 285, J. Dadaji Marg,
Bombay 400007
Proprietor: Parsiana Publications Pvt Ltd,
39 A. K. Nayak Marg, Bombay 400001
Shareholders holding more than one percent of the total
capital: Jehangir R. Patel, Veera J. Patel and Simin J. Patel,
address same as above.

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was a "deliberate attempt to keep out Zoroastrian Studies." He said that Dastur (Dr) Kaikhusroo JamaspAsa had written a letter stating ZS/Mistree should be excluded. The BPP trustees Guzder, Desai and Mehta said the exclusion of ZS was an "oversight" and there was no deliberate attempt to keep ZS out. Rusi Dalal, president of the Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe (ZTFE) who represented its newsletter, termed the omission an act of "negligence."

BPP chief executive Rustom Anklesaria pointed out that "65 percent of religious lectures presented to those attending the BPP Holiday Youth Program have been given by ZS... the trustees have nothing against Zoroastrian Studies." The decision to include any person on the committee would be left to the chairman, Nadir Modi, noted Mehta.

The legal tussle whether the chairperson of the BPP should assume office by seniority or by election is still pending the written judgement of the Bombay High Court judge. Guzder noted that adjournments had been granted by the divisional bench of the High Court awaiting the written judgement. Asked if there was a time limit for judges to deliver the written judgement, Desai replied "there is no time limit." Both Guzder and Desai had vied for the chairmanship, with Guzder being elected by the majority vote of the trustees. Desai is the seniormost trustee.

The BPP will net Rs 17 to 18 crores from the lease of a plot of land in Khareghat Colony, on which the old Fever Hospital once stood. The highest bidder, noted architect Noshir Talati, will have the right to develop the 17,000 to 18,000 square feet available for building. Poncha noted that the price which worked out to around Rs 9,500 per square foot of FSI (floor space index) was "a fair market price" for a plot of land on which flats could only be sold to Parsi Zoroastrians -- probably at Rs 15,000 a square foot or more. Poncha is the former managing director of Tata Housing.

The money received from the lease would be used for repairs and new housing constructions for the weaker sections of the community.

Poncha noted that though the trustees had a merit rating system for the allocation of new flats, there was no similar system for transfer of tenancy in the existing structures. Although the BPP has filed numerous suits against tenants for alleged violations of the Bombay Rent Act, "not a single



Mehraban Zartoshty: fostering Zoroastrian scholarship

suit have we won," noted Mehta. Poncha asked how many of the 4,000 flats controlled by the BPP had been surrendered? "Two in the last four years, or not even two," he stated.

While work on the Godrej Baug agiary is continuing ("the frame structure up to the dome level is completed" says the press release), there is still no sign of those opposing the shifting of the Doongaji agiary in Bharuch changing their stand. Despite several meetings and discussions, the leader of the opposition, Sam Sethna, is not committed to permitting the shift. The group has obtained a stay from the courts against shifting the fire. Guzder said talks were on with trustees of other fire-temples as well. In the meanwhile, the residents of Panthaky Baug have approached the BPP to subsidize the cost of an agiary in that Bombay suburban colony, said Guzder.

When asked about the non-publication of the *BPP Quarterly* and the *BPP Bimonthly* which was supposed to replace it, Guzder said that due to the heavy workload on the administrative staff, the publications had been neglected. He promised that the *Bimonthly* would restart. One of the correspondents pointed out that a similar reply had been given at the last press conference when the question was raised, but Guzder said this time things would be different.

The Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America (FEZANA) has offered to host a World Zoroastrian Congress in January 2000. No decision has yet been taken regarding the Sixth World Zoroastrian Congress. One possible venue, Tehran, has been turned down as many from India may not attend

and American Zoroastrians may not be granted visas to visit Iran.

Dalal of the ZTFE said that his association was to host a World Youth Congress in July 1997, and invited the BPP and other anjumans to send delegates.

The BPP press release stated that the response to the third child subsidy scheme announced by the BPP "can be said to be rather poor." Of the 12 cases, only five were eligible. The scheme is to be further advertised.

Towards the end of the conference, Guzder paid tributes to individual trustees and lauded their substantial contributions. Bengalee had laid emphasis on youth education programs, Kanga had used his formidable contacts to assist in property matters, Desai's legal and other contribution was "very effective," Kavarana was viewed as a mother of the community and Mehta was an indefatigable worker who personally looked into grievances and visited the trouble spots.

Guzder started the press conference with an apology for not holding press meets and anjuman committee meetings as he had promised to do when becoming chairman. An anjuman committee meeting was to be convened shortly, he said.

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The press conference was attended by trustees and staff members of publications. Extracts from the official BPP and N. N. and R. N. Wadia Trust press releases:

Housing

a) S. B. Bharucha Baug, Andheri (West)
In the multistoreyed building of 178 flats, six one room and kitchen (R + K) flats and one flat of two R + K remain unallotted. There are so far 14 flats vacant, ie possession of which has not been given due to certain cases being under review, or engaged couples whose flats will be released three months prior to the date of their wedding, or because of cases shortlisted and placed on the notice board.

b) Godrej Baug

One R + K flat in Q building and one in T building at Godrej Baug have been allotted from October 1994. So far 35 (Q=24 + T=11) cases have been shortlisted out of which possession has been given to 11 cases in Q Building. For T Building, NOC (No Objection Certificate) was received on December 31, 1994 and possession to the 11 allottees will be released shortly. For the 13 cases of Q building, possession has not been given due to reasons mentioned in item (a).

The residents of Panthaky Baug have approached the BPP to subsidize the cost of an agiary there

For the proposed project of two ownership buildings on the extended plot M in Godrej Baug, architect Rusi Khambatta has been appointed. He has started on the work of preliminaries and for obtaining permission from various authorities.

c) Mobed quarters

Sixteen mobed cases have been shortlisted and cleared on the notice board and in the Press. Fourteen flats have been occupied.

d) Development of building no 786 in the Dadar Parsi Colony

The estimated cost of this project is one crore rupees. Piling work is completed and further work is progressing. The project is expected to be completed by December 1996. Development would be by way of

construction of 12 additional flats of two R + K with the provision of a lift.

e) Development of B. S. Panthaky Baug
Architect Dara Mistry has submitted plans for the approval of BMC (Bombay Municipal Corporation) authorities for three buildings, ie two buildings having 140 flats of two R + K, and one building of 48 flats of one R + K, with premises on the ground floor of 6,000 sq ft for a bank. The estimated cost for this project, including cost of the building, of the construction of B. P. Road and compound wall, of the new drainage system, storm water drains as also other unforeseen expenses, is estimated to be about Rs 9 crores.

f) Blue Hills — Pune property

The Charity Commissioner's approval was received for accepting the development offer of Tata Housing Development Co at Rs 3.25 crores. Agreement was executed and sanction under Section 37(I) of IT Act was also received. Tata Housing have started development work and they have so far paid three instalments totalling up to Rs 75 lakhs, as per schedule.

Housing project at Vasai

Since the lands and FSI available with the BPP will get exhausted after construction

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of flats at Khareghat Colony, Panthaky Baug and Godrej Baug, and since there are still about 2,633 applicants on our waiting list, the trustees have decided to purchase land for further constructions. After visiting different sites, they have located a reasonably priced plot at Village Valiv of Tal Vasai. Prior to this, the trustees had inquired of all the applicants on the waiting list whether they would be willing to go to the suburbs. Of the 790 applicants who responded favorably, 185 have opted for Vasai itself. Hence, BPP has purchased a plot of 6,170 sq mts non-agricultural (NA) land (approximately 1 1/2 acres) located adjoining the main road known as Vasai-Ambadi Road, joining the National Highway Number 8 which is a distance of about 2 1/2 km from this plot. The plot is about 5 1/2 km from the Vasai railway station in the east, and adequate bus and rickshaw transport is available for commuting.

Apart from this NA land, the trustees have further decided to purchase 2 1/2 acres of an adjoining plot.

On the available plot of 1 1/2 acres NA land, nearly 70 to 80 flats of approximately 700 to 800 sq ft each can be constructed. It is proposed to construct large size flats in order to induce the allottees to go there with a view to offering them better living

conditions. Architect B. Sachinwalla from Vasai is looking after the development of this plot and obtaining the necessary sanctions. Once such sanctions are received, construction will start as soon as possible. A senior architect will be appointed to supervise the project. Ultimately, this colony on the total area of four acres may well consist of 200 to 250 flats. The trustees have decided to complete this project on high priority.

Revision of merit rating system

From the experience gained so far the trustees have decided to review the categorywise Merit Rating System that exists, and to constitute a committee for the same.

The following ladies/gentlemen have been invited to be on the committee: Edul Bharucha, Prof K. C. Sheriar, Fali Poncha, Ms Homai Modi, Pesi Jegus, Nariman Mehta, K. N. Randelia (Voltas and Ex-ITC). The committee will be headed by Chairman J. N. Guzder and trustee Ms S. K. Kavarana will also be on the committee.

Major repairs to old buildings

In the five year program chalked out for carrying out major repairs to old buildings, priority has been given to the following old buildings:

Building Nos

- 1) 693-696
- 2) 17, 20, 21
- 3) 15, 16
- 4) 9, 12
- 5) Godrej Bldg
- Master Bldg
- Banaji Bldg
- 6) Bldgs B, N, R

Colonies

- Dadar Parsi Colony
Panthaky Baug
Gamadia Colony
Gamadia Colony
Navajbai Contractor
Baug, Mahim
S. B. Bharucha Baug,
Andheri

So far the common experience has been that occupants are not willing to contribute up to 50 percent of the cost of such major repairs, which results in delay. The total cost of such major repairs is likely to be of the order of Rs 8 crores or more.

The BPP since 1953 has formed a committee consisting of three senior trustees and three representatives of the Wadias to look after the maintenance of the five colonies of Cusrow Baug, Rustom Baug, Bai Jerbai Baug, Nowroz Baug and Ness Baug. The committee generally meets once every two months and the minutes of the meetings are ratified by the trustees of the BPP.

All the buildings in these Baugs are now more than 50 years old. Mr Neville Wadia takes keen interest in the maintenance of these colonies by paying frequent visits to the Baugs. In 1985 he had formulated a scheme, supported by the trustees, for get-



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ting the buildings repaired with the cooperation of the tenants who were to share the cost of repairs on a 50 percent basis with the trust. This scheme was very successful and with the cooperation of the tenants all the buildings in the various baugs have been repaired and now present a neat appearance.

The rents and the permitted increases, etc., received from the tenements are based on old standard rents. Since the rents are very meagre and the expense of labor and materials has enormously increased, the trust is recovering service charges and car parking charges from the tenants as follows:

<i>Service Charges</i>		<i>Parking Charges</i>	
Cusrow Baug	Rs 160	Car	Rs 75
Rustom Baug	Rs 150	Scooter	Rs 25
Nowroz Baug	Rs 60	For all the five	
Bai Jerbai Baug	Rs 75	baugs	
Ness Baug	Rs 160		

The amount thus obtained is utilized for employing staff to collect garbage twice a day from each flat, to employ watchmen and malis for maintaining gardens, street-lights, staircase lights, lifts, waterpumps, sanitary fittings, repairs to drains and gutters and premonsoon repairs to roofs, etc. The response of the tenants is very satis-

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factory. The trust has granted concessions in the recovery of service charges from widows and retired people who cannot afford to pay full service charges.

For games, social and welfare activities, pavilions have been constructed in Rustom Baug and Cusrow Baug. Both pavilions have a badminton court. Gymnasiums are also available at both these baugs. Children's gardens have been provided at both baugs. Fifty thousand rupees was contributed by Wadia for the children's garden at Rustom Baug. The existing mortuary building in Nowroz Baug is being utilized for conducting cultural and social activities.

The Cusrow Baug United Sports and Welfare League celebrated the Diamond Jubilee of the Baug last year with great enthusiasm. The big central lawn in Cusrow Baug is utilized on such occasions to hold

functions which are attended in large numbers by Parsis and members of other communities.

A few years ago the trust took up the work of constructing an additional R.C.C. tank to augment the water supply of the colony at an approximate cost of Rs 3,40,000. The cost was met by contributions of Rs 500 per tenement, and the balance amount was utilized from the one month's voluntary contribution per year received from the tenants of Cusrow Baug. This has improved the water supply of the colony.

The trust has recently repaired the roads and filled up the asphalt joints in concrete road surfaces at a cost of Rs 34,800.

The Cusrow Baug United Sports and Welfare League has also worked out a scheme for taking up various projects for the improvement of the colony from the funds gathered during the Diamond Jubilee functions. Guzder has donated Rs 50,000 towards this project. Wadia has donated Rs 50,000 for the construction of a ring-well in the central lawn, so that the greenery of the lawn can be improved by utilizing the well water.

Rustom Baug is situated in a very vulnerable locality and during the last riots there was communal tension in this area. It was, therefore, decided to strengthen the

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existing compound walls and provide extra lights at an approximate cost of six lakh rupees, which has been shared on a 50 per cent basis between the tenants and the trust.

There is an R.C.C. building consisting of ground floor and four storeys occupied by servants. In view of the acute housing shortage, in 1988 the rooms vacated by servants on the ground floor were converted into single room tenements and allotted to seven deserving applicants. Since some more rooms have been vacated on the first floor, the trust has completed the work of converting the first floor also into three double and one single room tenements. The work has been completed and the flats will be allotted soon.

A few years ago the G.I. pipelines supplying water to blocks A to E were found to be decayed and due to leakage of water from these underground pipelines, there were complaints about shortage of water supply. The trust carried out the work of laying above ground G.I. pipelines at a cost of Rs 57,530, 50 percent of which was contributed by the tenants. The water supply to these blocks has improved considerably, and there are now no complaints.

The surface of the maidan at Rustom Baug had many boulders which projected above ground level. This was risky for the players of games like football, cricket, etc. The trust took up the work of removing such boulders.

The existing mortuary building in Rustom Baug has been repaired and converted into a hall, now known as the Neville Wadia Hall, which is being used for a children's nursery, religious classes and other social activities. Wadia had donated Rs 50,000 towards the cost of repairs of the same.

A bore-well has been provided by the trust in the maidan from which water is being distributed to the various gardens in Rustom Baug, including the children's garden. This has improved the ecological appearance of the Baug. Wadia had contributed Rs 50,000 from his personal funds towards the cost of the bore-well.

Nowroz Baug is the oldest baug. There were many complaints regarding shortage of water, especially from the third floor tenants. The trust took up the work of constructing an additional water tank, which was completed at a cost of Rs 5,64,450. Fifty percent of the cost was shared by the tenants and now there are few complaints regarding shortage of water.

As per the Development Control Plan of Greater Bombay, the existing 40' road in front of the Baug is to be widened to 60'. In



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1990, the trust had proposed to construct a new building having 11 shops on the ground floor and 10 flats on the upper floor by utilizing the FSI of the setback area. Some of the tenants of Nowroz Baug had objected to the same, stating that their light and air would be affected, in view of which this proposal was dropped. Subsequently, there were changes in the Development Control Rules and Transfer of Development Rights are now being made available in such cases. An auction sale was conducted in 1993 in the Charity Commissioner's office and the trust was able to obtain an offer of Rs 2,14,15,975 for FSI of 10,321 sq ft from Tata Housing. An advance of Rs 32,14,510 has been received from Tata Housing which has been invested according to the directions of the Charity Commissioner.

The existing compound wall has been demolished and a new wall has been constructed 20' away from the old wall. The work of reconstruction of the main gate has been delayed as this requires skilled workmanship to restore the old stone slabs of the ornamental gate to its original shape. The setback portion has been developed and will be handed over to the corporation after which the corporation will issue a TDR Certificate which will be handed over to Tata Housing Development Co, who will

pay the trust the balance amount of Rs 1,82,01,465, as approved by the Charity Commissioner.

Detailed discussions have been held with the Nowroz Baug Maintenance and Development Committee regarding improvement works to be done in the Baug. The trust will

The BPP will net Rs 17 to 18 crores from the lease of a plot in Khareghat Colony

carry out in phases, at its own cost, repairs and replacement of underground water mains, strengthening of the compound walls, providing fire-hydrants, repairs to the old structures and construction of roads costing Rs 56 lakhs. The tenants have also agreed to contribute towards the repairs of the buildings and have proposed to collect money for a future sinking fund. The repair work will thus be taken up in phases with the cooperation of the tenants.

The trust had issued a circular in 1987 requesting the tenants to pay an amount equivalent to one month's rent once every year as voluntary contribution, so that the trust could utilize the amount for each baug for common amenities like repairs to water mains, street lights, roads, etc. The initial response from the tenants was satisfactory. From this amount and other contributions from the tenants, the trust has carried out the work of repair of the roads at Rustom Baug, Bai Jerbai Baug, Ness Baug and Cusrow Baug. The trust was also able to carry out many other works for the benefit of the tenants by partly utilizing the amount received as one month's voluntary rent, the balance being spent from the trust's funds.

The buildings at Ness Baug are now in need of major repairs. Estimates for the same are being obtained from architects and the needful will be done after the financial details are sorted out.

The number of cars in Bai Jerbai Baug are now increasing and there is a shortage of parking space. The footpath opposite 'C' Block is proposed to be modified, so that at least 20 more cars can be parked in this area. Estimates for the same are being worked out.

In view of the acute shortage of accommodation, cases of induction of unautho-

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alized persons have increased. There are some tenants who are holding on to more than one flat and some are keeping their flats unoccupied as they have migrated out of India. The trust has been forced to take legal action in nearly 100 cases.

Sanjan Column and Dharamshalla

Major repairs were carried out during the year to the Boyce Dharamshalla and the Sanjan Memorial Column, amounting to Rs 1,33,803.

Day-care centers

In his White Paper Gujder had proposed the opening of day-care centers in baugs and colonies. The matter was dealt with at some length and all the pros and cons of the proposed scheme were considered in detail:

- 1) A day-care center is not an immediate requirement of the residents, because the services of the existing baby sitters/day-care centers in their colonies are available to them.
- 2) The non-recurring and recurring cost of a day-care center would be approximately Rs 1,40,000 and Rs 1,16,000 per annum respectively.
- 3) There were also other problems involved in the Punchayet taking direct res-

Response to the third child subsidy scheme "can be said to be rather poor"

possibility of running such day-care centers.

4) There is a lack of adequate accommodation at Bombay Parsi Punchayet and N. N./ R. N. Wadia Charities colonies/baugs for such activity.

Looking to these factors and having considered all aspects of the matter, it has been finally decided that the proposal of starting new day-care centers be dropped. But the already existing scheme of monetarily helping families whose children are going to day-care centers, will be more widely publicized and extended in order to give assistance to more needy families. Accordingly, an advertisement was given in *Jam-e-Jamshed* and *The Bombay Samachar* of January 8, 1995. Monetary assistance of Rs 300 per month per child is given to a family whose child is going to a day-care center.

Parsi Punchayet Matrimonial Bureau

It was felt necessary to up-date the bio-data of prospective applicants on the live register of the Parsi Punchayet Matrimonial Bureau: hence 261 male and 119 female applicants were written to, enclosing a detailed questionnaire. To date 96 males and 32 females have responded with a feedback.

The VIII All India Zoroastrian Youth Congress was held at Ahmednagar from November 25 to 27, 1994 and as in the past, seven eligible male and female applicants from the Matrimonial Bureau were sponsored by the BPP to attend the conference. The Ahmednagar Youth Association was kind enough to host these applicants and to provide free board and lodging. Whilst matrimonial alliances may or may not materialize through such visits, the concept of facilitating Parsi youth of one city to meet the youth from all over India in a relaxed and friendly atmosphere over a number of days, is a phenomenon which brings young people together and makes them conscious of community problems.

Thirty-six marriages and two engagements have taken place through the matrimonial bureau so far.

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Ali A. Jafarey

During a visit to Karachi in 1965, a friend proudly showed me a magazine. The name *Parsiana* was very attractive as were some of the articles. Two years later the same friend visited me in Tehran. He again showed me a copy of *Parsiana*. I commended it and as a reward, on his return to Karachi, he subscribed to it in my name. That made me addicted to *Parsiana*.

Some years later I visited India and when in Bombay, I went to see the Editor. His father turned out to be none other than my close friend Rati (Rutton Patel). We saw each other at B.V.S. Parsi High School and used to meet daily in the afternoon either at the Physical Culture Institute or China Creek, a swimming and boating resort. This added to my addiction to the magazine.

That makes me a *Parsiana* reader and an occasional contributor for, at least, the last 25 years. I have found *Parsiana* instrumental in broadening the Parsi outlook which owed its narrowness to an inherent tradition. It, and other publications like *The Bombay Samachar*, have given courage to many among the silent 'minority' to express their views and inform the less-informed 'majority' of the need to bring an overall change to the microscopic community in a macrocosmic world — a world which is changing fast through interaction, interchange, intercommunication, intermixing, intermarriage and intervention. *Parsiana's* now familiar features, regularized over decades — Readers' Forum, Events and Personalities, Zoroastrians Abroad, Books, Milestones, articles on religion, history, business, and other topics of social importance, advertisements

that reflect Parsi enterprises, and even matrimonials — have played a prominent part in enlightening the community.

Parsiana should be lauded for its part in helping to change the views of those who were awaiting the miraculous appearance of a savior to save the community from extinction and turn it into a universal religion. Many of them have understood the present rate of decrease in population



and have realized that the extinction is not very far away. The change in view has motivated even the conservatives to look for solutions to outstanding problems. I see the magazine's part as a great achievement and take this opportunity to appreciate the contribution of each and every person whose name has appeared and currently appears on *Parsiana's* editorial board.

What do the next 30 years portend? I feel quite optimistic. I have closely observed and later actively participated in the reformist movement among the Zoroastrians in Iran for the last 40 years. They were, under their progressive leaders, well on the way to changes when I returned to Iran in 1956.

It is based on my observation and experience in Iran and my association with Parsis in India and Pakistan, and now with those in Western countries that I foresee the following changes: The Parsi community of "a blue-blooded race of Kayanians" will give way to a Parsi community consisting of persons born of two Parsi parents, one Parsi parent, non-Parsi spouses, and adopted children from non-Zoroastrian parentage. Zarathushtrians-by-choice will, slowly but surely, be accepted. Reclamation of Iranians to their

ancestral religion under the *Rivayats* 'law of return' will be accepted first, and desired and worked for later. This will pave the way for the propagation of the good religion as a universal religion for all mankind. Non-Zoroastrians will be allowed to enter fire-temples and other religious sanctuaries. This will attract many Indians, particularly non-Zoroastrian friends of Parsis, to the Good Religion.

A semi-missionary movement to introduce the religion to non-Zoroastrians may start. In addition to a few aging dastur scholars, the average priest will be much better educated and of better understanding than those of the present generation. Avestan and Pazend prayers in rituals will be translated for the faithful, an act which will eventually drop off irrelevant parts that only lengthen a ritual without spiritually enriching it. Illogical and unscientific taboos against women will be removed one by one, and they will be ordained — on par with men — to full priesthood. Training and ordaining of priests and priestesses will undergo drastic changes. *Taro* and *nirangdin* will be confined to a narrow circle, only to disappear in face of declining facilities to consecrate bull's urine. Cremation and burial will replace dokhmenashini.

The *Gathas*, embodying the ever-fresh divine message of Zarathushtra, will be understood more and more through better and more standardized rendering. They will become the guide for a spiritually and materially rich and progressive life. All these changes will gradually be wrought by the increasing interest of the youth in religion and science.

Those opposed to these changes will become more vociferous but when they see their own children going over to the other side, they too will slowly go silent. It is very easy to attack, condemn, excommunicate and blaspheme others, but very difficult to treat dear ones the same way. Already many parents who had disclaimed or disinherited their children have been quietly reconciled, after the lapse of a few years, with their liberal, reformist, and/or intermarried children, especially when they have bonny babies.

Yet the traditionalists and the orthodox will survive. Reduced to a minority, they will continue with their mode of life, perhaps with more vigor, a vigor that could infuse a new generation with the understanding that will enable them to co-

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exist with the reformists and the progressives. Diversity will be tolerated to maintain unity.

While Bombay will remain an important center for Parsis in India, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Chicago, New York and Washington in the United States, Vancouver and Toronto in Canada, London, Paris and Hamburg in Europe, and Sydney in Australia will rise to prominence. And Tehran in Iran will grow into an outstanding center.

So far the movement started by a small group of persons to propagate and preach the Good Religion to all without any discrimination, and to accept those who through their solemn understanding and free will choose the religion, has not gained the momentum that would stir every Zarthoshti, particularly the Parsis. It will, very soon. The uproar by some against the movement is doing one thing for sure: it is making the movement known throughout the Zoroastrian community! This will turn more and more attention towards it. People will soon be more interested to have a first hand knowledge of it than read monotonous allegations against it. That will help turn the tide.

The next 30 years will see the movement grow by leaps and bounds. It is gain-

ing favor among the people of Iranian stock, especially those in diaspora. I see the day not far when first a larger number of 'born' Zarthoshtis will dare to come forward in its favor, then others will find reasons to 'reconcile,' come closer, and unite with those in the movement. Already signs of a thaw are seen within the rigid quarters of those who have been openly opposing it or secretly plotting against it.

Training and ordaining of priests and priestesses will undergo drastic changes

There are overtures for rapprochement. That movement is the Zarathushtrian Assembly. Those who receive copies of its bulletin *Spenta* and many of the readers of *Parsiana*, are acquainted with it and its increasing and expanding activities in various countries.

Recent events in the homeland of the

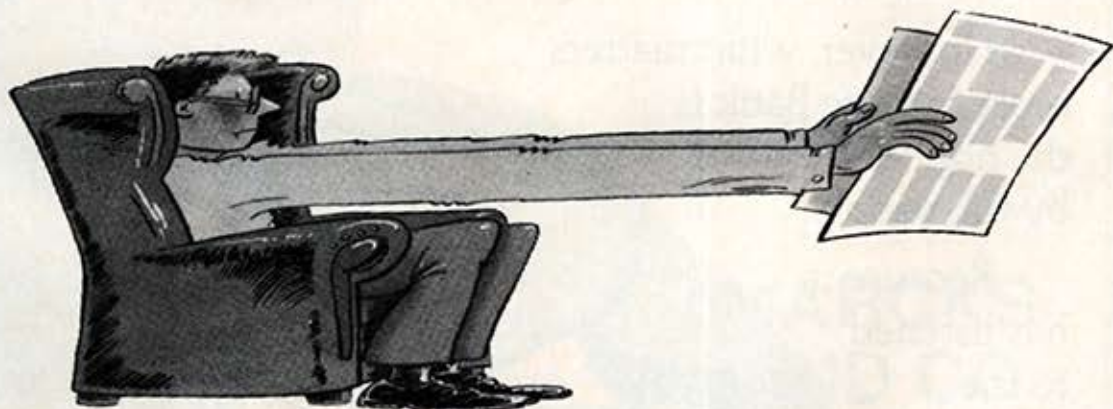
Zarathushtrians have also taken an unprecedented turn towards the ancestral creed. The atmosphere, tense with expectations, is very suitable, very promising. Things are changing for the good. The moment stands uniquely opportune, a moment which should not be lost.

Meanwhile *Parsiana*, with its increasing electronic elasticity, will be expanding its international role. It will devote equal time and space to Zarthoshtis in Iran and the Western countries who will be then outnumbering those in India by at least two to three times. Its columns for Zarthoshtis in India too will gradually take on a more universal look than the present dominating ethnic order.

The changes, drawing the growing community together and lending strength to expand it on a universal basis, will provide the Good Religion of Zarathushtra Spitama, the Manthran, divine thought-provoker supreme, a bright future, a future of *ushta* — health and happiness through gathic enlightenment.

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

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THE DIARY OF ZEUS CHINOY

A peep into the thoughts
of a 21st century attorney-at-law

Berjis Desai

Bombay, August 17, 2025: "We celebrated Catherine's 32nd birthday. The kids enjoyed the visit to the agiary at Breach Candy. Cath was equally excited. So was I. I had a sense of personal satisfaction too. The trustees of the agiary, our clients, have secured a landmark decision in their favor, holding that the spouse of a practising Zoroastrian had the right of entry into an agiary.

"I recollect that when I matriculated, in 2004, a lot of excitement was generated in the community by the verdict of the Supreme Court upholding the judgement of the Bombay High Court which had held the children of all 'mixed' marriages to be Zoroastrians. Four years later, the Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP) permitted non-Zoroastrians to have full access to the bunglis at doongerwadi during all ceremonies. The first decade of this century was indeed epoch-making. I think it was in 2009 that

the first crematorium started functioning at the Towers of Silence. What a shindig was created when the Bombay municipality served a notice on the BPP to close down the towers on grounds of public health and environment! Only quick thinking on the part of Parsis saved the situation with the decision to bring in the crematoria. Cath feels that Parsi funerals are a moving affair. I agree. Particularly after we did away with the 'khandiya' system. It is now almost a privilege to be a pall bearer.

"Recently *The Times* carried details of the 2021 census. We are 97,300 now (of course, 'we' includes our spouses of whatever religion and our children).

"I was very impressed with the way Nina intoned prayers this morning at the agiary. Considering that she is only the third woman to be ordained a priestess, she is doing really well. Cath mentioned that she holds a doctorate in Avesta from Ox-

ford. Thanks to The Zoroastrian Foundation we can afford to pay substantial salaries to our fulltime priests and priestesses. What a remarkable change in the status and quality of our priests! Mr B, my senior partner, says he just cannot believe this transformation. Perhaps it was triggered off after the behdins also became ordained as priests.

"The kids gorged themselves at 'Landmark,' the authentic Parsi cuisine restaurant. We had super delicious stuff from an impeccably vegetarian establishment. Mr B just shakes his head in disbelief that nearly 70 percent of Zoroastrians are now veggies — out of choice, and with a true understanding of the teachings of our faith.

"Rounded off the evening with an engrossing movie based on a true life reincarnation story. Which reminds me, Nina's paper on Zoroastrian belief in reincarnation was very interesting."



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The gift from Hongkong

The Jokhi family's over 4.5 crore donation to the B. D. Petit Parsee General Hospital may be a harbinger of change

Arnavaz S. Mama

Quietly the congregation gathered in the waiting room of the B. D. Petit Parsee General Hospital's (PGH) new intensive cardiac care unit (ICCU) as the voice of Dastur (Dr) Kaikhusroo JamaspAsa intoning the jashan prayers wafted over the public address system from one of the inner rooms. The grey and off-white decor and subdued lights were a perfect foil for the colorful embroidered borders, starched daglis and shining black pugrees which were the order of the day. Community members had responded in strength to the invitation of the executive committee of the PGH and its president, Homa Petit,

to witness the formal inauguration of the Shapoorji F. Jokhi Memorial Wing (JW) on January 11, 1995.

The centrally air-conditioned, two-storeyed structure at the apex of the L-shaped PGH has been outwardly designed to blend with the Hospital's vintage heritage exterior. It will house the radiology, ECG and pathology departments on the ground floor, four operation theaters (OT) on the first floor and a 12-bed ICCU on the second. Equipped with state-of-the-art technology, the JW is said to have cost more than 4.5 crore rupees, fully borne by the Jokhi family of Hongkong.

The project was initiated when the late





Shapoorji Jokhi had offered the PGH a donation of 1.5 crore rupees in 1989. In his welcome speech Petit recalled that the first intimation had come to his father, the late Dinshaw Petit, via noted physician Dr Farokh Udwadia. Shortly thereafter Shapoorji, "a man of few words but decisive, and knowing exactly what he wanted," as described Petit, "came of his own accord to the Hospital to offer his munificent donation because he had been a patient of the Hospital." Shapoorji's rags to riches career as a businessman in Hongkong had not affected his principles or his priorities. "Simplicity and genuineness coupled with a total dedication to the cause of the poor and the needy" had led him to create Avan Baug in Navsari before offering this handsome donation to the PGH. When Shapoorji passed away within months of making the offer, his younger brother and business

colleague Keki stepped into the breach not only to honor Shapoorji's word but, at the current tally, to triple it!

Petit complimented the philanthropists and professionals of various disciplines: the architect who designed the JW (Hafeez Contractor) and the doctors who shared their expertise in equipping it (Farokh Udwadia, Furdoon Soonawala, Tehemton

Top: Exterior of the Jokhi Wing and its entrance through the PGH

Grouped for a memorable occasion (seated) the Jokhi family -- Roxy, Rustom, Javer, Keki, Berges and Freny (standing) Mehta, Siddique, Jagus, Sir Dinshaw, Homa and Aban Petit, Bhathena, Bomi Balsara, Maneck Gagrati and Parekh (Photos: Superstar Video Labs)
A glimpse of the Hospital through the foliage (Photo: Varghese W. Fernandez)





Statue of PGH founder Bomanji Petit
(Photo: Varghese W. Fernandez)

Udwadia, Parviz Hakim, Jimmy Sidhwa and others), the civil contractor who bore the burnt of many an internal change without demur (Cyrus Unwalla), the electrical contractor (Adi Sagar) and RCC specialists (Cyrus Watchmaker and Noshir Kotwal). Also very involved in all the nittygritties were the PGH's project coordinator (Eruch Kapadia) and members of the Hospital's executive committee and building subcommittee — Homa and Aban Petit, Hector Mehta, Noshir Parekh, Zarir Bhathena and Jamsheed Kanga. Orchestrating their efforts was Pesi Jagus whose coordinating genius outdid his own meticulous technical perseverance, as noted Petit.

Briefly and modestly Keki Jokhi noted that he had "donated from the estate of (his) late brother" and thanked all members of his family who had supported his resolve to fulfill "Shapoorji's dream." Suitably, the function had been held on the late Shapoorji's 82nd birthday when, coincidentally, the PGH too was in its 82nd year, noted Petit.

After the ribbon-cutting, thanksgiving, back patting and lunching on the delicious traditional fare served buffet style by Neville Godiwalla, one question continued to nag: where are the resources to maintain the Jokhi Wing?

At a subsequent interview Petit admit-

ted that the maximum additional running cost of the JW would result from its central air-conditioning and the municipal taxes on the new construction. The former would be offset to some extent as the existing ICCU and OTs are also air-conditioned. "Therefore its not a completely new major load though of course the areas are much larger and therefore the operating costs will increase," concedes the president.

The increase in the size of the ICCU and the number of OTs has also meant an increase in the staff. Mock trials are being run to familiarize them with the state-of-the-art equipment. Petit hopes that the insti-

tution will "endeavor to cover these costs by improved maintenance practices and better management of financial resources." In the final analysis one "always has to accept quality with a price tag," he avers. "If you have to provide the facility of modern techniques, move with the times, the additional tag is always there... We have had people from every single hospital in Bombay requesting to see the JW. I am proud to say our ICCU is probably the best in Bombay today... When the community sees the services being given by the Hospital, I am sure it will support us, to see that the increased financial gap is bridged by donations..."

"There are many people offering donations for equipment, for brick and mortar. If the community keeps insisting on (giving) only for equipment and wards, one day the Hospital will become the graveyard of machinery. The Hospital is basically a service industry. We require sophisticated equipment,



Jokhi (left) draped by Petit with the traditional shawl and readying to cut the ceremonial ribbon
State-of-the-art equipment for the operation theater
(Photos: Superstar Video Labs)



but there must be some balance. Working capital must also be provided. The costs of electricity, food, taxes, wages, are rising. Every three years we face the trauma of wage demands. The cost of medicines, diagnostic facilities, etc are increasing all the time. It puts a drain on the Hospital's finances unless people give towards the corpus for running the Hospi-

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tal or donations-in-aid."

Reacting to the generally circulating criticism: *aapuné kai PGH né nuthi aapvu. Taan tau buddhu khavai jaich* (we don't want to give anything to the PGH. There everything goes into other pockets), Petit notes with some asperity, "There are never any specific instances. People don't realize that loose talk can harm the institution without any fault of that institution. In the process the poor and middleclass will suffer. If there are any specific instances which

"We require sophisticated equipment, but working capital must also be provided"



are brought to my attention, I will certainly look into them and take the severest action necessary," he adds, giving some vital statistics (see "What it costs to run the PGH").

Eight members of the managing committee — Hector Mehta, Pesi Jagus, Sir Dinshaw Petit, Zarir Bhathena, Yezdi Malegam, chief executive officer Dr Nissar Siddique, and general manager Kersi Sirvala together with Homa and Aban Petit — have been constituted into a core committee to create a master plan for the redevelopment and refurbishing of the Hospital. Its aim is to provide strategic directions, identify the needs and priorities of the Hospital in the next two decades. Set up about a month ago, the committee has been given six months to present a report, says Petit.

One of the preoccupations of the committee will be finding ways and means of funding the Hospital. "The trust deed precludes us from providing medical facilities to non-Parsis with the exception of accident cases where we are bound to provide treatment under the Supreme Court verdict of 1992. (We give all emergency and life-saving treatment before shifting them to another hospital.) So there can be no cosmopolitan wing within the Hospital," says Petit. However, the Hospital has FSI (Floor Space Index) which could provide for many

of the community's needs. As the PGH property is declared to be under the hospital zone of the Bombay Municipal Corporation's development plan for the city, "we can't use it for any other purpose like housing or commercial activity," says Petit. Hence the PGH management is toying with the idea of "leasing out part of the land to another hospital in exchange for a donation which can put our institution onto a very firm footing. We're talking in terms of 60 to 70 crore rupees or more. That way we can do much for the community without losing the identity of a Parsi hospital... If the new hospital is a super speciality hospital like Hinduja, we can tie up with it for free service to PGH patients. Alternatively, a separate trust with a commonality of benefits (with the PGH) could set up a diagnostic centre with cosmopolitan usage.

The core committee will also decide on the use of the areas vacated by the pathology and X-ray departments, the ICU and the OTs. But there is no likelihood of an increase in the total number of beds. Quoting an average occupancy rate of 85-89 percent, Petit says there is "no point in expanding when the community is dwindling."

Nor is there any intention of providing a psychiatric ward. "Contrary to popular perception there are not that many patients to justify a full ward," says Petit. He cites the case of the Petits' Diwana Fund where they are contemplating a cyprès application to divert the funds for lack of takers under the current object. "Besides," explains Petit, "a psychiatric ward would need a separate structure and separate trained staff. We had one or two cases of severe depression. They needed psychiatric care but they had to be



Exterior view of the Jokhi Wing
A section of the ICU
JamaspAsa (right) and Dastur Meherji-rana (right rear) conducting the jashan ceremony (Photos: Superstar Video Labs)

shifted out of the Hospital as one of the them tried to jump from the second floor! It is more a social rehabilitation problem than medical."

The much maligned old chronic ward on the ground floor of the doctors' quarters had been vacated by the Hospital management in February 1994, along with other patients, as the management was worried about its ability to meet the patients' needs during the then prevailing imbroglio with labor. When that was sorted out and the Hospital reverted to normalcy in March '94 the chronic cases were placed in the respective wards in the main building where supervision is better and treatment available more quickly, as notes Aban Petit. "We will certainly provide for the medical needs of the elderly," says Homa Petit while clearly demarcating the medical function from the "non medical custodial care" of an old people's home which, in his view, is the job of welfare agencies.

Asked to comment on the nature of the relationship between the staff and the patients, Petit says, "I think its okay, considering that there are 280 patients and we are talking in terms of four relatives per patient and about 500 staff members. Some friction is bound to be there, given the varying social and cultural backgrounds.

"If you provide modern techniques, move with the times the additional tag is always there"

Ours is a very demanding community," he adds with a smile.

A sit-out for patients in the garden which has undergone a dramatic change and is now a colorful haven, and a cafeteria for the benefit of patients' relatives are two projects currently preoccupying Aban. Having renovated the female ward on the ground floor a couple of years ago (painting, retiling and now, new beds) and repaired the enormous roof last year to stop the monsoon leakage, the management is currently engaged in painting the exterior woodwork thanks to a donation. The passages and rooms of the nursing home are next on the agenda. With the very recent installation of a new electric laundry and the appointment of a housekeeper cum laundry supervisor, Aban Petit hopes that

the perennial complaints about bad linen will become a thing of the past.

A plan to gradually implement visiting hours is on its way. Perceived as a "cultural change — people talk about the PGH's homely atmosphere," as notes Petit, the discipline will be enforced in easy stages.

A plus point for the nursing home is that a relative is allowed to stay and is provided with the comfort of a bed. But Petit admits that the well-to-do and the insured are going elsewhere. Together with a larger number of competing hospitals is the increasing problem of commuting which leads people to opt for neighborhood hospitals, he says. Besides, some of the cosmopolitan hospitals provide specialized services which the PGH, with its limited clientele, would be unable to sustain.

The ICCU and the physiotherapy department are the most sought after, the latter because of its well trained therapists as also because of the large number of fracture cases among the community, says Petit.

Despite the languishing condition of the Parsi Lying-in Hospital and Surat's Parsi General Hospital, both of which have a dearth of patients, Petit foresees a bright future for the PGH if one of the earlier mentioned schemes fructify. Admitted that

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the community is dwindling, Petit says. "Whatever members of the community are left, let us try to give them first class facilities. The objects of the PGH will remain relevant especially as the economic status of the aging community declines. I envisage a great role for this institution."

What it costs to run the PGH

•Average cost per patient per day to the PGH is more than Rs 500.

•Of the Hospital's total 284 beds, 115 are either totally free or the patients are charged at the rate of Rs 35 or Rs 50 per day depending upon individual circumstances.

•There are 45 beds on the first floor at Rs 100 per day; six beds at Rs 125 per day; six beds at Rs 155 per day; six beds at Rs 230 per day; six beds at Rs 240 per day; 22 beds at Rs 270 per day; 15 beds at Rs 280 per day; 3 beds at Rs 335 per day; 14 beds at Rs 375 per day; one bed at Rs 450 per day; five beds at Rs 480 per day; four beds at Rs 525 per day; one bed at Rs 600 per day; four beds at Rs 675 per day.

Only the last nine beds are fully paying, as per the present tariffs and outgoings, adds Petit.

•Actual working deficit of the Hospital is about Rs 60,000 per annum, net of donations.

•Apart from the bed charges themselves,

There is "no point in expanding when the community is dwindling"

the free patients and those who pay Rs 35 are treated totally free, which includes medicine and diagnostic facilities, and even if they need to be sent out for treatment, the tab is picked up by the PGH.

•The patients in the Rs 50-100 category have to purchase their own medicines but get concessions on diagnostic facilities even when they have to be sent out for specialised needs.

•According to the rules of the Hospital the ground floor patients are treated absolutely free by the doctors and surgeons.

•On the first floor the surgeon is entitled to a maximum charge of Rs 1,200 for a major operation and on the second floor to a maximum of Rs 3,000. The surgeon's daily visits are free for the first 10 days after the operation.

•Consultants charge Rs 35 per normal visit

on the second floor, Rs 100 for a special day visit and Rs 150 for a night visit. The respective rates for the patients on the first floor are Rs 15, Rs 80 and Rs 150. Only in Annexe A (commonly termed the nursing home) are the doctors free to charge market rates, if they so desire. However, there are those who prefer not to do so.

The community fails to realize the quantum of benefits the institution offers them, say the Petits, relating with a wry laugh how some people claim they choose the PGH on the basis "*kè jé Hospital né bè anna malè té khura* (let us help the Hospital earn a little)."

While Petit notes that "Charity is the basis of the PGH," he explains that each case seeking free or concessional admission is assessed over several criteria: the number of family members under one roof, the total income from all sources, the nature of the residential premises, etc. For example a patient living in an ownership flat, provided by his ex-landlord who wanted to develop his own property, would not necessarily be debarred from the concessions, says Petit. References from independent social workers, salary statements and income tax returns all need to be reviewed and corroborated via the Hospital's own paid social worker. Joint honorary secretary Hector Mehta supervises this part of the work, notes Petit.

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Understanding our history

A reading of the texts reveals that though Zarathushtra's message has been passed down faithfully, rituals and practices have been dragged beyond their historical context

Shahin Bekhradnia

The search for a background, the quest for roots, is a common characteristic for second generation emigrés like myself. It is important for people — particularly for children who feel divorced from the environment where they are being brought up — to understand the source of their differences. In the case of Iranian Zoroastrians, our whole history over the last 1,300 years has recently been replayed with the advent of the Islamic Republic.

It is probably rather difficult for non-Iranians to imagine the insecurity felt when the régime changed, or what it might feel like to be persecuted. However, there must be today very few Iranian Zoroastrians who do not share the collective memory passed down through oral history. I have interviewed many older Zoroastrians who can still remember being thrown off donkeys by Muslims, or stoned and jeered at because of their religion. As a child it was these kinds of stories that lodged in my subconscious, as indeed they have for many Iranian Zoroastrians, thus constituting a collective historical memory of persecution. My memories of hearing these stories go back to my childhood, and I will digress a little at this point to give the context for my upbringing in London.

My parents were the first Iranian Zoroastrian family to settle in the UK where I was subsequently born. My father is a true patriot and fiercely proud of his Iranian and Zoroastrian heritage. He, a village boy, and my mother, resident in the priests' quarters, both attended the Marker schools in Yazd where their Zoroastrian education was thorough. My mother is considered by many as an embodiment of Zoroastrian virtues. Her father was a well-known dastur in Yazd, whose poems are to be found

among those in Khazé's publications of Yazdi poets. Both brought me up to speak Persian, understand Dari (the language spoken nowadays only by Yazdi Zoroastrians) and I was steeped in our rituals, festivals and history.

It was precisely because they were in exile, both arriving without any knowledge of English and thus not able to integrate with the host culture of Britain, that they maintained their traditions so faithfully. As a result of their migration to Britain at the end of World War II, they did not acquire the fashions and graces which Tehran produced amongst those Zoroastrians who began to pour in from Yazd and Kerman in the 50's and 60's.

On winter evenings, my brother and I, and also my two cousins who came to England when I was still young, would sit on the Persian carpeted floor and play cards, or fivestones with my mother while she interspersed her playing with anecdotes about her childhood. My father would join in this, telling us stories of life in a desert village. At times the impression of an idyllic childhood interspersed with festivals was conveyed while at others what we were told seemed too horrible to believe. Over the years from the many things we were told or overheard we unconsciously acquired an understanding of our Persian Zoroastrian background in which the experience of persecution and hardship played a prominent role. The photos in the family album also helped to convey an understanding of our background and to stimulate curiosity.

For those who have no access to oral history, there is a collection of written accounts by European visitors to Iran prior to 1925. The significance of this date relates to the crowning of Reza Shah Pahlavi

as monarch, and the beginning of the genuine rehabilitation of Iranian Zoroastrians. The European sources go back to the 17th century when traders and missionaries began to travel through Iran on the way to India. Notably Sir John Chardin, J.B. Tavernier, John Fryer and Corneille le Brun each mention the wretched conditions of the Zoroastrians in Iran.

If we consider what was written earlier and compare it to G. N. Curzon in 1892, and again to E. G. Browne in 1893 and finally to Napier Malcolm in 1905, we form the impression that whatever we may have been told by our own families merely touched the surface of the true suffering of our grandparents, despite Maneckji Hattaria's important achievements on their behalf.

To give you an example let us consider one of the less pitiful accounts by an author mentioned above; "Some years ago a heavy poll tax was imposed which drove many away; within the last 20 years a wealthy Parsi (here he means Iranian Zoroastrian) has been murdered in the open streets at the instigation of the *mullahs*, and his murderer has escaped scot-free; they are compelled to wear sober-colored garments, and may not ride or keep open shops, or possess property; a higher price is extracted from them than from Mohammedans; they are forced to conceal their means, and to restrict their commercial operations for fear of exciting hostile attack; while in the streets, they are constantly liable to insult and personal affront (1892:241)."

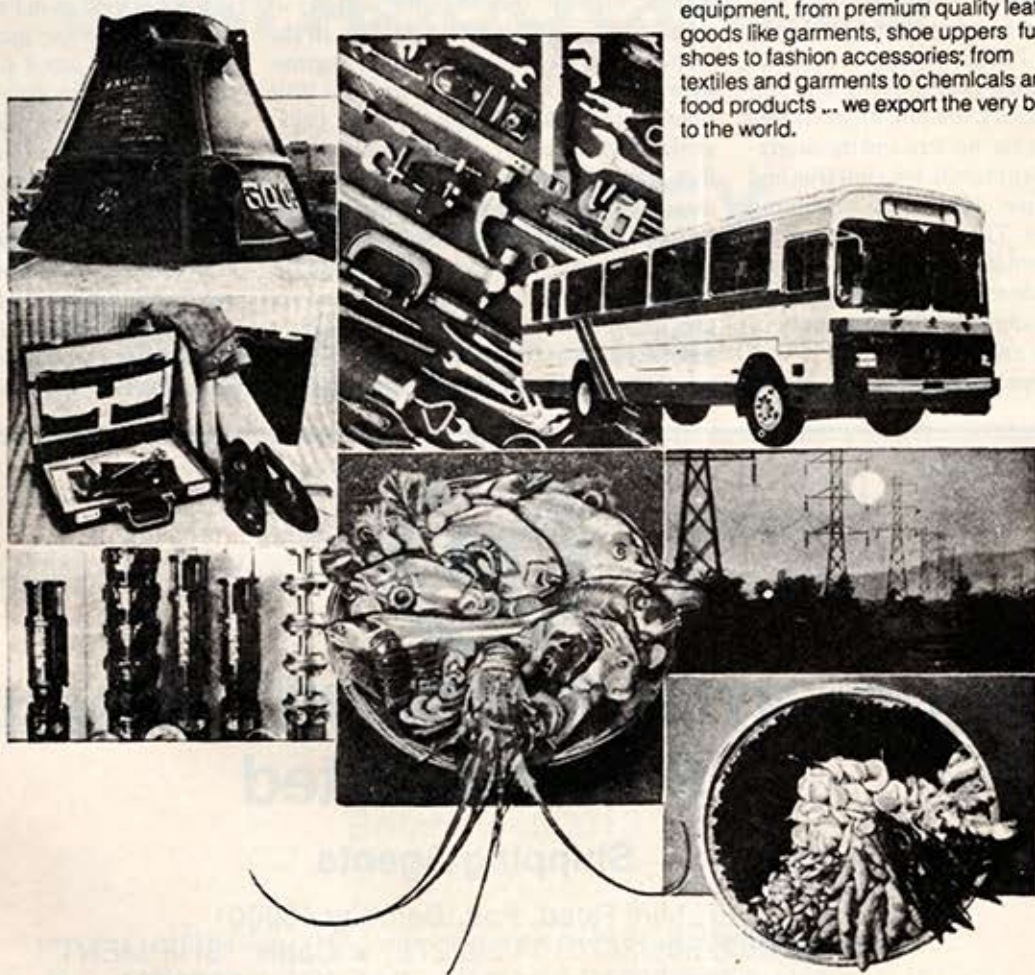
The improvement of conditions was dramatically achieved because of the Pahlavi dynasty's appreciation of Zoroastrianism. But few young Iranian Zoroastrians today fully appreciate the enormous

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debt owed by our community to the untiring efforts of Hataria and other Parsis, without whose intervention in the mid-19th century our community in Iran may not have survived. It is only by hearing from the people who benefitted from charitable Parsis such as Peshotan Marker that we are able to imagine the love and compassion they showed towards their co-religionists.

Iranians, particularly, but also Parsis, can see close parallels nowadays to what happened throughout Zoroastrian history in Iran since the 7th century conquest by the Arabs. A graphic account of what happened to the people of Bokhara, who resisted Islam at first, is to be found in Narsakhi's *History of Bokhara*; and short excerpts of other sources can be found in Dr (Ms) Mary Boyce's excellent compilation. The difficulties of preserving the faith soon after the Islamic conquest are described in the *Dadestan e Denig* and implied by the *Shkand Gumanik Vicar*. In this context then, we can understand the migration of those first pioneers who left Iran and landed in Sanjan, thereafter becoming known as Parsis. Through the present experiences of Iranian Zoroastrians, we are given an excellent reference point by which to locate and understand the continuity of the Zoroastrian experience.

Some anthropologists have argued that

it is normal for the younger generation to reject and challenge the perspective of the preceding generation and their relationship with those wielding power. Indeed this would have been true of many young Iranian Zoroastrians prior to the 1979 Islamic Revolution, since there were relatively few incidents of religious bigotry taking place in Tehran where most of the approximately 30,000 Zoroastrians were living. It is true that in Yazd there were still isolated examples of religious intolerance, but since only about 4,000 people lived there, very few came into contact with what had once been rampant prejudice.

Thus the young generation had little empathy for the stories of hardship recounted by the older generation, and some went so far as to challenge the veracity of what they were being told. In fact in the comfortable days of the Pahlavi regime, many young Zoroastrians in Iran had little interest in or knowledge of their background, because they were secure and took that security for granted, experiencing no discrimination or injustice, and leading fulfilled lives. Some of the more educated of this younger set began to challenge the older generation's high regard for and appreciation of the Pahlavi regime, taking a radical political stance. However, experience has changed all this, and political

events have reawakened in Iranian Zoroastrians both at home and outside Iran, a real awareness that they are different.

I believe that a process is under way to search for information about the culture and ideas that have led to such a determined and tenacious stand against Islam in the face of renewed persecution. I think that this search is particularly prominent amongst our younger generation of Iranian Zoroastrians precisely because of their own present experience and its unsettling effect on themselves, their parents, families and friends. Because we are all literate today, because of the political stimulus for asking questions, and because those of us outside Iran have access to material written in English and other European languages as well as in Persian, we are able to investigate the key question of who we are and what we stand for much more thoroughly than was previously possible.

One of the questions often asked by Iranian Zoroastrians when discussing the principles of Zoroastrianism is why there appears to be such a fundamental difference between the Parsi and the Iranian Zoroastrian, in outlook and attitude, towards all things religious.

The first encounter for most Iranian Zoroastrians who have formed an opinion about the Parsis was when they met them in



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the context of the diaspora, probably at one of the fire-temples. Certainly this was the way it happened for me and my brother as children in London. During all this time, we were regularly taken by our parents to the Zoroastrian House in London, where we always felt misfits, heavily outnumbered by our Parsi co-religionists with whom, as children, we felt we had nothing in common since we couldn't speak the same language, didn't like the food and dressed so differently. Without realising how or why, we were aware that we had evolved very differently, though apparently we had everything in common. After being taken to Iran for our *sudreh pushi* we realized that many of our religious practices were also different, including the saying of our *Avesta*. If today an Iranian Zoroastrian is quizzed about his/her background, the first definition will refer to national/cultural affiliations as Iranian, and then probably will be added the information relating to religious affiliation. A Parsi will probably answer differently.

Our differences do not stop merely in these cultural domains, but permeate the realm of belief and philosophy. The very admission of such differences gives rise to claims and counter-claims of authenticity, to criticisms and accusations from both sides of the divide, and to unnecessary feelings of offence. And yet, to any person who has a genuine and honest interest in the debate, the issues invariably lead one back to an examination of our joint histories. Another equally challenging consideration must be an examination of the textual authorities which we variously use to justify a position.

To many Iranian Zoroastrians it comes as a shock to learn that Parsis have one rule for men and another for women when it comes to the children of mixed marriages; or for example that they have a belief in the formulaic efficacy of a certain number of *ashem vohus* or *yatha ahu vairyo*s; or that they do not regard a fire created by the burning of gas as efficacious as a fire created by the burning of sandalwood; or that they celebrate Nowruz in July or August, or that the dokhmas are still in use in Bombay, or that many of them do not regard Iranian Zoroastrians as true Zoroastrians just because they do not wear the *sudreh-kusti*.

When some of the delegates (to the First World Zoroastrian Youth Congress in Los Angeles) demanded to know why the critical issues of mixed marriages and conversions were not put on the agenda for discussion and resolution, no satisfactory answer

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was given. Thus we were left with the impression that difficult issues were simply not being dealt with because they were prickly. And yet we all know that this is not an honest approach to doctrinal difficulties, not the way of Asha.

With genuine integrity we should examine the role of rituals, the issue of dualism, the position of women, the nature of death, the function of prayer, the concept of acceptance and other major issues. To inform ourselves we should read the various textual authorities originally written in Pahlavi but now available in European languages such as the *Herbedestan*, the *Mainyo e Kharad*, the *Denkard*, the *Dadestan e Denig*, the *Rivayat e Hemat e Ashawahistan* and the *Shkand Gumanik Vicar*.

From a reading of these texts it will become apparent that basic Zoroastrian ethics and doctrine concerning God and the dualism within his created world, as well as the way of Asha have been passed down faithfully and intact. However, one finds many practices and rituals that might have been appropriate at that particular time in Iran for Zoroastrians, which may or may not still be appropriate today. For example, in several of the texts there are explicit references to the strange Zoroastrian practice of gaining merit by marrying

one's daughter, mother or sister. In several texts there are explicit references to the possibility of accepting into the community of Zoroastrians, children or adults of different faiths. In the *Herbedestan* there are two explicit chapters dealing with the role of female priests.

The point I am hoping to make here is that those people who justify their particular practice or interpretation by reference to unbroken tradition, are simply deceiving themselves and the rest of the community. Apart from the fact that the 15th to 18th century *Rivayats* tell us of traditions forgotten in India, there is another argument. If they were maintaining an unbroken tradition then we would find them accepting new admissions into our community, they would welcome women priests and they would be exhorting us to marry our own mothers, sisters and daughters, to cite but a few of the obsolete traditions.

It seems to me that the only way to handle the doctrinal questions is to consult texts while bearing in mind the spirit of intelligent free choice articulated by Zoroaster. The problem with individuals is that they put themselves up as ultimate authorities and yet they are not infallible. Most of the individuals who act in this role are priests.

Just like all of us, they too are victims of their own prejudices and personal points of view which they tenaciously uphold as being irrefutable, by recourse to history. In actual fact they may be ignorant of history or deliberately misleading us by selective manipulation. If we look at the history of the priesthood by reading the *Tansar Nameh* in translation by Boyce and the *Dadestan e Denig* translated by Dr Philip Kreyenbroek, we find that the Sassanian high priests Tansar, Kartir and later Mahraspand invented a whole new corpus of liturgy and alongside it, no doubt, a whole lot of new rituals. It is well-known that the heavy burden of ritual duty on the laity, which in turn had financial implications for them, was one of the reasons why the faith crumbled when the prospect of being released from the rituals while still being offered salvation, was the alternative presented by Islam.

As a seeker of the truth within our religion, and bemused by the many different claims and points of view, it seems to me that an examination of the fundamental teachings within our religion is a reasonable way to understand what our forefathers defended. Our attention, then, should be focussed on the *Gathas*, which impart our basic values. This is an approach that

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is endorsed by the Iranian Priests' Councils both in North America and Iran. Their attitude reflects a more rigorous intellectual understanding of our history, and is concerned with the spirit of the teachings. I would welcome a less dismissive approach to them by some of our co-religionists, and more open discussion about what our history reveals. Unless this happens, our young generation, who like me have access to all this literature, will conclude that our small community is being misguided by a flock of benighted ostriches, and in frustration they might give up.

We have the opportunity here, in the relative intellectual freedom of the Western world, and with access to so many specialised libraries containing our texts, to make our history more accessible to those who want to know the truth. Speaking the same language, our young generation can start a dialogue amongst those who really care, and who want to preserve a tradition that makes as much moral, spiritual and intellectual sense to us today as it did to those who first chose to follow Zoroaster's teachings.

Edited and abridged version of the paper presented to the Ninth North American Zoroastrian Congress. Ms Shahin Bekhradnia belongs to the Department of Social Anthropology, Oxford, UK.

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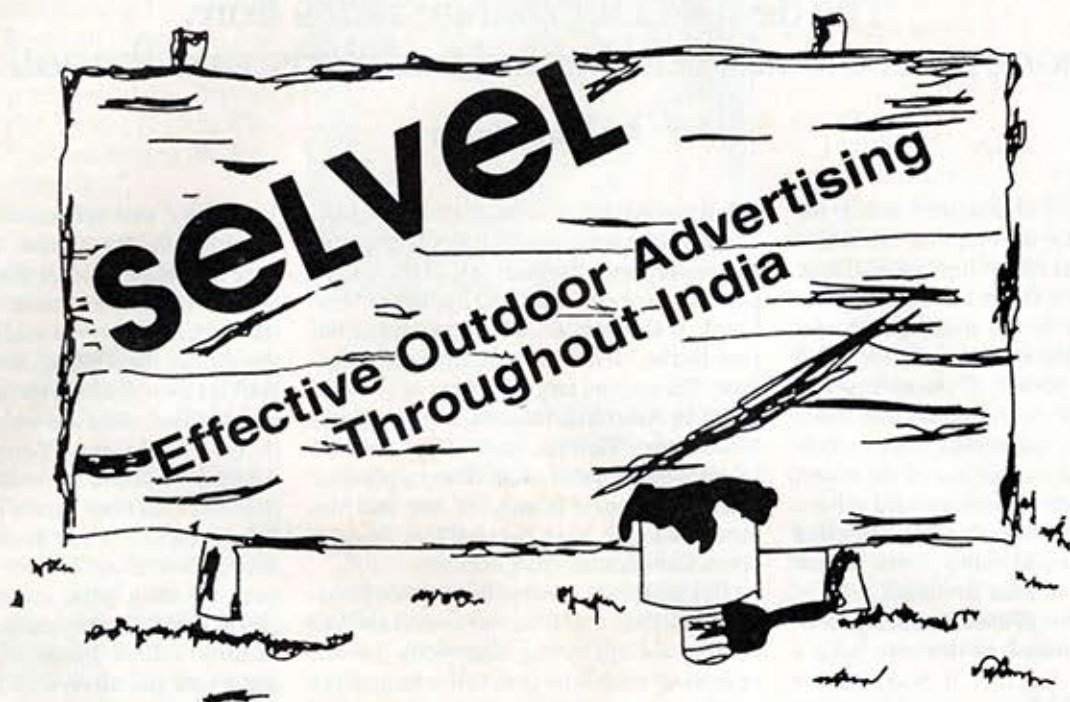
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REDISCOVERING ONE'S ROOTS

The demand for change stems from ignorance of the rationale behind traditions, says the author

Amavaz Chubb

There is a stretch of coastline along the south eastern part of Victoria, Australia, that is known as the Shipwreck Coast. Driving along the Great Ocean Road, reputed to be one of the most spectacular coastal routes in the world, it is not difficult to see why this stretch of ocean inspired such terror in the hearts of ancient mariners. Wild seas, dangerous rocks, reefs which lie beneath the surface of the water, steep cliffs and heavy mists are said to have claimed some 80 ships that had travelled across half the world safely, only to find disaster so close to their destination.

The name of one of these seafaring casualties commemorated at this site held a special interest for me. It was the *Sir Jamsetjee Family*. While trying to gather some information about this ship, another name cropped up — the *Pestonjee Bomanjee*. I was unable to come up with any specific information on either of these two vessels, but one fact seemed evident — Zoroastrian entrepreneurs of the last century had already established links with Australia, long before the Zoroastrian migrants of recent years made their way Down Under.

After the end of the British Raj, Parsis were keen to migrate westwards, but perish the thought of making a former penal colony their home. No such inhibitions deter the many new Zoroastrian migrants that come each year to Australia. Mainly young professionals, they are working to establish themselves in this land of opportunity that is unfortunately now struggling to overcome an economic recession.

The original Parsi pilgrim fathers who landed on the shores of Gujarat would have surely discovered that life is tough in a new country amongst new people. Just as those original migrants sought to gain acceptance and recognition from the government and people of the host nation and needed to work at establishing themselves in a new home, so too do the newer economic migrants of the 20th century. And when these first struggles are over, the greater one of estab-

lishing a religious infrastructure begins.

This is the stage at which Zoroastrians in Australia find themselves. The larger population centered around Sydney in New South Wales has already inaugurated the first Darbe Meher in Australia earlier this year. The second largest pocket of Zoroastrians in Australia, focused in and around Melbourne, Victoria, have long debated the pros and cons of establishing a place of their own, but it is only of late that the motivated ones have decided it is time for some action rather than excuses.

For most first generation migrant Zoroastrians in Australia, the ties to their mother country are still strong. They have just not been away long enough to suffer from a loss of identity yet. But for the newer generation, born in Australia, the links are already beginning to weaken considerably, and maintaining an identity is something to be worked on, it is not spontaneous or instinctive any more. A group or association can to a certain degree help foster that sense of identity. A bricks and mortar structure may enhance it further; but, whether these in themselves will be enough to sustain and perpetuate that identity in a multicultural environment remains to be seen.

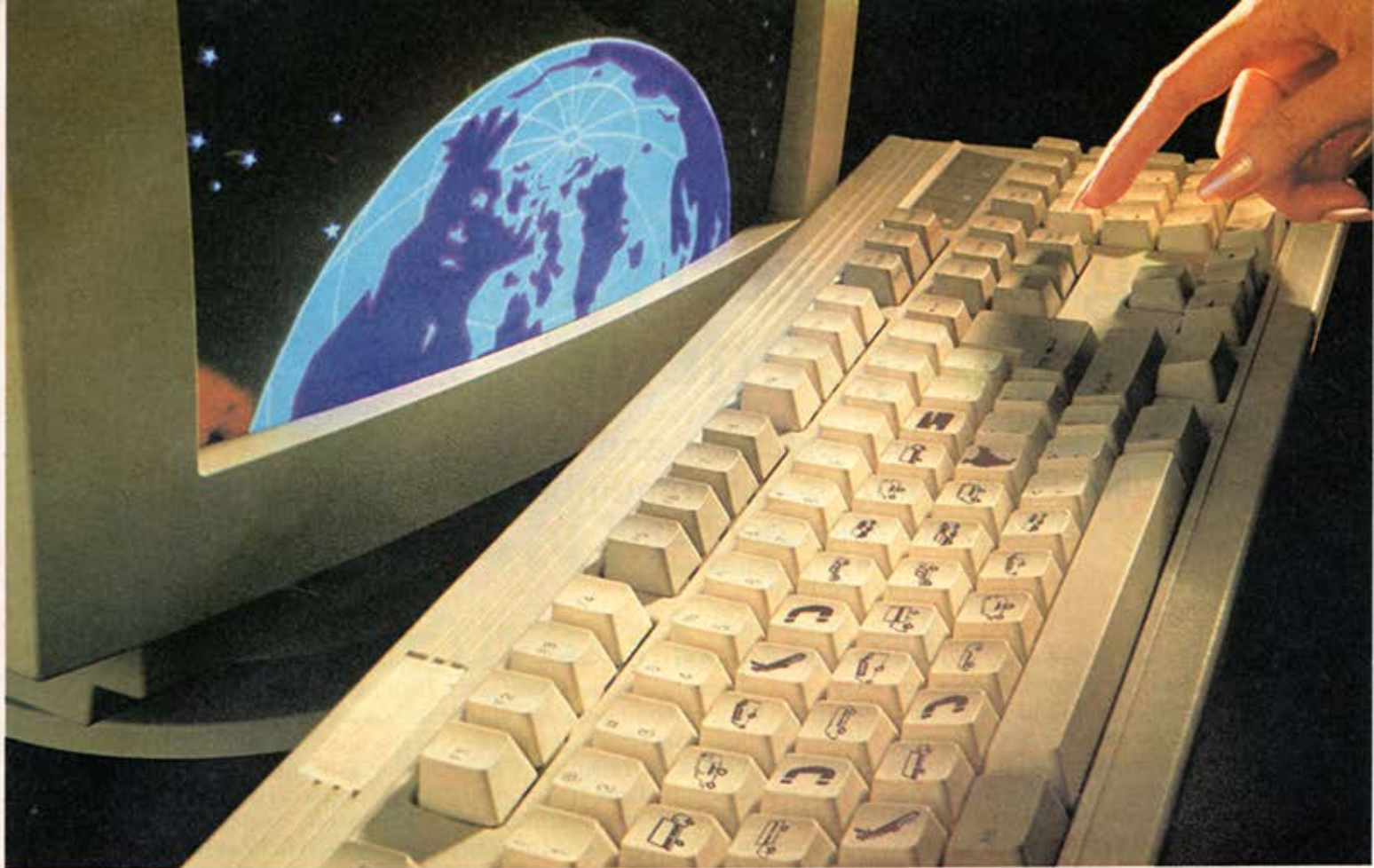
The Zoroastrians of Victoria seem to be approaching an interesting phase. They have been asked whether they want to establish a place of their own and if so, what would be their commitment to this cause. While the majority have voiced their positive inclination towards 'a place of our own,' active involvement even in the initial stages seems woefully inadequate. Nevertheless, the first steps on this long and winding road have been taken by the enthusiastic few. The vision and efforts of the few have always carried the many along, as will probably be the case here as well. And once such a place has been inaugurated, what then? Will the religion thrive, will the Zoroastrian identity be firmly established? One certainly hopes so, but chances are that nothing much will change.

Apathy and ignorance seem the two major destructive forces the Zoroastrians need to contend with at this point in time, if they are to remain a cohesive community in the years to come. We readily acknowledge that the last Parsi left on earth would quibble with his own shadow, but having identified this malaise, what are we doing to remedy things? While most Zoroastrians declare themselves proud to be Zoroastrians, few have any idea at all what it is that they ought to be proud of. Their general misinformation and/or total lack of information on even the most basic aspects of Zoroastrianism is the primary cause of their loss of identity. Unless this most basic problem is addressed, the survival of the religion in the next century remains in jeopardy.

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 of 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, become the weapon of our destruction?

Zoroastrianism has a tenacious history. Its traditions and philosophy have survived all these centuries remarkably well for it to be wiped out in the next 30 or more years. There is undeniable awakening amongst the Zoroastrians themselves to rediscover their roots. This quest needs to be encouraged, nurtured and channelled in the right direction. We have inherited a priceless heritage; surely we would not deny our children their rightful claim to it. "Do not go gentle into that good night Rage, rage, against the dying of the light."

Ms Amavaz Chubb (née Patel) studied at the J. J. Madressa in Bombay under Dasturs (Dr) Hormazdyar Mirza and (Dr) Kaikhusroo JamsaspAsa, earning a gold medal in Avesta-Pahlavi at the M.A. level at Bombay University. Ex-president of the Zoroastrian Association of Victoria, she conducts religious classes for children.



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Belgaum's zesty lady entrepreneur

Pioneer film exhibitor and hotelier Freny Nanji is still remembered a decade after her death

Tushna Kotwal



When the horse carriage drove up to the Belgaum club in the evening and Ms Freny Nanji alighted, it had to be six o'clock. And at the moment of her departure members set their watches at 9 p.m. without so much as consulting the club clock. Yes, punctuality had become almost a fetish with Belgaum's lady entrepreneur, pioneer film exhibitor and hotelier.

She was a true Zoroastrian who believed in the dignity of labor. For her, work was worship, says her daughter-in-law Veera. Though not terribly religious (she visited the agiary on occasions and said her kusti prayers once in the night before going to bed), she had great faith in God. She would always tell Veera, "*Tu mahré vasté bhanech to bus ché, mahné bhadé nu bhanvanu nathi joitu* (It is enough that you pray for me, I have no use for prayers that can be bought)."

No one ever dared to take Freny Nanji lightly. She was on equal terms with the district administration, the army and all her business contemporaries. She met the late Prime Minister Ms Indira Gandhi on a couple of occasions as well as Morarji Desai, was in touch with everyone who mattered, and never hesitated to speak her mind. Ms Bacha Siganporia, a good friend, describes Freny as "a woman of authority: good, kind, compassionate, but a strong-willed lady. She would always stand up for her rights as well as the rights of others. Always firm in her resolve, once she decided to do something, nothing could stop her. She didn't care at all about what 'people would say.'"

The Mirajkar brothers — Sharad and Suresh — who knew the lady in her heyday, have this to say: "Not only was she by

far the best dressed lady in Belgaum, she was also extremely compassionate and generous. We remember her taking a drive in her car along with (friend and partner Nadir) Ruttonji in the camp every day. They would buy bread and feed it to all stray dogs and animals under a certain tree every evening. She also made it a point to distribute medicines free to the poor and needy. She was always ready to help whoever asked for help, and no one was ever turned away empty-handed. Her charity was carried out quietly and without anyone really knowing about it."

A socialite to the hilt, Freny loved the good things of life. Impeccably turned out at all times, the good looking woman with a zest for life had a vast collection of the most varied and beautiful saris (which she always wore in the traditional Parsi style). These were set off with exquisite, perfectly matched jewelry. She always wore heels and would never fail to chide Veera whenever she saw her daughter-in-law wearing 'slippers' with her saris. Freny's good taste was evident in every facet of her life and she always sought the very best of everything.

The only child of Shirinbai and Mail Contractor (her father was called 'Mail' because the family ran a mail service between Belgaum and Dharwad), Freny was born 1901 in Belgaum — the charming cantonment town cradled by the Sahyadri hills in Karnataka — and worked her way up with qualities of head and heart that still serve to inspire people.

Married at 16 to Nadir Eduljee Nanji, Freny encountered personal tragedy at a very young age. The Nanjis lost their first-born son at 18 months. Later they had

another son, Jal. But soon fate struck a fresh blow: Freny lost her husband when she was barely 22. Too young and spirited to give up on life, she disciplined herself to exploit her talents — of which she had many. Under her mother's watchful eye, Freny learnt cooking, baking, sewing, needlework, knitting and all the other things that girls in those days were supposed to know. But the difference with Freny was that she didn't just know these things, she made herself very good at them.

Veera remembers her powerful and domineering mother-in-law, of whom she had once been in awe, with genuine love and respect. Displaying some gorgeous *kors* (borders) done in silk, beads, seed pearls, zari and lace by Freny — all quite priceless now and truly a sight to behold — Veera explained their genesis: "When Shirinbai took her afternoon siesta, she would entrust young Freny with a task to complete. It could be anything from polishing an entire row of shoes to completing an intricate and detailed bit of embroidery!"

Freny and Nadir Nanji had shared her parents' home with Shirinbai's three sisters. It was a difficult time and to make ends meet Freny went into partnership with the late Nadir Ruttonji (fondly referred to by old-timers as Nadir baba). A close friend of the couple, Ruttonji owned a shop called N. Ruttonji and Sons in the camp area where they sold confectionery, icecream, pork products and novelty items which Freny made herself. Being an expert needlewoman, she turned out beautiful lampshades, table linen (in the Irish linen style), tea-cosies and dolls (many of which she imported and dressed up). Her sari

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MEDICINA ALTERNATIVA INTERNATIONAL was established in Alma Ata (former U.S.S.R.) in 1962 as the outcome of an International Health Conference jointly sponsored by the World Health Organisation, the UNESCO and UNICEF, with Dr. Victor Inyushin of Khazakhstan State University as the first Chairman. The aim of W.H.O. was to promote all the different methods used in various countries of the World for preventing ill health and preserving good health. These include from the Ancient Sciences of Chinese Acupuncture, Egyptian Magnets & Pyramids, Sanskrit Ayurveda, Avesta Manthras, Tamil Siddha, Persian/Arabic Unani/Hakimry, to the modern Sciences of Kirlian/P.I.P. Computer, Radionics, Radiesthesia, Spectrochrome Metry, Homoeopathy, Bach Flower Remedies, Schuessler's Bio Chemicals, Pendulum Dousing, and other methods.

In the mid sixties the H.Q. of Medicina Alternativa was shifted to Europe, Holland, with a Dutch Doctor as the next Chairman, and in the late sixties, the International Organisations again decided to transfer the H.Q. to Sri Lanka with the support of the then Prime Minister, Mr. Bandaranaike, with Dr. Anton Jayasuriya then registrar of a Hospital in England being appointed as the next Chairman; and also given the outpatient Acupuncture Clinic at the Govt. of Sri Lanka Kalubowila South Govt. Hospital. Under Dr. Prof. Anton Jayasuriya's able stewardship, and with the full support of the President/Prime Minister and Govt. of Sri Lanka, Medicina Alternativa International flourished in the old soil of this tropical island paradise where many exotic plants bloom. Dr. Anton established the Training Institute for Acupuncture in Colombo; and through this Institute, doctors from many countries of Europe were enabled to learn the Alternative to Allopathy Method of Ancient Chinese Acupuncture during the 1960's, 1970's and 1980's, during epoch when a visit behind the Bamboo curtain was well nigh impossible. Thus Dr. Anton succeeded in knocking the "im" off the "impossible" and transformed it into the "possible"; by providing a Training Centre Educational Facility for doctors from the Western World to learn Alternative Methods about which the Medical Colleges curriculum in most Universities in Europe and

America knew nothing. In this manner, through such specially extra-trained doctors, the public in countries of Europe and America received the public health benefit of getting well and keeping well without having to spend money on expensive allopathic chemistry based medicine.

During the 1980's this process of International Education was continued by holding **World Congresses of Alternative Medicine Methods** in many countries of the world. By this process persons trained in many different methods of health care were given the chance to meet and share their respective expertise and learn from each other. The foundation of Medicina Alternativa became Broad Based, with the new wave of global thinking on the subject of health care that other methods could be used as Complementary to instead of Alternative to Allopathy.

In keeping with this global trend, the Govt. of Sri Lanka to its everlasting credit took the bold step of being the first country in the world to establish a separate **Ministry of Indigenous Medicine**; and it was that far sighted Statesman, President Jayawardene of Sri Lanka who took the equally courageous initiative to establish the **OPEN INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY FOR COMPLEMENTARY MEDICINE** under Presidential Patronage in Sri Lanka, in 1987. This unique, privately funded University quickly spread its wings over all the five Continents of this Earth, with hospitals, colleges, institutes, and training academies being affiliated to it, in over 120 countries of the world. The O.I.U.C.M. functions everywhere; by imparting training in all methods of health care which have withstood the test of thousands of years time. In India, the **Zoroastrian College** was established in 1986. Since 1986 in Bombay, regularly every year in January through the Alternative Medicine Holistic Health Dept. of the Zoroastrian College, World Congresses have been organised which attract many specialists from many Foreign countries and from all over India. In 1987-88, the Zoroastrian College was the **first Educational Establishment in India** to become affiliated to the Open International University for Complementary Medicine. Through

this affiliation, this unique College is able to provide the facility to Parsis and all people in every country of the World to do Research, which is for the Universal Benefit of Humanity and enable persons doing such original Research work to submit it in the form of a Thesis for a Doctoral degree.

The Zoroastrian College provides a World Wide facility to educated persons to submit research thesis for the Ph.D. Degree. In the span of the past 9 years, **Professors and Scholars from Australia, Japan, Jordan, Russia, Malaysia, U.K., Canada and all over India** have availed of this facility to express themselves at an International academic level. Over 25 persons have qualified for the doctoral degree in wide ranging subjects from Avesta Dictionary, Hom Yazad, Iranian

Zoroastrian Heritage, to Inter Faith Peace Dialogue, Medical Astrology, Mono-crystals, Spiritual Healing, treatment of eye disorders, and a wide range of other subjects.

The College also provides training facilities for Diploma Certificate Courses in a wide range of subjects from Avesta Grammar and Zoroastrian Scriptural studies to Acupuncture & Magnet/Colour Therapy and Holistic Health. The short term Diploma Courses also attract persons from abroad who are eager to learn the Truths of Nature and the Ancient Cosmic Wisdom.

In January 1995 the Annual Bombay World Congress of Holistic Health was hosted and organised by the Zoroastrian College at the Russian Cultural Centre. A delegation of 5 of the Senior most doctors of Tajikistan had attended, including the renowned Dr. Issoumuddin who treats psychosomatic diseases by Avesta Manthras, mind control, telepathy through T.V. President of India Dr. Shankar Dayal Sharma sent his Greetings to the organisers as well as the Governors of Maharashtra, Himachal Pradesh, Orissa, Nagaland, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, and West Bengal. The World Congress opening ceremony was to be presided over by Padmashree Homi J.H. Taleyarkhan, and Retd. Justice Dinshah Mehta, Minister of State, Marazban Patrawala, Russian Consul F. Rozovsky and Medicina Alternativa International Chairman performed the Inauguration Ceremony. Dr. Fred J. Fox of England conducted the first ever training in India of Bio-Testing/Bio-Therapy method. Prof. Dr. A.R.K. Pillai, President of the Indian Leprosy Foundation presided over many sessions and Dr. Harish Dhatia over Medical Astrology, Dr. (Mrs) Harprakash Sahni over Magnet Therapy, Dr. A. Gosalia over Naure Cure and Herbal Medicine, Dr. L. Mehra over Neuro Therapy, Dr. Mangala Chavan over Acupuncture and a host of specialists on other subjects. The Zoroastrian College has a large faculty of honorary Professors for the Alternative Medicine Dept.

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borders were always in demand and everything she made was snapped up as fast as her mouth watering cakes. Her friends remember that she had many "secret recipes" which she refused to divulge. Freney had learnt early that to be a successful businesswoman she had to hold on to her trade secrets!

To further augment her resources, Freney hired out furniture to the British army officers who were posted in Belgaum in the 1920s. This initial contact with the British brass grew until Freney became a regular at the army club where she played an excellent game of tennis with the officers and their wives. True to her way of doing things, she won trophies by the sackful and Veera still wonders if she will ever be able to display all of them. And while Freney worked and played hard, the ever resourceful Shirinbai chipped in to keep the home fires burning by making ghee from the butter that she bought locally. The ghee was then sold to the Parsi Dairy Farm in Bombay.

Venturing out to Samba, the airforce base on the outskirts of Belgaum where the home-sick "Tommies" desperately sought entertainment, Freney hired a hall, set up a projector and started running two film shows in the evenings, working the projector herself. A big success till the end of the war, when it was time for the soldiers to leave Freney closed shop at Samba and looked for newer pastures.

With the money from her Samba venture, Freney invested in a small tumble-down cottage in the camp area of Belgaum. The cottage was small, but rooted on a sizable area of land. Over a period of about two years Freney developed the property into what is Hotel Green today. After most of the building was completed, only the porch remained. Veera narrates how Freney often took part in the lotteries held at the army club. On one lucky day she won Rs 400 from a football pool, and the amount was used to construct the porch of Hotel Green. Both Freney and Ruttonji, who by now had come to live in her home, ran the hotel most efficiently, on Western lines, with great attention to detail. Many old-timers who frequented the hotel still smack their lips in mouth-watering remembrance of dishes past. The service and linen were immaculate. In fact, it is said that people who once stayed there made it a point to transit Belgaum just to sample Hotel Green again in its salubrious setting.

Around 1940 she bought the Ford motor garage and converted it into a cinema hall — Rex. Initially she had two or three

The home-sick Tommies desperately sought entertainment. Freney set up a projector, running two film shows in the evenings

partners, but things did not go as well as she had hoped and, realizing her own potential, she bought over the entire hall to become its sole owner. It was the only theater showing the latest English movies in Belgaum, the only theater which ran four shows a day and Freney was the only woman exhibitor.

Loved like a mother and sister by her staff, Freney ran the theater with exemplary capability. In this, as in all else, she was ably helped by Ruttonji and her son Jal. It is touching to see the eyes of her old employees mist over as they speak about her. They refer to her as Indira Gandhi because she was strong-willed and stern when it came to business. "No one ever knew or did business the way she did," says Haldankar Purohit, a booking clerk, who remembers her as being very tough but also very helpful and kind. "We were always expected to speak the truth no matter what — she would never tolerate lies from anyone." Even today, after all these years, he bows to her photograph before beginning work: "*Unko namaskar karné sé pehlé main kaam nahin shuru karta,*" were his words.

Freney's typical day would begin around 9.30 when she woke up. She would have her tea or coffee and stroll round her gorgeous garden. Says Ms Shirin Daver, her contemporary, "Freney was very fond of gardening and for years her garden was adjudged the best at all flower and garden shows. She had all kinds of flowers and plants ranging from the common bougainvillea to exotic orchids from the north east. Her dahlias, it is said, had to be measured across by a measure tape! Friends who were also keen gardeners would request her to stop participating in the shows so that they could get a chance to win!" She would import seeds and bulbs and her begonias, orchids, roses and gladioli were a feast for the eyes. Veera tells of a particu-

lar cactus which Freney had in the shape of a snake's head — which had to be fed on blood!

In the afternoons Freney would sit with her grandchildren for lunch and enjoy her time with the family. Lunch was usually prepared by cooks, but sometimes Freney herself decided to don the apron and turn out some exotic dish — much to every one's delight, of course. After lunch a siesta was a must. At 4.30 she and Jal would go to the Rex. After seeing to the work there, Freney would go to the club at exactly 6 o'clock, leaving her son to attend to the rest.

Dinner would be served after nine when she returned home from the club. After dinner, Freney and Ruttonji would both go to the theater and be there almost every night till the end of the last show. On their return Freney would take up her reading. She often read till about 2 or 3 in the morning before falling asleep.

And Freney spent exactly such a day for the last time on November 27, 1984. She was completely in control till the very end and sensed that she would be entering another realm — leaving behind men and women influenced by the example of her life, and children touched by the flame of her spirit.

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When Iran reawakened to the *Gathas*

Ebrahim Poure Davoud's rendition of the *Gathas* enabled his fellow Mohammedans to recognize the unique message of Zarathushtra

Hormazdiar J. M. Desai

"The *Gathas* are our oldest national asset written by the greatest son of Iran. Zarathushtra is the first and unique prophet among the Indo-Iranian people, who introduced the worship of one supreme being. It is but meet that we should read with extreme reverence the portion left to us from the teachings of such a personage, which after so many thousands of years, outliving a thousand vicissitudes of time, has at last come down to us."

Thus stated Ebrahim Poure Davoud in the preface to *The Gathas of Zarathushtra* approximately 3,000 years after they were first sung by the Prophet in ancient Iran. In the process of his pioneering translation of the *Gathas* into modern Persian (via the translation of German scholar and philologist C. Bartholomae) Poure Davoud awakened modern Iran to the life and literature of its past, its religion, culture and rich heritage, and motivated it to emulate its ancient glory and civilization.

"As the author of this translation, I have not been in pursuit of an elegant style. I have avoided all efforts to adorn the stanzas by ornamental composition. What can be gathered from the sayings of the holy prophet of Iran, I have written without addition or alteration," stated the first — and, hitherto, only — translator of the *Gathas*, the *Yashts* and the *Khordeh Avesta* into Persian.

Poure Davoud quoted from the German scholar Paul Horn who states, in his *History of Persian Literature*: "In the *Gathas* we meet with the expression of such noble feelings, such vigorous belief in the true faith, and such sublimity and excellence of ethics, that we cannot but praise and applaud the author of the songs."

He defined the message of the Zarthushti

Mazdayasni religion thus: "Through piety, truth, righteousness, cleanliness, effort and exertion, valor and generosity, charity and benevolence, learning and wisdom, optimism, patriotism and friendship with all humanity, it is evident that the reward in this world is happiness and peace, prosperity and joy, rest and comfort, glory and greatness; and after this period of pleasant



Poure Davoud: defined the message of the prophet.

and happy earthly existence has ended, the ultimate hope of bliss in the other abode."

A patriot to the core, Poure Davoud emphasizes one of the attributes praised in the *Avesta* — *vatan parasti* (patriotism). "Our country is in the greatest need (of this attribute) without which it would never work out its salvation."

The poet, author, teacher and research scholar was born at Resht on March 5, 1886. A student of Persian, Arabic and medicine, he qualified as *hakim bashi*, a

practitioner of ancient indigenous medicine. At this time, Iran was struggling for constitutional freedom and young Poure Davoud was deeply involved in this movement. He started writing patriotic poems and songs emphasizing the imperative need to strive for national freedom.

Attracted to studies abroad, Poure Davoud pursued law in Paris from 1910. He also studied French, German and English. In Paris he met Madame Bhikhaiji Cama, daughter-in-law of the Zoroastrian scholar of Bombay, K. R. Cama, and learnt from her the significance of the *sudreh-kusti* and certain Zoroastrian prayers. This personal contact greatly motivated Poure Davoud. He travelled extensively, meeting eminent orientologists and learning from them, studying the masterpieces of European scholars on Zoroastrian religion and the history and culture of ancient Iran in the great libraries of Paris.

The late Dinshah Irani, a lover of Iran and Iranian literature, was for some years on the lookout for a suitable scholar to translate the *Gathas* into modern Persian. While in Iran, he was advised to write to Mirza Abdul Wahab of Qazvin, an Iranian intellectual then residing in Paris. It was this great savant who suggested the name of young Poure Davoud to Irani.

Immediately on receiving a letter from Irani offering him the work of translating the *Gathas*, Poure Davoud left his family and hastened to Bombay. He stayed there for over two years, studied Zoroastrian scriptures with Avestan scholars and completed his monumental work. He familiarized himself with the Parsis and their lifestyle and became a great admirer of the teachings of Zarathushtra. Great credit goes to Irani for the pioneering lead taken by

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him in locating and entrusting this responsible work to Poure Davoud.

Much credit also goes to the late Peshotan D. Marker, whose love for Iran led him to establish several educational institutions in Yazd, for all the assistance and encouragement he gave Poure Davoud and for getting the *Gathas* and the *Poure Davoud Memorial Volume* printed and published in the P. D. Marker Avestan Series. These volumes, financed by Marker, were published under the joint auspices of the Iranian Zoroastrian Anjuman and the Iran League.

Rabindranath Tagore, who had accompanied Irani to Iran, had requested the Iranian Government to depute Prof Poure Davoud to the Vishva Bharati University to lecture on the history and ancient culture of Iran. The then Government of Iran immediately established the chair of Iranian culture at Vishva Bharati.

When Tagore wrote to thank the Government of Iran for establishing the chair, the Iranian minister for foreign affairs H. H. Foroughi himself sent a reply: "Dr Tagore, I assure you, no thanks are due by you to us. I will tell you the reason. Twelve hundred years ago, a part and parcel of our countrymen, Parsis, had to leave the shores of this country under distressing circumstances. We drove them out and India gave

The Government of Iran established the chair of Iranian culture at Tagore's Vishva Bharati University

them refuge and protection, as if they were her own children. At no time, we thanked India for the same. We are founding the chair in your University as a slight token of appreciation and gratitude for what India had done in protecting and preserving our own children."

Sad Band-e-Tagore, Poure Davoud's Persian translation of 100 quatrains from Tagore, was published in 1935.

A year after his return to Iran in 1938, he was made a permanent member of the staff of the Ministry of Education — in recognition of his unique abilities and scholarship.

Poure Davoud visited India thrice and travelled extensively. He was felicitated and presented addresses by several Iranian and Zoroastrian institutes, anjumans and

organizations. These scrolls of honor were worded in highly appreciative terms. His last visit to India was as a member of the high level Iranian cultural mission.

Poure Davoud's ghazals, panegyrics and elegies are superb. His songs on *Yatha Ahu Vairyo* and *Ashem Vohu* are very popular and sung in schools in Iran. His poems *Yazdagard Shariyar*, *Ameshaspandan*, *Yalti*, *Jazire Hormuz*, *Jam*, *Ka Fravahar-e-Darius*, all have assured him a place among the great poets of modern Iran, as notes the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*.

His prose style is simple, natural and lucid. His sentences are short and to the point. As a research scholar he studied in consultation with reputed European and Indian orientalists, and referred to original manuscripts and innumerable books to authenticate his statements. As a journalist, he edited the *Iran Shaher* with Mirza Muhammad Qazvini. Later he edited the *Rastakhiz*. As a teacher, Poure Davoud was most popular.

Glowing tributes were paid to Poure Davoud. Dr Irach J. Taraporevala, whose English translation of the *Gathas* is considered to be one of the best, described him as "a rare person, combining within himself the natures both of a poet and a scholar..."

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sure in the preface to the *Yashts*, "that for the first time in the history of (our) sacred literature, a translation of all the songs of Zoroaster was made in Iran by an Iranian who is considered one of the greatest writers today."

Qazvini referred to the *Gathas* as, "a book which commands equal respect with the *Bible*, the *Gita* and the *Quran*," and believed that the translation will go a long way in making Iranians alive to the great culture of their ancestors and their lofty philosophy.

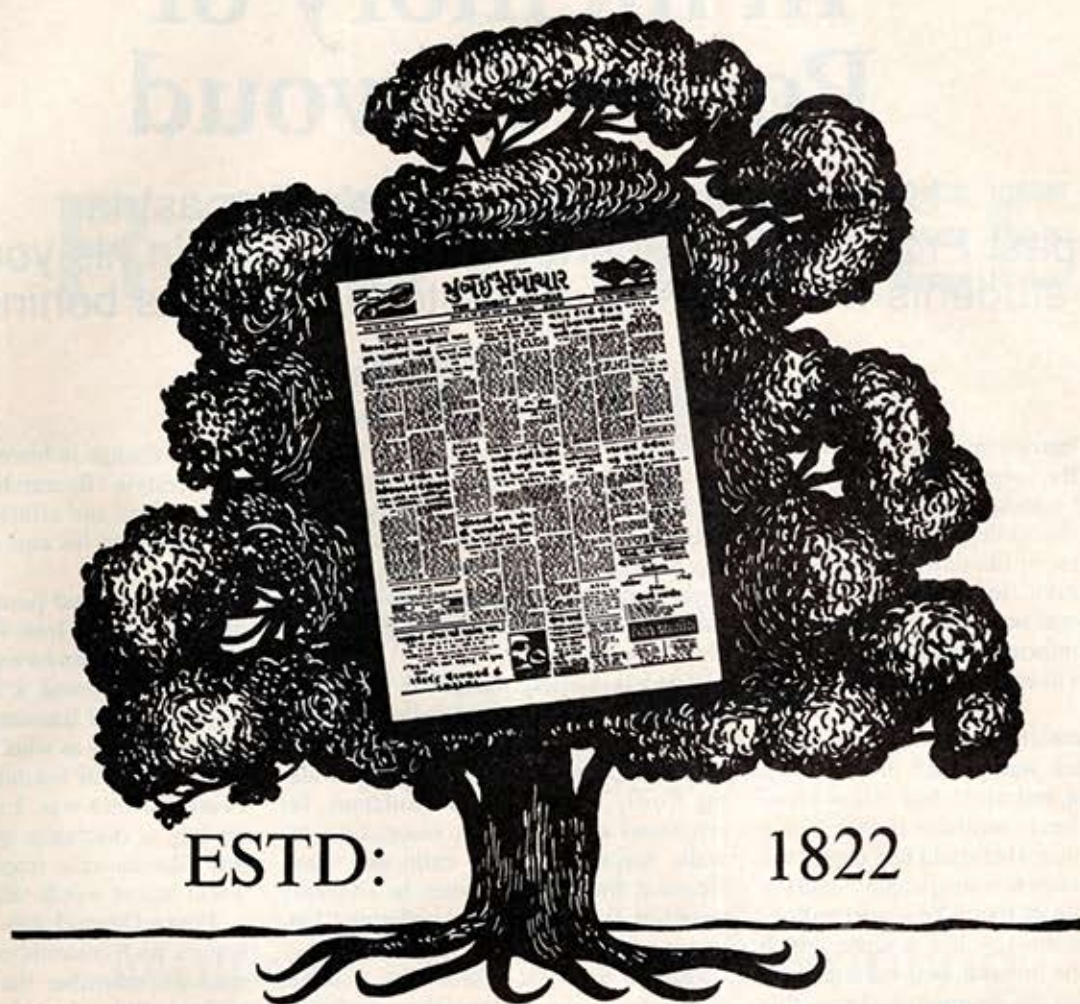
Indeed, Poure Davoud accomplished what a few decades ago would have been considered impossible. As Dr Sir Jivanji Jamshedji Modi in his foreward to the *Gathas* fervently notes, "This book will, I fully trust, bring into closer contact — contact of head and heart — the Zoroastrians of Persia and India with the Moham-medans of Persia..."

Trustee and joint honorary secretary of the K. R. Cama Oriental Institute, Capt Hormazdiar Desai mastered in Persian literature before acquiring his LLB degree. He was promoted to the Indian Administrative Service in 1962 from the Maharashtra cadre which he joined after wartime army service with the South East Asia Command. Desai co-founded the National Association for the Blind and has published seven books, several of them on the rights of the disabled.

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In memory of Poure Davoud

Unveiling the glories of Iran's Zoroastrian
past Prof Ebrahim Poure Davoud kindled in his young
students the desire to understand the ideas behind it

Dr Ehsan Yarshater

They said a learned man is coming to Iran who knows the languages of ancient Iran and who has translated the *Avesta*. I was studying in the college of literature and knew the name of Ebrahim Poure Davoud from his works. In those days ancient languages were not being taught in Iran and correct information about the culture and literature of ancient Iran was not available.

The translation of the *Avesta* by Poure Davoud which was printed in some volumes in India, and which had yellow paper covers, was rarely available in Iran. Some time before that, Hertsfield had taught the Pahlavi language to some people... and the ancient culture of Iran, like a rider galloping in the distance or like a scene which appears on the horizon, was taking shape gradually. But the yearning to know this old civilization which had found place in some hearts was not fulfilled because there was no teacher for this discipline — no one among the Iranians had paid any attention to it.

The arrival of Poure Davoud infused life in this new-grown desire. He was coming from the cities of learning. We were eagerly awaiting his arrival so that he might lead us also to the treasure towards which he was travelling. Ancient Iran was a thought-provoking era for us. The time gap adorned it in our eyes and made it a mirror of our longing. Its ambiguity softened our hopes and hid suspected defects. We had, with the help of limited knowledge, a powerful vision and broad desire constructed a magnificent and glorious world from the panorama of our history... In our difficult times, we clung to the pride of this world...

At last Poure Davoud reached Iran and the teaching of the languages and culture of ancient Iran — a new faculty — was entrusted to him at Tehran University. The day he began work, Isa Siddique, principal of the college, accompanied him to class to introduce him. The attendance in the class was more than usual.

Clad in a dark, decorated, clean suit Poure Davoud was of comparatively short stature, had an olive complexion and an eagle-like nose. He arrived in class walking slowly, followed by Dr Siddique. He possessed a heavy sweet voice. Like his walk, his talk too was calm and slow. Hence it was pleasant when he suddenly switched from literary to colloquial language.

Before the First World War, a select group of patriotic Iranians who were lovers of independence like Mirza Mohammed Khan Qazvini, Kazimzadeh Iranshahr, Syed Mohammed Ali Jamaalzaadeh and Poure Davoud had come together in Berlin. Most of them, besides having a passion for Iran's independence and power, were also scholars and researchers. The late Syed Hasan Taqeezaadeh was their leader and the periodical *Kaveh* was the mouthpiece of their thoughts and aspirations.

After the defeat of Germany and the uprooting of the Qajarian dynasty in Iran, Poure Davoud remained in Germany and devoted his time to research on the significance of ancient Iran. In this way he gained contact with Indian Zoroastrians, obtained favor and praise from them and published some of his works with their assistance. When he came to Iran at the invitation of the Tehran University there

was no change in his way of working and his lifestyle. Research in the culture of ancient Iran and efforts to reopen its glories remained his aim until the end of his life.

Poure Davoud pioneered the learning of ancient Iran in Iran. His passion affected others also. When he was engaged in teaching he awakened a love for learning languages and literature in many hearts. Few people are as wholly harmonious with their subject of teaching and research as Poure Davoud was. I still remember him reading a discourse on Mehr Yazad. It was like an epic from old Iran and his warm heroic words vibrated in our ears.

Poure Davoud was enamoured of the history and customs of ancient Iran. He used to remember the kings of old Iran with a high head and loved the faith of the Aryans and the religion of the Zoroastrians. His grief over the downfall of Sasanian rule and the victory of Taaziyaan shadowed most of his works. He loved only that which was Iranian. The most gripping parts of his writing describe the glories of the Iranians or his repentance over the victory of foreigners. In such works, his prose is extraordinarily tender and moving, and they are considered as salient specimens of contemporary prose. Likewise it was in such works that the inborn talent of his poetry was visible in his prose.

When he finished his work at the college he would walk home slowly. Although he was not affluent, some of his ways were noble and his living reminded one of the customs of the freeborn. To students, and to those who required his books, he was generous. In his talk he

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never seemed to care for material things or matters like salary or privileges. Respectable, restful and polite, his inner shyness prevented him from becoming angry and quarrelsome. Notwithstanding the fact that the Zoroastrian society gave him much respect and considered itself indebted to him, he did not turn to them for benefits. He seldom went to see anybody and mostly remained at home where he entertained his colleagues, relatives and students.

When a friend passes away from this world, his shortcomings disappear in the shade of death and his virtues become magnified. But in the case of Poure Davoud I do not experience such uneasiness. He holds high status in the history of Iranian culture. In his departure a bright face, a good prose writer and a noble man of Iranian society has been lost to us.

One of the most important services of Poure Davoud in the field of literature is the Persian translation of *Avesta* in six volumes. The work, in my opinion, is one of the most important published in Persian since the beginning of the constitutional era. Though it may be possible to name some works of the last 70 years which might be superior to it in terms of research, I am aware of very few books which have

The sense of justice kept him on the path of moderation

opened a new horizon of educational research in our country. Nor, with regard to the knowledge of one of the most important documents in the history, nationalism and religion of Iran, are there books which can be considered more worthy of attention than Poure Davoud's *Avesta*.

It is a precise and reliable translation of the *Avesta*, a work which is full of ambiguities and difficulties. Poure Davoud took up this task on the basis of great interest and spent most of his life in it. Since their publication these volumes have remained a basic source, perhaps a unique source, of information about Zoroastrian regulations and the ancient fables of Iran.

Another outstanding scholarly service of Poure Davoud is the creation of special interest and the infusion of love for this field of knowledge, in the hearts of many

youths and students.

The secret of the scholarly life of Poure Davoud was his patriotism. Though the glories of ancient Iran were fundamental to it, occasionally heightened love and devotion gave a touch of exaggeration to his works. He despised the people who had invaded and encroached upon Iran. He considered them ignorant and uncivilized. He did not like their memorials and his taunts were directed against them.

But the gentleness of his thinking, and the sense of justice which grows from liberality, kept him on the path of moderation, out of conflict with scientific research and prevented him from indulging in the fabrication of history.

Besides the scientific services and the valuable publications which made Poure Davoud popular, his moral characteristics endeared him in many hearts. One of them was his simplicity and sincerity. His manner and talk were frank and free and he spoke and wrote and acted always according to his belief. He was devoid of the cleverness and the cunning which are the common characteristics of those who are greedy and power-hungry. In friendship he was faithful and although the modesty which was inherent in his nature hindered



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the unfolding of his sentiments, it did not prevent him from encouraging his students and praising their efficiency or effort. The number of his loving friends among students and colleagues was legion.

His delightful nature made his company sweet and pleasant. In the course of his calm and serious talk some joke might crop up suddenly and make everyone smile. His jokes, though critical, were without bitterness.

Poure Davoud used to pay attention and give special respect to female students and meritorious women. He was happy to see intelligent, eloquent and deserving girls. Perhaps what particularly pleased him was the difference between the style of these women and the ways of women with *chador* on their heads. He considered the style of the *chador*-clad women contrary to human dignity. In the existence of diligent and productive girls he saw the revival of Iran from its days of humiliation.

In later years, due to my remaining away from Iran, I could not visit Poure Davoud as often as I wished. The last time I saw him was six months prior to his passing away. We were sitting in the courtyard of his small house in Aabaan Road. Though he had just completed 80 years of age he looked healthy and vigorous... The

hair on his head had started to turn grey and he was complaining about some pain in his legs.

For several years he had been collecting material for writing a book about "Soshiyaant," the Promised One of the Zoroastrians. I asked him how far it had progressed. He said, very slowly, that there was little progress these days. I do not know why, but I felt that he had no hope of completing it.

On reaching home my hand automatically stretched toward the first volume of *Yeshtaha* which Poure Davoud had gifted to me during the earlier days of his arrival in Iran. On the title page his legible handwriting had inscribed, "Gifted to Ehsaanullaah Yaar Shaatir." And I remembered the first day in class, eagerly awaiting his arrival...

An edited and abridged version of a personal tribute in Persian translated into English for *Parsiana*, courtesy the Iran Culture House, Bombay. Editor of the *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, Dr Ehsan Yarshater had succeeded Prof Ebrahim Poure Davoud in the chair of Avestan and Ancient Iranian studies at Tehran University. Yarshater had studied under Poure Davoud in Tehran, and with Prof W. B. Henning and Prof Dr (Ms) Mary Boyce in London. The multilingual Yarshater has also been general editor of the UNESCO sponsored *Persian Heritage Series*.

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"ADVERTISING IS A TERRIFIC PROFESSION"

Ogilvy and Mather's director of international client service, Roda Mehta reviews the path she has tread

Homi J. Rogers



"There are four people an overseas client talks to when he plans to enter a country with his product: a management consultant, a solicitor, a government liaison man and an advertising agent." So observes Ms Roda Mehta, the feisty 45-year-old director of international client service at Ogilvy and Mather (O&M), the fourth largest advertising agency in India. And, judging by O&M's high profile in this specialized market, which is largely responsible for the agency's capitalized billing registering a spectacular 50 percent increase from Rs 114 crore to Rs 162 crore during the last year (much ahead of the industry's mean of 37.4 percent), it is apparent that Mehta as the fourth pillar of the equation has been doing an exceedingly fine job. From Ferozpur, where she was born the third child of a railway engineer, to her position in a premier ad agency is indeed a long haul. And it has been one with an enviable track record.

An economics graduate (BA honors) from St Miranda, Delhi, Mehta spent her early life in the north, before coming to Bombay to do her MBA from the Jamnalal Bajaj Institute. "I remember our having to live in tents in Delhi, before the railways allotted us a house," reminisces Mehta on her early days when her father, Pesi Hormusji Mehta, having broken away from the agrarian trend of the Manchorewalla family, held a transferable job in the Indian Railway Services. "It pleased my parents, especially my mother (Nargesh) when on completing my graduation I applied for and

got admission at Bajaj. She felt that being in Bombay would better my chances of getting hooked to a good Parsi boy," laughs Mehta. What her mother dreamt of, however, was not to be. Mehta found Bombay truly cosmopolitan and, she chuckles, "the only Parsi boy in my class was already interested elsewhere."

Not that young Mehta ever truly missed not growing up within the confines of the community. "Being in a place like Delhi, where there are fewer members of one's faith can have its plus points," she muses. "For one, you get to know people from all walks of life, and are exposed to various communities and their cultures." At the same time, as Mehta realized, a strong feeling for one's own religion and people gets instilled. "The priest becomes like a pivot in our lives: he is the one round whom things happen; he provides the link with religion." For Mehta, the religious links so provided run strong. "I still wear my sudreh-kusti, do my prayers, observe rituals," she states, adding that the dogmatism our religion is mired in rather saddens her. "There is nothing that has provided me with new windows or perspectives," laments Mehta, regretting that even simple questions like "why am I here?" do not seem to be answered by Zoroastrianism.

The seeker within Mehta has led her to explore many paths: a Vedantic scholar impressed her when she was in Bangalore

on an O&M stint to convert the regional offices into autonomous business units. And she is just back

from Igatpuri after attending a 10-day course in Vipassana, an ancient meditation technique which enables one to experience peace and harmony through maintenance of complete silence and a process of self-observation. It has been this seeking spirit, and her ability to synthesize her experiences that has led Mehta from one success to another, as she seeks out challenges and ways to meet them.

She accepted her very first job as a challenge. Viewed in hindsight, though, it was that fortuitous break that was to make Mehta, in a manner that probably neither a job with Tatas (who, says Mehta, did not then recruit women in TAS, their administrative services), nor with ICICI (The Industrial Credit and Investment Corporation of India Limited) would have accomplished. Employment at ICICI, where Mehta's parents knew the then Deputy General Manager, Dr Pheroze Medhora, was a logical move for the young post-graduate who had done a major in operations research. But fate intervened, and Hindustan Thompson Associates (HTA) came head-hunting at the campus. The first National Readership Survey (NRS) had just been completed, and HTA wanted someone to computerize the data base. The challenge was enticing. And Mehta, who was rejected by the Tatas because of their

recruitment policy, was lured away from a Rs 1,100 job at ICICI to a Rs 750 one fraught with the challenge she sought, and an assurance of growth based on merit and performance.

The move paid rich dividends: Mehta grew, and for well over a decade and a half she was the most respected voice in media. What had earlier been a clerical function in most advertising agencies who bought space in newspapers and magazines (often expressly at the client's instructions or at the persuasion of the representative who approached them), was slowly but surely being converted by Mehta into an essential agency service. Mehta brought her knowledge of economics, mathematics and computing into the service to devise modes by which the client could get maximum mileage and reach for his advertising rupee.

While all this helped to shape her agency, O&M (which she had joined after two years of completing her task at HTA), into a media-buying force, it also helped in giving media buyers a greater respectability in advertising circles. Mehta may have been the first MBA to opt for a career in the department of advertising, but with her positive contribution she ensured that she would not be the last. A whole new host

of hopefuls with stars in their eyes discovered that there was more to advertising than being clever wordsmiths and savvy servicing men. And, undoubtedly, it was Mehta who had thrown the floodgates open.

The plums were there for Mehta's plucking too. Within two years of joining O&M, an agency she has now been with for 19 years, Mehta became a media group head. And at just 32 Mehta was accorded a place on the O&M board. With the lifting of the emergency, the magazine boom that ensued further bolstered Mehta's reputation. It was she who would pick through the plethora of publications vying for the advertiser's rupee. And the 1982 Asiad games, which had color television coming to India, furthered Mehta's reach and powers of selective buying.

She was a member of the committee formed to evaluate sponsored TV programs, and it was Mehta, along with her colleagues, who convinced the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (I&B) after two years of relentless pursuit, to abandon their lopsided policy of rationing time to advertisers: the result was better quality serials and increased revenues for Doordarshan. It was, after brokerage of time was done away with and the entire rate structure

suitably revised at their instance, as consultants to the Ministry of I&B, that Doordarshan grew rapidly, Mehta recalls triumphantly.

More accolades were to come her way for her role in the National Literacy Mission campaign. O&M was approached for a campaign on adult literacy in the wake of its stirring nation-building advertisements ("Spread the Light of Freedom" etc). "On August 16, 1989, I took the brief," recalls Mehta — an indication of how close to her heart was this campaign that she still remembers the exact date she started work on it. "We traveled vastly through six states, interviewing numerous people: NGOs, literates, trainers, those attending adult education classes, and those not," she narrates.

At the end of this odyssey Mehta developed a strategy, a brief that substituted the government handout of macro figures. It was on Mehta's brief that the final ad film took shape, with the necessary emotive and functional thrust of not just converting illiterates but motivating the literates to offer to teach the lesser privileged, and so help them perform their tasks in a better and more productive manner. Even so, the campaign would have come unstuck but for Mehta's grit and go-getting ability in again

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convincing Doordarshan to put the film on air free of media cost. The flattering results then came in: over 200,000 respondents wrote in from all over the country offering their services.

For Mehta who had earlier in her life toyed with the idea of undertaking architecture, the National Literacy Mission provided a chance to 'build' a new India and give something back to society. With globalization and the winds of liberalization sweeping the country, Mehta will be further contributing to the country in her new role by facilitating the entry of multinational clients. Her job, as she observes with characteristic modesty, is to advise her agency's clients on market behavior, competition status, strategies, pricing and distribution. The successes are there for all to see: Duracell and Seagram have been launched to favorable responses, while the Finish giant Nokia and Kimberly Clark are set to make waves in the coming months.

"Advertising is a terrific profession," concludes Mehta, "for people who don't want to be bound by routine, who look at things differently; who think intuitively, observe and listen; who are sensitive to humanity and prepared to work 18 hours a day." And would, we enquired, youths from

the Parsi community fit the brief?

"I don't think you can generalize on religious characteristics," comments Mehta, giving the question a pass over. It is not, however, just an attempt to duck the issue, for Mehta's "only exposure to Parsi youth

*Mehta not just
converted
the illiterates
but motivated
the literates*

is the young Parsis who come and join us, or from the children of parents I know." Yet, from her limited observations, Mehta candidly notes that she can't spot that much charity and integrity amongst the youth as the community was once famous for. And no, she does not generalize on Parsi females being smarter or cleverer than the males.

"The edge of girls over boys is happen-

ing all across," she smiles and, with her own sterling example, one can scarcely disagree. And as a result of this sobering knowledge, and perhaps because of her upbringing (Mehta has spent most of her adult life in the Parsi bastions of Bombay and Bangalore where her brother Daraius stays), she foresees "no problem situation" for herself if and when she decides to get married. "It will have to be a Parsi. I have very strong feelings about that," she muses.

What is however a disturbing trend, observes Mehta, is that the community has no common purpose or goal. On a visit to Israel, she had noted that the Jews — another microscopic community like the Zoroastrians — had something that bound them together: the desire to get back to their homeland. "Israel was like a melting pot of Jews from all over the world. As against that, we have American Parsis, British Parsis, Australian Parsis... We have to merge back into a larger whole or our numbers will reduce." From one who has spent over two decades looking at numbers, and the strength they convey both in qualitative and quantitative terms, this is surely a thought worth considering. As much as her dictum for success: "Do not lose sight of the means, while always looking at the ends."

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Abraham Mathai

OTB! Short for 'Only The Best.' That's what Ms Mahrukh Kerawalla believes in. And 'OTB' is exactly what she's chosen as the brand name of the ladies footwear range she intends to launch shortly.

What started out as a hobby — making ladies shoes and scholls (broad-straped slippers) — through hard work, grit and imagination has grown today into a big venture.

It all began more than a decade ago, when a cobbler knocked on Kerawalla's door asking for work. Kerawalla found his work quite good and since she wanted to help him, asked him to make a few more pairs for her friends. Scholls were in fashion those days, and Kerawalla got them made in an attractive range of colors. Soon, there were the friends of her friends, and their other friends asking for similar pieces.

"Once we booked a stall at the Parsi Colony Gymkhana's Winter Fair and sold quite a few pairs," said Kerawalla. "A friend suggested we sell to boutiques. And yes, the boutiques resold them at fancy prices and often passed them off as imported!" That's the kind of quality shoes that Kerawalla made.

"On a couple of occasions, we even conducted sales at our homes. It was an ad

for one such sale that caught the eye of the owners of Metro Dawood Shoes. They asked me to come over with a few samples, which they liked," she reminisces. An initial investment of Rs 10,000 got her a shed at an industrial estate in Wadala. And ever since, she has been making designer shoes, sandals, slippers and scholls for them.

At the same time, Kerawalla enrolled as a member of the Jai Hind Sahkari Charmoutpadak Sangh, a cooperative society of small leather manufacturers. "This was mandatory, because in this trade sales were always routed through a co-operative society. This also ensured that the producer got a fair deal for his efforts," she said.

Kerawalla was soon elected chairperson of the society, a position she's been holding for the last 10 years. The society, with over 3,500 members in and around Bombay, is

also affiliated to the Khadi and Village Industries Board. This cooperative society supplies shoes to most major shoe shops in Bombay.

This position means dealing with a lot of poor and uneducated people. "But I find it a challenge," she says. "Yes, sometimes it can get a bit frustrating, especially trying to make a person understand something. But in the end I enjoy doing what I'm doing, and it's fun. Being here also gives me an opportunity to help them out. Maybe that's why I have been re-elected to this post for the last 10 years in a row."

Kerawalla's workshop units are now scattered around Duncan Road, in central Bombay, the heart of the leather industry. She moved here from Wadala after the riots. "The workers normally live on or around the workshop premises, and in Wadala they were constantly harassed," she said.

The 500 or so pairs she makes each month are adapted from designs in foreign catalogs or an odd pair a friend may pick up on her trip abroad. But that requires imagination and a feel for what will sell. Some



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time back, she had made shoes and handbags for the airhostesses of Damania Airways. At present, she's on the same job for Jet Airways.

Since she only manufactures, she does not have a label of her own. Her shoes carry the retailer's brand — Metro Shoes.

"That way, I do not have to bother about the selling. It's so much easier dealing with one retailer. And the person is assured of exclusivity. Otherwise, you will have all the shoe shops exhibiting the same ware! Moreover, Metro Shoes has over 20 shops, and is growing fast.

"Of course, it has its disadvantages. Like, I should have the capacity to hold on to my stocks if the demand is low."

Putting in more than 12 hours of work each day, running her manufacturing unit, selecting raw materials, dealing with labor, checking the finished goods, looking after the cooperative society and, between all this, expanding her company, she is full of vitality and energy.

At the 1,000 square feet factory they

have taken over at Nagpada, Kerawalla intends starting out with 100 pairs a day, beginning April this year.

The firm will start with ladies' shoes, closed shoes and shoes for little girls. These shoes will be handmade and for good pasting of soles and for the final finishing, machines will be used. "We want to tap the niche for children's shoes," says Kerawalla.

"We have plenty of raw material and good labor in India," she says. "Our pairs can be as good as the imported ones. That is provided we are quality conscious. But of course there is a price

for good quality stuff. My policy is: 'The product should speak for itself.' I do not like anybody complaining about my product. This is what I hope to achieve, and I am sure I will," she says with determination.

After all, as a person who once toyed with the idea of becoming a physiotherapist, and was the tennis champion of her school, Kerawalla has the stamina and energy required in the business. Born and bred in Pakistan, with a BA from the Uni-

"Our pairs can be as good as the imported ones provided we are quality conscious"

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iversity of Karachi, she was asked to look after her father's business when he went abroad. "But I wanted to do something on my own, something creative," she asserts. "I formed a firm of indenting business for textiles which worked well."

She moved to Bombay after her marriage to Zarir Kerawalla, manager of Jewel of India and Jade Gardens, in 1983. "At first, I was quite surprised at the poverty among the Parsis here. I found the Parsis of Karachi very enterprising. They were more secure and settled," she feels. "The Karachi Anjuman takes real good care of the Parsis there. They are more relaxed, socialize a lot and are of a helping nature."

"For example, during the Iran crisis when the Shah was deposed, Zoroastrians fleeing the country were given shelter and helped to settle. They used to hold language classes so that they could stand on their own feet once again."

"I feel Parsis here, too, could achieve a lot. They are perceived as trustworthy and hardworking. People want us to work for them. Often friends in the business ask me if I can recommend a good Parsi cashier for their firm."

In Bombay the lady once again tried her hand at the textile business. But it did not click. That was when opportunity, in the form of an unemployed cobbler, knocked on her door!

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BOMBAY

THE RETURN OF SWABAL

The only survivor of a chain, Cusrow Baug's Swabal Stores has regenerated as a self-service retailer

Sarosh Bana

Everywhere one turns, one sees the gradual decline of Parsi institutions. Dwindling patronage, ebbing interest and the inexorable shrinkage of the community have today left our agiaries, schools, madressas, sanatoria, even our once bustling neighborhoods and shops, bereft of the attendance, occupation and clientele they once enjoyed.

One of the institutions that struggled for survival against overwhelming odds has undoubtedly been Swabal Stores. This chain of provision shops had in the past a high visibility in Bombay but it somehow failed to keep up with the times. It forfeited its relevance and utility along the way and was

just about to give up its ghost altogether, when the trustees launched an eleventh hour salvage operation that managed to prop up the Swabal signboard at least at one of the outlets.

"It was our community's eminent social worker, Ms Bapsy Sabavala, and my father, Jehangir Cama, who established the Swabal Store circa 1934," recalls 77-year-old Ms Shirin Jejeebhoy, whose family now sustains the Parsi Dhandha Rojgar Fund, a trust committed to encouraging Parsi entrepreneurship that oversees the management of Swabal. In fact, Swabal is supposed to mean 'self-help' in Persian, and the objective of the fund was to train

Parsi youth in an effort to gain them eventual self-employment.

Shirin's husband, Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy, who is a sprightly 81, adds, "The first Swabal Stores was set up in Petit Building, now rechristened Ness Baug, in downtown Bombay's Nana Chowk. Other outlets were established subsequently near Novelty cinema at Grant Road, near today's Ganga-Jamuna cinema at Tardeo, at Gowalia Tank, and the fifth outside Cusrow Baug on Colaba Causway, all Parsi strongholds in their heyday." Curiously, there was no Swabal store in the Flora Fountain area which was actually the original settlement of the community in Bombay.

Today, the last one, the store at Colaba, remains, the rest having folded up over the years after having been a severe drain on the scarce resources of the Rojgar Fund. "It was by selling off these losing propositions that we were at all able to use that money for resuscitating the Cusrow Baug



Photos: Varghese W. Fernandez

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shop," remarks the Jejeebhoy's 37-year-old son, Rustom, who is one of the trustees. "At one stage, my idea was to sell off all the shops lock, stock and barrel, make a clean break, form a corpus with the money realized and invest the amount into housing for the needy in our community."

Shirin Jejeebhoy pointed out that Parsi philanthropy was very much to the fore when the Swabal Stores came to be created. But at the same time, Sabavala and Cama felt the need to provide vocational training to the underprivileged sections of the community rather than merely proffering them dole. The Rojgar Fund introduced what were termed as *hunnar shalas* where instruction was imparted in such skilled jobs as carpentry, automobile repair, welding, watch repair, bookkeeping, basic accounting, shopkeeping...

Sir Jamsetjee recalls at least one workshop run as a *hunnar shala* near the Banaji fire-temple at Thakurdwar, while another was located close to the Swabal Stores at

"They have things we require and don't indulge in blackmarketing"

widows, by merchandising their homemade foodstuff such as confectionaries, *daar ni poli*, *vasanu*, *murambo*, *popatji*, cutlets, patties, custard, pickles and squashes. The store manager, salespersons and even the delivery boys were all Parsis and the Rojgar's aim was to induce them eventually to branch out and set up their own enterprise."

Lalkaka regrets that the staff gradually alienated customers by their singular lack of salesmanship, their chronic lethargy and disinterest, and even their curtness. "Around

us, relatively modern shops with more dedicated customer service were cropping up and our clientele did not take long in deserting us in their favor," he avers.

Rustom Jejeebhoy concurs, adding that even the outmoded displays of the provisions did their bit in turn-

ing off customers. The goods were stacked on moldy wooden shelves and dusty cast iron racks and in boxes and jars that were uncompromisingly unattractive. For instance, vinegar was retailed from a bulging glass dispenser by siphoning it out with a tube drawn to its mouth and released in the container brought by the purchaser. He nevertheless reminisces about Rustomji Karanjia, who was manager of the Cusrow Baug Swabal, the feeder store for all the remaining Swabal Stores, as a gentleman who was scrupulously honest and immensely diligent in discharging his duties.

"Unfortunately, the later generation was not so idealistic, and massive pilferage, both within our shop and en route to home deliveries, soon brought us ever deeper in the red," he affirms. According to him, these shopkeepers who had turned shoplifters ate up the sweets and other items as well.

Such thievery underscored the debasement of our values and the pathetic manner in which an ennobling Parsi institution was brought to ruin. "At one stage, we were reduced to a level where we had no funds to even pay off our rent or our suppliers," Jejeebhoy notes. Interestingly, another trusted employee who comes to his mind was a Parsi murderer who had served his sentence. Jejeebhoy cannot recall this person's name, but says, "We were all quite wary when he approached us for a job. But Jehangirji Cama was confident we could trust the man and employed him as the driver of our delivery van, a position in which he served Jehangirji well."

Later on, even thieving Parsis were difficult to find to serve in the stores. As a result, the trustees finally decided to wind up four of the loss-making outlets one after the other and invested Rs 10 lakhs in the Cusrow Baug shop instead. Lalkaka mentions that "when we gambled and decided to put all the eggs in one basket by retaining only this outlet," the trustees advertised in Gujarati-language newspapers like *Jam-e-Jamshed* and *The Bombay Samachar* — and even put up signboards — for Parsi employees, for the full three months during which renovation was being carried out on the shop before it finally re-opened in its gleaming new avatar on April 1, 1994. "Strangely, not a single Parsi came forward and today, all our staff comprises non-Parsis save for our accountant," Lalkaka maintains.

The new Swabal is certainly a cut above its siblings of yore, though one cannot help feel nostalgic for the days when life was less frenetic and even wretched service was a hallmark of the times. When one enters this new Swabal Stores, one at once realizes that the era of the old musty Parsi shop is over. David Menezes of the Bombay-based Super Market Consultants which was entrusted the daunting task of transforming the place, beams with pride at the 700 sq ft air-conditioned glass and granite layout with a blue neon store-sign beckoning passersby. Both he and the store manager, Reginald Rodrigues, claim that this Swabal Stores has India's highest sale among all comparable-sized supermarkets in the first six months of their existence, including the Sahakari Bhandar. "Our sales average Rs 30,000 per day and increase on Saturdays and at the beginning of the month," Rodrigues points out.

Pravin P. Mithaiwala and his friend Chandravadan Mathuria live at Crawford Market and Sikkangar at V. P. Road, res-



Swabal Stores founders Cama (left) and Sabavala recognized the need for vocational training

Tardeo. Woefully for the community, the pioneering zeal and spirit of enterprise that had earlier pitchforked the Parsis to the forefront of nation-building, began to steadily wither away. Not many Parsi youth were fired by such a calling any more, but were content to take a low-salaried 10 to 5 job in a bank or other establishments, or worse, turn wayward. And with attendance dropping sharply, the Rojgar Fund's workshops had to be dismantled.

The situation in the various Swabal Stores was no different. Ratan Lalkaka, another trustee, points out: "Our shops were stocked with all provisions from foodgrain to edible oils and from vinegar to toiletries. But that apart, we afforded livelihood to numerous poor Parsi women, including



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pectively, but make it a point to shop at Swabal Stores when they are in the vicinity. "They have things we require and don't indulge in blackmarketing," says Mithaiwala. "Besides, with the items available on display, even those we forget to include on our list can be brought to mind as a result." Ms Rita Sidhwa and Ms Hufrish Press like the self-service and mention that the store clerks are helpful and polite. But add, "The space is slightly cramped and there is need for one more cash counter."

According to Rodrigues, another counter is proposed as soon as the requisite computer system is inducted shortly. Adds Jejeebhoy, "We will be setting up a counter by the door for a Parsi lady, Ms Anahita M. Bharucha from Lalbaug, for selling Parsi fast food items. We hope to recover our investment in the next four years."

But despite the encouraging sales, Jejeebhoy is not certain whether there will be adequate earnings to gradually restore the famous Swabal chain again. "Property rates are far too extravagant in Bombay for that sort of an enterprise," he explains. But the most telling aspect that has emerged with the Cusrow Baug Swabal is that an age-old Parsi institution has been hauled back from the precipice and not allowed to die out.

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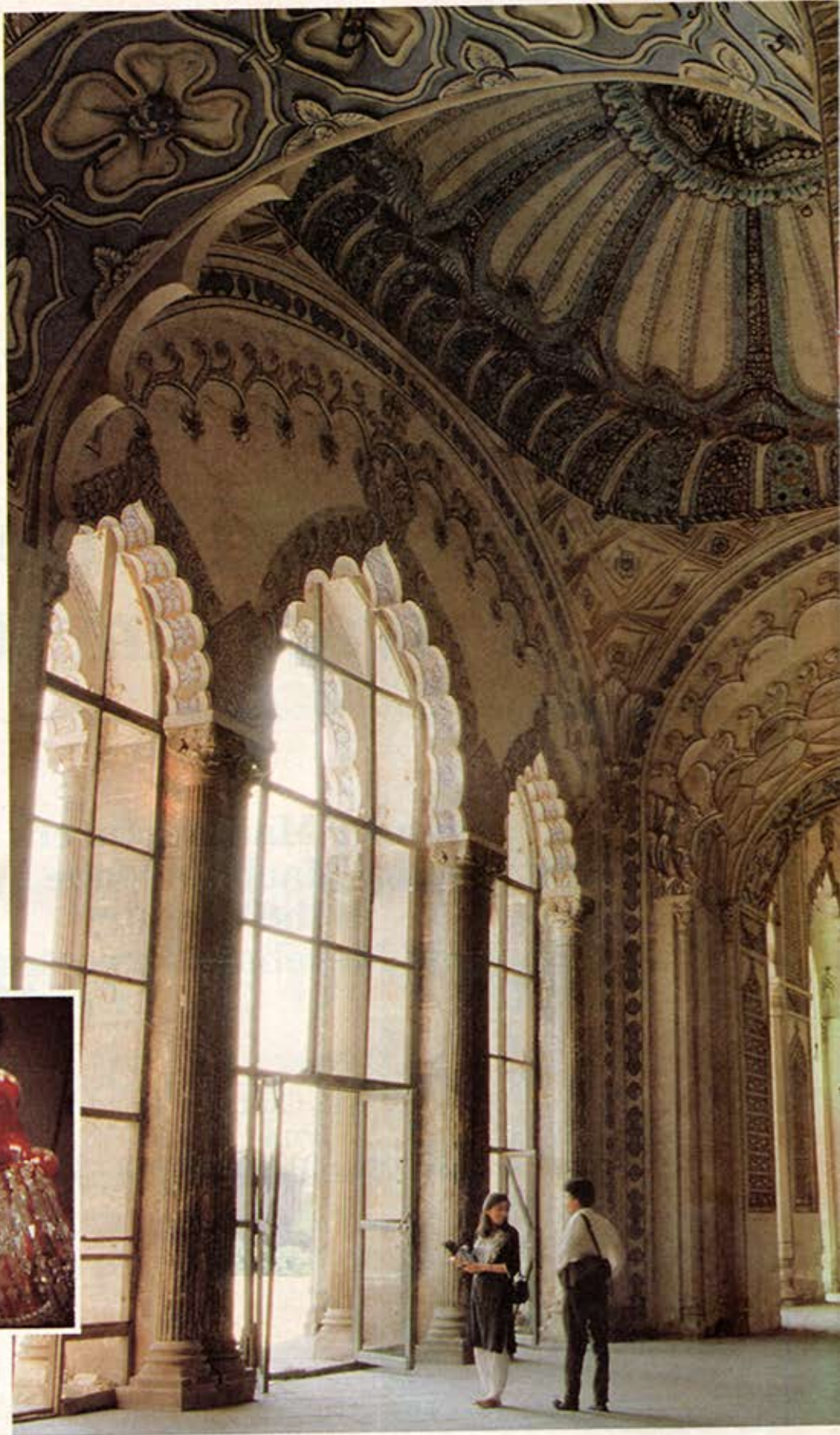
Civilized decadence

The creation, presentation and consumption of food was serious business for the Nawabs of Oudh!

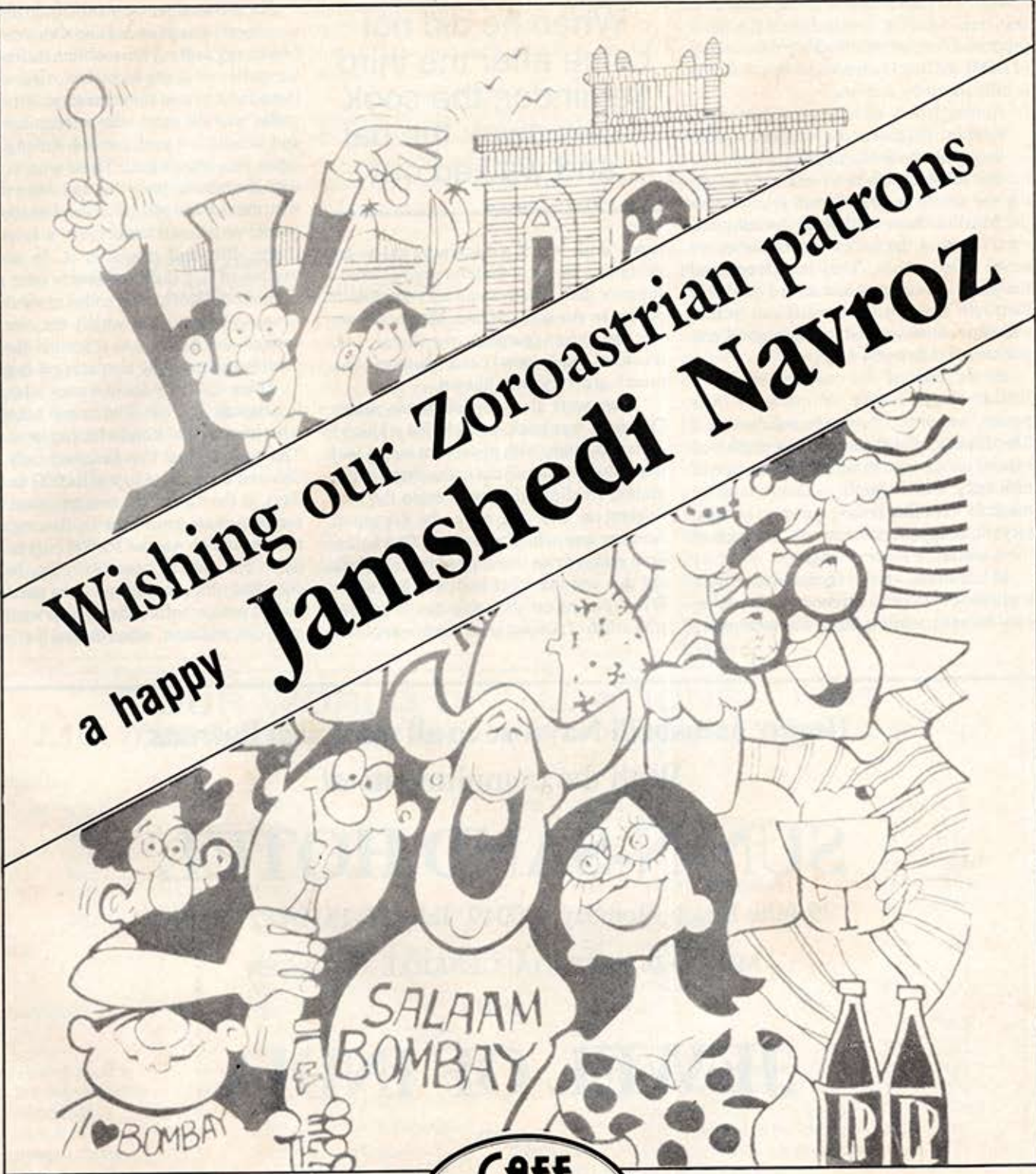
Bhicoo J. Manekshaw

The people of Lucknow are gentle, soft spoken. Their refinement knows no bounds. Their hospitality is perhaps unequalled in India. Their culture or way of life is as delightful as that of the people of Hyderabad.

Their cuisine — the Awadhi cuisine — is superlative and the most delicate of the



Lucknow's Jama Masjid (right) and the chandelier of the Chota Imambara: recalling past opulence
Photos: Varghese W. Fernandez



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three schools of Moghlai cuisine in India. It is innovative and refined, at the same time very rich in ghee in certain dishes. It is more subtle and delicate than the Moghlai cooking of Delhi, and the Hyderabadi cuisine which is influenced by Andhra.

Although they all have the same origin — Persian, Turkish and a bit of the Arabic — these three schools of Moghlai cuisine have developed their own versions by adapting the spices and food from areas where the Muslims have settled. In Awadhi cuisine, I am told, the spices in most dishes are never added whole. They are ground and the juice is extracted and added to flavor the food. Today it is very difficult to find authentic Awadhi food, even in good restaurants and five-star hotels.

At the turn of the century, when the British divested them of much of their power, a number of nawabs indulged in a life of fantasy and pleasure. They employed special cooks who excelled in one type of dish only. For example, a dish would be made to look like pulav, quorma, kababs, biryani, chappati, chutney, etc, but each of them would be made of sugar!

In Lucknow, a pulav is considered more sophisticated than a biryani. A biryani is easy to make, while a subtly flavored pulav

**When he did not
come after the third
reminder, the cook
threw away the dal
and walked out**

needs skill, which a discerning palate can recognize and it is therefore considered a superior dish. There are about 80 variations of pulavs in Awadhi cuisine. Many of them, like the *gulzar* (garden), *nur* (light), *kaku* (cuckoo), *moti* (pearl) and *chambali* (jasmine), are very well known.

There were also more elaborate pulavs. One such was made to look like a *khichdi* — it was made with pistachios cut to look like dal and almonds cut in the shape of rice grains! I believe that once eaten the taste lingers on and can never be forgotten. Another was called *anar dana*. One half of each grain of rice was dipped into an edible red dye and the other half was left white. When placed on the table one wondered why a dish of pomegranate seeds was placed

along with other savory dishes.

For the *moti pulav*, *varak* (gold and silver sheets) was pounded and added to well-beaten egg yolks. This was then stuffed into the gullet of a dead chicken, tied with a thread and heated for some time. When the gullet was slit open with a sharp knife, lo and behold — well formed shining little white pearls appeared! These were cooked with the meat of the pulav and when mixed with the rice and placed on the *dastarkhwan* (white or colored tablecloth), it looked as if the dish had pearls in it. In another version of this dish, the pearls were made of small vadis of paneer rolled in *varak*. The *navratan pulav*, for which the rice was cooked and colored to resemble the nine precious gems, was also created here.

There is a story about a cook who came to a nawab for a job. The nawab asked him what he could cook and what pay he wanted. The cook replied that he could only cook dals and wanted a salary of Rs 500. In those days, at the turn of the century, most other servants were paid four or five rupees a month, and he wanted Rs 500 only to cook dals! The nawab conceded this, but the cook had other conditions — he needed 24 hours' notice before the nawab wanted to eat a dal; and then, when the dal was ready,

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it should not be kept waiting, but eaten immediately. Again the Nawab conceded the demands.

One day when the order was given to cook a dal and it was made, the nawab was occupied and did not come to the table immediately. When he did not come after the third reminder the cook picked up the dal, threw it away and walked out of the household! No amount of searching could find him. Well done. How many of us would have the courage to do just that?

Great esteem and respect were accorded to expert cooks in Lucknow in those days, and they were highly paid. Unfortunately now, in the so-called civilized and educated circles of today, they are called *bawarchees* in a derogatory manner. Food used to be a high priority in a nawabi household and even in those days they thought nothing of spending Rs 1,000 to Rs 2,000 per day on their kitchen.

Most nawabs employed *hakims* (doctors) who were very good. Medicine and food were prescribed by them by just feeling the pulse of their employers; and according to the constitution of the family they would create dishes, so most families had slightly different variations of the classical dishes.

Traditionally meals were served on a

One half of each grain of rice was dipped into an edible red dye

white or colored dastarkhwan. In Hyderabad the tablecloth is called a *dastarkhan*. Food is also served on low tables called *chowki* in Hyderabad.

Nahari is a traditional breakfast dish of the Muslims. It is made of trotters and head of the goat, and eaten with shirmal or kulchas (we from Bombay would prefer our own *brun pau*) and is the pride of Lucknow.

Other breakfast dishes are puries, *khalina* (a type of scrambled eggs) served with *rogni tikkis* (bread made with flour, milk and cream and cooked on a charcoal fire), *katre kheema masala* (mince cooked with chopped onion, ginger and garlic), parathas, kababs, jalebis eaten with balai, all washed down with Kashmiri tea (a spiced tea served with cream and almonds).

Lunches and dinners would consist of a variety of dishes like quormas, *kalia* (a

chicken, trotter or fish dish with a lightly spiced thin curry), pulavs, biryanis (the Persian influence) and *kushka* (rice steamed with whole spices to give added fragrance). Other seasonal dishes would be the *salans* (meat cooked with gravied vegetables), and dishes made of chicken, quail or partridge. Different types of dals and rotis would be served with these dishes along with achars, chutneys and murrumbas. The meals would end with sweet dishes, the most popular being shahi tukra.

The Persians ate leavened bread — rotis, but after coming to India and tasting the Hindu puries, they started putting ghee on their tavas and hence the paratha was born. An improvement on the paratha was the baquar khani roti, and an even greater improvement was the shirmal. This roti is the speciality of Awadhi cuisine, but it is equally popular in Hyderabad. Shirmal is served at all celebrations. Its creator was Mahumdu and during his time it had become so popular that he used to supply a hundred thousand of these at any one time for royal banquets and majlis. There is a variety of this bread called nan jalabi, and Lucknow cooks believe that no one can produce them as well as they can.

For the epicure chickens were fattened

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with musk and saffron till their bodies were scented with these fragrances. Then a delicate broth was made from these chickens, and a little rice added to it (much nicer than my version of piche-pache).

A sweet called malida is made with semolina (doesn't it sound familiar? Surely it is a version of our own malido which is of Persian origin). When milk and dried fruit are added to it it is called panj giri.

Balai or makhan malai is another delicious sweet made from rich milk which is kept simmering. As the cream gathers on the top it is removed and repeated layers are put on top of one another. If it is too thin, a paste of chestnut powder is added to it. When I saw it being sold in the streets of Lucknow, covered with varak, chopped nuts, saffron and kevera I was told by one of the youngsters that butter is also added to the milk while it is cooking. I wonder, is this true?

Once upon a time there were over 120 varieties of kababs, but the recipes were not passed down and with the slow creeping in of tandoori food, five-star and fast food culture, the authentic cuisine of Oudh is slowly dying out.

In the chawk area of Lucknow, there is a small shop called Kunde ki Kabab. It has shabby wooden tables and not more than

After tasting
the Hindu puries,
the Persians
started
putting ghee
on their tavas
and the paratha
was born

eight persons can be seated at a time. They serve the famous Gulawati kababs. People were standing in long queues to take them home. These kababs literally melt in one's mouth.

They are so light that they cannot be formed into any shape. I saw a paste in a large thali being scooped up with four fingers and slapped on to a large shallow flat karai and fried for a minute or two at the most, then flipped over and cooked for a lesser time on the reverse. They were served in small plates with parathas which were not so good. It is a rewarding experi-

ence to go to the chawk and eat at this shop in Lucknow.

While we were eating we heard a delicate hammering — rather like the tinkling sound of the dwarfs working in the movie *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* which I had seen in my teens. We went to investigate this unusual sound, and saw three men hammering away at sheets of silver placed between two layers of deer skin, making varak. Half inch squares of silver were hammered into three to four inch squares of varak, each thin as a wisp of a cloud. They would be placed between sheets of paper and sold.

A little further down we came across another small restaurant belonging to Abdur Rahim, where the famous nahari was being sold. Again long queues were formed for this dish, but my eye was caught by the magnificent kulchas being taken out of the tandoor. I have never seen such flaky, melt-in-the-mouth kulchas. They, too, were in great demand and many were being packed and taken away.

This shop was started by the present owner's great grandfather, and I was told by the youngster there that the dish was made by his father at home and sent to the shop. While we were there we met a delightful ex-army officer waiting for the

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nahari, who asked how we came to know about this shop. When we told him that we had come across it by chance, he informed us that it was a very old establishment and people came from far and wide to eat here; he himself had been coming here ever since he was a child.

Awadhi cuisine is synonymous with a method called *dum*. The meat, game or poultry is lightly sautéed and browned in ghee over a charcoal fire. It is then placed in an earthen pot with the spices, vegetables, etc., covered and sealed with a paste of flour and water and cooked on a slow fire till done. Biryani and pulavs cooked in this manner are opened at the table and the aroma has to be really experienced to know the joys of food cooked by the *dum* method.

A kind friend invited us to meet a great and famous chef. The time of appointment was 11.30 in the morning. When we arrived there we were greeted with typical Lucknowi warmth. After a few moments of polite conversation we were asked to share some light refreshments. The dining room table was laden with food. Shami kababs with the distinct flavor of fresh coriander, crisp samosas, sandwiches, hot jalebis, homemade cakes and a type of sweet that was a mixture of rabdi and ravo. Nothing was good enough for us and we

were treated with great kindness and a courtesy seldom found in today's world.

We then started talking of the fate of Lucknowi food and culture. Our friends bemoaned the fact that their beautiful way of life was dying out. I felt great anguish at their complete acceptance of their fate — like a kind of death wish — and I beseeched them to pull themselves out of their lethargy and do something about it. The great chef could write about the lost cuisine of the Nawabs. There was a writer amongst the group and I suggested that he could perhaps help the chef so that his great art would not be lost to posterity. I believed they should do this not only for Lucknow but for India.

Some of the beautiful palaces could be converted into heritage hotels and genuine Lucknowi food could be served there, thus encouraging more cooks to continue their art and save it. Other palaces could be opened to the public for a fee as is done in England. For a split second I thought I saw a spark of interest in their faces, but the interest subsided like *doodh na puffs* on a hot day.

One of the places where one can still have genuine superlative Awadhi food is at the table of the Raja of Jehangirabad. We were invited to dinner there and served *shab degh*, a great delicacy made with trot-

ters (it can also be made with meat) and turnips. Mince kababs are added and the subtle flavors of garam masala and keora are cleverly brought out. It is cooked by the *dum* method and was served to us in delightful, old-fashioned soup plates with shirmal and rotis. I don't think that in a thousand years of practice I could capture the subtle flavors of this fabulous dish. The meal ended with shahi tukra.

We were invited the next day to taste the very special biryani that the Raja's cook made. We accepted the invitation with great joy, but when we arrived the Raja informed us that his temperamental cook had refused to make the biryani. She did not feel like making it and, what was more, the Raja yielded to her whim. How utterly delightful!

We were served kakori instead. The dish gets its name from a small town called Vakori, where a British administrator insisted that the kababs be made softer. Due to their softness they do not travel well and must be cooked very close to the dining room and eaten immediately, else they collapse. According to the epicure, the second lot of kababs is better than the first, and we found it to be true. The second lot were crisper on the outside and softer on the inside. It is an enchanting dish, lightly spiced

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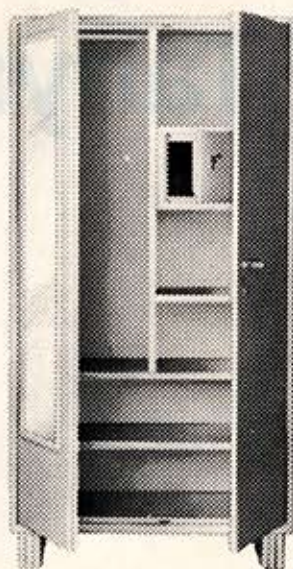
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which just disappears in the mouth.

No meal was complete without the ubiquitous paan (which in Lucknow is called *gilauri*) and, in the days gone by, the hookah. These were filled with milk instead of water and mixed with *khushbu* and seasonal fruits.

This is what I call the height of civilized decadence!

These are not Lucknowi recipes but given to me by other experts.

GULAWATI KABABS

By Salim Mohamed, a cook we had at India International Centre. Unfortunately, he refused to cook anything except what he felt like cooking on any day and had to go — he was not cooking for a *nawab*!

Mince (1 kg very fine — almost like a paste)

Browned onions (100 gms — drained and minced)

Cashew nuts (100 gms — paste)

Channa (10-20 gms — roasted and ground)

Semi ripe papaya (250 gms — paste, I use less about 50-60 gms)

Clove powder ($\frac{1}{2}$ tsp)

Chilli powder (20 gms)

Saffron ($\frac{1}{2}$ tsp)

Salt (1 tsp)

Sweet attar (2-3 drops)

Butter (150 gms)

Oil (150 gms)

Mix all ingredients except oil and butter. Heat oil and butter. Form flat kababs with the mixture and fry till brown on one side. Turn them over and fry the other side. If you cannot shape the mixture, just spoon it into the hot fat with the help of two wet spoons.

KAKORI KABABS

By Kalyan Singh, the tandoori cook at India International Centre. He worked there for 25 years and his tandoori food was one of the best I have tasted.

Mince (1 kg)

Mutton fat (200 gms — rendered)

Poppy seeds (100 gms)

Cloves, cardamoms, bay leaves, caraway seeds (*shah jeera*), rose petals (dry roasted and powdered together — 10 gms)

Salt (1 tsp)

Cashew nut (1 tbsp — ground)

Channa (1 tbsp — roasted and ground)

Almonds (1 tbsp — ground)

Papaya (50 gms)

Chilli powder ($\frac{1}{2}$ tsp)

Saffron (2-3 gms)

Clove ($\frac{1}{4}$ tsp — powdered)

Mix all the ingredients together. Knead well and shape on greased skewers. Barbeque on a charcoal fire. Serve immedi-

ately with slices of lime and *kachumbar*.

SIRI PAYA

By Ms Charmin Jena. I thought that my *Devji*, cook bearer at my parents' home, cooked the best trotters ever. Though his are good, Ms Jena's are superlative.

Neck of lamb ($\frac{1}{4}$ kilo — cut into small pieces)

Sheep's head (1 — cut and trimmed by the butcher)

Trotters (4-6)

Masala.

Ginger (2" piece)

Garlic (1 — large pod)

Coriander ($1\frac{1}{2}$ tsp — powdered)

Onions (2 — large, grated)

Oil (3 tbsp)

Salt (to taste)

Red chillies (12 — dried) or chilli powder ($\frac{1}{2}$ tsp)

Turmeric powder ($\frac{1}{2}$ tsp)

Curds ($\frac{1}{4}$ kg)

Coriander leaves (chopped for garnish)

Pressure cook the meats for about 10 minutes. Grind ginger, garlic and chillies. Heat the oil and brown the onions. Add $\frac{1}{2}$ a cup of water and simmer till the onions are soft and the water has dried. Add ground masala with the remaining dry masala ingredients and saute for three minutes. Add curds and mix well. Add meat and simmer till it is cooked, adding the water from the pressure cooker as needed. The gravy should be medium thick when the dish is ready. Garnish with chopped fresh coriander leaves.

KULCHAS

The cook who was making the kulchas at Abdur Rahim's shop gave us this recipe when I told him that never in my 72 years had I seen such beautiful kulchas! I have not tried out this recipe so I do not know what the end result will be.

Ingredients (A)

Flour (1 kg)

Yeast (25 gm)

Bicarbonate of soda (6 gms)

Salt (10 gms)

Ghee or butter (500 gms)

Milk (800 ml — I think it is a bit too much, use enough to make a soft dough)

Eggs (2)

Cardamoms (4-6 — crushed)

Sweet attar

Ingredients (B)

Flour (1 kg)

Yeast (25 gm)

Milk (800 ml — use enough to make a soft dough)

Salt (10 gms)

Method using ingredients (A)

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Melt butter or ghee. Sift flour with salt. Dissolve yeast in a little water with a pinch of sugar. Beat eggs, add milk and mix well. Place the flour on a table and make a well in the centre. Pour in yeast and the milk and egg mixture and mix well. Add cardamom and attar and knead well. Allow to rise. Add bicarbonate of soda and form into balls. Method using ingredients (B)

Mix the flour with salt. Dissolve the yeast in a little water with a pinch of sugar. Add to the flour with the milk, knead well. Allow to rise. Form into balls.

Roll out each ball made with ingredients (A) into the size of a small saucer. Press the ball from the dough made with ingredients (B) on top and roll out to the size of a dessert plate. Cook in a tandoor or an oven till done — about 10 to 15 minutes.

Note: Use the compressed type of yeast and not the dry variety. I think the yeast used in Lucknow was made from the previous day's dough.

Good luck and bon appetit!

Bhicoo J. Manekshaw, a graduate of the prestigious Cordon Bleu School of Cookery, London, and author of *Traditional Recipes of India*, has been associated with many haute cuisine organizations in the country.

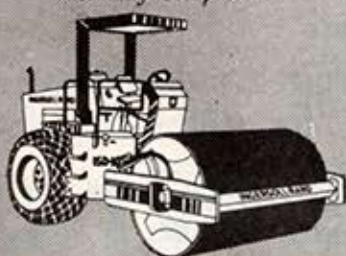
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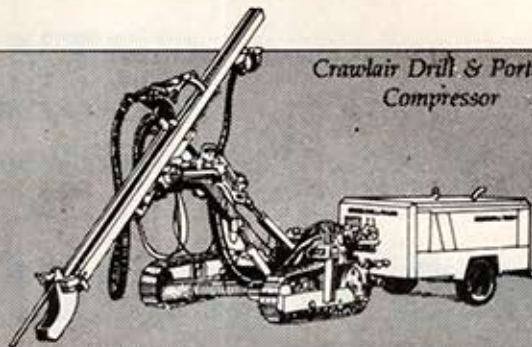
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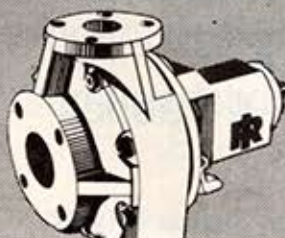
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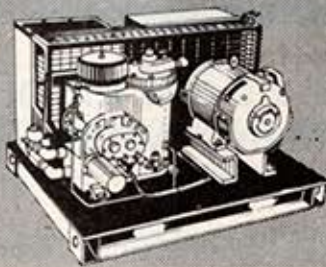
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Jarthoshti Dharma ane Kriyao Vishe Lakhano (Writings on Zoroastrian Religion and Rituals) by Dastur (Dr) Firoze M. Kotwal. Published in 1994 by the Athornan Mandal, Navsari Building, 2nd Floor, Fort, Bombay 400001. It is also available at The Athornan Boarding Madressa, 651-652 Firdausi Road, Parsi Colony, Dadar, Bombay 400014. Pp: xii + 173. Price: Rs 30.

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This right is exercised with impunity by protectors, not of religion but of vested interest. The pro-

protectors are humanists, occultists, theosophists, pseudo-mystics or so called khshnoomists/deenparasts and their 'expositions' are invariably tainted. For instance, humanism vitiates the views of the humanists; the presentations of others, often termed 'occult interpretations,' show a disregard for or occultation of the philologico-historical background and the basic ideas of a number of scriptural precepts, injunctions and imageries. Besides, such expositors have no background as far as the scriptural languages are concerned, and hence they only succeed in flustering a number of people, particularly of the younger generation. Ever so often, Zoroastrianism is presented in such a grossly sentimental fashion that the best of the younger generation cannot be faulted for revolting.

However, in the maze of misleading literature and high-priced recorded cassettes containing 'spiritual guidance,' occasionally, one comes across an untainted work from one of the few orthodox scholars. The booklet under review belongs to this category.

During the last few years Dastur (Dr) Firoze Kotwal has written a number of articles mainly with a view to guide the members of our community. Out of these,

21 stimulating thematic pieces have been published here by the Athornan Mandal with an introduction by Ervad Parvez Bajan and a foreword by Ervad Rustom Panthaki. Diverse facets of different topics bearing on rituals, religious practices and some burning problems are expounded by the author with erudition and lucidity. While remaining totally aloof from alien beliefs and their propounders, as behoves an orthodox scholar, and by remaining faithful to the Zoroastrian viewpoint in all cases, the author has indicated what exemplary religious guidance should be like.

Kotwal rightly takes to task those who knowingly or unknowingly misguide the community. Those who revel only in talking about laws and rules of conduct as well as good deeds are upbraided (p 14) in no uncertain terms. Similarly, there are those who call the flesh of a dead or slaughtered *gospand* 'nasa.' Kotwal nails this lie (p 54) by saying "Zoroastrianism does not regard such flesh as *nasa* (putrefied matter)." Again, those who try to perpetuate canards like reincarnation being central to Zoroastrianism, are given a fitting reproof on p 106 where the author categorically says: "There is no place for reincarnation in Zoroastrianism."

At one place or another, readers will find answers to the tall yarns spun by the heterodox or pseudo-orthodox hoaxers. One such yarn is the 'commandment' asking us to recite *Spendarmad mah* during the Gatha days. Citing scriptural reference (p 92-93), Kotwal tellingly observes: "It is in the fitness of things to remember the particular gatha in *roz nik nam*, and, scripturally as well as ritualistically, it is wrong to recite *Spendarmad mah*."

Except for a few blemishes here and there, the Athornan Mandal deserves to be congratulated for bringing out this work of impressive expertise and consummate skill at an affordable price. It is recommended as a good, reliable read, especially to budding priests and laity already misled by casuistical interpretations of the scriptures which deviate so much from some of the authentic renderings as to be confusing. A succinct and faithful assessment of certain aspects of Zoroastrianism, the work will help the layman to see through the con-

cocted 'Zoroastrian' carapace often put forward by some self-seeking commoners. May we look forward to a sequel from the Athornan Mandal in the near future?

If arrangements could be made to bring out an English translation of this work, it would prove to be a boon, particularly for the younger generation in India and abroad.

Of legend and history

Adi Doctor

The Kayanians (Les Kayanides) by Arthur Christensen. Translated into English by F. N. Tumboowalla. Published by H. J. M. Desai and Ms H. N. Modi for the K. R. Cama Oriental Institute, 136 Bombay Samachar Marg, Bombay 400023. Pp: v + 164. Price: Not mentioned.

The plus point of this book is that you get a complete lowdown on the various available sources about the Kayanian kings and their contemporaries, to be found in our extant Avesta, Pahlavi and Persian texts. The copious notes at the end of each chapter also provide interesting information on the observations made by diverse commentators/scholars, mostly Western, on the subject.

That is the only positive thing one can say about this book which, in spite of the labors of the author, Arthur Christensen, and the translator, the late Mr F. N. Tumboowalla, should not have been published by the K. R. Cama Oriental Institute. The Institute president, Mr J. Shroff's (since deceased) sweeping claim that "the quality of Christensen's scholarship may be gauged from the fact that even after 60 years modern studies can add, or alter, little of what he wrote," smacks of the same academic servility that has hounded Parsi students and savants of our religion and history throughout this century.

This is not to detract from the intensive research undertaken by Christensen in this book, as in his other works. But to what purpose? The pages are full of speculation, suppositions, surmises, compromises, conjectures, 'mays' and 'mights,' etc. That too in a book which is supposed to deal in ancient Iranian history! But then most of these writers treat the Peshdadian and the Kayanian dynasties as pre-historic and, therefore, legendary or mythical! Except perhaps Kai Vishtaspa, all the other mon-



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archs who preceded him are supposed to be legendary and not historic. Why? Because only Kai Vishtaspa's name is to be found in the *Gathas*!

Then what about the yashts, where many of the Peshdadian and Kayanian kings appear? Well, haven't you heard of the younger and the older *Avesta*? According to Christensen, there is much more to it: (a) There are "the oldest parts and other more recent parts of the same yasht... Now, the more I look at the substance and the composition of the yashts, the more I am convinced that these hymns have been borrowed from a non-Zoroastrian milieu." Evidence? Nil! Instead, "According to the generally accepted opinion things must have happened in the following manner: Some time after the composition of the pieces which constitute the older *Avesta*, the popular gods (sic) ignored by Zoroaster having been introduced into the older Zoroastrian system, they began to compose hymns to this or that divinity, and they are the first Zoroastrian compositions made in the dialect of the younger *Avesta*. But if that were so then one would not be satisfied with making hymns in honor of the rehabilitated ancient divinities; one would have addressed, first, hymns to Ahura Mazda and to each of the six (seven) Amesha

Spentas, because Ahura Mazda remained the supreme god (sic) and, after him, the Amesha Spentas always occupy the first rank among the divinities."

Then comes the mega faith-shaking bloomer: "On the contrary, yasht 1, which bears the name of Ahura Mazda and yasht 2, which glorifies all the Amesha Spentas together, are late compositions of a repulsive dryness, partly patched up from fragments taken from everywhere and produced from a paltry theology, made up to complete the series of yashts at the time when they were being somehow or other adjusted to the days of the months of the Zoroastrian calendar." What shall we say to that? The treacherous pitfalls of philology? Or, better still, invoke the Gujarati saying, *naachtan nahin avde, tyare angnun vaankun* (the poor carpenter blames his tools)? Simply because the "scholars" are unable to understand certain *Avesta* passages, do they have the right to belittle and condemn? Why, the Prophet himself in Yasna Ha 50.6 (*Gatha Spenta Mainyu*) declares that his teachings or the religion are full of secrets and mysteries (*razeng* — vide Kavasji Kanga).

The yashts, according to the author, have parts which are "primitively non-Zoroastrian," and some "interpolations," "addi-

tions" and "redactions." He gives quite a long list of such yashts, beginning with Aban and ending with Zamyad, along with paragraphs he finds out of place! What beats me is why these academics don't appreciate the fact that to unravel Avestan mysteries, a special arcane key is required and not some borrowed un'locking device. It has now been proved beyond any doubt that every *Avesta* litany is a composite whole, with a concatenation of ideas and themes. That proof has been provided by the late Dr Framroze Chiniwalla in his translation of the *Khordeh Avesta*. But unfortunately, the latter day kavis and karapans among our scholarly fraternity have no inclination to go through his work. Their misguided infatuation with pre-Zoroastrian and post-Zoroastrian Avestic writings, makes one sick.

Again, Christensen falls into the same trap as most other scholars and historians in confounding certain Avestan proper names with geographical place names. On the one hand, he rightly says that, "Iranian families might have named their children after celebrated persons of the past so that several names belonging to the same historical family may appear together in another family..." In fact, most of the names of rivers, mountains, etc are originally

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cosmic rather than terrestrial.

The Kayanians has six chapters and an excursus. While the printing by Jenaz Printers is neat, some errors have escaped the attention of the proofreader.

Women who wage peace

Dina Mehta

Blood into Ink edited by Miriam Cooke and Roshni Rustomji-Kerns. Published in 1994 by Westview Press, 5500 Central Avenue, Boulder, Colorado 80301-2877, USA and by Westview Press, 36 Lonsdale Road, Summertown, Oxford OX2 7EW, UK. Pp: 239. Price: Not mentioned.

This remarkable anthology is a compilation of women's voices that speak about what it's like to be female and face conditions of violence on a daily basis — whether in an active war zone or during sporadic communal riots.

The literary voices belong to Middle Eastern and South Asian women and *Blood into Ink* ranges in a wide sweep westwards from Bangladesh to Israel. Besides translations from Arabic and Hebrew works and from several Indian languages, the antho-

logy includes stories, poems, memoirs, journal entries and notes in original English. A brilliant foreword by Meena Alexander deserves to be read with attention.

In the war myths of many cultures men are the heroes who fight on bloody battlefields, women the sad victims who stay at home and weep elegiac tears. But the experiences of 20th century conflicts, as recorded by these women, challenge this concept because the war front has ceased to be a well-defined arena separate from the home front. In few cases do men 'go to war' today, because the war is waged on their doorsteps. And while men and women continue to work in fields and homes and offices, they also participate in combat roles: they join demonstrations, they carry messages, medical supplies, rifles, bombs, whatever.

So women are no longer substitutes for men, they no longer fill in for absent heroes when they rally to the national cause. They have integrated their traditional role as homemakers with their role as comrades in battle and their daily struggle for survival — physical, economic, intellectual and emotional — stretches seamlessly into the public sphere of political war.

What impresses one when reading these

stories and poems is the steadfastness of women in the chaos of war. With what courage they meet the demands of a 'normal day.' The extraordinary circumstances are coped with as a livable normality: it is as if the women create this illusion of stability because they are nurturers of life, and life has to go on.

Despite the daily bombardments, random shootings, curfews, rapes, riots and enforced exodus of civilians, groceries have to be purchased, children sent to school and fetched home. A bath has to be a hurried ritual for fear that a shell will hit you when you are naked. Feeding the family becomes an anxiety — will there be enough money to buy enough to eat? Nights unfold their own surreal nightmares when you have to rush the old and infirm to shelters in wheelchairs under a sky spitting fire and destruction.

One result of this joint exercise against a common enemy has been the awareness in women of a parallel — but hitherto unacknowledged — conflict at home. They realized that they were marginalized, disempowered within their own society. With this realization they began to articulate the need to conduct simultaneous political and social revolutions. Indeed, the blurring of the boundary lines of behavior for men and women during war permitted a new pers-

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pective on the male/female equation.

One powerful story illustrating this is *Two Faces, One Woman* by the Palestinian writer Nuha Samara. A woman's husband deserts her and her invalid father in the war zone of Beirut to enjoy the safety of Paris, when this choice is offered him by his company. So does she weep?

No. She sits in front of her mirror and cuts off her long hair: "It fills me with desire for you," her husband had said. And as she bleaches it, she sees her face harden and feels herself beginning to look like a Nazi officer. In this new persona she learns how to shoot, "amazed by her lust to kill." She leaves her old father in the geriatric ward of a hospital: "She kissed him. Not a single tear. This war was tough." She reassesses the role she had played as a wife in prewar times, recalls her husband's imperious sexual hunger and his whims about what he wanted/didn't want, his "explosions of anger," his family's "eternal visits." She decides she doesn't want him back. And she decides to take a lover.

The release of her sexuality signals the dissolution of the old patriarchal mold that had imprisoned her. And it heralds the radical possibility of female independence in a splintering world.

The anthology is divided into two parts,

'Remembering' and 'Waging Peace.' War remains a constant in both the categories, and it is as if the continuous pressure of violence has honed a language that transfigures 'blood into ink.' The phrase occurs in an Arabic poem entitled *Intimations of Anxiety* in which Laila al-Saih hopes to transfigure her experiences of violence into literature, her anxieties into love.

Similarly, in the Punjabi poem *To Waris Shah*, Amrita Pritam records her anger at the unmitigated violence committed against women of all communities by Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs during the partition years. When she calls the 18th century poet Waris Shah (author of *Heer*, an epic on a woman's sorrows) to articulate the sorrows of the 20th century victims, she underlines the importance of documentation to break the chain of violence. To remember the past is to ensure its survival, so that the same horrors are not repeated. "Remembering" then becomes a commitment, and "waging peace" an act of faith that attempts, by the might of the pen over the sword, to transfigure brutality into compassion, death into dialogue.

One of the chief concerns of the women who "wage peace" are the children. In a haunting Farsi story, *A Short Hike*, an Iranian woman allows the wind to remove her veil during a walk. Clothes often play a part

in these stories, either as a symbol of oppression ("one of the devices to make women believe they are contemptible"), or as a gesture of defiance. An indoctrinated schoolboy demands that the woman veils herself again, and when she refuses he threatens to inform on her.

In many other stories in this volume, children are the victims of physical violence. But in *A Short Hike* written by A. Rahmani during the first year of war with Iraq and three years after the Iranian revolution, we see children as victims of ideological violence. "Death to an unveiled woman!" they shout as they throw rocks at her, "indicating a systematic and conscientious attempt at stoning me." Here children's minds, not their bodies are maimed, and instead of protecting the boy, this woman finds herself confronting him.

Many of the voices contained in this anthology are heard in English for the first time, and to make them available in one volume is a publication event of singular importance, for which the two editors should be warmly commended.

One of the editors, Dr Miriam Cooke is professor of Arabic literature at Duke's University, USA, and she has specifically translated stories and poems for this anthology. Dr Roshni Rustomji-Kerns is —

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yes, you've guessed it — a Parsi. Roshni's use of the double-barrelled surname — the family name she was born with in Bombay in 1938, and her husband's name after she married Charles Kerns in 1978 — is meaningful to her because as a member of both families she sees herself nourished physically, intellectually and spiritually by Asia and America.

This universal attitude, fostered early in her by a wonderfully liberal-minded mother, is reflected in Roshni's work. Apart from *Blood into Ink* she had edited special issues of the *Journal of South Asian Literature*, and her forthcoming anthology is entitled *Living in America: Fiction and Poetry by South Asian American Writers*. She lives in California and is Emeritus Professor, Hutchins School of Liberal Studies at Sonoma State University.

The concern of both the editors for women's ways of coping with violence derives from their personal experiences of conflict. Miriam has lived and studied in Beirut, and written on women's fiction that came out of the war in Lebanon. Roshni carries with her childhood memories of the Indian struggle for independence: hushed funerals of men killed in lathi charges, Sarojini Naidu's speeches, the gruesome communal riots, the flood of refugees. To-

day she can view that struggle in the East from the vantage point of living in the West.

Both the editors have felt the need to speak out to each other across cultural borders. Why have they juxtaposed works from Syria, Lebanon, Israel, Iraq, Iran and Afghanistan with selections from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka? Because these geographically contiguous areas (not seen as a block in the West) are integrally connected. They share a long history of cultural, economic and political exchange. And this anthology is the editors' personal contribution to provide a bridge between them.

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MILESTONES

This issue of *Parsiana* presents Milestones for the months of December 1994, January and February 1995.

Also included are intercommunity marriages registered both at the Old Customs House and at the MHADA office in Bandra (East) for the six month period of September 1994 to February 1995. Civil marriages between Zoroastrians have also been listed. However, names that could not be confirmed as Zoroastrian have been omitted from the list.

There were 13 intercommunity marriages plus two civil marriages between Zoroastrians registered at the MHADA office and 37 and four, respectively, at the Old Customs House.

The Chandanwadi crematorium registered the names of six Zoroastrians who were cremated between September 1994 and February 1995.

The age of Zoroastrian brides (as listed in this issue) ranged between 19 and 46 years, the

arithmetic mean (the total number of individual ages divided by the total number of brides) being 26 years. The corresponding figures for the grooms were 23 and 52 years, averaging at 30 years.

Compared to 69 babies born in Bombay, there were 249 (+ three cremated) deaths for the three month period of December '94 to February '95. Seventy-nine Zoroastrians succumbed to heart disease of whom 30 were 80 years and above. The other major killers were pneumonia and lung disease (38), old age and general debility (22) and cancer (21). Brain disease claimed 11 victims whereas hypertension and septicemia took a toll of nine lives each. Seven patients fell prey to liver disease, six to diabetes, five each to kidney failure and asthma and four to accidents. Anemia, dehydration and nervous disorder were the causes of death for three patients each. Two deaths each were attributed to gastrointestinal bleeding, head inju-

ries, tuberculosis, bronchitis and burns. Parkinson's disease, pulmonary hypertension, myeloma (a malignant tumor of bone marrow), intestinal perforation, pyogenic meningitis (pus in the surrounding membranes of the brain and spinal cord), Alzheimer's disease, haemorrhage, motor neuron disease, fracture, epistaxis (bleeding from the nose), dermatomyositis (acute inflammation of the skin and muscles) and intestinal obstruction were the isolated cases registered for the three month period. Apart from five youths, aged between 13 and 36 years, two infants (one premature and one stillborn) were also lost to the community. The age range fluctuated between 7 days and 110 years. A 101-year-old lady also breathed her last. The Zoroastrian life expectancy at birth for the three month period, in Bombay, was 74 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.

AHMEDABAD

DIED

Banoo Noshir Unwala on January 20, 1995

AJMER

DIED

Sohrabji Bodhanwalla; January 20

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BORN

A boy, Noshir, to Dinaz and Sorab Engineer; May 25, 1994

A girl, Vanaaz, to Shiraz and Kerman Rana; July 6

A boy, Percy, to Rashna and Zubin Bharucha, brother to Manaz; August 11

A girl, Sanaya, to Navaz and Percy Daruwalla; November 7

A girl to Bakhtavar and Hoshang Karai; December 1

A boy to Shirin and Neville Lacca; December 1

A boy to Kety and Nowzer Mehta; December 1

A boy to Khurshid and Darayas Mistry; December 1

A boy to Farahnaz and Jamshed Falhazada; December 4

A girl to Ashish and Zubin Jaorewalla; December 4

A girl to Neeta and Kavomaz Dastoor; December 5

A boy to Rozebeh and Rohinton Satarawala; December 5

A boy to Hutoxi and Nauzer Nicholson; December 7

A girl, Zarah, to Gool and Zarir Udwadia, sister to Zal; December 8

A boy to Jerbanoo and Viraf Kolah; December 9

A boy to Tanaz and Aspi Illava; December 10

A boy to Meher and Pervez Vadiwalla; December 10

A girl, Anahita, to Goolrukh and Vispi Buhariwalla, sister to Delnaz; December 13

A girl to Kermis and Behram Irani; December 13

A girl to Kamal and Firoz Motafarm; December 16

A boy to Shiraz and Jehangir Pardiwalla; December 17

A girl to Yasmin and Farokh Engineer; December 19

A girl to Jasmine and Viraf

Daruwala; December 21

A boy, Noshir, to Benaifer and Rattan Toddywalla; December 21

A girl to Zarine and Faroze Katrak; December 22

A boy to Hoofrish and Keki Nagporewalla; December 23

A girl to Roshan and Kayumars Mehta; December 24

A boy to Shireen and Dinshaw Kavarana; December 24

A girl to Kashmiria and Rayomand Bhesania; December 25

A boy, Fehzan, to Khushnuma and Arzan Khambatta; December 25

A boy to Kashmiria and Homiyar Mohta; December 25

A girl to Binaifer and Khushru Jijina; December 27

A boy to Firoza and Eddie Bhot; December 29

A girl to Nina and Hoshang Guard; December 29

A girl to Nina and Timmy Mugaseth; December 29

A girl to Anita and Anosh Shroff; December 31

A girl to Kashmiria and Rusi

Govekar; January 4, 1995

A boy to Nilofer and Noshir Mistry; January 7

A boy to Farishta and Farrokh Kohinoor; January 8

A girl to Zarin and Rashid Tamboowalla; January 10

A boy to Khushnuma and Cyrus Bharucha; January 11

A girl, Berezida, to Parinaz and Minoo Gandhi; January 12

A boy to Anaita and Hemanth Hegde; January 16

A girl to Shernaz and Yazdi Bardoliwalla; January 17

A girl to Shenaz and Rusi Fitter; January 19

A girl, Zarah, to Armin and Hoshedar Antalia; January 20

A girl to Yasmin and Kayomerz Mehervanjee; January 24

A girl to Anahita and Faroukh Pirozmand; January 24

A girl to Thrity and Rustom Sethna; January 24

A boy to Amestrice and Yezdi Talati; January 24

A boy, Rushad, to Sunnu and Mehernosh Irani; January 25

A girl to Jeroo and Aspi Forbes; January 26

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A girl, *Freyana*, to *Dinaz* and *Rajendra Shinde*; January 26
 A girl, *Sanaya*, to *Shiraz* and *Vispi Kapadia*, sister to *Fareena*; January 27
 A boy to *Anahita* and *Merwan Dubash*; January 28
 A boy, *Farzan*, to *Mitra* and *Nevil Irani*; January 29
 A boy to *Shiraz* and *Meherwan Parbhoo*; January 30
 A boy, *Jehan*, to *Arnavaz* and *Astor Gandhi*; January 31
 A boy to *Roshni* and *Homi Bharda*; February 2
 A girl to *Pervin* and *Firdosh Daruwala*; February 2
 A boy to *Shernaz* and *Fredy Kapadia*; February 7
 A boy to *Gulshan* and *Sarosh Kolah*; February 7
 A girl to *Nilofer* and *Maneck Hansotia*; February 8
 A girl to *Diana* and *Kerman Kadva*; February 8
 A boy to *Dinaz* and *Nozer Kanga*; February 8
 A boy to *Rupina* and *Fredy Mistry*; February 11
 A boy to *Tannaz* and *Hoshang Jalejar*; February 15
 A girl to *Tina* and *Pesi Shroff*; February 16
 A boy to *Meher* and *Mehernosh Contractor*; February 22
 A girl to *Thrity* and *Gaiv Mistry*; February 24
 A boy to *Bakhtawar* and *Cyrus Shroff*; February 24

MARRIED

Persis Dinyar Mohta and *Mehernosh Rusi Choksy*; September 1, 1994
Shirin N. Zaveri and *Gaurav D. Sharma*; September 8
Yasmin Dara Poonegar and *Yves Jean Pouzet*; September 12
Suruchi H. Hanjrah and *Firoz A. Master*; October 14
Neena Mangharam Vaswani and *Homi Minoo Bhathena*; October 15
Deborah Ramdhar and *Eric Dinshaw Chinoy*; October 21
Mahazabeen F. Shroff and *Sameer V. Khan*; October 25
Manjula Chava and *Yazdi Framroz Bagli*; October 29
Ruby Jimmy Karbhary and *Viraz Darab Fouzdar*; October 31
Benaifer S. Khambatta and *Bhagwantrao Pant Pratinidhi*; November 7
Bibi-Fatima Azdar and *Yazdi Kianpour Ardeshtir*; November 11
Fatahiya Ismail Rokadia and *Danesh Shokrehkuda Irani*; November 19
Nergish Minoo Patel and *Rohinton Minoo Mistry*; November 21
Nesrun Sohrab Yazdegardi and *Malik Valimohamad Rangara*; November 21
Zenobia Jal Buhariwala and *Jayesh Rasik Gilder*; November 25
Armin Jamshedji and Inderjit Neogi; November 25
Roxana Soli Fatakia and *Deepak Kumar Mukharjie*; November 28
Hutokshi Fali Nadirshaw and *Viraf Dinshaw Mehta* of Secunderabad; December 1
Monaz Phiroze Wadia and *Rayomand Minoo Noble*; December 1
Kashmira Keki Mistry and *Firdaus Jehangir Tarachand*; December 1
Pinaz Homi Ranji and *Rohinton Homi Mahuvawala*; December 4
Persis Mehli Irani and *Aspi Erach Damania*; December 5
Khurshid Behram Sanjana and *Zarsis Sorab Merchant*; December 5
Ruehingize Khodabux Irani and *Rayomand Nariman Palkhiwala*; December 5
Dinaz Dara Sethna and *Minoo Keki Bengali*; December 6
Hufrish Darabshaw Gubba of Surat and *Homyar Phiroze Bulsara*; December 6
Gita Khakhosro Yegta of Yazd, Iran and *Ciroz Jamash Ganji* of California; December 6
Meher Pervaz Hiloo and *Farhad Hoshang Hozdar*; December 6
Deval Pramesh Lakhia and *Jimmy Dossu Kapadia*; December 6
Meher Minocher Fatakia and *Firdosh Dinshaw Katgara*; December 6
Banoo Soli Irani and *Dinshaw Cawasji Bhandari*; December 8
Armin Homi Amalsadvala and *Firdose Kersi Lala*; December 8
Mehernaz Homi Vimadala and *Darayus Adi Patva*; December 8
Zenobia Darab Irani and *Neville Sam Mehta*; December 9

Naznin Jamshed Panthaky and *Phiroze Dinshaw Mogrelia*; December 9
Radhika Suri and *Mehli Nazir*; December 10
Jacqueline Rovenia Rodrigues and *Kayomarz Sam Patel*; December 10
Ternaz Freddy Bagli and *Hoshedar Sapal Bhandari*; December 11
Nilufer Marazban Laly and *Cyrus Kushroo Khambatta*; December 11
Jasmine Khurshed Mistry and *Darayus Dhanjisha Sanjana*; December 11
Niloufer Pesi Karanjia and *Shachin Shamanandan Srivastav*; December 11
Tanaz Kersi Meherji and *Godrej Nariman Bhathena*; December 12
Piloo Jamshedji Zaveri and *Kurush Sam Bhathena*; December 12
Nilofer Rustomji Daruwala and *Minoo Homi Daruwala*; December 12
Sonali H. Modi and *Parvez H. Mohta*; December 12
Yasmin Phiroze Doctor and *Darayas Sorabji Fatakia* of Kalyan; December 13
Veronica Juliet D'Mello and *Homiir Dinshaw Panthaki*; December 14
Anahita Noshir Captain of Delhi and *Aadil Dhun Elavia*; December 15
Rashna Keki Mory and *Farokh Hoshang Karanjia*; December 15
Sukanya J. Hegde and *Homi N. Darukhanawalla*; December 15
Zubina Minoo Bhamgara of Nagpur and *Percy Homi Sidhwa* of Valsad; December 15
Behnaz Shahbaram Shahzadi of California and *Firdaus Khushro Irani*; December 16
Ferzin Soli Magra and *Navroz Kersasp Ketrak*; December 16
Ruby Firoz Daruwala of Delhi and *Yazdi Naushir Bulsara* of Jamshedpur; December 18
Yasmin Marazban Merchant of Ratlam and *Vispi Nariman Dupattawala* of Nagpur; December 18
Sunita Balkrishna Parte and *Avakshi Kerfegur Doctor*; December 18
Aban Sorab Khambatta and *Maneck Homi Patel*; December 19
Tinaz Kersi Dubash and *Zarir*

Parvez Chacha of Surat; December 20
Leaela Framroz Antia and *Noshir Syavak Antia*; December 22
Yasmin Noshir Mody and *Percy Rustom Karkaria*; December 23
Shibani Sachdeva and *Rayomand Soli Framroze*; December 25
Tahzeeb Gulab Bhagat and *Furrokh Roosi Panthakee*; December 25
Taree Raman and *Jehanbux J. Edulbehran*; December 26
Khurshid Faramroze Bozorgchami and *Khurshed Homi Irani*; December 26
Havovi Sam Sidhwa and *Ramiyar Parvez Karanjia*; December 26
Villoo Firoze Elavia of Baroda and *Sharokh Kersi Nikorawalla*; December 27
Sharmeen Mehli Reporter and *Shomit Basu*; December 29
Maharukh Homi Mistry and *Jehangir Homi Randeria*; December 29
Kashmira Godrej Dumlavwalla and *Cyrus Dadi Vatcha*; December 29
Vini Dara Wadia of Raipur and *Darcys Dosabhai Wadia*; December 29
Roxane Rustom Dadina of Thane and *Coover Minoo Chinoy*; December 31
Shazneen Kersi Commissariat and *Porus Parvez Buharivala*; January 2, 1995
Yvonne Cleveland and *Freddy Dali Mistry*; January 2
Jasmine Khurshed Bhot and *Porus Yazdi Mistry*; January 2
Tanaz Mehelli Mistry and *Hoshang Jalejar Bhadha*; January 3
Rashna Damania and *Kenneth Desai*; January 3
Asha T. Munjwani and *Adil D. Masani*; January 3
Delrosa St Quinn Valladeres and *Neville Jal Chinoy*; January 5
Nyra Homi Gazdar and *Darius Dhun Surti*; January 5
Pervin Keki Irani and *Dineyar Pervaz Buhariwala*; January 6
Zenobia Pesi Heera and *Edmund Albert Gomes*; January 6
Zenobia Yazdi Daruwala and *Farhad Homi Unwalla*; January 7
Benaifer Rusi Lakdawala and *Khusrav Bejon Bajan*; January 8

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- Shubhada Balkrishna Khare and Vispi Ady Karanjia; January 8
Yasmin Marazban Sarkari of Bilimora and Kaiwan Dorab Mevawala; January 8
Hutoxi Homi Jehangir of Surat and Farokh Erach Wadia; January 8
Ferozi Homi Mistry and Kersi Feraidoon Bhikhaji; January 9
Dilnaz Minoo Gandhi and Sarosh Rusi Colabawalla; January 9
Farida Jamshed Kothawala and Feroze Eddie Kotwal; January 10
Dina Dastur and Hemant Mehta; January 10
Monisha Grewal and Rashid Firdaus Jehangir; January 11
Baktavar S. Aria and Gajendra Bapna; January 12
Yasmin Soli Sidhwa and Percy Framroze Bhiwandiwalla; January 12
Parizad Keki Reader and Porus Aspi Deboo; January 12
Parul Kothari and Darayas Mistry; January 12
Dilshad Keki Patel and Hoshi Dhunjishaw Tavadia; January 12
Gulnar Edul Bhagvagar of Nagpur and Shyamuk Polly Sidhwa; January 13
Annahita Cherag Khareghat and Sharukh Neville Baria; January 14
Kashmira Fali Jokhi and Rustom Dinshaw Talati; January 14
Rukshana Khusroo Irani and Percy Phiroze Billimoria; January 15
Prithy Sonavala and Zubin Jehanbux Gandevia; January 15
Fatima Sayedali Ajdar and Ardeshtir Bahman Kianpour Yazdi; January 15
Yasmin Adi Shekari and Parushpa Ardisher Aderbehehman; January 16
Farzana Adil Bodhanwalla and Darayus Jamsheed Mojangani; January 17
Binaifer Minoo Karkaria and Fredy Aderbad Nadirshaw; January 17
Perezina Sarosh Limboovala and Zubin Rashid Poonawala; January 17
Pervin Savaksha Satha and Darayush Neville Contractor; January 19
Teenaz Jal Baria and Noshir Faramroze Daruwalla of Scottsdale, Arizona, USA; January 19
- Farzana Godrej Postwala and Percy Keki Bharucha; January 20
Persis Hoshang Sukhadia and Homiyar Sohrabji Navdar; January 21
Veera Pesi Shaw and Navroze (Joy) Phiroze Patel; January 21
Daisy Bahadur Jokhi and Navroz Pervez Guard; January 22
Ferzeen Farrokh Bhesania of Thane and Hoshang Nariman Chageman; January 23
Pervin Shawakshaw Pardiwalla and Fali Pirojshaw Daruwalla; January 23
Armaity Pesi Lalla and Rayomand Nariman Elavia; January 23
Mehernaz Homi Bhappoo and Tehemton Rustom Zarolia; January 23
Shobha N. Vasawa and Kaikhasru J. Irani; January 24
Farida Kersi Mistry and Rohinton Marzaban Irani; January 24
Zinnia Pervez Mistry and Ardeshtir Faredoon Modi; January 24
Sharmin Badrudin Bardai and Farrokh Bomi Italia; January 25
Daisy Firoz Nariman and Ratan Keki Bengali; January 26
Dinaz Behram Elavia and Zubin Keki Shroff; January 26
Dilnaz Soli Bharucha and Mangeshkumar Piyush Zaveri; January 27
Nilufer Jimmy Panthaky and Kaizad Jehangir Dick; January 28
Khurshid Furrokh Sanjana and Nazban Behram Mehta; January 28
Binaiferr Nakra and Sanjay Kohli; January 29
Betty Virginia Maria Lawson and Murzban Phiroze Narsang; January 29
Shahnaz Shapur Irani and Kaiomarze Sheriar Falahati; January 30
Persis Jal Bhatena and Minoo Pesi Boocha; January 31
Reshma Polard Polard of Dahanu Road and Adil Nariman Rustomji; January 31
Anahita Minoo Mody and Noshir Dady Colah; February 2
Thrity Padam Daruwalla and Kali Shavakshah Patel; February 2
Baleshree Madhusudan Vora and Barzeen Ellis Bharucha; February 4
- Binaifer Maneck Mistry and Sunil Jayantilal Buddhden; February 4
Zinobia Purvez Bhesania and Maneck Rastom Mody; February 4
Shahnaz H. Udwadia and Murlidharan Nair; February 4
Kashmira Pervez Sabawala and Zubin Dara Patel; February 4
Parizad Noshir Patel and Mehroz Maneck Dadrewalla; February 5
Persis Rohinton Karkaria and Paurus Mehelli Irani; February 5
Mani Yazdi Irani and Homi Byram Tarapore; February 5
Hufrih Jimmy Nanporia and Karl Jimmy Dadrevala; February 6
Tina Sarkari and Sanjay Datt; February 6
Dilnaz Lovjee Wankadia and Maneck Aspi Mubarakai of Dahanu Rd; February 6
Rashna Firoze Siganporia and Zubin Dinshaw Wadiwalla; February 6
Tina Dinshaw Irani and Khodadad Sohrab Yazdegardi; February 7
Ketyun Feroze Sudry and Neville Parvez Billimoria of Navsari; February 9
Naznin Noshir Pundol and Mehernosh Jal Daruwalla; February 9
Gulshan Parvez Munshi and Firoze Farokh Patel; February 9
Aban Minoo Pastakia and Zubin Samy Bilimoria; February 11
Shekufeh Rustom Sheriarian and Farshid Dinshaw Yazdani; February 12
Hufriya Kersasp Kanga and Darayes Maneck Karkaria; February 13
Meher Edal Cassad and Burjiz Fali Pithawala; February 14
Dinaz Minoo Engineer of Lonavla and Shahrokh Ardeshtir Shahnava of Khandala; February 14
Zia Adi Cooper and Munchi Pallonji Shroff; February 14
Shiraz Wadia and Hanuman Tripathi; February 14
Fardeen Farokh Panthaki and Sagar Pravin Shah; February 15
Kamal Darayash Mehta and Xerxes Soli Bharucha; February 16
Daisy Soli Behramkamdin and Histasp Aspi Contractor; February 16
- Firoza Meneti Saiwala and Shashank Rupchand Karani; February 16
Dilkhush Khushru Batliwala and Rayomand Khushroo Daver; February 18
Atosa Homi Press and Viraf Homi Karai; February 18
Saiesha Keki Mistry and Dhun Adi Dhanbhora; February 19
Kashmira Homi Mistry and Rayomand Homi Press; February 19
Dilnaz Firoze Bulsara of Nasik and Yazdi Godrej Mehta; February 20
Kainaz Zarir Madan and Khurshid Yazdi Daruwalla; February 21
Meher Cawas Dadachanji and Percy Phiroze Master; February 21
Kashmira Eruch Patel and Bakhtiyar Ardeshtir Vazifdar; February 21
Zenobia Jal Dadina and Boman Dara Nakra; February 23
Yasmin Pheroze Kharas and Karl Dinshaw Divecha; February 24
Rashna Batiwala and Cedric D'Souza; February 24
Parizad Parvez Shroff and Pourushasp Rohinton Dumasia; February 24
Ferzana Rohinton Dukandar and Sarosh Boman Daruwalla; February 25
Vandana S. Galani and Berjis M. Desai; February 27
Bakhtawar Rustom Gotla and Percis Dorab Satha; February 27
- DIED
Thelma Jehangir Tata (85), residing at The Cairn, Anstey Rd, Off Altamont Rd, Cumballa Hill, 400026; September 12, 1994 (cremated)
Khorshed Sorab Katgara (85), Heera Meher, Wodehouse Rd, Colaba, 400005; October 2 (cremated)
Kersy Cursetji Nagarwala (53), Godrej Staff Qrts, Vikhroli, 400079; November 17 (cremated)
Firoze Edulji Billimoria (86), Empress Bldg, N. Petit St, Grant Rd, 400007; December 1
Rumi Cawasha Bengali (52), 627, Homavazir Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; December 2
Burjor Nariman Bharucha (68), Lam Bldg, N. M. Joshi Marg, Lower Parel, 400013; December 2

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and

Mrs Purviz R. Shroff



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- Framroze Hormusji Billimoria* (78), J/10, Cusrow Baug, S. B. Rd, 400039; December 2
- Ardeshtir Phirozshaw Khambatta* (82), 280/C, Bhatia Soc Bldg, Princess St, 400002; December 2
- Hutaoshi Pallanji Madan* (81), 11, Sai Ashish, Dr Peter Dias Rd, Bandra, 400050; December 2
- Keki Dorabji Mistry* (83), 19, Mathew Rd, Hari Nivas, 400004; December 2
- Mehroo Jehanbux Unwalla* (74), Meher Mans, Unwalla St, Udva, 396180; December 2
- Alamai Godrej Anklesaria* (75), C/o Dara Erachsha Patel, 17, Mistry Bldg, Wadia St, Tardeo, 400034; December 3
- Naval Maneckshaw Chinoy* (80), 63, Jame Jamshed Bldg, Jame Jamshed Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; December 3
- Dhnamai Nusservanji Librarian* (101), 271/A, Dhun Lodge, Tardeo, 400007; December 3
- Hoshang Erach Balsara* (48), 7, Uranwalla Mans, 255, Dr Ambedkar Rd, Parel, 400012; December 4
- Bapai Sorabji Engineer* (89), A, Empire Ter, Lamington Cross Rd, N. Petit St, 400007; December 4
- Sakarbai Bomansha Mithaiwalla* (65), Shroff Bldg, Gamadia Clny, Tardeo, 400007; December 4
- Banoobai Pallonji Patel* (92), Jaiwant Niwas, Manpada Rd, Dombivali (E), 421201; December 4
- Manek Merwanji Surti* (85), G/9, Cusrow Baug, S. B. Rd, 400039; December 4
- Alu Erach Vaghaiwalla* (75), Nanabhoy Chmbs, Gunbow St, Fort, 400001; December 5
- Vispi Samy Khatow* (36), 19, C. M. Banaji Bldg, Forjett St Cross Lane, 400036; December 6
- Motan Framji Workingboxwala* (94), 10, Vijay Nivas, 5, N. B. Marg, 400007; December 6
- Homi Edulji Mistry* (78), H/20, Nowroz Baug, Lalbaug, 400012; December 7
- Dinoo Adi Vatcha* (58), 225, Petit Widows' Chawl, Thakurdwar, Charni Rd, 400002; December 7
- Dhun Kakshru Vazifdar* (79), 816, Mistry Bldg, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; December 7
- Keki Cawas Mehta* (64), Jer Mans, Gowalia Tank Rd, 400036; December 8
- Khodayar Jamshed Raisi* (65), A/8, Rustom Baug, Victoria Rd, Byculla, 400027; December 8
- Behram Aspendiar Behrami* (69), Clover Bldg, 4, Sleater Rd, Grant Rd, 400007; December 9
- Aban Ratanshaw Dadachanji* (68), C/9, Captain Clny, Tardeo Rd, 400034; December 9
- Rustomji Dinshawji Fitter* (82), Banaji Bldg, Forjett St, Gowalia Tank, 400036; December 9
- Silloo Jamshed Madan* (75), 64, Somerset Hse, Off B. Desai Rd, 400026; December 9
- Dhun Navroji Pavri* (78), Rajda Hse (New Kanga Bldg), Gowalia Tank, 400036; December 9
- Nariman Dhunjishaw Karani* (87), 780, Karani Mans, M. Joshi Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; December 10
- Naoshier Pallonji Printer* (92), 764/E, Umrigar Bldg, Tilak Rd, Dadar, 400014; December 10
- Adi Jamshedji Davar* (87), 686, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; December 11
- Tehemton Jehangir Fraser* (76), B/4, Sanjana Apts, 66B, Carter Rd, Bandra, 400050; December 11
- Yezdi Sheriarji Sidhwa* (59), 6, Meherbai Wadia Bldg, Wadia St, Tardeo, 400034; December 11
- Behramgore Ratansha Vakil* (75), 111, Tampines Rd, Singapore, Republic of Singapore; December 11
- Cohyar Jehangir Coyajee* (73), Dil-khush, 40, B. J. Kher Marg, Malabar Hill, 400006; December 12
- Gool Jehangirji Jesang* (84), 9/3, B. S. Panthaki Baug, Hargovindas Sanatorium Rd, Andheri (E), 400069; December 12
- Banoo Merwan Farzadi* (78), Hornby View, Gunbow St, Fort, 400001; December 13
- Keki Shawaksha Nagporwala* (71), 622, Palia Mans, Lady Jehangir Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; December 13
- Soli Pirojshaw Bajan* (63), 4, Patel Block, Mehella Patel Agiary St, 400007; December 14
- Gool Cursetji Bam* (80), 13, Karkaria Hse, 3rd Marine St, Dhobitalao, 400001; December 14
- Dhanmai Kaikhushru Buhariwalla* (86), 146/B, Patel Bldg, N. M. Joshi Rd, Lower Parel, 400013; December 14
- Freny Pheroz Engineer* (74), 22, Belvedere Mans, M. Karve Rd, 400020; December 14 (cremated)
- Firooze Darasha Colaabavala* (70), Puran Niwas, Arthur Bunder Rd, Colaba, 400005; December 15
- Nariman Pestonji Daruwalla* (81), Dhun Manor, Patel Clny, Nasik, 422001; December 15
- Khorshed Behram Karkaria* (69), 38/A, Gopal Mans, Turner Rd, Next to Panthaky Agiary, Bandra, 400050; December 15
- Freny Soli Captain* (74), 04, Palm Springs, Cuffe Parade, 400005; December 16
- Furdoon Dorabjee Cooper* (66), 11/6, Rustom Baug, Victoria Rd, Byculla, 400027; December 16
- Khorshed Adi Gandhi* (70), 73/75, Walkeshwar Rd, 400006; December 16
- Minu Ratanshaw Gandhi* (68), C/o Kety Erachshaw Gandhi, D-84, Acharya Niwas, Navy Ngr, Colaba, 400005; December 16
- Dolly Jehangir Irani* (62), Meher Mans, Balaram St, Grant Rd, 400007; December 16
- Manoo Keki Laher* (72), M/12, S. B. Bharucha Baug, S. V. Rd, Andheri (W), 400058; December 16
- Ratanshaw Nadirshaw Patel* (66), C/o Kersi N. Patel, 3, Cama Bldg, M. Cama Park, Cama Rd, Andheri (W), 400058; December 16
- Dina Dorabji Curravala* (87), 11, Hill Park, A. G. Bell Marg, 400006; December 17
- Khorshed Dinshawji Kanga* (67), 16, H. M. Petit Widows' Chawl, Thakurdwar, 400002; December 17
- Rati Burjee Kotwal* (76), 6/1, Ratan Tata Clny, Tardeo Rd, 400034; December 17
- Nariman Dhunjibhoy Daruwalla* (72), Habib Bldg, Corner of Grant Rd, Playhouse, 400008; December 18
- Minoo Bejonji Shroff* (84), 63, Mira Soc, Salisbury Park, Pune 411037; December 18
- Jehangir Pestonji Kanga* (80), Temple Ter, Forjett St, Gowalia Tank, 400036; December 19
- Khurshed Dosabhoy Marolia* (73), 102, Coronation Mans, Dada Saheb Phalke Rd, Dadar, 400014; December 19
- Dolly Phirozshaw Rivetna* (72), 2/31, A. H. Wadia Bldg, Parel Tank Rd, 400033; December 19
- Alamai Manchershaw Chinoy* (94), F. S. Parukh Dharamshalla, 34, Hughes Rd, 400007; December 20
- Faramroze Shavakshaw Joshi* (62), 1/24, Batliwalla Bldg, Khareghat Clny, Hughes Rd, 400007; December 20
- Pillamai Eruchsha Kadva* (76), 605, Karim Mans, 4th Rd, J. S. S. Rd, 400002; December 21
- Jamshedji Aderji Surty* (76), Cooper Bldg, Marzban Clny, Dr Nair Rd, Agripada, 400011; December 21
- Gool (Manek) Fareedoon Bana* (80), Meher Afrin, Marve Rd, Malad (W), 400064; December 22
- Jehangir Kaikhushroo Dumasia* (63), Toher Manzil, Mehella Patel Agiary Lane, Grant Rd, 400007; December 23
- Phiroze Kavasji Guzder* (83), 402, Silver Cascade, Mt Mary Rd, Bandra, 400050; December 23
- Tehmina Rustomji Mehta* (80), F. S. Parukh Dharamshalla, 34, Hughes Rd, 400007; December 23
- Allan Ratansha Mir* (70), X-113-4, Godrej Staff Qrts, Vikhroli (E), 400079; December 23
- Tehmina Manchershaw Wakadia* (79), 598/C, A. H. A. Wadia Bldg, J. S. Rd, 400002; December 23
- Hosang Fardunji Writer* (85), Railway View, Uranwalla St, Grant Rd, 400007; December 23
- Rustom Hormusji DadyBurjor* (94), 12/B, Banoo Manor, Dadiseth 2nd Cross Rd, Chowpati, 400007; December 25
- Jamshed Dinshawji Mistry* (55), E/21, Jer Baug, Dr Ambedkar Rd, Byculla, 400027; December 25
- Mehra Minocher Bahadurji* (80), F/4, Nowroz Baug, Lalbaug, 400012; December 26
- Behram Pestonji Cardmaster* (71), Marine Mans, 1st Marine St, 400002; December 26
- Parvez Behram Hirananeek* (56), 21, New Contractor Bldg, Victoria Garden Rd, Byculla,



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mad Parsis
there is only one
who is crazy
about Gool
and he does
not live in Poona*

- 400027; December 26
Jamshed Ardeshir Irani (69), 16/3, Tata Mills Co-op Hsg Soc, Elphinstone Rd, Parel, 400012; December 26
Keki Khurshedji Khareghat (75), B/17, Pushpa Kunj, Nehru Rd, Santacruz (E), 400055; December 26
Putli Khushroo Daver (58), 721/A, Choksey Charity Trust Bldg, Rd no 4, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; December 27
Allan Jehangir Meherhomji (92), 1B/19, Tata Mills Co-op Hsg Soc, J. B. Marg, Parel, 400012; December 27
Jehangir Byramji Kolah (77), 607/D, Dolat Manzil No 2, Dr Ambedkar Rd, Byculla, Dadar, 400014; December 28
Mehramai Rustomji Shroff (91), E/50, Jer Baug, Dr Ambedkar Rd, 400027; December 28
Gool Dosu Talaty (79), A/14, Ocean Gold, Twin Towers Lane, Prabhadevi, 400025; December 28
Ratanbai Faramroz Taraporewalla (93), B/206, Vikas Towers, Opp Amboli Rlwy Crossing, Andheri (E), 400069; December 28
Sheramai Manekshaw Patel (75), 10, 816, Mistry Charity Bldg, (Widow's Chawl), Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; December 29
Soli Rustomji Manekshaw (62), C/o M. R. Cooper, 8/B, Elegant Apts, Cuffe Parade, 400005; December 30
Roshan Sarosh Saklatwala (63), 107, Patel Apts, Jampali Naka, Agiary Lane, Thane (W), 400601; December 30
Feroza Behram Sidhwa (46), 53, Dina Bldg, M. Karve Marg, 400002; December 30
Sherbanoo Kaikhusroo Khergamwala (92), 674, Society Bldg, Rd no 14, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; December 31
Daulat Nozar Dastoor (85), Mohd Bldg, Nathalal Parikh Marg, Colaba, 400005; January 1, 1995
Jamshedji Savakshaw Driver (81), 13, Jyoti Mhl, Naushir Bharucha Marg, 400007; January 1
Amy Dosabhoy Jasavala (71), Gamadia Bldg, Gamadia Clny, Tardeo Rd, 400007; January 1
Eduji Cursetji Kaka (88), 3/7, A. H. Wadia Baug, Parel Tank Rd, 400033; January 1
Jerie Firoze Kapadia (72), M/21, Cusrow Baug, S. B. Rd, 400039; January 1
Ratanbai Fredoon Mistry (81), 752, Dr Jal. Vakil Bldg, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; January 1
Adi Nusserwanji Irani (70), B/35, Meherzin, Wodehouse Rd, Colaba, 400005; January 2 (cremated)
Jer Dinshawji Malesara (80), C/o Perviz A. Kanga, 141/1, Godrej Hill Qrts, Agra Rd, Vikhroli, 400079; January 2
Roda Godrej Zaiwala (55), 61/71, Kashinath Bldg, V. S. Marg, Mahim, 400016; January 2
Minoo Sorabji Engineer (85), 302/9, Wadia Est, Bail Bazar, Kurla, 400070; January 3
Firoze Manekji Kalyaniwalla (75), Rajni Mhl, Tardeo Rd, 400034; January 4
Jamshed Nusserwanji Karai (74), 82, Aderbad, 34, Hughes Rd, 400007; January 4
Alamai Framroze Pastakia (88), 1/29, Dadachanji Bldg, Marzban Clny, Dr A. Nair Rd, 400011; January 4
Soonie Rustom Vachha (71), 15, Hampton Court, 125, Wodehouse Rd, Colaba, 400005; January 4
Dady Phirozeshaw Messman (71), Perin Villa, Malcolm Baug, Jogeshwari (W), 400102; January 6
Adi Sorabji Shroff (85), 721/A, Nanabhai Choksi Bldg, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; January 6
Rustom Jehangirji Daruwalla (74), 585/12, Jilobai Wadia Bldg, Lady Jehangir Rd, Matunga, 400019; January 7
Ratan (Jimmy) Khurshedji Dastur (67), 108/B, Madhuban, Worli Hill Rd, Worli, 400018; January 7 (cremated)
Mehran Behram Panthaki (65), G-3, Maitri Bldg, Golanji Hill Rd, Parel Village, 400012; January 7
Minoo Nusserwanji Patel (81), 11/8, Rustom Baug, Victoria Rd, Byculla, 400027; January 7
Jaiji Mancherji Bhathena (110), 28/A, Toddywalla Bldg, Sun Mill Rd, Lower Parel, 400013; January 8
Kashmira Faredoon Mistry (18), 275/B, Captain Bldg, Chikalwadi, Grant Rd, 400007; January 8
Faramur Phiroze Nariman (53), 808/4, Aimai Manzil, Dr Ambedkar Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; January 8
Tester Khurshid Behram (63), M/35, Cusrow Baug, S. B. Rd, 400039; January 9
Noshir Maneckji Bharucha (79), C, Kanta Bldg, Near Super Cinema, 400007; January 9
Percy Behramji Bhatena (46), 25, Bhabha Sanatorium, Band Stand, Bandra, 400050; January 9
Mehroo Farokh Bhathena (56), 785/A, Ready Money Bldg, M. Joshi Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; January 9
Nergesh Cavasji Dangore (76), 4/2, Lady Dorab Tata Bldg, Bandra (W), 400050; January 9
Bapaji Loveji Mevawalla (75), A/18, Blue Sea Apts, Juhu Tara Rd, Santacruz (W), 400049; January 9
Jehangir Nariman Patel (67), Pannalal Bldg, 228, Bazar Gate St, Fort, 400001; January 9
Rustom Hormasji Khapoliwalla (77), B, Muncher Manzil, 35/C, Jairajbhai Lane, 400008; January 10
Adi Temulji Marker (75), 5, Albless Bldg, Zoroastrian Clny, Chikalwadi, Tardeo Rd, 400007; January 10
Rustomji Kaikhusru Batliwalla (91), 618, Jami Lodge, Jame Jamshed Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; January 11
Jimmy Cursetji Chandaru (73), 7, Jer Baug, Dr Ambedkar Rd, Byculla, 400027; January 11
Arnavaz Jivanji Elavia (70), 691, Albless Bldg, Dr Dinsha Master Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; January 11
Parvin Phiroze Cooper (73), 71/A, Rustom Baug, Victoria Rd, Byculla, 400027; January 12
Shavak Hormusji Cooper (76), Sleater Hse, Sleater Rd, 400007; January 12
Feroz Dinshawji Mistry (60), 650, Kermani Bldg, Firdoshi Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; January 12
Banobai Minocher Bhagwagar (88), Minoo Mans, Malcolm Baug, Jogeshwari (W), 400102; January 13
Neryosang Navroje Navroje (61), 74, Aderbad, Hughes Rd, 400007; January 13
Ratti Darabshaw Bavaadam (59), 1/B/31, Tata Mills Co-op Hsg Soc, Elphinstone Rd, Parel, 400013; January 14
Frenny Dinshaw Bhesadiar (68), Dubash Bldg, Wadia St, Tardeo, 400034; January 14
Gool Kaikobad Lichmore (79), Mohamadbbhai Mans, 7, N. S. Patkar Marg, 400036; January 14
Minocher Nusserwanji Dumasia (78), 649, Kaka Bldg, Firdoshi Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; January 15
Naval Nesserwanji Engineer (82), 614, Bachubai Mans, Jame Jamshed Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; January 15
Nargish Sheriar Irani (65), Meher Mans, Baram St, Grant Rd, 400007; January 15
Maneckbai Cawasji Mehta (80), 6, Contractor Chawl, D. K. Cross Rd, Byculla, 400027; January 15
Munchershaw Jehangir Sukhadwalla (98), 666, Orient Hse, Lady Jehangir Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; January 15
Homai Bomansha Lavangia (89), Mistry Bglw, Parsi Panchayat Rd, Andheri (E), 400069; January 16
Nowroji Ratanshaw Captain (91), Jairaj Peerbhoy Bldg, 28, Forjett St, 400036; January 17
Ratanshaw Jehangirjee Colabawalla (82), 86/6, Godrej Clny, Vikhroli, 400079; January 17
Dhun Ardeshir Jambudiwala (80), 9, Baug-E-Rehmat, St John Baptist Rd, Bandra, 400050; January 17
Rustom (Rusi) Jehangirjee Bharucha (75), Alpawalla Bldg, M. M. Chotani Rd, Mahim, 400016; January 18
Perin Burjor Dudhmul (62), Armin Hse, 8th Lane, Khetwadi, 400004; January 18
Tehmina Dossabhoy Hodivala (87), Wilson Bldg, Dr Ambedkar Rd, Dadar, 400014; January 18
Dara (Dorabji) Ruttonsha Toddywalla (66), Nusserwanji Hse, Dhuswadi, Dhobitalao, 400002; January 18
Sam Framroze Billimoria (50), 7/C-11, Tata Clny, Tardeo, 400034; January 19
Manijeh Kaikhusru Carnac (90), The Cliff, Pochkhanawala Rd, Worli, 400025; January 19
Nariman Kaikhusroo Karanjia (97), 64, Somerset Hse, Off B. Desai Rd, 400026; January 19

Daulat Keki Sethana (78), Parijat, Near Bedekar High School, Vishnu Ngr, Naupada, Thane, 400601; January 19
Meherbai Pirojshah Daruwalla (90), 7/9, Ratan Tata Clny, Tardeo, 400034; January 20
Pallanji Phiroshah Fitter (79), Ladka Devji Chawl, Pushpa Park, Ban Dongri, Malad (E), 400097; January 20
Homi Dorabji Postwalla (93), 286, Princess St, 400002; January 20
Tehmina Dinshaw Desai (83), 4, Meher Villa, Malcolm Baug, Jogeshwari (W), 400102; January 21
Banoobai Faramroz Bhadha (74), Petit Widows' Chawl, Mody St, Fort, 400001; January 22
Piroja Meherji Dumasia (91), 54, Acharya Ngr, W. T. Patil Marg, Deonar, 400088; January 22
Hoshi Merwanji Gazdar (53), 45, Gazdar Hse, Bhulabhai Desai Rd, 400026; January 22
Dhun Nadir Shroff (62), 1, Petit Block, Balaram St, Grant Rd, 400007; January 22
Homai Jehangirji Daji (87), 27, Blue Flame Apts, Opp Jama Masjid, S. V. Rd, Bandra (W), 400050; January 23
Jer Nusserwanji Dastoor (85), 49, Hill Rd, Bandra, 400050; January 23
Rustom Hormusji Mogul (88), 674, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; January 23
Marazban Faredun Panthaky (79), N/9, Dalal Est, Lamington Rd, Bombay Central, 400008; January 23
Mervin Firoze Amra (25), G/4, Shapurji Bharucha Baug, Andheri (W), 400058; January 24
Baby of Shernaz Yazdi Bardoliwalla (7 days), 7/586, Shiv-Niketani, 18th Rd, Khar (W), 400052; January 24
Jal Khursedji Daruwalla (89), 21, ElCid, B. G. Kher Marg, 400006; January 24
Adi Munchershaw Gandhi (70), 799, Minu Mans, Jame Jamshed Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; January 24
Darnesh Tozar Heerjee (13), 23/9, Air India Clny No 1, Kalina, Santacruz (E), 400029; January 24
Piroja Keki Sadri (85), Safoorabai Manzil, 15, Wadia

St. Tardeo, 400034; January 24
Jalejar Darabshah Aga (84), 147, Lentin Hse, Lamington Rd, 400007; January 25
Kaitayun Naushir Bharucha (74), 56, Botawalla Bldg, Bomanji Master Rd, Opp Kalbadevi Post Office, 400002; January 25
Farmaroz Rustom Joshi (66), 36, Mangalore St, Fort, 400001; January 25
Homi Navroji Marolia (70), 31, Parijat, 95, Marine Drive, 400002; January 25
Dhunmai Dhunjishaw Soonawalla (87), N/18, Nowroz Baug, Lalbaug, 400012; January 25
Minocher Framroze Anklesaria (82), 14/1, Rustom Baug, Victoria Rd, Byculia, 400027; January 26
Chandan Bharucha (76), Sir Dorab Tata Bldg No 1, Opp Bandra Talkies, Bandra (W), 400050; January 26
Lim Cawasji Dumasia (82), 738, Shirin Villa, Rd no 5, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; January 26
Jamshed Ardesher Pardiwalla (65), Presswala Bldg, 190, Lamington Rd, 400008; January 26
Meherbai Naoraji Patel (99), C/o N. J. Patel, 10, Old Khareghat Clny, N. S. Patkar Rd, 400007; January 26
Dolat Ardesher Buhariwalla (74), 13/12, Lentin Bldg, Gamadia Clny, Tardeo, 400007; January 27
Khurshedji Dorabji Dastoor (71), C/37, Usha Sadan, Next to Colaba Post Office, 400005; January 27
Dhunbai Sorabji Kama (90), O/12, Dalal Est, Dr D. B. Rd, Bombay Central, 400008; January 27
Hilla Kaikobad Mory (88), 5/A, Elavia Bldg, Contractor Baug, Mori Rd, Mahim, 400016; January 27
Marzban Pheroze Contractor (35), 2-B/39, Tata Mills Co-op Hsg Soc, Elphinstone Rd, Parel, 400012; January 28
Jal Jehangir Dubash (83), Naju Manor, 14, Oliver Rd, 400039; January 28
Aspandiar Khodadad Joobanian (Irani) (77), 21, Multani Bldg, Khambhata Lane, Khetwadi, 400004; January 29
Piloo Pestonji Mistry (72), C/o Dinaz R. Chinoy, 646, Gai

Bldg, Khareghat Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; January 29
Dinshaw Framroze Panthaky (88), 598/A, Wadia Bldg, Girgaum Rd, 400002; January 29
Rati Dhanjisha Bulsara (61), 5/14, A. H. Wadia Baug, Parel Tank Rd, 400033; January 30
Erach Ratanshaw Mama (79), 502, Rose Mary, Ice Factory Lane, Hill Rd, Bandra (W), 400050; January 30
Homi Kaikhushroo Sanga (83), 36, Mistry Bldg, Sun Mill Rd, Lower Parel, 400013; January 30
Katie Hormusji Shroff (70), 54/A, Ocean Crest, Bhulabhai Desai Rd, 400036; January 30
Soli Jamshedji Banaji (80), F/50, Cusrow Baug, S. B. Rd, 400039; January 31
Sheroo Framroze Parakh (78), 23/A, Britto Villa, St Paul's Rd, Bandra, 400050; January 31
Dinshaw Hormaz Kapadia (76), Shahnaz, 286, S. V. Rd, Bandra, 400050; February 1
Dolly Phiroz Limbuvala (64), Matruchaya, Naopada, Vasai Rd, Thane 400601; February 1
Mani Faramroze Mistry (72), B, Sanjana Bldg, Forjett Hill Rd, 400036; February 2
Erach Burjorji Ghyara (85), 403, Pleasant Park, Lokhandwalla Complex, Andheri, 400058; February 3
Dinshawji Dadabhoy Patel (87), Kashinath Bldg No 3, Kashinath St, Tardeo, 400034; February 3
Cawas Edulji Wadia (67), C/o Farida Sahukar, 14/A, Hamabai Petit Bldg, Marzban Clny, Gilder Lane, 400008; February 4
Khurshed Jehangir Warden (84), Gool Rookh, 83, Worli Seafac, 400025; February 4
Sorab Mayar Irani (77), Homaji Baug, Masoli, Dahanu Rd, Dist Thane, 401602; February 5
Coovermai Maneckshaw Masani (99), 261, Jupiter, New Cuffe Parade, Colaba, 400005; February 5
Rustom Ardesher Nekoo (88), C/o Khurshed Gustad Sadri, R/J4, Nowroz Baug, Lalbaug, 400012; February 6
Homai Dinshaw Avasia (65), Vaidya Mans, 41, Tardeo Rd, 400034; February 7
Dhunji Merwanji Commissariat (43), 101, F/47, Manish Ngr,

Andheri (W), 400058; February 7
Pesi Rustomji Dalal (70), Niamat Manzil, 3, Nusserwanji St, Grant Rd, 400007; February 8
Rustomji Dhunjishaw Bhagat (89), P/2, Cusrow Baug, S. B. Rd, 400039; February 9
Keki Cawasji Suratia (66), Avan Baug, T2, Navsari, Gujarat, 396445; February 9
Banoo Dinshaw Tavadia (68), A/4, Nowroz Baug, Lalbaug, 400012; February 9
Perviz Kaikhushroo Baria (57), 10/G2, Shapurji Bharucha Baug, V. P. Rd, 400004; February 10
Rustom Sorab Irani (59), 1/12A, Panthaky Baug, Andheri (E), 400069; February 10
Tehmi Behram Mehta (87), A, Gowalia Tank Bldg, A. K. Marg, 400036; February 10
Pirosha Edulji Sakhidas (77), Chotani Bldg, Wadilal A. Patel Rd, Grant Rd, 400007; February 10
Noshir Hormusji Kateli (77), E/9, Vanashri Central Bank Hsg Soc, L. T. Rd, Borivli (W), 400092; February 12
Ardesher Kaikhushroo Rabadi (87), 8, Daruwalla Bldg, 145, Alibhai Premji Marg, 400007; February 12
Dhunmai Minocher Sethna (77), 8, Tarachand Bldg, Gamadia Clny, Tardeo, 400007; February 12
Gool Dinshaw Sevadia (78), 4, Wadia Block No 3, Malcolm Baug, Jogeshwari (W), 400102; February 12
Gool Dorabji Rabadi (78), 8, Widows' Chawl, Nowroz Baug, Lalbaug, 400012; February 13
Khushroo Eruchshaw Kaikobad (78), Shireen Mans, Bhaji Gali, Sleater Rd, 400007; February 14
Bapai Behramji Cardmaster (86), Motiwala Mans, Gowalia Tank, 400026; February 15
Pervin Farhad Ginwalla (51), Rutton Manor, Garden Rd, 400039; February 15
Jal Mehervanji Korkhao (76), Niamat Bldg, 82/D, Prof Almeida Park, Bandra (W), 400050; February 15
Freni Minoo Bulsara (59), 605, Gokul Apts, Goraswadi, Malad (W), 400064; February 16
Mahrugh Yazdi Engineer (45), Aziz Bldg, Tardeo Rd, 400034;

February 16
Sarosh Mahiyar Honarmand (Irani) (63), 76, Habib Mans, A. K. Marg, 400036; February 16
Motibai Rustomji Billimoria (85), 31, H. M. Petit Widows' Chawl, Thakurdwar, 400002; February 17
Alamai Darabsha Mistry (87), 211/C, E3, Highway Park, Thakur Complex, Kandivli (E), 400101; February 17
Khurshed Keki Nanmanizadeh (65), 507/509, Chira Bazar, 400002; February 17
Sam Bejonji Lakdawalla (80), Master Chmbs, Metro Cinema Lane, 400020; February 18
Katayun Faramroz Shroff (78), 13, Sleater Rd, 400007; February 18
Mithoo Jehangir Daruvala (72), 34/K-3, Merwanji Cama Park, Cama Rd, Andheri (W), 400058; February 20
Faramroze Nusserwanji Nakra (90), 50, Hill Rd, Above Canara Bank, Bandra (W), 400050; February 20
Khurshed Jehangirji Baria (60), 3, Wadia Bldg, Dr B. Ambedkar Rd, Dadar, 400014; February 21
Daulat Phiroz Dotiwalla (78), Family Hse, Jame Jamshed Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; February 21
Rustom Nusserwanji Sagar (81), 668, Desai Bldg, Opp St Joseph's School, Wadala, 400031; February 21
Faramroze Jamshedji Kapadia (89), A/22, Cusrow Baug, S. B. Rd, 400039; February 22
Tehmina Tehmuras
Minbativala (86), Engineer Hse, 85, Tardeo Rd, 400034; February 22
Khurshed Meherji Pagdiwalla (84), G/1, S. B. Bharucha Baug, S. V. Rd, Andheri (W), 400058; February 22
Sherami Darabshaw Sethna (90), 5, Dr Engineer's Bldg, Kashinath St, Tardeo Rd, 400034; February 22
Kekhasroo Hormusjee Doctor (73), 16, Dubash Bldg, Gamadia Clny, Tardeo, 400007; February 23
Daulat Dossabhoy Kamdin (72), 18/A, Sagar Sangeet, 58, S. B. Rd, 400039; February 23
Pilamai Cawasji Naterwalla (86), D/7, Shapurji Bharucha Baug, V. P. Rd, 400004;

February 23
Ratoo Rusi Contractor (72), 11, Sea Palace, 2B, 25/H, Juhu Tara Rd, 400049; February 24
Baby of Ruby Zubeen Nallaseth (stillborn), 3/66K, Soonaiji Mans, A. K. Marg, 400036; February 24
Jehangir Framroz Shroff (85), T/7, Cusrow Baug, S. B. Rd, 400039; February 24
Nergish David Soans (54), 203, Mangal Darshan, Turner Rd, Bandra, 400050; February 24
Keikobad Cawashaw Batliwalla (90), Merwan Mans, 59, Napean Sea Rd, 400006; February 25
Mani Dhunjishaw Engineer (70), 6/2, Khareghat Bldg, Gamadia Clny, Tardeo, 400007; February 25
Perinbanoo Ratansha Suraliwalla (79), A, Gowalia Tank Bldg, A. K. Marg, 400036; February 25
Adi Nariman Desai (52), 6/C, Ness Baug, Nana Chowk, 400007; February 26
Keki Jamshedji Gandhi (47), Vaccha Gandhi Bldg No 2, V. Gandhi Rd, 400007; February 26
Dina Pirojsha Ichhaporia (87), 64-66, Kashinath Bldg, Cadell Rd, Mahim, 400016; February 28

BHUSAWAL

MARRIED
Yasmin Dadrawala, daughter of Sheroo and Cyrus and *Adil Kavina*, son of Zarine and Rusi; December 16, 1994

CALCUTTA

MARRIED
Tina Colah, daughter of Perviz and John and *Shreekant Servaia*, son of Kanta and Kailash; December 11
Khurshed Ardeshir and Jimmy Vatcha; December 18
Shenaz Jal Patel and Zubin Pervez Dabu; February 29, 1995

DIED

Amy Medhora, daughter of Munchershaw and Mehramai and sister of Dali and Roshan Jila; November 30, 1994
Firoz Dinshaji Mehta, husband of late Dhunmai and father of Marzban, Maher, Hosi, Nergis Phiroze Master and Gool Fredy Raja; December 18
Faramroze Munchershaw

Mehta, husband of Dina and father of Jamshed and Tehmi Contractor; January 28, 1995

DELHI

BORN
A boy, Gev, to Aban and Aspi Dittia; December 8, 1994

HYDERABAD

BORN
A boy, Sheryar, to Tehnaz and Aspin Battiwalla; October 16
A boy, Mahir, to Maya and Mehernosh Dittia; December 23
A boy, Zeeshan, to Dinaz and Jamshed Vervatwala; January 8, 1995

JALGAON

MARRIED
Vinnu Minoo Jalgamwala and Rohinton Naval Mistry of Nasik; December 27, 1994

POONA

BORN
A boy, Nekzad, to Kashmira and Rohinton Doctor; December 1
MARRIED
Tehnaz Boocho, daughter of Aban and Jehangir and *Shahvir Chothia*, son of Khushcher and Rohinton; December 25

DIED

Kavas Kaikhooshrou Framji (86), husband of Jeanie and father of Kaikhooshru and Jawahar; August 15
Mini Sam Mugaseth (76), Hill View Apts, Salisbury Park, 411001; November 3
Adi Behram Irani (46), 20, Nirmal Soc, St Patrick's Town, Hadapsar, 411013; November 4
Aspi Feredoon Irani (58), 25, Vijay Park, Kondhwa Kurd, 411015; November 10
Tehmina Burjor Dadachanji (77), 870/71, Dastur Meher Rd, 411001; November 18
Maneckji Nusserwanji Anklesaria (82), 94, Mahatma Gandhi Rd, 411001; November 22
Mehra B. Watchmaker (94), Shahbedad, 12, Boat Club Rd, 411001; December 15
Sorab Mancherji Master (88), 419/20, R. S. Kedari Rd, 411001; December 17
Kaikhushroo Jehangir Nanavaty (87), 3-12-A, Canopus Apts,

Boat Club Rd, 411001; December 17
Burjor Eruchshah Dumasia (73), 3, Konark Puram, Kondhwa Rd, 411054; December 25
Villoo Minocher Bhathena (70), 6, Noah Apts, 141, Kondhwa Gaon; December 26
Aloo Burjor Manna (85), Brahmanand Apts, Narangi Baug Rd, 411001; December 26
Soona Behram Marker (86), 23, Gidney Park, 411001; December 26
Perin Adi Postwala (60), 141, Aundh Rd, Khadki; December 30
Adi Bomanshah Kapadia (69), 71/4, Saroj Apts, Sahani Sujan Park, 411040; January 1, 1995
Shapurji Jehan Motabai (79), C/4, May Fair, 4, Dhole Patil Rd, 411001; January 1
Rustomji Naoroji Patel (78), 10, Mody Clny, Synagogue St, 411001; January 13
Firoze Dadiba Billimoria (88), 5, Dr Coyaji Rd, 411001; January 15
Dhun Nowrozji Godiwala (76), 1/21, Five Star Apts, Bund Garden Rd, 411001; January 19
Dhunmai Nariman Mehta (66), 1056, Homi Hse, Camp, 411001; February 1
Khodadad Sohrab Irani (77), S/55, Bhagya Uday Ngr, Kondhwa, 411045; February 2
Mahabanoo Maneckji Mody (94), Jer Villa, East St, 411001; February 3
Adi Phiroz Framji (87), 1/B, Clover Ter, Nathan Rd, 411001; February 8
Dhunmai Sorabji Bagla (75), 826/C, Dastur Meher Rd, 411001; February 26

SECUNDERABAD

BORN
A girl to Mr and Ms Maherwan F. Asundaria; July 22, 1994
A girl, Kainaz, to Parvina and Dara Patel; August 5
A boy, Arsheen, to Zenobia and Nauzer Lakdawalla; September 24
A boy, Kersasp, to Jeroo and Aspi Cawasji; November 23

MARRIED

Arnawaz A. Bastawala and Rohinton N. Pochkhanawala; June 3
Bapsy F. Framji and Shiraz C. Bhagwagar; December 20

Wahbeez Pervez Wankadia and
Viraj Ardeskar Medhora;
December 30

DIED
Bomanshaw B. Antia (79);
June 6
Ghaver F. Engineer (72);
July 22
Amy Darabshaw Eduljee (67);
August 7
Kekhusroo R. Taraporewalla
(93); August 10
Dinbai A. Irani (85), of Wadi;
August 23
Pesi S. Saher (61); September 4
Perinbanu M. Bokdawalla (87);
September 13
Mehra Keki Tarachand (72);
October 13
Freni S. Irani (85); October 30
Filly E. Dastoor (62); December 10

SURAT

DIED
Tehmina Kekobad Paliya (82),
Chandravilla Apt, Bibiniwadi,
Sayedpura, 395003;
November 9
Bokhatiyar Noshirwan
Todiwalla (27), Dehla St,
Rustompura, 395002;
November 22
Kettymai Jalejer Vajifdar (74),
Kalani Vakhar, Lalgate,
395003; December 1
Dhun Gustadji Bodhanvalla
(62), Bhaya St, Nanpura,
395001; December 7
Shehramai Homi Kalagopi (64),
Bhaya St, Nanpura, 395001;
December 10
Manacksha Pestanji Siggurwala
(71), Wadi St, Rustompura,
395002; December 12
Rustamji Navaroji Tavadia
(87), Diwanji Wadi,
Rustompura, 395002;
December 19
Keikhroo Pirojshaw Daruwala
(89), Maachlipith, Shahpore,
395003; December 24
Mehru Ratansha Bhathna (64),
Baimai Bldg, Nanpura, 395001;
December 25
Mehru Baji Daruwala (81),
Nariman Home and Infirmary,
Shahpore, 395003;
December 26
Dhunmai Pirozshah Patel (78),
Nariman Home and Infirmary,
Shahpore, 395003;
December 30
Jal Pirozshah Bhethna (70),
Popat St, Nanpura, 395001;
January 4, 1995
Najamai Sorabji Madon (94),
Mota St, Rustompura, 395002;

January 11
Fareed Eruchshaw Todiwalla
(68), Mota Mohalla, Rustompura,
395002; January 14
Minoo Darabshaw Basania
(42), Bartad Tal, Mahuva,
394250; January 15
Sam Jehangirji Jijina (46), Sir
Saheb Adariyan, Allahi Baug,
Rustompura, 395002;
January 15
Perviz Eruchshaw Gandhi (64),
105, Riya Apts, Nanpura,
395001; January 25
Piroja Dosabhai Variava (91),
Moti Kanbiwad, Village Kathor,
394150; January 26
Keki Jamsap Vaid (94),
Serdwala Block, Shahpore,
395003; January 29
Banoobai Eruchsha Hilluwala
(78), Dehla St, Rustompura,
395002; February 2
Rusibhai (Rustamji) Hirjibhai
Chiniwala (67), Ghoddod Rd,
395003; February 5
Banubai Dinshaji Variava (90),
Parsiwad, Village Amroli;
February 7
Jarbanoo Hormasji Sundry
(90), Parsiwad, Village Amroli;
February 12
Thrity Pesi Paliya (50),
Aganovad, Sayedpura, 395003;
February 14
Bahadurshaw Hormasji Wadia
(73), Malesar St, Rustompura,
395002; February 15
Piran Faramroj Amalsadiwala
(62), Cyrus Mans, Sayedpura,
395003; February 27

AUSTRALIA

Sydney
BORN
A boy, **Zubin**, to **Gool** and
Daraius Bilimoria; January 15

MARRIED

Mahrugh Wadia and **Raj**
Mundul; January 14
Ruby Unvala, daughter of
Jeanie and **Jangoo** and **Simon**
Lane; January 26

DIED

Perin Bejon Tata, mother of
Roshan Jeejeebhoy, **Roda**
Bulsara and **Navaz Verma**;
February 11

Victoria

BORN
A girl, **Kimiya**, to **Fariba**
and **Ardeskar Irani**;
August 5, 1994
A boy, **Damesh**, to **Armin** and
Hoshi Buhariwala; November 23

CANADA

British Columbia

DIED
Anahita Irani (37), wife of
Shahpour; January 23, 1995

London, Ontario

BORN
A girl, **Armaity**, to **Shernaz**
and **Jamshid Minwalla**;
November 10, 1994

Ontario

BORN
A girl, **Neda**, to **Farzaneh** and
Daryoush Ejbari, sister to
Rostam; September 18
A boy, **Jason**, to **Rati** and **Eddie**
Writer, brother to **Jamie**;
November 27
A boy, **Xerxes Darson**, to
Soonoo and **Daraius Billimoria**;
December 28

DIED

Manijeh Darabshaw Sarkari,
mother of **Kersi**, **Arnavaz**,
Aspi and **Pilloo Engineer**;
January 7, 1995

Toronto

BORN
A girl, **Humin**, to **Arnavaz**
and **Jamshed Dhabbar**;
September 3, 1994

MARRIED

Catherine Lloyd and **Jehangir**
Daruwalla of **Calgary**, son of
Soona and **Adi**; July 23

Vancouver, British Columbia

MARRIED
Azita Yeganegi, daughter of
Pari and **Parviz** and **Raiomand**
Parsi-Feraidoonian;
November 25

IRAN

Tehran

DIED
Simindokht Rashid, mother
of **Daryoush Goshtasbi**;
October 20

Yazd

DIED
Khodadad Demehry (78),
husband of **Homyunc**;
October 20

PAKISTAN

Karachi

BORN
A boy, **Shaun**, to **Perveen** and
Zarir Pohwala; December 8
A boy, **Shahveer**, to **Yasmin** and
Daraius Charna; December 13

A boy, **Zermesh**, to **Katayun** and
Jamshed Patel; December 18
A girl, **Leea**, to **Anita** and
Nadeer Contractor;
December 22
A girl, **Natalie**, to **Faranaz**
and **Behram Mana**;
January 27, 1995
A boy, **Zarmesh**, to **Sonita** and
Rustom Amaria; February 4

Lahore

DIED
Tehmina P. Bhandara, mother
of **Firoze** and **Bapsy Sidhwa**;
January 6

USA

Belmont, California

DIED
Khosrow Namdaran (95),
husband of **Gohar** and father
of **Farin**, **Farshid**, **Farzad**,
Farzin, **Farhad** and **Farrokh**;
October 20, 1994

Bristol, Philadelphia

BORN
A boy, **Cyrus**, to **Freny** and
Syavux Patel; October 6

Brookfield, Wisconsin

DIED
Nariman Dastur; November 17

California

BORN
A boy, **Jehan**, to **Hufrish** and
Rohinton Patel; October 22

MARRIED

Mina Salamati Sar-e-Deh,
daughter of **Parichehr** and
Rustam and **Sohrab Aidun**, son
of **Kharman** and **Shahbahram**;
July 30

Chicago

BORN
A girl, **Avvan**, to **Bepsi** and **Pesi**
Sanjana; December 14
A girl, **Shanaya**, to **Aban** and
Cyrus Grant, sister to **Karl**;
December 15

Columbus, Ohio

BORN
A boy, **Hormuz**, to **Monaz**
and **Mehernosh Kapadia**,
brother to **Sanaya**;
August 9

Houston

BORN
A girl, **Nasha**, to **Havovi**
and **Kaemerz Dotiwalla**,
sister to **Aryeneesh**;
December 3

DIED

Homa Firozgary (7), daughter of Mahnaz and Farrokh; January 1, 1995

Lafayette, Indiana**BORN**

A girl, Sanaya, to Jasmine and Ness Shroff; December 29, 1994

Los Angeles**DIED**

Homi Amroli, father of Behroz Vadoli and Hosi; January 17, 1995

Seattle**BORN**

A boy, Nima, to Shahnaz and Ader Rostami, brother to Michelle; November 19, 1994

Silver Spring, Maryland**BORN**

A girl, Sarah Nicole, to Benaifer and John Devine, September 28

Westminister, California**MARRIED**

Shenaz Patel and Neville Shahukar; November 12

Compiled by Roxana A. Driver

TOTALS FOR 1994 AND 1995

	Bombay			India			World		
	A	B	C	A	B	C	A	B	C
BORN									
Boys	37	133	18	7	12	1	12	33	2
Girls	36	115	17	2	7	--	11	31	1
MARRIED									
Parsi	124	294	78	8	16	1	3	12	--
Intercommunal	51	78^	25*	1	4	--	3	5	2
DIED									
CONSIGNED									
Males	130	501	82	32	72	16	4	37*	1
Females	119	495	78	33	99	12	6	30*	5
CREMATED									
Males	3	12	2	--	--	--	--	--	--
Females	3	10	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

A: Total numbers in this issue

B: Running totals for 1994 (February-March 1994 -- February-March 1995 issues)

C: Running totals for 1995

^ Males married out in 1994 -- 44

Females married out in 1994 -- 34

*Males married out in 1995 -- 12

Females married out in 1995 -- 13

* Overseas deaths are listed in the consigned column as *Parsiana* does not have any 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 or abroad.

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Died: Dr Kavas Kaikhoshrou Framji, 86, President Honoraire and former Secretary General of the International Commission on Irrigation and Drainage (ICID) and an acclaimed world intellectual, in Pune on August 15, 1994.

A universally respected wizard on irrigation and drainage, Framji had, within the first five years of his career, repaired the largest breach in Sind's Sukkur Barrage, going on to write an authoritative *Flood Control Manual* for the Indus River embankments in Sind and earning himself an MBE from His Majesty's Government when he was but 35 years old. "His erudition and inspiring personality" have left "an everlasting imprint on the work of the ICID," notes the Commission's newsletter (1994/4) in its frontpage homage, mourning the "mentor and guide...on whom it could always depend." The ICID's central office in Delhi is said to have received condolence messages from national committees, individuals and international organizations.

Framji had the "acumen to foresee the vast potential for development in a newly emerging independent India and accordingly proceeded in a short period of about 30 months to transform the Research Station, which dealt primarily with river and canal hydraulics, into an institution dealing with the new requirements of harbor development mainly among them the estuarine modelling of the Hooghly and the Cochin backwaters, and coastal modelling of the Madras Harbor...A major training program was undertaken which set the Research Station well on the way to serving the entire needs of the country in the development of major and minor ports. Facilities for hydropower structure studies such as (of) Koyna, Hirakud and Bhakra... major facilities for the studies of geophysical, geotechnical and earthquake engineering related to river valley projects were also created," records the obituary published in *Jalshakti* (October 1994), the newsletter of the Central Water and Power Research Station in Pune to which Framji had been appointed director in 1945 — the first Indian to head the organization which was then called the Indian Waterways Experiment Station.

"Clearly, he was a 'marked man,' especially when Mr H. M. Patel, ICS, then defence secretary, selected him for the very difficult task of reorganizing the

Channels of the Mind

Amavaz S. Mama

defence factories. This was a most unusual assignment in those days for one whose special line was irrigation and water management. He did it brilliantly, bringing order into the post-World War II and post-Partition chaos of defence production, as director general of ordnance factories. I was at that time the deputy secretary dealing with defence factories and could see this all



at close quarters," recalls K. T. Satarawala, a retired civil service officer and former Indian Ambassador to Mexico.

After 10 years at the job Framji went on to be chief engineer and joint secretary in the Union Ministry of Irrigation and Power whence, in 1963, he sought voluntary retirement to serve the country as consultant and honorary adviser. During his so-called retirement, Framji "pursued a variety of careers, any one of which could be considered as an outstanding career for an individual," remarks the *Jalshakti* tribute.

He set up the Indian branch of Rendel Palmer and Tritton which later became Consulting Engineering Services India, an

organization (of which Framji remained chairman to the end) that "made its mark on the development of harbors and inland waterways, roads and buildings. Simultaneously he held the post of Secretary General (ICID) in an honorary position, bringing out a number of publications including the *Design Practices of Irrigation Canals in the World*," states *Jalshakti*.

The Indian Society for Hydraulics marked the passing of its patron — since its inception in 1992 — with a tribute in its newsletter *ISH News* (December 1994), noting that Framji's "two volume book on flood control published by ICID contains valuable information on flood control practices in the world."

A champion of the cause for environmental protection, and a staunch supporter of the doctrine that environmental control is complementary to and not in conflict with water resources development anywhere in the world, as notes a press release, Framji was conferred a number of awards. The Alexander Onassis Public Benefit Foundation of Greece chose him, the first Indian, for the Olympia Award and Prize for 1985 — considered as prestigious in its field as the Nobel Prize — for promoting important changes in the concept of water resources planning on our planet. The same year the Marquis Giuseppe Scilune International University presented him with its honorary doctorate of philosophy in engineering. The French Government designated him Chevalier du Merite Agricole — the first Indian to be so honored — and the government of Sind, Pakistan, awarded him a gold medal on the occasion of the golden jubilee of the Sukkur Barrage for distinguished services on the construction and initial operations and regulations of the Barrage and its canals. For his national and international contributions in the field of liquid flow measurements in open channels, the Indian Standards Institution conferred on Framji its K. L. Moudgill Prize in 1979.

The Ahmedabad born (1908), Pune (Vincent School) and London (King's College) educated member of the prestigious Indian Service of Engineers (it ranked on comparable terms with the ICS) had negotiating skills which were honed from the years when, as superintending engineer, he dealt with the Sind-Punjab

continued on page 184

Masina Hospital's forgotten friend



The fire had died out long ago. Alzheimer's disease had reduced the revered surgeon to a bag of bones in a wheel-chair, seemingly unaware of and untouched by the goings-on in the corridors of the B. D. Petit Parsee General Hospital (PGH) which he had once strode with military efficiency, admired by some, feared by others. When Lt Col Dara Bharucha, 89, former medical superintendent of Masina Hospital and a pillar of its support, breathed his last on September 11, 1994 he had been an inmate of the B. D. Petit Nursing Home for well over three years and few knew — or cared to know — about the old man who seemed to have become its permanent fixture.

"You'll be happy to know that the board of trustees at the meeting held on March 11, 1995 have resolved to install a photograph of your late brother, Lt Col Dara Bharucha and name the physiotherapy department after him," Masina Hospital's managing trustee D. B. Bhappu wrote in a letter to Ms Tehmi Bharucha requesting a copy of the late surgeon's photograph.

On his return to India after seven years of training abroad, he had been first appointed to the PGH. Nonetheless, "Masina (Hospital) was his second home," notes Tehmi. Even after the devastation of Alzheimer's which increased after his wife's death in 1982, he would go there with his wardboy though he could no longer work, she adds.

The third son of Avanbai and Rustomji Bharucha, a solicitor of standing, Bharucha was a product of Panchagani's Billimoria School, St Xavier's College and the Grant Medical College whence he emerged with his MBBS and a spate of medals and scholarships. Work in London's St Bartholomew's Hospital and the Middlesex Hospital Medical School earned him his FRCS in 1932. For the next four years he

worked with eminent surgeons and gynecologists in Paris and Vienna, polishing his skills, acquiring the finesse that placed him among the cream of professionals in the community.

The initial period of work at the PGH and the J. J. Hospital [as surgeon and tutor at the Grant Medical College (GMC)] was brief. In 1942 he joined as an officer in the surgical division of the Indian Medical Service (IMS) and was appointed to the military hospitals in Ceylon, Lucknow and Dharavi.

It was after his discharge from the army at the end of World War II that Bharucha joined the Masina Hospital, acquiring a high profile in the community. The Hospital, founded in 1902, had been virtually handed over to the Government by its retiring superintendent trustee Dr (Ms) Mehrbanoo Masina. Responding to the community's hue and cry, Bharucha, the late Dr Murzban Motashaw and Masina Hospital trustee Hormazd Meherji-rana took it upon themselves to rescue the Hospital from the dumps, as notes well-known surgeon and gynecologist Dr (Ms) Nergish Motashaw.

"They organized programs and donations and propped it up again," says Motashaw. "Ms Banoo Irani and other social workers helped them to collect money," recalls Tehmi. To generate income they cosmopolitanized the Hospital while reserving two wards for the community — one each for males and females. The paying patients of the Dock Labour Board, which began to patronize the Hospital, were a substantial source of funds, informs Tehmi.

Bharucha's devotion to his work set him apart from other men. Despite pre-occupations with three hospitals in Bombay he regularly visited Dr Billimoria's Chest

Hospital in Panchagani, notes the obituary in *The Bombay Samachar*. Though he could laugh and joke with the best of them — Motashaw recalls his penchant for narrating funny anecdotes on the basis of his wide and varied reading — "worktime was worktime and if they (nursing or medical staff) hadn't done what he'd told them to do, they'd be reduced to tears. Then he would roll up his sleeves and do what had to be done," Tehmi smiles at the typical scenario.

A lot of his traits were a product of his army discipline. Long hair and nails were taboo. Unpunctuality made him fret and fume. Anaesthetist Dr Hoshung Mobedji, in a letter to *The Samachar* recalls an occasion when he had asked Bharucha for a lift from the J. J. Hospital to the Masina where both of them were honoraries: "While coming out of the compound I requested him to wait in the car while I signed the departure muster roll... At the very mention of this he was very upset and said he did not want to be late for his appointment at the Masina Hospital. I tried to convince him that unless I came and anaesthetised his patient, he would not be able to start his surgery. His reply was a masterpiece: 'I don't care what time you come and start the case. I don't want to go late for my appointment.' Ultimately he condescended to wait in his car and when we reached there he told me, 'Mobedji, because of you I have come five minutes late for my appointment!'" Motashaw reminisces about his forebodings: "'(I must) never book the theater after you, Nergish Motashaw, because you'll come in late and make us all late!'"

"Once in the theater he would concentrate very hard on what he was doing. He detested music in the operation theater and even if some sounds came in from the nearby nurses' quarters, he would have it

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shut off," says Motashaw.

The students of the KEM (King Edward Memorial) medical college had to face Bharucha (from the GMC) as an examiner, among them Nergish Motashaw and Farokh Udwadia who has since become one of Bombay's celebrated physicians. They remember him as totally upright. "You got what you answered. It didn't matter who you were or from where you came," says Motashaw. "An extremely straight and honest individual, even in his professional dealings," corroborates Udwadia.

His army stint had taught him to "accommodate himself to any situation. If the food wasn't good, he'd say 'Just eat it. After all it's converted into carbohydrates, fat and protein...' He brushed and cleaned his own shoes. When my driver drove in raising the engine, it bothered him. He was very particular about everything," Motashaw recalled the many facets of the man.

"To patients he was very good. He took his rounds and whether they were paying patients or non-paying patients, he examined them with the same concentration, the same amount of time," says Motashaw who had worked with him as a junior. He would give his instructions and walk off — with the relatives running after him, she describes the recurring scene. "Regular in his habits, he was able to accomplish much more than others. Much of the work he did was free and poor patients who benefitted had reason to bless him," writes his mentor, the 104-year-old former principal of Billimoria School in Panchagani Dara Edibam in a condolence letter to Bharucha's younger brother, Keki. "After the surgery he would visit his patients daily and do the dressing himself, not leave it for his assistants to do," notes a grateful Irani who recalls his kindness over the years with admiration and gratitude.

Bharucha was married to Dr Tehmina Cooper. They were in medical college together. It was a love marriage though childless and Dr Tehmina continued to practice independently through much of their life together. "After his wife died, he crumbled like a pack of cards, deteriorated very rapidly — so much had he depended upon her," adds Motashaw.

"When our mother was not well, Dara would visit more than once a day to regale her with stories," Tehmi recalls the happier times. Unfortunately for Bharucha, his own illness eventually made him unreachable. There was no one and no way to cheer him.

He is survived by his elder brother Phiroze, Keki and Tehmi. Arnavaz S. Mama

CHANNELS OF THE MIND

continued from page 181

Indus water dispute in the early 1940s, as notes the condolence resolution of the Indian National Academy of Engineering. In the Ministry of Irrigation he dealt with international problems concerning the apportionment of waters between India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. (The Pakistani President Zia-ul-Huq had registered his appreciation of Framji's "objective, impartial and harmonious outlook" at these Indo-Pak conferences with the personal gift of an oriental carpet, a family member informs us.) Thereafter, as technical consultant he served on the Krishna, Godavari and Narmada river water tribunals which ruled on interstate disputes on the sharing of the waters. As member, fellow or office holder Framji was associated with over 60 bodies worldwide, recalls his wife Jeanie.

Framji, whose fields of specialization included water resources planning, development, measurement and management, farm water management and modern irrigation techniques, hydraulics and hydrodynamic research and sedimentation in fluvial and tidal channels, was the chairman of two technical committees of the International Standards Organization and was included in various international editions of the *Who's Who* since 1975. The International Biographical Centre of Cambridge (UK) had named him a World Intellectual of 1993.

Realizing the "extremely valuable work in water management done in Russia and France, (he) set about to learn both Russian and French sufficiently well to be able to add valuable scientific literature in these languages, including an *Encyclopedia of Water Management* in French," notes Lt Gen Adi Sethna (retired), president of the Delhi Parsi Anjuman. Observes Satarawala, "Knowing a little of the pulls and counterpulls in the affairs of nations, I believe firmly that but for Kavsi (as he was known to his friends and admirers) and his very special ways, as well as his talent and prestige in the field, the headquarters of the International Commission for Irrigation and Drainage would never have come to be located in New Delhi. This was a signal honor for our country and one for which we can be sure there would have been intense competition. To be its Secretary General for 25 years was surely a record."

"Self-effacing to a fault, few outside his charmed circle knew about Kavsi. His Onassis Award was hardly given due recognition by the country or the community," writes Sethna. The General

speaks of "family tales of the (Sukkur Barrage) era (that) recall this handsome and dashing young engineer's white Arab stallion and an Electrolux fridge run on kerosine as part of his camp baggage, little realizing the importance of both in what was then a desert requiring transportation as well as a modicum of comfort."

Satarawala recalls his first meeting with Framji in the bungalow of N. N. Wanchoo, a civil servant who rose to be governor of Madhya Pradesh and who thought the world of the engineering prodigy. It was in 1952 when Framji was well into his assignment as director general of ordnance: "We talked that evening not about the making of battle tanks, or of guns or high explosives or uniforms for the army but of the art of Toulouse Lautrec! This was typical of Kavsi. His interests were very wide indeed (a relative describes him as an enthusiastic gardener) and included a great love for western classical music which was a common bond between us. From his wide ranging tours to many countries of the world, he would bring back records of music: first the new LPs, then tapes and still later, CDs, comparing all these with the art of the few visiting pianists and violinists who came to Delhi for concerts which my wife used to organize for the Delhi Music Society. At these concerts, Kavsi and his wife were always in the audience..."

"Right up to the last, there was international recognition. I kept hoping that we would see his name in the national awards (but) it was not to be... Perhaps a special commemorative postage stamp will be brought out for him who did so much in his field just as one was brought out for Dr D. N. Wadia, FRS, the great geologist or, recently, for Mr J. R. D. Tata."

A truly religious man in a non-ritualistic sense, Framji loved his work and viewed it as a mission, inform family members. He was wont to say that he would never retire and, indeed, he worked effectively to the end. On the last day of his life he was said to have worked a long day of around 12 hours.

"Whatever happens," notes Satarawala nostalgically, "the nation and the world are hardly likely to forget Framji. In the next 30 years with the world population going up by billions, the need for water — for drinking, for cooking, for growing food and for irrigation as well as for industries and waste disposal — is going to go up all the time. The world will then need many more Framjis, and even more urgently!"

Framji is survived by his wife Jeanie, his sons Kaikhushru and Jawahar.

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