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JUNE 1995 Rs 18



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# Parsiana

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 Unsigned letters or those without an address will not be published.

## Panchgani Agiary Scheme

On May 14, 1995 the Seth Nanabhoy Bezoni Choksi Dar-e-Meher celebrated its 64th anniversary. To this day it remains one of the neatest and most picturesque places of worship of the Zoroastrians — visited by almost 5,000 Zoroastrians each year from all over the world. It is perhaps the highest located agiary, Panchgani being about 4,300 feet above sea level.

Recently the trustees of the Panchgani Parsi Aderian Fund (which looks after the welfare of the Dar-e-Meher) and the Panchgani Parsi Anjuman Fund (which looks after the aramgah and the Shirinbai Bhedwar Community Hall) have formulated a scheme to create a corpus as both the funds are so very low that maintenance is becoming almost impossible.

This scheme invites prospective donors to make a one time donation of Rs 5,000 and earmark any day of the year along with it. (A donor may give more than one such

gift if he so wishes.) On the selected day, the cost of the kathi, the sandalwood, loban and the entire upkeep of the Dar-e-Meher will be met from the interest earned from the donor's contribution, and a prayer of blessing will be recited as desired by the donor.

We hope we shall have many such donations. Our target is 365, to represent the 365 days of the year.

The Parsi community in Panchgani has rapidly dwindled over the past few years. The quiet but generous response of old students of Billimoria High School has helped considerably and we now appeal to the gracious and generous Zoroastrian community, through the readership of *Parsi-ana*, to help.

Cheques/drafts may be drawn in favor of the Panchgani Parsi Aderian Fund and addressed to The Trustees, Seth N. B. Choksi Fire Temple, Panchgani 412805, Maharashtra, India.

PESI VIRJI  
Panchgani

## Parsi Colony near Vasai

Criticism on the subject of promoting a housing colony for Parsis near Vasai is misconceived and contrary to facts.

To describe Vasai as a remote area is erroneous. Village Valiv is not an adivasi village. It is a well planned, semi-urbanized village having residential and indus-

sub-region shall also be an integral part of the metropolis and the decision of the Parsi trusts to establish a colony at Valiv shall be hailed with respect and gratitude by the generations to come.

There are already about 125 Parsi families residing in Vasai, Nalasopara and Virar who have formed their punchayet under the leadership of Homi Patel and a dadgah shall be shortly consecrated in Valiv. The plans of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP) and the Postwalla and Gandhi Charities will give shelter to many needy Parsis who are unable to marry on account of non-availability of housing in Bombay within their means.

Let us recollect the splendid vision of our forefathers during the genesis and growth of Bombay when it was just a group of seven islands peopled by fisherfolk. They were prompt in visualizing the times to come and migrated to Bombay from Gujarat. Having an enterprising nature and the will to carve out a place of respect and dignity in society, they prospered. The lands they owned still sustain us.

It is also interesting to recall that the same type of hue and cry was raised during the promotion of Parsi colonies in the suburbs at the time when Bandra and Andheri were construed as faraway places by the Press.

Absolute rejuvenation is needed in facing the challenge of the current times. The concentration of Parsi owned property is now exhausted, much of it being under legal encumbrance due to neglect or carelessness. We lack in resources and muscle power to remove the encroachments and we are unable to regain the clear title even through due process of law.

The decision to buy lands in Valiv by the BPP is indeed commendable and timely. The Postwalla and Gandhi Charities have also purchased about

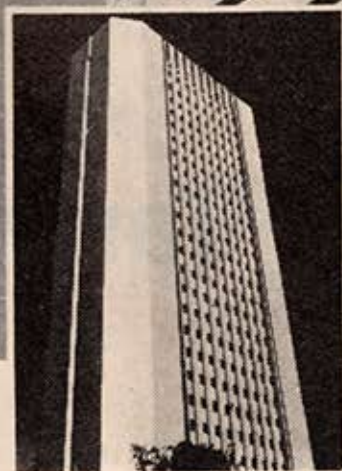
five acres of land adjoining the Bombay Parsi Punchayet's land. The Vasai-Virar subregion has an assured urban growth potential. It is exhilarating to learn that Parsi trusts have the vision to look into the future and have established their right to real estate on the other side of the creek and to catch up with the others in the race to make our presence felt in the region.



The 64-year-old Panchgani Agiary

trial developments. The cost factor, abundance of water, soil conditions, ecology and lesser population ratio adds to the cause of a decent living. Village Valiv is within the limits of the Bombay Metropolitan Region and its growth is monitored by CIDCO. Very shortly the Vasai-Virar

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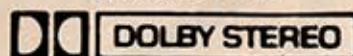
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Any derogatory remarks pertaining to the credentials of the area could have repercussions on the developing trend of the vicinity. The tribals enjoy special privileges and there are various enactments to improve and protect their status. Any remarks regarding tribals, however innocently referred, may flash an unpleasant controversy.

The establishment of a Parsi colony at Valiv is a revolutionary move and should be welcomed by all in the interest of the community.  
B. P. SACHINWALLA

## The irony of purity

The Parsi community is fast dwindling in number. At this rate, one wonders how long it will continue to exist.

One of the reasons being that an average Parsi couple these days has either two or one offspring, and some have none. Even two offspring can only be considered as replacements for their parents. Less than that and the number will naturally decrease.

The other reason for the community decreasing in number is the man-made law of not accepting the offspring of a Parsi mother, who has had an inter-community marriage. The children of a Parsi male who has contracted such an intercommunity marriage, are however Parsis. Why?

Since religion usually means more to a girl than to a man, most of the girls do not forsake their religion even after their inter-caste marriage.

There is no need to point out that a baby from the day of conception till the time of his/her birth, thrives on the mother's blood. Even after birth, the child is constantly under the mother's care and guidance for a couple of years. Naturally, the mother's influence will have a great effect on the child's mind and behavior.

The often used Gujarati phrase "father's blood" hardly makes any logical sense. How much time can and does a father spare for his child during this formative stage? There are so many instances where a child sincerely wishes to follow his/her mother's religion and be accepted by the community.

Religion is one thing; the man-made rites, rules and customs are entirely a different matter. The rites and customs are not only handed down from one generation to another, but additions are also made by every following generation.

Where is it mentioned in the Zoroastrian religion not to accept children who have a Parsi mother and a non-Parsi father? Or for that matter, that even their mother

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cannot be considered a Parsi after such a marriage?

What happens in case of adoption? How many Parsi babies are available these days for couples who wish to adopt a child? They have no option but to adopt a baby whose neither parent is a Parsi. Once again, the law which gives a child the father's surname, entitles the child to become a Parsi. Navjote too takes place in due course. One does not agree or disagree over this issue.

But without logic, can a child who has a Parsi mother's blood in his/her body, be denied his/her navjote? How can one justify this man-made rule?

There are plenty of cases where a girl with one or the other parent as a Parsi gets her navjote done just before marriage to please her Parsi in-laws. As should be expected, the sudreh-kusti is never put on once removed from her body. Yet, everyone is not only satisfied, but happily take her as a full-fledged Parsi.

Parsi priests do not miss their opportunity by performing the navjote of a child of mixed parentage, charging enormous amounts. In their opinion, they are not only doing a favor to the mother, but also to the community. No one, but no one, can ever stop all this.

When a Parsi requires either blood transfusion or an organ transplant, do they ensure that it comes from a Parsi? Who can wait to ensure this absurd notion of purity at such a critical stage?

Parsis are the most westernized community amongst all Indian communities. A great number of old fashioned ways and ideas have been discarded. It is now up to the Parsi Punchayet to show very serious concern over this whole issue. Surely, they themselves realize the stupidity of this man-made law which has continued over the century. It is up to them to once and for all change this unwritten law. Unless something is done, the community cannot survive for long.

Ms KHORSHED A. BASU

Jamshedpur

## Zoroastrian Charity — 2001

In modern times, charity also needs to be run on sound business principles. There is a crying need for a greater interface between charity and business on the one hand and among charity organizations themselves.

The Social Development Summit held at Copenhagen recently (attended by over 100 countries' representatives including India) has stressed the role of non-government organizations (non-profit charity or-

ganizations) in solving the problems of poverty, illiteracy, urban degradation, unemployment, exploitation of the female child, child labor, etc. The donor countries have voiced their doubts about the ability of government organizations alone succeeding in these social amelioration measures without the help of voluntary agencies.

Charity, like business, has been greatly hampered in our country by archaic laws and the difficulty of augmenting resources for ploughing into desired socioeconomic goals. The landed estates of many charity organizations have become the target of land encroachers and other unsocial elements, for want of a clear and speedy judicial remedy.

Charity trusts which are small, and therefore too poor to afford adequately qualified staff, must form a federation or amalgamate so as to improve not only their performance but their very chance of survival.

In this context we announce an essay competition in English, open to all, on the subject "Zoroastrian charity — 2001 AD." Non-Zoroastrians too are welcome. It is our earnest desire to bring the prize winners and the panelists together at a day-long seminar where the present performance of our charities and the future course of action would be discussed in all their ramifications. Before the turn of the century, we hope we shall be able to have a proper plan in place. It is up to us all to make this effort bear the fruits of success.

•The essay may be legibly handwritten or typed on one side of foolscap size paper. Maximum length should preferably be 10 sheets of foolscap.

•The essay must indicate the name/address of the contributor (a pen name may be additionally indicated if the contributor so desires).

•The essay will be judged on the basis of clarity, objectivity and originality.

•There will be three prizes of Rs 1,500, Rs

1,000 and Rs 500 respectively. The panel of judges will be selected by *Jam-e-Jamshed* and their decision as to the prize-winning essays will be final.

The essay will not be returnable.

All entries must reach *Jam-e-Jamshed* Pvt Ltd, Box No 638, 7, Kumpta St, Fort, Bombay 400038, not later than September 30, 1995.

E. J. CHINYO

## Better use of assets

The greatest need for our community at the moment is housing, education and recreational facilities for the weaker sections of the community.

The Punchayet trustees can work in close cooperation with the trustees of the Petit Sanatorium at Cumballa Hill. The current building is in a very dilapidated condition. The greatest need in that area is for parking space. The trustees can build an underground parking lot on that plot where during the day parking can be charged on an hourly basis, and at night, parking can be charged on a monthly basis for residents of that area who are finding it difficult to park their cars.

The present structure of the Petit Sanatorium should be torn down even though it is a very beautiful building but at the moment is in great disrepair. In its place a building can be built to house the underground parking as suggested above. The ground floor of the building may be sold to restaurants and shops at current market rates; the first and second floors could be given for offices to professionals and companies; depending upon the FSI available, and the number of storeys that can be built, sufficient flats should be made available to Parsi families who can pay for them, and the remaining flats could be given free to Parsis. The revenue from the ground, first and second floors should be used for the upkeep of the premises. I am sure in this way the capacity of the Sanatorium can be increased substantially to house deserving



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Parsis. Even if the Sanatorium needs to be maintained, the same space can be utilized for the Sanatorium and the remaining space could be utilized for housing.

I would suggest the same proposal for the Panday Sanatorium opposite Hotel President on Cuffe Parade. The building is in shambles. The same plan can be followed here with underground parking, shops, restaurants and offices; the remaining FSI could be used for housing for deserving Parsi families.

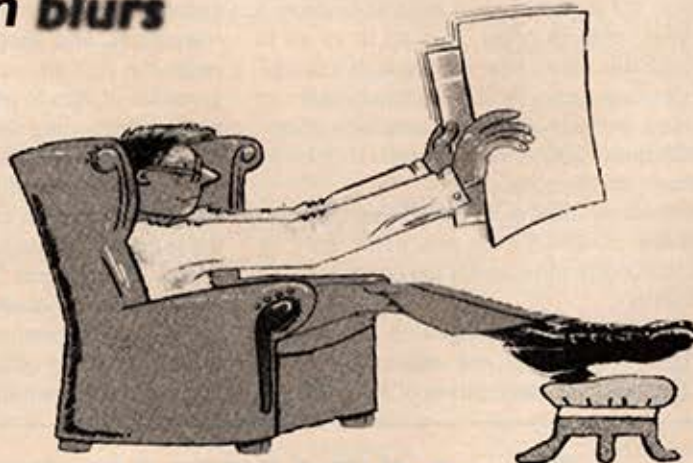
Similarly, there are many agiaries which are in dire need of kathi funds and where the mobeds complain of very few worshippers and find it difficult to maintain the fire and earn a living. The fire from such agiaries can be transferred to other agiaries or atash behrams and the space utilized as suggested above.

There is vacant Doongerwadi land beside the road connecting it to Godrej Baug. Encroachments have begun there. I feel the trustees should take action now to prevent these encroachments from becoming permanent. I understand a 'mali' is already living there. This prime land could be utilized for the benefit of the community for housing schemes, etc.

If the above suggestions are accepted, a certain percentage of the revenues earned could be used to subsidize the studies of deserving Parsi students.

Furthermore, there is plenty of area available at Doongerwadi which is not utilized, especially in front of the building Spenta. Here a club house for Parsi youth could be built, as youngsters from middle and low income Parsi families have really no facilities to enjoy any kind of sports like swimming, tennis, badminton. When they attend college, they come into contact with youngsters from all walks of life. The affluent are able to indulge in sports and games at private clubs, attend disco-

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theques in the evenings where entrance fees and annual membership fees are exorbitantly out of reach for middle-class Parsi families. The income generated from the above suggestions could be utilized to provide recreational facilities on the lands on Doongerwadi where Parsi youth could enjoy sports facilities and perhaps a discotheque and other games.

VISPY MINOO ENGINEER

## The Gathas translated

I am happy to inform you that I have literally translated the divine *Gathas* of Zarathushtra and also explained the metaphysical implications of each verse. The poetic eloquence of our beloved Prophet was matched only by his keen intellectual perception. Zarathushtra truly emerges as a colossus among poets as well as among philosophers.

I graduated with philosophy honors from Bombay University, and have studied the basic principles of the Avesta language at Sir Jamsetjee Jeebhoy Madressa — Mulla

Feroz Madressa under the able tutelage of Dasturji (Dr) Hormuzdyar K. Mirza. Dr Irach Taraporewala's comprehensive work on the subject was of great help to me in my work.

I had submitted an essay on "Some metaphysical implications of the Divine Revelation of Zarathushtra" to Dr Mirza, and am happy to write that the learned dastur found it "a scholarly work and worthy of publication."

I would like to know if anyone would be willing to have my work printed at cost. I have absolutely no desire to make any profit and would like my work to be made available at an affordable price.

Ms ROSHAN S. DESAI

## The Ajmalgadh settlement

Among the forsaken hills of Ajmalgadh lies the lost treasure of early Parsi civilization in India.

The Pune based archeologist Ms Roxana Irani has unearthed traces of an early Parsi sanctuary viz. open fire altar, water tanks, well like structures and other Zoroastrian artifacts. She undertook this unique excavation without any assistance from the Archaeological Survey of India which was most surprising.

With this discovery it will be possible to establish the dates of some ancient Parsi

settlements. Little research has been done on the early history of the Zoroastrian community in India which is a subject of controversy. According to scholars of the community like Dastur (Dr) Hormuzdyar Mirza, Ervad (Dr) Rooyinton Peer, etc there was no proper record of early events in Zoroastrian history on Indian soil. The *Kisseh-i-Sanjan*, written around 1599 by a priest Boman Sanjana in Persian verses, was seen as a literary work and somewhat flawed.

All the artifacts, human bones and ashes which Ms Irani has discovered have been sent for carbon dating process to ascertain the exact date of Parsi settlements in Aj-



A mosaic in Pompeii depicted Darius III losing the battle to Alexander

Photo: A.V.H. Jackson's *Persia Past and Present*

malgadh. She is awaiting the results. This excavation was conducted for two months from a small grant she had secured from the World Zoroastrian Organisation, Bombay, the Surat Parsi Panchayat, the Tatas and the Godrejs. After ascertaining the exact date she will go to study the mountain top settlements in Kohistan which is in Iran.

There was a recent lecture cum slide presentation by Roxana at the K. R. Cama Oriental Institute. I hope that philanthropists from our community will come forward to help her further in her research work. This unique discovery is not complete. She hopes to complete it within a period of two years but needs financial help.

We hope that she will be suitably rewarded by the Zoroastrian community after this accomplishment.

D. D. NATERWALLA

## Only the spirit endures

Persepolis was essentially the spiritual capital of Persia. It was not of any consequence as a political or economic center nor did it have any strategic importance.

After building it Darius himself spent only a small part of the year there. He

seldom visited it, except on the memorable occasion of the New Year — Navroze.

Each spring the king presided over a great celebration to mark the new year. Navroze was a religious celebration held under the auspices of Ahura Mazda, the supreme God of the empire whose winged symbol was everywhere to be seen.

On that occasion though no foreigners were invited it was the country's political event to which the King's subjects were invited. Everything in Persepolis was designed to celebrate Navroze and to establish the power of the empire over its 23 nations.

The ceremony ended with a magnificent banquet at which the guests were offered all kinds of meat and presented with the silver dishes from which they had eaten.

For two centuries Persepolis enjoyed the glory of the hour, till in 330 BC Alexander the Great invaded the magnificent city which fell without a struggle and Alexander ruthlessly looted and destroyed it. He found an immense treasure trove and at least 10,000 pairs of mules and 5,000 camels were needed to carry it away.

Why did Alexander raze the beautiful city when he had spared Babylon earlier and at Suza, Alexander had sat on Darius's throne without a drop of blood being shed?

It was because of a hard fought battle at the pass of the Persian Gate which was defended by 40,000 men. As Alexander's troops marched through the plain they saw struggling towards them 800 old Greek prisoners, maimed and mutilated. Feelings ran high among the Greek army and later led to the carnage at Persepolis.

At first Alexander spared the magnificent buildings and palaces on the appeal of his generals, but later set them on fire also, though on the very next day, regretting himself being carried away by passion, he had the fire extinguished but too late.

Alexander held a magnificent banquet on the very spot where the great kings of Persia had entertained their guests on the vast stone terraces where had stood the palaces and gardens earlier.

Thus Persepolis perished in a splendor of regret never to revive its glory except, abortively, during the Shah's regime which also contributed to his downfall.

HOMI J. H. TALEYARKHAN

Edited by Arnavaz S. Mama



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# Events and Personalities

## Stay happily ever after

In its efforts to promote self-employment among Zoroastrians in India the World Zoroastrian Organisation (WZO) has made available financial support totalling Rs 44,23,060 on an "interest free" basis to 41 enterprising individuals, informs a press release issued by Dinshaw K. Tamboly, chairman of The WZO Trust Funds.

Among the ventures that the WZO will be supporting the maximum beneficiaries, 29, are in the field of transport and communications, three in the computer line, three in the food industry, two in manufacturing and one each in video shooting, sound recording, electrical workshop and beauty parlor.

The funds for this project were gifted to the WZO "by one single Zoroastrian in the memory of Bai Maneckbai and Seth Pirojshaw Bomanjee Jeejeebhoy," writes Tamboly. "It is the fond and earnest expectation of the WZO that all the beneficiaries will make the best possible use of this golden opportunity... will prosper and be very particular and prompt in adhering to the repayment schedules that they have mutually finalized with the WZO in order that the funds could be rolled over..." he continues.

Another project to be launched by the WZO is a retirement home in Navsari, quite different from an infirmary. It is essentially meant to service senior citizens who of their own volition choose to "spend the evening of their lives in well planned and happy surroundings with their own peers...leaving their congested accommodation for their kith to live and proliferate," notes Tamboly.

A commitment to finance the project cost in the region of Rs 1.25-1.50 crores

has been received, and the land for the site has also been selected. "Within two years of the property being in our hands the project should be completed," hopes Tamboly. In the designing of this center, they have been promised honorary assistance from a young Zoroastrian architect who has experience in constructing such a home for the Jews abroad.

Envisaged as a ground plus four-storey building, the ground floor will contain the dining room, kitchen and recreation areas while the storeys above will be used to house the residents, about 15 per floor, each of whom will be provided self-contained rooms. One-third of the inmates can pay the full cost, one-third can be subsidized, and one-third will be free, expects Tamboly. It is essentially the inmates themselves who would be involved in the day-to-day supervision and management of this center where they will be free to lead their own independent lives, specifies Tamboly.

Depending on the success of this pilot project in Navsari, the WZO may consider other centers in Bombay and the rest of India.

In the meanwhile The WZO Trust will be involved in supporting two institutions: the Lady Hirabai Cowasji Jehangir Health Unit in Bombay and the D. N. Mehta Hospital in Navsari. One lakh rupees for the Health Unit and two lakhs for the Mehta Hospital had been pledged by Babubhai Shah who, inspired by his Zoroastrian wife, the late Coomi, has frequently extended munificent financial support for various Zoroastrian causes. "Although undergoing treatment on his sick bed, Babubhai has not put any of the Zoroastrian causes on the back burner...

(and) has sent... the cheques," acknowledges a grateful Tamboly describing him as a "gentleman philanthropist...(of) a very small but special breed."

## Debarred in Udvada

If a navjote is performed but the initiate refused entry into fire-temples, will it in future deter the performance of navjotes of children of intercommunity marriages?

To castigate "reformists and some thoughtless coreligionists, dasturs and mobeds" involved in organizing the navjote rites of children, one of whose parents is a non-Zoroastrian, the Shri Samast Anjuman Committee of Udvada passed a resolution at a meeting on March 19, 1995 presided over by Dastur (Dr) Hormazdyar Mirza. As per the English translation of the resolution carried in the February-March 1995 issue of *Deen Parast*, "Taking into consideration this grave matter and in order that the status of our Anjuman's Pak Iranshah Atash Behram and that there is no deficiency in any *tariqat* (injunction), and keeping in view the religious matters, such individuals who are born out of union with non-Zoroastrians, should be prevented from entering an atash behram or an agiary. Even mobed saheb and behdin should be given due authority in this regard..."

Beseeching other anjumans and punchayets to follow suit, the *Deen Parast* write-up enjoins, "Will the Udvada Samast Anjuman now please implement its resolution?"

## Figurative picture

Almost one-fifth of the Zoroastrian population in Ahmedabad and Nagpur falls in the under-20 age-group. But while Ahmedabad's total Zoroastrian popula-

tion is 2005, as reported in the *Fed Newsletter* of February 1995, Nagpur's strength is 688, according to the *Fed Newsletter* of May 1995.

While in Ahmedabad there were 39 percent in the 20-49 age-group and 24 percent in the 60+ category, in Nagpur there were 34 percent in the 21-45 group and 27 percent aged over 60.

In both the cities the males outnumbered the females, in Nagpur by 30, and in Ahmedabad by 11. In Nagpur there were 20 more males in the 0-20 age-group and 11 more males in the 31-45 age-group. In Ahmedabad there were 37 more males in the 20-39 category and 15 more in the 6-12 group. Females in Ahmedabad outnumbered the males by 33 in the 50-69 age-group.

Nagpur's demographic picture was published in the Anjuman report for the year ended March 31, 1994. They showed an increase in their numbers by three as versus their 1991 count of 685. Ahmedabad's survey was conducted by Ms Niloufer Commensariat.

## Collector's largesse

"I didn't want my lifetime's collection to go into private hands and get commercialized," said veteran art collector Karl Khandalavala who gifted his priceless treasures to the Prince of Wales Museum (POWM) in Bombay. Khandalavala's reasoning for parting with his valuable paintings and sculptures, estimated at several crores, was quoted in the *Indian Express* of May 2, 1995: "So that every art lover of the present and future generations can get enchanted with the exquisite Indian art." His collection was to be on display at the Museum when it reopened in May 1995.

Some 700 paintings, 100 miniatures, stone sculptures and metal images, plus nearly 4,000 books of art for the Museum's library constituted Khandalavala's donation, mentions the article. A part of his collection though continues to adorn his home in Pune. "I have not touched anything that makes my home. I'm quite obsessed with this painting of Nana Phadnavis done by a Britisher... I'm also equally passionate about these sketches of horses

which you see on the wall and I cannot live without any of these," he told Ms Vinita Deshmukh.

A former advocate-general, it was mainly during court vacations that Khandalavala was

able to pursue his hobby. While the nonagenarian does not add to his collection any more he notes, "I'm glad I have contributed my bit in preserving the Indian heritage."

## Welcome Navroze cards

"A Navroze toast to... health, wealth, happiness, friendship, joy," is raised by a dugli, pugree clad beaming Parsi gentleman. "Celebrating Navroze means..." or "Pestonji's tips for a happy Navroze..." are offered by Reliable Reproductions, a company that has for the first time launched a series of vibrant humorous Parsi New Year greeting cards, each priced at Rs 10.

"Ours is a community with a sense of humor," says Ms Gulshan Eric Lawyer who as the company's visualizer designed the cards depicting "Parsi culture and the lighter side of the community." The usual greeting cards for the occasion have floral themes or religious motifs so Lawyer decided that she would instead capture the "fun and frolic of Navroze." What she particularly bore in mind was the grievances of her friends who said they didn't know what to do with cards which bore some religious emblem because then discarding them became a problem.

Happy with the feedback she has received from a cross-section of the community who have seen her creativity, efforts are now on to market these cards in Bombay, Gujarat, Delhi and Bangalore which have a good base of Zoroastrians. Perhaps next year they may try Toronto too, she adds.

Before working for Reliable Reproduc-



tions Lawyer, based in Pune, was with Hallmark Cards for a year which brought her "tremendous exposure," she acknowledges. A graduate in arts from Elphinstone College, Lawyer was for a while doing

freelance writing for *Mid-Day* and *Femina* and took up subeditorship of *Health and Care* magazine. She subsequently did her BEd in Pune. But ultimately she found her niche in art which she excelled in although she has had no formal training. For success "you need a vivid sense of imagination," believes 31-year-old Lawyer who remembers as a school girl at the Convent of Jesus and Mary, drawing a new cartoon on the blackboard every morning so that the classmates and teachers could have a chuckle. Admitting that she had dived into the creative sea before she could learn to swim, Lawyer's main thrust has been to bring humor in others' lives like the new card series which she hopes will bring "a smile to your face."

## Scout service

Among the scout troops that have reached milestones are Sethna's Scouting Society which completed 80 years of activity in 1994 and the 51st West Bombay Scout Group that celebrated its 70th anniversary in 1995. The former was started by Rustomji





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Edulji Sethna who is believed to have introduced the scout movement in India while the credit for establishing the latter group goes to Piloo Mistry.

In March last, members of Sethna's Scouting Society went on a hike to Bahrot Caves where their own rover priests performed a jashan, notes a press release.

At the iridium jubilee celebration of Sethna's Scouting Society too last August, a jashan was performed by the Group's



*Late Rustomji Sethna (left) and Master*

scouts and rovers, followed by felicitation for old scouts, an entertainment program and contributory dinner. The release of a souvenir marked this occasion. Messages from scouts and other dignitaries, the history and achievements of this group (the only one in Maharashtra to have run for eight continuous decades) and its members have been recorded in this souvenir.

Sethna's Scouting Society, presently under the control of Group Leader K. F. Tata, had originated as the Parsee Scouting Society in 1914 when Sethna, one of the office bearers of the Parsee Division of the St John Ambulance Brigade, started to teach the rudiments of scouting from the book *Scouting for Boys* by Sir Baden Powell which he found very fascinating. The Troop's badge depicts a rising sun and a bond of union. It was made cosmopolitan in 1950 and in 1954, after Sethna's demise, it was renamed Sethna's Scouting Society and the Group was referred to as Sethna's 18th West Bombay. The sea scout section was added to the group which even admits handicapped boys to their league.

One of the foremost scout groups in Greater Bombay is the 51st West Bombay Scout Group which felicitated its group leader Jehangir Shapoor Master in April last for his "60 years of selfless and glorious service to scouting." Assistant district commissioner for open groups of the West Bombay Bharat Scouts and Guides District Association, he has served as badge examiner and organized innumerable scout camps, notes the pamphlet issued on the occasion of his felicitation. The certificate

*continued on page 48*

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## Meeting the Queen

"We in the Commonwealth can teach the rest of the world something about tolerance because it is at the heart of the unique association to which we belong. Although our countries are spread all over the world and face many different problems, we know a great deal about each other and it is therefore easier for us to understand each other's point of view even when we disagree. That understanding is essential to a tolerant society."

The message of Queen Elizabeth II, head of the Commonwealth, was read out by its secretary-general Emeka Anayaoku to the participants at the Commonwealth Day celebration at Westminster Abbey on March 13, 1995.

In attendance were representatives of 51 member nations and, "because the Commonwealth is a community of nations in which other great and historic faiths have an honored place," the representatives of a multiplicity of faiths. Zoroastrians were represented by Rusi Dalal, president of the Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe (ZTFE).

Before the ceremonies commenced, the dignitaries and members of various faiths were presented to the Queen and Prince Philip; then led through the aisles of the Abbey in procession. After an introduction by the Dean of Westminster, passages from various religious texts were read out,

each followed by appropriate affirmations recited by the entire congregation. The theme of the Commonwealth Day was in keeping with the United Nations General Assembly proclamation of 1995 as the Year for Tolerance: the sort of tolerance that enhances the quality of life of the individual and brings benefit to the family, the community, the nation and the world, as defined by the Queen.

At the end of the Observance, the royal couple paused to exchange greetings with the dignitaries and representatives of various faiths.

"It is only the third year running that we Zoroastrians have been invited to be represented at the Commonwealth Day Observance in spite of the long existence not only of the Commonwealth but also of our association," notes the ZTFE newsletter of April 1995. There is also growing participation of the ZTFE in the social and cultural life of other similar institutions. "Never before have we felt so successfully involved in national life, at the same time propagating an understanding of our Zoroastrian existence," notes the newsletter.

July 16, 1995 marked the centenary of the election of Sir Muncherjee Bhownagree to the House of Commons from the Bethnal Green constituency. The second Zoroastrian Indian to enter the mother of parlia-

ments, barrister Bhownagree was a conservative who campaigned vigorously for justice for Indians in South Africa.

The ZTFE planned to commemorate the occasion with a lecture at Nehru Centre and dinner at the Houses of Parliament. A professionally prepared brochure on Bhownagree's life and work is also on the anvil with a coordinating committee which includes Prof John Hinnells of London University's School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) and researcher Omar Ralph.

Bhownagree had succeeded Dadabhai Naoroji to the presidency of the London association -- then known as the Incorporated Parsee Association of Europe -- in 1906 and continued to lead it until his death in 1933, informs the ZTFE newsletter.

Ms Mondanna Irani who stood first at the London University's third year clinical



(From left) Farokh, Kety, Bomi and Eruch Daruwalla: social service commitment. Left: Queen Elizabeth pauses to greet Dalal

skills examination has bagged the coveted Bio-Science Clinical Prize bestowed by Prof J. Hermon-Taylor, a director of Bio-Science International Incorporated, informs the ZTFE newsletter. Irani received her BSc in medicine this year and is now progressing with medical studies leading to the MBBS.

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Products, Zar Amrolia holds an Oxford doctorate in nuclear physics and regularly commutes to world financial centers, informs the ZTFE newsletter.

Endowed with charisma, presentation skills and a pleasant temperament, Amrolia is nonetheless known to be a demanding professional and a perfectionist. Amrolia's in-depth understanding of products, innovative ideas and penchant for providing customer satisfaction is acknowledged even by his rivals, according to the newsletter.



Buff colored greeting cards, currently in two designs, have been introduced by the ZTFE. Designed by Ms Gool Udwadia (née Jambuserwala) and meant to suit any occasion, the less than 10 gm cards (6"x4") cost a nominal 25 pence each and are readily available.

The Lions Club Melvin Jones Award for dedicated humanitarian service rendered to the community at large was simultaneously presented to Eruch Daruwalla and his son Bomi. The occasion of the presentation was the 21st charter anniversary dinner of the Lions Club of Hounslow earlier this year. E. Daruwalla has been involved with the British Legion's Poppy Appeal for the past 26 years. He and Bomi have both been active scout leaders for the past 15 years. Bomi was the president of the Lions Club of Hounslow in 1989-90, notes the ZTFE newsletter.

## Social worker Batliwalla

All her 76 years Dr Bapai Batliwalla of London, Ontario has been learning and growing. She took a course in creative



writing at York University when she was 59 and became a doctoral student in psychoanalysis and sociology at the age of 63, notes Joy Ibsen, reporting an interview with the lady in *Today's Seniors* (August 1994).

A psychiatric social worker, therapist and consultant, Batliwalla was awarded the prestigious Day-Garrett Award by Massachusetts's Smith College School for Social Work, the institution where she acquired her masters degree 44 years ago.

"Throughout your life you have been an educator, an innovator, a mentor, and most importantly, an unrelenting advocate for the oppressed, especially non-white persons and those physically challenged. Your career has embodied the passionate spirit of the social work pioneers you hold so dear to your heart...Through the presentation of the Day-Garrett Award we express our appreciation for the way you have represented the School over the years," notes the citation from the College president Ms Mary Maples Dunn.

The Award, established in 1978, honors "distinguished individuals who have personified in their lives and service to the community, the high purpose of professional service," says a letter from the College to Batliwalla.

The only child of a professional Parsi family in Bombay, who was encouraged to pursue an independent academic career, Batliwalla grew up with the usual exposure to India's many communities. "For this reason she is puzzled by the current preoccupation with multiculturalism in Canada," writes Ibsen. "I don't know what to make of it. People are people. To me multiculturalism means respecting a group or individual's dignity and differences within the context of basic humanity. It's wrong to say of a person, 'if you aren't like me, you're no good.' We tend to generalize about (people) from the color of their skin and their accent," Batliwalla told Ibsen.

Nor is she enthusiastic "about people referring to themselves as hyphenated Canadians. Those choosing to come to

Canada must learn to live in this country," Ibsen quotes the citizen of the world. The citation refers to Batliwalla as "the first psychiatric social worker in Bombay," and to her work in four countries. In the US Batliwalla helped migrant Puerto Rican families settle in New York; in England she similarly helped orient and settle Indian immigrants; in India while working as social work supervisor Batliwalla began a nursery school which provided child, parent and family therapy and helped establish the Confederation of Indian Social Workers. Thanks to her Bombay experience she was called upon as a consultant to the newly established Calgary School of Social Work in Alberta and has been affiliated with social work faculties in the Universities of Manitoba, Western Ontario and Case Western Reserve.

Pursuing her doctorate after retirement, Batliwalla became involved with issues such as home health care and the development of ethical professional standards. Her latest endeavor is a collection of essays based on 40 years of work, research and case material which, Ibsen mentioned, was soon to be published.

The lifelong career woman who lives alone in her apartment is said to have lost her vision five years ago. The handicap has slowed Batliwalla, not stopped her, informs Ibsen. Carrying on with help from homemakers and food delivery services Batliwalla is "still active in a number of organizations including the Westminster Institute of Bioethics, becoming a Fellow of the Institute in 1992."

## Impacting female attitudes

The Mary Lyon Award for action for gender equity in schools was presented by the American Association of University Women (AAUW) of Massachusetts to Dr Roda Amaria on May 6, 1995. She was nominated for the award by Marjorie Hensley and Margery Bessom, co-presidents of the North Shore branch of the AAUW.

Amaria's candidature had been sponsored by Dr Marion Kilson, Dean of the Salem State College (SSC) where Amaria has been associate professor in the education faculty for the past decade. Kilson notes that Amaria "has had a significant impact on the teaching of elementary science and technology and thus on educational equity for school girls" in the North Shore area.

Hensley and Bessom in a combined letter to Ms Barbara Diamond who holds the Initiative for Educational Equity Chair in Worcester, Massachusetts, proposed

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Amaria for the award: "The nomination was made and voted at the January 1995 meeting of the Branch...Roda, long a member of our Branch, has demonstrated her response to the Initiative for Educational Equity, her dedication and career focus, and the unusual way in which she is carrying out her goals."

An alumnus of the Universities of Bombay and Birmingham, Amaria has continued to study science, maths and technology in the US, thereby serving as a role model to her graduate and undergraduate students, mentions the letter.

Apart from her work at Salem State College, she serves on the Elementary Science Collaborative and as consultant to schools, colleges and museums in Massachusetts. As an example of her contribution the ladies cite how she is working in partnership with MIT (Massachusetts Institute of Technology) "offering leadership with a team approach for learning and teaching" to high school teachers in the area. In addition, since the past five years she has been coordinating the Four College Conference that enables 500 to 700 teachers to devote a Saturday for workshops, presentations and exhibits of educational material. She is the coordinator for the



*Amaria: education for gender equity*

SSC with the Boston Higher Education partnership, is active in professional and academic associations like project WISE (Women In Science and Engineering) which offers incentives to girl students, has provided encouragement for science centers, field trips, site visits as well as teacher training workshops. Working on issues of harassment and discrimination, Amaria is said to pay particular importance

to the matter of building self-esteem, so vital for young children.

Amaria, who started tutoring since she was in the eighth standard, brings back educational information whenever she returns to India, using the opportunity to offer classes as guest instructor in the J. B. Vachha High School for Parsi Girls where she was educated.

Considering the average size of an elementary school class (50 percent of which are girls) and multiplying it by the number of teachers Amaria works with (e.g. the 500-700 who attend her workshops, most of them women), one can only imagine the number of girls she has helped through her undertakings, notes the nomination.

Adds Margaret Bishop, acting dean of the continuing education and special programs of the SSC, "The decision to make science education her chosen field made her a pioneer in developing a collaborative approach for women to enhance and share their knowledge...Over three years many in-service workshops were held to demystify science for elementary teachers most of whom were women 40 years of age and older."

Over and above her many commitments, Amaria "has been instrumental in job place-

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ments for many. She demands excellence in preparation, yet is assistive and supportive," writes Bishop, adding, "It is difficult to assess the actual number of people whose attitudes about gender equity in the schools have been affected by Dr Amaria ... With the ripple effect, it may be too numerous to count."

## The past and the present

A historical perspective on current affairs, a sense of humor, an aptitude for mathematics -- these are the tools Dr Farrokh Langdana employs to stoke the interest of his students in macroeconomics, international trade and finance. The efficiency with which he has wielded them at Rutgers University's Graduate School of Management brought him the University's highest honor in 1994 -- the Warren I. Susman Award for Excellence in Teaching.

For Rutgers' Executive Master of Business Administration (EMBA) program, Langdana has dispensed with textbooks in macroeconomics. Instead he uses the *Wall Street Journal*, his considerable insight and knowledge and the experience of the executives and managers who are his students, notes a tribute in the Rutgers publication describing its EMBA program, which is aimed at giving the careers of established executives and managers an insightful thrust in an increasingly technical economy.

Langdana's interest in military history and in trains is reflected in his office in Newark which Kathleen Brunet describes in the

Rutgers newsletter as decorated with models and drawings of old railroad cars and engines and photographs of historical personalities like Stonewall Jackson and Abraham Lincoln. More to the point are stacks of articles on current events which he distributes to his students to analyze in the light of economic theory and is delighted when they start bringing in such articles themselves. "When they start



bringing me stuff, I know I've hit home. I know that now they're hooked," he says.

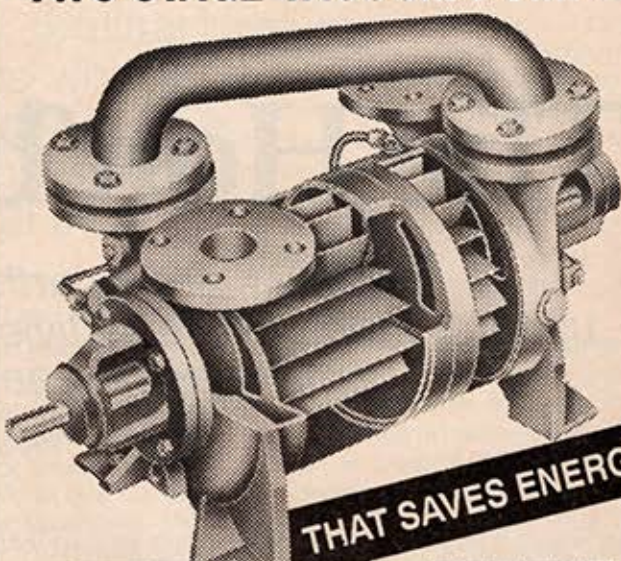
Despite dealing with subjects that are popularly considered too dry, difficult and loaded with theory, Langdana's philosophical approach helps him bridge "the gap between theory and practice by relating concepts to everyday experiences and everyday life. He really wants his students to learn and to understand the material," notes Julie Geffke, a graduate student in Langdana's international trade and finance class. In his macroeconomics class Langdana requires students to follow the economy for several months and to develop their own short term forecasts as part of their final exams. "Such forecasts have proved to be remarkably on target," comments Brunet.

The author of three books in his chosen field, Langdana is apt to consider consumer confidence as a significant economic factor -- one that is often neglected by central banks and makers of monetary policy.

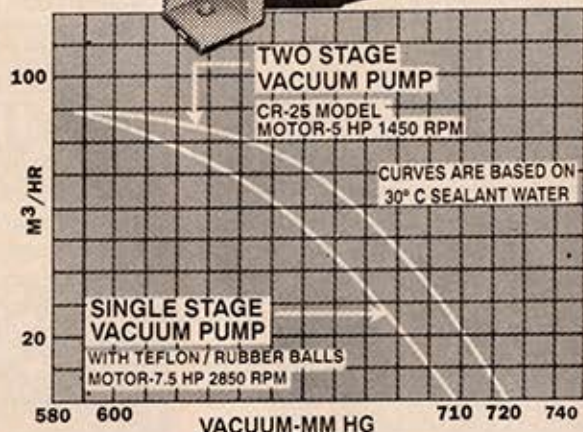
Son of Keki and Dr Zarine Langdana of the Parsi Lying-In Hospital, Bombay born Langdana attributes his interest in history and on how the past impacts the present, to the influence of his father who lost no opportunity to take his young son to war movies and those based on historical events. An IIT (Indian Institute of Technology) graduate with a masters and doctorate in economics from the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Langdana, 36, lives in New Jersey. During summer he teaches in the Rutgers' study program in France and has been involved in designing the curriculum of Rutgers joint MBA exchange program with Dalian University of Technology in China, informs Brunet.

Compiled by Arnavaz S. Mama

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# The Hon'ble Speaker

*Feminist, anti-apartheid veteran and former underground political activist, Frene Ginwala is determined to make democracy work in South Africa*

Pippa Green

A letter arrived in the parliamentary office of Dr (Ms) Frene Ginwala, Speaker of South Africa's first democratically elected Parliament, in September 1994. It came from two Standard III school children who had been part of an educational group brought to Parliament. Addressed, as it was, to the new Speaker of the National Assembly, a position that has traditionally been surrounded with pomp, circumstance, but relatively little substance, it was almost heretically informal. It began... "Dear Frene and everyone in parliament, It must be so fun going to work in a palace (that is what it looks like) and interesting (of course). I (Abbi) thought I was going to be an actor, but since I've seen what fun it must be to be in parliament I've changed my mind. It must be very hard work though. I could imagine you wearing a wig and a big cloak (ha ha ha ha)... I hope some other people from our school will be able to go to parliament so they can have as much fun as we did.

Yours sincerely

Abbi and Elizabeth

P.S. Say hello to everyone in parliament for us.

P.P.S. Thank you for making South Africa a better place (Sorry about all the spelling mistakes)."

Soon after the first session of the new Parliament ended, a guide took a group of tourists around the legislature. Referring to a gallery of pictures of previous Speakers, all wearing wigs and robes, she informed them, "The late Mr Louis le Grange didn't wear a wig and our present Madam Speaker doesn't wear either. She says she's so small that eight people would have to

help her carry the robe. So she just wears a sari."

A ripple of polite laughs ran through the group. Ha ha ha.

To those who know her, the thought of Dr Frene Ginwala in a wig and a robe is indeed ha ha ha, as Abbi and Elizabeth so aptly expressed it. Not that she isn't consistently elegant. There is a smoothness about her exterior — her mellifluous voice, her flowing sari, her sleek skin, her gliding gait — that belies a roaring energy and iron determination within. "She really gets things done," says her personal assistant, Lawson Naidoo. "She just works incredibly hard."

In the few months that the new Parliament sat last year, she and the Rules Committee which she chairs, scrapped the formal dress code, established a crèche for women parliamentary workers and members, and opened up previously closed parliamentary committees to the Press and public.

Where the berobed but bare-headed Louis le Grange, Speaker from 1987-1991, "went completely berserk," to quote the Democratic Party (DP)'s Tony Leon, when the Labour Party applauded FW de Klerk's February 2, 1990 announcement that he was unbanning the African National Congress (ANC), clapping is now *de rigueur* in Parliament. Where Helgard van Rensburg, chairman of committees who chaired many Assembly debates, prohibited parliamentarians from removing their jackets on a searingly hot day, parliamentarians now come to work in caftans, dakishis and sandals. "She has not only rocked the boat," says Leon, leader of the small but

vociferous DP. "She has positively turned it around."

This year, on the eve of the opening of Parliament, the 62-year-old Ginwala plans to steer that ship in a resolutely new direction. The task she has set herself now is not to open the doors of Parliament but, as she puts it, "to get people to come in." And it is more: the challenge is to somehow make it accountable, a place where people can bring their problems, a place where public debate is truly public.

"Say you have a rural community where someone has dumped toxic waste. Are they going to know that they can bring this problem to Parliament? The answer is no. They have to realize that what happens in this institution affects them," says Ginwala. Not that there should be a referendum on every issue, but people must know that "their intervention can be persuasive."

This current seriousness of purpose contrasts with Ginwala's reaction when she heard that she might be elected Speaker of the National Assembly. An Afrikaans daily phoned her to say the ANC might nominate her, that she was President Nelson Mandela's choice. "I laughed," she recalls.

Her next reaction was: "They're trying to shut me up." And after that, more cynically: "That means there won't be many women in the Cabinet."

Three weeks later, at the Caucus meeting where she was nominated, the years of political discipline that shaped the ANC in exile showed. "I wondered whether I would actually say no, and defy the ANC, or accept. And I realized that, politically, it wouldn't further anything I believed in if I said no. It wasn't a question of what I



wanted, but a collective thing."

As for shutting her up, it's hard to imagine that anyone could conceive of success in such a project. Even at cocktail parties, those ubiquitous forums of superficial "networking" and inconsequential chit-chat between dignitaries, journalists and politicians, she is formidably focused, whether she is talking to a foreign statesman or a lowly reporter. It is a new style which the old school finds hard to reconcile with their notions of how VIPs should circulate at such functions.

Last year, for instance, at a diplomatic do at the Brussels home of Neil van Heerden, the South African Ambassador to the European Union, she became involved in a deep discussion with South African journalists about how to cover the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP). Van Heerden kept trying to steer her gently aside on the pretext of "sitting down," or meeting more important people. She politely waved him away and carried on an intense discussion that lasted nearly an hour.

She has the same approach to her work. "I had never really thought about what a Speaker did," she says. "If I had, I would have thought about it in a narrow kind of way as presiding over Parliamentary business. What I did not know was that the Speaker is the manager of Parliament. The Speaker has the same relationship to the Secretary of Parliament as a Cabinet Minister does to a Director-General."

But part of her business is to preside over Parliament and at first traditionalists were at pains to point out, perhaps still fearful of the ANC, that Speakers had to be impartial in the debates. Leon, leader of a party that would feel it most keenly were the Speaker unfair, commented: "I have found her generally to be very fair-minded, fiercely independent of the party she represents, and she encourages debate on controversial issues." She did not hesitate, he says, to convene the debate on the issue of 3,500 police officers being granted indemnity before the elections when the DP called for it.

And then she allowed parliamentarians a fairly generous brief. It was only when Koos van der Merwe, the irrepressible MP from the Inkatha Freedom Party, began berating the shortcomings of the Kempton Park negotiations and the lack of regional

*Ginwala in the former House of Assembly with portraits of earlier Speakers* Photo: David Goldblatt

powers that she intervened: "I will allow members some latitude but I cannot allow a discussion on all crises, past, present and forthcoming."

That she was the first woman Speaker in the South African Parliament was noted more by the media and other parliamentarians than by herself. Well-known for her outspoken feminist views, she was nevertheless gentle with MPs who could not make the transition from Mr to Madam Speaker. A requirement of the Speaker listed in parliamentary literature, is "the possession of innate gentlemanly feelings which involuntarily command respect and deference."

Ginwala thinks otherwise. "Personally I would have preferred the title Speaker. There was no reason to assume it was male. Yet if people call me Mr Speaker, I generally ignore it, and soon enough they correct it themselves."

In one debate, however, she took the chair from her deputy Sandra Ranchod as Justice Minister Dullah Omar was in mid-speech. When he referred to "Mr Speaker," she could not hold her tongue. "I would urge the honorable minister to be more vigilant," she said. "Changes happen behind his back."

This year, perhaps, changes will happen before our eyes. How exactly does she intend to transform Parliament from the clumsy, complicated, rarefied institution that it was to the accessible, open institution she envisages?

Ginwala has a plan. It has two legs: accessibility and accountability. "The language (of Parliament) is still not people-friendly. But as long as we debate only laws we are in a bind because laws cannot be loosely worded."

The second leg involves accountability. "We have to build in people an awareness that they have the right to ask questions (of MPs)," she says. I asked her what members of the public could do if they had concerns, for example, about the appointment of particular ambassadors, or about the RDP. "They can write to any MP, or to their political parties. I get stacks of letters and I send them off to ministers." The committees, she says, are open now. People can go to a public hearing and say what they want to say. "The problem is not whether you can do it. The problem is getting people to know you can do it."

To implement these goals she has devised a "package" of elements. These are some:

• A "Green Paper" on intended legislation. A Green Paper would be a much broader

look at legislative options. "It might say about a proposed law, this is how they did it in China or how they did it in Peru."

A White Paper, which is all we currently have, presents a much more crystallized view. But in Ginwala's vision, a Green Paper would encourage more public debate. And where there is a major issue,

*"I would have preferred the title Speaker. There was no reason to assume it was male"*

Parliament should be able to say: "We need to hear what the people are saying," and do so.

She and the Rules Committee also want ministers to provide a list of people and institutions who have been consulted on a bill.

• A National Foundation, to which Parliament makes a grant, but which also might be supported by business ("because they have their lobbies") and foreign foundations. Its task would be to investigate how to enhance public participation, whether through educational programs in the schools, or whether through the canvassing of opinions on issues that affect particular communities. Let's say, for instance, a proposed law would radically alter pensions. "Then the task of this Foundation would be to flood pension bodies and pensioners with information, and also send people out to solicit information," and to help bring those who had something to say to Parliament.

There is a lot to unlearn, Ginwala points out. "Parliament and government are still incomprehensible. Even now, members and political parties have not thoroughly digested the constitution. You see, constitutions grow as people live in society. You absorb things in most societies: there is not a formal learning process. But the majority of us were outside of this society, so in addition to the normal alienation that you have in most democratic societies, here you have an even greater alienation."

Most South Africans, she says, are more familiar with their civics, or unions or their local ANC branch. "But these are not functioning properly, so where do they go with their problems? How do we bring

these channels back into existence so that we can consolidate democracy?"

• Public Education. Parliament has set aside a large part of its budget for this. Already a public education officer has been appointed, and some projects have started in the schools. The visit by Abbi and Elizabeth and other schoolchildren was the start of this. "For those kids," says Ginwala, "Parliament suddenly meant something."

To make it more accountable, she suggests the following:

• A registry of interests. "Everyone should know what financial interests MPs have, whether they are consultants, or business people, or winemakers or run a shoe factory or a sweet shop." So every time MPs make a speech, or vote in a particular way, we would know where they are coming from.

• A code of conduct to be administered by an ethics committee. One of its first tasks would be to establish a registry of gifts. At the moment there are no records, and no restrictions on the gifts MPs can receive. So Ms Winnie Mandela, deputy minister of arts and culture, can accept a house from a diamond dealer, and in the past National Party MPs could accept untold favors from unknown lobbies. For Ginwala, this is a problem: "What happens to those gifts? Someone sends me a bouquet of flowers, which sits in my office, or someone sends me a Christmas bottle of wine. But then it could become two bottles, or a case or several cases: to whom do they belong?"

Sometimes, she says, it's simple: "President (Robert) Mugabe (of Zimbabwe) gave me a beautiful carving. Now that clearly belongs to Parliament. But Evita (alias satirist Pieter-Dirk Uys) gave me a coffee mug (after she appeared on his show). Do I display that in Parliament? There is no easy answer. But the point is, if it's known, it's easier to avoid corruption. If people know that Evita gave me a mug it's not a national issue if I drink my coffee out of it. But it must be based on the fact that it's all in the open. Corruption happens when things are secret."

This system won't stop corruption, she admits, but if it was discovered, say, that an MP received a gift of R 5,000 from someone and didn't declare it, the obvious question would be, "Why not?"

There are cynics who might, rightly, point out that accountability is still far from established practice. Winnie Mandela, whose business connections and whose use of taxpayers' money are still open to many questions, won't answer them. Civil ser-

*continued on page 36*

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# When scholars deliberate...II

The Second International Congress hosted by the KRCOI brought 30 scholars together

Homi J. Rogers

An international star cast of scholars from home and abroad, Avesta votaries and Vedic aficionados, those gaga on the *Gathas* to the delvers into the *Dinkard* and dictionaries had gathered together at Sir J. J. Modi Hall of the K. R. Cama Oriental Institute (KRCOI). The staple conference themes of history and archeology, art and architecture, language and literature, were well blended with potions of philosophy and philology, comparative studies in reli-

intervening period of six winters. She was helped by her co-trustees and, amongst a roll call of others, by Dastur (Dr) Kaikhushroo JamaspAsa, High Priest of the Anjuman Atash Behram, who was chairman of the subjects committee and Prof S. A. Upadhyaya, director of postgraduate research at the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, who with his quick wit and erudition tempered with earthiness was the toast of all present throughout the Congress.

## Meeting ground

While the theme of the KRCOI's First International Congress had been a reappraisal of Indo-Iranian studies, the second wished to build on the good work already achieved, and provide, as the Dalai Lama rightly pointed out in his message published in the Congress souvenir, a "meeting ground for Indian and foreign scholars to exchange their varied views and ideas, particularly on Indo-Iranian history and cultural studies." The organizers hence wished to provide a platform for the dissemination of knowledge.

The theme of the Congress, "To impart knowledge is the most excellent of all gifts" as spelt out on the banner, received an early impetus from Governor of Maharashtra, Dr P. C. Alexander. Alexander started with a little tongue-in-cheek humor as he recalled how Modi (known to Alexander because of their common involve-



gion, and provisions for discussion on rites and rituals with the now almost mandatory duel on dualism as the KRCOI sponsored Second International Congress began on a crisp morning on January 5, 1995 in Bombay.

The four-day conference had been lovingly crafted and meticulously mounted by the efficient secretary-trustee of the KRCOI, Ms Homai Modi, after a long

*Top: Modi (in sari) and Alexander look on as Palkhivala lights the inaugural lamp. Alongside: Humbach, Jamasp-Asa and Dastur Hormuzdyar Mirza: a private joke*



ment with the Red Cross) had sought to help him along with his speech by suggesting to his wife Akama that the Governor could speak "on the broad aspects" of historical research for which he said he was grateful. How well versed he truly was with the subject of historical research emerged as he spoke, catching Modi off guard, red-faced but joining in the merriment over her own ingenuousness.

The Governor lamented that India had produced no Herodotus, nor made any attempts as a country to record its own history apart from stilted accounts documented by paid court historians and, later, the parochial British. Alexander's thoughts on the need for historical research, his suggestion that the relationship between the Christian Church in Persia and in Kerala, where there are five crosses with Pahlavi inscriptions, be studied, as also his offer to help research scholars, geared the assembled gathering for the discussions that lay ahead.

Alexander's speech and that of Nani Palkhivala who delivered the keynote address, presaged a dialog delving into the interaction between India and Iran in the spheres of religion, literature, spiritualism, and the flow of ideas which contributed to strengthening the fiber of both civiliza-

or master, and the first and only Persian poet to use the Indian flute (*bansuri*) as a symbol to explain his philosophy.

Upadhyaya similarly spoke of Iranian scholar Vaidya Burzo who drew inspiration from India, and is credited with the

## "Reflective religion is a view of the world and a way of life"

first ever translation into Pahlavi of that endearing equivalent of Aesop's fables, the *Panchatantra*. He focussed on a figure, who is, as Havewalla pointed out, the same as Burzin Meher, known to most Parsis. According to Upadhyaya, Vaidya Burzo came to India around sixth century in search of a life infusing drug. He returned with the *Panchatantra* which he introduced to the Islamic — and thence to the European — world and which have for centuries since enthused countless students with new life and morals.

Yet another speaker on the first day to delve on this interchange between the two

accelerate the process of synthesis between the traditions of Islam and the trends of Indian culture, thereby consolidating the growth of medieval Indian society.

A similar exposition for a closely corresponding period was offered on the penultimate day of the meet by Dr Reza Shabani Samghabadi, a professor of social history at various universities in Iran. Samghabadi spoke on the cultural relations between Iran and India during the years 1525 (when Babar invaded the country) to 1856 AD (when the sun finally set on the Mughal empire, with Bahadurshah Zafar eking out his last days). The three centuries saw an atmosphere of intimate understanding amongst individuals, and innumerable books found in regional libraries acknowledge the depth of mutual interest amongst people and respective states. Samghabadi concluded his address with a charming Persian couplet that crystallized the spirit shared by scholars of both countries, and most of the audience present: "You have never been out of our vision/That we look for another opportunity to return to it again."

Probably for this very reason, some of the more popular and enlightening talks at the seminar were those which bridged the distance between the two nations. The



*At the valedictory function (L to R): A. K. Monfared, Taleyarkhan, Godrej, Iran Consul General Khosrow Rezazadeh, Irani and Insler*



tions. Though not all the topics chosen by the speakers or organizers could, or did, deal with this interplay, the first day's proceedings had at least three of the six speakers discussing this aspect.

Dr (Ms) Sabar Havewalla, associate professor of Persian at the Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, spoke on the contribution of Maulana Jalaluddin Rumi, a Sufi poet of 13th century Iran. The maulavi (dervish), Havewalla pointed out, is the only Persian poet to follow the Indian tradition of accepting a spiritual guardian

countries was Dr G. D. Shukla who offered a glimpse of learning and literature in early medieval India in the context of the study of Persian. Shukla, a professor at the Post-Graduation Department of History at Gujarat's Sardar Patel University concluded that right from Babar onwards almost all the imperial Mughals helped to

Conference gave enough food for thought — and treat to the eyes — on these close links. Contributing to the visual treat was Dr (Ms) Kalpana Desai, assistant director of Bombay's Prince Of Wales Museum (POWM) who with the help of twin projections delineated how Persian art was employed in early Mughal painting, and how the miniature painting school owes its maturity to Iranian influence.

### Comparative religions

Discourses on comparative religions fluc-



holiest places (sanctuaries) of monotheistic religions like Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Christianity, Islam and Sikhism. Tanaka reasoned that as in Buddhism, where the seat of the Buddha has been left empty for ever, so too in most monotheistic religions, sanctuaries are kept empty,

because of the invisibility of God, "with the exception that they use some symbols to represent divinity" as exemplified by the fire in Zoroastrianism, the seven-branched candlestick in Judaism, the cross in Christianity.

The two most cogent papers on

comparative religion came from JamaspAsa, who was the last speaker in the four-day deliberations, and Kaikhosrov D. Irani, professor emeritus in the department of philosophy, City College, New York and a prolific and well-respected author in areas of philosophy of mind and history of ideas. JamaspAsa spoke on the links between Zoroastrianism and Judaism down the years, and drew the assembly's attention to the similarity in thought between Yasna 44.5 and Isaiah 45.7, the *Book of Genesis* and *Bundehishn*, and the common view of both religions on conversion. His study ranged from scriptures to sociology, to history ("King Cyrus is the only non-Jew mentioned in the Old Testament") and philosophy. However, the learned Dastur's study did leave quite a few Zoroastrians in the audience bristling as they wished to hear greater words of wisdom from him.

More in the audience though were nettled at Irani's paper on the second day,



tuated from the mundane to the truly inspired. At this Congress Buddhism seemed to be the main religion from which comparisons were effected. Sorbonne University's Prof Philippe Gignoux started the proceedings with the Sasanian notion of the existence of *ruwan* (soul), in the context of the historically known instances in Tibet and Bhutan where the soul travels in the extraterrestrial planes during dreams. Prof Richard N. Frye, whose ill-health did not allow him to be present, had his paper on "Buddhism: Competitor of Zoroastrianism in Central Asia" read by Prof Jamsheed Choksy but in Frye's absence no discussion followed. And a young Japanese research fellow, Ms Kanoko Tanaka, postulated at length on the motif of the empty throne in Buddhism, and its comparison with the altar or the



Left to right (top): Kamerkar, Freddie Mehta, Writer, Tanaka Kalpana Desai and Dalal

Second row: Nizamuddin Gorekar and Havewalla

(Alongside) The KRCOI staff: Thankam Nair (ext L) Yasmin Khan and Sarita Kode (ext R) with trustee-secretaries Modi and Capt Hormazdiar J.M Desai





which presented a case for religion without rituals. Irani is a votary of the unalloyed purity of Zoroastrianism as manifest in the *Gathas*, sans the rituals, which he maintains came on later. Zoroastrianism, Irani held, is a reflective religion, "one where you have sages, prophets, present a vision to humanity of a view of the world and a way of life, and then invite the disciple to make a choice." Irani considers the *Upanishads* and Buddha's teachings as part of the "Emergence of reflective religion in the ancient Indian and Iranian traditions," as titled in his study, though all three differ in content. Admitting that all three religions were later formalized, Irani nonetheless emphasized that the declaration of choice in Zoroastrian prayers (*Jasa me avenghe Mazda*) be put into practice. Stormed by a barrage of questions and indignation at his 'heretic' thoughts, Irani conceded that ritual is necessary for humans.

The professor added a proviso: "That attitude should not compromise the vision of the prophets."

### Rites and rituals

The four-day seminar had many papers presented on rites and rituals to interest the 200-odd Zoroastrian delegates present in varying numbers and with naturally diminishing attendance as the sessions went past. Ironically, the organizers requested Irani to read the paper, "The integrating power of ritual art" in the absence of its author Prof James Boyd of the department of philosophy at the Colorado State University. "I will be careful in presenting this to you," jested Irani, who then proceeded to present salient points from Boyd's paper, which argued that Zoroastrian rituals are neither decorative nor an additional part of the religion's frame: "They bring together diverse realms of experience...and hold the master key to unlock the core of religion."

One session that particularly thrilled some Zoroastrians was the one chaired by noted solicitor and self-proclaimed staunch Zoroastrian, Burjor Antia. The second morning session (there were daily two morning sessions, and two post-lunch ses-

sions) on the last day, it had Antia introducing three young, fully ordained priests of the community to his audience, two of them already PhDs, and a third promising to join their ranks by the end of the century. It was a populist session where the audience lapped up M. F. Cama Athornan Institute's joint principal Dr Rooyintan Peer's much-expounded-earlier concept of *Druj-i-Nasush* (evil of infection). Joint honorary secretary of the Athornan Mandal Parvez Bajan and joint principal of the Athornan Madressa at Dadar Dr Ramiyar Karanjia respectively spoke on



the study of Middle Persian *Stos* and on the teaching and learning of the Avestan script — past and present. Karanjia provided a wealth of information of how in modern times an ancient language like Avesta is taught through a combination of phonetics and a mnemonic recitation of prayer, amongst others.

### Fresh insights

One paper on an off-beat subject was presented by Dr Gernot Ludwig Windfuhr, professor of Iranian Studies at the University of Michigan, USA. Windfuhr's paper drew parallels between Mozart's opera *The Magic Flute* and Zoroastrianism. The opera reflects freemasonry, the equality of the sexes in marriage (in Yasna 53, the prophet holds woman and man as equal in importance and intelligence) and a syllabic resemblance between its main character Sarastro and the Prophet. According to Windfuhr, an examination of the opera from the Zoroastrian angle makes it more comprehensible.

Another well-argued case was presented by Dr (Ms)



From left: Misra, Mehendale and Windfuhr Top (L to R) Peer, Bajan, Antia, Desai and Karanjia. For Upadhyaya (L) and Samghabadi a quiet moment over coffee





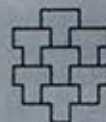
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*'The Peregrine' - highrise residential building at Prabhadevi, Bombay.*

Rashna Writer, whose paper concluded that the intrinsically Indian social mechanism of caste was one among several factors which contributed to Zoroastrian survival in India. Writer, who holds a doctorate from the London School of Economics in international relations, and has undertaken for the past 15 years a study of the history of Zoroastrian Iran and Parsis domiciled in India, analysed the philosophic underpinning of caste, as well as the role of endogamy, demarcation of labor and social hierarchy in India. "The Parsis," reasoned Writer, "acquired an empathy for the caste structure insofar as it complemented their particular religious and social conventions, and came, therefore, to be perceived as another Indian caste."

SNDT University's professor of history and vice president of the Asiatic Society of Bombay Dr (Ms) Mani Kamerkar pointed out why the Parsi identity could survive the second entry of Islam into India with recourse to six centuries of history. Studying the growth of Zoroastrianism in India, and its blossoming at Navsari, which has given the country two of its top 10 sons (an allusion to Dadabhai Naoroji and Jamsetji Tata), Kamerkar postulated Navsari's religious supremacy which provided the beacon through troubled times.

The same could not, unfortunately, be said of archeologist and KRCOI governing body member Dr (Ms) Katy F. Dalal who presented her study of Cambyses, Cyrus' ill-fated son, accused in history of secretly assassinating his brother and slaying the holy bull Apis. Dalal's paper was meant to vindicate Cambyses of the crime after 2,500 years, though, many a historian including our own Ervad Ratanshah Motafram when writing the *History of Ancient Iran* has already cleared Cambyses of the charge, and established how the

## The more popular and enlightening talks at the seminar were those which bridged the distance between India and Iran

same was more a Greek-foisted falsehood on history. Director of postgraduate research at Pune's Deccan College Dr V. N. Misra's paper on Indus Civilization and the Rigvedic Saraswati, who shared the morning session on the second day with Dalal, also stopped short of new interpretation. Ms Khursheed Khurody, a PhD student at Harvard University, who spoke about the sculptures in the cave temples of Western India (Karla—Bhaja—Kondana—Bedsa), made no reference to world trends which could have influenced the sculptures and the temples during their construction between the second and first century BC.

### Debating dualism

If Dalal and Kamerkar kept the Zoroastrian *magaj* (brain) ticking with a quick dip in the community's glorious past and its kings and heroes, the Western scholars, notably, offered the Zoroastrian audience an equally fine repast commenting on the Zoroastrian holy books, particularly the *Gathas*. Of course, this did lead to spirited question time following the papers, especially when the scholar was distinct enough to have his thoughts registered and understood. Most

discussions, though, on the *Gathas* or Zoroastrian philosophy tend to veer towards the existence (or non-existence) of Evil as a twin force.

Prof Hanns-Peter Schmidt presented a paper refuting that the world is a mixture (*gumezish*) of good and evil. Schmidt, who has been an associate professor of Indo-Iranian studies at the University of California, Los Angeles, and author of several publications including *Zarathushtra's Religion and His Pastoral Imagery* felt that the notion of the evil spirit is absent in the *Avesta* and appears only in the Pahlavi texts which belong to a period when Greek philosophy had a great impact.

Choksy who teaches at Harvard and Stanford Universities put forth a somewhat similar interpretation, hazarding that the constant swings between monotheism and dualism, as accepted Zoroastrian philosophy, were signs of the times. Choksy's paper, "Doctrinal variation within Zoroastrianism: The notion of dualism," explained that dualism arose from a confluence of pre-Zoroastrian ancient Iranian beliefs which the Prophet drew on to propose a comparative and relative ethical dualism on righteousness (*asha*) and falsehood (*druj*), and which was modified in later years as bifurcation of the spiritual and corporeal realms into good and evil spheres. Choksy's paper stirred a virtual hornet's nest. A black-topped Dorab Patel thundered, "We believe in good over evil, not good and evil being of equal strength." Homi Sethna, documentary film-maker of two short films on the religion, pleaded that we should stick to the *Gathas*, and not

*Sharing thoughts: Tafazzoli (left) and Gignoux; Sethna questioning from the floor and mistress of ceremony Jerry Kumana* All Photos by Spectravision



**"HE PROMISED  
HE HAD SOMETHING  
THAT COULD CHANGE  
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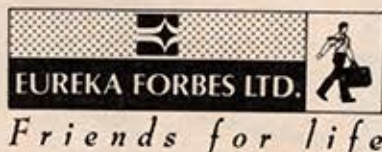


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the commentaries on them. Choksy, flashing his boyish smile, gently reminded that commentaries can help us understand what is meant in the *Gathas*. And Irani offered an incisive and inquiring comment in querying whether one interprets dualism as dualism of choice.

#### Gathic translations

The *Gathas*, as at the first Congress, featured prominently amongst the papers, though many of the subjects emanating from them seemed to hold little interest for the assembled delegates. This was primarily because the scholars based their papers not on the content of the *Gathas*, but merely on words and their different interpretations/translations. Stanley Insler, professor of Sanskrit and comparative philology at Yale University and source of an authoritative translation of the *Gathas*, chose to discourse on Avestan *vaz* and Vedic *vah*, grappling with linguistics and etymology. Dr Helmut Humbach of the University of Mainz and equally well-renowned for his translation of the *Gathas*, also played non-controversial, taking up Yasna 45.2, and debating whether *mrauuat* meant "he spoke" or "shall address."

Translations formed the cornerstone of many another paper presented. Prof M. A. Mehendale, a Sanskrit professor, felt that Yasna 41.2 is wrongly translated currently as "may a good ruler, whether man or woman, rule over us in both the existences..." and should be "may you, who is a good ruler, rule over us (all) — whether man or woman — in both the existences."

Prof Ahmad Taffazoli, a member of the Iranian Academy of Persian Language and Literature, delivered a paper on an over hundred year old Pazand version of the sixth century *Denkard*, lying in a private collection in Tehran, which he feels would help in better understanding of the Pahlavi version. Cutting through the scholarly discourses observer Patel stated that translations don't have the spirit of the letter; "stress on the esoteric meaning, not the literal."

#### Congress focus

Somewhere along the way, it was apparent that the magic of the first Congress was hard to recapture. One missed, for example, speakers like renowned criminal

lawyer and director of the POWM, Karl Khandalavala, international scholars like Shaul Shaked and Ehsan Yarshater, and a figure like management consultant Aspi

Moddie amongst the delegates who contributed to the discussions knowledgeably with his razorsharp comments and summing-up. Though each of the 14 sessions had chairpersons of distinction who would introduce the speakers, sometimes with a few chuckle-guaranteeing witticisms thrown in for good

measure, they did not undertake a brief summation of the papers presented. The audience too seemed bereft of many a colorful personality.

The valedictory session was headed by a tour-weary Sorab Godrej, the Congress' Organising Committee's co-chairman. And former member of the Minorities Commission Homi Taleyarkhan, who delivered the presidential address that day, remarked on the role of religion as a unifying force and developer of harmony.

The organizers had ensured that everything moved precisely over the four days, starting with fair punctuality at 9.30 a.m. despite the normally empty chairs then and concluding by 5.30 in the evening. Delicious catering by Dalal and her family, and a welcome tea/coffee break, enabled speakers to unwind and bemused listeners to seek clarifications.

In his concluding remarks Irani made it clear that "the Congress was getting far too unwieldy." While the task of assembling over 30 renowned scholars, many of them from overseas, is no doubt commendable, and organizing a four-day long event with socially-crammed evenings, a truly herculean task, it may probably make greater sense in coming years as suggested by Irani to focus the Congress on a particular area of study. Alternatively, or additionally, as done at many other congresses, there could be keynote addresses every morning on a topic of general interest, followed by break-away sessions categorized subject-wise and held at smaller venues to be attended by scholars and delegates interested in the particular topic. This would even help those interested in say, linguistics, to understand the deliberations at closer quarters, and seek clarifications. All that is up to the KRCOI trustees and dedicated staff to mull upon ere the next event.

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"To redirect the attention of the youth from the temptations of the permissive society towards higher potentialities inherent in them, could only be fulfilled by deep-seated faith in religion," Rasna soft drinks magnate and Ahmedabad Parsi Punchayet president Areez Khambatta told the 173 participants of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet's (BPP) ninth Holiday Programme for Youth (HPY). As chief guest on the inaugural session of the program on May 1, 1995, Khambatta's words enunciated the concerns of the elders of the community who addressed the youth that day as well as at the valedictory program a month later.

Urging the youth to build on the community's innate qualities of sincerity, honesty and diligence, Khambatta added, "With a little determination and action, success will automatically follow. I would particularly stress on determination and action...Indecisive people never come forward." Guest of honor, eminent physician Dr Farokh Udawadia sought to impress on his young audience, "You must aspire to good ends and great ends but never forget...that the means to the end do matter...I don't know whether material wealth is really an achievement, the sole achievement that one wants."

The BPP's star program has grown from an original 23 participants in 1987 to the large assembly witnessed this year. The increasing numbers which included students from Baroda, Bharuch, Dahanu, Jhansi, Neemuch, Secunderabad and Surat, besides Bombay, necessitated a shift of venue to the J. B. Vachha High School for Parsi Girls in Dadar. The earlier programs had all been held in the Khareghat Hall but with more youngsters eager to avail of its facility, a larger venue became necessary and Ms Tehmi Aga, trustee of the Vachha School volunteered the use of the school premises for the duration of the camp.

As senior BPP trustee Eruch Desai, who chaired the inaugural meet, told his audience of high school graduates, "We want to discipline you, we want to give you correct guidance, the correct approach, the correct thought process so that you can easily lay your steps on what you are going to achieve tomorrow." Emphasizing the respect that Parsis have earned over the generations from other communities, Desai noted, no one speaks disparagingly of the commu-

# Springboard to achievement

The Bombay Parsi Punchayet's Holiday Programme for Youth seeks to prepare the young for the trials and triumphs ahead

Arnavaz S. Mama

nity "because of our sense of discipline...integrity, fair play...what we call Asha and that is what they should imbibe in you to make the best in life."

The program, under the seasoned guidance of its coordinators Ms Diana Marfatia, Ms Binaifer Bharucha and Ms Asheesh Tata [and behind the scene support of BPP trustee Dr (Ms) Mehroo Bengalee, then chief executive Rustom Anklesaria, joint

secretary Ms Sheroo Master and others] included aptitude testing and vocational guidance, a presentation on the wide gamut of career openings available to the youth today, an introduction to a variety of opportunities and problems that crowd the world around us by way of talks by visiting professionals, an insight into the religion and Zoroastrian history. Sports, essay and elocution competitions, trips to the John-



Left: Sethna receiving flowers from Nekshan Deboo

Facing page (second row — L to R): Marfatia, Bengalee presenting merit certificate to Suzanne Irani (Master in the center); Anklesaria felicitated by Hormuz Mehta

son and Johnson factory, the braille press, the holding of a blood donation drive and more provided for active participation of the youth. Aiding the coordinators were several alumni of past programs who are members of the BPP's Youth Club.

The HPY has grown from the initial idea of gainfully employing the long vacation that students enjoy after their board exams, in many cases leading to boredom or mischief. The month-long camp is followed by a few more days of leadership training for those with potentiality. The last two days of the month had been reserved for social service programs like cleaning the Panthaky and Narielwala Agiaris and entertaining old folks at the Parukh Dharamshalla and at Sir J. J. Hospital's Parsi ward. As Marfatia said, "We believe that the HPY does not only take intellectual inputs to grow and achieve excellence; (to grow) socially, spiritually, emotionally (we need to care) for each other and also for the not so fortunate brethren of our community. (It) is a very important ingredient for

us and we believe that only then can a perfect blend be achieved to develop a rounded personality."

At the valedictory function on May 27, chief guest Lt Gen Adi Sethna (retired), president of the Delhi Parsi Anjuman, jiggered up the proceedings: "I am told that on these valedictory occasions you have to receive the wisdom of so-called guest speakers and chief guests and people like that. I am making a change. I am going to ask three precise questions to which I want your response with the same enthusiasm (with which) you have been clapping." The bemedalled general ["I have been ordered by Rusibhai (Anklesaria) to appear in my medals"] had asked, "Is the Parsi community getting over anxious? If so, why? And what should we do about it?" To illumine the background to the questions he described the shying away of Parsi boys from any discomforts. He narrated an incident of over-anxious parents worried about their son travelling with him on the upper berth of a train from Bombay to Jabalpur. The boy and a Hindu friend,

travelling in another compartment, had been appointed medical representatives in Jabalpur for the leading pharmaceutical company, Hoechst. "I happened to be brigade commander of Jabalpur then... We had a very nice Parsi Anjuman there and in a few days' time there was going to be Pateti. So both these boys were also invited. By the time Navroze came around, the Hindu boy came and said to me that 'Parsi na tau mammae kahyu ke ahiya bahargamma javanu ane khava peevanu fave nahi te ene Mumbai bolavi didho (the Parsi boy's mother felt that living in the mofassil he would be inconvenienced for food, etc and therefore recalled him to Bombay).' By now the Hindu boy is a very senior officer in Hoechst and I wonder where that Parsi boy is!"

*Top row (L to R from facing page) Khambatta; Udadia; Desai; Guzder receiving flowers from Priya Bhujwala; and Taleyarkhan presenting shield and certificate for elocution to Kainaz Pooniwala*



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Sethna related how mothers in his time encouraged their young sons to join the services, even when World War II was raging: "Our mothers said to us at that time, 'Jao, fateh karo, Ahura ni madad thi (Go — and with Ahura Mazda's help, success will be yours).'" In contrast Sethna said, a

(of) a lack of confidence. Parents are very over protective nowadays." Of the many parents present, not one chose to answer. One man refused to accept that Parsis are over anxious.

Sethna also noted that working women of other communities find it easier to work because they are pretty sure that their mothers or mothers-in-law will feed the children and may even help with the homework. "Why do Parsi women not have that support?... Is it because the parents are not prepared today to help or is it because their daughters are not prepared to accept the help of their parents or their parents-in-law?" Sethna urged the audience for a response but there was none. He advised the youth to return to the core values of the

faith: charity in the sense of giving of oneself; the kusti before meals and *sukrana* (thankfulness) after. "I keep on saying all these things because many in Bombay think that we people in Delhi are very modern. *Hun koiné vatlava nathi mangto; hun khali Parsi né Zarthosti banavva manguch* (I do not wish to convert anyone; I only want to change Parsis into Zarthostis)." Noting that the world is seeking a return to family values, he urged Parsis to rediscover theirs and concluded by exhorting the youths "to go forth and do many things cheerfully, confidently and with a song on your lips... Do things more useful to others than to yourself and do something different."

Introducing guest of honor Homi Taleyarkhan BPP chairman Jamshed Guzder who presided over the function recalled seeing him work in Bombay House as a junior assistant in the Tata Oil Mills Company many years ago. Since then, of course, Taleyarkhan carved a niche for himself in Indian politics and diplomacy. Taleyarkhan's speech was largely based on a survey published in the national Press which depicted the growing emphasis on material benefits that seemed to preoccupy youth today. Decrying such a blasé attitude Taleyarkhan referred to the billions in underdeveloped countries who are below the poverty line and the growing incidence of poverty in the Zoroastrian community. He wished the young members of the HPY to "find a solution to...the Promethean ambi-

tion of our times: a desire to reconcile political freedom with equitable and sustained development that will provide all citizens with economic and social resources necessary for self-fulfilment."

Guzder sought to inculcate a greater tendency towards entrepreneurship by recalling that the community had acquired its social and economic status because of the ability of the older generations to make money in business and to spend it wisely in creating social infrastructure for their coreligionists as well as for their compatriots. He spoke of their strong religious faith and of his own personal experience of receiving some of his most creative ideas while saying his prayers. Prayers, he told the assembled Zoroastrians, will eliminate the need for medicines together with headaches and worry!

Anklesaria, who summarized the points that the major speakers had made earlier, informed the gathering that though matrimony hadn't been one of the goals of the HPY, it had resulted in three unions to date. But the spirit of the HPY was best exemplified in four lines of an interdenominational prayer with which Sethna had concluded his remarks:

"We thank Thee for the hills to climb and  
hard work to do,  
Things which require the skill of hand and  
eye.  
We thank Thee for music which raises our  
hearts in one breath  
To heaven -- and for the hard grasp of a  
friend."



At the navjote of Binaifer and Diana Daruwalla — one of the HPY's social service highlights — are the children's mother, the BPP's Bakhtawar Dastoor, Bharucha, Tata, Marfatia and a relative

grandmother of his acquaintance told him, "Adi jauni, ayé loko su karèch? Aye Noshirwanné étlo dodvech, dodavech, pasino pasino thai jayèch (Adi look what they are doing to Noshirwan — they are working the sweat out of him)!" ... Is it right that there is this anxiety keeping us back?"

In answer Shezad Irani pointed out that in Sethna's generation there were seven to eight brothers and sisters in a family. "I don't accept that if you go in a war you die or something like that; but this anxiety is just because you have only one son or only one daughter." (Later in the evening Anklesaria provided a counterpoint to Irani's argument in the form of a story about a Sikh lady who lost her fifth son in the war. The senior officers who went to condole with her found her weeping — because she had no more sons to offer the motherland!)

Sethna's second question was "Are our parents supportive enough in the endeavor of our children to excel? (Are) they expecting too much from the children and getting disappointed?" When a girl responded, "You should ask the parents about that," Sethna turned the question around: "Are you anxious?" "In some (respects) yes... Because the world here we feel is quite dangerous nowadays and it is because



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## THE HON'BLE SPEAKER

*continued from page 22*

vants, particularly in key government ministries such as housing and safety and security, can and do block or control access to ministers, so that the public is denied often crucial information.

But Ginwala never misses an opportunity to distinguish between government and Parliament. Government is the executive which runs the country; Parliament makes the laws that form the framework for that operation. "I know this sounds highfalutin, but the National Assembly is the custodian of the choice of the people. People voted, they elected those Members (of Parliament), and now those are the custodians of democracy."

Ginwala talks a lot about democracy and about her plans to achieve it. It's somehow hard to reconcile her constant preoccupation with openness, participation and accountability with the Press's former "hardline Marxist theoretician" label. What does she think of this? "I don't feel I need to answer anything," she snaps. "If they've got their labels right or wrong, it's their judgement."

She has much the same reaction to questions about her personal life. An example: "When were you born?" I ask.

"1932."

"What month?"

"April."

This is becoming like a cross-examination, and I'm definitely not winning. I gird myself. "What day?"

"Why do you want to know my birth-date?" she asks, exasperated. I explain that a profile of a person means more than just an examination of their work and politics, but she is unconvinced. "Just leave it as April, 1932," she says, giving the lie to chauvinists who accuse women of fudging their year of birth.

This much I can tell you: she was born, the middle child of three, on an untold day in April 1932 in Johannesburg. Her father, an oil miller, was born in Mozambique and the family ran a business there.

She grew up in Kempton Park and Roodepoort and went to school in the area west of Johannesburg, near where the Market Theatre now stands. Her family went to India during the war, and she spent four years schooling there, mainly because it was too dangerous to return. "Passenger ships were being torpedoed then."

Politics grew on her when she returned to South Africa, helped, perhaps, by the fact that a schoolmate was on trial.

Her parents sent her to England in the

1950s where she got a law degree at London University, but when she came back to South Africa her life was consumed by politics. She was not quite 28 when she left the country the second time — the day after the Sharpeville shootings, March 22, 1960. A freelance journalist then, she was in

*Ginwala argued that liberation in South Africa would mean nothing without freedom for women*

Durban interviewing Natal Indian Congress activist Monty Naicker when Walter Sisulu phoned to ask in a guarded way whether she could go to visit her parents who were in Mozambique. Her real task, though, was to get ANC leader Oliver Tambo out of the country. "I was flung in at the deep end," she says. "I wasn't in a leadership position then. I just happened to be in the right place at the right time."

She went to Salisbury in then Rhodesia, and chartered the aircraft that eventually flew Tambo out of the country. She became a kind of travel agent for the ANC, and later arranged for Nelson Mandela, who was then banned, to leave the country for his trip around Africa. She also got him back into South Africa. It was for this illegal trip that he was eventually arrested.

For Ginwala the next 30 years were spent in exile — broken only briefly in 1976 when she was given special indemnity to attend her father's funeral. Mostly, she worked in the anti-apartheid movement, but more importantly, she was, for many years, a close associate of and assistant to Tambo, and based in England, Mozambique and Zambia.

Despite her close connection with the African liberation movements, she maintained the strong intellectual independence that is today her hallmark. For instance, in 1969, when Julius Nyerere, president of Tanzania, invited her to edit *The Standard*, one of the newly nationalized newspapers, her reply was, "I'm not constitutionally capable." His reaction was that that was why he wanted her. And did it work out in practice? "Not entirely," she admits. She did report to him, and in practice, he eventually fired her.

She returned to England, where she

received her doctorate from Oxford in 1974. At this time, she was also head of the ANC's research department, and although she was more involved in what she describes as "broad anti-apartheid work," she also worked underground on such projects as assessing South Africa's nuclear capability.

"Frene worked flat out," recalls her nephew Zavareh Rustomjee, who is now director-general of the department of trade and industry. "Even when it was not popular (in England) to be part of the ANC."

It was around this time, too, that she had begun to get involved in the ANC Women's Section. Previously, she had disdained it as a "welfare" part of the ANC, but an exiled organizer of the Alexandra bus boycott, Florence Mposho, had consistently chided her for not taking women's emancipation more seriously. "I owe a lot of my awareness to her," she says.

With the support of a crop of exiles who left South Africa in the 1970s, Ginwala was among those who argued that liberation in South Africa would mean nothing without freedom for women. She had to fight the flipside of that battle too: just as she argued in ANC circles that liberation meant women's freedom, in international circles she argued that, for third world women, liberation without concomitant social, political and economic freedom was unthinkable.

Her constituency now is much broader, but her base, her lodestar, is still the organization and emancipation of women in South Africa.

When she returned from exile in 1990, she castigated both the ANC and the government for having only one woman on their fledgling negotiating forum. "How can these men serve on such a committee?" she asked of the ANC. "If there were 19 whites and one black, they would have refused to serve."

Perhaps it is her sharp tongue, or perhaps her devotion to the task she has set herself, that gives her the reputation of being somewhat difficult to work with. "That's partly true," admits her assistant Naidoo. "She sets high standards for herself and those around her."

Rustomjee, her sister's son, says of her that she is a mixture of "discipline, compassion and justice. The public perception of her is a hard one. The compassionate side, the family side, the softer side, I don't think comes across as easily." She makes regular time for her 85-year-old mother and spends what little is left with her sister's family.

It is a part of the woman that she is one of the most charming politicians around today, yet can be merciless with those she thinks are wasting her time. Recently, when members of the parliamentary trade union occupied her office during a protest strike — "without an appointment," she remarked acidly to the Press — she refused to see them and said she felt she was owed an apology.

There must be few politicians whose self-assurance can outweigh their anxieties about being popular, especially in their own constituencies.

Ginwala got her apology. Perhaps she'll file it with a letter she got from Mphumzi Mbetheni, a schoolchild who toured Parliament with Abbi and Elizabeth and the Read-a-Thon group. Mphumzi wrote thanking the Speaker "for everything that you have done for us when we were in Parliament. I thank you for being so kind to us when we arrived there."

The two missives might remind her of the difficulties, and the joys, of the task she has set herself.

Edited version of the article "Speaking openly" (*Leadership*, Volume 14, Number 1, 1995) reprinted with permission of the publisher, Churchill Murray Publication (Pty) Ltd, Cape Town, South Africa. Pippa Green is the political editor for SABC Radio News.



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# A Causeway with a cause

An erroneous change in the name of Lady Jamsetjee Road clouded the 150th anniversary celebration of the Mahim Causeway

Homi Rogers

Few anniversaries are observed with the misgiving that dimmed the sesquicentenary (150th anniversary) of Bombay's Mahim Causeway built by Lady Avabai Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy at a cost of Rs 1.40 lakhs. When the Causeway was ceremonially inaugurated by the Governor of Bombay on April 8, 1845, Lady Jamsetjee gave a further donation of Rs 22,000 for a "handsome approach to the causeway," as notes Jehangir R. P. Mody in *Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy The First Indian Knight and Baronet*. The new road, opened in 1848, has been known as Lady Jamsetjee Road ever since.

Hence, the change of name listed against it in the *Bombay Telephone Directory 1994* led to consternation in the Jejeebhoy family and the community. "I am greatly distressed, even disheartened, by this unnecessary change... (The Bombay Municipal) Corporation (BMC) has, by this contemptuous act committed a serious breach of trust," complained Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy (seventh baronet) in a letter to S. G. Kale, Municipal Commissioner, a copy of which



was sent to the Press, including *Parsiana*.

"There was a legend attached to the construction of the Causeway..." Mody quotes from an article by J. R. B. Jejeebhoy ("A Notable Centenary" in *Mumbai Vartaman* of March 21, 1945) based on an extract from a Portuguese paper. According to this source the lady was fulfilling a promise made to Virgin Mary at the Mount Mary Church of Bandra, which stands across the creek, that she would build an access road to the shrine if the male progeny she bore survived seven summers.

"Preposterous," thunders Ervad Peshotan Peer, erstwhile panthaky of Bandra's Tata Agiary, which lies on the way to the church. And chronology, it would appear, provides a postscript to this report,

for at the time the Jejeebhoy family pledged their financial support to the Causeway their son and heir, Cursetjee, the second Baronet, was 30 years old, while his brothers Rustomjee and Sorabjee were 17 and 16 years old, respectively. This much delayed redemption of a vow was not characteristic of the family which had, since Cursetjee's boyhood, contributed to many charitable causes and could not have forgotten the one they were committed to. The Causeway to which Lady Jejeebhoy contributed handsomely must hence have been built, one assumes, for altruistic reasons.

There had been earlier attempts to span this mischievous stretch of water, as narrated by Mody. An estimate was prepared in 1837 by Captain Foster for constructing a causeway at a cost of Rs 67,000. Khurshedji Cowasji Banaji then suggested that the government divert to it the Rs 10,000 already subscribed by the citizens of Bombay, for a causeway at Thane, and match the same with an equal contribution. The proposal was accepted, but the project remained stillborn as Banaji failed to collect the balance Rs 47,000 by public subscription. A year later, Jehangir Nusserwanji Wadia offered Rs 25,000 with the proviso that the government make up the deficit, but the offer was refused. And so people and their animals continued to ferry across in tiny boats, buffeted by waves and treacherous currents.

In the monsoon of 1841, tragedy struck. Fifteen to 20 boats capsized when crossing the creek, and many lives were lost, records Mody. Lady Avabai, Jamsetjee's wife of 38 years, and also his first cousin (it was her father's business that Jamsetjee had grown with and prospered) was moved. She had her husband write to the government that she was willing to set aside Rs 45,000 from her personal monies, if they could not find the necessary funds to build the Causeway.

Lady Avabai Jejeebhoy Courtesy: Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy — *The First Indian Knight and Baronet*

*The Bandra Creek circa 1922*

Courtesy: Bombay Through A Camera



The offer was accepted, but a fresh estimate called for had the costs spiralling to Rs 1,64,540. It was an amount that Jejeebhoy found exorbitant. Tenders for the work were invited through the military board, and Jamsetjee Dorabjee Naigaumwala, who in later years was to establish his name as a railway contractor, had his tender for Rs 1,36,780 accepted. Lady Jejeebhoy raised her contribution to Rs 1,00,000, and sent a cheque for the same on January 19, 1843.

Twenty days later, on February 8, work on the Causeway began from both sides in right earnest. Fearful that the work could stop if the estimate be once again found woefully short of the required amount, Lady Jejeebhoy loosened her purse strings again, and contributed a further Rs 40,000, laying down only one condition for this additional largesse: on completion, no toll should be levied on the public using the Causeway.

On April 8, 1945 (*roj Tir, mah Shehrev*, 1214 YZ) the causeway was opened by the then Governor of Bombay, Sir George Arthur at 5 p.m. It is said that a vast concourse of people of all creeds and communities assembled to witness the grand spectacle. Writes Jejeebhoy, "(The procession) consisting of the superintending engineer and his assistants, contractor Naigaumwala, a troop of lancers, the Governor's band, the

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## A cannon thundered in salute when the procession reached half-way across the Causeway

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Governor and his staff, Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy, all in different carriages..." crossed the highway, a cannon thundering in salute when it reached half-way.

Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy obtained permission from the court of directors to gift the engineer, Captain Cruickshank, a sum of Rs 5,000. Naigaumwala was gifted Rs 15,000 on the occasion.

Subsequently Lady Jejeebhoy offered Rs 22,000 to defray the cost of a good road from Mahim bazaar leading to the Causeway, which was named after her.

It was the renaming of this road, without any warning, that cast a pall of gloom on the Jejeebhoy family and members of the Zoroastrian community when the change was noticed, quite by accident, on the eve of the Causeway's sesquicentenary. An

agitated Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy remonstrated in his letter to the Municipal Commissioner, "That the Municipal Corporation of Greater Bombay has by one cruel stroke thought it fit to obliterate a page from the annals of Bombay's history by renaming Lady Jamsetjee Road as N. C. Kelkar Road and Dr A. S. Gaya Marg only goes to show its scant (regard) for the sentimental feelings of a community which has contributed so generously to the development of Bombay." But Kale has assured the present Baronet that the name of the road remains unchanged, and that, as a matter of policy, the BMC does not change the Indian name of roads. An article in *The Times of India* (April 8, 1995) by Gunvanthi Balaram, however, quotes the MTNL's (Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Limited) assistant general manager (directory) thus: "We get the list of old and new names from the BMC's publications division."

The Causeway and the approach road remain tenuous links for the community, reminding them and other citizens of Bombay of the benevolence and kind-heartedness that distinguished a Zoroastrian. And though the sesquicentenary of this strategic piece of land may have gone unsung, the alertness that spotted the *Directory* entry, is in itself a cause for celebration.

***With Best Wishes  
from***

**Mr Rusy M. Shroff, M.B.E.**

**and**

**Mrs Purviz R. Shroff**

# Filling Our Needs

Religious education for the adult can succeed only if it satisfies certain basic needs, says the author

Dina G. McIntyre

"And may that man reach what is better than good [ie the best], namely, the one who would instruct us to the straight paths of the Mighty One..." (Y43.3—*The Gathas of Zarathushtra* as translated by Prof Stanley Insler)

That is how Zarathushtra views religious education—instruction in the straight paths of the Mighty One. But in our Zoroastrian community in this country we have had limited success with adult education. One wonders why.

Perhaps the answer involves filling our needs. If a religious experience fills our needs, people will come for it no matter how far away they live, or how busy they are. For me, the more I learn about Zarathushtra's teachings, the more deeply they fill my needs—in ways I never imagined possible when I first started to study the *Gathas*. Of course, people's needs differ. So essentially what I give you is a personal perspective.

In attempting to figure out the ingredients for a successful program of religious education, I looked at the problem both in terms of Zarathushtra's teachings, and in terms of filling our needs. The system of adult religious education which I suggest is to create local adult study groups, like Sunday schools, that meet periodically, and that include within their structure and activities, five requirements: knowledge of Zarathushtra's teachings, discussion, action, friendship and prayer.

## Knowledge of Zarathushtra's teachings

It saddens me to hear leaders of the Zoroastrian community say that all religions are the same in terms of their ideas, and that it is only the ceremonies and traditions that give a religion its identity. In fact, there are many differences between the ideas of Zarathushtra and the ideas taught by other major religions. Shouldn't we be aware of these differences? If we are Zarthushtis, shouldn't we know what Zarathushtra taught? Our study group should have, as its

highest priority, acquiring knowledge of Zarathushtra's own teachings and, every bit as important, exploring how these teachings are relevant to our lives.

Take for example the question of mind versus spirit. In both the east and the west, today, there is a perception that mind and spirit are two opposite and irreconcilable forces. At one extreme, people in scientific fields express scepticism at anything spiritual, regarding as fantasy something that cannot be dissected, analysed and quantified. At the other extreme, religious authorities denigrate the mind as an impediment to spirituality. They find it unsettling to their authority to have their dictates questioned by inquiring minds, and often require of their adherents a blind, unquestioning faith. In between these two extremes are the vast majority of people, uncomfortable with this conflict, but not knowing how to resolve it.

Zarathushtra's approach is quite different from the conventional wisdom of today. He does not see mind and spirit as irreconcilable and opposing forces. He tells us that a good mind and spirit are both a part of God, and they also exist in man. Both of these divine forces—a good mind and good spirit—are necessary to bring about the desired end. In Zarathushtra's view, it's okay to think for ourselves. Spirituality is not threatened by an inquiring mind rather, it is strengthened by it. I love this harmony between mind and spirit in Zarathushtra's teachings. It makes sense. It frees me from artificial scepticism, and also from unthinking dogma. I like the freedom and the responsibility that this teaching gives me to figure out what's right in my time period. And do it.

If you first study the themes that run through the *Gathas*, with quotations from the *Gathas* that relate to each theme, it will not only help you to understand Zarathushtra's ideas, it will also help you to become familiar with his own words. With this foundation, you can start a verse by

verse study of the *Gathas*, which is more challenging, but very rewarding. If you wish to start at a simpler level, I suggest you start with a book that gives you a general overview, like Farhang Mehr's *The Zoroastrian Tradition*.

Each week, have a different person in the study group assume responsibility for explaining (or reading aloud) one chapter or one lesson, and leading a discussion on it. The more participation you have between members of the group, the more successful the group will be.

## Discussion

One of the exciting things about studying Zarathushtra's teaching, is becoming aware of how relevant it is to our lives. How does it help us to relate to people, to solve problems, to function at home and at work? How does it help us to improve our neighborhoods, to find solutions for the great questions of our day? A good way to explore the relevance of Zarathushtra's teachings to our lives is through group discussions. Bring forward questions or problems that are of interest, and then discuss those questions within the framework of the teachings of Zarathushtra that you have learned about. Or pick a topic of current interest—the war on drugs, abortion, the O. J. Simpson situation, Bosnia, anything that interests your group. Analyse or discuss the problem and its solutions within the framework of the teachings of Zarathushtra that you have learned. You will be amazed at how these teachings come to life, and how much they help you to make sense out of your life.

If your group decides to get into the later Zoroastrian literature, you will find some of it quite beautiful, and some of it really awful. Don't be afraid to discuss realistically what turns you off. If you look at every major religion, you will see that over the centuries, the practices and customs that have been devised by man to suit a particular time period, become obsolete,

and are relinquished by succeeding generations.

I doubt you would find many Christians today who see their religion in terms of the practices which prevailed in medieval times, when the scourge and the cell were considered indispensable aids to achieving spirituality. In the same way, Zoroastrians today have relinquished many of the man-made practices and customs that governed our forefathers. For example, in the *Vendidad*, it was considered a "most deadly deed" for a person to permit any hair to drop into the ground without protective rituals, and a person guilty of such conduct, we are told, would pay for it with his life. Today we all go to barber shops and beauty salons, without fear of capital punishment. Yet we still cling to certain outmoded ideas that are demeaning to women, ideas that appear in later literature and not in the revelations of Zarathushtra. This is not right. If your study group decides to get into the later literature, don't be afraid to look at both the good and the bad. Take what's good and use it in your lives. And let go of what your good mind and your good spirit tell you is not good.

Adult religious education will not be a success if it alienates you from common sense and life in the mainstream. It will not be a success unless it's meaningful to your life. And the best way to make it meaning-

ful to your life is to discuss and understand Zarathushtra's original teachings in terms of today's knowledge, and real life situations.

If you want your study group to survive, it is essential that in the course of your discussions, you treat each other with courtesy, with friendship, with respect. Give each person a chance to speak in turn. Don't interrupt. Don't yell and scream. As Dastur Nowrooz Minochehr-Homji was fond of saying: "Let us disagree without being disagreeable." The sharing of knowledge and insight which group discussions generate is a great way to learn, but the bottom line is that each individual has the right to think for herself or himself, and make his or her own choices. I am well aware that there are Zoroastrians in India who scoff at this idea. In so doing, I think they miss a very profound aspect of Zarathushtra's thought. If you read the *Gathas*, you will find that he lived in a time of great cruelty and oppression. Both the princes and the priests were a part of this stranglehold of oppression:

"... the rich Karpan [type of priest] chose the rule of tyrants and deceit rather than truth" (Y32.12).

"Those deceitful ones who appear in grandeur as lords and ladies, even they have ruined this life by stealing the property of

the (true) inheritor... [and] have tried to deflect the truthful from the very best thinking." (Y32.11)

Zarathushtra himself was on the receiving end of this oppression, and was ruthlessly ostracized by these corrupt priests and princes. He complains to God:

"...throughout my lifetime I have been condemned as the greatest defiler, I who try to satisfy the poorly protected (creatures) with truth... come to me, give support to me..." (Y49.1)

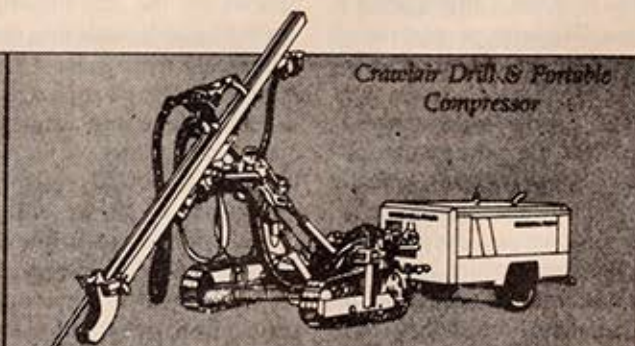
"To what land to flee? Where shall I go to flee? They exclude (me) from my family and from my clan. The community with which I have associated has not satisfied me, nor those who are the deceitful rulers of the land. How, then, shall I satisfy Thee, Wise Lord?" (Y46.1).

"...I lament to Thee. Take notice of it, Lord, offering the support which a friend should grant to a friend..." (Y46.2).

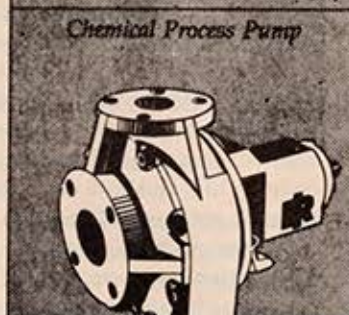
Confronted by corruption and oppression, Zarathushtra wrestled with the problem of how to bring about change, and he concluded that change starts with an individual making choices. A profound insight. You can have the best systems in the world -- judicial, legislative, corporate. But if the individuals who staff these systems don't make the right choices, even the best systems in the world are not going to work. So



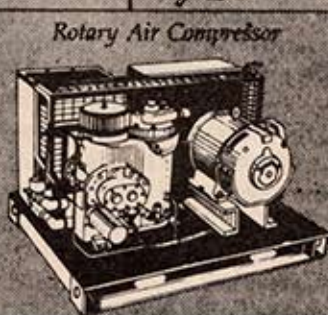
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let the function of your study group be supportive, instructive. Not dictatorial. Not dogmatic. Respect the right of each person to think for himself and make his/her own choices.

### Action

In a thousand and one ways, our religion tells us that good thoughts and good words are a great beginning, but they are not enough. They have to be translated into actions.

Zarathushtra himself sees the purpose of existence to be two-fold — to perfect ourselves, and to perfect our world. I think, therefore, that a successful program of religious education should include not only knowledge and discussion, but also some action — some perfecting of our world. Volunteer programs give us a wide variety of opportunities to put our beliefs into practice, and in the process cement social and communal relationships with good works and goodwill.

Our religion has become something of a spectator sport. But that is not the way Zarathushtra conceives it. To him, it is a way of life. Like the group discussions, a group project, or group action will be a meaningful way of making Zarathushtra's teachings come to life and, in the process, it will make the members feel good about themselves, good about their communities, and good about their study group. I also suggest that in choosing your projects you should not limit them to projects that benefit only the Zoroastrian community. Zarathushtra taught that the loving and benevolent spirit of God, *spenta mainyu*, lives in each of us — not just in Zoroastrians. If we truly believe this, then we begin to understand the brotherhood of man. A Persian poet of the 15th century, Jami, expressed it this way. He said:

"Each essence is a separate glass,  
Through which the Sun of Being's Light is passed,  
Each tinted fragment sparkles in the sun  
A thousand colors, but the Light is One."

We need to re-learn this ancient and beautiful teaching of our prophet that is so relevant to life today.

### Friendship

We live in a fast-moving society that generates a substantial amount of stress. And this stress creates a corresponding need for something that refreshes our spirits, re-charges our energies. Knowledge and discussion of Zarathushtra's beautiful teachings, and good works that put them into practice, are all good ways to refresh our spirits and re-charge our energies. But, in

addition, we need to create a band of friends.

One of the unique aspects of Zarathushtra's teaching is his idea of the relationship between man and God. He does not describe this relationship as that of a father to a child, or a master to a servant. He describes it as that of a beloved to a beloved or a friend to a friend. Just as God is friends with us, so must we be friends with each other. Just as we are beloved of God, so must we be loving to each other.

Our community is torn by controversies. There is some hypocrisy in preaching "unity" if this unity does not include many of us. Exclusionary practices do not make for unity. Such controversies do not refresh our spirits and re-charge our energies. For adult education to succeed, we must either decide these controversies, once and for all, and then set them aside — not keep resurrecting them — or have separate study groups for those whose beliefs and practices are totally irreconcilable. Otherwise, you will simply wind up with a lot of fights, a lot of disgust, and people will start turning off and dropping out. In the *Gathas*, Zarathushtra talks of a brotherhood or community of those who follow truth and right — *asha*. That spirit of friendship, of belonging, of being good to each other, is what will make people travel long miles, and take time out of busy lives, to be a part of our study group.

### Prayer

I suggest 10 minutes at the start of each study group session to pray as a group for some particular person or good purpose. Today, we tend to think of our prayers as being very rigidly prescribed, in both form and content. And that's perfectly all right. But let us not limit ourselves to the prescribed routine. In the *Gathas* we see examples of many different types of prayer. There are many instances in which Zarathushtra prays for others. For example, he says to Ahura Mazda:

"Thee... do I lovingly entreat for the best for Frashaoshtra..." (Y28.8).

Zarathushtra tells us that if a prayer has two ingredients, God will never fail to answer, and those two ingredients are good purpose and love:

"... For I know that words deriving from good purpose and from love are not to be left wanting by you." (Y28.10).

So encourage members of the group to bring to the group's attention whatever person or situation is in need of prayer, and follow Zarathushtra's example. Pray together with good purpose, and with love, to help someone in need. Bear in mind, the

answer you get may not be the answer you want, but there will be an answer. And it will be the best.

There are many ways to teach. We can teach with words, but more powerfully by actions. The shyest member of your study group can be as effective a teacher with his actions as the most articulate member of the group is with his words. So let me close with a verse from the *Gathas* which give us the objectives of religious education.

"...Through good thinking  
the Creator of existence shall promote  
the true realization  
of what is most healing  
according to our wish." (Y50.11)

Edited and abridged from the paper presented to the Ninth North American Zoroastrian Congress, Pennsylvania, July 1994. Dina G. McIntyre is a practising lawyer who published in '89-90 *An Introduction to the Gathas of Zarathushtra* — a series of 12 contributory essays by various scholars of Zoroastrianism, copies of which may be obtained, without charge, while supplies last, by writing to Dina @ 1609 Lawyers Building, Pittsburg PA 15219 USA.



### MATRIMONIAL

Bachelor in fifties having independent business seeks matrimony with suitable girl. Apply with details and photograph (returnable) to:

The Advertiser  
Parsiana, Matrimonial (June/24-95)\*  
GPO Box 892, Bombay 400001

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

### MATRIMONIAL

Handsome Baroda based Parsi gentleman, aged 40 years, 6', fair, from a respectable family, earning a good salary seeks matrimonial alliance from educated, home-loving, working/non-working girls. Apply with photograph returnable to:

The Advertiser  
Parsiana, Matrimonial (June/25-95)\*  
GPO Box 892, Bombay 400001

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

The age of Zoroastrian brides (as listed in this issue) ranged between 21 and 35 years, the arithmetic mean -- the total number of individual ages divided by the number of brides -- being 27 years. The corresponding figures for the grooms were 24 and 39 years, averaging at 32 years.

There were 66 Zoroastrians who died in June in Bombay as compared to 13 who were born. Of the 20 persons who died due to heart disease, nine were 80 years and above. Ten Zoroastrians died due to pneumonia and lung related diseases and eight due to cancer. Old age and general debility claimed four patients whereas three deaths each were attributed to hypertension and kidney failure. The 16 isolated cases registered in June were: diabetes, septicemia, cerebral haemorrhage, in-

fection of both legs, liver disease, nervous disorder, encephalopathy, burns, urinary tract infection, dehydration, ulcerative colitis (an inflammation and ulcerative condition of the colon), cholecystitis (inflammation of the gall-bladder), atherosclerosis, arthritis, haematemesis and diaphragmatic hernia. Two stillborn baby boys were lost to the community. The youngest to breathe his last was a 30-year-old male as compared to the oldest: a 93-year-old lady. The Zoroastrian life expectancy at birth for June in Bombay was 71 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.

Bora Masjid St, Fort, 400001; June 9  
*Koomi Nariman Pithawalla* (72), 5/20, B. S. Panthaky Baug, Gundavali, Andheri (E), 400069; June 9  
*Ardeshtir Sohrab Bakhtiyar* (41), 24, Haji Habib Bldg, Dr Ambedkar Rd, Dadar, 400014; June 10  
*Piloo Behman Colabewalla* (77), 12, Gulmanor, 8, Strand Rd, Opp Telephone Bhavan, Colaba, 400005; June 10  
*Khorshed Jehanbux Dubash* (61), 11/11, Gamadia Clny, Tardeo Rd, 400007; June 10  
*Framroze Fakirji Jokhi* (90), 9/9, Rustom Baug, Victoria Rd, Byculla, 400027; June 10  
*Pheroze Behram Karanjia* (79), Shengre-La, 4, Carmichael Rd, 400026; June 10  
*Behram Boman Najmi* (68), A/28, Laxman Apts, 212/D, Azad Lane, Andheri (W), 400058; June 10  
*Aloomai Navroji Patel* (87), Sabani Apts, 62/B, Zig Zag Rd, Pali Hill, Bandra, 400050; June 10  
*Piroja Kaikhushroo Baria* (92), 10/G-2, Shapur Baug, V. P. Rd, 400004; June 11  
*Khushroo Nariman Damania* (30), B/20, Godrej Baug, Off Nepean Sea Rd, 400006; June 11  
*Mani Jamshedji Davar* (83), 152, Mehernaz, 91, Cuffe Parade, 400005; June 11  
*Dina Barjorji Elavia* (77), C/o Khorshed J. Mehta, Sanghika Hse, 558, Adenwalla Rd, Matunga, 400019; June 11  
*Tehmina Khodadad Irani* (62), Merwan Mans, J. V. Rd, Opp Rly Stn, Ghatkopar (W), 400086; June 11  
*Khorshed Pirojshah Vankadia* (65), 17, Mullan Manzil, Baram St, 400007; June 11  
*Katy Rustom Charna* (73), 9/4, New Geeta Hsg Soc, Anandnagar, Dombivali (E), 421203; June 12  
*Silloo Burjor Hiranmanek* (63), Rati Khush, 32, P. J. Nehru Rd, Vakola Pipe Line, Santacruz (E), 400055; June 12  
*Keki Manecksha Jalnewalla* (62), 764/A, Banoo Hse, Dr Ghanti Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; June 12

## BOMBAY

### BORN

A boy to *Zinobia and Pervez Karanjia* on May 27, 1995  
A girl to *Jasmin and Marzban Maney*; June 11  
A girl to *Pervin and Percy Arsiwala*; June 14  
A girl to *Maharukh and Hazir Dubash*; June 19  
A boy to *Mahazarin and Zen Bharucha*; June 20  
A boy to *Amy and Cyrus Rustom*; June 20  
A boy to *Zia and Ashad Mehta*; June 21  
A boy to *Binaifer and Phiroz Amaria*; June 22  
A boy to *Nivedita and Kurush Paghdwala*; June 22  
A girl to *Susan and Percy Poonegar*; June 24  
A boy to *Armaity and Neville Wadia*; June 24  
A boy, *Kaiwan*, to *Nilufer and Nozer Tantra*; June 28  
A boy, *Karl*, to *Tanaz and Kersi Vaghaiwala*; June 28  
A boy to *Armaity and Adille Sumariwala*; June 30

### MARRIED

*Khurshid Erach Sethna and Mehernoz Adi Italia* of Bangalore; June 1  
*Anahita Gustad Tampal and*

*Raymond Hosi Irani*; June 2  
*Gulshan Darabsha Mahuvawalla and Sharukh Adi Navelmanek*; June 3  
*Ketayun Nozer Daruwalla and Kurosh Daryoosh Fallahzadeh*; June 4  
*Delnaaz Kurush Mubarakai and Spenta Farokh Irani*; June 5  
*Tanaze Behram Edulbehram and Rashid Behram Khusrowshahi*; June 6  
*Feroza Jamshed Vatcha and Jehangir Jamshed Madon* of Thane; June 8  
*Farhana Merwan Zainabadi and Jimmy Noshir Shroff*; June 24

### DIED

*Baby boy of Hufiz Farrokh Basta* (stillborn), residing at B/1, Cusrow Baug, S. B. Rd, 400039; June 1  
*Coomi Jamshed Daruwalla* (84), 4, Malcolm Baug, Jogeshwari (W), 400102; June 1  
*Roda Pirojsha Kavarana* (75), Banaji Bldg, Forjett St Cross Lane, Tardeo, 400007; June 1  
*Meherji Maneckshaw Mandviwala* (76), Safna, 7/D, Vrindavan Park, Near E. M. Circle, Sama Rd, Baroda, 390008; June 1  
*Pilamai Jamshedji Boywalla*

(89), Bandra Florist Comp, 23/D, Hill Rd, Bandra, 400050; June 3  
*Jamshed Kaikhushroo Bharucha* (80), Jer Baug, Dr Ambedkar Rd, Byculla, 400027; June 4  
*Tehmina Pallonji Gotla* (89), C/o Raty R. Paghdwala, Patel Bldg, Forjett Cross Lane, Gowalia Tank, 400036; June 4  
*Navroji Hormusji Mistry* (75), 22, Cama Bldg, Gilder Lane, Tardeo, 400008; June 4  
*Behramsha Dhanjishaw Patel* (54), 3, Kavarana Bldg, Sant Gadge Maharaj Lane, Dadar, 400014; June 4  
*Bachha Bomanshaw Bam* (74), 649, Kaka Bldg, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; June 5  
*Jamshed Ardeshtir Mazkoory* (75), 15, Khudabux Bldg, Opp Sales Tax Office, Mazgaon T.T., 400010; June 5  
*Dolat Nariman Patel* (80), 27, Sethna Bldg, Mia Mohammad Chotani Rd, Mahim, 400016; June 5  
*Dinshaw Rustom Irani* (70), 602, Mitha Towers, Sector No 17, Vashi, New Bombay, 400703; June 6  
*Dhun Edulji Baria* (61), A/38, Bharat Ngr, 342, Grant Rd, 400007; June 7  
*Daulat Rustomji Mistry* (85), 8,

**Loveji Munchershaw Kapadia** (60), 1-4/U, Cusrow Bag, S. B. Rd, 400039; June 12  
**Sam Cursetjee Banatwala** (62), 2/A, Indu Park, N. Dutta Marg, 4 Bglws, Andheri (W), 400058; June 14  
**Dina Minocher Choksi** (84), M/60, Cusrow Bag, S. B. Rd, 400039; June 14  
**Bejan Burjor Bharucha** (62), B/14, Jer Bag, Dr Ambedkar Rd, Byculla, 400027; June 16  
**Peshotan (Pesi) Nariman Daruwala** (68), 4/4, Khorshedhai Shroff Bldg, Gamadia Clny, Tardeo, 400007; June 16  
**Dinshaw Burjorji Ogra** (44), B, Tapia Bldg, Jalbhai Path, Charni Rd Jn, 400004; June 16  
**Jal Jamshedji Vakil** (69), Amalfi, Napean Sea Rd, 400006; June 16  
**Thrity Rusi Bengali** (45), C-1/12, Contractor Bag, Mori Rd, Mahim, 400016; June 17  
**Allamai Dhanjishaw Driver** (85), F. S. Parukh Dharamshalla, 34, Hughes Rd, 400007; June 17  
**Banubai Kaikhushroo Bharucha** (79), 16, Gandhi Mans, Wadia St, Tardeo, 400034; June 19  
**Baby boy of Khurshid Nadir Elavia** (stillborn), 81, M. A. Patel Bglw, J. P. Rd, Andheri (W), 400058; June 19  
**Mani Maneckshaw Mistry** (86), 147, Lentin Hse, Lamington Cross Rd, 400007; June 19  
**Ardeshtir Pestonji Sidhwa** (84), Mirza St, Mahatma Gandhi Rd, Udvada, 396180; June 19  
**Dina Bhicaji Daruwala** (78), 104/B, Jupiter Apts, Samarth Ngr, Lokhandwala Complex, Andheri (W), 400058; June 20  
**Firoze Framji Elavia** (49), 567, Dinsil, 14th Main Rd, Kora Mangala, Bangalore, 560034; June 20  
**Framroze Mancherji Patel** (87), A/7, Mehta Bldg, Captain Clny, Tardeo Rd, 400034; June 20  
**Baimai Berjor Patel** (55), 2, Jahangir Bag, Opp Jussawala Sanatorium, Juhu, 400049; June 20  
**Freny Jamshedji Engineer** (78), 501, Kiran Towers, 45, Pali Hill Rd, Bandra, 400050; June 21  
**Khorshed Minocher Sethna** (84), Sethna Hse, 251, Tardeo Rd, 400007; June 21

**Daulatbai Pestonji Tavadia** (83), 6/16, Tata Clny, Tardeo, 400034; June 21  
**Dinamai Pirojshaw Wadia** (82), 8-20/A, Talukdar Bldg, Marazban Clny, A. R. Nair Rd, 400011; June 22  
**Dhunjisha Ratanji Kalyaniwalla** (82), Batliwalla Bldg, Khan Est, M. M. Chotani Rd, Mahim, 400016; June 24  
**Kaikhushroo Fram Vakil** (91), 209/B, Cumballa Crest, 42, Peddar Rd, 400026; June 24  
**Rustomji Bomanji Engineer** (86), D/2, Eden Hall, Dr Annie Besant Rd, Worli, 400018; June 25  
**Eruch Byramji Mistry** (73), Jeevan Dhara, Dr Ambedkar Rd, Bandra (W), 400050; June 25  
**Tehmina Jehangir Chhoy** (93), 10/8, Rustom Bag, Victoria Rd, Byculla, 400027; June 26  
**Najamai Meherwanji Dalal** (93), 20, Dhunjibhoy Bldg, Sleater Rd, 400007; June 26  
**Jamshedji Ardeshtir Gora** (85), B/14, Cusrow Bag, S. B. Rd, 400039; June 26  
**Temuras Hiraji Baria** (69), Soonaiji Mans, Gowalia Tank, 400036; June 29  
**Tehmina Fardunji Jasavala**

(83), 5/27, A. H. Wadia Bag, Parel Tank Rd, 400033; June 29  
**Gool Behram Boga** (71), 6, Sai Aashish, Dr Peter Dias Rd, Hill Rd, Bandra, 400050; June 30  
**Khodamuradh Rustom Irani (Kohinoor)** (81), Kanya Bhavan, 554, Chira Bazar, Girgaum Rd, 400002; June 30  
**Nargis Nariman Kelawalla** (76), 4/62, A. H. Wadia Bag, Parel Tank Rd, 400033; June 30  
**Shirin Homi Sarkari** (75), D/6, Rustom Bag, Victoria Rd, Byculla, 400027; June 30

#### CALCUTTA

DIED

**Jamshed Shiavax Banker**, June 15

#### POONA

DIED

**Baby boy of Xerxes Burjor Bharucha** (2 days), 4, Dr Coyaji Rd, East St, 411001; June 6  
**Nargis B. Marolia** (70), C/o Meheroo M. Dalal, B/3, Park View, Salisbury Park, 411037; June 6  
**Perin Ratansha Edibam** (92), 43, Sassoon Rd, 411001; June 7  
**Noshir Darabsha Jijina** (74), 9, Navyug, 15, Wellesley Rd, 411001; June 17

**Pillamai Kaikhushru Irani** (79), A/2, Hermes Towers, 618, Sachapir St, 411001; June 29

#### SURAT

DIED

**Dolatbanu Jamshedji Tural** (79), Goti Adarian, Dhastipura, 394003; June 8  
**Shera Kamaji Daruwala** (72), Palia St, Nanpura, 395001; June 25

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#### CANADA

**Richmond, British Columbia**

MARRIED

**Tazeen Behramfram**, daughter of Khurshed and Sam and **Kersasp Bharucha**, son of Banoo and Rusi of Edmonton; June 3

#### USA

**Chicago**

MARRIED

**Natasha Bilimoria** and **David H. Casey**; June 24

**Durham, North Carolina**

DIED

**Freny Udvadia**; June 19

Compiled by Roxana A. Driver

#### TOTALS FOR 1995

|                  | Bombay |     | India |    | World |     |
|------------------|--------|-----|-------|----|-------|-----|
|                  | A      | B   | A     | B  | A     | B   |
| <b>BORN</b>      |        |     |       |    |       |     |
| Boys             | 10     | 49  | --    | 4  | --    | 9   |
| Girls            | 13     | 40  | --    | 3  | --    | 7   |
| <b>MARRIED</b>   |        |     |       |    |       |     |
| Parsi            | 8      | 161 | --    | 2  | 1     | 3   |
| Intercommunal    | --     | 25^ | --    | -- | 1     | 6   |
| <b>DIED</b>      |        |     |       |    |       |     |
| <b>CONSIGNED</b> |        |     |       |    |       |     |
| Males            | 30     | 232 | 3     | 46 | --    | 11* |
| Females          | 36     | 222 | 5     | 42 | 1     | 17* |
| <b>CREMATED</b>  |        |     |       |    |       |     |
| Males            | --     | 2   | --    | -- | --    | --  |
| Females          | --     | --  | --    | -- | --    | --  |

A: Total numbers in this issue

B: Running totals for 1995 (February-March 1995-June 1995 issues)

^ Males married out -- 12

Females married out -- 13

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

These figures pertain to information provided to or collected by *Parsiana*. They do not represent the total number of births, marriages and deaths in the Zoroastrian community in India and abroad.



### NEPAL BONANZA

8 days - BOMBAY-DELHI-BOMBAY by  
air-conditioned Rajdhani Express  
DELHI-KATHMANDU-DELHI by air  
Visiting Kathmandu-Pokhara-Dhulikhel-  
Pashupatinath-Delhi. Rs 12,555  
Dep: 14th October 1995

### NAINITAL

10 days - BOMBAY-DELHI-BOMBAY  
by air-conditioned Rajdhani Express  
Visiting Nainital-Bhimtal-Ranikhet-  
Almora-Delhi-Agra-Fatehpursikri  
Rs 7,777. Dep: 14th October 1995

### GO.. GO... GOA

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and a bottle of wine for all. Rs 4,199  
Dep: 23rd and 29th October  
and 22nd December 1995

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# Randeria: research and religion

Died: Dr (Ms) Jer Dara Randeria, 64, eminent cancer researchist who is credited with being the first person in the world to successfully inbreed certain strains of mastomies, on March 25, 1995 at the Sherwood Central Hospice in Durban, South Africa following cancer.

For nearly four decades Randeria (née Mody) conducted extensive studies in cancer during which time she was instrumental in building up research facilities at different institutes: she set up the Experimental Pathology Laboratory in the biology division of the Indian Cancer Research Centre; she introduced the department of histopathology at the then newly started CIBA Research Centre at Bombay; she established the Cancer Research Institute and its animal room facility at the University of Durban, Westville working as its head and senior research officer for 15 years during which time she was able to culture mastomies — breed certain strains of mice that "spontaneously develop intrastomach cancer and ductal breast cancer analogous to those found in humans," it was reported by Dr Thillay Naidoo in *The Parsee Community in South Africa*. She had also then organized the First International Seminar on Mastomies. Before proceeding to Durban, Randeria was for a decade serving the Cancer Research Institute, Tata Memorial Centre as officer in charge of experimental pathology, informs Capt Hormazdiar Desai in his detailed write-up.

While *The Mercury* of March 27, refers to her as a "senior cancer research scientist," *The Daily News* of the same date acknowledged her as "respected cancer research scientist." Randeria had the distinction of being appointed by the World Health Organisation, Geneva as a member of the Expert Advisory Panel, Food Additives and served a five-year term as member of the American College of Toxicology. Her biographical details — complimenting her on her excellent attainments — have also appeared in cancer research directories of UK and USA, *Who's Who of International Biographical Centre*, Cambridge and *Who's Who of Women in South Africa*. She was the first Asian lady to win the prestigious Kalsia Cancer Research Prize in 1965.

To her goes the honor of being the first Parsi bride to be permitted entry into South Africa which was then doggedly advocating the apartheid system. It was with tremendous difficulty that her husband Dara, an ophthalmic surgeon, was able to convince the authorities who ultimately



relented on the proviso that he bring a wife who would be an asset to the Indian community, recalls Dara's sister Perin Dittia.

Her research findings were sought across the globe. As mentions the April '95 issue of *Varsity Voice*, the publication of the University of Durban — Westville, "A prolific writer, Dr Randeria authored over 70 publications in international journals and presented papers at numerous international conferences." She was guest lecturer in pathology at the Grant Medical College, Bombay; Regional Research Laboratory, Hyderabad; Department of Cancer Research, Berkeley, California; and at the University of Perugia, Italy. At the University of Bombay she served as guide for postgraduate MSc students specializing in applied biology and microbiology, gave annual lectures in pathology and bacteriology, and conducted classes in basic histology and pathology.

After graduating in microbiology and chemistry, Randeria did her postgraduation

from the Indian Cancer Research Centre, the subject of her thesis being "Biological testing of tobacco extracts for carcinogenicity." "Her research on betel chewing and cancer had been acclaimed internationally," states *The Leader* of March 31, 1995. For five years she was the recipient of the coveted scholarship from the National Institute of Health, USA. As the Bombay University and J. N. Tata scholar, she proceeded to the University of Leeds, UK, studied at the department of experimental pathology and cancer research and completed her PhD (Med) with her thesis entitled "Experimental ovarian tumors in mice in varying conditions." Further insight and experience she gained by undertaking study tours of several well-known European cancer research laboratories. At the Penrose Research Laboratory, University of Pennsylvania, she did a course in comparative pathology.

Surat born Randeria's early education was at the Dhunmai Cawasji School in Khandala. As a science student at Bombay's St Xavier's College, she had hoped to make her career in medicine. But when she was unable to secure a seat in a medical college having fallen short of a few marks, she opted to pursue microbiology, informs her brother Faramroz Mody.

She also spared time from her extremely busy professional work and schedule to study in depth the religio-culture of the Parsis and the Zoroastrian concepts that elated Iran. She has written some 30 studied papers on Zoroastrian topics and comparative religion. She was one of the most vociferous proponents of the Fasli calendar, urging all the Zoroastrian sects to adopt one uniform calendar. Her popular books are *Man and his Culture Through the Ages*, *Fresh Enquiry Into Eternal Themes* and *The Parsi Mind — A Zoroastrian Asset to Culture*. In the last mentioned book she writes, "It is time for a get-together to rake up ideas, to dig into treasure chests forgotten in dusty attics, to thread the pearls and stud the scabbards, now in Parsi style."

In 1993 she was the scholar invited by the K. R. Cama Oriental Institute to deliver the Government Fellowship Lectures when she covered "Some Unique Concepts in Zoroastrianism." These talks were in memory of her revered mother Dina K. Mody to whom as she put it, "faith was as natural as life."

Despite all her achievements, Randeria

was very simple, humble and self-effacing. To this scientist, service was love in action. She believed that the best reward for service is power to do greater service.

Randeria is survived by her husband Dara and daughter Pervuez.

(Compiled from a write-up submitted by Capt Hormazdiar Desai and other sources.)

## Benign Belgamvala

Died: Minocher K. Belgamvala, 80, erst-while president of the Madras Parsi Zarthosti Anjuman (MPZA) for 27 years, on January 8, 1995 following a brief illness.

"His calm and gentle temperament, skillful diplomacy and his ability to remain unruffled when provoked or in the face of crisis" made Belgamvala a popular president of the MPZA and chairman of the Jal Phiroj Clubwala (JPC) Dar-e-Meher, the two posts to which he brought "grace and dignity," as notes a press release issued by the Madras Parsi Association. Two years ago the community in Madras honored him by conferring on him the status of first patron member of the MPZA.

His deeds of kindness and generosity were recollected by both Parsis and non-Parsis at a condolence meeting convened by the executive committee of the MPZA in memory of Minoo, as he was known among his circle of friends and admirers. MPZA president Nariman Mogrelia recalled how he had benefitted from his association over the years with Belgamvala, and Jehangir Clubwala, trustee of the JPC Dar-e-Meher referred to Belgamvala's attitude of going out of his way to help his fellowmen.

In his endeavor to promote fraternity among Zoroastrians in Madras, on the occasion of the Clubwala Dar-e-Meher's 75th anniversary in 1985 the softspoken Belgamvala had remarked that the platinum jubilee has "presented us with an opportunity to take stock of ourselves." Heading an anjuman which was otherwise deemed conservative, on certain issues they maintained their stand like permitting non-Parsis to pay their last respects by viewing the face of the deceased Parsi.

That he never lost his temper even in the most trying circumstances was ad-

mired by S. Govind Swaminathan, former advocate general of Tamil Nadu while his contribution to the advancement of motor sports in Madras was lauded by Indu Chandok, president of the Madras Motor Sports Club.

Among other associations with which Belgamvala had enduring ties are the Automobile Association of South India where he was chairman until his demise, and the Madras Motor Sports Club where he was president for nearly two decades. "At a time when motor sports was the exclusive privilege of the rich, it was his pioneering spirit, tireless efforts and organizational capability that made motor racing popular and put Madras firmly on the map of this exciting sport," notes a write-up on Belgamvala.

Horse racing was among Belgamvala's other varied interests. He was an official of the Madras Race Club, a popular member

of the Madras Gymkhana Club and a charter member of the Lions Club of South Madras, we are informed.

An engineer by profession, Belgamvala was the regional manager of Asbestos Cement Ltd for 33 years and had started the Asbestos Cement factory in Coimbatore before he launched his own business, M. K. Belgamvala and Company, as distributors and consultants to builders and interior decorators,

informs the press release. Bangalore born Belgamvala had acquired a degree in electrical engineering from the old Mysore State and graduated in radio engineering from the City and Guilds of London. Audio engineering was listed among his hobbies and so too was listening to music, both pop and classical, being particularly fond of the tango and Viennese waltzes.

As notes a tribute, "Minoo fitted into just about every definition there is of the word 'gentleman.' Not just on the more obvious level of gracious manners, mild temperament, impeccable dressing, refinement of style, living well and making friends well, but more so in the deeper sense — as a person who could not cause pain to others and who was genuinely willing to help people in distress, even if it meant putting their interests before his own."

Belgamvala is survived by his wife Meheroo and sons Darius and Hormaz.

Parinaz Gandhi

## EVENTS AND PERSONALITIES

*continued from page 12*

of merit and the war service badge have also been earned by him. A strict disciplinarian, he practices the elements of scouting, mentions the leaflet.

"To provide training in good citizenship by means of games and outdoor activities, to train body and mind, to develop character (self-control, self-reliance, obedience, resourcefulness, etc) and to give healthy, instructive and useful pastime," are the chief aims of the group.

## Patel's Hungarian goulash

The task of doing business with a company in the red is daunting enough. But when it also belongs to a different political and cultural hue, it means one is really Hung(a)ry for a challenge.

Homi Patel, managing director of REPL Engineering, probably was. In December 1993, reports the *Sunday Observer* of April 30-May 6, 1995, Patel's REPL acquired 51 percent of the VSZM Kft shareholding for Rs 3.50 crores when the five-crore turnover Hungarian company was in the red to the tune of Rs 12 lakhs. By 1994, "in the very first year after taking it over," to quote *Business India* of May 8-21, 1995, the company had doubled the turnover to Rs 10 crores, and "turned around VSZM into a profit-making company." Patel, reports the *Sunday Observer*, hopes to better the 14 percent profit, and has set the company a target of Rs 14 crores turnover in 1995, despite heavy planned investment in major equipment. "Patel, in fact," continues the report, "postulates a growth rate of 25 to 30 percent for the next three years," and reckons Hungary a sound base for future exports to Europe.

The pioneer of heat-shrink technology in India, Patel, a chemical engineer from the University of California at Berkeley, repeated the experiment in Malaysia where his company set up the first joint venture of its kind in the country with a 30 percent shareholding in Jasama Holding SDNBHD. Buoyed by his success stories, Patel, states *Business India*, is setting up a fibre optics plant in Dubai, as both gas and electricity are cheap there, giving the venture a competitive edge over companies based in India.

Like in bridge, where a goulash is defined as a re-deal in cards, Patel, with his Hungarian experiment, has shuffled the way to do business. And, in the process, found the right recipe for success.

Homi J. Rogers

Compiled by Parinaz Gandhi