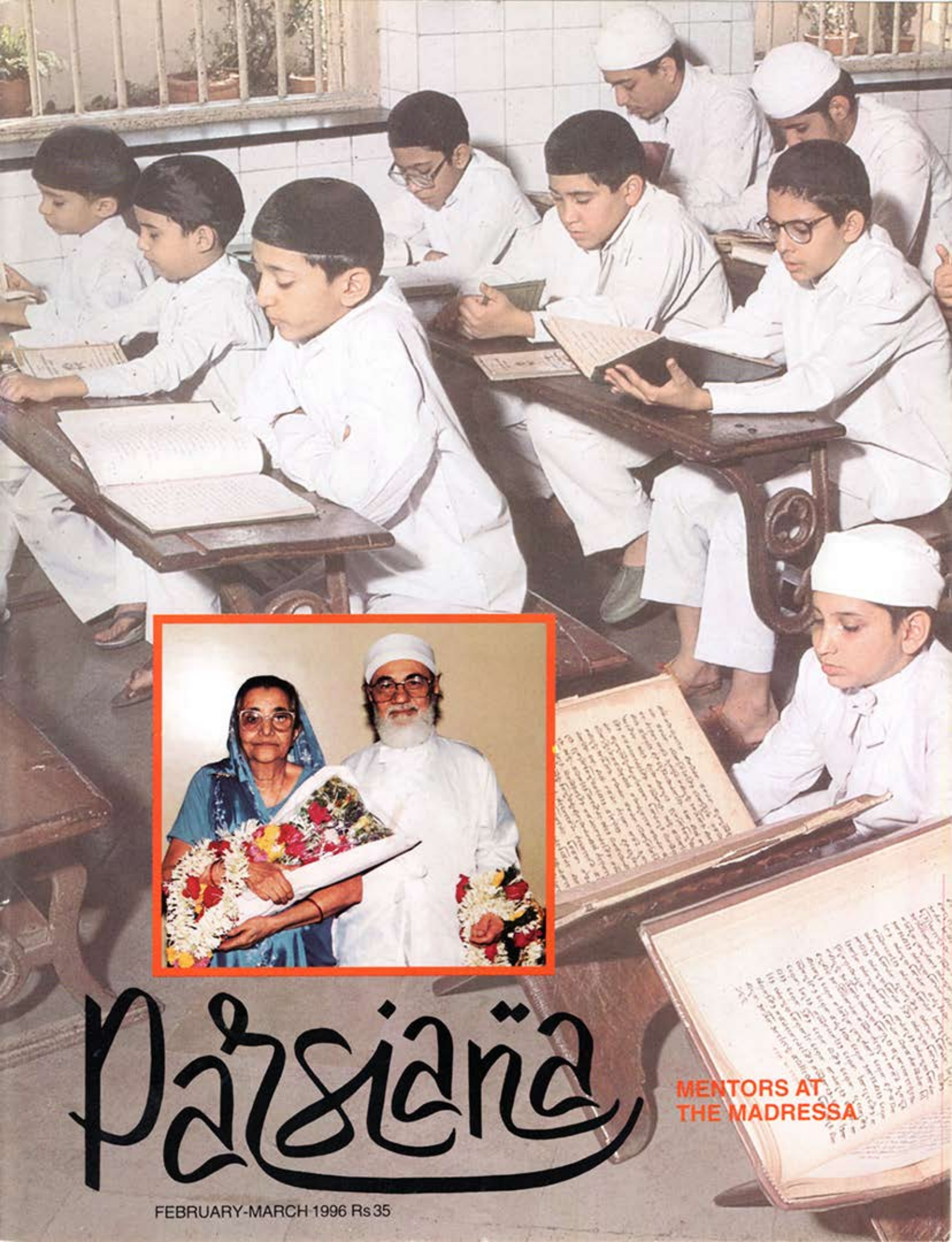




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Parsiana

February-March 1996
Volume 18 Number 7

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Cover: Madressa photo by Homyar Mistry/Homz Prints.
Inset of Rustom and Jalamai Panthaky by Dolly Divecha



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 Unsigned letters or those without an address will not be published.

NA Congress in Frisco

The Tenth North American Zoroastrian Congress 1996 will have as its theme, Zoroastrian Leadership — Past, Present and Future. Jointly hosted by the Zarthushti Anjuman of Northern California and the Persian Zoroastrian Organization on July 5 and 6, 1996 at the Cathedral Hill Hotel and Convention Center in San Francisco, the Congress will provide simultaneous Farsi translation at sessions through wireless headsets, hearing and speech impaired telephones in guest rooms and a choice of vegetarian cuisine at all meals.

We invite you to join us celebrate the Congress, deliberate meaningfully at sessions, foster fellowship and develop new and lifelong friendships, have a memorable good time and take optional pre and post Congress tours.

We are not only looking forward to your active participation but also appealing for your support by donations and advertisements in the Souvenir Program for the

Congress.

The Congress Hotel and Convention Center has limited space availability. Though larger than previous congresses we would urge you to book early to avoid disappointment.

Official registration brochure copies will be available with your local anjuman soon. You can also contact us at the Arbab Rostam Guiv Zoroastrian Temple, 10468 Crothers Road, San Jose, CA 95127, USA (Tel and Fax: 408-272-1850).

GODREJ KERAWALLA

Secretary, The Tenth North American Zoroastrian

Congress — 1996

"Nuggets in a nutshell"

I have read with great dismay Mr Aspi Moddie's review of S. A. Nigosian's book *The Zoroastrian Faith* ("Nuggets in a nutshell," Books, Parsiana, November 1995).

If only the reviewer had glanced through the latter's bibliography on p.133 ff., he would not have snubbed Parsi scholarship as he has done. Had it not been for his forefathers' scholastic efforts, the hard work of copying hundreds of manuscripts and a fund of knowledge and learning, no Humbach, Boyce, Shaked, Insler, Haug and West would have been able to work on the Zoroastrian faith.

It is not my intention to belittle Western scholarship or the research work Western scholars have been accomplishing, but it is a fact that they have to refer to the works of Parsi scholars all the way — from the time of Neryosang to the present day. In fact, Nigosian's book is also based on the works of Parsi academicians.

Dastur (Dr) KAIKHUSROO M. JAMASPASA

"Prophetic Paintings"

Homi Rogers' "Prophetic Paintings" (*Parsiana*, November 1995) recalled the happy experiences I had with Sorab, the son of the illustrious portrait painter Manchershaw Pithawalla. So many years back I had approached him with a picture of my father Rustomji with a request for a small painting. I desired the painting with a Parsi *fenta* (headgear) though in the picture I gave him my father wore a Parsi cap: because of his serious eye trouble, the then renowned eye-specialist Dr Banaji had advised him not to wear a *fenta*. Sorab accepted the work and asked me to give him the *fenta* my father used to wear.

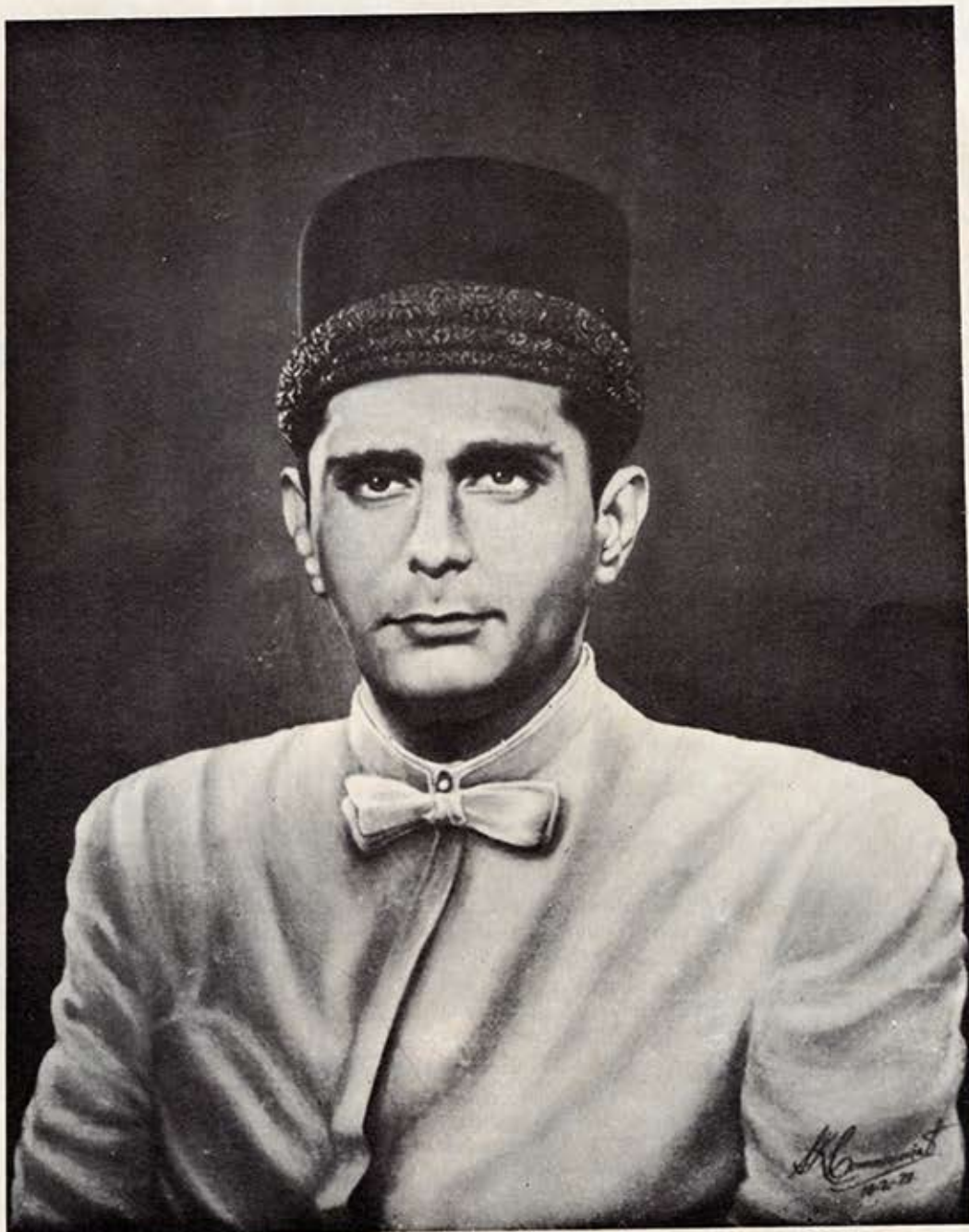
Sometime thereafter, when I went to his studio to see the painting, I was satisfied.

On his inquiry, I told him that there was some difference in the angle of the *fenta* on the forehead. He heard me patiently and asked me to see him again after two or three days. I met him accordingly and was much satisfied. I made some further suggestions. He asked me to see him late in the evening that day and when I saw him accordingly, the painting he had completed satisfied me fully. What I desire to convey is that the illustrious artist took so much trouble to satisfy his client even though the work was of a minor nature.

I had the good fortune to come in contact with other illustrious artists like Shiavax Chavda and Ms Kumi Dallas. Chavda prepared a painting of the Surat Parsi Panchayat's (SPP) past president Mr Nusservanji Kavasji Vakil which was presented by the Panchayat to Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda where Mr Vakil was the vice chancellor. Dallas did several portraits for the SPP. In my capacity as the Panchayat's secretary I came in close contact with her and my wife and I became very good friends with her. She presented us two landscape sketches in 1959 and 1965. They remind me of her attainments and of her good nature. I have happy memories of my visits to her studio where I saw the painting of Dastur Khurshed Dabu which, after his demise, if I am correct, adorns the wall of Wadiji Fire-temple of Bombay. She prepared a painting of my mother Shirin which hangs on the walls of her family's Homawala Daremeher in Bharuch.

Some excellent portraits by Jehangir Lalkaka and Pithawalla were presented to the SPP by those who donated liberal amounts to its S. N. Paruck Parsi Polytechnic Institute. Since the closure of the Polytechnic (because of the apathy of Parsi youths to go in for technical and industrial courses) they have been adorning the walls of the Ratanji Manekji Enti Dharamshala, managed by the Panchayat. Dallas was so good as to come to Surat, stayed here for some days and touched up the old paintings before they were transferred to the Enti Dharamshala, named after an illustrious son of the community.

Besides these painters of repute, I also came in contact with illustrious sculptors like Kamath of Bombay and Govind Kolhatkar of Baroda who executed a few busts for the SPP. It was my good fortune to meet such artists and hold happy memories of them. One who works with the pen



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feels happy when he comes in close contact with artists who work with brushes and chisels for he realizes that pen, brush and chisel can bring much joy in the lives of those who care for culture and work for its advancement.

RATAN R. MARSHALL

Surat

"The Priests' Rebuttal"

The article "The Priests' Rebuttal" (*Parsiana*, November 1995) by four High Priests in connection with the navjotes of Mr Neville and Mr Nusli Wadia gives cause for more confusion than enlightenment.

It is to be noted that it took more than a year for the four High Priests to delve into the writings in the *Videwdad* to substantiate their stand on this issue.

It is admitted by them that 'inward' or 'outward' conversions are illegal and invalid because Zoroastrianism does not approve or sanction conversion. They have also not stated who is to be considered as a Zoroastrian. It is also stated by them (under the sub-title 'Zoroastrian Groups') that those who have adopted an alien faith "only a generation ago" may be called "Zoroastrians who have gone astray" and may be "allowed to revert to the ancestral religion after ceremonial repentance" if they sincerely repent the past action and express their honest desire to revert to their ancestral religion.

According to the above views, it may have been proper for the late Sir Ness Wadia (father of Mr Neville Wadia) who converted to Christianity before Neville was born, to opt to rejoin the Zoroastrian fold into which he was born. In the case of Mr Neville Wadia, both his parents were Christians at the time of his birth, he was brought up in the Christian faith, he himself has praised the Church of England. Is it justifiable to reintroduce him now as a Zoroastrian by a navjote ceremony by imploring a very doubtful precept of "belonging to an alien faith only a generation ago?"

This concept of "only a generation ago" may be stretched in future to more than a generation in which case a sizable number of citizens of Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan may lay claim to join our religion on the plea that their ancestors were Zoroastrians who migrated to these countries a few generations ago.

Our community is very grateful to the Wadias who have done yeoman service to our community, especially in areas of housing. Mr Neville Wadia is a worthy scion of a well-known family and he himself is a kind, considerate and charitable gentle-

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man and this unfortunate controversy should in no way tarnish his excellent image.

Would our learned High Priests please delve further into the *Videwdad* to unearth if there are any permissible exceptions for Zoroastrian ladies who have been excommunicated from their religion on their marriage to non-Zoroastrians but have not forsaken their religion of birth and continue to practice and partake in all religious rites and rituals? Can they induct their children into Zoroastrianism by navjote (if the non-Zoroastrian father has no objection)? This category deserves our sympathy, consideration and understanding more than bending backwards to induct a non-Zoroastrian into our religion by justifying this action under some scriptural evidence in the *Videwdad*.

Dr M. D. DISAWALLA
Bangalore

The navjotes of Neville Wadia and Nusli Wadia may have grave consequences both religiously and legally in preserving our racial identity as Parsi Zoroastrians in the future. Ever since the Parsis migrated to India, it is accepted that we have followed the principle of segregation which meant no intermarriage. There are enough scriptural and historical records to prove that

the purity of our race was indoctrinated in our religious philosophy even before the advent of Zarathushtra.

The principle of segregation has guaranteed our survival for well over a thousand years, without which we would have perished like a drop of rain.

Chapter VIII of the book *Conversion Caucas* written by three learned Dasturs, reads in conclusion:

"With confidence and with emphasis can one assert, as the present writer did in his said lecture that:

- There is no word in the *Avesta* for 'to convert' in the sense of the change of religion;

- Never in their long and chequered history have the Zoroastrians adopted a policy of conversion of non-Zoroastrians.

In the *Jam-e-Jamshed Weekly* dated December 24, 1995 our five Wada Dasturjis conclude by stating the following:

"We once again firmly affirm that the present case is not one of conversion, but of someone reverting to their ancestral faith which is permitted in our religion. Zoroastrianism does not approve or sanction conversion.

If a member of a Parsi Zoroastrian family is converted to an alien religion, that conversion is invalid from the Zoroas-

trian viewpoint. The person concerned can revert to the ancestral faith if he/she so wishes."

Would the above assertions allow our Iranian brothers, who were converted to Islam against their will, to once again revert to their ancestral faith? It seems it would. With what consequences?

Secondly, in truth both Neville Wadia and Nusli Wadia were not converted from the Zoroastrian religion. They were born of Christian parentage as Christians and were baptised into the Christian faith. Hence there is no question of them reverting to their ancestral faith.

Initially *Parsiana* printed letters written to Mr Neville Wadia by our High Priests, in which a Wada Dastur wrote to Mr Wadia that his navjote would be most farcical. Subsequently, he stated that much against his religious and doctrinal beliefs and convictions, under exceptional mitigating circumstances, a dispensation was being granted for the navjote of Mr Neville Wadia by all the five Wada Dasturs.

Taking all the human factors involved into consideration, a special dispensation was given to Neville Wadia and Neville Wadia alone for his navjote, purely to repay a communal debt for the exceptional services rendered to our Parsi community

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by the Wadias. Sadly the learned Dasturs are now trying to justify the navjotes of the Wadias on religious grounds. This will inadvertently turn an exception into a rule. This may seriously also jeopardize our religious and legal status in future as Parsi Zoroastrians.

I humbly appeal to the four [now that Dastur Noshirwan M. Dastur of Surat has through his letter seen the light and withdrawn his support ("The Priests' Rebuttal," *Parsiana*, November 1995)] learned Dastur sahebs to think again.

FILLY K. MARAVALA
Essex, UK

"Happenings in London"

The global Zoroastrian community is very satisfied with the thoughtful and apt decision of our scholarly High Priests who have concurred with the navjote of Mr Neville Wadia and unequivocally proclaimed him a full Parsi Zoroastrian. There is no room apparent for doubt that these scholarly Dasturs' advice to the community is entirely in line with the general understanding of Zoroastrian precepts. Hence, Mr Zal Sethna's apparently tenacious enthusiasm for his own views and displaying a tendency to present issues in black and white are merely an engagement in a marathon contest with reality ("Happenings in London," *Zoroastrians Abroad*, *Parsiana*, October 1995).

These are scarcely the ideal qualifications for the task of judging the well-reasoned decision of our scholarly High Priests. Could this be another instance of a group of the mobbed class responsible for holding back the community from advancing and for accentuating the divisions within it? Or is it simply a case of the mediocre preaching mediocrity?

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

"Boys' Town: lessons..."

Thank you for publishing Roni Khan's beautiful write-up on our school ("Boys' Town: lessons on living," *Parsiana*, September 1995). Unfortunately Zoroastrian children are not taking advantage of all the facilities we are offering them.

We have just built a new dormitory for 180 children with modern facilities, bathrooms, toilets, etc. We have advertised and offered in local papers that we are willing to accept children of Zoroastrian priests free of charge and also of very poor parents from the mofusil. Further we are also offering five to 10 seats at Rs 5,000 per year all inclusive against our standard boarding

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KEKI P. MEHTA

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"Why did he die?"

"Why did he die?" (*Parsiana*, September 1995) is a sad commentary on the state of affairs in Karachi. The city, which men like Jamshed Nusserwanjee, Harchandrai Vishindas and Abdullah Haroon had claimed as 'one of the cleanest and most peaceful cities of the East' needs the prayers of all lovers of humanity.

Ardeshir Cowasjee's article reveals a phase of Feroze Kanga's life. Noshir Mana's column in the *Parsi Sansar* (November 14, 1995) adds to the lustre of Feroze, who followed in the footsteps of his wonderful mother, Ms Dhunmai Kanga, an insurance agent of Sun Life Assurance Co of Canada trained under the great entrepreneur Dinshaw Byramji Avari.

A letter received from his beloved wife Khorshed reveals the innate personality of Feroze Kanga.

"For Feroze, life was meant to be lived with joy and happiness — life, he said, is too short to grouse and grumble about — so he always tried to lighten it for every one.

"I knew he lived it the way he wanted to and enjoyed every moment granted to him. He has left many, many happy memories with all who knew him. Guess, we have to follow his smiling, cheerful, kind way of dealing with life, as best we can..."

BEHRAM RUSTOMJI

"Ahd-nameh authentic?"

I consider it undignified to keep responding to letters on the 'Ahd-nameh' as they have degenerated into personal attacks, not at all

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relevant to the topic which originated long ago from my review of Dr Jamsheed K. Choksy's *Purity and Pollution in Zoroastrianism, Triumph over Evil* ("The Purifying Prescriptions," *Parsiana*, November 1990).

However, at the strong insistence of my friends, I would like to clarify that I have never described Omar Khayyam as "lecherous" or "drunkard" to Ms Mistry or to anyone else ("Ahd-nameh authentic," Readers' Forum, *Parsiana*, October 1994, January 1995 and April 1995). I have such high regard for Khayyam and other Iranian scientists, thinkers, philosophers, scholars, historians and artists that I cannot conceive of portraying them in such terms.

I have had little contact with Ms Mistry. After my discourse at the youth conference in Toronto, I was approached by many from the audience. She may have overheard me — or even asked me — about wine in Khayyam's *Rubaiyat*. I might have replied that wine is wine in Persian poetry unless it is clearly used as a metaphor. This is what I say when asked. Wine has always been respected and enjoyed in moderation by Iranians — scientists, poets and laymen. That by no means makes Khayyam a "lecherous drunkard," but then, there is no limit on some people's capacity to distort truth knowingly or unknowingly.

With this note I end this controversy. I stand by what I have written about the so-called 'Ahd-nameh, the precise Iranian calendar, Khayyam, and any other subject that has been published in *Parsiana* or any other publication.

ALI A. JAFAREY
California, USA

The temple Lovji built

In the second half of the 18th century, Lovji Wadia, an immortal name in ship and naval yard building, constructed an agiary in Siganpore, his ancestral place. A village on the outskirts of Surat, Siganpore is now a part of this historic city. Though the structure had been rebuilt by his family member Navroji Jamshedji Wadia and repaired from time to time thereafter, it urgently required major repairs. The original estimate of about six lakh rupees had to be revised to about eight and a half to nine lakh rupees when work on the ancient structure was taken in hand.

Our earlier appeal had netted about four lakh rupees which amount has already been spent. We badly require about three lakhs more.

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residing outside Siganpore have their religious ceremonies performed in this fire-temple. It is in the interest of the community that this place of worship is thoroughly repaired so that it can satisfy its religious needs for many more years to come, especially as there is still a sizable Parsi population here.

As such, we appeal to the members of the Parsi community and to the trustees of Parsi charitable trusts to extend a helping hand. This fire-temple, registered in the office of the Charity Commissioner with registration No.C 158, has a limited maintenance fund and as such it is difficult to make two ends meet.

Cheques and drafts in favor of "The Siganpore Fire Temple Trust" may be sent to the managing trustee Minocher Sorabji Siganpore, 12/1284 Machhlipith, Surat 395003.

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SIGANPORIA Trustees, The Siganpore Fire Temple Trust.

Chikhli Agiary appeal

A fast developing town in south Gujarat, Chikhli is a taluka capital 10 km away from Billimora Railway Station, situated between Valsad and Navsari on National Highway No 8. It is a business, medical and educational center for 86 villages around it. The late Mr Dinshawji Dadabhoy Italia has made a number of charities for primary schools for boys and girls and the Italia High School at Chikhli. A number of drinking water wells were contributed by various Parsis.

After the departure of the British many Parsis lost their liquor and toddy business. Further they suffered from policies like the land ceiling act and *Ganot Dhara* (land to the tiller). The majority of literate Parsis went to Bombay or other cities for jobs. Those

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who were not educated remained in the villages and did farming or later on sold their land and went to Navsari, Billimora or Valsad, the nearby towns.

Fortunately, some Parsis remained in the interior villages and now the young Parsi generation with their good educational background, have cultivated the land with much higher productivity than their forefathers. With the introduction of modern techniques for farming and the facility of canal water throughout the year, they have converted their farms into greenery with more than one crop per year.

These developments together with the problems of cities have attracted many young people back to the villages. Once again there is an inflow of Parsis in South Gujarat.

Looking at the above scenario, the trustees of the Chikhli Parsi Anjuman decided to rebuild their dharamshala and mobed's residence which were nearly 120 years old.

The agiary and mobed's residence, adjoining the old dharamshala building, belong to the family trust of Mr Jamshed N. Guzder, chairman of the Bombay Parsi Panchayet. Mr Guzder has been kind enough to hand over both structures to the

Chikhli Parsi Anjuman.

Donations of Rs 7,35,547 have enabled us to construct a hall on the ground floor, two rooms for the dharamshala and a flat for the priest's residence on the first floor. We have also rebuilt the kitchen of the agiary. Thus, the first phase of our work is complete and the hall was inaugurated on January 28, 1996, (*roj Adar, mah Shehrevat*, Y.Z. 1365) by Mr Jamshed N. Guzder.

For the second phase of renovating the agiary and providing accessories like fans and other electrical appliances, chairs,

tables and other necessary items required in the hall, we need Rs 5,00,000.

Parsi charitable trusts and individuals are requested to donate generously to our deserving cause. Your donations in favor of "Renovation Fund, Chikhli Parsi Anjuman" may be sent to any of the following:

•Yazdi M. Italia, joint managing trustee, Chikhli Parsi Anjuman, Valsad Clinic, 20, Stadium Road, Valsad 396001 (Phone 02632-54024);

•Adi M. Italia, B/13, Navroz Baug,



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Y. M. ITALIA
Valsad

Deolali-Nashik directory

This is to request the courtesy of your columns for helping our Deolali-Nashik Parsee Zoroastrian Anjuman compile a directory whose purpose is to incorporate the names of all Parsi/Irani Zoroastrians who fall into either of the following two categories:

- Full-time residents of the sister towns of Deolali, Nashik and Nashik Road.
- Those who are not full-time residents but have some connection with these sister towns through business/occupation, trusteeship, landed property, relatives, ancestors, etc. Those residing abroad are also welcome in this category.

In either case, we seek the name (including spouse and children), birth date (of each), present address (and/or local Deolali-Nashik address where applicable) and telephone number (if any).

The idea is not just to attempt a headcount of local residents, but to cover all those who are connected in some way with the Deolali-Nashik belt. In this manner, we hope to enhance the scope and usefulness of the directory.

The requested particulars may please be sent to The Deolali-Nashik Parsee Zoroastrian Anjuman, 216 Lam Road, Deolali 422401.

The facilities of our Adaran Saheb at the Bai Ratanbai J. Chinoy Agiary, the Towers of Silence, and the Bai Shirinbai M. Neterwala Rest House and Memorial Hall are available to all Parsi/Irani Zoroastrians in India and abroad, whether or not they are connected with Deolali-Nashik.

DHAN B. PATEL

Trustee, The Deolali-Nashik Parsee Zoroastrian Anjuman

Agra Dharamshala

I had gone to Agra in the last week of December 1995 and on reaching there I was shocked to find the Parsi Dharamshala fully occupied by non-Parsis and on going preparations for a non-Parsi wedding that was due to take place on the premises. Also the name Zoroastrian Prayer Hall near the premises of the Dharamshala is really misleading as the ground floor is occupied by the Bharat Gas Agency. I had to run from pillar to post along with my family to find accommodation elsewhere. It is really very disgraceful to see the way in which the Parsi Dharamshala is functioning in Agra.



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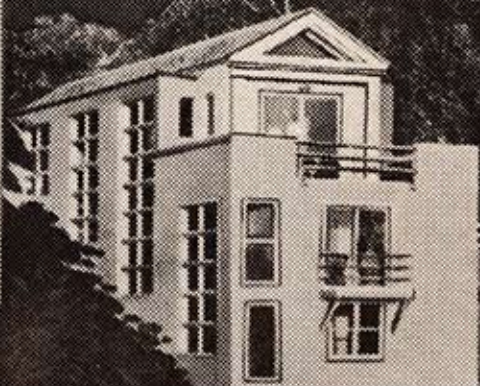
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Is the Agra Parsi
Anjuman aware of
this or is it turning a
blind eye?

On the other
hand, when I had
gone to Delhi along
with my family in
October 1995
during the Dassera
holidays, my visit
was very pleasant.
The Delhi Parsi
Dharamshala was a
very pleasant expe-
rience. The rooms
were airy and com-
fortable, the service excellent. Credit goes to Ms Dhun Bagli for
keeping the Dharamshala well maintained and also the Agiary
next door was really very beautiful. I have yet to see an agiary like
this. Keep up the good work Ms Bagli and the Delhi Parsi
Anjuman. God bless people like them who are doing yeoman
service for the Parsi community.



Agra Dharamshala: financial crunch

Ms ROSHNI JAMSHED SADRI

Kanpur

The Agra Parsi Anjuman replies:

After taking due permission from the donor, the prayer hall along
with a room have been rented to M/s Bharat Gas Co since last
three years to meet the maintenance expenses of the Dharamshala
and the aramgah amounting to nearly Rs 48,000 per year.

During 1995 there was no income from the Dharamshala at all.



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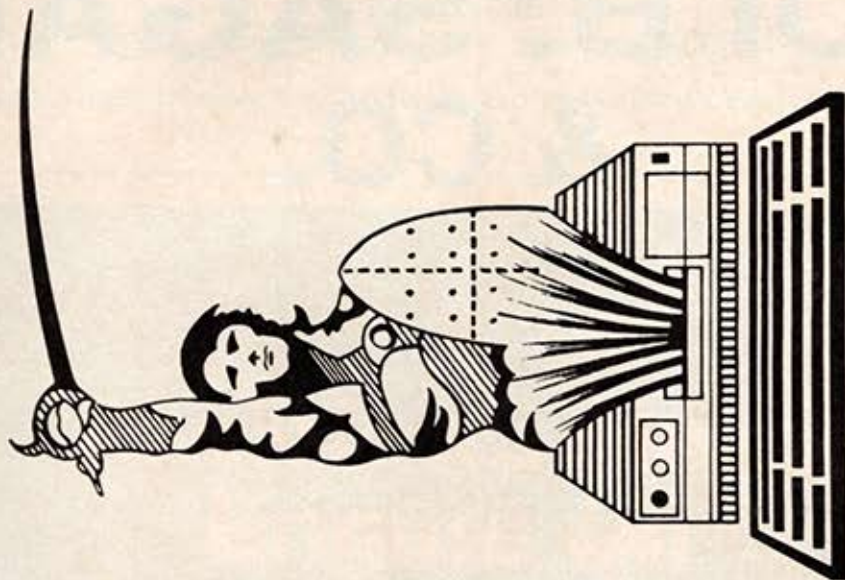
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Occupancy was hardly two percent.

Of the 10 rooms available, one room is rented out to M/s Bharat Gas Co, three rooms have been rented for temporary stay to a Parsi Zoroastrian family of Agra, one room was occupied by a Zoroastrian college student from Indore and five rooms were booked by Mr Dadi Sorabjee for his guests.

It is incorrect to state that a non-Zoroastrian wedding was taking place at the Dharamshala. Further the complainant had not reserved any accommodation in the Dharamshala which one has to do if one desires to stay as per the Agra Parsi Anjuman rules.

HOSHANG R. DEBARA

President, Agra Parsi Anjuman

There was no advance booking for any passengers in the said period. The Agra Anjuman books rooms on payment of one day's advance rent. We regret the inconvenience caused which could have occurred even in the case of total occupancy by Parsis. I am sure they had an advance booking for the Delhi Dharamshala which is usually fully occupied.

The Anjuman had allotted the use of five rooms and courtyard to a senior member of the Anjuman for residence for his near ones, who were non-Parsis. The wedding did not take place here. This was done as a very special case for the first time seeing his and his family's help to the Agra Anjuman for the past 70 years. Please realize that our small anjuman of 23 Parsis (of whom 10 are over 60 years of age) has to maintain harmonious and helpful relations in the non-Parsi milieu of this north Indian city.

At the same time Room No 2 was occupied by Mr Kaiyan of Indore, Room Nos 8, 9 and 10 were in possession of Ms and Mr Khambatta, a Parsi couple residing there. The matter therefore has been totally misrepresented.



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Agra never had a prayer hall functioning as a dar-e-meher or agiary. We have no mobed for the past 15 years as no one is willing to come so far and quote very high rates. For 23 members (only five of whom are earning members) to maintain a dharamshala and aramgah was difficult. So the hall was given on rent, after prior permission of the donors, on the same lines as the Delhi hall is used for Indian cultural programs.

I take this opportunity, through *Parsiana*, to request every Parsi visiting Agra to only use the Dharamshala. Consider it an act of charity as it will help us in our struggle to maintain the Parsi identity in Agra.

Dr RATI KHAMBATTA

Secretary, Agra Parsi Anjuman

A memorable visit

Among the many delightful aspects of my recent trip to Bombay, during which I was engaged in research for my MPhil thesis in Zoroastrian studies, was my visit to the Athornan Boarding Madressa at Dadar. The entire occasion of this visit was a paradigm of the hospitality, kindness and warmth I was shown during my time in Bombay by the many members of the Zoroastrian community I was privileged to meet.

May I, through your letters column, express my gratitude to all those Zoroastrians, priests and laity, in Bombay and in Ahmedabad, who made my trip worthwhile, who granted me interviews and allowed me to ask what may have seemed to be naive and even impertinent questions; to those who invited me to their homes to share their company and cooking; to those who guided me around Bombay, who arranged and provided me with accommodation — to all those I give my thanks, which comes with all sincerity from

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a student and admirer of the ancient and noble Zoroastrian faith.

And lastly, to the staff of the K. R. Cama Oriental Institute, where I sit on the last day of my visit writing this letter, a big thanks for assisting with my research.

PETER CLARK
Cardiff, UK

The GIP Railway Terminal

Rail history reveals that the Great Indian Peninsula (GIP) Railway Provisional Committee in London, formed a Provisional Bombay Committee in July 1845 to give character and credit to this oldest rail-line in India. Two Europeans were appointed as chairman and secretary, with 15 other ordinary members, including Cursetjee Cawasjee, Bomanjee Hormusjee Wadia, Vicajee Meherjee, Jaggnathjee Sunkarsett, Cursetjee Jamsetjee Jeejeebhoy, Dadabhoy Pestonjee Wadia. On the board of trustees, were two Europeans and one Indian — Jeejeebhoy Dadabhoy Mooghana.

Further, it is said that "...it redounds greatly to the credit of our enterprising native contractor, Mr Jamsetjee Dorabjee, that this important object has been accomplished with unqualified success, with extraordinary despatch and at a cost which, considering all circumstances, must be regarded extremely moderate."

Therefore, with malice towards none and charity to all, V.T. should be renamed the Great Indian Peninsula Railway Terminal (GIP Rly Terminal).

D. R. MANECKJI

President, Central Railway Motormen's Association, Bombay V.T.

The Farohar

There has been some misunderstanding and controversy regarding the correct facing of the Farohar.

Originally, this figure dates from the days of Achemenian and Sassanian rulers of ancient Iran and is seen very conspicuously on

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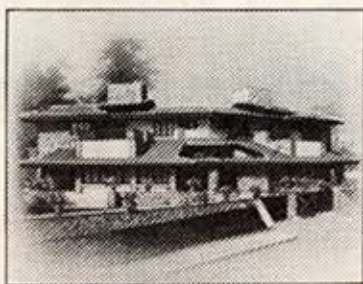
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the mountains of Persepolis and Naksh-e-Rustom.

Accompanying illustrations of the figure, as have appeared in old books, will give the correct idea to the readers. The Farohar as seen here is facing towards its right, its right hand raised in prayer to Ahura Mazda and holding a circle in its left. The circle is a symbol of Ahura Mazda, meaning the Creator, and has no beginning or end.

Nowadays, on invitation cards, magazines, newspapers, etc the Farohar is shown facing its left. Hence, this brief explanation, which I believe, will prove useful to your enlightened readers.

Ervad HORMAZD M. PAVRI
Nagpur

The Parsi well

The Bhikha Behram well has an interesting history. A Parsi gentleman named

Bhikhaji Behramji from Broach came on foot to seek his fortune in Bombay circa 1715 AD. On the way he was waylaid by the Marathas who were at war with the Muslims and imprisoned in a fortress. When he could convince his captors that he was not a Muslim but a Parsi by showing them



Bhikha Behram Well Photo: Homiyar Mistry

his sudreh and kusti, he was released.

Bhikhaji opened his merchandise business at Hormiman Circle then known as "Angrej Bazar." Being of charitable disposition he sank the well known after him as Bhikha Behram Well in 1725 and for

long years his descendants maintained the well as a charity. Cart loads of water ever since then have been carried to the suburbs of Bombay as well as to the surrounding locality and for providing water for animals.

Ever since then the well has been held as a sacred place of worship by Parsis to whom it is one of the primal creations of Ahura Mazda. Considerable land around the well was at one time the asset of this holy well.

In those days, when Powai and Tansa lakes did not exist, charitable persons sank wells and no less than 18 wells were said to have existed in the maidan area.

Dr VIRAF J. KAPADIA

A touch of verse

Years ago, so many magazines, journals and newspapers used to regularly carry poems. I have myself written so prolifically for many of them, in fact, most of them. I find that as less and less poems get printed, I seem to write less and less. The same must be the case with so many others like me.

Optimistic as I always am, I never give up trying. So here I am penning this letter, wondering whether you would be inter-

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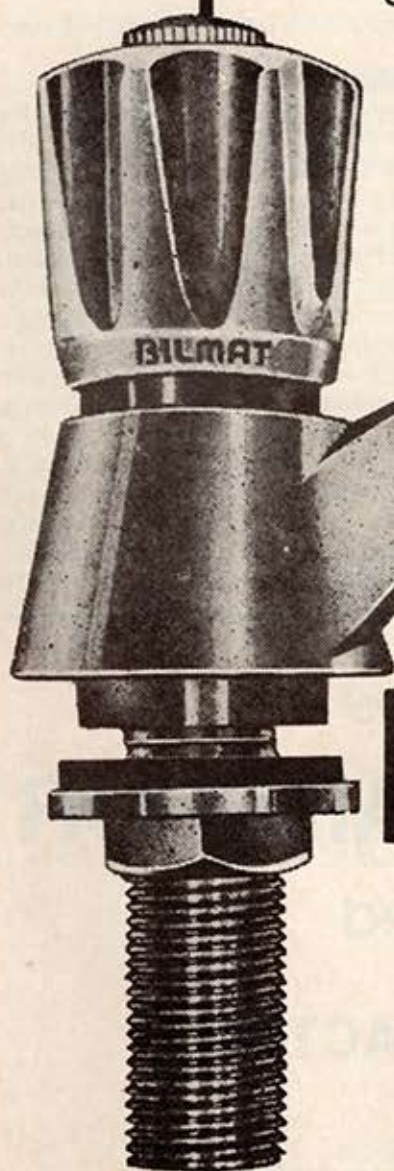
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ested in keeping one column of your magazine for poems. I know *Parsiana* basically carries community news, and may not be programmed for carrying poetry. I could not, however, restrain myself from making this suggestion.

If you could carry one or two poems (just one column) in each issue, it would go a very long way in encouraging people to write poetry. I would myself contribute, and if you invite your readers to send in their contributions I would be more than happy to even edit them for you.

Ms THRITY E. BHARUCHA

The Editor replies:

Poems pertaining to the community are welcome.

A spur for posterity

A few days ago during discussions an elderly Parsi gentleman referred to the Parsis as living on "past glory." Does this imply that we, as a community, are not doing anything at all in the present? Does it mean that the present generation of Parsi men, women, youth and children are all non-achievers?

Why should the Parsis forget the achievements of the past? Past glory serves a vital purpose. When my wife and I visited Greece after Granada 92, Spain's World Philatelic Exhibition, we were indeed thrilled and rejuvenated with pride on being Parsis, the descendants of those great Persian Emperors Darius and Xerxes whose names were mentioned at several places in Greece starting with the Acropolis. One has the same deep sense of history when one visits Persepolis, Cyrus' tomb, Yazd and other places in Iran. In fact each Parsi should endeavor to visit Iran at least once in his/her lifetime just as a devout Muslim makes a Haj pilgrimage to Mecca or a devout Hindu to Kashi.

Parsis are a very secular community, ever loyal to the land that

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gave them refuge and have given their all for the country. The contribution of this community of meager numbers is worth recalling. The first civil hospital, medical college and the first free cosmopolitan home for the aged in India were started by a Parsi, Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy, the first Indian baronet; the first Indian professor, the first Indian to be a member of a Royal Commission, the first Indian to be elected from Great Britain to the British Parliament was Dr Dadabhoi Naoroji who coined the word "Swaraj" and was the president of the Indian National Congress for three terms. He was also the mentor of the fathers of India and Pakistan i.e. Mahatma Gandhi and Mohammedali Jinnah.

All the three Indians to be elected to the British Parliament in the pre-independence era were Parsis — Naoroji, Shapurji Saklatvala and Muncherjee Bhowanagree. The first President (Mayor) of Bombay was Sir Pherozeshah Mehta who is known as "the father of local self-government in India;" he was President for four terms. The first Indian to design and unfurl an Indian national flag was Madame Bhikaiji Cama; the first modern industrial steel plant in India was set up by Jamshedji Tata; the first newspaper in India was started by Furdoonji Marzban; the finest shipbuilders in the British Empire when "Britannia ruled the waves" were the Wadias. The first Indian philanthropist to be honored by independent India by issuing a postage stamp was Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy. The first non-Muslim to be honored by Pakistan on its postage stamp was Jamshed Nusserwanji Mehta who holds the unique distinction of being the Mayor of Karachi for 13 long years; the father of atomic energy in India is Homi Bhabha; the first Indian aviator was J. R. D. Tata who was also the first Indian businessman to be awarded the nation's highest honor, the Bharat Ratna. The first cancer hospital in India was also founded by the Tatas. The community has given the country chiefs of the three armed services, the army, the navy and the airforce; the first Indian to be a Field Marshal is Sam Manekshaw; the first Indian modern organized bank was started by Sorabji Pochkhanawalla, the first Indian and Asian to be awarded the Roake International Trophy of U.K. for original research in philately is also a Parsi; the first organized cricket team to tour Great Britain was a Parsi team.

If the Parsis do not remember their great persons, their achievements, etc how do they expect the Government and the sister communities to remember? The attendance of Parsis at functions to honor and remember the great sons of the community is indeed dismal. One wishes they would spare a few moments from their busy schedule, nay leisure hours, to pay homage to these stalwarts.

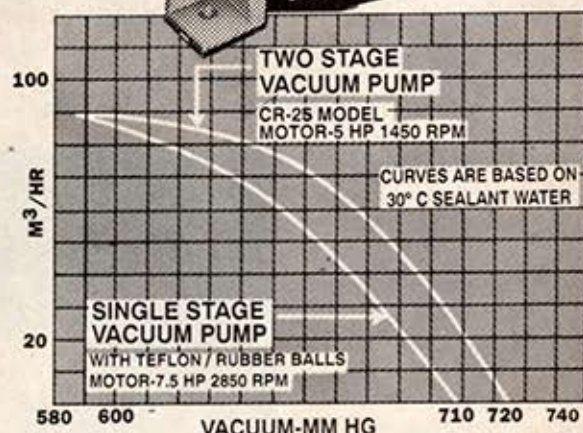
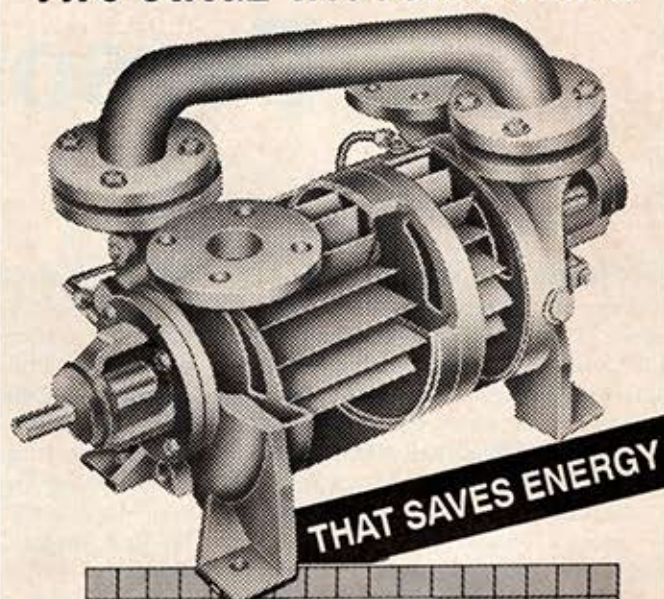
Even today we have several Parsis — men and women who have made their mark on the soil of this great country as well as abroad. Every year in some walk of life Parsis are contributing significantly as despite today's cut-throat competition the pages of *Jam-e-Jamshed Weekly*, *The Bombay Samachar*, *Parsiana*, *Mahila* and the non-Parsi press attest. So let's give our youth and others large doses of encouragement. Let the past glory be an inspiration to greater achievement in future. Let us honor the achievers not only so that they know that their community cares but also that their achievements can be an inspiration to the youth who are the real trustees of posterity.

VISPI S. DASTUR

President, The Bombay Parsee Association

continued on page 160

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Events and Personalities

Welcome for Wadia

With the controversy over the navjotes of industrial doyens Neville and Nusli Wadia still raging, it is not surprising that both father and son have turned down repeated requests for interviews. But an insight as to how the senior Wadia felt about his initiation into the Zoroastrian fold was glimpsed at a felicitation function held for him by the grateful residents of Rustom Baug in March last year.

"I have always been a Parsi but being Zoroastrian also has made all the difference," said the octogenarian. "My heart is full of joy."

Speaking of the "wonderful days in my life" whenever he visited Rustom Baug, "one of my favorite (baugs)," he said he felt "particularly comfortable and happy... I have come here as a complete Parsi Zoroastrian."

He spoke of his father and grandfather and how he has "tried to follow their example and will continue to do so." Regarding his navjote Wadia said, "It's a question of belief and nothing else. I'm so happy I have achieved this great wish of mine that I have had for so many years."

Speaking about Rustom Baug which was built by his forefathers, Wadia said he had "watched the Baug grow. In my time we have built four buildings" in which another 100 people have been accommodated. The pavilion too has been constructed. "It's a great asset and center for the tenants of the colony. Without colonies the community would become scattered."

Referring to his travels abroad Wadia recalled how "thrilled" he was on "finding Parsis doing well... It's wonderful the way we've stuck together."

Wadia's warmth and effusiveness was more than equalled by the Rustom Baug residents who gathered on the lawns in front of the pavilion to honor him. Noting

the great interest Wadia took in the colony D. B. Bhappu, president of the Rustom Baug Association said, "We have always been close to him. And now by embracing Zoroastrianism he has come that little more close to us. Who is a Zoroastrian? One who practices the precepts of Zoroaster."

Addressing him as a "our beloved patron," Dr Porus S. Turner, president of the Sir Ness Wadia Club, said he was "overjoyed that (Wadia) is a Zarthushti. Of course, in spirit and body, he has always been a Zarthushti."

Referring to the "vast population around

us," Turner said, "We are only 70,000. We would have been (scattered) and rudderless without colonies." He said people often asked, 'How do you keep the place (Rustom Baug) so clean and green?' I reply, 'No person is more responsible for this than Neville Wadia.'"

Then Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP) trustee Eruch Desai spoke of "my very good Zoroastrian friend Neville Wadia. We are welcoming one who has always been with us. (You will not) find another Parsi more dedicated than Neville and who loves his community more."

The BPP "took time to consider" whether to recognize Wadia's navjote, said Desai who retired as BPP chairman in October last year. "We had to deliberate and invite views from a cross



The welcome at Rustom Baug; flanking the bust of Sir Ness Wadia are (L to R) Bhappu, Wadia, Desai, Turner and Hirji Thanawalla



Try it



*The feel and
fragrance of Satin*

section of the community." The BPP trustees decided they had "nothing to disagree with the High Priests" who approved the navjote, said Desai. "If a man feels he belongs to a race, let no man deny it."

In league with Navsari

The "hibernating" Navsari Parsi Association (NPA) is being revived under a new 16-member committee. Though it will continue with cultural and social programs as of yore, in its reincarnated form the Association "is poised to undertake various projects, all aimed at extending support to members of society, irrespective of caste, creed and sex, in diverse areas of need," declares a press release. This new cosmopolitan avatar will enable the trust to benefit from the income tax dispensation which saves a 40 percent tax on donations, as announced NPA president and noted solicitor Burjor Antia at a press conference held at the Ripon Club on February 28, 1996. The Association has applied for a registration number under the Bombay Trust Act.

Among the goals that the NPA has set itself, the revival of the priesthood is its primary concern. The aim, as enunciated by Antia, is to provide priests who can interact with the lay members of the community. Hence the accent will be on culling out persons with the right attitudes and molding them through sustained encouragement and financial help to become scholar priests whom "we can be proud of,

(command) the kind of respect that Dastur Maneckji Dhalla commanded as high priest," as notes NPA vice president Ms Homai Modi whose early years in Karachi have left an indelible memory of the stature of the late Dhalla and the veneration in which he was held by Karachi Parsis of his time.

As Antia chalked out the plan of action, the first step would be to try and see that priestly class children go to the madressas when the Association would credit a certain amount into their individual accounts, to grow along with the child. Equally important is to "see that those who are there are absorbed in atash behrams and agiaries" with an assurance of earning between Rs 10,000 to Rs 15,000 per month, notes Antia. Refresher courses every three to six years would ensure that their academic interests continue to be vitalized. Where the children undergo their navar initiation in agiaries or atash behrams, it is hoped that the head priests/high priests would examine them to ensure basic academic standards.

The NPA's other aims are to encourage the development and/or revival of traditional arts and crafts. For the Zoroastrian community the accent would be on the making of phetas, pugrees, kustis, kors (sari borders) and the induction of those skills into the younger generation, the encouragement of *Shah Nameh* and khayal recitals, etc.

At the moment there are said to be two

lakh ruprees in the kitty and Farrokh Antia and Jal Tata, two members of the original Association of which the late Ms Shera Vajifdar had been founder president, have been assigned the mantle of settlers. "We haven't gone out for donations yet," informed Modi.

The organization is expected to function simultaneously in Navsari and Bombay and the team of "socially minded persons" constituted for the task reflects this goal. Apart from Antia and Modi are joint honorary secretaries Tata and Dinshaw Tamboly, joint honorary treasurers Ms Bapsy Daruwala and Ms Roshan Master. High profile journalists Jehan Daruwala and Behram Contractor also feature on the list of committee members which includes Sam Bajan, Farrokh Antia, Hoshang Wania, Ms Bachi Tamboly, Ms Shernaaz Engineer, Soli Vajifdar, Feroze Dastoor, Babubhai Shah.

According to Antia there are about six mobeds in their 40s, currently employed in banks, who would be willing to revert to full-time priesthood if their current levels of emoluments could be ensured. One has already left Hindustan Lever to join Banaji Atash Behram as a boiwala, informed Antia. The shortfall in his income will be made up by the trust, said Antia who is also managing trustee of the Banaji Atash Behram. He further informed that a new building with about 20 flats is being planned in the Banaji Atash Behram compound, reserved for mobeds. Antia agreed with the general sentiment that the funds should be available to the mobeds in proportion to the caliber and number of ceremonies they performed for the behdins. "Many ceremonies are not being done, like the *ijashne*, *vendidad*, etc; not even in *Udvada*! They are either not being done or they're not doing it properly," Antia noted. The initial revival is expected to occur in Navsari with subsequent "infiltration" into Bombay.

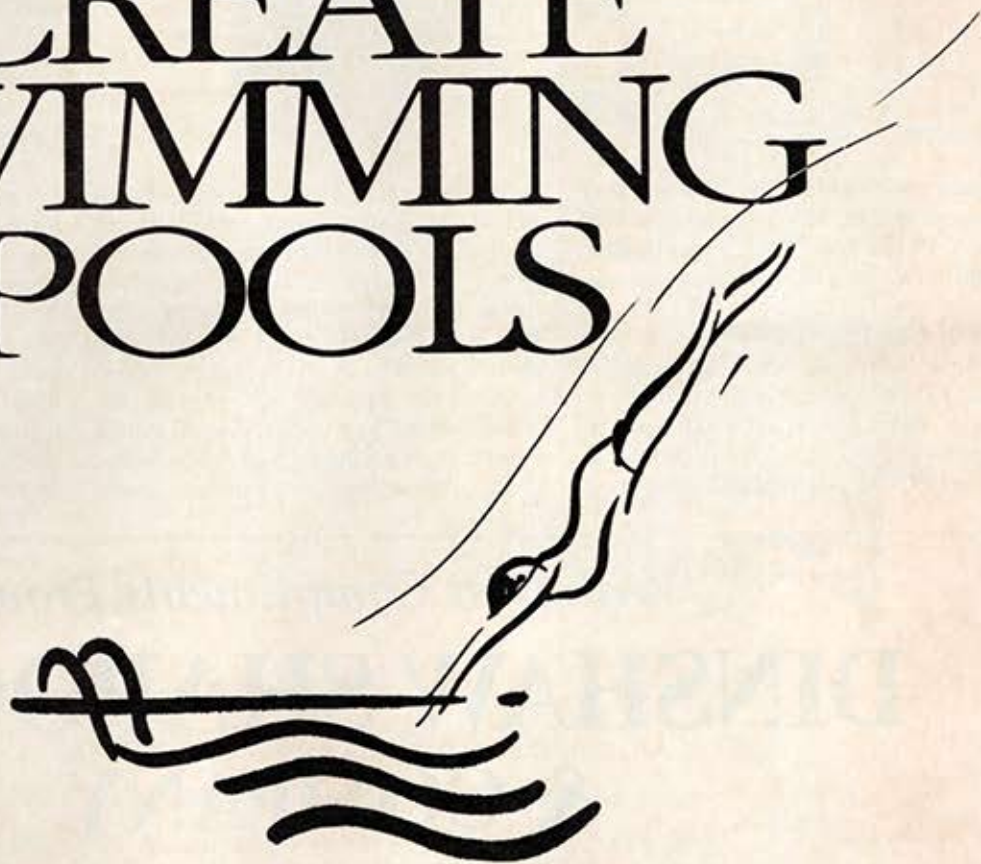
The NPA's first public function scheduled on March 6 at the K. R. Cama Oriental Institute featured a talk by Bejon Desai, ex-principal of Nasik's Boys' Town Public School on "The Holy Land of Navsari."

As the press release notes, "The NPA team is geared up to undertake social welfare projects in a professional manner with a high degree of commitment and devotion and it seeks the support of socially committed members from all walks of life willing to extend a helping hand, either by way of donations and/or by way of time and effort." Interested persons are welcome



Neville Wadia (center) receiving a cheque for Rs 10,00,000 donated to the Jerbai Wadia Maternity Hospital by Nariman Dubash (right). At extreme left is Hirji Thanawala, managing director of the N. N. Wadia Charities. A new ward at the Hospital will be named after Dubash's father Dr Kaikhushroo who had served the same institution, according to a family source Photo: Adi Sudder

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to contact Soli Vajifdar, the focal coordinating member of the NPA committee, at Sheri House, 19 Gunbow Street, Fort, Bombay 400001 (Tel: 2661971).
Arnavaz Mama

"Feel the fervor"

Zarthosti Devotional Songs, an audio cassette by Parvez Katrak in praise of Ahura Mazda, Zarathushtra and atash, was released by Ms Dhunmai Madon on December 17, 1995. Among the dignitaries present

at the function at the Seth Aslaji Bhikaji Wadia Dar-e-Meher were noted solicitor Ervad Burjor Antia and former principal of Dadar's Athornan Boarding Madressa Ervad Rustom Panthaky. The cassettes that were distributed free of cost were shortly out of stock, according to Katrak.

Abridged versions of compositions, among others by lyricists Dastur Mulla Feroze, Kavi Khabardar and Adi Dhondy, the devotional songs are "a source of plea-



Launching the cassette: Panthaky, Antia, Katrak and Madon Photo: C. C. Gandevia
Engineer receiving the Udyog Excellence Award

sure, a treat of intense sincere emotion," writes Dastur Kaikhusroo JamaspAsa, High Priest of the Anjuman Atash Behram. He further adds, "Even though there is a tremble in his voice, one can feel the deep fervor in it."

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Commending Katrak's zeal and commitment for the last 23 years, JamaspAsa mentions, "Music is only a catalyst; it is a medley of sounds... having melody, rhythm and harmony which are soothing to the ears and inspire one's spirit. But more important are the words and poetic rhythm, measured by quantity or accent that elevate the emotional fervor of a listener."

Beauty business

"There were 50 awardees from all over the country and some NRIs (non-resident Indians). Only two of us were women. I was really in a tizzy," admits Ms Katy Engineer, among the recipients conferred the Udyog Excellence Award in 1995 by the Industrial Economic Forum in New Delhi. In an interview with *Eves Touch*, June 25-July 9, 1995 the Madras based beautician added, "I felt the award recognized all my hard work and fulfilled my ambitions."

Ever since she bought over Aspi Beauty Parlour, reportedly the earliest beauty and health clinic in Madras, the 22 years she has been in this business has seen her opening a chain of beauty parlors. Besides training and employing many aspiring beauticians, some of whom have established their own parlors, she has also conducted innumerable demonstrations.

"Beauty consciousness is on the rise," she observes, and makes sure that her clients, many of them celebrities, receive attention from trained personnel. "Beauty is serious business. A raw hand or an inept person can butcher your hair or your face," states Engineer who had been fascinated by this profession since her childhood in Bombay where she was a student of the Cathedral and John Connon School.

At the Co-optex and Leather Fashion shows in the city 60-year-old Engineer takes charge of the hairstyling and make-up of the models. That is a new challenge altogether when within five minutes Engineer and her assistants have to change the look of the model to suit the next outfit. "It is interesting work, it's fun, but it's also a lot of hard work," she reports. She is wary of handling additional responsibilities on the rationale: "This is a personalized service and I need to be around constantly."

Mystic Mandala

For readers out of the know, the Aquarian Age is a time when liberal thinking will prevail, when acceptance based on understanding will be the rule and, most of all, it will be the end of individuality and the beginning of group consciousness. In short, the buzz word of the Age will be 'truth' —

searching for truth, believing in truth, understanding truth. Thus when *Mandala* describes itself as 'The Magazine of the Aquarian Age' it is perhaps the best introduction to itself. As Rusi Daruwala, editor and publisher of *Mandala* says, "It will be a time when team effort will override individual salvation."

Explaining the magazine's name, Daruwala says, "A mandala is a mysterious diagram used for meditation." The accompanying logo, very much like Leonardo da Vinci's anatomical sketch of the human body, is a reproduction of a 16th century painting of man and the universe. Published by Maitreya Foundation, a charitable trust formed by Daruwala and four others, the Foundation has long-term plans of publishing books and holding classes.

In keeping with its Aquarian Age ideals, *Mandala* attempts to share with the reader the illumination of western and eastern esotericism. A sampling from one issue: the masonic lodge, Paramhansa Yogananda, psychic hazards of sex, the role of stress in healing, and Hindu omens. If there is one thing that holds this variety together it is the belief that the inner space of an individual is where it all starts ('it' as in evils, goodness, health, relationships).

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Thus the bottomline is 'Know yourself and be at peace with yourself.'

Daruwala prefers not to slot the magazine as a spiritual one because of "the invariable association with religions." But there is no doubt that *Mandala* does fall in the more all-encompassing definition of spirituality. "We're not promoting self improvement or religion," says Daruwala. "Essentially we just try and cover vast subjects — the idea being to give people a wider understanding."

Strictly "not an organization man" (by which he means he doesn't subscribe to any particular group or guru), Daruwala ensures that this aspect of his personality guides his magazine. "We don't advocate a cult or teaching. We want to point out what is constructive in all systems."

The origins of the magazine stem from open classes on Mandala-like subjects that Daruwala used to hold many years ago. "I noticed a great interest in the students but information available was meager," says Daruwala. And so in March 1995 *Mandala* was born. Its editor is very much like the magazine — with varied interests and a searching intellect. Fifty-seven-year-old Daruwala is a chartered accountant by profession but has worked in publishing and journalism. His father, Jehan, is editor of *The Bombay Samachar*.

To read *Mandala* you need to have a sense of adventure similar to when you enter a bookshop and pick up a book on world economics even though you know you'll struggle through it. For a broad-minded reader who isn't stuck in a rut *Mandala* offers a chance to expand your mind.

If there is one criticism against the publication it is against the dry style of writing and presentation. Bordering on the academic, the magazine seems to imply that to be with it in the Aquarian Age you should be pedantic.

One word of caution. Don't pick up the magazine because you see 'astral projection' on the cover and you expect the issue to contain lurid stories of people recounting hackneyed incidents of floating outside their bodies. This is precisely what *Mandala* doesn't offer. In fact as a bearer of the Aquarian Age it would look with a mild scorn on such expectations.

Roshan Mehta

Doctors Unplugged

That the community's medicos also make good actors was evident when they staged *Doctors Unplugged* in early 1995. The shows netted them approximately one and a half lakh rupees, reports Dr Fardoon P. Soonawalla, president of the Parsi Medical Amateurs Association (PMAA). The Association has been performing stage shows for the last 25 years. Usually they



Merriment and sobriety with Parsi doctors (above, L to R) Katrak, Framroze, Pardiwalla and Amin; Soonawalla with entrepreneur Parvez Damania (right) Photos: Farokh Jassawalla

have been versions of the plays of Dr Jehangir Wadia. Last year's performance was a variety revue compered and conceived by Dr Bomi Pardiwalla. The proceeds from the first show held in March '95 was earmarked for the B. D. Petit Parsee General Hospital (PGH) and from the second show which was staged a month later the beneficiaries were the poor Parsi medical students to help them defray the costs of their text books and other educational expenses.

The overall idea of the whole show was executed by Pardiwalla who conceived the characters, dialogue, sequences as well as the lighting and sound. "We do take-offs on various items and always incorporate local personalities who are sporting enough to let their names be incorporated in the show," he says. Directed by Sam Kerawalla and assisted by Pervez Mehta, *Doctors Unplugged* unearthed a lot of young talent. "Some senior doctors opted out for personal reasons, so that gave us an opportunity to pick up a lot of new talent," mentions surgeon Pardiwalla.

The evening's entertainment consisted

of skits, gags and a short play — *Cleopatra* — which were interspersed with songs by Dr (Ms) Villie Bamboat, sometimes assisted by Pardiwalla, and dances by all the performers, young and old.

Readying for the show two-and-a-half months before it was staged, the medicos used to come twice a week for practice at the PGH at the end of their private consultations for the day. Center stage stalwarts were Drs Homi Dordi — the darling of the crowd as he always received the most applause from the audience — Rustom Patel, Bamboat, Ms Armaity Amin, Ms Zenobia Framroze, Dara Gandhi, Tehemton Bhathena and Pardiwalla. The fresh faces



on stage were those of Drs (Ms) Hufrish Suraliwalla, Ms Anita Pundole and Marzban Katrak. The cast was ably assisted backstage by Ms Aban Pardiwalla, Ms Diana Bharucha, Ms Piloo Mehta, Ms Farida Green and Ms Shireen Vakil. Bomi Pardiwalla credits Dr Marzban Nalladaru PGH PMO (Principal Medical Officer) with the overall arrangements and coordination. Sarosh Bhabha provided the studio and sound recording, videography was done by Bomi Patel of Superstar Video Labs and Farokh Jassawalla provided the photographs. The services of Patel and Jassawalla were free of cost, acknowledged Bomi Pardiwalla.

Bombay is not the sole beneficiary of the doctors' entertainment and charity. The PMAA have taken their shows in earlier years to Poona, Baroda and even to Karachi where they have raised funds for local charities with their histrionics.

Roxana A. Driver

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Table tennis pro

At the Nehru Stadium in Indore, one gate is named after Jall Godrej. Six years ago the Madhya Pradesh Table Tennis Association organized an all-India Jall Godrej Felicitation Table Tennis Tournament. Presently he is chairman of the selection committee (senior) of the Table Tennis Federation of India. Not many may know of 72-year-old Godrej who was one of India's best table tennis players, representing India all over Europe, writes his brother Bomy Godrej.

As acknowledged then Union minister Madhavrao Scindia, in the souvenir brought out on the felicitation occasion in 1989, "Jall Godrej has been a big name in Indian sports, particularly table tennis. His contributions to sports have inspired a large number of youths to take up sports as a career both for individual excellence as well as national pride."

It was at the age of 16 years that Godrej started playing the game at the residence of Col C. K. Naidu whom he recognized as his first mentor. Within two years he showed his mettle when he won the men's singles, men's doubles and the mixed doubles at the Central India Table Tennis meet. Thereafter he went on to make a name for himself at national meets and was even chosen to represent India at international meets, mentions Om Soni sharing his recollections of Godrej's prowess at the game as a "half volley." "My brother has won so many trophies that my parents had a special showcase built

Dalal-Paghdwala and her Crystal Choral

for them which to this day adorns our house," says Bomy.

Godrej's dedication to sports does not end with table tennis. He is on the selection committee of the MP Carrom Association and the finance committee of the MP Cricket Association. Though once very keen to pursue a career in aviation, he had to yield to his parents' wishes. Ultimately however he took up flying as a hobby and serves as honorary secretary of The MP Flying Club Ltd, Indore and Bhopal. He was formerly president of the Aero Club of India and vice-president of the

Federation Aeronautique International, Paris, as specified on his visiting card.



"Stirring" sound

The First Noel, depicting the nativity scene, and *November Nuance* were presented by Crystal Choral, the choir trained by Ms Freya Dalal-Paghdwala, at the Blavatsky Lodge in Bombay on November 19, 1995. The scripting and direction for

the performance was by Ms Khorshed Avari while music accompaniment on the piano came from Ms Dowlat Dhalla, according to a press release sent by Ms Soonoo Vesuna.

Teacher of voice production and singing, Dalal-Paghdwala had toiled for months to train over 30 Parsi children whose combined effort "resulted in a stirring vocal performance," as notes the write-up.

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“Finger on the pulse of the city”

Arnavaz S. Mama

*Labor politician and social worker
Tehmtan Framroze has carried his concern
for the common man into the mayoralty*

“I was allowed to live in a country which welcomed me. We must put back, not just take out. My guiding principle is what should we do for the local community, to improve the quality of life where we live..., improve the environment, the educational conditions, the economic conditions (that determine) the happiness of people.”

Currently deputy mayor and former mayor of Brighton (the seaside resort of 18th century British society so deftly portrayed by W. M. Thackeray in his classic novel *Vanity Fair* and now synonymous with the annual conventions of the Conservative Party) Tehmtan Framroze explained his preoccupation with local politics to *Parsiana* in the course of a brief visit to Bombay. The Zanzibar born politician had last been to India as a child, 42 years ago.

A Labor councillor since 1986, Framroze's job as mayor consisted of innumerable speaking engagements and presence at local functions and occasions as the representative of the crown. “As a mayor, you are above politics. You represent the entire town which is Conservative, Liberal and Labor.” This aspect requires special discipline while making speeches, Framroze notes, adding that he considered it his first duty to encourage people and thank those who “never get thanked” like the staff of the hospitals, the utilities, etc. Responding to as many invitations as possible, Framroze says, “The smaller the organization the more I felt I should honor the invitation.”

Describing the mayoralty as an 18-hour job which demanded extreme punctuality, Framroze was grateful that he had a chauffeur driven car and didn't have to “worry about parking” — the “only perk!” as added his British wife Marian with a wry smile.

“Sometimes you can't help feeling like a parcel,” Framroze laughs but calls it “an enriching experience. You have your finger on the pulse of the city. You meet such a wide variety of people, it's a privilege.” According to the prevailing system, invitations that a mayor is unable to honor devolve on the deputy mayor or a former mayor is called to help out.

The mayor's parlor (or office) is housed in Brighton's Royal Pavilion — a fantasy structure that is Indian Moghul outside and Chinese inside, as Framroze describes it, tracing the strange combination to the playboy whimsies of King George IV who

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had seen pictures and wanted them reproduced. The office is equipped with 200-year-old furniture — impractical but beautiful!

The Labor Party made inroads into Brighton, a very conservative town, for the first time in 1986. Shortly after being elected county and borough councillor, Framroze was asked to chair the housing committee. It was a particularly tough job — to try and get houses built and maintain

the existing stock when the Margaret Thatcher government "was forcing us to get rid of them." A part of the Conservatives' policy to privatize, county homes, hitherto on rent, were sought to be sold to the occupants. Though Brighton's Borough Council was locked in battle with the government, "saying we have to provide social housing for those who can't afford (to buy their own homes), Brighton has become one of the biggest homeless areas outside London," avers Framroze. His distress is evident as he reviews the

scenario that then prevailed: People without the means were beguiled into buying their homes by taking mortgages from the bank. When the economy took a downturn, many people lost their jobs and therewith, their ability to meet their mortgage instalments and the creditors "repossessed" the dwellings, turning families out into the street. Simultaneously, home values crashed and there were no buyers when job opportunities elsewhere required a family to move to another part of the country: "People were stuck in jobs since they couldn't sell. It affected the mobility of employment!" Framroze says his policy — that both rented and ownership housing sectors should co-exist — is getting a lot of support and that he has succeeded in getting together tenants, banks and the administration in a common forum to discuss their problems and seek mutually acceptable solutions. "In the past these people were not talking to each other... It's very satisfying to be involved in something that works." Wherever there is quarrel and despair Framroze says he tries to create understanding at the grassroots and is therefore not interested in a political level that does not help the common man. Hence, being a member of Parliament (MP) in

opposition is a waste of time.

Another sector where his expertise as a facilitator has been sought is to create a rapprochement between unemployed "bored" youths who congregate on the streets and the community's aged members who feel threatened by their presence. Framroze says he was approached by the directors of different agencies to create a forum incorporating the police, educational authorities, social services and the youth



Deputy mayor Framroze inspecting members of the Princess of Wales' Regiment (Photo: Evening Argus, Brighton)

to work out sustainable solutions to the benefit of society as a whole.

These forays have strengthened Framroze's resolve "to try and bring together groups which would otherwise never approach each other," create understanding and find common objectives and then lobby Parliament for legislative support where required.

Framroze had initially arrived in England to study at the university and return to Zanzibar. After a year in London, he moved to Brighton in 1968 when he was invited by the University of Sussex to work at the library of its School for African and Asian Studies. His job was to assist in the provision of research material covering the Indian subcontinent and Africa. The initial contract was for a year, but Framroze stayed on since he says he was offered the responsibility to plan a major extension to the library building, a job normally undertaken by the chief librarian. The offer was "too attractive for a junior to refuse," recalls Framroze. Political crises in East Africa also precluded his return there.

Continuing with the University, Framroze said he got involved with its politics as the British universities were then facing "cuts" from the Thatcher government: university lecturers had hitherto enjoyed a system of tenure by act of Parliament. This enabled them "to carry out research independently and protected them from patronage, corruption or bullying." Faced with the government's axe "we had to fight to protect the staff, ensure reasonable pen-

sions." Framroze says he was part of the delegation to Sir Keith Joseph, Thatcher's "mentor" and her minister of education. The Labor member was further incensed by the introduction of higher fees for overseas students. A believer in the rights of the Commonwealth, Framroze says he felt this treatment of Commonwealth students was doing harm to British interests.

"Economic forces have always tried to dominate. The basic premise of most countries' foreign policy is self-interest. Most states believe it important to protect

themselves from perceived threats. Anything different — different language, culture, religion — becomes a threat. Lack of understanding and respect breeds suspicions... There is no distinction between right and wrong in economic terms. People will happily cut off your livelihood though they won't cut off your arm!

"What we need is a world moral order," continues Framroze, referring to the recent agitations in the UK against the export of live animals. Since the animals were "being exported from a port five miles from my office, I joined the protest as mayor of the town. I was told by the demonstrators that the police behaved since the mayor was there." Framroze says he asked the Church of England vicar to use his church to allow people to come and pray peacefully against the way animals were being treated. "We were told by the politicians and farmers that we were all mad and that farmers needed to export this way because if we didn't, some other country will. I'd never been into a church until I became mayor. I addressed the congregation from the pulpit. My message was that 100 years ago human beings used to be sold. Nobody in power then believed it was wrong! Today we are treating fellow creatures cru-

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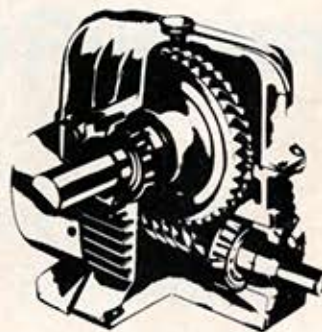
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elly. The test of a civilization is how it treats vulnerable people, animals." Framroze says he made about 20 speeches in two or three months and most people in the area were of the opinion that it is high time people in position spoke up. But Framroze notes that people tend to cling to their legal rights, preferring to ignore the moral aspect of an issue.

It was when his father's leg was amputated that he became conscious of the suffering of those who had physical disability, says the politician cum social worker. Becoming involved in the problem at a generic level, Framroze cofounded and chaired "Access"—a group devoted to help those who live with various disabilities. He realized that "buildings are often designed by healthy young men who have no notion of disability." Now Access has developed enough moral standing to vet the plans of new public buildings to ensure that there is a way for people on wheelchairs and crutches to get around.

As a councillor, Framroze has pursued an equal opportunity policy for women and the disadvantaged. In his bid to empower women he says he has promoted the creation of more creches and a system of job sharing that works particularly well among women solicitors. "Men have put a lot of barriers in front of women. When we took over, the directors (of all the public services) were men. Now 50 percent are women. To empower people you have to promote such policies. It doesn't just happen. Now fathers are entitled to paternity leave and it is illegal to ask a woman questions at a job interview that are unrelated to the job."

Framroze felt sorry that with "all the prosperity, all the acumen of the Parsi community, it has not been able to maintain its buildings in splendor and glory (in Bombay)" and considered the Roxan Shah episode "a denial of human rights." He said he had done his bit to support agiaries in Panchgani and Pune whence he had just returned to Bombay. He was particularly interested in the fate of the Dadysett Atash Bahram where his Igatpuri born father and Zanzibar born mother had been wed. His two brothers are settled in Kenya, a sister married and settled in Pune.

He estimates the existence of about

5,000 Zoroastrians in the UK and refuses to accept that "the community is incapable of establishing an atash behram there."

Though living away from London has curtailed his interaction with the Zoroastrian community to a rare attendance on special occasions, Framroze says he is friendly with the leading lights of both feuding groups — the Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe and the World Zoroastrian Organisation—and refuses to be drawn into their controversies. In fact he is nursing a fond hope of getting them together some day, to pull together towards a common goal, on the lines of his facilitation work in Brighton. Extol-

ling the Ismaili community's social cohesion and dynamic institutions, Framroze is sure "British Zoroastrians can and should do it (too)."

To that end Framroze feels it is important for Zoroastrians in the UK to acquire new, larger premises "which are accessible, not so much now as in the next century," incorporating residential facilities for out of town Zoroastrians. Lack of parking facilities at Zoroastrian House at Compayne Gardens is also a very real problem for those who live in other parts of the country, according to him.

The man who has had "a role model effect on young colored kids (he says there are about three percent immigrants in the Brighton area)" enunciates his credo: "Don't complain about discrimination. You have to survive in the world and fight it." They are surprised and energized to see a man of Asian origin discharging the regalia of authority — as surprised as were top Indian civil servants attending a special course in public administration held at Sussex University who responded to the Mayor's invitation to tea in his fantasy pavilion!

Prince Charles' speech wherein the Prince of Wales spoke of himself not as Defender of the Faith, meaning the Anglican church but as "defender of faith" that is, the religious faith of all his subject including Catholics, Bahais, Hindus, Zoroastrians, etc has given a new dimension to UK Zoroastrians. Framroze, as the only Zoroastrian politician with such a visible presence, is determined to capitalize on it, to the greater benefit of Zoroastrians and Asians.

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Captaining the WZO

The World Zoroastrian Organisation (WZO) Medical Benefit Fund instituted by Dr (Ms) Shirinbanoo Kutar in memory of her late husband, Dastur (Dr) Sohrabji Kutar of the UK, has exceeded its initial target of £ 100,000 and is now on its way to doubling its corpus, informed WZO president Shahpur Captain. Speaking briefly on the phone to *Parsiana* in the course of his annual visit to India, Cap-



tain noted that the three-year-old Fund had helped approximately 50 Zoroastrians so far, most of them being from India. Specialized treatment for heart and kidney ailments, rehabilitation of paralysed people, hip replacements and specialized medicine for cancer patients accounted for most of the requests, he added.

The aid is proffered from the investment income of the Fund and "we seek special donations when we can't (meet) the constant demand," Captain said, indicating that much of the effort was the dedicated work of an anonymous WZO member.

Thanks to an overseas donor, the WZO instituted the Creation of Wealth Scheme by providing cheap loans to the tune of Rs 5 lakhs each to 10 Zoroastrians setting up small-scale industries, notes Captain. One Zoroastrian has already received the financial aid under this Scheme. In addition, through the kindness and generosity of a Zoroastrian trust in India, a Self-Employment Scheme has also been started, and to date about Rs 1.5 crores have been utilised for this purpose, revealed a grateful Captain.

"It is a part and parcel of the activities of the world body on the world scale. We're in India because the need here is the greatest. If the need arose elsewhere, we'd address it there," Captain says, referring to these as also to their amelioration project in rural Gujarat where 250 Zoroastrian families have been helped so far to recover their economic balance. According to Captain, "terrible new cases keep coming up in godforsaken places."

On a different level is the predicament

of a Parsi who has already spent a year in a lockup in another country. It will be addressed by the WZO, assures Captain, who also notes that the Organisation has recently welcomed philanthropist Neville Wadia as its grand patron and Bombay Dyeing chairman Nusli Wadia as a patron in the wake of their navjotes in Bombay.

Captain expects to attend the Sixth World Zoroastrian Congress in Tehran in June, though he doesn't expect a general WZO representation there. "I am not in favor of such meetings (but) the possible formation of another world body is on the agenda... An attempt is being made... from the American angle. We have to be careful as we believe it to be divisive of the community."

Questioning the need for such an apex body, Captain says, "None of the people involved have ever come forward to say what that body is going to do. Networking? That can be done by the WZO. Our constitution allows for everything. The anjumans don't want to join (the WZO) because they have their own political axe to grind." [The Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India and the Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP) have looked askance at the WZO constitution which equates anjumans with individual members, allowing an anjuman body and a lone Zoroastrian one vote each. They have also complained that the WZO has withheld its membership list from them. "The list of members is available. I'll send you a copy," Captain told *Parsiana*]. Referring to the BPP, the Federation's honorary secretary Keki Gandhi, Rohinton Rivetna, the founder and former president of FEZANA (Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America) and Zal Sethna, former president and currently managing committee member of the ZTFE (Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe) who have all questioned the bonafides of the WZO as a world body, Captain says, "We've told them, we're quite prepared to consider all reasonable propositions."

Reminded of the bicameral system proposed for the WZO at the Fourth World Zoroastrian Congress (in Bombay in 1985) which allows the present individual members to constitute one body and the anjumans/associations to constitute another, somewhat on the lines of world democratic legislatures, Captain was emphatic, "The bicameral system was turned down by the

BPP. They said they wanted control!" Captain decried the attempt to classify the body as a social service league by recounting how the WZO was set up in London at a time when Iranian Zoroastrian lives were in jeopardy due to the political tumult in Iran. "Just because it's branched into social activity in India to do what anjumans didn't do," referring to its work in rural Gujarat, "was no reason to delimit its capabilities," he contested. A world demographic survey cum census (another perceived field of work for the projected international body) could be undertaken by the WZO and was on its list of priorities, Captain indicated, to be undertaken by total professionals in every center of Zoroastrian population at an estimated cost of £ 30,000. "None of us know how many Zoroastrians live in rural Gujarat and Maharashtra; we can't take only the cities," he continued. "The population in the US and Canada — and also in the UK — is a shifting population. We have to be very careful..."

Captain estimates that there are 7.5 thousand Zoroastrians in the UK, but "not many have given their names (for inclusion) in the UK directory." Reverting to the WZO, Captain noted, "We are more representative than anything you can imagine. Take the example of the ZTFE: it is certainly not representative of the Zoroastrians of London. Nobody is interested. Nobody goes there (to Zoroastrian House in London). People who live in London know it. Notions of such representation are fallacious. Their idea of another building is causing problems (The ZTFE managing committee is working towards a £ 2 million plus project for a new, bigger Zoroastrian House with adequate car parking facilities and, hopefully, an agiary). At a special meeting called by the ZTFE committee, members asked numerous questions on this project, which remained unanswered. The present location is central... To say that (ZTFE president) Rusy Dalal or Zal Sethna is representative of the Zoroastrians of UK is absolute nonsense."

Turning his thoughts westward, Captain indicated that FEZANA cannot be considered a representative body from comments made to him by many American and Canadian Zoroastrians, adding, "People outside don't know this." Referring to the impromptu meeting of international

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Zoroastrians, including WZO representatives in Chicago after the Second Parliament of World Religions in 1993 that Rivetna had called together to discuss the question of an international Zoroastrian body and where different draft constitutions incorporating the WZO had been presented. Captain challenged: "Rohinton Rivetna does not have the authority of FEZANA. Ask people in New York, Chicago, etc whether such an authority had been given (to Rivetna)..."

"We've been misunderstood and misrepresented everywhere," Captain charged and reiterated, "What net-working? The concept is very much flawed. They're pushing it, out of sheer jealousy. The WZO will do its utmost to see that such a body is not formed as the WZO strongly believes that it will divide and harm the community globally."

Fruity fighters

"Medical science has the technology and know-how to produce effective vaccines. What's missing is better access to the 'unvaccinated' and an inexpensive method of vaccine delivery," notes researcher Dr (Ms) Yasmin Thanavala.

"Dishing up a mess o'immunity" is how the prestigious *U.S. News and World Report* (*USN & WR*) titled its story on the research development that promises to provide edible vaccines against the world's most virulent scourges. "Tomorrow's vaccine will be not a jab or a pill but a banana. Simply by eating a normal looking and tasting banana, people will be protected against AIDS, hepatitis and other diseases at a tiny fraction of the cost of today's vaccines," amplified the BBC World Service.

The innovative technology that could revolutionize disease prevention is the result of two US teams of microbiologists working in tandem, one of them headed by Bombay born Thanavala at New York state's Roswell Park Cancer Research Institute in Buffalo. The other team is led by Dr Charles Arntzen of Texas A&M University. The research was launched in 1992 under the World Health Organisation's Children's Vaccine Initiative with backing from a consortium of philanthropic institutions including the Rockefeller Foundation in an effort to find cheaper, easier ways to provide immunity in the third world countries where diseases of all kinds are rampant.

Thanavala and her team began by inserting the "DNA extracted from the hepatitis-B virus (HBV) into tobacco leaves" because the genetics of the plant are well-known though the plant itself is not a food source in the known world, as notes Thanavala in an article. The protein antigen it yielded was partially purified and injected into mice, eliciting the same response as produced by the current commercial vaccine. The team then introduced the vital protein in potatoes and found that mice fed the raw bio-engineered potatoes developed similar antibodies. "The breakthrough will be to express the antigen in foods, such as bananas, that are widely eaten and require little or no cooking or processing," said Thanavala. "Potatoes are usually cooked before eating and we don't know what cooking does to the vaccine..."

"Our research opens up limitless possi-



bilities for delivering vaccines, not only for hepatitis-B, but for diseases such as malaria or leprosy. Ideally, the genetically engineered foods would be grown locally in each country, and their distribution controlled by physicians and other healthcare workers.

"There may even be a market for garden-variety vaccines in industrial countries, such as the United States. What child — or adult, for that

matter — wouldn't prefer a banana to a needle?" asks Thanavala.

"It would take researchers five years to increase the amount of protein produced by the plant and its power to elicit an immune response. At that point, a vaccine may be ready for tests on humans," Henry Davis quoted Thanavala's estimates in *Buffalo News* (April 11, 1995).

Thanavala's team has concentrated on hepatitis-B as some 300 million people are known to be carrying the virus which is a leading cause of liver cancer, note newspaper reports. Spreading through contact with contaminated blood or blood products, sexual intercourse or from mother to baby, it is said to show few or no symptoms until it attacks the liver. "Until we significantly reduce the number of carriers, this global epidemic will persist," says Thanavala.

The currently available commercial vaccine, produced from yeast, has to be injected in three doses over six months. Requiring refrigeration and medical infrastructure that hikes up its cost (variously estimated at between \$80 and \$150), it is unaffordable/impractical for the poor countries where 20 percent of the population is said to be carrying the virus. The bio-engineered, vaccine-laden banana could cost as little as five cents a dose, hopefully estimates the *USN & WR*. "It is not a question of whether we can do it. It's a matter of how long it takes us," Thanavala told Davis.

Daughter of Katie and the late Maneck, Thanavala graduated with microbiology and chemistry from Bombay University. Her masters under Dr Shanta Rao on "The effect of hormones on antibody production" in Bombay and her doctoral the-

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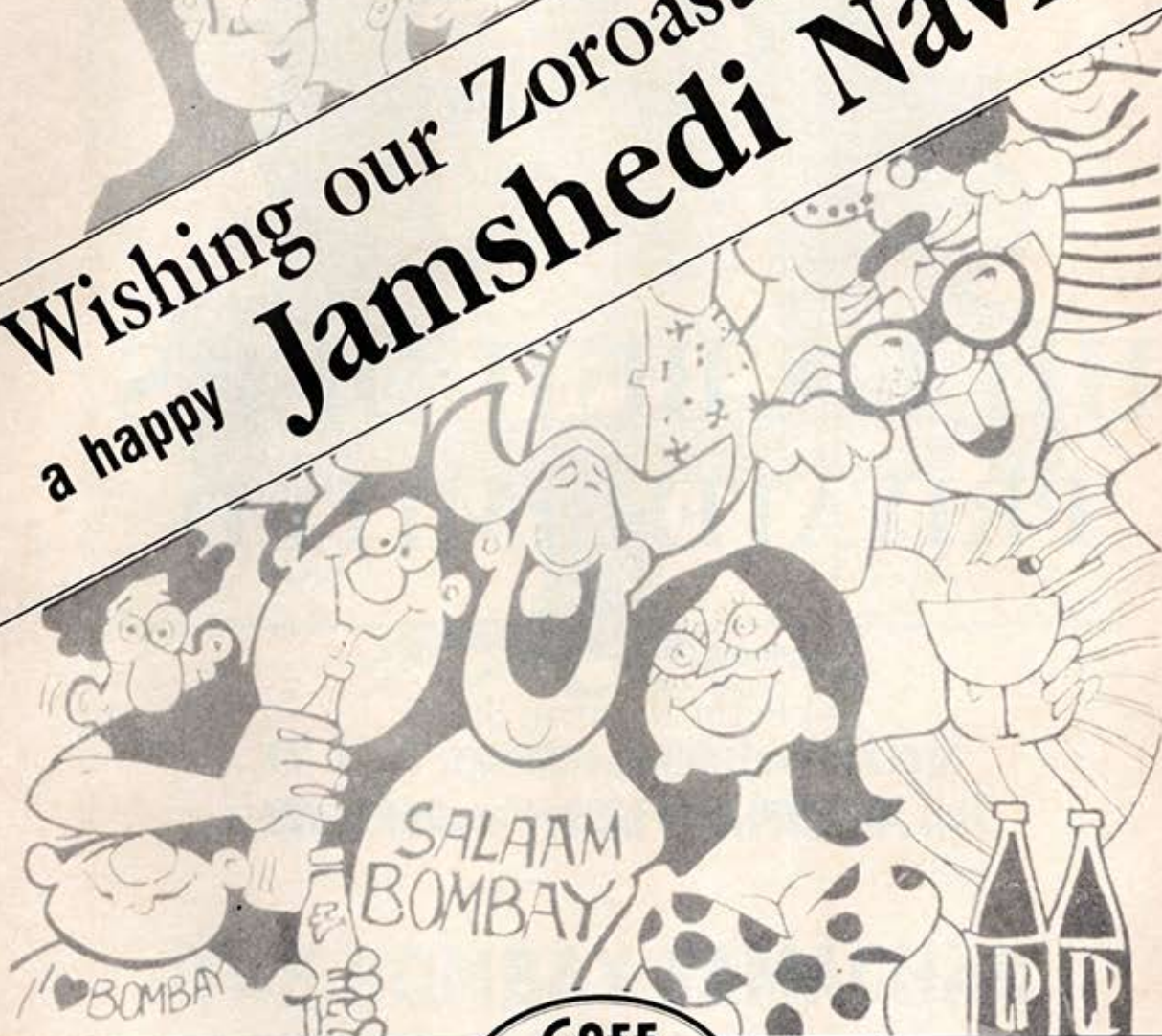
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Zoroastrian Kurd Ilhan Kizilhan
The Karanis: Susan, Bonnie, Sabrina and Hoshang (left)

sis on "The role of antibody affinity in the regulation of fertility by immunological methods" under Prof Ivan Roitt at London University delineated her chosen field of research and teaching, initially at London's Middlesex Hospital Medical School's Department of Immunology and thereafter at Roswell Park. With more than 40 articles published in various scientific journals, Thanavala has been invited to speak at national and international symposia. She has simultaneously nurtured several students successfully through to their Masters and PhD degrees. A member of professional bodies like The New York Academy of Sciences and the British Society for Immunology, among others, Thanavala has received several honors and awards, notably the Indian Council of Medical Research's gold medal in reproductive biology, the Eisenhower Medical Center's Distinguished Speaker Award and the Dr Louis Sklarow Memorial Award. In conjunction with fellow scientists, Thanavala has applied for two patents on aspects of HBV immunization.

Married to fellow researcher Dr Arvind Thakur, a professor at the University of Buffalo, with whom she has co-authored some of her published articles, Thanavala has preserved her Indian citizenship though she enjoys the status of permanent resident both in the UK and the USA where she finds time to steer high school and college students during the summer breaks.

Winning teams

What do companies like Brunswick, Argyle, Lancer, Mercury, Sea Ray, Circle Seal, Filterite — and a host of others — have in common? At some point in time their products — ranging from bowling balls and golf bags to laboratory and surgical instrumentation, to luxury yachts to

military missile systems, to NASA space shuttle components — have felt the impact of relentless competition and been catapulted from losers to winners by a judicious dose of value technology (VT) strategies. Heading the transforming teams has been Chicago based Zoroastrian Hoshang Karani.

A typical VT study involves a team of five people representing various areas within the company. Through cost studies and consumer feedback, brainstorming, evaluation and development under the direction of an experienced value specialist (in these cases, Karani) the goal is reached in six to seven meeting days spread over four to six weeks, informs a press release. The average result of the exercise is an overall cost reduction of 20-25 percent but individual cases have registered more than 65 percent, notes the write-up. Returns on investment in value technology is said to range from 10:1 to 30:1.

Karani, an MS in mechanical engineering from the Tennessee Technological University and an MBA in international business management from Loyola University, has been a former president of the Metropolitan Chicago chapter of the Society of American Value Engineers and served as general chairman of its world conference in 1983. His 25 years' experience has been garnered in management positions at corporations like Imperial Eastman, Pullman Standard and at Brunswick where he coordinated interdivisional activities as its corporate director of technology. Now having launched Karani Value Technology Strategies, Karani is thirsting for an international client base.

Many a compliment attest to Karani's leadership credentials. Referring to the value analysis study of the space shuttle collector assembly, F. Konigsdorffer, gen-

eral manager of Brunswick Technetics, says it all: "In my opinion Hoshang handled a very tough project with great professionalism and sensitivity. Above all, I admired the self-confidence and pride of achievement instilled into a team who have never really worked together." Zebco Corporation president John Charvat adds, "In Hoshang... your department is uniquely blessed with individuals who do their jobs not only because they have to, but seemingly because they want to... Their pride shows...."

The son of Bapai and the late Rustom Karani of Bombay, Hoshang reached Illinois in the 1960s where he has made his home with wife Bonnie and daughters Susan and Sabrina.

The Zoroastrian Kurds

After the last visit of a delegation of Zoroastrian Tajiks in 1993 not much was heard of our religious brethren in Eastern Europe. But in February this year Ilhan Kizilhan, a 30-year-old television journalist originally from Turkish Kurdistan was in Bombay doing a television documentary on the local Zoroastrians for MED T.V., a satellite television.

A Zoroastrian by birth Kizilhan says that there is no conversion to the religion in Kurdistan. "You are born a Zoroastrian," he says. While still a baby the *Peer* or high priest sprinkles water on the child and initiates him into the fold. "We pray twice a day in the morning and in the evening," he says. Their prayers are in Kurdish language but their word for God is *Khoda*. They observe March 21 as the New Year. They fast for three days in December, and in August and October they make a pilgrimage to worship at the *lalesh* or temple. They believe in one God who has seven angels. During their festive season they dance and sing and a group of Zoroastrians go from village to village singing religious songs.

Kizilhan who is married to a Zoroastrian and has two children aged two and six, says that the Kurdish Zoroastrians are divided into three groups, the Sheikhs, the Peeras and the Murids or lay people. Marriage between the three sects is prohibited. Kizilhan puts the number of Kurdish Zoroastrians at over half-a-million. The purpose of his documentary is to increase awareness about Zoroastrianism amongst his viewers in Kurdistan and neighboring countries and to thereby start a dialogue between the Zoroastrians there and in India.

Compiled by Arnavaz S. Mama

POLITICS AND POLICY

Around 1,000 delegates are expected to attend the Sixth World Zoroastrian Congress in Tehran from June 19 to 22 1996, of which about 250 will be from outside Iran.

Ms Homai Modi, India's representative to the Congress while speaking to the representatives of 11 anjumans assembled in Madras on December 23 and 24, 1995 for the executive council meeting of the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India, said that the applications from India and elsewhere would be screened by the executive council formed in Tehran to host the Congress. This is the second world congress to be held in Iran. The first, held in 1960, was the first of the world congresses. All the other congresses have been held in Bombay.

Rusi Dalal, president of the Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe (ZTFE) said the World Youth Congress will be hosted in London from July 4 to 7, 1997 and would be open to those between the ages of 18 to 40. There was no limit on the number of delegates who could attend from India, he stated.

With the fate of the ninth all India youth festival then uncertain (it was later held in Surat, January 5 to 7, 1996), the Poona Parsi Panchayat (PPP) offered to host the next youth congress if a sum of three lakh rupees could be assured.

Over two lakh rupees was pledged by Federation members for hosting the tenth youth festival in Bombay with the Bombay Parsi Panchayat (BPP) offering to chip in the amount required to reach three lakhs should the youth be unable to collect the amount. Federation and BPP president Jamshed Guzder personally pledged an amount of one lakh rupees and said that for the next five years for every youth festival held he would pledge a lakh each.

Thirty-two nominations have been received by the Federation for the annual awards for 1994, stated former chief executive of the BPP Rustom Anklesaria, a coopted member and now a consultant on the Federation projects being implemented by the BPP.

The Save Udvada Committee's project preparations are awaiting funds from the central and state governments, said Modi, a member of the Committee. The sea has been eroding the beach on the coastal Gujarat mecca of the Parsis.



The Federation and the Sixth Congress

The Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India discusses the arrangements for representation at the Sixth World Zoroastrian Congress in Tehran

No solution has been found towards utilization of the 1,500 acres in Palghar belonging to the Iranian Zoroastrian Anjuman. According to Aspi Irani, vice president of the Anjuman, the matter is at a "stalemate."

Guzder stressed the need to "do something" for the rights of Parsi women married to non-Parsis and their children. He said he had advised those who had married out to form an association which they had done as "you can't go to the Supreme court without that." However the courts he said may not intervene in the personal law of communities. "I don't know what to do. God willing something should happen."

The controversy over the Federation's invitation to former Parsi Zoroastrian Anjuman of Secunderabad and Hyderabad (PZASH) president Bezon Dittia figured in the closing minutes of the Federation meeting, with the Madras Parsi Anjuman president Nariman Mogrelia stating that the Federation would have to take a decision one way or the other. Dittia and PZASH have been at loggerheads for sometime and the anjuman has objected to Dittia's presence at the Federation meetings.

The last item taken up for discussion at

the executive council meeting was the formation of a world body of federations which saw Federation's honorary secretary Keki Gandhi leave the main table in annoyance when Delhi Parsi Anjuman (DPA) vice president Dadi Mistry and coopted member from Madras Ms Mani Clubwala questioned the need for the formation of another world body when they believed that the World Zoroastrian Organisation (WZO) was serving the purpose. Mistry and Clubwala are members of the WZO.

Of the 75 delegates that the Madras Parsi Anjuman had expected to attend the Federation meet, only 25 showed up causing Mogrelia to voice his "disappointment" and to sarcastically comment at the end of the two day meet, "Thank you for coming in such large numbers."

Sixth World Zoroastrian Congress

Guzder explained that the Sixth World Zoroastrian Congress was to be held in Tehran as Iran had requested that India not "monopolize" the congresses. The Congress' executive council also requested that two people be sent from Bombay to assist in the hosting of the Congress. Accordingly, DPA president Lt Gen (retired)

Adi Sethna, and Modi, who had assisted in organizing earlier congresses, visited Iran. Guzder stated that the Iranians would make accommodation available at lower charges for delegates from India and also reduce the delegate fee for those from this country. He said that the Iranian government would be "very liberal with visas" and he urged Zoroastrians to go to Iran "to help our fellow Zoroastrians."

Speaking about our *mader vatan*, the motherland where Zoroastrianism has its roots, Modi said that the World Congress would be "a happy occasion to be with our co-religionists." However she added that only around 100 to 120 people "will be allowed to go from India." Registration forms, which almost double as visa applications, would be available from the anjumans. The requirement for birth certificates to be attached with the forms may be waived for Indians as not all Indians have that document.

"Sending the form does not mean you go to the Congress," said Modi. The forms will be vetted by the executive council of the Congress in Tehran and invitations will be issued to those selected. If a form is sent directly, the party will receive a direct reply. If the form is sent through the BPP or another anjuman, the reply would be sent to the concerned anjuman. Modi, who has been appointed the representative in India for the Congress, said three passport photos would have to accompany the form. Women must wear a scarf while being photographed but not all the hair need be covered.

PPP trustee Eruch Irani questioned, "Why should they (the Iranians) decide who should attend? We should decide."



Facing page: Members of the Madras Anjuman together with Federation representatives on the steps of the Jal Phiroj Clubwala Dare Meher



Left to right (above): Guzder, Anklesaria, Gandhi, (below) Dastur Hormazdiar N. Dastur of Pune, Laskari, Mogrelia and Kavarana



"I agree," said Modi, "but because of security reasons they want to decide."

"Eruch's point is valid" said Gandhi. "The Federation should get a quota. We want people to go who will make the Congress effective. It should not be only those who can afford 39,000 to 40,000 rupees who should go."

"The anjumans will use their discretion," Modi noted and agreed to a suggestion that the Iranians should favourably consider recommendations from the Federation. When asked whether the limit of 100 to 125 delegates from India included accompanying spouses and children who may not attend the Congress, Modi replied that she would seek clarification.

ZTFE's Rusi Dalal, while stating that the Congress would be "an eye opener," said there may be a problem for Zoroastrians from the UK and the USA in obtaining Iranian visas. He also felt it would be "dangerous" for Iranian Zoroastrians residing abroad to go back to Iran. Dalal expected "around 25 delegates from England and a handful from Australia" to attend the Congress.

Modi clarified that the "quota limitations came only yesterday (December 22, 1995)." So she did not have an opportunity to seek further clarification on the subject. She said that Rohinton Rivetna, former president of the Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America (FEZANA) had mentioned that 30 to 40 delegates would come from the USA.

Rusi Gae, former joint secretary to the Government of India Law Ministry, inquired, "What are the norms for an application to be accepted? The applications

can be sent accordingly so that there is a reduction in the number of rejections."

"I will ask," said Modi, "but I don't think I will get an answer to that. They may not want to state reasons."

Aspi Irani said the Iranian Anjuman would "try and help to vet applications."

Registration fees which are \$ 300 (Rs 10,500) for adults and \$ 150 (Rs 5,250) for students have been reduced for delegates from India and Pakistan to Rs 4,000 and Rs 2,000 respectively. The charges which are not refundable include daily snacks and afternoon tea, said Modi. Registration forms should reach the concerned authorities before March 31, 1996 after which date the registration fees will be doubled. The cost of a regular air ticket on Iran Air for the Bombay-Tehran-Bombay sector is Rs 23,000 to 24,000, said Modi. "We are trying for

concessions (between 30 to 40 percent)...we are also trying for the pilgrimage fare." She noted that Iran Air flies every Friday to Tehran thus delegates would have to spend two weeks in Iran as the Congress itself begins on a Wednesday and ends on a Saturday. (The Congress was originally slated for June 20 to 23 but was changed later to June 19 to 22.) Thus a person would have to arrive the Friday prior to the holding of the Congress and leave the Friday after. Eruch Irani noted that Emirates Airways also flies to Tehran though similar discounts to Iran Air may not be offered. Tours of Iran would be arranged most



Left to right: Mani Clubwala with Zarin Mistry and Freny Byramshaw and with Dadi Mistry and Homai Modi

likely to Yazd, Isfahan, Shiraz, Tehran and Hamadan. "This is still open to suggestion by the tour agent" said Modi.

(Friendly Tours is the official agent though other organizations are also known to be booking tours.) The delegates travelling by Iran Air would leave Bombay on June 14, 1996 and return on June 28, 1996. (It was proposed to hold a Federation meeting on the weekend or week days prior to the departure.) The proceedings of the Congress will be in Farsi with simultaneous translation in English and vice versa. The subjects to be covered are:

- Increase co-operation among the world associations in order to preserve our cultural and religious heritage; promoting progress and improving the living conditions of Zoroastrians (especially our youth).
- Reinforcement of the schools for educating the priests (mobeds); and allocation of special funds to send outstanding priests to well-known universities.

- Promote religious education to the Zoroastrian youth.
- Make decisions on the future of Zoroastrians (especially our youth); including investments and the use of assets for future generations.

The Congress authorities "had not agreed to demography," being one of the subjects at the Congress, said Modi. According to her, the anjuman authorities in Iran placed the Zoroastrian population in that country at around 60 to 65,000 as verses the census figure of around 90,000.

Those who wish to present papers (maximum time, 20 minutes) on the topics should send their papers or abstracts by March 31, 1996 to Dr Khoshrow Dabestani, general secretary, Sixth World Zoroastrian Congress, Number 8 Zarthoshtian Street, Mirza Koochak Khan St, Jamhuri Ave, Tehran

Iran's President Rafsanjani "has gone out of his way...to make the Congress a success"



11316, Iran. Participants elected to speak at the Congress will not be charged registration fees.

The temperature in Iran is expected to be around 25 to 30 degrees celsius. Women should wear loose clothing, long coats, a scarf and socks. The coat or dress should be below the knee. Women can speak and participate in the Congress.

Mistry questioned if Iran "is the right place to hold the Congress." Seeing how the numbers of delegates was to be restricted, he asked, "How beneficial is it to the Zoroastrian in India?" He also questioned what the Congress would achieve.

Modi replied that a congress gives an opportunity "for us to rub shoulders with our co-religionists. We will not achieve anything in Iran which we have not achieved in India. Whatever you achieve at any other congress you will achieve here and you also get to see your homeland."

Aspi Irani said that by going to Iran "we will be helping Zoroastrians in Iran."

Iranian President A. H. Rafsanjani "has gone out of his way to give a message to embassies all over the world (for issuance of visas). He is most anxious to make it a success. If you have any respect for your community go out of your way to help," noted Guzder.



Modi described how she and Sethna were taken to eight to 10 Zoroastrian schools where Zoroastrian prayers are taught to the students. She noted that Iran had a Zoroastrian Council of Women and a Zoroastrian Council of Mobeds. "Here we have no council no head or tail." She said the meetings there worked "like clockwork... everyone spoke to the point."

"Unlike here," quipped Gandhi.

Pervaz Irani, vice president of the Federation of Zoroastrian Youth Associa-

Left to right: (top) Pervaz Irani, Gae and Dandiwalla; (center) Farokh Irani, Eruch Irani; (below) Dalal and Aspi Irani

tions (FOZYA), said the Congress was a good "excuse to visit Iran." He said youths from Dahanu were also planning to book seats for the Congress through the Iranian Zoroastrian Anjuman. Modi informed that a person was coming from Iran in the first week of January to prepare travel packages for the Congress.

Youth festivals

Dalal assured the delegates that the youth congress to be held in the UK would also differentiate between the fees charged to Zoroastrians from India and Pakistan as versus the rest of the world. He said FEZANA would not hold any all American meets in 1997 and requested India not to do so either. This would increase the participation at the London meet. Dalal said he was "not worried about numbers. Ten or 20 is no problem. If its 40 or 50 we have to look at it in a different way." When asked whether married people could attend the Congress, he said certainly, "we are not a marriage bureau." The ZTFE would organize trips in and around London, he stated.

As regards the youth festivals in India, Pervaz Irani said "Surat is struggling for the finance," to host the ninth all India Youth Festival in that Gujarat city. Eruch Irani said his Panchayat was ready to organize an international youth festival in Poona if he were assured three lakh rupees. "If we raise enough, we will refund the three lakhs," he said. Pervaz Irani then reiterated his commitment to host the tenth youth



congress in Bombay and asked for funds. Mistry promised to raise advertising worth Rs 50,000. Mogrelia promised Rs 25,000 worth of advertising from Madras. BPP trustee Ms Silloo Kavarana pledged Rs 25,000. Hoshang Debara from Agra offered Rs 3,000 from his anjuman. Aspi Irani offered Rs 10,000 from the Iranian Zoroastrian Anjuman. Guzder offered Rs 50,000 initially and then another Rs 50,000 from a women and children trust fund and said if the youth "were holding congresses for the next five years I will give one lakh every year and, in the event I die in the next five years, I will request BPP chief executive Behram Laskari and Rusi Anklesaria to request the amount from my children." Anklesaria suggested that in the event of a shortfall the BPP could advance Rs 1,50,000 and if the youth collect the amount required they could refund this amount to the BPP. Laskari suggested that the BPP should offer as much money as the youth could raise. Thus if the youth raise 75,000 the BPP would contribute another 75,000 if there was a shortfall.

Demography

The 1991 census figure which showed an increase in the Parsi population from 71,630

in 1980 to 76,382 in 1990 was welcomed by the delegates. Gandhi said that they were trying to get more details and to "convince the government to give data." He said that the government told him that the Parsis were a small community and you should "get information yourself." Guzder noted that the formation of a high power committee of workers was in the offering. The purpose was to take an all India census of Parsis. They need to collect 10 lakh rupees, he said, adding "I have personally decided to contribute three to four lakh rupees. We can raise the money, but where will we get dedicated workers? In Bombay we will manage but outside Bombay you all will have to work."

As regards the third child policy of the BPP, Guzder said 14 cases had come before the Punchayet since June 1993. He advised the delegates to get statistics of Parsis married to non-Parsis. "Ours is a democratic community. People ask, 'Why is it that the brother who marries out has his children considered Parsis while the sister cannot?'" he said. Gandhi countered by noting that the orthodox group also believes in equality of the sexes and wants the children of both men and women barred from becoming Parsi Zoroastrians. Farokh

Irani, trustee of the PPP, asked about those Parsis married to non-Parsis and urged the Federation "to take a decision." Gandhi noted that in the last meeting of the Federation people took objection to what was printed in the *Fed Newsletter* regarding the definition of Parsi Zoroastrian as stated in the judgement of the Bombay High Court judges Frank Beaman and Dinshaw Daver. "Keep the sentiments of the older members of the community in mind," counselled Gandhi.

PZASH trustee and former president of FOZYA Jehangir Bisney noted, "The census people didn't come to our house. FOZYA could help you with the survey." Pervez Irani said "many youth organizations have carried out surveys. In Bombay, if the BPP helps, we can mobilize youths." Modi noted that demographer Ms Ava Khullar had felt that amateurs may not be suitable for the job and retired census officials would be more effective as some of the information to be collected was of a sensitive nature.

In the absence of FOZYA president Porus Karanjawalla whose father had expired two weeks earlier, Pervez Irani listed the projects that FOZYA intended to under-

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take. Among these was an all-India drawing competition, an all-India Mr and Ms Zoroastrian competition along the lines of the Miss India Pageant and an all-India cricket match in March. Delhi's Young Farohars had taken a tour of Gujarat and Bombay, mentioned Gandhi. In Bombay they were hosted by Guzder at the Parukh Dharamshalla. Mistry recalled that Delhi had hosted 30 youth from the BPP Holiday Youth Program and among those who addressed the youth was noted lawyer Rohinton Nariman who spoke on the significance of the kusti prayers. Thanking Delhi for the "services, hospitality and sight seeing," Anklesaria lamented that though Bombay has a lot of youth activities there "is no coordination, no central authority." He felt even a part time person could perform the function of coordinating youth activities. The name of Ms Yasmin Charna who helped organize the youth congress on behalf of the Damaniyas in Ahmednagar in November 1994 was suggested as one who had the potential to assume the role. An inter-city youth meet between Madras and Secunderabad was mooted by Mogrelia and agreed to by Bisney. The Madras Anjuman would contribute for the train fare, said Mogrelia.

Among the actions the Save Udvada Committee has considered for preventing further erosion of the coastline are afforestation and building of walls, said Modi. Saplings are being nurtured for replantation on the shore line but the problem is that villagers may start cutting the trees for firewood, she noted. "Security over a very large area is required," said Modi. "We are trying to involve the villagers in our efforts." The other precaution is to build six-foot walls — three feet above and three feet below the sand. The walls which will be hollow from inside, and rounded, will last for several years and will have to be replaced in due time. Two or three walls are to be erected in the first phase said Modi. Funds are expected from the government in three to four months and will be given in stages. "This is only a temporary solution. Every time a wall goes down another wall has to be put up. The community cannot afford this kind of expense," she noted. In regard to a query whether tetrapods would work, she replied in the negative, noting that one needed a deep fall in the shore line as at Bombay's Marine Drive; otherwise the tetrapods would be washed away. Modi bemoaned that "some of the local Zoroastrians are not

interested in helping us. They say "*Ké bapdadanu ayuch to ayuch, hoi tau hoi, nahi hoi tau nahi hoi* [We have inherited (the land) from our forefathers. As long as it is destined to exist it will exist]. It is a very disheartening attitude."

Mogrelia stated he was "disappointed" at the poor turn out for the Madras meet: "If we are spending money to go to other cities for the Federation meeting, others should reciprocate." He noted the preparations, pains and expenses incurred by the anjuman to host a successful meeting. Commenting on the "slow implementation" of the Federation projects Debara noted, "At the beginning people attend from enthusiasm. Now there is a lack of attendance. Why are members not attending the meeting?" Gandhi pointed out that of the last four meetings held in the south the attendance was between 10 to 11 anjumans at each meeting. "We have not done badly," said Gandhi. The meeting being held over the Christmas weekend may also have affected the attendance, he noted. In response to suggestions from members Gandhi agreed to write to anjumans asking them why they were not attending the Federation meeting and to please do so.

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Gandhi also voiced his disapproval at the limited number of nominations received for the Federation awards for 1994-95. "Only two nominations have been received for sports. The anjumans are not doing their jobs. There must be many illustrious youth. We should not go by just these nominations."

Individual anjumans

In other anjuman news Agra's request that a board be put at the Delhi Dharamshalla stating that Parsis could reside at the Agra Dharamshalla while visiting the historical city was conceded to by Mistry after Federation members pleaded with the DPA representative to put up such a notice in the dining hall. Mistry said he would convey the message to his co-trustees. Debara complained that Parsis only took a one day bus tour to Agra and that many of them are not aware of the dharamshalla and its facilities. He noted that the anjuman was spending Rs 16,000 every year, over and above the Rs 7,400 income from travellers, for the maintenance of the dharamshalla.

Capt Homi Dandiwalla, president of the Allahabad anjuman, noted that as interest rates were down, the anjuman would have to resort to cost cutting. He was going to suggest to his members to hold meetings at each other's residence to cut down on the expense of hiring a hall.

Eruch Irani said that the PPP had "stopped talking and started working, unlike in the past." The "very, very active" PPP had started a newsletter to communicate with the community. The doongerwadi land had been demarcated and no encroachment has taken place to date. Fencing and a gate had been installed on part of the property.

"We are not here to debate who is right or wrong or whether the request of Bezon

Dittia is justified or not," said Gandhi referring to the controversy between PZASH and its former president and exvice president of the Federation's south zone. Dittia and the anjuman trustees have been at odds for sometime with the anjuman objecting to his continued attendance at Federation meetings as a special invitee. Gandhi said efforts have been made to arrive at a compromise but there seemed no "motivation" to compromise on either side.

"Dittia offered a conditional compromise that was not acceptable to the anjuman" said Mogrelia. "The anjuman feels strongly on the subject. We have to decide one way or the other. Gandhi said that anjuman should write to the Federation giving their reasons for wanting to bar Dittia from the Federation. Their letter would then be passed on to Dittia who would then submit his written reply. The Federation could then study the correspondence and decide on a line of action."

In the closing minutes of the meeting on December 24, Gandhi said he had written to Rivetna regarding the proposed structure for a world body of Federations with a rotating presidency between India, Iran and the USA. He said that one meeting of the world body each year would be held in India. He gave further details, adding that these were his personal views and were only the basis for discussion. Clubwala "objected" to Gandhi's efforts to form a parallel body and said this should not be brought up in the Federation meeting. "We already have a world body." Gandhi retorted that FEZANA has sent drafts to individuals for comment. He had only offered his suggestions. Clubwala stated that former Federation and BPP chairman Dr Aspi Golwalla had said at the fourth world congress inauguration that no parallel world body would be created. Mistry clarified that "whatever you (Gandhi) write

to Rohinton Rivetna will be as an individual... why promote another world body?" he asked.

Gandhi countered that what Golwalla had said was "without consulting the Federation" and the all-India body was not bound by his statement. Gandhi also assured the members that before the Federation accepts any drafts, the whole body would deliberate on it.

Clubwala and Mistry, however, alleged that from the manner in which Gandhi spoke, "I have done this, this I am going to send," it meant "as if the Federation has agreed." Mistry said the matter was of great importance and should have been raised earlier in the meeting. "Is the Federation democratic or autocratic?" asked Mistry.

Gandhi accused Clubwala and Mistry of creating a "hallal (quarrel)" everytime the subject of the world body came up and picking up his papers left the main table. It was left to Guzder to thank the host for the hospitality extended to which Mogrelia replied, tongue in cheek, "Thank you very much for coming in such large numbers."

Those attending the executive council meeting were: Hoshang Debara from Agra; Capt Homi Dandiwalla from Allahabad; Jal Irani from Bhavnagar; Jamshed Guzder, Ms Silloo Kavarana, Behram Laskari, Rustom Anklesaria and Ms Homai Modi from Bombay; Darius Marshall from Calicut; Dadi Mistry, Keki Gandhi and Rustom Gae from Delhi; Aspi Irani and Pervez Irani from the Iranian Zoroastrian Anjuman; Nariman Mogrelia, Ms Mani Clubwala and Ms Zarine Mistry from Madras; Farokh Irani, Eruch Irani and Hormazdiar Dastur from Poona and Jehangir Bisney from Secunderabad. Rusi Dalal of the Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe was a special invitee. The press was represented by *Parsiana*.

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BPP trustee Rustom Tirandaz aims at reviving the community's Zoroastrian ethos

Arnavaz S. Mama

"I'm a man in a hurry"

"They slouched; they offered their hand (for a handshake) as though they're afraid you'd rape them!"

Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP) trustee and municipal councillor Rustom Tirandaz was impressed by only two handshakes from among the 25 youths, several MScs and PhDs among them, whom he had met prior to this interview with *Parsiana*. He singled out a girl who "held herself high" and another youth whose grip spelt self-confidence. These two will go places, he predicted. And the rest? "If we don't start developing human resources in the community, we'll be swept under the rug in the 21st century," he responds. Public speaking and personal development courses in the BPP is Tirandaz's answer to help our so-called educated youth who "can't make a 10-sentence speech in front of five people."

As the grizzled corporator sees it, Parsi abilities "haven't nose-dived. We've been brain-washed into believing they have." Out of 100 outstanding lawyers 15 to 20 are Parsis. Of 100 doctors at least two or three outstanding ones are Parsis, he notes. "We are producing hardware experts,

software experts." The problem, as he sees it is that "the community is no longer pulling (at opportunities) and pushing (at obstacles) together." Indifference has set in, he says, "because the spirit of the top Parsis is dead. They are thinking only of themselves and their promotions. That is why the Central Bank of India is now a South Indian institution. They (Parsis in high places) must have the courage to say 'Employ him, he's my friend.' The spirit of pulling and pushing together must be revived."

Referring to Zoroastrian individuals who have dominated cosmopolitan life in

India like the late Thermax chairman Rohinton Aga ("such a fantastic brain, a class by himself in international economics"), Russi Mody (who "ran TISCO for 20 years without labor problems") and others who have not been "used by the community," Tirandaz says, "I refuse to believe any great leader wouldn't like to leave his stamp behind." According to his analysis, "The community's affairs have become self-perpetuating since persons in power remain in power till they die or fade away. Therefore the community is not able to get the best people during their prime."

According to Tirandaz, a good leader is one who surrounds himself with superior and better people, is accessible to the flock and makes sure that only what is in the best interest of the flock is implemented. Such a man "has the courage and conviction to take hard decisions without giving in to vested interests or sentimental attachments to the past." And, the democrat elaborates, a good leader's decisions ensure "the maximum



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benefit to the largest number of people, for the longest duration of time." Moreover if you take such decisions you are accepted within the community and without, he adds.

"The community will throw up its own leaders," he predicts, citing the example of the late Rajiv Gandhi: "Who expected an airline pilot to be one of India's greatest leaders?" Crediting the late prime minister with being a "very democratic person" who created leaders within his party and outside it, Tirandaz recalled that Gandhi had had the courage to do some very plain speaking during the Congress centenary function which was one of the first major public events of his term. "He had said that the Congressman has become a 'dalal,' which needs to change. He said we need to rid ourselves of this 'agency business.'" According to Tirandaz, this was in stark contrast to Jawaharlal Nehru's style of functioning: "Towering as he (Nehru) was, he castrated his colleagues and they remained in opposition."

The effort to get the Punchayet and the community together was kicked off on March 3, 1996 with an invitation to the community for a guided tour of Doongerwadi. The idea was to acquaint the community with the extent of the estate and seek its help to stave off the creeping encroachments. Tirandaz is seeking volunteers for new anti-encroachment sub-committees which would then, hopefully, keep tabs on various community proper-

ties. "Dadi Engineer, Dinshaw Mehta, Rustom Tirandaz can't go running from pillar to post. We must create local leadership," acquaint them with procedures when there is an accident, a dead body to be disposed of, when anyone in the neighborhood needs to be bailed out of trouble.

"We have stopped functioning collectively as a community, lost our camaraderie" in the snobbery that differentiates so-called quality folk from "hapenny-tuppenny Parsis," says Tirandaz. "But the rich people and the well-to-do have the maximum to lose," he reminds us.

Once the ball starts rolling at Doongerwadi, Tirandaz hopes that the community will come forward to take its own census under the BPP's aegis. Acknowledging that his attempt to do so on his own "got no more than 1,000 responses," he accepts the need to try once more, under Punchayet auspices, to count "every single Parsi in the world." For Tirandaz says, "I don't believe in approximations. Approximations have been used against us." Hoping that an announcement of the BPP's census can be made at the Jamshedi Navroze ghambar at Dadar's Parsi Colony, Tirandaz notes that the envisaged data would include name, sex, date of birth, educational qualifications, blood group, address, telephone number and whether self-employed or salaried. People have already contributed money for the forms, etc, he informs.

So far Tirandaz says his fellow trustees have been "very happy, have let me have my way." Anticipations of conflict between him and Mehta have so far been proved baseless and the two trustees have been working in tandem. They go together to scout for land for new residential colonies. BPP chairman Jamshed Guzder and trustee Ms Silloo Kavarana join them on weekends, he notes.

The community's obsession has been

housing and there is much in the BPP's way of tackling this issue that Tirandaz would like to change. Referring to the 2,400 applicants still on the waiting list Tirandaz says, "If they had any spirit of enterprise, they'd go to the HDFC (Housing Development Finance Corporation)." But there is nobody, no institution to guide them or give them financial support. Despite the existence of the Zoroastrian Co-operative Bank, of the BPP's own funds, a system of guarantees for venture capital has never been explored to help the community find and fund its own accommodation, he says, adding, "It's a shame that the BPP can't have funds but Dinshaw Tamboly can get crores" to implement the WZO's self-employment project. The case of "the man who was crying because he had a wealthy girlfriend" highlights the peculiarities of the community's housing problems. (A young man of limited means was promised a Godrej Baug flat if he could find a bride. When he did, she turned out to be the only child of fairly affluent parents with substantial accommodation. On realizing this, the Punchayet withdrew its offer of the flat. The girl's parents however refused to house their daughter and son-in-law after marriage. In the Punchayet boardroom for the initial interview appointment in February 1996, Parsiana was witness to the anguished groom-to-be and his mothers' last ditch attempt to seek the intercession of Tirandaz and Mehta with the wedding barely a fortnight away. On Mehta's recommendation the boy agreed to live in the sanatoria for about a year until the BPP, in coordination with the N. M. Wadia charities could find a flat for him and his bride.)

According to Tirandaz there were about 300 vacant flats of which 150 were available to the BPP for allotment when he was

A charged moment at the scrutineers' table on October 14, 1995 (L to R) Rusi Bhungara, Rustom Hormuzdiar, contenders Tirandaz (winner) and Kersi Limathwalla and Perin Adrianwalla. With fellow contenders Dadi Engineer (winner) and Viraf Kapadia on July 8, 1995



elected on October 14, 1995. In the two-and-a-half months since then, 100 have been allotted, "since my election created awareness and therefore a sense of guilt that we could have 200 babies by now." There are plans, he says, to create funds from the remaining flats to acquire land and/or ready buildings for community housing.

Another reform of the housing allotment system that Tirandaz is pushing for, is a homogenized, monolithic waiting list instead of the competing lists maintained by the BPP, the Wadia Trusts, the Rayomand Committee, etc. He is hopeful of accommodating them all by 2001!

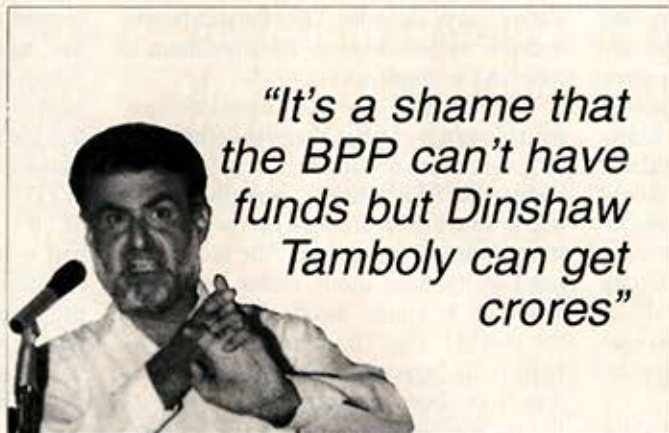
Nor does the businessman/exporter approve of the community's penchant for selling real estate. "God made land and he stopped making land. God made people and people continued to make people," is Tirandaz's description of the housing problem. "Whenever there is encroachment, the attitude is to sell the property. My belief is that property should not be sold. If (architect) Noshir Talati can get buyers, the BPP can do so — and keep the profits," he says, alluding to the recent transfer of a plot at Khareghat Colony to developer Talati for Rs 17 crores for the construction of ownership flats for Parsis.

The man who describes himself as a "custodian of the 300-year-old hopes and aspiration of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet" and wants to bring to it "management by objectives," rues the ad hoc and antiquated systems that prevail at that august body, the lack of amenities that should be basic now to institutions of standing like a fax machine or a modem to link the BPP computer to the international information highway. "There is not even a fridge!" he laughs.

Referring to Mahatma Gandhi's philosophy — strengthen the weakest link and you strengthen the whole chain — Tirandaz believes that "the community needs to be taken into confidence... It is a matter of great shame, at least to me, that people have to come begging and pleading and showing their worst since the BPP has only given and never allowed people to generate assets for themselves — their time, energy, resources versus the BPP's bank guarantees... The BPP has built on ancestral lands and handed over properties to tenants and cooperatives, not considering

the high land cost which, if it had taken into consideration, would have helped raise monies to help others who had no resources... Behind every great fortune is a crime," Tirandaz quotes Mario Puzo's *Godfather*, adding, "People who can give large amounts for housing are those who have black money."

"I don't consider that a man who comes to ask for a flat is asking for charity. It's his



right. It's the duty of the state government (to provide) but if the BPP calls itself the 'apex body' it has the responsibility to house community members who don't have housing."

Tirandaz has no reservation regarding the movement of atash padshahs from the older localities with diminishing population to areas where the community has now moved like the farther suburbs — Borivli and beyond. Such movements have been quashed through legal action by small groups of beneficiaries perhaps because the community was not taken into confidence, he reasons. But he is averse to the state of decrepitude to which some agiaries have succumbed. As he sees it, the "agiaries were built by community lovers" but succeeding generations of those families have used their position on the governing trusts as a source of patronage. He cites instances where smugglers have built permanent stalls on agiary properties in the Fort area, to prove his point. One young entrepreneur known to him has offered to organize help to the tune of one lakh rupees every year for any agiary that needs repair. "*Éva to ketta malsé* (You will find many more such volunteers)" if the community bigwigs welcome community involvement in their affairs, he adds.

Former BPP trustee Dr (Ms) Nelie Noble and some others had urged him to contest for Punchayet trusteeship nearly 15 years ago, recalls Tirandaz. "In spite of my tremendous ego, I thought of myself as a

modest chap. I told them 'I'll be a millstone round your neck since I'm not going to give up!'" When he lost to solicitor Dadi Engineer he had made a public declaration that he would contest every succeeding election until he was elected or the system of adult franchise was adopted by the BPP. Now he views universal adult franchise as a means of interesting the common man in the affairs of the community. Kindling

enthusiasm in the community, he considers the first phase of his program of rejuvenation. The next one could be the revival of the Punchayet's ancient function as community arbitrator. Already, Engineer has arranged for advocates to review pending litigation. An effort is underway to "decide one way or the other" and settle the disputes that were "unnecessarily put on the back-burner" for the past 15-20 years.

In the meantime the man with the ready tongue and loud voice (the heavy wooden doors that have replaced the swinging half doors on the Punchayet's board room are largely due to his presence, he smiles unabashed) says he continues to be the "seniormost" member of the Bombay Municipal Corporation (BMC) and the only one without a backward class certificate in line for the mayoralty. "Because of me they are setting out a new building repair policy," he claims and banter, "I will try and get a ticket for Parliament. After all, my name is not in the 'hawala' list."

A weight-lifting champion of Bombay University during his years as a science undergraduate at Ruia College, Tirandaz and his wife Armaity, a trained physiotherapist who works at the Jai Vakeel School for children in need of special care, have two sons — Fareedoon and Darayus (their eldest, Behram, succumbed tragically to rabies in 1993) — and Bruce, BP (Bombay pariah)!

At the inception of his trusteeship term when Tirandaz was introduced to the Punchayet staff one of them challenged: "Would you be able to differentiate between crocodile tears and real tears?" He says he told his querist, "My mission here is to eliminate real tears and crocodile tears." Amplifying that statement the optimist claims, "The trustees say they are the apex body. Even if one Parsi is disgruntled, it's the job of the seven trustees to redress it... I'm a man in a hurry I want to implement my projects in seven years and get out so a younger man can come in..."

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Awareness at Doongerwadi

Preventing creeping encroachments at Doongerwadi and elsewhere requires the community's active vigilance

Arnavaz S. Mama

It could have been a paidust. Except that the cortège of about 250 Zoroastrians took a different route and was not so well disciplined. Was this the avant garde of the community's movers and shakers answering the Punchayet's call? "It is our moral duty to save Doongerwadi from erosion and encroachment. Think and consider what you can do for the community," urged the invitation in *Jam-e-Jamshed* (February 25, 1996) announcing "Doongerwadi Awareness Day" on March 3, 1996. Lest people got carried away, a footnote added, "No one shall be allowed to enter the dokhmas."

Encroachment of Zoroastrian properties has been an oft repeated plaint. Each meeting of the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India's executive council has recorded the woes of mofussil anjumans. On occasion, the Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP) has conceded its own problems at Doongerwadi where the Simla

House slum dwellers had been known to trespass and, comparatively recently, when the contractor charged with constructing a pukka pedestrian link between Doongerwadi and Godrej Baug had been allegedly harassed by such elements.

As the community congregated in the pavilion adjoining the Albless Bungli, BPP trustee Dadi Engineer revealed that he was "bewildered by the fact that we're not preserving the assets we have." According to Engineer, not only was a certain group of persons living on the property in a pukka house with phone and TV but had a vehicle repair workshop. Engineer described the occasion when the trustees had visited the site in the course of an earlier trip round the premises, building up to the denouement: "When trustee Dinshaw Mehta got excited (Engineer told the listeners) a woman emerged to lecture him 'Ayé tau hamaru ché. Tamé tau doodhma sakar nakhi né avéla. Yaad ché? (This is our land. You

had pleaded to come in, as per your sugar-in-the-milk story. Do you remember?)" Engineer had made his point: the audience gaped and gasped at the unexpected turn to its favorite legend!

The morning began with Dadar Parsi Colony stalwart Ms Mithoo Jesia calling the meeting to order at 9.45 a.m. and humbandagi led by Ervad Jal Kooka (ex Hong Kong). Trustees Ms Silloo Kavarana, Engineer, Mehta and Rustom Tirandaz and BPP chief executive Behram Laskari faced the audience across a sheet bedecked table with microphones. The fact that there was no funeral at the Doongerwadi that morning was interpreted by Tirandaz as

The Doongerwadi-Godrej Baug pathway skirts this non-BPP construction (left) Among the trees, on the slope between Spenta and Khareghat Colony, stands this expanding hut allegedly occupied by a kharwa family



God's tacit compliance with his idea that the community must be acquainted with the developments that are occurring on or threatening its properties. Alleged encroachment at the Towers were only a case in point. "Properties were donated for the Parsi downtrodden," he declared, adding, "When there is encroachment, it takes the fortune of a lifetime to remove." The list of encroached properties that he reeled off included the BPP's Khareghat Colony-Spenta area, the Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy Trust's property at Kandivli-Borivli, Wadia Trust property at Santa Cruz... "These properties could accommodate half the people on the BPP's waiting list. The F. E. Dinshaw Trust has a single Zoroastrian trustee who has inducted a Mr Raheja on the Trust as though there were no Parsis available...The Zoroastrian Co-operative Bank was conspicuous in having more non-Parsi patrons," he added tartly. (The Bank lends to those who approach it and meet the lending criteria — Editor.)

According to Tirandaz, "Trustees were afraid (to confront the encroachers) or for other reasons looked the other way." (According to Punchayet sources, the BPP has filed legal charges against all Doongerwadi and Spenta/Khareghat Colony encroachers — Editor.) Now it was time for the community to help itself, by being vigilant; the courts were already too overburdened to provide relief to litigating Parsis, he contended.

That the pursuit of individual gain has had repercussions on the community at many levels was exemplified by a case history: A Parsi girl who had met Mehta and Tirandaz at the BPP in search of a flat had recounted that her family could no longer continue at their Foras Road flat. In an area now synonymous with commercialization of sex, there had been originally 16 Parsi families in the building.

"When there is encroachment, it takes the fortune of a lifetime to remove"

Then one sold out to a brothel keeper. The latter then cajoled and threatened other tenants — all except two — into leaving. The other family comprised a man and his young son. One day the youth was seared with acid. It was a long, painful recovery. And then the young man saw himself in a mirror and committed suicide. "Such was the brothel keeper's clout with the police that the case was registered as a suicide only." There was no reference to the acid-throwing, Tirandaz noted, emphasizing the frustration of those who survived the tragedy.

Referring to the BPP's legal attempts to regain hijacked properties, especially flats, Engineer is said to have instituted a group of legal assistants to review the innumerable petitions pending in the courts, pressing those where necessary or expedient and settling others to mutual advantage.

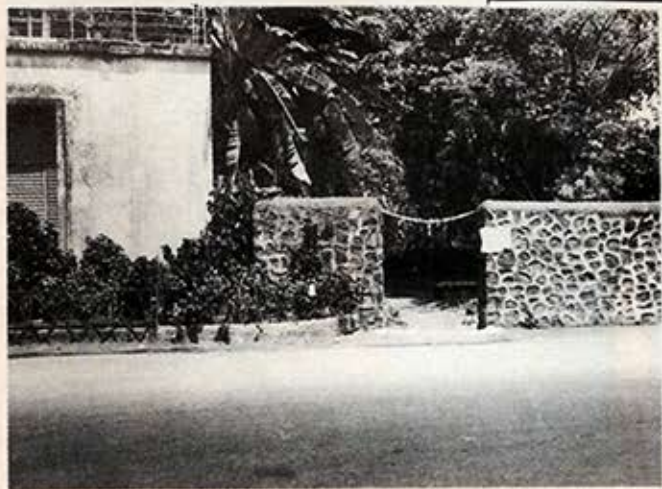
The obverse of this policy is to create vigilance committees in each colony to prevent unauthorized inductions/encroachments. Spearheading the movement are the residents of Godrej Baug whose spokespersons Manek Dastoor and Ms Shiraz Gotla volunteered to look after Doongerwadi as well as Godrej Baug. "We'll do all that's possible to see that there is no further encroachment on lands still left. We'll act as watchdogs," declared Gotla. Many more such groups may be required, implied the trustees.

A project that Tirandaz is rooting for is the Mazdayasnan Cultural Center with carparking, auditorium (and swimming pool?) in Bombay. "Think of the Y. B. Chavan Centre (at Backbay) and the Shanmukananda Hall (at Sion). Visualize the two together," Tirandaz suggested grandiosely! Cost estimates were elastic ranging from a few lakhs to a couple of crores; the location was also a matter of some conjecture. The Doongerwadi grounds are legally off limits for any except obsequial requirements and hence may only be used to accommodate mobeds and khandhias. But the Amba Wadi area (adjacent to Doongerwadi and Godrej Baug) where several BPP personnel reside, may perhaps be more promising for the project.

The group that started the tour like a Roman phalanx gradually disintegrated



Breaches in the BPP property's outer wall (left) adjacent to the Hanging Gardens and inner wall (above)



into clutches of stragglers. There were not enough informed guides to lead the way. Some of us saw that a resident of Grand Paradi had allegedly taken over the BPP area behind his wall to create an extended garden. At another location the newly built footpath had taken an obsequious detour to avoid treading on allegedly encroached land!! Though most people instinctively

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adhered to the trustees' repeated exhortations before, during and after the excursion to maintain a dignified peace, aggressiveness on the part of some community members who insisted on trespassing on the trespassers raised qualms. Journalist Sarosh Bana noted a "rallying around of (the alleged) encroachers. It is likely that they'll try to strengthen their position." Punchayet sources subsequently reported murmurings among (the alleged) encroachers that if the Parsis can summon 300, they could field 3,000.

The projected Godrej Baug Agiary's slow motion construction is marking time until someone, somewhere, agrees to donate a fire to enthrone therein. According to current gossip, it is likely to be one of the two fires from Lonavla's Adenwalla Dare Meher. (The Adenwalla Agiary's managing trustee Cowasji Dinshaw denied this — Editor.)

Some of the community's queries -- and the answers they evoked -- seemed almost out of a Zoroastrian *Alice in Wonderland*. "Does Godrej Baug belong to Godrej?" asked one. "Oh no! Godrej built only these two buildings and demanded that the place be called Godrej Baug." Considering that the response came from a trustee, it was a matter of distress that the late Naoroji

"If our numbers don't increase, whatever we make or do will have little significance"

Godrej's signal help in land development, roads and infrastructure of the property — when the Punchayet's coffers were bare — was so brazenly swept under the carpet.

"If our numbers don't increase, whatever we make or do will have little significance," opined plant biologist Dr Ardeshir Damania. Having lived for many years in Syria, working on the UN's Agriculture in Arid Areas project, Damania noted that Armenians there had maintained their community identity despite their minority status.

When Engineer bemoaned the community's lack of sportsmen/athletes of national standing ("At one time four members of the Indian cricket team were Parsis") and suggested that one lakh rupees be earmarked from BPP funds to promote sports in the colonies, Bombay Parsee Association president Vispi Dastur informed, "For the last few decades FOZAWAC (Federation of Zoroastrian Associations for Welfare and Culture) had been regularly conducting athletics, billiards, table tennis competitions and providing academic and cultural help. The foundation is there; it needs funds. (However) Parsi girls and boys sit glued to the TV... We have the Parsi Gymkhana," Dastur noted, proposing the need for the institutions to get together with the BPP to build on the existing infrastructure.

The suggestion recalled Engineer's electoral proposal to invite the trustees of various Zoroastrian trusts to dovetail their activities with the Punchayet's, seek cyprès dispensation from the High Court where possible to divert funds for projects of contemporary urgency. The idea, mooted by many an earlier trustee, had flopped: trustees of private trusts preferred to guard their fiefdoms. Engineer now reported from personal experience: "Many trustees are old fashioned. (They) won't do anything, won't allow others to do so. The trustees (of private trusts) don't cooperate." The Punchayet itself emerged with a more positive assessment: "We have an absolutely honest staff, people of principle." On the debit side, "they're used to a certain type of

thinking," their minds are "in a groove." And, whatever the Punchayet does, "it does very slowly," noted Engineer who said the board now wants "to form sub-committees, delegate, decentralize the BPP."

Seizing the opportunity of a receptive, cooperative audience, Engineer referred to certain community behavior that has consistently riled the Punchayet: Why are there two — feuding — associations in each baug? Why do people avoid paying even so little as 50 paise per month towards the cost of colony security, making excuses whenever the designated collector comes to the door?

Ms Rati Peer recalled meetings sponsored by the erstwhile *Sanj Vartaman* where Parsis could get the information they required. "Nowadays people run from pillar to post because they don't know where to go for admission to the Avabai Petit School or for sanatoria bookings," she noted in Gujarati, urging the trustees to designate one or two persons to sit in particular spots in each colony from whom community members can seek help and guidance. She also dilated on the 90-year-old Cama Convalescent Homes at Band Stand, Bandra, where generations of Parsis had holidayed and recuperated and were now, lamentably, lying dilapidated and closed.

Tirandaz, who had been the prime mover of the "Awareness Day," paid tribute to two stalwarts the community had recently lost — industrialist Rohinton Aga and politician/social worker Ms Aloo Chibber. As he urged the gathering to stand in a minute's silent remembrance of them, members of the audience reminded the trustees of other outstanding Zoroastrian achievers who had dominated their respective cosmopolitan fields of endeavor — legal luminary Hormusji Seervai, banker Manek Goiporia, and art historian and criminal counsel Karl Khandalawala. Tirandaz also used the opportunity to appreciate the quiet efforts of co-trustee Kavarana: "She does more work for the Zoroastrian community than all the trustees put together. She's not a jawbone but a backbone."

Ere the meeting disbanded, Tirandaz assured the gathering that there was neither competition among trustees nor competition between the trustees and the community. "We have come here today to discuss, not to debate... The quality of good leadership is that it makes no claims to superiority (but has) the ability to surround itself with giants in their respective fields..."

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Winning over the king

Manekji Hataria's words and deportment enlightened Shah Naseruddin Qajar on Zoroastrianism

Capt Hormazdiar J. M. Desai

While reading a booklet published by the Iran League entitled *Hataria, the Parsi Missionary to Iran*, containing excellent articles by the late Mr G. K. Nariman (in English) and by the then secretary of the Iran League, Mr Kaikhushru A. Fitter (in Gujarati), I came across a unique conversation piece in Farsi — Persian — between His Majesty Shah Naseruddin Qajar of Iran and 'Manekji Saheb' as Hataria was respectfully and lovingly called by the Zoroastrians of Iran. In this interview between the two, Manekji explains to His Majesty some basic fundamentals of the religion of Zarathushtra.

On March 31, 1854, when Manekji was 41 years old, he went to Iran and toured the country extensively. He fully familiarized himself with the sad plight of the Zoroastrians of Iran — particularly of Yazd and Kerman: the tyrannies to which they were subjected, the maltreatment from corrupt jazia tax collecting authorities, the discriminatory and humiliating circumstances in which they were compelled to live. He returned to India in 1863 and reported to the Parsi leaders the sorry state of the Zoroastrians in Iran and the need to ameliorate their lot.

Manekji's objectives were the total abolition of the obnoxious jazia tax and to finally remove all discrimination against the community. To achieve these laudable aims, he worked with a missionary zeal and the tact and diplomacy befitting an elder statesman. He established contacts with people who mattered in court circles, made respectful submissions and representations and, keeping his goal always before him, with great patience and perseverance ultimately succeeded in his objectives. He would give the ministers, court officials and governors lavish presents

solely with the view to achieving his goals. And his sweet reasonableness seduced all who came in contact with him.

First audience

Manekji had excellent relations with Sir Henry Rawlinson, British ambassador to Iran and well-known explorer, author and traveller. Through the good offices of Sir Henry, an audience with Shah Naseruddin Qajar was arranged. Manekji was asked to

after waiting till about 3 p.m. he alone was summoned. After making his obeisance several times, Manekji stood at a distance of about 20 steps from the king.

His Majesty exclaimed, "Is this Manekji?"

Manekji bowed low and said "Yes. I am the one who is always willing to sacrifice himself in the bejewelled dust at Your Majesty's feet." At this stage, the Shah had a short conversation with his courtiers.

Meanwhile Manekji advanced step by step towards him and placing the silver casket at his feet, removed the cover. He opened the address (wrapped in brocade) sent by the Parsi akabars of Bombay and displayed it. After it was replaced in the silver casket, His Majesty asked, "Do you know Farsi?" Manekji: "Yes, Kebla of the World." His Majesty: "Do you belong to the Zoroastrian tribe? Is your religion Zoroastrian?" Manekji: "Yes, Protector of the World."

His Majesty: "What are the main directives of your religion?"

Manekji: "The main directives are similar to the Shariat of Islam. There is some difference in the prayers. But in essence both are the same."

At this stage the king addressed the amirs standing in the front right row: "These people are good, pure and holy and have survived from very ancient times."

Then His Majesty asked, "Are you worshippers of fire?"

Manekji: "No, Your Majesty. We consider atash — fire — as the Kebla, in the same way that the followers of Islam consider Kaaba as the Kebla."

His Majesty: "What, you do not consider fire as God Himself?"

Manekji: "No, Your Majesty. One must know God through His creation. Water,



Hataria: master of court etiquette

Photo: Russey M. Davar

present himself in court with the petition from Indian Zoroastrians on May 14, 1860. With six other behdins, Manekji waited in court all day to see the king, but in vain. The next morning he was there again and



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fire, sun, moon are all created by Him. Through them we worship the Creator Himself."

His Majesty: "Then don't you worship the fire?"

Manekji: "No, Your Majesty. We stand in front of the fire or the sun and offer prayers to their Creator."

His Majesty: "Why do you pray standing in front of the fire?"

Manekji: "These are *noorani* — lustrous objects. We consider each lustrous ray a ray from the Holy Creator. Hence we consider it best to offer prayers in front of these manifestations of the Creator Himself."

His Majesty: "You mean *roshni* — light?"

Manekji: "Yes, Your Majesty."

His Majesty: "Do you observe *roza*? Do you fast?"

Manekji: "No, Your Majesty. We do not remain hungry during the day and eat well after sunset as do the followers of Islam. But we have directions to eat a few morsels less and to give the food so saved to the poor."

His Majesty: "Do you undergo *nekah* while taking a wife?"

Manekji: "Yes, Your Majesty. Like the followers of Islam we too have *nekah*. Our mobeds tie the nuptial knots."

His Majesty: "Do you perform *nemaz*?"

Manekji: "Yes, Your Majesty, we follow the directions of the Creator and offer prayers six times during the day and night."

His Majesty: "Are you a tradesman?"

Manekji: "Yes Your Majesty, I trade on a small scale. But the main work of this servant is to guide the few remaining Zoroastrians of Iran on behalf of the Parsi akabars of India."

His Majesty: "In what occupation are the Parsis of India mainly involved?"

Manekji: "Most of them are traders, a few are writers in the service of the English."

After asking a few more questions, His Majesty observed, "The people of this group are very loyal and are originally of Iranian descent."

Concluding, Manekji made the following submission: "I am one who is always willing to sacrifice himself in the dust at His Majesty's feet. Though the Parsis of India have, over a long period, been away from the Iranian land, still they consider the Shah of Iran as 'a shadow of the Creator' and have always kept friendly relations with Iran. Hence, in this royal darbar as splendid as King Solomon's, this small representation is like an insect flying at night. We pray that it be sympathetically considered by Your Majesty."

His Majesty: "Very well, very well." When the king saw Manekji following court practices and retreating most respectfully, he exclaimed: "This person appears to be noble and very deserving." In this first audience with the Shah, Manekji created an excellent impression.

Abolition of jazia

Manekji had personally observed the cruel tyrannies of corrupt tax officials who collected twice or thrice the amount of the assessed tax. The imperial court had fixed

His sweet reasonableness seduced all who came in contact with him

the tax at 667 tomans per head. But since several intermediaries demanded their share, the tax was at times collected at 2,000 tomans per head. At times, the amount forcibly collected was 10,000 to 20,000 tomans! Barely one-fifth were able to pay the tax. Those who could not pay were mercilessly beaten, their children tortured in front of their eyes and forcibly converted to Islam.

Through his contacts with Rawlinson, the French Ambassador Count de Gobineau and the oriental scholar E. B. Eastwick, Manekji succeeded in getting the jazia tax fixed at 907 tomans and seven karans, the entire tax to be remitted directly from Bombay.

But Manekji was not satisfied with this achievement. When he was once told in Bombay that the jazia fund had dwindled into a very meagre amount, he offered to forego his honorarium. It was with the help of foreign diplomats and influential courtiers whom he always entertained and pleased with lavish presents that Manekji was able to obtain further audience with His Majesty Shah Naseruddin Qajar. The result was the issue of the imperial firman abolishing the jazia tax.

The imperial firman

His Majesty Shah Naseruddin Qajar was so impressed by this sincere and noble crusader, that by an imperial firman given at Tehran in the month of Ramzan 1299 (August 1882) he abolished the jazia tax on Zoroastrians. This firman gave Zoroastrians equality with all other Iranian

subjects. This historic imperial charter reflected great credit not only on the dedication, tact and perseverance of Manekji Saheb, but also on the nobility, graciousness and vision of Shah Naseruddin.

The firman reads:

"In consideration of the innumerable benedictions which it has pleased the Almighty to accord to us, and as an act of grace towards Him who has given us the Royal Crown of Persia, with the means of promoting the welfare of its inhabitants, there has devolved on us the duty of securing tranquility and happiness for all our subjects to whatever tribe, community or religion they belong, so that they may be profited and refreshed by the beneficent waters of our special favor.

"Amongst these are the Zoroastrians of Yazd and Kerman who are descended from an ancient and noble race of Persia, and it is now our desire to make their peace and well-being more complete than before.

"That is why, by this royal firman, we ordain and command that the taxes and imposts of the Crown, levied previously on our Musalman subjects of Yazd and Kerman, may be recovered in the same way from the Zoroastrians who reside there. In this manner the impost, which exacts from this community the sum of 845 tomans is abolished and, on the commencement of this propitious year of the horse, we make an abatement of this sum and free the Zoroastrians from it forever. We therefore order and command our mustaufis and officers of the debt of the Royal Exchequer to remove it from the revenues which have to be paid in by Yazd and Kerman. The Governors now in office, or those who will be nominated subsequently, at the head of these provinces, ought to consider all right to the payment of this tribute abolished for ever; and, as regards the present year, and the following years, if this sum should happen to be exacted, they will be held responsible and will be punished for it. Moreover, in the tribute of the tithes and imposts on water and land, and for all trade duties, the Zoroastrians must be treated in the same manner as our other subjects.

"Given at Tehran in the month of Ramzan 1299 (August 1882)"

The imperial firman was received by Sir Dinshaw Manekji Petit, president of the Society for the Amelioration of the Conditions of the Zoroastrians of Persia, through Mr Thompson of the British Embassy.

During the regime of Nadirshah, Yazd and Kerman alone had a population of some 5,00,000 Zoroastrians. When

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Manekji reached Yazd, the Zoroastrian population of Iran had dwindled to 7,000 souls. After the issue of the imperial firman, the Zoroastrian population gradually increased.

The great orientalist G. K. Nariman writes: "We do not know the early history of this great man but for whom, it is believed by many, Zoroastrianism would have very nearly died in the country of its birth." Gobineau had observed: "Such was the abject condition of the *gabrs* (infidels) in those days, mostly on account of disabilities which were inflicted on them, generally by those who themselves or their near progenitors had embraced Islam, that the community was threatened with extinction."

Though Manekji's main work was to act as an agent of the Society for the Amelioration of the Conditions of the Zoroastrians of Persia, he also assisted in founding wells and schools and carrying out repairs to places of worship and rest houses, and the construction of dokhmas. In 1865, Hataria published a book, *Rishale Ej Har Shiyaate Iran* and *Jamaye Manek* notes dealing with the manners and customs of the then Zoroastrians in Iran.

At a public meeting convened on May

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7, 1865, Bombay Parsis presented to Manekji a manpatra (scroll of honor), a pair of shawls and a purse. Responding to the address, Manekji said that whatever little he was able to achieve, was due to the liberal assistance he was getting from Bombay.

From his younger days, Manekji was fond of collecting old and rare coins, manuscripts, out-of-print books, antiques, etc. It is reported that the coins collected by him are now with the British Museum. His collection of rare books and manuscripts are in the Manekji Hataria Library in the upper hall of the Anjuman Atash Bahram, Bombay. Perhaps young oriental scholars will one day go through these carefully to throw more light on the life and work of Manekji Saheb.

This great Parsi missionary, who was born in 1813 in Vesu — a village near Surat — passed away in Tehran on February 15, 1890 at the age of 77. His achievements were unprecedented. He had undertaken a task reported to be "beyond human capacity." Gobineau had said, "There was needed nothing short of a miracle to save the *gabrs* (infidels) as the Zoroastrians were called by the followers of Islam." Manekji Saheb performed the miracle.

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“Tradition lives... in the present”

Kaikhosrov D. Irani

Meaningful tradition thrives on rituals and practices
that address a society's current concerns

Discussions and writings on religious issues within the community emerge with varying frequency. They arise when somebody believes that the tenets of the faith are being violated, and texts of various periods are cited with ambiguous consequences when the spirit of humanity and moderate common sense could indicate the appropriate course of action. In these discussions, people frequently tend to identify real or imaginary opposition against which vile accusations are casually made. Most of these differences are not genuine disputes, although the disputants believe so. It is toward this clarification that these remarks are formulated.

A religious community shares beliefs and practices along several different dimensions: ● an accepted doctrine, ● a way of life or — in other words — an ethic, ● rituals, communally participated in, or individually performed, ● social practices.

In any scholarly study of a religion, it is imperative that we recognize what the Core of the religion is. Within a religious tradition it is frequently the case that different denominations will identify the Core along different dimensions. The Core is taken to be the most historically stable element, and the other dimensions are made to adjust to the stable Core in varying historical circumstances.

In the Zoroastrian tradition, the Core is the fundamental doctrine as taught by the Prophet in the profound verses of the *Gathas*. The doctrine gives us a view of the world and a related way of life: The world was meant to evolve to perfection in accordance with an ideal principle, the ideal truth, i.e., Asha. The actual world we live in became, however, a field in which two conceptual vectors are manifested; they operate as forces of good and evil. Our way of life in this morally conflicted world in

which we live requires us to discern the flaws introduced by evil and to act to reinstate the good, thus making the world evolve toward the ideal, Asha. Such actions are called righteous; and one who lives such a life is an Ashavan in Zarathushtra's doctrine.

All religious traditions contain rituals. They perform three religio-communal functions — they explicitly reinforce commitment to the ideals and practices of the faith; the public rituals emphasize the shared participation in belief and life; and lastly, the rituals focus our minds upon our belonging to the tradition, sharing in activity in which generations of past believers have engaged. It will be clear that the first function of commitment to religious ideals requires that the ritual and its recitation be understood. For there can be no commitment to what is not comprehended. There are some who hold that uncomprehended recitation has some religious consequence. Such a magical notion is inconsistent with Zarathushtra's theology. There may be, of course, some psychological effect on the reciter; the value of such recitation is for each reciter to judge — it cannot be made a requirement for religious practice.

Though we do not know the exact history of rituals, we can be reasonably sure that from the earliest days there were rituals consistent with Zarathushtra's doctrine, quite distinct from the Indo-European rituals of bloody sacrifices that prevailed before him. There must have been a ceremony of declaration of faith, called for in a reflective religion such as Zarathushtra's. Today we call this the *navjote*. The declaration was originally in the *Fravareti Ha* in the *Yasna*, and is now incorporated in the *Mazdayasno Ahmi* recitation. Also, the ritual of marriage ceremony can be traced back to the last chapter of the *Gathas*. But

the ceremony is degraded with irrelevant additions. It should involve nothing more than the expression of willingness and the promise of the marrying partners, the admonitions of the Prophet in Ha 53 of the *Gathas* and, perhaps, some short blessings.

Many of the practices which generate controversy within the community are social practices. Social practices of a religious community do not automatically become religious practices. Social practices result from the social forces and necessities of historical situations; religious practices must perform the functions we identified above. What many find most disturbing is the practice which predicates religious belonging on parentage. This limitation demotes Zarathushtra, one of the very first universal, non-tribal religious preceptors, into a tribal prophet. For Zarathushtra, the believer is one who holds his view of the world and lives the life of Asha (Truth) as grasped by Vohu-Mana (the good mind) and inspired by Spenta-Armaiti (benevolence). Any human being who comprehends this religious vision can choose to accept it or not. His or her parentage or blood-type, or other genealogical or biological factors, are irrelevant. The choice is a spiritual one. And once such a person accepts the faith as the Prophet desired people to do, nobody else's views or feelings have the slightest relevance on the matter. Religious conviction is an intensely private relation between a human being and God. This is called the acceptance of a religious faith.

There is, of course, another, social, matter: whether a person who has made such a religious choice and made an appropriate declaration of the same (as in the *navjote* ceremony) would be accepted as a co-religionist within the religious community. This is religio-communal acceptance.

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This is a social issue, wrongly formulated as a doctrinal issue. This particular practice of the Parsis of the last few centuries is made to look like a divine injunction of the early religion, and the social bigotry of a fearful community is ascribed to the dispensation of a tribal god. The great innovation of Zarathushtra was to regard Ahura Mazda as a transcendent Lord of the Universe, not a protector of a tribe.

Similar social problems arise in marriages between Zoroastrians and non-Zoroastrians. The cultural resistance against such marriages is understandable. Thus we notice that in the Sassanian period it was recommended in the Zoroastrian tradition that the non-Zoroastrian spouse be invited and initiated into the faith. And in any case, the children be instructed and initiated into the faith. Such was the practice in Zoroastrian Iran from Achaemenian times on. However, the present Parsi practice often extends rejection in these situations, damaging the bonds of familial ties, almost to the limits of inhumanity.

My purpose here is not to propose social action. I expect my preferences are clear enough; all I wish is that discussants recognize what they are doing, and not confuse doctrinal — and hence fundamental —

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issues with social ones which are changeable. Indeed, the history of religion indicates that many rituals — the ceremonial acts as well as the recitations — were composed at different times, centuries after the life of the Prophet. Many of them belong to the Sassanian period and were adaptations appropriate to the atmosphere, language and ideas of that day and age.

There is no reason why we cannot make similar adaptations, keeping in mind the purpose and function of the ritual, in order to preserve its essence, making it meaningful in our own day and age. That, I would suggest, is the way to keep the tradition alive. For tradition lives in the minds and hearts of the believers in the present. This is very different from traditionalism which imposes, intact, a dead past on living consciousness.

Kaikhosrov D. Irani, professor emeritus in philosophy at City College, New York and president of the Zoroastrian Association of Greater New York (ZAGNY), is the voice of reasonableness on the Zoroastrian lecture circuit. His understanding of Zarathushtra's teachings is contextualized within the history of the world's religious thoughts and beliefs.

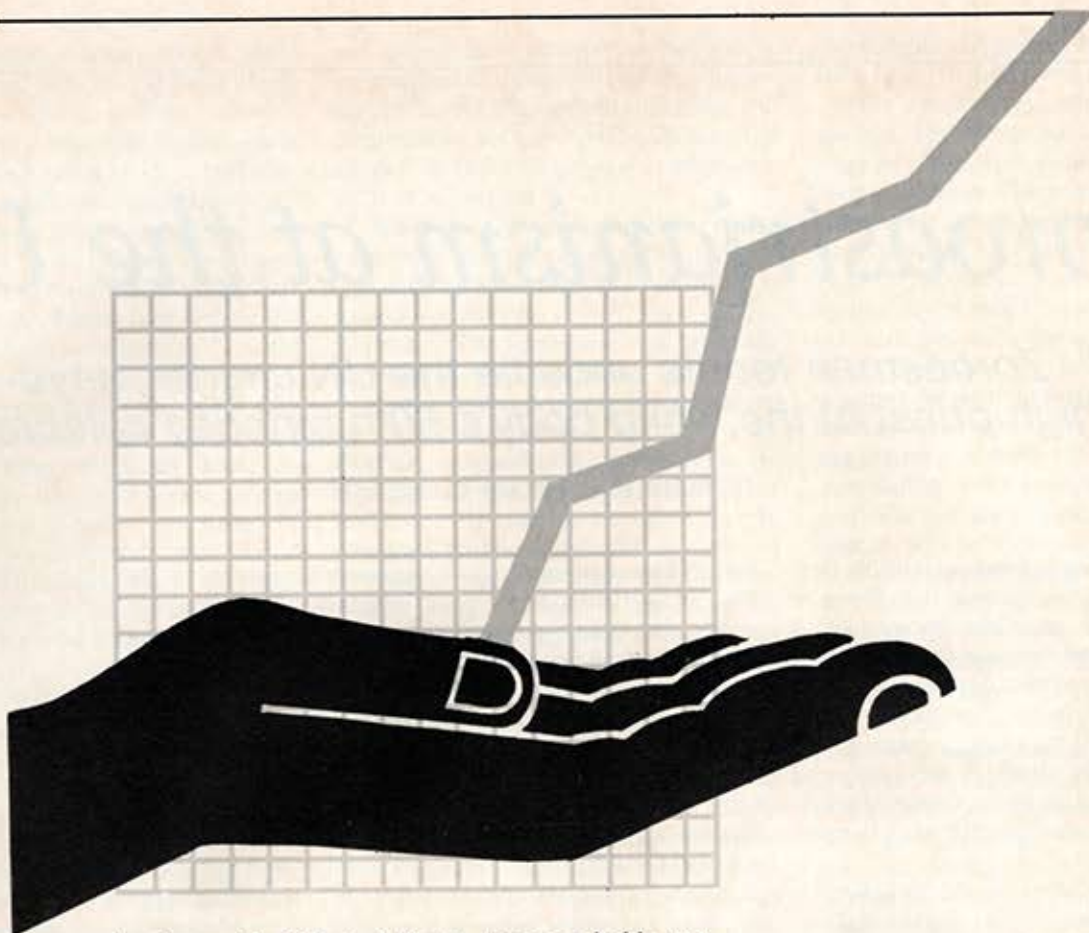


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Zoroastrianism at the UN

Zoroastrian tenets underlie the UN charter, says the high priest at the world body's 50th birthday celebrations

Dastur (Dr) Firoze M. Kotwal

I am indeed honored that our world's family of nations has deemed it befitting to invite a high priest of the Zoroastrians — one of the tiniest religious communities in the world — to address this august body. In a sense, the jubilee of the United Nations is the jubilee of the entire human race. So let us unfurl the banner of fellowship and goodwill, and thereby the banner of religious tolerance amongst each one of us present here today.

We Zoroastrians are the followers of the great Iranian prophet, Spitaman Zarathushtra, known to the ancient Greeks as Zoroaster. Zarathushtra lived and preached in ancient Iran, parts of which today form the vast Central Asian Steppes. He lived some 3,500 years ago, which means more than a millennium before the advent of Christianity, making Zoroastrianism one of the oldest revealed religions of the world.

Prophet Zarathushtra's genius is to be found in his sublime hymns, the *Gathas*, in which he revealed that there was one, supreme, all-knowing, eternal God of the good creations — Ahura Mazda, the Lord of Wisdom. He saw Ahura Mazda to be totally good, perfect and just. Ahura Mazda, he taught, was a friend to all and never to be feared by man who, in turn, the Prophet declared, should worship Him. In other words, Zoroastrians recognized the supremacy of Wisdom from which no imperfection, injustice or evil can emerge.

Man, Ahura Mazda's finest creation, is believed to be the central figure in the cosmic struggle between Him and the forces of evil. The Prophet declared that it is during this period of conflict in the world that man, through free will, should choose to fight and vanquish evil by using the ethical paradigm of the spirit of goodness — the good mind, truth, power, devotion,

perfection and immortality — to generate the Zoroastrian triad of good thoughts, words and deeds. Prophet Zarathushtra recognized that the use of these principles of righteous living would enable man to bring about the eventual ineffectiveness of evil in the world.

Zoroastrianism is a "this-worldly religion," where life is a celebration and the spiritual world is an extension of the physical world. To the Zoroastrians, spirituality is not one embedded in monasticism, fasting or celibacy, but one in which a Zoroastrian is encouraged towards the purposeful generation of wealth which is to be shared by continuous acts of charity. Thus Zoroastrian spirituality is attainable in one lifetime through right thoughts, words and actions.

It is this message of Zarathushtra which became the bedrock of three mighty dynasties of ancient Iran. The Achaemenians, the Parthians and the Sasanians created their empires from the sixth century BC to the seventh century AC. Imperial Iran extended from the shores of the river Danube to the river Indus in the east and from lower Egypt in the west through Asia Minor and across most of central Asia to the borders of present-day China. Despite the political strength of vast empires, the Zoroastrians appear to have shown an uncommon religious tolerance towards their subject peoples. The Zoroastrian king Cyrus liberated the Jews from Babylonian captivity in the sixth century BC and not only allowed them to return to Palestine, but gave them monies from Zoroastrian coffers to rebuild their second temple in Jerusalem. For this act of magnanimity, Cyrus was looked upon as the Anointed One sent by the Jewish God Yaweh. Zoroastrian beliefs of heaven and hell, the coming of the savior, the Last Judgement followed by the Resur-

rection of the physical body, are some basic doctrinal tenets which entered post-exilic Judaism, and thereafter into Christianity and Islam.

It is the same king Cyrus (550-530 BC) who first declared to the world what is today enshrined by the United Nations as the first Bill of Human Rights. King Cyrus was followed by king Darius the Great (522-486 BC), who in his charter epitomized the Zoroastrian credo: "By the grace of Ahura Mazda I am of such a sort that I am a friend to the right, I am not a friend to the wrong. It is not my desire that the weak man should have wrong done to him by the mighty, nor is it my desire that the mighty man should have wrong done to him by the weak. What is right is my desire."

The ancient Iranians protected the beliefs and practices of the other non-Iranian faiths in the spirit of religious tolerance. Zoroastrianism has never sought to proselytize for it appears to have been the religion only of the Iranian people. Our belief stems from the fact that if God is omniscient, then God places man, His finest creation, in the different great religions of the world, at birth. Therefore, in the name of religion we have not sought converts, reflecting what one might call religious pluralism today. Zoroastrians, by being a non-proselytizing people, seem to have influenced other cultures. Despite political rivalry, for example, the Academy at Athens of Plato and Aristotle, had Zoroastrian Magians as its tutors, which clearly indicates how Zoroastrian thought seems to have influenced the Greek philosophers and, through them, Western civilization as we know it today.

Wherever my people have migrated to new lands, sometimes through choice, on other occasions due to persecution, they have prospered, giving their all to where

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they have continued to live. Ahura Mazda, the Lord of Wisdom, has been the sustainer and helper of the helpless, the guardian of the right and the poor, the liberator of those in distress and averse to all that is harmful, as Ahura Mazda is responsible for all that which is good and beneficial in the world. I believe that we should strive to make this suffering and needy world less of a home of grief and strife and more of a commonwealth of love, thus bringing about the Abode of Light here and now in the physical world. Alas, not every wrong can be righted, not every injustice can be reversed; but Zoroastrianism offers a cheerful optimism of living life to the fullest by promoting happiness in both the physical and the spiritual worlds. Life indeed must be made worth living, and a long and righteous life in the service of humanity should become the clarion call in every man's prayer.

The United Nations is perhaps uniquely suited to direct its member nations upon a new path of progress and self-discovery. Sectarianism, bigotry and fanaticism are all seen to be theologically bad in Zoroas-

trianism, for true goodness and knowledge would not lend itself to bigotry, hate or fanaticism. The bell that tolls in a church or a temple should be directed at banishing evil and all the uncharitable feelings which may exist between persons individually and between nations collectively. Man should be freed from the shackles of a pre-determined fate or destiny, as in Zoroastrianism man is the maker of his own destiny.

The Zoroastrian contribution for the 21st century is one of hope and clear optimism. If members of each religion recognized that there is but one tree with a common root but with many branches and flowers, making the human experience one of variety and multiplicity, then it is conceivable that religious tolerance and the spirit of understanding will develop, where a person does not seek to convert as a means to self-growth, but respects and accepts to grow in the tradition of one's own faith at birth.

Secondly, Zoroastrian spirituality has much to offer the world of the future. If human beings realize that spirituality is

not beyond one's attainment but is realizable in a single lifetime through the generation of good thoughts, words and deeds, then indeed a new world order will be on the anvil as we move into the 21st century.

Man must learn that happiness is one's birthright and that pain, suffering and any form of evil is contrary to the Wise Lord's divine nature, for only then will a new chapter of awareness and fellowship be made possible. And the United Nations is undoubtedly the best world forum for maintaining and promoting not just world peace, but for building a new world based upon the foundations of social justice.

Edited text of the paper presented at "Visions for the 21st Century," a United Nations Conference on Regional and Global Issues on October 21 and 22, 1995 in New York.



Dastur (Dr) Firoze M. Kotwal, High Priest of the H. B. Wadia Atas Bahram, Bombay, was formerly principal of the M. F. Cama Athoroman Madressa. Respected for his erudition, Kotwal has co-authored studies of Zoroastrian scriptures with distinguished Western scholars.

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*A community's
gratitude and
devotion has
followed Ervad
Rustomji
Panthaki and his
wife Jalamai
into retirement*



MENTORS AT THE MADRESSA

Homi Rogers



For over three hours on that sunny Saturday evening of April 22, 1995, speaker after speaker extolled the good work of Ervad Rustomji N. Panthaki and Jalamai, his devoted wife of 27 years. The 400-strong audience assembled in the narrow courtyard outside Dadar's Athornan Boarding Madressa applauded and cheered into the night as tributes were paid to their humble Panthaki who had almost single-handedly revived and strengthened the Madressa — a school for training initiates into the Zoroastrian priesthood — and spread the message of love to his fellowmen.

As if ordained by the Lord, the destinies of Panthaki and the Madressa have been inextricably linked down the years. Pan-

thaki was born on March 11, 1917 in Nargol. The Madressa was established in 1918. Panthaki saw it for the first time in 1924 — when he went with his father to enrol his elder brother in it — and something stirred within him. "I wanted to join the Madressa," he recounted in his short thank you speech at the function held to honor him on his retirement as the Madressa's principal after 29 years of uninterrupted service.

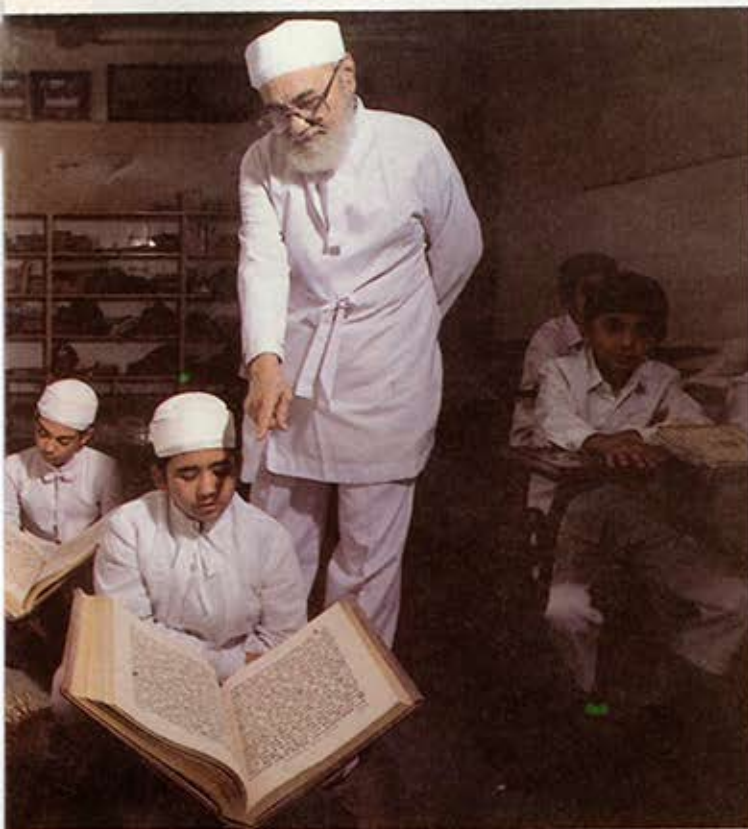
Panthaki's ties with the Madressa, inspired by this first visit, fructified into an on-going relationship when he joined it in 1928 to train as a fully ordained priest. And the ties did not snap with his passing out. After a stint with his father at the Poonjiagi Agiary at Nargol and a year at the Bai H.

N. Mullan Dar-e-Meher at Nagpur, he returned to the vicinity of the Madressa to practise as a yozdathregar mobed (one who performs high liturgical ceremonies) at the R. N. RustomFaramna Agiary in Dadar. In the evenings he would call on his alma mater and sit with the priests and scholars assembled there. In 1953, when he was 35, Panthaki was persuaded to join the Madressa as a teacher, a duty he performed with dedication till 1961.

"The Madressa's fall started around 1962," stated Dastur (Dr) Hormazdyar Kayoji Mirza, the revered High Priest of Udvada who presided over the felicitation function. One of the first students to have passed out of the Madressa, Mirza's account of its checked history and Panthaki's



The Madressa as landmark and classrooms (above and left); Panthaki felicitated by Mirza while Jalamai, Aspy Dadachanji, Yezdi Panthaki and Vispi Dastur look on; with successor Karanjia
Photos: Homyar Mistry, Homz Prints



role in reversing its fortunes was heard with rapt attention by the audience. As students continued to leave the Madressa, as its funds depleted, closure was enforced in 1965; but its one devoted teacher stayed on. When Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP) trustee Manek Mistry took up the collection of funds Panthaki, often foregoing his wages, "with *tan-man-dhan* (body and soul) worked to build up the Madressa," and succeeded in doing so.

Panthaki humbly attributes the school's resurrection to God's will, and to his quiet insistence that Madressa students be educated up to the SSC (Secondary School Certificate) examination in addition to being taught Zoroastrian prayers and liturgy. This rounded education strategy paid off.



The Madressa was back on its feet. "During the last two decades, 70 to 80 students have passed their SSC examinations through the neighboring Dadar Parsee Youths Assembly High School, while they learnt their prayers here," stated Ervad Parvez M. Bajan, an ex-student of Panthaki and joint honorary secretary of the Athornan Mandal, the governing body of the Madressa which had hosted the function.

What truly endeared Panthaki and his wife to all who came in contact with them was the care and concern they exhibited at all levels. "He was like a father to us," stated Bajan. And incoming principal Ervad (Dr) Ramiyar Karanjia recalled Jalamai as having tucked him into bed and even bathed many a young ward. Ervad Jehangir Turel spoke of Panthaki's *bhalu tan, bhalu kartavya, ané bhalu vichar* (good body that performed good deeds and held good thoughts) and recalled how he guided people in their times of difficulty. "By reviving and keeping the Madressa alive, he has kept the community going," remarked Jamshed Guzder, chairman of the

BPP, as he lauded Panthaki's good work. Many more tributes were heaped on the couple: a measure of the great respect in which they are held as over a score of speakers from different walks of life went on till well past 9 p.m. What's more, Mirza, who presented the honors to Panthaki and his wife, stayed to the very end despite his age (he's in his 90s) and failing health.

Panthaki is primarily a teacher; and as Ervad Vispi Dastur, a trustee of the Athornan Mandal, commented in his introductory address, "One does not know where a teacher's influence ends." Panthaki's resignation, accepted with great reluctance, can signal the end of an era, but not what he stood for and worked for, and certainly



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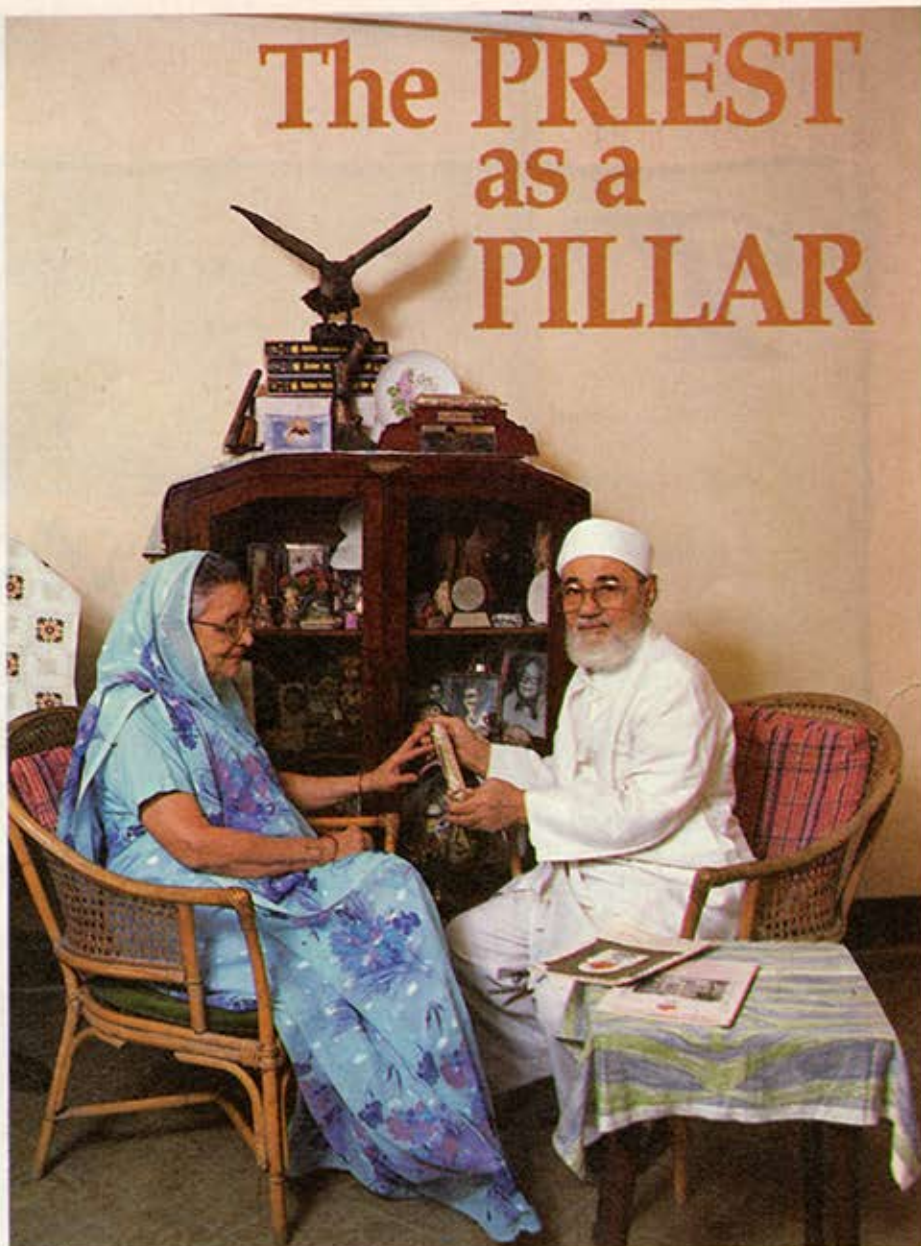
not the institution he fostered and greatly augmented with the construction of an annex building (at a cost of Rs 35 lakhs) in its compound.

The felicitation function also marked the passing of the baton to protégé Karanjia, handpicked for the vacated seat by Panthaki himself. Speaking on the occasion on behalf of the Madressa's ex-students Karanjia recalled his association with his teacher since he was a nipper of eight and a half. He remarked that Panthaki had addressed him as a child, a teenager, and as an adult. Not an eye was dry when young Karanjia and his wife Havovi presented a shawl to their mentors, and proceeded to touch their feet. It was a gesture that spoke a thousand words.

More than a thousand words were nevertheless uttered. And each speaker had something new to say about Panthaki. Ms Mithoo Jesia, secretary of The Mancherji E. Joshi Memorial Trust, claimed that she found her pride in being a Zoroastrian from Panthaki. She revealed that he had scripted with Nadir Modi the revue *Amar Jyoti Zarathushtra* and even acted in it. Rustom Tirandaz, our intrepid municipal corporator informed the gathering that the Kirlian photographs his son had taken of Panthaki depicted him "as one in a million." Ervad Sharukh Dhalla, honorary treasurer and a trustee of the Madressa, recalled that Panthaki's suggestions to the architect helped in constructing the annex building in a very short time. Marzban Giara, translator and publisher of books of interest to the community, spoke of the ways in which Panthaki contributed to his books, which included providing him a quiet place in the Madressa to compile a monograph.

There was little doubt that the community which owed a great deal to this humble priest was anxious to repay its debt of gratitude. Guzder, when informed that the Madressa survives on contributions which by God's grace always materialize when needed, suggested that a corpus be built and initiated the fund-raising exercise with a personal donation of Rs 50,000. Thus, even as he walks away into the sunset, Panthaki has started another round of collection for the institution to which he had contributed so immensely.

Yet at the end of the evening, weighed down with shawls and scrolls, *parikas* (monetary gifts) and salvers, and smiling through his garlands, Rustomji softly said: "I have not done all that has been ascribed to me. God has done it. It was His will and the community's support that made it possible."



Principal of Dadar's Athornan Boarding Madressa for 29 years Ervad Rustomji Panthaki infused life and values to this community institution

Homi Rogers

"Zarhosti jigar né dhan chhè," says Ervad Rustomji Panthaki in an interview to *Parsiana*, thanking the community for the support that made his Madressa mission an unqualified success.

For Panthaki, ex-principal of the Athornan Boarding Madressa in Dadar, life still centers round the community's younger generation. As we enter his second floor flat, recently allotted to him by a grateful

Bombay Parsi Punchayet for his 40 years of dedicated service to the Madressa, a child receiving tuition in navjote prayers skips out after bidding fond goodbye to Panthaki, his wife Jalamai and his sister Perin. "Gnan daan (gift of knowledge) is the biggest daan of all," smiles Panthaki,

The Panthakis: bonds of love and devotion Photo: Homiyar Mistry, Homz Prints

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the twinkle in his eyes belying his 79 years.

Unlike most mobeds, Panthaki gravitated towards teaching, and the Madressa at Dadar in particular, right from an early age. An ordained priest adept at performing high liturgical ceremonies under stalwarts like Dastur Faramroze Kutar and Ervad Mahiyar Kutar, Panthaki had consecrated the fires at Nargol's Poonjiaji Dar-e-Meher, and the Barashnum Gah at the Banaji-Limji Agiary in Bombay. "I could have got a panthak," (charge of a dar-e-meher) he reminisces on being asked why he opted for teaching, "but I was inclined towards education. In this my father too encouraged me, though it meant earning *ardhi rotli* (less income). I'm happy to have honored my father's words, for in following this inner call, I've not made lakhs of rupees, *pun lakhkho ni ijjat melvich* (but earned a great deal of respect)."

Though Panthaki has no string of degrees tailing his name, his words are understood and respected by a large section of the community. Especially by the young Zoroastrians who have received knowledge of the faith through him not just at the Madressa, but also through the many religious classes he has been conducting. From 1954, Panthaki imparted religious instruction at Rustom Baug for a pittance of an honorarium, probably spending more than what he got as his advancing years required him to commute to and fro in a taxi to keep his date with the colony's children.

"I was not going there to teach. I was going to see the roses in the garden," remarks Panthaki good-naturedly about his Sunday sermons to the young. That he tended these *gulabs* with care is apparent by the love and respect that a whole group of middle-aged Parsis shower on him. Panthaki recalls a particularly bright youngster, who on being told of the omnipresent and omniscient nature of God queried him on the need then of going to the fire-temple. Panthaki, perceiving the child's sharp intellect, did not hush him up, but proceeded to draw an analogy with a car that has to be taken to a garage occasionally to recharge the batteries. "Even today, when this boy or those in his class meet me when coming out of an agiary, they call out in jest: '*battery recharge karava gayela* (we had gone to recharge our batteries).'"

The community's battery needs to be similarly recharged, believes Panthaki, if we are to survive and prosper in the times to come. "Our community can only be strengthened if religious classes are conducted in every baug and Parsi school," he asserts. "The knowledge of our religion

and our *sanskar* (culture) must be given to our children. Our ancestors left their homeland to protect *dharam* and *kom* (faith and community); we too should adhere to that motive, in order to prosper... otherwise, we'll be wiped out."

One way of retaining our Parsipanu is by being conscious and proud of our heritage and this knowledge our priestly class should be able to impart to us, holds Panthaki. "The Madressa is of great importance to the community, because by training priests it is the mediator between the community's present and its future." Panthaki, who not only breathed new life into the Madressa, but also added an annex building to provide more space for the physical and extracurricular activities of its resident boys, advocates that the community enrol its boys in the Madressa when they are six and a half to seven years old. "They would then learn, from the right age, not just their prayers but also the educational curriculum offered at the neighboring school without facing difficulties of language or medium of communication."

More importantly, Panthaki stresses that boys ordained into priesthood should practise the profession. "After all, the Madressa runs on community donations, and its students have a responsibility to the community. Besides, considering the present demand-supply scenario, there is a good income to be made in this line. And it's like an added qualification for those who migrate abroad. Many of my students ask me to send them their certificates as being a Zoroastrian priest helps in securing their appointment."

The traffic though, pleads Panthaki, should be two-way. The community too should support the mobeds. "Just like a doctor is sustained throughout his internship, or an aspiring accountant supported through his 'article days,' so also a priest should be *saachav*-ed (protected) by *vadil* mobeds (senior priests) and the community while he gains the experience which qualifies him to become a full-fledged *yozdathregar* (a priest who performs high liturgical ceremonies, i.e. those beyond *afargan-froksi-baj*). Panthaki holds that every *navar* has a beholden duty to carry out such rituals for the community.

Yet another way in which Panthaki believes the community can regain its lost splendor is to stop migrating. "We are being lost in a vast ocean by our going abroad. The present set has managed to retain its identity, but the next generation will be lost," he feels. "Zoroastrians should

stay in India and preserve their Parsipanu. Then God Almighty will look after us.

"The community should forget its small quarrels, and sit across the table and resolve its differences rather than go to the Press with them. The priestly class should become one rather than belong to different *tolas* (groups)," advises Panthaki.

"The present crop of children in our community is smart," adds Jalamai, who like him has seen through at least one entire generation, "a little more on the mischievous side, though." Yet the couple that has wiped away tears, shared the joys and sorrows of their wards — and been regarded by them as foster-parents — is confident that the new breed "*jaasti zalki nikalsé* (will be resplendent)" if we teach them religion, and teach them properly.

"The breakup of the joint family system, and the emergence of two working parents has caused children to be deprived of moral education. They are then prone to accept superficial cultural norms." The panacea for many of our problems could be in a return to our roots, mutual love and a new understanding between partners. "It's more an impression than a fact that Parsi girls are brighter than boys," Panthaki defends his charges. "True, our girls are *mehentu* (diligent), but it's not that our boys are not talented. It's time our girls sought husbands for their human qualities. That will form the key to true marital bliss and overall happiness."

Panthaki should know. For besides being a one-man dynamo of education, he is also a very devoted husband. Married late in life to his cousin, Jalamai, an equally devoted social worker and a good seamstress who learnt under Burjorji Bharucha, then a well-known cutter in Nargol, the couple has worked shoulder-to-shoulder, selflessly, without the lure of materialism, serving one another and the community.

"*Maaru vaachan bhaari* (I read voraciously)," says Panthaki, who considers poet Ardeshir Khabardar his guru, and in his relatively free time now indulges in reading, listening to music, and keeping up with world news, his favorite hobbies. And then there are the memories, moments of shared happiness the couple recall with an infectious bonhomie. "Remember the time I sent Yazdi to your room..." ribs Panthaki. "Do tell of how an entire group followed you around the premises chanting..." begins Jalamai, but neither completes the tale, for both of them are doubled up with laughter. How many of us, Mammon-chasing couples, will have so much joy to reminisce about?

"If you choose wrongly, you will be corrected"

Along with the natural world's capacity for survival, man has an implanted yearning for nobility, says the author

Khusro F. Rustamji

It is to the sun that all plants and animals turn with appeals for help. The plant in your room bends to face the sun. What happens to make it turn? The plant, in need of a new chemical unknown to itself, appeals to the sun for it; and it is supplied.

There is in nature an element of asking, asking for help, asking for support and sustenance. That is the basis of prayer which all religions have in their ritual, and is a carry-over from our animal origins. Every plant and animal prays to the sun for help to grow, to overcome trouble — drought, starvation, sickness.

In animals, nature has developed the brain which meets many needs. The capacity to endure emerges in all types of disasters. The inner spirit is awakened to overcome and satisfy the urges of change. There is a demand, a summoning of resources within a plant or animal, and an endeavor to reach out, to adjust, to settle down to a new environment.

What powers exist in the sun to analyze, to work out answers, to supply needed chemicals, to direct all the activities of life, we do not know in full. We do know, however, that it was the deadly gas hydrogen cyanide which played an intermediate role in synthesizing the amino acids that are required for life.

Mankind's propensity for strife and violence is a carry-over from our animal origins. At that time the male used muscle to stake an area for food, lead the herd to face the enemy, or establish his right over a female. Later when humans settled down, it was a continuation of the same process, which was called ruling, conquest, and a refinement resulted in codes of conduct, which later became laws. The major influence in the control and deve-

lopment of man was the same as in the animals, the word of command of the leader.

Then, when community life developed, and the command of the leader was not enough, laws appeared, and in order to enforce greater cohesion, came the prophets and their doctrines based on the need for some type of spiritual solace, comfort and divine support. There was a need, and the prophets fulfilled it, prescribed a way of life which would harness the human need for love and friendship, enrich it with the sacrifice and protection of mother love and the soldier's virtue, and control the basic instincts with his own mental powers, the laws of the land, and the fear of divine wrath. Four thousand years ago, the need for a simple prescription of good living was given by Zarathushtra in the form of a condensed doctrine — good thoughts, good words and good deeds.

What this doctrine stresses is that if a man or woman thinks good thoughts without malice or hatred, fantasizes and dreams correctly, the nobility in him or her comes to the surface. That person spreads in the sphere of influence an aroma of happiness, and in return life is filled with unsought gifts. Gandhi was a supreme example of this. (Incidentally, his faith in Parsis was unbounded.) In the fight for freedom, he said to the people of India, they must think of freedom and the benefits it will bring, the chance to improve the lives of the poor. If they brought hatred of the British into it and retaliated with violence, they would damage the struggle for freedom.

There is a personal side to this doctrine which any person can ascertain for him-

self. If he harbors evil thoughts about a member of his family, a neighbor, or a friend, his mind seems to find some way of punishing him. He may lose his balance, fall down and hurt himself, he may have sleepless nights, forget important matters, or sink into a depression. Deep in the inner consciousness of man there is a desire for nobility and righteousness. It may be implanted or developed by a mother, teacher, a film, book, even the scrap of a song. Or perhaps it is, as many religions believe, a spark of the divine that is in all living beings, a cosmic ray that lies in every human heart.

The man or woman of good mind follows up good thoughts with good words and good deeds. In practical terms it means concern for others, particularly for those in distress, or those at a lower economic level. A few years ago, the Parsis of Bombay showed it in full measure: the Wadia charities are one example. In consequence the community prospered. To this day, a Bombay Parsi says on parting, "Let me know if I can do anything for you." An extension of the same can be found among the Zoroastrians of North America. The help that they extend to each other, and especially to a newcomer, is the hallmark of a true Zoroastrian.

What we now know is that the world is an ordered and comprehensible entity, part created by chance, part by an inbuilt design of incomparable worth. Obviously, it has been perfected by a mind which seems to be the central theme of all life.

One side of religion, therefore, is the one connected with all the attributes of the sun. The other side is the one that has been developed over the centuries by men who wanted unity, peace and progress, and

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utilized man's intelligence and spiritual resources to establish religions. The prophets that appeared from time to time delivered a message based on morality.

Zarathustra did not conceive of a god who is like a human king, an elderly benefactor, or a white-bearded saint living in the clouds who controls the destiny of man by doling out benefits and imposing punishments, who needs constant prayer, propitiation and sacrifice. That is, if it exists, clearly the creation of the clergy, who reserved the right to intercede with him as he was their creation. Such a god may be invented for solace, for comfort and for greed. But he is not a reality. On the other hand the symbol of Ahura Mazda — fire — is a faith which sustained life when the Iranian tribes were wandering in the bitter cold of the ice ages in the vicinity of the Caspian and Aral seas, the ancient Arya Varta, before seeking a home in Persia. The practice of the disposal of the dead by the sun and birds may also have originated during those wanderings in Central Asia.

If our life is in conformity with the sun, like that of a plant on fertile soil, it is set in the right direction. The emphasis in plants is on punctuality: correct nutrition, timely reproduction and a timely death. In the

animal world, there are social habits, perfected for example by ants and beetles (special favorites of God), and there are various ways of living together in reptiles, fishes, birds and mammals culminating in the human race which requires a capacity for helping others and social decorum which produces serenity (constantly stressed in

***Discern what is
good or bad for
society rather than
for yourself***

the *Gathas*). The message of Zarathustra is, therefore, in total conformity with nature. So brief, so precise, it appears as bright and sparkling as the day it was given thousands of years ago. It was given in poetic language which has consequently endured uncorrupted. In just a few songs, the *Gathas* spell out a way of living that is so simple that it has total application today.

There is emphasis — deliberate, specific and final — on the first principle:

"There is only one God, God of infinite wisdom (wisdom also means power) — Ahura Mazda, creator and promoter of the world (Songs 8 and 9)."

The faith enjoins Asha (righteousness), cultivation of the mind, the ability to discriminate (in today's language we would call it education) and along with it there is emphasis on serenity (peace of mind), and a desire to improve the world, (The Parsis of Bombay in the past were prime exponents of this faith as all their charities prove.)

In its pristine nature there is no threat of hell in this faith, no hopes of heaven. It only promises that humanity will correct you if you go wrong. It means that you will suffer for your sins, and in the end realize it and come back to the path of righteousness. What the *Gathas* specially emphasize is that happiness comes to him who gives happiness to others. It is to the holy spirit or holy mind Spenta Mainyu that you take your problems and determine in your mind what is right and what is wrong. Song 3.2 says clearly, "Hear the best... ponder with a bright mind... and select either of the two, the good or the bad course." The consequences will follow.

This is what makes the faith different



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from all others. It does not claim to be the best. It does not claim perfection at all. It merely says that it is you with the cultivated mind that must decide which path to follow. Songs 3, 4, 11 and 12 make it clear that you have to discern what is good or bad for society rather than for yourself, and if you choose wrongly, you will be corrected. This means in effect that what you make of yourself, what you achieve, what you aim at, and the strength that you acquire, is all from your own mind. You are the captain of your soul.

Four thousand years ago when mankind was just beginning to think, when worship often turned to magic and witchcraft, the *Gathas* said that "All superstitions, beliefs and false gods, goddesses and similar imaginary beings and the performance of rituals to appease them should be abandoned and all irrational ideas and practices should be given up (Song 5)." Could any seer today have given advice which is more modern and scientifically correct?

The fact that mankind was led to believe in the past that God was like a human saint that lived above in the sky should not prevent us from adjusting our vision, and accepting that God is the life force of the sun, with many attributes and powers that are still unknown to us. What is certainly not acceptable to a modern mind is that there is a court in the sky that determines whether it will be heaven or hell for every person that dies. Concepts that are contrary to reason and science have crept into religions because man's understanding of the facts of life was vague and imperfect, and a simple allegory was required to keep men on the right path. The mistake that scientists make is to reject religion because some of the interpretations made in the past were untenable. In their own sphere scientists do not reject science because some scientist makes a wrong conjecture or puts forward a wrong theory. The sublime truths that the prophets gave, which have been tested by mankind for centuries and inscribed on the tablets of eternity as the morality of man, cannot be discarded.



The distinguished former chief of the border Security Force and a recipient of the Padma Vibhushan, Khusro F. Rustamji writes on a host of subjects from the functioning of the police and politics to Zoroastrianism. Rustamji was also a former president of the Delhi Parsi Anjuman.

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Status of Women: sacred and secular - 4

"A woman is not inherently evil"

Dr Ketayun H. Gould

While bigamy and adultery was permissible for Zoroastrian men, women dared not

The image of a liberated Zoroastrian female on par with the male is only an illusion, an ideal that has yet to be realized. There is no denying that in certain spheres she has been granted equal opportunities but she has had to suffer discrimination too. This article which runs into six instalments analyzes the relevant texts and traditions to study the status of women in the ancient, medieval and modern periods.

As it originally appears in *Religion and Women* (a publication of the State University of New York Press, 1994) the paper entitled "Outside the discipline, inside the experience: women in Zoroastrianism" is a researched, academic presentation. Since *Parsiana* will be carrying an abridged version of the text to make it simpler for the lay reader, we will not be detailing the sources that the author painstakingly cites at each instance.

In the first three instalments we learnt that certain divinities perceived as female entities were venerated, that the soul of a dead man was said to be met by a female figure on its upward journey.

Yet within the stronghold of the aristocracy and priesthood in the pre-Zoroastrian era, paradise was denied to women. With the advent of Zarathushtra, both men and women were deemed allies of Ahura Mazda to fight the evil forces. The domestic routine though was considered to be of prime concern to the females in the ancient period. While marriage and the begetting of children is advocated in Zoroastrianism, the prevalent belief was that menstruation causes a woman to lose her ritual purity and spread impurity if she comes in contact with others. Even though religious equality was denied to females in ancient times, within the confines of a patriarchal society women were ceded certain economic and legal rights.

Women had to bear considerable hardships and suffering in the medieval period when Zoroastrianism was relegated to the status of a minority religion. Also noticeable in this episode are the double standards that condoned remarriage and adultery among men but censured females who dared to take the same liberties.

The Zoroastrian religion represented a significant step up in the recognition of the traditional roles of women as compared to the patriarchy in the Indo-Iranian context. At the same time, it is quite evident that the growing elaboration of beliefs and practices that regulated ritual purity and pollution must have affected women more disproportionately than men because of the impurity associated with menstruation, parturition and abortion. Jamsheed K. Choksy believes that this elaboration occurred between the tenth to the third centuries BCE and was codified

in the *Vendidad* ("the law against the demons").

However, it is very clear that it was the medieval period, which encompasses the Sasanian and Islamic centuries (third to sixteenth century CE), that witnessed the most dramatic change in the perceptions of women's religious and secular roles. In reaching this conclusion, it has to be acknowledged, as H. Michael Simmons has charged, that there is a tendency to place an overreliance on texts, most of which are concerned with matters of ritual purity. Undoubtedly, the scriptures during this

period reflect the most conservative viewpoints since the Sasanians institutionalized the Zoroastrian faith as the official religion of the kingdom. The establishing of temple worship created a powerful elite of chief priests who wielded considerable power — hereditary offices that were an exclusive male domain (Mary Boyce). Furthermore, Cyrus R. Pangborn and Maneckji Nusserwanji Dhalla maintain that under the Sasanians, the priesthood spent an inordinate amount of time dealing with cultic and theological issues, which "descended to rigid formalism, stifled independent inquiry, stigmatized honest doubt as Ahirmanian, and sought to over-rule original thinking by dogmatic assertions (Dhalla)."

The post-Sasanian period, with the stress involved in change of status of Zoroastrianism from state to minority religion (under the dominance of Islam) must have played its part in driving the religion to adopt a very patriarchal worldview. The stress of survival has often been correlated with the rise in male patterns of dominance toward women — an easy target since females are the most powerless members of a victimized group. Moreover, Zoroastrian fear of an alien religion and culture, especially when it was tied to their status of being the subjugated sect (Boyce refers to many "stories" of rape and abduction of Zoroastrian women — a common fate suffered by many conquered populations) must have encouraged the surfacing of extremely punitive attitudes toward women. In addition, Dhalla demonstrates that religious dissensions, especially the growth of sects "had racked the Zoroastrian world" during this period. One of these sects, Zurvanism, is known to have held a very perverse view of women (R. C. Zaehner).

The ambivalence toward women's full religious participation is present in all patriarchal religions, although it is true that the initial vision does provide a sense of possibilities for women. If the societal forces change in the direction of conservatism, these forces usually dictate the course of religious response. Therefore, transcending this phase requires ability on the part of women to have enough of a power base to deal with the politics of both the religious and societal institutions.

Legends

The convergence of patriarchal religious and societal forces with Zoroastrian conceptions of purity and pollution produced some elaborate legends that display strong



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ambivalence towards women. The association of menstruation with the evil spirit (Pahlavi Ahriman) led to the following legend that is preserved in the *Bundahishn* (3.7): "the original creation." After the initial attack on Ohrmazd's perfect creation, Ahriman had been in a 3,000-year swoon caused by the wise lord's recital of a sacred prayer and by the vision of a righteous man (Gayomard). Although his demons were powerless to wake him, the task was accomplished by the whore demoness (Jeh). She succeeded by promising to let loose affliction on the righteous man and the primordial bull and all the creations of Ohrmazd. "And she so recounted those evil deeds a second time that the evil spirit was delighted and started up from that confusion, and he kissed Geh (or Jeh) upon the head, and the pollution which they call menstruation became apparent in Geh."

Menstruation, then, comes from the kiss of Ahriman, and it was created in order to render human beings unfit to do battle against evil (Choksy). The question arises as to how this original affliction was going to be transmitted to human beings. According to the *Zadspram* (34.30-31), the evil spirit joined himself to the whore demoness. "For the defilement of females

he joined himself to her, that she might defile females, and the females, because they were defiled, might defile the males, and cause (the males) to turn away from their proper function." Here, the female as

Menstruation comes from the kiss of Ahriman

the source of impurity, pollution and temptation is portrayed vividly. Therefore, the structure of the legend itself conveys a negative image of woman that is very similar to some medieval Christian beliefs (Eileen Power 1975).

Simmons goes back to the original coupling; that Spendarmad, the bounteous immortal, is the guardian of both the earth and virtuous woman. Therefore, the virtuous woman is the protégé of Spendarmad, and not Jeh. Jeh can be perceived in the context of dualism as the demonic antithesis of Spendarmad, and thus, the antithesis of good woman. Thus, Jeh and Spendarmad are two opposing points on a continuum, both of which affect women, at least as long as the material world is in

a mixture of good and evil. Jeh defiles women and Spendarmad blesses them. Simmons concludes this argument by suggesting that until the final renovation when Ahriman and Jeh will cease to exist, the purity codes are needed to protect women and the rest of the good creation from the evil of Ahriman. In this sense, a woman is not inherently evil, she is always a part of the good creation.

Choksy is more convinced that the medieval period does represent a real change in the perceptions regarding women, that "women were, in time perceived as easily corrupted and beguiled by the forces of evil... women were believed to be inferior to men, who although also susceptible to pollution and deception by the forces of evil, are not afflicted by a pollution which periodically manifests itself." These attitudes pervade the historical and religious texts, and the best that can be said is that at times the attitudes reflect an ambivalence rather than outright negativism toward women.

Other texts

Other passages in the texts are directly pertinent to the subject of women since they present Ohrmazd himself addressing



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women: "I created thee, whose adversary is the whore species, and thou was created with a mouth close to thy buttocks, and coition seems to thee even as the taste of the sweetest food (is) to the mouth, for thou art a helper to me, for from thee is man born but thou dost grieve me who am Ohrmazd. But had I found another vessel from which to make man, never would I have created thee, whose adversary is the whore species (Zaehner)." The ambivalence toward women and sexuality, as well as a grudging recognition of the necessity of having women around in order to produce children, is quite striking.

At the same time, as in the ancient period, it is also clear that the religion exhibited some flexibility in prescribing women's religious roles, albeit at a very peripheral level. The *Sayest ne Sayest* (10.35), a compilation of "the proper and improper," specifies some limited conditions under which a woman can perform a few sacerdotal functions. She is "fit for priestly duty among women," having the right to consecrate the barsom and perform liturgies. Still these functions by no means should leave the impression as some writers have claimed (Ervad Rustam Shahzadi) that "so sacred a work as that of...the chief priest... at a ritual was not denied to their sex (women)."

In fact, the Pahlavi writers of the period were quite explicit in delineating the fact that women were expected to be silent partners in the religious experience. A post-Sasanian work, the *Sad Dar* (59.1-2.5), a treatise on "a hundred subjects," expounds:

"In the good and pure religion of the Mazda worshippers, they have not commanded the women to perform the Nyayises. And their Nyayises are these, that three times everyday, at dawn, mid-day prayer, and evening prayer, they stand back in the presence of their own husbands, and fold their arms and speak thus: 'What are thy thoughts, so that I may think them; what is necessary for thee, so that I may speak it; and what is necessary for thee, so that I may do it?' ... For the satisfaction of the sacred being is in a reverence for the satisfaction of the husband."

Besides the religious texts, it is also instructive to examine the wisdom literature, because the folk wisdom provides a clue to the kind of milieu that spawned the patriarchal religious perceptions of the day. In this context, statements attributed to Adurbad, the son of Maraspand [a high priest who lived during the reign of Shapur II (307-379 CE)] can serve as excellent

examples: "Put not your trust in women lest you have cause to be ashamed and to repent; do not tell your secrets to women lest your toilings be fruitless (Zaehner)."

Dhalla refers to other sources that echo the same sentiments: woman has no wisdom, and therefore a man can thank his creator that he has made him a man and not a woman; a woman's first and last duty is to obey her husband, and she is to be condemned to suffering in hell if she is wanting in obedience to her lord; and Arda Viraf pictures the soul of a woman wending its way toward the infernal regions, reminding the pious soul of her husband that as her lord upon earth, it was his duty to have guided her on the path of righteousness and not allowed her to lapse into wickedness so that now after death she could have accompanied him to heaven instead of going to hell.

Choksy believes that "perhaps the influence of Nestorian Christianity on Iranian society during the medieval period reinforced Zoroastrian misogyny," since "the view of woman as an instrument of the devil, both inferior and evil, also developed during the earliest period of the Christian Church, originating in the writings of St Paul."

In describing the societal milieu, the Pahlavi texts mention five different kinds of marriages. The prevailing theme in this categorization seems to be the woman's primary role as the provider of children. A woman who is given in marriage through an arrangement made by the parents (the most common type of marriage) is called "privileged wife." A woman who marries against the wishes of the parents is called "self-disposing wife." A woman who is the only child of her parents, agreeing to give the first child to her parents is called the "one wife." A woman who is chosen to be the "adopted wife" of a youth who has died is then married to another youth with full dowry but is considered to be the wife of the dead man as far as it pertains to the life of her soul after death. In return, half her children belong to the dead man and half belong to the husband. A childless widow who remarries is a "serving wife;" for purposes of the afterlife and the respective ceremonies, her name continues to be tied to her first husband. Half her children by the second marriage belong to the first husband in the other world (Dhalla; Jamshidji Cawasji Katrak). Choksy also provides references to various Pahlavi texts to show that they contain discussions of the practice of consanguineous marriages.



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Both incestuous marriages and polygyny are said to have persisted during the medieval period among all classes of Zoroastrian society in both Iran and India. Again, as in the ancient period, there is no way to assess the effects of these practices on women, since it is impossible to circumvent the problem of women's "silent history."

The texts mention the fact that marriage could be dissolved at the initiation of either the husband or the wife, but the way the laws were formulated and practiced is quite revealing. Usually both parties had to agree to a divorce, but the wife's agreement was not required if she was infertile or guilty of adultery. Once the wife had borne children, she could only be divorced on grounds of adultery. Generally, there were four reasons for which a man could divorce his wife: adultery, concealment of the fact that she was menstruating, practice of sorcery, and sterility (Choksy). A wife did have the right to seek redress in a court of law if the husband was seeking a divorce under wrongful circumstances. Dhalla adds an interesting footnote to this topic by pointing out that the Rivayat states that in order to have a male successor, a husband may take a second wife if the first wife is infertile, provided he is willing to continue to support the previous wife. The wife, however, was not allowed to divorce the husband if he turned out to be impotent.

Moreover, the same double standard is revealed in the texts on the subject of adultery. When a woman married, she literally accepted the husband as her lord and master. She was, in effect, her husband's property. Thus, the Zoroastrian pronouncements in the medieval period on the subject of adultery can be understood only in the context of male property rights. Maganlal A. Buch refers to various texts which can be interpreted in this manner: one should avoid adultery since "everyone who beguiles the wife of another... that woman becomes, in a moment, unlawful as regards her husband;" and "one should abstain from rape on another's wife and from causing a woman to occupy a separate bed from her husband." However, the greatest fear with adultery is the disturbance of woman's main function: the production of rightful male heirs. Thus, the texts claim, "and by it all lineage is disturbed, control is put an end to, and without the authority of the husband an intermingling of son with son occurs (Buch)."

It appears that all these negative views of women seemed to ultimately find their

justification in the fact that women were the physical source of menstrual pollution — a major source of impurity — that is, evil — in the material world. Women, by extension then, became inferior, sinful and evil. The medieval period witnessed a significant elaboration of taboos and rituals associated with menstruation and parturition. The texts lay out the exact number

Had I found another vessel from which to make man, never would I have created thee

of steps that a menstruant must distance herself from the "righteous man" as well as other sacred elements. The period of confinement after miscarriage or childbirth was extended to 40 days. During the period of menstruation, even her gaze and voice were believed to be capable of polluting all of Ohrmazd's good creation. The main effect of these misogynist views was that by the medieval period, women came to be regarded, in religious doctrine, as dual faceted: god-created, yet periodically polluted, easily tempted, and untrustworthy. Although essential for the victory of good over evil, and the direct antagonists of the whore demoness, women were believed to have been afflicted with this demoness's characteristics: menstrual pollution and carnal temptation (Choksy).

Maybe part of the problem in evaluating the role of women in Zoroastrianism has been that the authors have felt the need to present an unidimensional view — positive or negative. The reality seems to point toward ambivalence — a much more understandable stance since the male ecclesiastical authorities must have realized that the initial equality preached by the Prophet was at great odds with the male control of religious institutions, congregations and households in the medieval period. Hence, the dilemma had to be resolved by providing women some opportunities for flexibility in their religious and societal roles. Dhalla gives examples of these alternatives: women officiated at minor ceremonies; they owned property and acted as a guardian of the family when no male relative was living to guard its interest; women could succeed to the throne if the king had no male issue; and women were not subject

to the harsh restrictions in public that the coming of the Arab hegemony imposed on the Zoroastrian minority.

Parsi settlements in India

Although the early history of the Parsi Zoroastrian refugees' flight to India in about 936 CE, and the settlement in Sanjan is shrouded in legend, the story itself makes some references to women that are instructive. The *Kisseh-i-Sanjan* was written in 1600 CE by a learned priest whose sources were old books, plus oral history. It claims that when the refugees came ashore, the local ruler was afraid of the large body of armed strangers, and asked the priest who had come as the group spokesperson to explain their religion and customs. The priest answered in 16 Sanskrit shlokas (stanzas). Interestingly, the references in these stanzas to women stress their traditional roles — "(a community) whose married females are not (looked upon as) pure if devoid of husband" — or the fact that females observed the menstrual taboos: "Pure-hearted men, whose females in menstrual period, become pure on the seventh night; (and when) delivered of child pure in body after a month from the day of delivery; (whose females) are noble on account of their graceful conduct... are powerful and strong and have always laughing faces (Rustom Burjorji Paymaster)."

The *Rivayats* ("traditions" — a compilation of instructions provided by the Zoroastrian priests of Iran to inquiries raised by the Parsi priests in India about ritual practices; Parsi emissaries brought back 26 *Rivayats* between 1478 and 1773) reveal that the Zoroastrian doctrines regulating women's behavior during menstruation and childbirth were conveyed in elaborate detail to the early settlers in India. In fact, it might be interesting to speculate if the Parsi priests' fear of not remembering the details of ritual practices, and the Iranian priests' stress on describing the most exact routines might not have resulted in even more conservative traditions being preserved during this period. For example, Choksy describes how the Persian *Rivayats* and Parsi writings in Gujarati cover such topics as the number of times the married couple were supposed to have intercourse per month if the wife was not pregnant, and the rituals that both parties had to follow after each act to cleanse themselves of ritual impurity.

Scattered references to topics pertaining to Parsi women are also available in other sources such as foreign travelers' accounts of what they observed in India.

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The Rev Edward Terry, chaplain in the service of the East India Company, 1616-1619, noted about his visit to Surat that the "Parsis took only one wife who was chosen with priestly guidance (John R. Hinnells)." Thus, the practice of polygyny must have been on the decline, although Zoroastrian men were still permitted to take a second wife if the first was infertile. Another priest, Rev Henry Lord, who was in Surat between 1615 and 1623, described the five forms of marriage that were prevalent among the Parsis, and the types match the medieval period marriages among the Zoroastrians in Iran (Paymaster).

The remaining citation relating to women's activities again falls in the area of traditional lore. An incident at the end of the 11th century describes the valor with which Parsi women, dressed as men, defended the settlement of Variav from hostile troops while Parsi men were away partaking in a feast — a fact that reveals that women did not participate in all public functions. As victory was at hand their disguise was discovered and the hostile troops rallied again. The women could not fight off this assault and knowing that they would be defeated, they preferred death to dishonor and drowned themselves (Paymaster). The legend does convey the impression that women were capable of taking independent action, albeit under unusual circumstances. However, the reason for the action is protection — not some unfeminine cause like power, and in the end the women are revered for their sacrifice, not triumph through slaughter on a battlefield. In other words, the legend symbolically tries to solve the patriarchal society's ambivalence toward women. *To be continued*



Dr Ketayun H. Gould is professor emerita in the School of Social Work, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in the United States. She is a partner, along with her husband, in Independent Scholars Associated in Stafford, Virginia. She opted for early retirement to pursue her research and

scholarship. Her writings have dealt with two main areas: feminist theory, models and practice frameworks in the area of women and ethnic minority concerns, and historical and demographic studies of the Parsi Zoroastrian community in India. Currently she is authoring a book on the historical and demographic decline of the Parsi Zoroastrian community in the rural and urban areas of Gujarat.

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Parinaz Gandhi

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Feroza (left) and Jersheen at Madras Anjuman entrepreneurs exhibition

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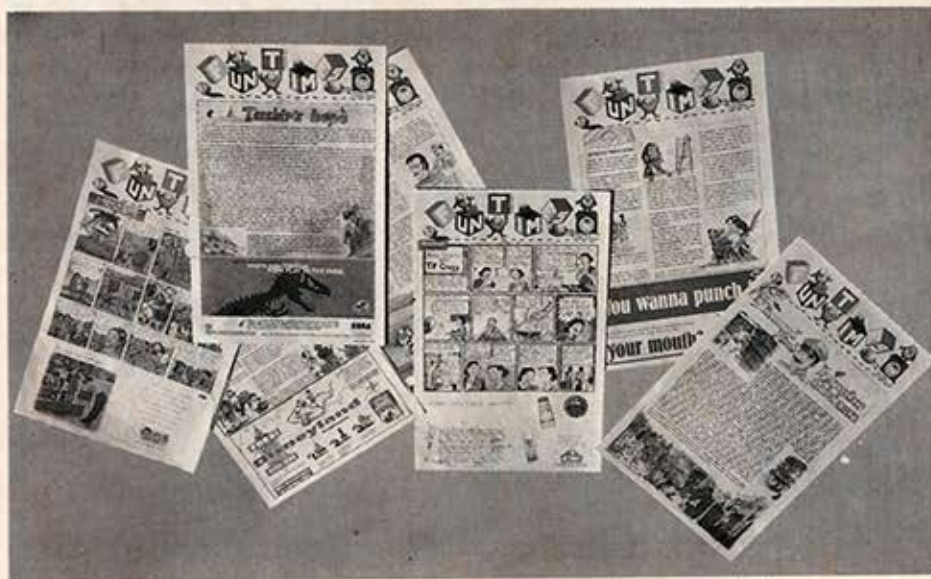
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sing and coordination of marketing activities for the issues also designs packages for special promotions and sponsorship, and oversees the administration and distribution network. Thirty-year-old Jersheen's primary responsibility is finance as also to supervise the creative input for the tabloid, coordinating with the artists, printers and their young readers especially when they introduce sponsored clubs and birthday card schemes through *Funtimes*. Providing a forum for the children to communicate and interact with each other is one of the important accomplishments of *Funtimes*, claim the publishers. Besides, with the editorial content of their magazine increasing, they now have space to carry original contributions from children. This also means they have to entertain a spate of correspondence from the young enthusiasts.

From the principals of different schools too the publishers have had positive feedback. They have commented on how their students enjoy the variety offered and how they look forward to each bi-monthly issue. As commended Ms A. Williams of the C.S.I. Ewart Matriculation and Higher Secondary School, "Being a principal, one is always on guard regarding reading material, especially reading material for the young... *Funtimes* is definitely a very valuable and gem-like reading material that can foster a lot of good among young people, make them realize their own potential and creativity..."

"*Funtimes* has a totally unique format. It is not modelled after any Indian or foreign publication," maintain the Madans. "Since our venture is the first of its kind

in the country and a success, we do envisage competition," confess the sisters. For the future they look forward to enhance their print run to 2,00,000 copies and have a major distribution network to include cities and towns all over India. They would also like to have offshoots to coordinate sponsored children's activities and clubs.

Their current turnover is in the vicinity of 20 lakh rupees, with efforts in the past two years being concentrated almost exclusively on *Funtimes*. Under the banner of Ferheen Publications they hope to bring out a subscription based children's magazine, distributed throughout India and continue publication of story and activity books for children from India and abroad.

In addition to their own "dedication and hard work" the sisters attribute the success of their novel enterprise to "the tremendous support of our parents Suber and Jamshed Madan without which we could not have even launched Ferheen Publications." They are particularly thankful for being provided "a very liberal and broad-minded upbringing wherein our parents encouraged us to study and choose a career of our choice. We were also taught to rely on our hard work more than relying on receiving favors from people. Today our business activities are strictly based on the Zoroastrian values we were brought up with — honesty, sin-

cerity and dedication."

Both the academically brilliant girls had studied at the Doveton-Corrie Girls' Higher Secondary School, Madras and later at the city's Ethiraj College being rank holders at the different examinations that they passed first class. Feroza chose to do her BA in economics (earning the first rank in College and the fifth in the University), followed by masters in business economics, specializing in finance and marketing (standing first class first), and a diploma in journalism/mass communication (ranking second in the course). Jersheen did her graduation (earning the second rank in College) and postgraduation in commerce (where again she stood second in College and 10th in the University). Each of them have won a string of prizes for their academic performance.

The Madan sisters have also been involved with community activities. While Jersheen had served as the honorary treasurer of the Madras Parsi Association from 1991-94, Feroza is constantly volunteering her services to the Madras Parsi Zarhosti Anjuman especially in organizing events geared to enhance youth participation and community interaction.

"What the community needs to address is the improvement of the quality and caliber of the Parsi youth," they believe. Plagued by the problem of diminishing numbers, the community leaders keep focussing on this issue single-mindedly; thereby "we are increasing dependency of the Parsi youth on various housing/social welfare schemes," is their reading of the scenario.

For a small community like the Parsis, quite a few youths are setting up their private enterprise and making a success of it, they observe — success not only in monetary terms but in job satisfaction as is the case with them. For Feroza and Jersheen, the greatest reward is to see the excitement and sheer delight when children receive each new issue of *Funtimes*. Or to have their young readers write in to them as was the case of one 12-year-old girl who never seemed to get her fill of their regular features — Auntie Shanti, Nature Page, Riddle me this — and stated, "I love to read *Funtimes*. Can you please publish (it) every month?"

"We were taught to rely on our hard work more than relying on receiving favors from people"

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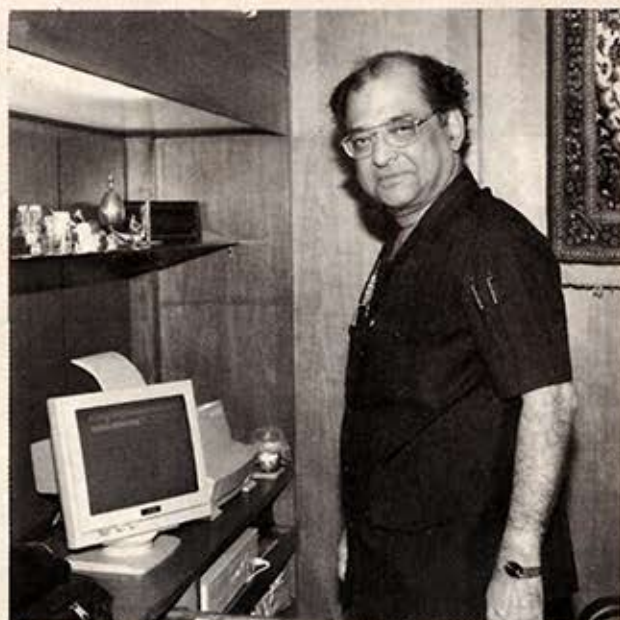
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Spokesman for *The Statesman*

Editor-in-chief of
The Statesman, Cushrow
Irani is both making news
and publishing news

A. Patel



From an insurance executive to the editor-in-chief of Calcutta's leading daily *The Statesman*, Cushrow Russey Irani has certainly come a long way.

"Writing fascinated me from childhood," says the soft-spoken, middle-aged gentleman, "but it was only when I entered the law college in Bombay that I actually started writing for newspapers." Though law was his subject, literature was his passion, and it was this close proximity he shared with the English language that prompted him to write "on issues of public interest."

After finishing his LLB, Irani found that he could not practise at the Bombay High Court because he was 19 years old. "Those days," says Irani, "one could not practise law till he was 21." So in search of greener pastures he went to Calcutta and took a job with an insurance company. "Besides being a Fellow of the Chartered Insurance Institute (FCII), I was also a Fellow of the Institute of Arbitrators (FIA)," maintains Irani, emphasizing the fact that he was "a qualified insurance executive."

In Calcutta he sharpened his pen by writing on a regular basis and this brought him to *The Statesman* in 1968. This prestigious (and Calcutta's oldest) paper was born in 1875 by bringing together two other English dailies, namely *The Friend of India* and *The Englishman*.

Irani never looked back since the day he joined the newspaper. Investigative stories and sensational pieces, crisp features and

hard-core news items, the paper successfully incorporated all these, and in the process carved for itself a unique reputation. "We've tried to make it a well-rounded paper," Irani observes proudly.

Being at the helm of a newspaper that is often cross-referred to in Parliament (*The Statesman* is simultaneously published from Calcutta and Delhi) and oft-quoted during a hearing at the Supreme Court, is no mean job. Irani's day begins at 5.30 a.m. when he gets up and reads the daily papers, "searching for mistakes as I go along." On reaching office, an editorial conference is convened by him at 11 a.m. where the edits for the day are decided. "And it is here," he goes on to say, "that we review the policies on various issues."

A news conference a little after noon keeps him abreast of the day's happenings and another one at 4.30 p.m. keeps him updated on new developments or interesting twists to certain important cases. "In between all this," says Irani, "I have to direct particularly important stories, investigations, etc. apart from the never-ending writing that I have to do."

In spite of this gruelling schedule, Irani still finds time to devote to his hobbies. He says, "I am particularly fond of classical music, be it Indian or Western." Looking at my Nikon F4 kept on the side of his table he comments, "I myself am very interested in photography and used to be a much keener photographer than I am today. (Now) I am hard-pressed for time."

Taking a break from work has never

been necessary for this dynamic individual because, as he says, "I don't regard my job as a chore from which I have to escape and take refuge in something or the other. I don't recall ever having a vacation in the true sense of the word, because I enjoy what I am doing. In fact, when I go overseas for a couple of days, attending meetings and conferences, I am deviating from my daily schedules and that is enough to recharge my batteries."

Irani has also had the honor of chairing the Newspaper Society (NS) and the Audit Bureau of Circulation (ABC). At present he has the distinction of being chairman of the Press Trust of India (PTI). In fact, he has been re-elected for the second time after a gap of 20 years. He has also been associated with the International Press Institute (IPI). He's been the chairman of this Institute for four years, which makes him the longest reigning chairman in IPI's history; nor must we forget the fact that he has been on its board for 16 years. "One cannot be on the board for more than eight years at a stretch," says Irani. Adding, "that is the reason why I was asked to come back for a second term after a short break."

Besides successfully holding all these portfolios Irani has also authored a book, *Bengal, The Communist Challenge* written by him in 1968, deals with communism in the state of West Bengal. A collection of his articles and speeches in defence of freedom has also been compiled into a book and, recently, selections from his



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column, Caveat, in *The Statesman* (a segment of the newspaper's readers buys the publication solely for the column) have also appeared in book form.

Freedom of the Press is something that Irani has always championed and he categorically denies the allegation that his paper at times seems to be biased towards one party, and harsh towards another. He says, "The policy of the paper has been to condemn any form of intolerance whatsoever. We are severe on any party that transgresses what we believe are standards that are required to be maintained.

"For example," he continues, "recently we have been very tough on the BJP (Bharatiya Janata Party), because of its intolerant attitude in certain respects. Corruption is also something that the paper has always highlighted." Adds Irani, "The government tries to interfere a lot in the lives of ordinary people and this is something the paper tries to focus on from time to time, to change its attitude and approach."

A Zoroastrian to the core, Irani rarely misses out on a community ghambar at the agiary, or a religious discourse at the Olpadwala Memorial Hall if he is in Calcutta, despite the fact that his tight schedule leaves him very little time for social commitments.

In 1987 he was invited to the North American Zoroastrian Congress held in Los Angeles (LA). "The large audience at LA responded to what I believe to be true," says Irani, his eyes glistening with pride. "I am certainly not a good community man in the true sense of the term, neither am I very learned (about) our religion. But I am proud of being a Zoroastrian for several reasons, one of which is that we were the first of the revealed religions to insist on good thoughts, good words and good deeds. The hypocrisy of behaving abominably and then spending hours in *pujas* to wipe away sins is not acceptable to our religion, and certainly not acceptable to me. I feel really angry with those people who paid money for the demolition of the Babri Masjid, caused misery and suffering to thousands, then performed *yagnas* at home, burning food that should have been given to deserving people."

This sensitive, outspoken and seasoned journalist who has steered *The Statesman* through turbulent times does not in any way think of retiring after nearly 30 years in the profession. "The company is not prepared to leave me," he says. "When I feel I am not able to be on top of the job any more, I will personally step down."



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Hospitality marked by

He leads us into a room. It was not at his residence, nor at his hotel, nor at his office. And yet on the premises of the Hotel and Restaurant Association (Western India) the convivial Jehangir R. J. Cama was exuding graciousness. Apparently, hospitality comes effortlessly to the chairman and managing director of Cama Hotels Limited who is not only president of the Hotel and Restaurant Association (Gujarat), of the Hotel and Restaurant Association (Western India) but also of the Federation of Hotel and Restaurant Associations of India (FHRAI).

In the history of the Federation "this is the first time that a president has been elected from Gujarat and I'm very proud of this fact," confesses the Ahmedabad based Cama. Development of infrastructure and human resources are the two areas Cama would like to focus on during his year as president. "The hotel is truly the sunrise industry in India. It is the biggest generator of employment, wealth and foreign exchange," informs Cama.

Following liberalization of the Indian economy, the FHRAI "has got a large part of what it wanted from the government," observes Cama. With tourism being classified as a state subject quite a few states have declared tourism as an industry, men-

As the first president of the Federation of Hotel and Restaurant Associations of India from Gujarat, Jehangir Cama will focus on developing infrastructure and human resources in the country

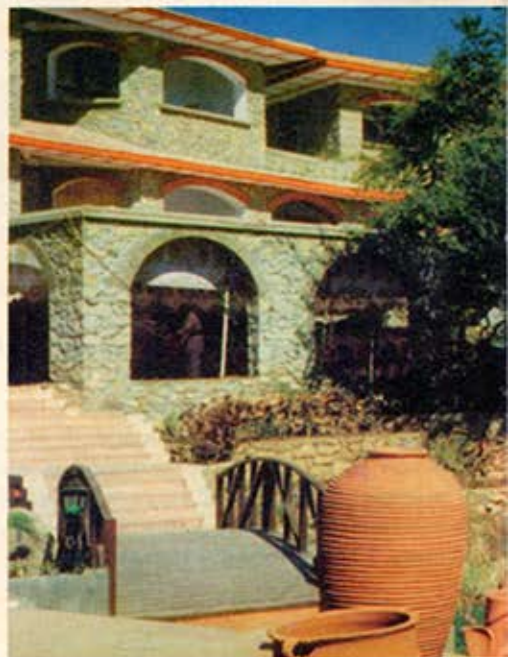
Parinaz Gandhi

tions the hotelier, and yet "the benefits that go to the export industry are not coming to us. So we keep pushing." The expenditure tax they would like abolished or modified but additional expectations the hotel industry has from the government are not in the form of "changes but incentives and facilities to encourage (upcoming) hotels, restaurants, wayside inns, motels."

Empathizing with the plight of foreign tourists Cama adds, "Our international airports are definitely not international in quality; they are not user-friendly nor overly clean. The railway stations, the less said the better... The government has to consider travel infrastructure as a major priority (instead of) talking of idiotic notions like phasing out first class on the railways..."

"Everything has got to lead to quality," insists the FHRAI president. "That is the statement for the next decade... Any tourist, whether he is Indian or foreign, expects it." Within India itself, Cama estimates that nearly 200 million affluent middle-class Indians want to travel, want to move.

To keep pace with the world trends in the service industry Cama foresees the need to collaborate with international associations that can impart training to Indian personnel. To this effect he has got a commitment from the European Union to run 40 three-day training workshops. He also expects that the American Hotel and Motel Association will send their trainers into India as well. Such benefits should largely accrue to the independent and small hoteliers and not the chains which have



quality

their own training institutes, he believes. Almost every city in India is building hotels. Even pilgrimage centers are developing hotels. Against this scenario, unless there is trained manpower "hotels will never offer quality," notes Cama.

There may be substantial scope for improvement in India yet the optimist is firmly of the view that "this will be the country of the 21st century." This is not an issue just for academic discussion, stresses Cama who with his paternal benevolence punctuates his responses with the word "beta (child)." In fact, "I have just talked one of my nephews into coming back to India," he maintains.

The hotel industry itself offers considerable employment avenues in India. With ample job openings and fabulous salaries there is constant job hopping to improve career prospects. The number of Parsi entrants however is dismal, states Cama who is a member of the board of governors of the Institute of Hotel Management, Catering and Applied Nutrition, Ahmedabad and Bombay. Recently, in the course of his interviews, he asked one Parsi male applicant whether he was prepared to work outside Bombay to which the boy responded that he would have to consult his parents, Cama shakes his well-groomed head in



Left to right (from top):
Parents, the late Rustom and Mini
Cama, Jehangir Cama, wife Mehroo,
son Rustom and daughter Laila;
the cars showroom, the family flagship
Cama Hotel in Ahmedabad and the
Mount Abu resort

disbelief. Similarly Cama feels very disappointed each time he hears of a Parsi selling off his hotel in India. "Our boys run hamburger joints in America, staying as second class citizens rather than help build their own nation," he laments. "A Parsi young man who wants to go abroad will work harder there than in this country. I don't understand why. Is there an inferiority complex? Is there some belief that they cannot fit into this society?" wonders Cama. "Our standards of integrity and honesty are



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As the head of Cama Hotels Limited, Cama oversees the functioning of their four star hotel in Ahmedabad which has 50 rooms and their Rajputana Resort in Mount Abu which has 42 rooms and is classified as a heritage hotel. While the hotel in Ahmedabad was started in 1960 by Cama's father Rustom, when there were only four or five four star hotels in the whole of India, the Mount Abu resort was opened last year and is reputed for its vast landscaped gardens and the entire gamut of sports facilities offered, informs the sports enthusiast who serves as the president of the Central Board of Cricket, Ahmedabad, and as vice-president of the Ahmedabad Military and Rifle Training Association. In the next three years they plan to start a hotel in Udaipur, Rajasthan.

After that? "Enough," says 58-year-old Cama who, as director of Cama Motors Limited, also runs four automobile workshops and three showrooms. "*Kétlu joièch* (What more do you want)? It keeps me and my son (Rustom) busy," he notes. His wife Mehroo too is involved in Cama's ventures. In his words, "She is into everything. Part-time into motors, for the Abu project she did all the fabrics and drapes..." She also runs a travel agency. Their daughter Laila, trained in Salzburg, is the food and beverage manager at Cama's while another daughter Ayesha being handicapped is at home.

In fact, the turnover from their automobile business is seven times that from the hotel business, mentions Cama who happens to be the president of the Ahmedabad Automobile Dealers' Association as also the Ahmedabad Petroleum Dealers' Association and additionally serves as governing council member of the Federation of Automobile Dealers' Association of India, as vice chairman of the local advisory board of the Western India Automobile Association and as member of the Traffic Advisory Committee of Ahmedabad city.

The foundation of their automobile business too was laid by Cama's father who was appointed dealer for the Ford Motor Company until they withdrew from India. "I sit at the desk which was gifted to my father by the managing director of Ford Motors when they left India," states Cama who had done his apprenticeship and dealership management training with Ford in UK in the 1950s. "My father wanted to give back something to the city in which he was born and prospered," Cama explains the genesis of his family's varied business

interests including dealing in heavy machinery and power generators. What made him start the first four star hotel in Gujarat? "He was a businessman, he was an entrepreneur, he was a Parsi. Isn't that enough?" reasons Cama. "A Parsi businessman could

"A Parsi young man who wants to go abroad will work harder there than in this country"

venture into any field and make it go." If there ever was a role model in Cama's life, it was his father who stressed on ethics in business, and building relationships, advising, "Never look back if you have these two." It was also on his father's insistence that Cama was sent to the Gujarati medium Tutorial High School to get a "pucca grounding in Gujarati." Though he had been titled Khan Bahadur by the British he maintained, "You cannot afford to be *burra sahebs* (big people)." After two years of science at the M. G. Science Institute, Cama joined the family automobile business.

Vehicles had interested even Cama's grandfather Jehangir Dadabhai Cama who came from Surat to settle in Ahmedabad. He set up the first cycle shop in Ahmedabad, selling Raleigh bicycles. He was also the sole distributor then of Singer sewing machines, Cama permits us a peep into his family's business connections. With each successive generation the business has expanded and now in 1996 they plan to go public for "expansion *wasté paisa joié* (money is the prerequisite for expansion)."

Despite his heavy business commitments Cama makes time for welfare work: he is vice president of the Blind Men's Association as also the Gujarat Cancer Society. Does he also make time for activities concerning the Parsi community? He gives a tactful reply, "I help whenever they approach me." But apparently a deeper involvement in terms of accepting trusteeship of the punchayet he shies away from.

"I am deeply religious and the most dreadfully God-fearing Parsi," claims Cama, "but I'm not the sudreh-kusti wearing Parsi. I go to a fire-temple about 10-15

times a year because I like to and not because I have to." So also the performance of religious ceremonies like the navjote he advocates for he believes that "rituals are necessary for the continuity of religion." He is also very keen that his children marry within the fold. As to the mode of disposing the body, he says he is indifferent. His late *kaka* (paternal uncle) Dara Cama was a great votary of cremation but most of his family members have been consigned to the *dokhma*, he reports.

"Times are changing so fast. The present generation is growing up in a rarefied atmosphere," observes Cama citing Alvin Toffler's *The Third Wave* as an indicator of the days to come. As he foresees, "Fundamentalism will be our downfall... (It is the same) for any community or religious group." For India, the businessman has greater hopes: "We have human and natural resources. Since my teens I have always had an abiding faith in the future of this country..."

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Not only the Iranshah but the well-maintained, reasonably priced hotels in Udvada draw Zoroastrians to this center of worship

Gustasp Irani

Tabota par eedaa (eggs on tomato), fried *boi* fish, mutton pullao topped with two servings of double scoop ice-cream from hand-churned molds... This was tradition at its sumptuous best, served in generous helpings on the balcony of our room that overlooked the central courtyard of Udvada's oldest hotel — Globe.

In most Udvada hotels we discovered that while some old customs die hard,

others — happily the warts of the past — have given way to amenities like attached toilets, hot water on tap 24 hours a day, clean linen, towels and soap on request and facilities you might expect in any no-frills modern hotel.

Indeed, Udvada hotels have come a long way. And then again, they have retained their distinctive Parsi identity and homeliness where guests feel free to shed

their inhibitions and move around in their *sudreh* and pajamas and nighties.

The sounds filtered into our room — the instructions shouted to the hotel staff, the happy chatter and laughter of guests; and again at mealtimes, the clatter of service,

Vintage hostelrys: Hotels Noshirwan and Majestic (top), Wadia Dharamshala and Dastur Baug (below)



**Udvada
hotels have
retained their
distinctive Parsi
identity &
homeliness**



the sighs and exclamations of appreciation. It brought to mind the time when one guest at Paradise Hotel started to bang his chair impatient for his meal to be served, then expressed his appreciation at the gastronomic delights with a string of expletives.

It is the same no matter where you stay, be it in the old-world charm of Globe and Noshirwan, the contemporary structure of Paradise or the simpler comforts of the dharamshalas.

In May 1995 one more Parsi-run institution, Hotel Sun-n-Sands, opened its doors to guests. Don't let the name fool you. Sun-n-Sands, comprising of six rooms grafted on to an old Parsi-owned beach front bungalow (set amidst ample lawns) opposite the old Globe Annex, is as old-worldly as you can get. According to the brother and sister



Paradise Hotel's modern counterpoint to the Sodawaterwala Dharamshala (center) and Globe Hotel (bottom)

team of Noshir and Armaity Shroff who run the property, Parsi guests from the USA, Canada and Australia in search of their roots just love the place. The Shroffs, who migrated to Udvada from the congestion of their Grant Road flat in Bombay, plan to give a facelift to the cottage and add attached toilets to all rooms without compromising the heady nostalgia.

Talking of nostalgia, Hotel Majestic which has gone through a spell of on-off sequences over the past few years, is on again. This time it is being managed by Dara Pardiwala who also runs Darious Darba on the highway at Pardi, one station further down from Udvada.

Also under new management is the Sodawaterwala Dharamshala. After Jehangir Irani, the previous manager, died in early 1995, Dara Shroff, brother of the Shroffs who run Hotel Sun-n-Sands, has taken over one of the oldest dharamshalas which provides good value for Parsis travelling in large groups and looking for budget accommodation.

At the other end of the scale we have the fairly new Paradise Hotel, run on contemporary lines that the older hotels have to emulate to pull in clientele. For instance, it provides guests with television and Star TV in every room. According to the husband and wife team of Hector and Farida Engineer, after doubling their capacity by adding 14 new rooms in May 1995, they are still running near capacity even during the slack period. During the peak season,



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which covers the summer, Diwali and Christmas vacations and long weekends, they suggest that reservations be made at least two weeks in advance, if not more, to avoid disappointment.

In fact this is true of all hotels and even dharamshalas in Udvada, that you make your bookings well in advance during the peak season. Which brings us to the problem that Udvada hoteliers face when careless guests make reservations and do not show up.

"We turn away guests because our rooms are reserved. We prepare and keep the meals ready... and the party that has made the reservations just does not turn up. Not only do we lose out on the empty rooms but even the food goes to waste," laments Noshir Pestonji, proprietor of Noshirwan Hotel. "All it takes is common courtesy, a single phone call to inform us that they are cancelling their reservation. Not only will it save us a lot of headaches but it will help other Parsis who want to use our property," he adds.

Pestonji echoes a sentiment shared by all Udvada hoteliers who must resolve this sticky problem. One solution is insisting on advance payments for the first

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day's stay, especially during the peak season.

It's evening now and instinctively we head towards the sea. The beach is peppered with local residents and visitors, silhouetted against a setting sun. After the orange-gold orb has slid off the sky we make our way back to our hotel past old Parsi houses. Here residents sit on open porches conversing with neighbors across the street, while elderly ladies with scarves tied around their heads perfume the houses and the night air with *loban* or incense.

As we approach our hotel we are greeted with the rich aroma of food. The family in the adjacent room is already in nighties and lengha/sudreh. We nod a greeting as we enter our room to freshen up for the evening repast.

In the distance we hear the muffled striking of the *maachi* bell — one stroke followed by nine in groups of three — that announces the enthroning of Iranshah and the turning of the *gah*. We turn to pay our respects to the holy fire. As long as it remains in Udvada, we shall keep returning and as Udvada's hotels improve their facilities, there will be an added incentive to do so.

For details of amenities available, see chart on the following page

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Hotels at a Glance

Key to symbols: Facility available *

Hotel Name & Address	Tel Nos Udvada code: 026387	No of Rooms	Tariffs: per head per day (all meals, taxes and service charge included)		Breakfast only	Lunch only	Dinner only	Hot water	Bathroom/Toilet facilities	Sheets	Towels	TV	Laundry	Rickshaw hire	Conference facilities	Generator	Safe deposit locker	Pets acceptable
			Adults	Children														
Globe Hotel Udvada 396180 Sidhwa family, Partners	2097 2104	12 Ordinary 10 Deluxe	Rs 250	3-7 years 50%	Rs 40 + Day room charges	Rs 75	Rs 75	9-11 am & 3.30- 4.30 pm geyser	both attached	pre-laid	on request	common		*	up to 40	*		*
Noshirwan Hotel Iranshah Road Udvada 396180	2165 2285	12 Ordinary	Rs 280	-do-	Rs 35 +Rs 35 Day room charges	Rs 70	Rs 70	full day by bucket	both attached	pre-laid	on request	common	ironing only	*		*		*
Noshir Pestonji Prop.		5 Deluxe	Rs 225	5 years - Navrote 50%	-do-	Rs 35 +Rs 50 Day room charges	Rs 70	geyser	both attached	lad in front of guest	on request	common	ironing only					*
Paradise Hotel Udvada Beach Udvada 396180 Hector and Farida Engineer, Prop.	2224	28	Rs 250	3-7 years 50%	Rs 35	Rs 90	Rs 150 (incl. over-night stay)	geyser	both attached	lad in front of guest	*	in all rooms	24 hrs service	*	up to 40		on request	*
N. M. Wadia Dharamsala J Wadia Road Udvada Rly. Sin Udvada 396185 H. J. Ichaporla, Manager	2057	2 Ordinary 4 Special	Rs 160	full rate	Rs 10-20	Rs 60	Rs 60	morning only by bucket	both common	pre-laid			ironing only					
Sir J. J. Dharamsala Udvada 396180 Ardehsir Mirza Manager	2196	3	Rs 115+ Rs 4 lodging/lan (to be revised soon)	3-10 years 50%	Rs 25	Rs 45	Rs 45	full day by bucket	both attached	pre-laid		common	ironing only	*				
Sodawaterwala Dharamsala Udvada 396180 Dara Shroff, Manager	none	9	Rs 125 +Rs 10 room charge	full rate	Rs 25	Rs 40	Rs 40	by bucket 7-10 am & 3.30- 4.30 pm	both attached	pre-laid		common B&W		*			small dogs only	
Dastur Baug Iranshah Road Udvada 396180 Mr & Mrs Unwala, Manager	2205	10	Rs 150 +Rs 10 room charge	full rate	Rs 20	Rs 60	Rs 60	by bucket 7-11 am & 3- 4.30 pm	both attached	pre-laid				*				
Majestic Hotel Dara Pardiwala, Manager	2151	19 6	Rs 225 -do-	5-10 yrs Rs 125 -do-	Rs 30 + Rs 50 Day room charges	Rs 70	Rs 70	by bucket	both attached common toilet	pre-laid		common B&W		*				*
Hotel Sun-n-Sands Noshir & Armany Shroff Partners	2190	3 3	Rs 225 -do-	up to Navrote 50% -do-	Rs 30 + Rs 25 Day room charges	Rs 70	Rs 70	full day by bucket	both attached common toilet	lad in front of guest		common		*				*

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MORE ROOM IN PARADISE

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Parinaz Gandhi

"*Jojé, vicharjé* (consider and ponder)." "*Sochjé, samajjé* (reflect and beware)." "*Dubi javano* (you will drown under your business debts)." "*Mari jasé* (you will kill yourself)." "It is better that you get a good job." These were the words of caution and counsel received by Hector Engineer when he turned to the elders of the community for experience and encouragement before launching Paradise Hotel in Udvada, he remembers three years later. "*Koi risk lèva nathi mangta* (no one seems willing to take risks)," observes Engineer in the course of an interview with *Parsiana* on January 3, 1996 to explain why only a handful of Parsis are known to start their own business.

The day following their marriage on April 25, 1993, Hector and his wife Farida received their first guests at Paradise Hotel. In the next four days they found all the rooms in the Hotel were full. Guests were even willing to spend nights on the terrace, remembers Farida. "The crowd followed him for the food," mentions Farida matter-of-factly, referring to Hector's earlier stints in the preceding 10 years at Hotel Noshirwan and Majestic until his services were terminated "on some *bahna* (excuse)." Their spread of pungent, non-vegetarian dishes appeals to many of their guests.

Hector, according to Farida, "knew everything about running a hotel." So she

prevailed upon him to start their own hotel. A delayed honeymoon was the least of their concerns. They had to raise funds at a time when the stock market was at its nadir (following the Harshad Mehta scam). In addition to their personal resources they

received a loan of Rs 15 lakhs from the Gujarat State Finance Corporation and another loan of three and a half lakh rupees from businessman and Bombay Parsi Punchayet trustee Jamshed Guzder. They are also ever grateful to Soly J. Bhesania,

a director of Garden Varelli for his continuous unstinting support. With this they were able to complete the first phase of their Hotel and make it operational in 1993. The second phase they were able to complete in end 1995 thereby increasing their accommodation capacity to 113, the highest among hotels in Udvada they say.

On an average they claim an occupancy of 50-55 percent but during vacations and long weekends they are over booked, claims Farida, 27, who looks after the administration and paper work while Hector, 42, is involved in the day-to-day running of the Hotel, believing in personal service and personal touch. "This is not work for him; he enjoys it," says Farida while her share of the responsibilities is "something I have to do," she admits. She was looking forward to working as an airhostess with East West Airlines until plans of marriage and the upcoming hotel forced her to change her priorities.

In the midst of the interview, the lights go off. It is the regular power cut that is daily imposed on all the residents of Udvada. In great haste Hector rushes out



Top: Paradise Hotel's new look
Below: At the inauguration of the Hotel in 1993 (from left) Najju Toddywala, Hector and Farida Engineer and Jamshed Guzder



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the tree must GROW...**

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so we ask Farida whether they don't keep separate candles in the section of the Hotel which they have converted into their residence. "He's not bothered about the house." He had gone to make sure that candlelight is available to all the room occupants.

When it is not customer satisfaction that Hector is involved with, it is staff interaction. Both of them are very appreciative of the cooperation they receive from their staff. Quite a few of the staff members have been with Hector from the time he was at Noshirwan. The moral support from the staff at the time of building Paradise was tremendous. In fact, they foresook their salary for the first two months, acknowledge the Engineers. The dedication with which they serve has earned them their employers' total confidence, so much so that when the Engineers take a holiday once in a while, retreating to a nearby hill station, they leave the affairs of the Hotel for four or five days in the hands of their staff who have received encomium from the public too for managing so ably.

As a policy the Engineers believe in not imposing any rules — neither for the public, nor for the staff. And yet they find that everyone stays within limits. They do not even insist on adherence to timings with the result that food is made available at all reasonable hours. "Everyone comes to enjoy. Everyone comes in a jolly mood." During Diwali time, about 60 percent of their clientele comprise Hindus but they are not as outgoing and fun-loving as the Parsis, has been Farida's observation. Since the beach resorts on nearby Devka charge Rs 600-700 per person per day, they find Paradise Hotel's rates — Rs 250 for non-vegetarians and Rs 200 for vegetarians — very economical. Food, service and view are what Paradise is reputed for. They decided to name their hotel Paradise on Farida's recommendation, for the couple who believe that "the letters 'P' and 'R' *sadéch* (are harbingers of fortune)," had limited their choice initially.

Before they were able to establish themselves as leading hoteliers, they had to face adverse publicity too, mostly from the residents of Udvada, as points out Farida, who looked askance at the *pathar na dholiya* (stone beds within which mattresses are inlaid as per the decor), their distant location from the other hotels, and

the lack of sea view from certain rooms (actually, Hotel Majestic and Paradise are the only remaining hotels located on the beach).

The peaceful ambience and the rustic cleanliness of Udvada appeal to the Engineers who are happy that they decided to settle in this town. Though Farida who was educated in Bombay before marriage misses the city occasionally, she is happy with the shift for the pace of life in Bombay "is too damn fast. You have to keep running all the time." After her schooling at the Bengallee Girls' High School and two years of commerce studies at the Lala Lajpatrai College, Farida joined DHL, the courier arm of Airfreight Limited. Hector's

roots are in Ankleshwar. He had studied at the Ginwalla High School and thereafter chose to make a career in lampshades. When his father Faramroz opted not to continue as manager at Noshirwan Hotel in Udvada, Hector stepped into his father's shoes and later took over as contractor. Both Farida

and Hector are fond of reading and travelling, though constraints of time limits the latter.

Since they operate in a pilgrim center are they both particularly religious? Hector confesses that he has great faith in the Iranshah and Zarathushtra: "Whenever I have asked for any favors I have been blessed. Without the hand of God (we would not have been able to succeed)." Farida too is religious, praying with a book for two to four hours each day. The religious fervor within the community itself is on the rise, they say.

Having carved a niche for themselves the Engineers are now making efforts to enhance their popularity among their clients. They are contemplating designing a garden or children's park on their premises. Their dream project is a garden restaurant. Indoor games for children is also on their cards.

Not only would the Engineers like more customers to frequent Paradise, they would also like more tourists to come to Udvada. They therefore maintain, "All the hotels in Udvada are doing well. If there are two to three more hotels, more visitors would come." They have room in their hotel as also in their hearts to accommodate newcomers. After all, if there is no place in Paradise, pilgrims can always knock at other gates.

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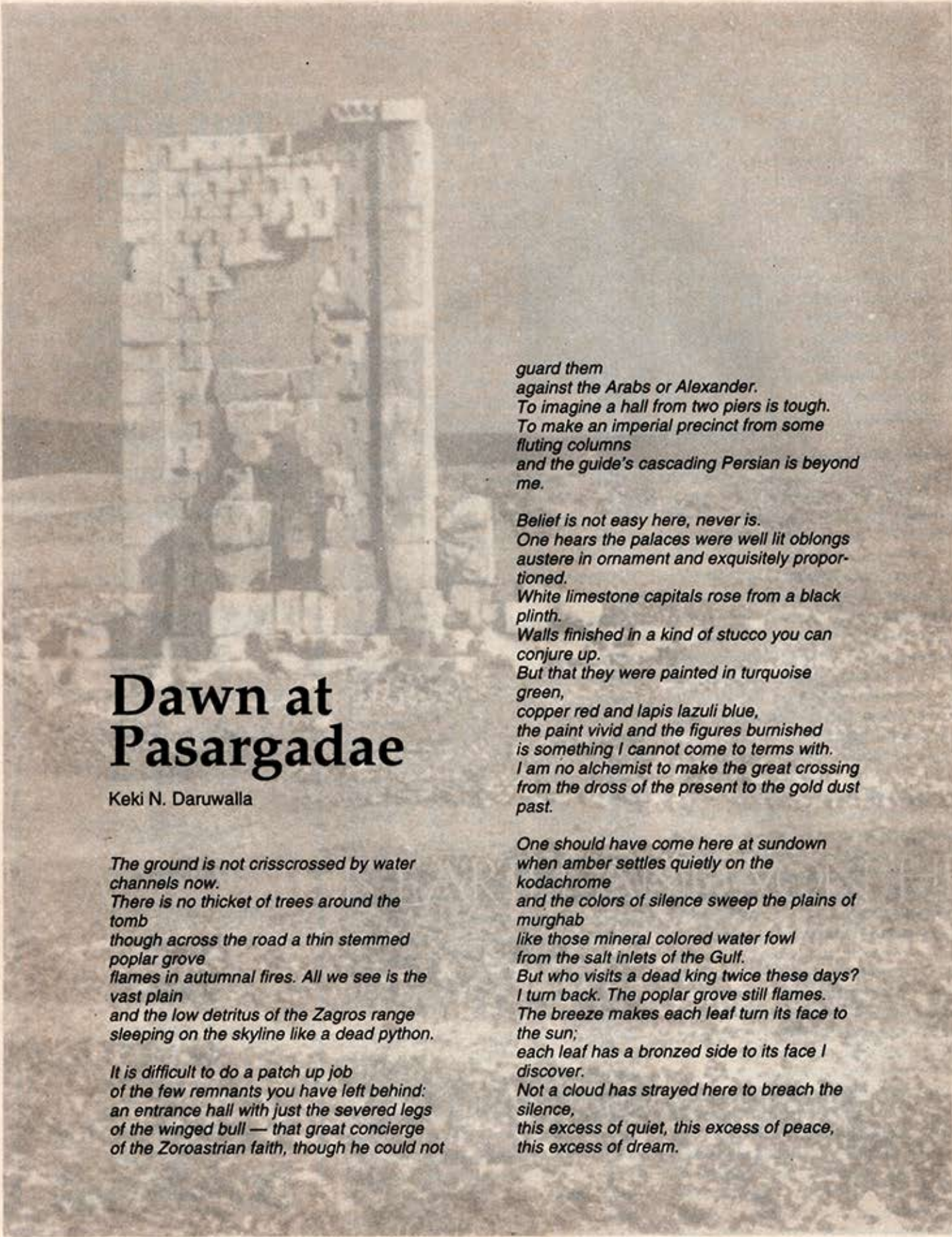
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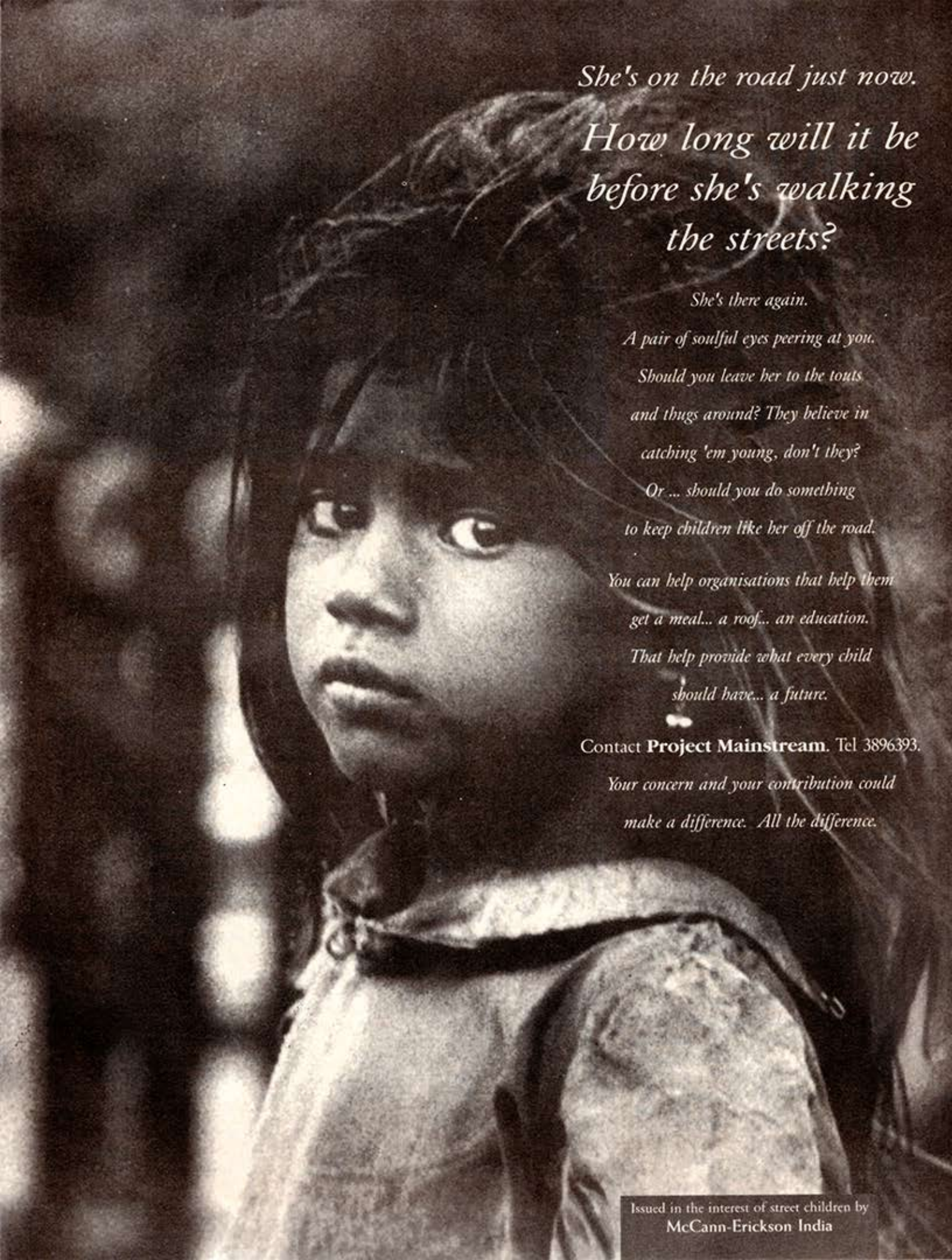
*The ground is not crisscrossed by water channels now.
There is no thicket of trees around the tomb
though across the road a thin stemmed poplar grove
flames in autumnal fires. All we see is the vast plain
and the low detritus of the Zagros range
sleeping on the skyline like a dead python.*

*It is difficult to do a patch up job
of the few remnants you have left behind:
an entrance hall with just the severed legs
of the winged bull — that great concierge
of the Zoroastrian faith, though he could not*

*guard them
against the Arabs or Alexander.
To imagine a hall from two piers is tough.
To make an imperial precinct from some
fluting columns
and the guide's cascading Persian is beyond
me.*

*Belief is not easy here, never is.
One hears the palaces were well lit oblongs
austere in ornament and exquisitely proportioned.
White limestone capitals rose from a black
plinth.
Walls finished in a kind of stucco you can
conjure up.
But that they were painted in turquoise
green,
copper red and lapis lazuli blue,
the paint vivid and the figures burnished
is something I cannot come to terms with.
I am no alchemist to make the great crossing
from the dross of the present to the gold dust
past.*

*One should have come here at sundown
when amber settles quietly on the
kodachrome
and the colors of silence sweep the plains of
murghab
like those mineral colored water fowl
from the salt inlets of the Gulf.
But who visits a dead king twice these days?
I turn back. The poplar grove still flames.
The breeze makes each leaf turn its face to
the sun;
each leaf has a bronzed side to its face I
discover.
Not a cloud has strayed here to breach the
silence,
this excess of quiet, this excess of peace,
this excess of dream.*



*She's on the road just now.
How long will it be
before she's walking
the streets?*

She's there again.

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Toying with trains

Anuradha Gupta

Viraf Mulla places his money where his heart is — in steam engine miniatures

Spread out on rows of parallel tracks atop the dining table, the miniature trains look amazingly lifelike. You can almost hear a whistle go as you half expect one of them to slowly chug away.

The tiny replicas, modelled after real trains, are a part of a private collection that has been acclaimed for its novelty by railway enthusiasts and collectors alike. Viraf Mulla, its owner, is a true-blue train buff. Trains are his 'first love' and have been a part of his life ever since he can remember. Travelling by trains, reading about them, watching them, collecting their models, Mulla enjoys just about everything to do with trains and can't seem to have enough of them.

"It's a French original," he tells us, holding one of the models in his palm for us to see, "made to scale, up to the last rivet." He waits patiently while we scrutinize what looks like a silver grey toy before putting it down carefully amongst other such models of his modest but exclusive collection.

Over a cup of tea at his flat in Borivli we listen intently to this bespectacled, soft-spoken gentleman in his late 30s as he speaks on his pet subject. Having spent his early childhood in Nagpur, where railways are an integral part of the town's culture, it was, he says, difficult to remain indifferent to their charm. As a child he remembers spending hours at the railway yard and station, just watching the steam trains puff by, the sky smoky behind them, their shrill hoots ringing in his ears. "There wasn't much to do then, you see," he adds playfully, "no satellite or cable TV."



The beginnings of this interest in trains go back to when he was all of four years old. Confined to bed after a bout of jaundice, he recalls how a book on trains picked up by his father from the streets had kept him amused for hours.

Even after his family moved to Bombay from Nagpur, this interest stayed with him through the school and college years. At times, it even took precedence over his studies. Like the time when he was reading for his first year BCom. The location of his college, Burhani College of Arts and Commerce along the railway lines in Byculla, proved to be an overwhelming distraction. He spent much of his time watching the trains plying or being shunted and eventually failed to clear the examinations. Getting a clerkship with Godrej and Boyce, Mulla completed his graduation by correspondence, diligently saving all his earnings for the various train travels he hoped to undertake one day.

Mulla's fascination for steam locomotives has taken him all over India and to several places in Europe famous for their railway networks and trains. Of particular interest to him are the steam trains from the Est region of France. "They are," he says, "the most elegant, the crème-de-la-crème of steam engines the world over."

In 1980 he got himself a Eurail pass and journeyed across Europe on *Le Mistral* — then the most prestigious train, practically living in it for two months. It was, in his words, "a dream come true." A few years later he went to Norway. His travels in the beautiful terrain of this snow-covered, rugged country was the most exhilarating

experience of his life. On one occasion he even crossed the Arctic Circle. So enraptured was he by the place that he promised himself he would return. And he did, the next time with his wife.

Once back home he started collecting models of the trains he had seen, as mementos of his travels. Today his collection of 10 odd trains consists exclusively of models from the Est region. And that's how he intends to keep it. The models don't come cheap, we learn. The smallest costs Rs 5,000 and the prices of some of the others go up to Rs 20,000. Seeing the small red lamps placed on each of the dining tables in the small five-inch coach and the detailed machinery replicated within the sleek engines, we can understand why. The models may resemble toy trains in size, but incorporate a wealth of detail from the original. One goods train model even sports a bright red carrier with Coca Cola written on it.

Besides his forays abroad, Mulla has sampled practically every steam locomotive in India, often 'footplating' with the engine driver instead of travelling in the coach. As a member of the Royal Model Society, Pune, an association that has helped him take his interest beyond a mere hobby to a purposeful activity, he has been able to meet many other train enthusiasts like himself.

Now a supervisor in Godrej's excise department, Mulla's main concern with old steam engines and coaches is to preserve them in running order. He does not approve of the way they are housed in museums, dismantled, the engines stripped

Mrs Jeroo & Jehangir N. Medhora

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of all their machinery and the outer shells as mere show pieces. He believes India has a great railway history and the old steam locomotives are a national heritage which should be treated that way.

Apart from its historical value, he thinks this vintage rolling stock can help earn revenue for the country. "Indian Railways can preserve steam engines by scheduling special runs of trains with these engines which can be a great tourist draw," he suggests. He believes they are objects of public interest. The many enquiries he gets from train lovers all over the country and the tremendous response he received at the exhibition held during the Railway Week in 1995 are ample indications, he adds.

In the future, "there are two things I would like to do most," he tells us. "One is to take the Trans-Siberian railway from Beijing to Europe. The other is to see the steam locomotives of South Africa."

A supportive family (including his golden retriever Paettu, whom he fondly refers to as his second daughter), share his enthusiasm and have helped him pursue his hobby, he admits appreciatively. His wife Kashmira works with the Central Bank. Son Behzad, studying in the fifth class at St Francis School, shares his interest in trains and is crazy about cars too. And his daughter Farah who is in the second standard at the Mary Immaculate Primary School has her own collection of Barbie dolls. Mulla's father Feroz, who was with the Life Insurance Corporation and after retirement with *Blitz*, now devotes most of his time to teaching children.

From filling a bored schoolboy's idle hours with wonder and fascination, Mulla's affair with trains has become an all-consuming passion.

On our way out we notice luggage neatly stacked in one corner of the room. The family is leaving on a holiday to Shimla — travelling by the rail car, of course!

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True Iranian cookery at Piccadilly is a touch of home for the expatriate



After my five-year stint in Tehran, Iran, I've always viewed *chello kababs* served in Bombay with suspicion — the rice is a touch too sticky and the kababs dry and bland. So when I finally succumbed to temptation and ordered the famous Iranian dish at Piccadilly Restaurant, Colaba, I had my reservations. Happily, my fears were misplaced. As I spread the butter over the rice I noticed that each grain was well cooked yet separate, and the first bite into the kabab made the gastric juices flow.

Not surprisingly, by noon the restaurant was resounding with Farsi conversation as Iranians and a few locals tucked into the gourmet delights. Apparently, the *broonmaska-chai* (round, crisp bread — buttered — with tea) days of the traditional Irani restaurants are over, at least at Piccadilly.

"To survive, you have to adapt. The old Irani style restaurant would no longer work in Colaba which is largely a tourist area," says Parvez Buzorg, an Irani Zoroastrian who runs the establishment with his Irani Zoroastrian wife, Mahdokht. So in 1987 the Buzorg couple decided to give their restaurant a new identity. But first, they had to identify their new clientele and match them to their culinary skill. They resolved to specialize in Iranian and Middle Eastern cuisine and only later expanded their menu to include continental fare.

In a way, the change was not just the end of the Irani restaurant tradition but also of the culture that spawned a fraternity of eateries that were an intrinsic part of Bombay city. "Did you know that up to the 1960s there were around 3,000 Irani restaurants and bakeries in every corner of

Bombay? Now there are no more than 300 left," says Buzorg.

According to him, Irani restaurants and bakeries were the economic backbone of Zoroastrians migrating from Iran to India during the first half of the century. The mechanics of the system were simple enough: new migrants were invited to India, made partners in a running business, taught the trade (and language too), and then encouraged to open new outlets. The name of the game was partnership, and it worked as long as new restaurants were being established to justify the fragmentation of the profits pie.

"The other advantage of the system was that Zoroastrians were able to help members of the community to a better life. The problems began when further expansion of business — or the establishment of a new one — became impossible. Then the partnership system, which had been a boon to the community, became a curse, especially when the children of the original partners joined the company," says Buzorg. Irreconcilable disputes led to a number of restaurants being sold or shuttered.

And Buzorg should know. For Piccadilly, like many other Irani restaurants snared in disputes and legal wrangles between partners, was for a period under the management of a court receiver. Then in 1987, the Buzorgs finally unscrambled the tangles and started out afresh as a specialty restaurant with Iranian and Middle Eastern cuisine. That year, they also renovated the family rooms of the place and the following year the entire kitchen area. Then, in 1995, they gave the entire eatery



— including their menu which listed continental fare — a facelift.

While Buzorg managed the business aspect of the restaurant, Mahdokht gave it a distinctive Iranian 'as mother makes it' flavor. In fact, twice every week on Tuesday and Friday she personally prepares the Iranian specialty *Gurma Shabji* (a vegetable and meat dish served with rice) with a sprinkling of original Iranian ingredients — sent by her mother from Iran.

Not surprisingly, Iranians flock to Piccadilly to gorge on these homemade delights. The consulate staff of many Middle Eastern and other countries are regular clients and for them the Buzorgs have special seating facilities in the upper level of the restaurant, complete with tables and chairs once characteristic of traditional Irani restaurants. There is a touch of irony here that is not lost on the couple. "If we were in Iran we would have to put up a sign outside our restaurant saying that it is Zoroastrian owned and managed, so that religious Muslims did not enter by mistake," says Buzorg. That aside, there is very little religious discrimination against Zoroastrians in the bigger cities like Tehran.

In Yazd, however, it is another matter for, according to the Buzorgs, religious discrimination still exists. "For instance, take a Muslim run laundry. If he knows I am Zoroastrian, he will not accept my clothes even if I offer to pay double the regular charges. But in India, the same person will forget his religious prejudice and gladly eat in my restaurant," Buzorg's comment is matter of fact, without malice. The owners of Piccadilly recognize the need to converse freely in one's mother-tongue and eat food that stills the pangs of homesickness.

And Mahdokht livens up the setting

Parvez and Mahdokht at Piccadilly (top)

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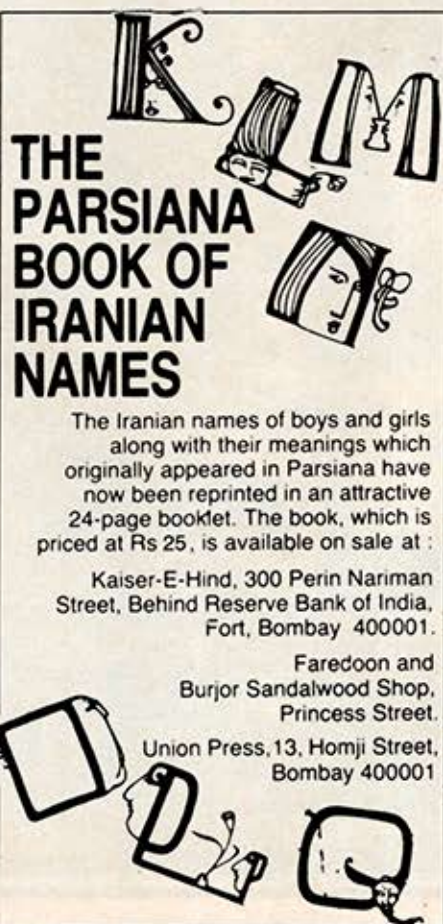
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with her bubbly presence, speaking with the Iranian clientele in fluent Farsi and with others in accented English and Gujarati. "I love to talk," she states, "even if it is in my broken Gujarati."

A homely restaurant that serves excellent food, Piccadilly's menu provides variety. Apart from staple snacks like pizzas (Rs 50-60), sandwiches (Rs 20-35) and burgers (Rs 25), a variety of French breads feature on the menu (Rs 20-30) stuffed with cheese, mince meat or chicken tikka, as per your desire. An Iranian mutton soup served with boiled potatoes (Rs 35) could be the precursor to continental fish, chicken, steak or lamb courses (average price Rs 50-60), salads and vegetables (Rs 25-35).

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And yes, I will be looking forward to re-discovering the delights of *chello kabab* all over again.



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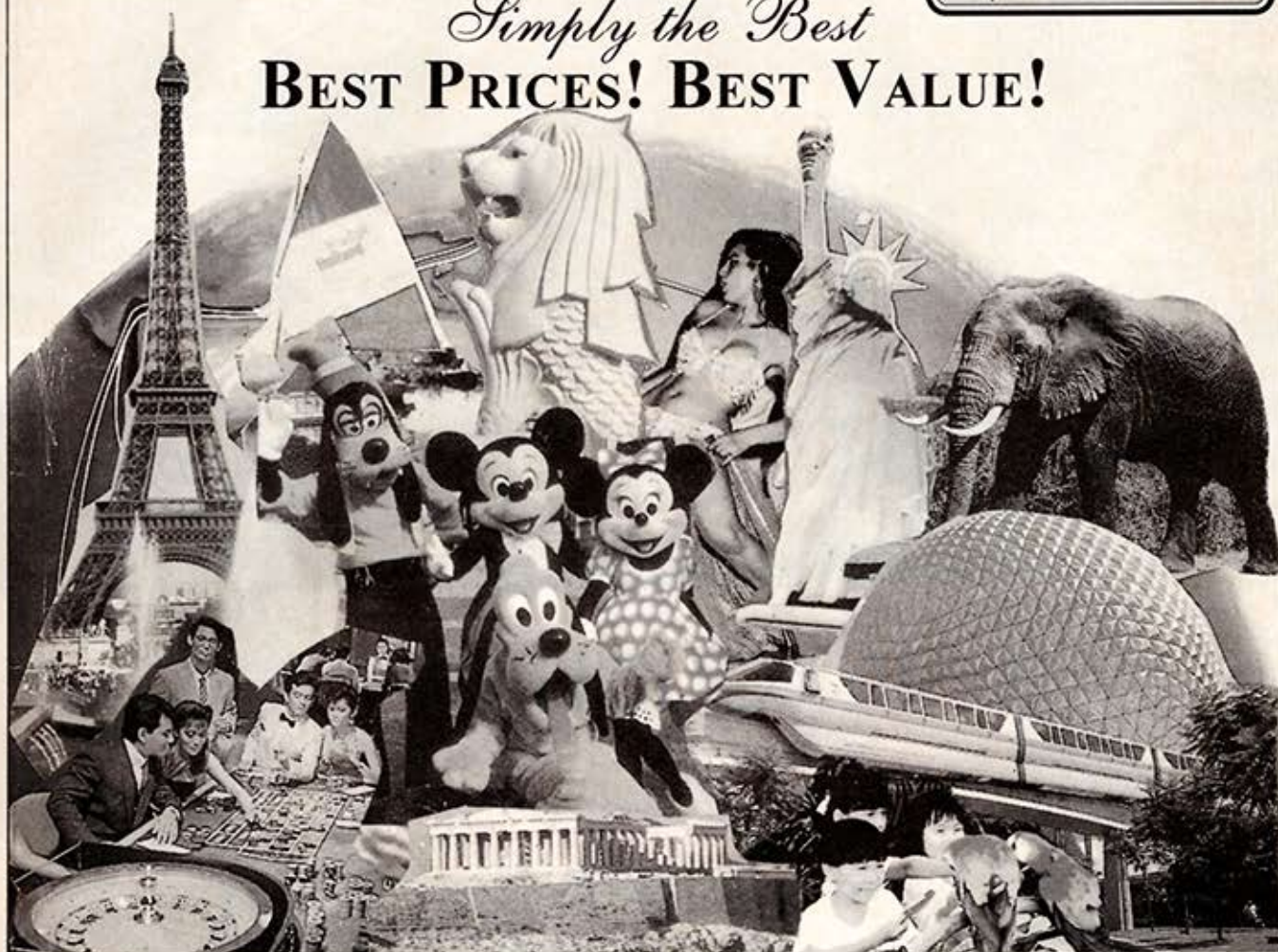
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Bhicoo J. Manekshaw

Traditionally for Jamshedi Navroze, one should start recipes with *sagan no ravo* or *miththu dahi* (sweet curd). Since I have given *Parsiana* my *rava* recipe, let me give you an excellent recipe for *miththu dahi* as my mother-in-law used to make, which you could cut with a knife! It has to be *bhès nu doodh* (buffalo milk) which we used to get in the good old days before

the onslaught of milk packets. But one can use the full cream milk which we get in packets today.

MITHTHU DAHI

Milk (1 ltr)

Curds (3 tbsp)

Sugar (to taste)

Add sugar to taste in the milk, a little less than necessary, as the milk is reduced. Reduce milk on a low flame to about 3/4 ltr, cool to room temperature or to blood heat. Beat curds till smooth. Brush the inside of the bowl with curds in which the dahi has to be set. Add rest of curds to milk

and whisk well or, pour the mixture from one pan to another from a distance, (safe enough distance so that it does not spill). When well blended, pour carefully into the setting bowl. Cover with a plate and cover the whole with a towel. Leave undisturbed overnight or for a couple of hours till set. Place in refrigerator till well chilled. Serve with *sev* (or *rava*). *Happy Navroze!*

BEER SOUFFLÉ

Of course you have not tasted it before, or heard of it, simply because I had not made it before! Nor would I have, had there not been an emergency at the Santushti Com-

Beer Soufflé (apex), *Chocolate Carnation Cake* (center), *Miththu Dahi* (left) and *Mocha Cheesecake*

Desserts for pictures prepared from Ms Manekshaw's recipes by Anavaz Mama. Photo by Varghese Fernandez

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plex, where our restaurant, Basil and Thyme, is situated. One morning after instructing the various cooks on the menu of the day, just as I was putting on my apron, before going into the kitchen, there was a break in electric transmission. Initially I took no notice as usually supply is restored after some time. This time however I was informed that there was a major breakdown and the electricity would not be available till 2 p.m. and our generator had broken down just the day before! I was to make beer cake for dessert! So as lunch is served at 12.30 p.m. I decided to make a beer soufflé. It was a most delicious sweet, created out of necessity and panic! Please try it. It is very unusual.

Beer 325 ml (½ bottle — ¼ ltr)

Double cream (250 g — 8 oz)

Eggs (4 — separated)

Caster sugar (150 g — approx 5 oz)

Salt (a pinch)

Gelatine (2½ tbsp)

Dissolve gelatine in about 6 tbsp water on low heat. Keep aside. (It is important to know how to dissolve gelatine correctly. Put water in a small saucepan, and hold it in your left hand. Sprinkle gelatine with your right hand, shaking the saucepan and the right hand together so that no lumps

occur. Keep aside till the gelatine has absorbed the water. Place the gelatine on very low fire till dissolved or place pan in a larger pan of very hot water and allow to dissolve. Gelatine should not be boiled as it loses its strength.) Place beaten yolks and sugar mixture over barely simmering water and beat till light and fluffy. Add dissolved gelatine. Mix well. Cool over ice, stirring occasionally to mix the gelatine and yolk mixture. (This is the secret of making a good soufflé.) Add beer, mix well. Whip cream and spoon into yolk mixture. Whisk egg whites till stiff and fold into soufflé. Allow to semi set over ice, then spoon into prepared soufflé mold or in a bowl and set. Cover with a thin layer of extra cream and decorate with rosettes along the edge.

PRALINE GATEAU

Preheat oven to 180°C (350°F)

A light rum flavored sponge cake (7½" to 8") filled with praline.

Cake

Eggs (4)

Caster sugar (125 g — 4 oz)

Flour (125 g — 4 oz)

Salt (a pinch)

Vanilla essence (½ tsp)

Line a cake tin (7½" or 8" in diameter) with paper, brush with oil and sprinkle with flour and caster sugar.

Sift flour with salt. Beat eggs till frothy. Add caster sugar and beat over simmering water till thick and mousse like. The mixture will increase in volume and lighten in color and, when lifted on the whisk, it will form a ribbon on itself. Lightly fold in flour, sprinkling a little at a time. Spoon mixture in prepared cake tin. Tap tin lightly on the table (to ensure the mixture is evenly spread) and place in preheated oven. Bake for approximately 25-30 minutes. Cool in cake tin for five minutes, then turn out on a cake rack. When completely cold, cut into half horizontally, and sprinkle with rum syrup.

Rum syrup

Sugar (½ cup)

Water (1 cup)

Lime (½ — juiced)

Rum (3 tbsp)

Make a syrup with water and sugar. When sugar is completely dissolved, remove from fire and add lime juice and rum. Sprinkle on cake.

Praline

Sugar (90 g)

Almonds (90 g with skin)

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Double cream (1 cup)

In a heavy frying pan place sugar and allow to melt and caramelize on a slow fire. Add almonds and cook for 1-2 minutes. Pour praline mixture into a well greased plate and allow to set. Remove hardened praline and crush coarsely. Whip cream till stiff. Add half the praline. Spread on one half of the cake and cover with the other. Spread sides and top with remaining cream and sprinkle remaining praline on top.

If desired, make rosettes with extra whipped cream along the edge of the cake.

CHOCOLATE CARNATION CAKE

Preheat oven to 180°C (350°F)

This is a recipe which I have been making since the 1950s, often for the birthday parties of my friends' children.

Cake

Butter (250 g — 8 oz)

Margarine or vegetable shortening (like Dalda in India) (250 g — 8 oz)

Caster sugar (200 g — 7½ oz)

Flour (500 g — one lb, roughly)

Cocoa (115 g — 4 oz)

Digestive biscuits (250 g — 8 oz)

Chocolate butter cream

Eggs (4 — whites)

Icing sugar (250 g — 8 oz)

Plain chocolate (170 g — 6 oz)

Butter (250 g — 8 oz)

Vanilla essence (½ tsp)

Brandy (1 tbsp)

Walnuts (4 tbsp — chopped)

Carnation spray

Almond paste (375 g — approx 12 oz)

Maiden hair or asparagus ferns (few — pink, yellow)

Almond paste

Almonds (188 g — approx 6 oz)

Caster sugar (150 g — approx 5 oz)

Icing sugar (125 g — 4 oz)

Egg (1 — yolk)

Vanilla essence (¼ tsp)

Almond essence (½ tsp)

Lime juice (½ tbsp)

Make almond paste first. Blanche and grind almonds. Mix sugars together in a bowl.

Whisk egg with essence and lime juice.

Add to sugar mixture along with almonds and knead well to extract a little almond oil. Keep in refrigerator for about one hour. Divide into three and tint lightly with pink and yellow leaving the third section plain or tint it green. On a board lightly sprinkled with icing sugar, roll out each section separately into a rectangle. Cut into large strips about 2" wide and 4" long.

With the back of a knife mark one edge closely to give a frilly appearance, but do not cut through the paste. Gather the uncut edge of strip together to form a carnation. Repeat with rest of the paste. Place on a tray to dry out. Tint the edges of carnations with pink and yellow, with a fine brush. Keep aside till needed. Tint the third portion with green and roll into stems for the carnations.

Note: The carnations can be made a day before so that they can dry out and harden.

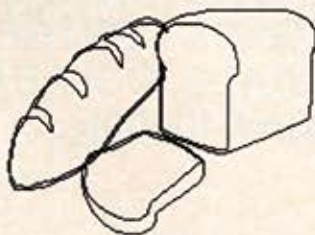
Chocolate butter cream

Cut finely or grate the chocolate, place in a pan over barely simmering water till the chocolate is melted and smooth. Whisk egg whites with icing sugar over a pan of simmering water till thick and forms a 'ribbon' when the whisk is lifted from pan. Mix chocolate with egg white mixture. Heat butter till very soft and add to chocolate mixture a little at a time. Stir in essence and brandy. Refrigerate.

Cake

Beat butter and margarine together till light and fluffy. Crush biscuits coarsely. Mix with butter and add rest of ingredients and mix well. Divide into three equal parts. Take three shallow flan rings with loose bases. Brush bases and sides with oil.

*Happy Navroze to all Zoroastrians
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Line bases with brown paper. Roll out three rounds of cake mixture to fit in the flan rings. Or put 1/3 of mixture in each flan ring and smooth out with the base of a glass or pallet knife. Bake in preheated oven for about 20-30 minutes. Allow to cool before turning out from tins.

To assemble

Place a little of chocolate butter cream on a serving platter. Place a round on top of this so that the round stays intact and does not move. Cover this round with chocolate butter cream and place another round on top. Cover this also with the chocolate butter cream. Place third layer on top. Spread sides with chocolate butter cream pulling the pallet knife away sharply so that it stands in peaks. Add 1½ tsp cocoa to rest of the icing and pipe a row of stars with a star nozzle at the base of the cake. Arrange ferns on one side of cake, tied with a ribbon, and arrange carnations to form a spray on top of the ferns. Take a smaller star nozzle and pipe the rest of the icing on the top edge of the cake. Now sit back and wait for the applause!

HAZELNUT MERINGUE TORTE
Preheat oven to 190°C (375°F)

Eggs (4 — whites)
Caster sugar (250 g — 8 oz)
Vanilla essence (a few drops)
Lime juice or vinegar (½ tsp)
Browned ground hazelnuts or walnuts (125 g — 4 oz)
Double cream (¼ imperial pint — 5 oz)
Icing sugar

Decoration

Hazelnuts (8 whole browned) or walnuts (8 halves)
Whipped cream (90g — approx 3 oz)
Set the oven at the right temperature. Prepare two sandwich tins with loose base by rubbing the sides and base with butter. Dust with flour. Place a round disk of brown paper or bakewell paper buttered and floured.

Whip egg whites till stiff. Gradually add caster sugar and continue to whisk till very stiff (For best results use a copper bowl which has been rubbed with a cut lime dipped in salt then lightly rinsed out. The egg whites get stiff very soon and do not collapse). Add lime juice or vinegar and prepared nuts. Spoon into prepared tins. Bake for 30-40 minutes. Remove from pan and cool. Cover one round with whipped cream and cover with the other

meringue. Dust with icing sugar.

To decorate

Pipe 8 rosettes with a star nozzle at the edge of the meringue, and place browned hazelnut or half walnut on each rosette.

Variations

For the filling use pureed strawberries, raspberries or chopped nuts with the cream. I shall never forget an incident that took place at the advanced certificate course that I was doing at the Cordon Bleu cookery school. There were not more than 10 pupils allowed in the course. We had to work in pairs. Every morning we had to make a three course meal. On one occasion we had to make this torte. One unfortunate girl put an unroasted hazelnut on the cake. We ate what we cooked and the rest was sent down for the staff. And the best one went to the Cordon Bleu Restaurant below the school. To cut a long story short, the unroasted hazelnut portion somehow went to the principal Miss Hume. She came up to our class and all hell was let loose, that the standard was not up to the mark and at this rate no one was going to pass! We listened in stunned silence, no one talked for at least 15 minutes. It only broke into hilarious laughter when I said that I don't

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want to see or eat a hazelnut as long as I live!

CHOCOLATE MOCHA CHEESE CAKE

Preheat oven to 180°C (350°F)

Cottage cheese (500 g — 16 oz)

Cream cheese (In India use Amul cheese spread) (250 g — 8 oz)

Caster sugar (1¼ cups)

Vanilla essence (1 tsp)

Coffee powder (2 tsp — instant)

Salt (¼ tsp)

Eggs (4 — large)

Chocolate (6 tbsp — grated and melted with 4 tbsp brandy)

Line one 8" cake tin with foil, and lightly oil.

Process cottage cheese in a food processor till smooth. Add cream cheese, one cup sugar, vanilla, coffee and salt. Mix well.

Add eggs and process again till smooth.

Pour two cups of the mixture in a jug. Add chocolate to the remaining mixture with the rest of the sugar. Mix till completely blended. Pour 1½ cup chocolate mixture into prepared cake tin. Pour coffee mixture in center of chocolate mixture. Pour remaining chocolate mixture on top of coffee mixture.

Run a skewer through the mixture to create a marble effect. Set the cake pan in a larger pan and pour boiling water to reach halfway up the side of the cake pan. Place in preheated oven. Bake till center is just set, and the sides puffed up and slightly cracked. Remove cake from oven and cool. Cover with foil or clingwrap and refrigerate overnight. Lift cake from pan, invert on plate. Gently remove foil or clingwrap. Place a serving platter on top and invert again. Refrigerate till required.

EGGLESS ALMOND AND SPICE CAKE

Preheat oven to 150°C (300°F)

Sugar (150 g — 5 oz)

Honey (½ cup)

Water (2/3 cup)

Flour (1 cup)

Cinnamon (1 tsp)

Nutmeg (½ tsp)

Clove (½ tsp)

Bicarbonate of soda (½ tsp)

Salt (a pinch)

Almonds (375 g — 12 oz — blanched, peeled and lightly roasted, coarsely chopped)

Crystallized orange peel (1 cup — finely diced)

Decoration

Crystallized cherries. Whole blanched almonds. Apricot jam. Whipped cream to serve with cake.

Keep a well buttered 9" cake tin ready. Place sugar, honey and water in a pan, and stir till sugar dissolves; bring to the boil. Remove from heat and add flour which is sifted with spices, a pinch of salt and bicarbonate of soda. Mix thoroughly. Add almonds and peel. Mix all well together and spoon into the prepared cake tin. Bake for about 40 minutes. When done cool cake in pan before removing from tin.

Spoon about 2 tbsp apricot jam into a pan, add 3 tbsp water and warm gently. Sieve. Brush on top of cake and decorate with cherries and almonds.

Note: You may use any nuts besides almonds, if desired, such as walnuts, cashewnuts, peanuts or even hazelnuts!

Bon appetit

Bhico J. Manekshaw, a graduate of the prestigious Cordon Bleu School of Cookery, London, and author of *Traditional Recipes of India*, has been associated with many haute cuisine organizations in the country.

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READERS' FORUM

continued from page 33

"Late Dhunjisha Kalfati"

Mr Bhikhaji Adenwalla had enquired about the Late Dhunjisha Kalfati (Readers' Forum, *Parsiana*, September 1995).

I hereby would like to enlighten Mr Adenwalla regarding Mr Kalfati. His full name was Sir Dhunjibhoy Bomanji. He was not a police commissioner as stated by Mr Adenwalla, but a naval contractor.

In 1921, the Prince of Wales was to visit Bombay. The Parsis, who were in the forefront of politics in those days, decided to welcome the Prince. When the Hindus and Muslims, who wanted to boycott the Prince's arrival came to know of the Parsis' welcome plans, they threatened the community that its holy places of worship would be destroyed. In such a time of crisis, the community was leaderless as all the knights and baronets among the Parsis did not take the threat seriously and went about their usual business.

Sir Dhunjibhoy Bomanji, who had great influence with the British, asked the Government to give protection to the Parsis but was refused as the police force was busy maintaining law and order at the time of

the Prince's arrival.

Thereupon, Sir Dhunjibhoy asked the Government to give arms to the community for their defence with which request the British complied. When the riots started Sir Dhunjibhoy went from agiary to agiary personally and distributed arms to the valiant Parsi youths, exhorting them to fight for their holy atash padshahs.

With the blessings of Dadar Ahura Mazda, the Parsi youths responded very well and defended our holy places of worship. The riots lasted for three days from Thursday November 17 to Saturday November 19 in which three Zoroastrians were killed and hundreds injured but not a single place of worship was harmed. Sir Dhunjibhoy did everything that was possible for his dear community and did not look back till the community was safe, spending his personal fortune for the protection of holy places of worship.

His death anniversary falls on Shehenshahi mah Meher, roj Jamyad. The jashan ceremony is performed by the Pundole group of Zoroastrians since 1967.

The jashan ceremony this year was open to all Zoroastrians, on March 31, 1996 at 4 p.m. in the Dadyseth Atash-beham.

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"The Zoroastrian flag..."

I am impressed by the "Zoroastrian Flag of Friendliness and Brotherhood" advertised in *Parsiana* (July-August 1995). I am in full agreement that we Parsis should have our own flag.

The role which the Parsi Zoroastrians have played in building up the Indian nation by goodwill, friendliness and brotherhood has resulted in members of practically all communities addressing Parsi males as 'bawajis' and females as 'maijs,' to express their love and respect.

Parsis no doubt preach and practice their own Zoroastrian religion but at the same time they show their respect and reverence for all religions. I had prepared a few years back a pattern with religious emblems of all the four religions — Hindu-

ism, Islam, Christianity, Zoroastrianism. You will appreciate and agree with me that the flag prepared by me will be a more appropriate flag of friendliness and brotherhood acceptable to all communities as its design embodies the tenets of all the religions

SAMY ENGINEER

The innards of the earth

The early Iranian concepts of Ilm-e-Khshnoom have conveyed the secrets of the earth long before modern science. Dastur Adarbad Marespand had said that there is nothing in the world that is not mentioned in the *Avesta*.

Our earth measures 25,000 miles over the equator, while its core is about 2,750 miles deep. Scientists have explored only about 12 miles within the earth.

According to Avestan scriptures, the earth's structure is made up of many layers: One is solid rock including smaller

particles of soil. It runs several miles below the surface and it is referred to as the infernal regions or *Heng* in the *Avesta*.

Below the *heng* lie ocean-like layers called *anassars* made up of ultra elements of rock,

water, air and fire.

As we advance further towards the core, we come across an extremely hot region of flowing ashes followed by extremely hot fluids. This region is recognized as *apakhatar* in the *Avesta*. As we go further towards the center of the earth, there come the extremely hot compressed vapor regions whose extreme temperature is almost unthinkable.

Lastly, we approach the region *Aipi Dakhyu* which is almost triangular in shape, and in its center is the seat of the Earth's soul called *Gaoosh-Urva*.

It is given in the *Avesta* that Ahriman is continuously trying to create a fifth *anassar*. If he succeeds in doing so, it will be a strange non-living thing, harder than solid rock, which will be responsible for the destruction of our mother earth. But the Almighty constantly nullifies his ill effort through *Gaoosh-Urva*.

The extremely hot fire mentioned above is always in motion, and is responsible for the evolution of life. It also supplies the necessary energy for survival of all living things of the earth, enabling life to go on.

Ms FRENY BHARUCHA

Jamshedpur

Parsi Zoroastrian (left) and United Parsi flags



Edited by Arnavaz S. Mama

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Savoring the joy

Burjor K. Karanjia

The Joy of Achievement: Conversations with J. R. D. Tata by R. M. Lala. Published in 1995 in Viking by Penguin Books India (P) Ltd, 210, Chiranjiv Tower, 43, Nehru Place, New Delhi 110019. Pp: 194. Price: Rs 250.

R. M. Lala's *The Joy of Achievement* is by no means a substitute for his biography of J. R. D. Tata, *Beyond the Last Blue Mountain*. Nor is it, as Lala rather modestly claims, a supplementary to it. To this reviewer its significance is deeper: it illuminates the reason for the success of the biography — its truth.

Lala quotes Samuel Johnson: "The business of the biographer is... (to) display the minute details of daily life." A certain degree of hero worship is perhaps also an ingredient of a successful biography. Of-

ten it happens that this very hero worship distances the biographer from his subject. At other times, if the subject has passed away, the biographer has to rely for information on the recall of those who knew him or worked for him, and on the extant records of the man and his achievements. Lala was in the fortunate position of playing Boswell to Tata's Johnson for over a long period of time. He worked in the same office. He was not only in daily contact with his subject, but grew to be on increasingly friendly terms with him. In this Lala was singularly blessed and, as a consequence, both the biography and the sequel to it are twice blessed.

A great man's friendship isn't easily won. Soon after joining Tatas, Lala was instructed to despatch the Prepaid Ticket Advice (PTA) to a professor in Paris whom JRD had invited to India. But the PTA did not reach Paris in time. JRD phoned Lala

to enquire why. "May I come up and explain to you, sir?" said Lala. "What explanation can there be?" JRD retorted. "The PTA had to go in time and the PTA has not gone in time. That is *not* the way we work in Tatas." Lala comments: "In later years he was more than generous with his compliments about my work but it was the chastizing that helped me the most."

In fact JRD took people as he found them, but did his utmost to get the best out of them. As Ratan Tata confided to Lala, "He is very good at a one-to-one relationship." JRD confirmed this: "I honestly think you cannot

get the best out of the man unless the man feels he has the freedom to have his own way, even if it is not my way. If I had asserted myself I would have suppressed his originality. This I never did consciously." On another occasion JRD amplified this: "I am one who will make full allowance for a man's character and idiosyncracies. You have to adapt yourself to their ways and deal accordingly and draw out the best in each man."

JRD certainly had a quick temper. One Shapurji, later secretary to Sir Homi Mody, recalled JRD

throwing "files at us," but being at the same time "kind-hearted and extraordinarily thoughtful. JRD admitted he had a quick temper, but didn't recall ever having flung files! There was an interesting sequel to this. When Minoo Masani, former ambassador to Brazil, was offered the post of JRD's executive assistant he declined saying, "Jeh, I value my relationship with



Tata with wife Thelly and their dogs Digby (left) and Pinnocchio.

Courtesy: *The Joy of Achievement: Conversations with J. R. D. Tata*

you and I understand you bawl out people who are your executive assistants. I would rather not risk our friendship." JRD replied: "I know who to bawl out. I won't bawl you out." Masani was persuaded to join. JRD, whose links with France were never severed, gave him the designation of *chef du cabinet* or principal secretary.

A certain peculiarity of JRD's character which Lala often remarks on was that while he was patient when big issues were involved, he tended to be impatient about small things. Like most car drivers, he got irritated by the blind tyranny of traffic lights: "I will talk to Pasricha (Bombay's traffic chief) some day. Traffic lights should never be so long, not more than a minute or two."

Another characteristic that comes out strongly is his infectious sense of humor. His favorite joke, concerning Lord and Lady Linlithgow, Viceroy of India at the outbreak of World War II, is such a gem that this reviewer cannot resist the temptation of sharing it with *Parsiana* readers. The Viceroy was being shown round a stud farm by the manager, followed by his Lady with the assistant manager. "The assistant

While he was patient when big issues were involved, he tended to be impatient about small things

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manager pointed out the farm's stud bull to the Viceroy and said, 'Your Excellency, this is our champion bull. He performed 365 times last year.'

"Is that so?" said Lady Linlithgow. 'You must go and tell His Excellency that.'

"So the little man ran up to the Viceroy and, almost breathless, spluttered, 'Your Excellency, Your Excellency, Her Excellency wants me to tell you that this bull that we've just passed has performed 365 times last year.' 'What! With the same cow?' roared Lord Linlithgow. 'No Sir,' stammered the assistant manager.

'Go and tell that to Her Excellency,' replied the Viceroy firmly."

JRD's constant concern as an enlightened industrialist was not so much what profits his companies made, but what the nation needed. His one regret was that his wide and varied experiences as India's most successful industrialist

were never availed of by successive prime ministers when planning the nation's economy. He deplored the destruction of the mosque at Ayodhya, prophesying that it would not be easily forgotten by the

Muslims or by Hindu secularists. "I cannot understand how erecting a temple is more important than building a great literature or making India into a prosperous and peaceful country."

But it was the growing intimacy between the biographer and his subject that, as suggested earlier, imparts to the book its most touching and exalted moments. The love of poetry they shared naturally brought them together. Often, in moods of relaxation, the two would read out or quote from memory their favorite poems. JRD would share with Lala his thoughts on children, his fondness for them and his regret at never having had any of his own; on the problems of aging and the approach of death; the possibility of life after death and the existence of God... On several occasions JRD expressed his perplexity how a kind and wise God could be so indifferent to the suffering and degradation all around. Behind the great man, respected and revered by all who knew him, was this even more endearing inner man with his dilemmas and conflicts, his agonizing over things left undone, and the high reaches of his spirit.

What brought them even closer was

that they were both ailing — and caring — men. When their common physician the late Dr (Ms) Gool Contractor told JRD about Lala's recurring symptoms, he exclaimed: "Oh God! Keep this man going for some time. I need him." In a despairing moment, as one sick man to another, Lala sought his advice: "I would like to get your advice as one who too had to face a medical problem and adjust to life, but above all as a friend." Later, at the Tata Memorial Hospital when Lala thanked him for taking time off to come and see him, JRD cut him short: "Don't thank me. I've just come to see a friend." It was through this spontaneous care and concern, concludes Lala, that JRD took Tatas "beyond being just an industrial group and lifted it to the level of a family."

Putting down this book, one gets the warm feeling that in spite of the dread disease which the sensitive author has not once named, Lala was sustained throughout by his invigorating encounter with greatness. And it is surely a testimony to his evocative skills as a writer that the greatness that rubbed off on him also rubs off on his readers, so that they too savor, for a brief spell, the joy of achievement.

A word needs to be added about the book's excellent production values — editing, printing, proof-reading, binding and designing — such a rare occurrence in Indian publishing that one cannot but say *alleluia!*

For most of us, Homi Jehangir Bhabha was the tremendously gifted scientist who fathered the country's atomic energy program, and died in an air crash above Mont Blanc. Apart from his involvement in

Coming home to India for a short holiday in 1939 altered the course of his life

India's atomic program, little is known about his contributions to physics.

This lacuna in our scientific heritage has now been filled with the publication of G. Venkataraman's *Bhabha and his Magnificent Obsessions*. This book is one of the 'Vignettes in Physics' series being brought out by the Universities Press with the intention of capturing in simple words the drama and excitement of great discoveries for the serious reader.

The choice of Venkataraman as author for the monograph on Bhabha could scarcely be bettered. Venkataraman started his career in the 50s with Bhabha at the then recently formed Bhabha Atomic Research Centre, then spent over a decade at the Indira Gandhi Centre for Atomic Research at Kalpakkam. He is hence one of India's more erudite and experienced physicists. His book is a befitting opportunity



Bhabha: the man and his mastery

Homi J. Rogers

Bhabha and his Magnificent Obsessions by G. Venkataraman. Published in 1994 by Universities Press (India) Limited and distributed by Orient Longman Limited, 3-6-272, Himayatnagar, Hyderabad 500029. Pp: ix + 209 + 12 photo pages. Price: Rs 70.



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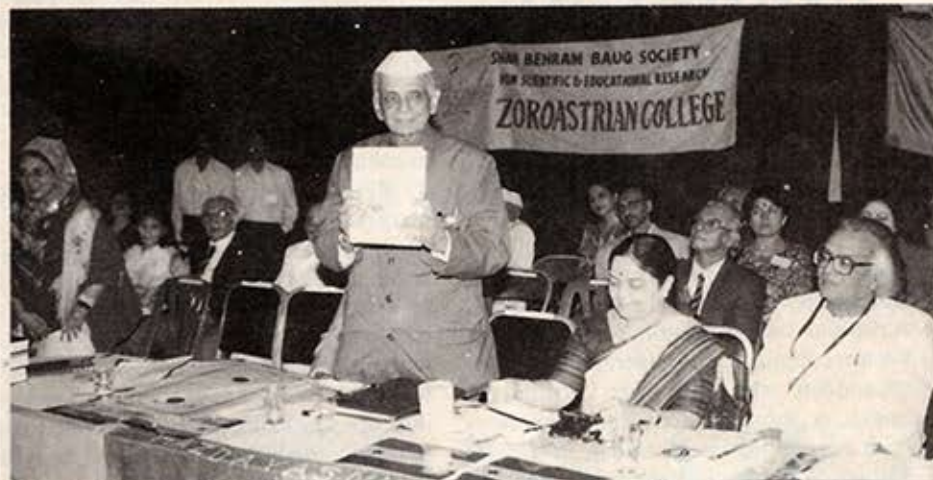
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MEDICINA ALTERNATIVA HOLISTIC HEALTH WORLD CONGRESS - JANUARY 1996



L to R: Dr. Meher Master - Moos President Z. C. welcoming the distinguished Delegates and Guests of Honour at the World Congress Opening Ceremony with Justice Y. S. Deshpande, Padmashri Homi J. H. Taleyarkhan, Vice Chancellor Dr. S. Deshmukh, Dr. M. C. Bhandari, Prof. Dr. Sir Anton Jayasuriya, and in the second row, Mr. Rustom Chothia, Dr. Punamchand Rathil, Dr. Natalia Singh, Dr. Fred Fox, Dr. Harprakash Sahani and others.

12th/13th/14th January 1996 marked the 7th year in succession of the **World Congress of Medicina Alternativa** being organised in Bombay at the Russian Cultural Centre by the Zoroastrian College. The 3 days Congress saw gathering of some of the most distinguished Specialists of different methods of Health Care. The crowded sessions drew outstanding Speakers from many countries.

Rev. Dr. FRED J. BOX of England had spent two months in India teaching the special method of BIO-TESTING And BIO-THERAPY through the Zoroastrian College to qualified Allopathic and Homeopathic Doctors. The sessions were held at the Holy Family Hospital and Bombay University Fort Campus. 15 Doctors from all over India benefitted from this Training and qualified as Diploma Holders. **Prof. Dr. ALEJANDRO SILVA GARLAND** of Chile, presented extra ordinary research on Unified knowledge and its application to Health peace. **Prof. Mrs. RAYE MATHIS** of Atlantic University U.S.A. spoke on the work of the **EDGAR CAYCE CENTRE**, and Psychic Education. **Dr. Mrs. NATALIYA SINGH** of Russia presented her unique work on Communications from her Asho Farohar. The International Star of the World Congress was the young Englishman **THORNTON STREETER**, who stole the show by demonstrating special Equipment made in England of Live Photography of the Human Aura of patients; and demonstrated the disease disappearing out of the Aura under treatment of Energy flowing through the hands of a Healer. This equipment is the invention of Dr. HARRY OLDFIELD. The Healer **Dr. SHASH-**

IKANT SETH, gives free Healing Treatment to all those who attend the weekly lecture programmes conducted by the Zoroastrian College in Bombay. **Dr. M. C. BHANDARI**, Founder of Bharat Nirman and Editor of Mystic India spoke on the development of the Ancient Wisdom of India for the benefit of peoples of other countries. **Dr. M. R. FADNAVIS**, Surgeon from England spoke on the practice in U. K. Hospitals. **Dr. PUNAMCHAND RATHIL** of Akola, India's Internationally renowned Magneto Therapist demonstrated his Scientific Research in use of Magnets for Healing. **Dr. DILNAWAS BANA** of Switzerland and **Dr. GITA KASTURI** of Bombay enthralled the audience by their beautiful dance therapy performances. **Swamiji AKHILESHJI** uplifted all present by his discourses; **Dr. Mrs. HARIPRAKASH SAHANI** and **Dr. Mrs. MANGALA CHAVAN**, Faculty Members of Z. C. played a key role in organisation and chairing the Sessions as too did **Dr. A. GOSALIA** and **Dr. ZARIN TUREL**, who has the unique distinction of being appointed on the International Atomic Energy Board in Vienna, Austria. **Dr. HARISHBHAI DHUTIA** headed the Session on Medical Astrology. **Dr. MAHMUD HASAN**, was Chairman of the well attended and well presented Session on **Unani Medicine**. **Prof. Dr. A. R. K. PILLAI** President of Indian Leprosy Foundation spoke on the work of the Foundation in eradicating Leprosy from India.

CONVOCATION CEREMONY

Dr. M. MANMOHAN, Z. C. Faculty Head in Coimbatore, brought a Delegation of students and Doctors who had qualified for Research Degrees.

The January 1996 Convocation Ceremony saw the following persons being honoured: **SHRI M. C. BHANDARI** and **Dr. M. MANMOHAN**, Honorary Doctorate Degrees; **Dr. PURVIZ KOLSAWALLA**, President of Parsis of Australia gained his D. Sc. degree on the strength of his outstanding Research on the Gathas and Computerisation of all the texts. **Dr. Smt. MAYA VENKATESH**, **Dr. P. PUSHPARAJU** and **Dr. T. RAJENDRAN** of Madras and Coimbatore all gained Doctorate Degrees by Research Thesis, and **Mis ARUL KALA** was conferred the B. Litt Degree. Two distinguished Italian Professors, **Dr. MARIO STROMILLO** and **Dr. CORRADO DUGLIO**, presented unusual Thesis on the ageing problem for their Doctorates. **Dr. Mrs. MALTI SRISIKAR** and the inimitable **Dr. LEO REBELLO** both commanded the Chair and also presented papers on GATT and demonstrations. **Mr. RUSTOM TIRANDAZ** was felicitated on being elected a Trustee of the Bombay Parsi Panchayat. **Ervad NOSHIRWAN KANGA**, **Mr. RUSTOM CHOTHIA** and **Prof. SAM DOCTOR**, all Z.C. Avesta Dept. Faculty Members led the Release of the book authored by **Dr. BEHRAM D. PITHAWALA**, entitled **IN SEARCH OF DIVINE LIGHT** released by **PADMASHRI HOMI J. H. TALEYARKHAN**.

The Chairman of Medicina Alternativa International, **Prof. Dr. Sir ANTON JAYASURIYA**, spoke on the work of the OPEN INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY FOR COMPLEMENTARY MEDICINE and the Acupuncture Therapy work done at the Kalubowila Hospital in Sri Lanka. Many Awards were given to distinguished persons by **Padmashri Homi J. H. Taleyarkhan** and others. **Dr. Mrs. SHYAMLA CHANDRAN** presented her 6 tastes Nari Vaid System.

Dr. RAMESHSINGH CHOUHAN, **Mr. C. SUNDARAM** and **Mr. SUNDER RAJAN** of Bangalore Pranik Healer Associations performed many miraculous cures by the Philippine method. **Dr. VAID SURESH CHATURVEDI**, and **Dr. RAVIKANT GOYAL** kept the Delegates spellbound by their presentations on the Neem Tree and how parents can choose the sex of their child to be born. Speakers on Electro Homeopathy excelled. All in all the Congress was highly successful with **Dr. JEHANGIR R MEDORA** of Canada presenting the Zoroastrian Flag of Friendliness and Brotherhood designed by him as a Vexillographer to all Delegates, and **KAIZAD PATEL**, **POORUSH KARKARIA**, **PRINCIE MEHTA** and **BURGESE BHADHA** being presented their Diploma Certificates in Avesta and Zoroastrian Scriptural studies under the able guidance of **Prof. SAM DOCTOR**.

If you wish to consult Alternative Medicine Doctors buy the **Holistic Health Doctors Directory** available from the College Office. Many books on Zoroastrian Religion and Health subjects are also available.

6TH WORLD ZOROASTRIAN CONGRESS, IRAN

Through **MAZDAYASNE MONASTERIE/Z.C.** a Tour of Iran is arranged, through the Govt. of Iran approved Tour Operator **SOHRAB POOR MANDEGARIAN**. Departure Bombay 31st May return 28th June 1996. Visiting Demavand, Elburz, Caspian, Kolman, Bam, Yazd, Istahan, Shriaz, Kuman Shar, Persepolis and other places. Those wishing to join this special, educational, historical tour may contact immediately. For further information and registration contact above office or phone.

for him to pay tribute to his mentor, and to so present Bhabha's contributions to physics as to encourage the scientific temper in his readers.

The book has been developed on the lines of the celebrated Feynman lectures, so named after a scintillating physics teacher of the 20th century whose discourses stirred the interest of students by their simple language and chatty style. So, we have the theories postulated by Homi Bhabha sandwiched between his bio-sketch; and a concluding piece on lesser-known aspects of his personality interspersed with interesting vignettes from his life.

Bhabha's short biography should be of interest to the Zoroastrian reader. A modern-day Leonardo da Vinci, given his proclivity for art and music, literature and painting, in addition to his dedication to science, Bhabha was born in Bombay on October 30, 1909 to a lawyer father and a mother tracing her ancestry to the Petit family. As a child, he was fond of meccano and music, and read voraciously from the family library, even mastering, it is said, Einstein's theory of relativity by the age of 16. He enrolled at the Cambridge University (UK) at the behest of his parents for a degree in mechanical engineering, but managed to convince his father to let him pursue his true love, physics, where his aptitude lay.

Coming home to India for a short holiday in 1939 altered the course of his life. The outbreak of World War II made returning to England futile as research work had ceased in western European countries. Bhabha was hence sucked into work in India: first as a reader at the Indian Institute of Science founded by Jamsetji Tata in Bangalore and later, in the establishment and growth of the Institute for Fundamental Research, which the Tata trusts funded at Bhabha's behest.

Venkataraman's book chronologically carries the reader through the many experiments Bhabha conducted, right down to the formation of the Atomic Energy Commission. An overview of cosmic rays is provided before describing Bhabha's contribution to this sphere. In a similar manner, offering considerable background material, other sterling contributions of Bhabha are set forth with ample diagrams and illustrations to simplify the study and to stimulate the reader.

For anyone interested in physics and hoping to follow in Bhabha's footsteps, the book would make inspiring reading. But even for the layman, a quick scan

would help to make him aware of the magnitude of Bhabha's work and his deep understanding of science's myriad mysteries which he unlocked for the betterment of the world.

Merchant's miniature muses

Haiku: An Ode to Nature by Adi F. Merchant. Published in 1994 by Hoshang K. Bulsara, Hoshie's Books, The Reward, 2nd floor, 220 Tardeo Road, Bombay 400007. Pp: 43. Price: Rs 45.

Brevity, said the Bard, is the soul of wit. But can brevity express the depth of a soul? A difficult task, no doubt. Yet one that has been accomplished by generations of Japanese poets who have been writing the hokku, or, more correctly, the haiku. Now with the publication of *Haiku: An Ode to Nature*, Adi Merchant joins the ranks of this select group of poets who attempt this

verse of only 17 syllables, yet within this contracted structure give the reader (or listener) the heart's response to impressions of the eye and ear.

The haiku, Merchant informs us in his 'note,' "does not make a complete poem in the usual sense: It is a lightly-sketched picture the reader is expected to fill in from his own memories." Much like a Japanese painting where empty spaces on the canvas only serve to emphasize the lines drawn by an artist, the haiku is not intended to be an explicit statement. It is, as R. H. Blyth, who has translated the haiku from Japanese into English says, "an open door which looks shut." For those amongst us who are used to conventional poetry, it could well have remained a shut door but for Merchant's short and illuminating introduction to his collection.

Merchant has a way with words and images. A copywriter for more than 30 years, he seems to bring the same crispness to his post-advertising literary pursuits as to work tailored for market consumption where one's attention must be grabbed without unnecessary verbiage. However, while the message is spelt out in advertising copy, the haiku invites the reader to fill in the picture himself, taking off from the landscape provided by the poet. A sensitive reader will find ample opportunities for this, given Merchant's finely-honed skill for creating a mood and a mystique.

Take, for example, the first poem in this slim collection of 172 haikus, which Merchant claims to have written 20 summers ago, and with which he embarked upon his experiments with this form. It reads: "Sun's fire dies: clouds glow/In pageantry the day ends/Yellow moon lights night." In just three lines, with a total of 17 syllables traditionally arranged so that the first and third lines contain five syllables and the second line seven, Merchant captures the quintessence of a peaceful evening after an eventful day.

There are other fine examples where Merchant creates soothing nature images that remain in one's mind long after the 17 syllables have vanished. Sample this haunting image association: "A single cricket/Chirps, chirps, chirps and is still/My candle sinks and dies." Or, marvel at the harmonious relationship Merchant builds up between man and his landscape with: "Falling, drifting leaves/Cover up the wooden bench/Preserving our warmth." Similarly, one can share the poet's joy in a new day: "Sunrise, when day breaks/Time to pick roses, bring smiles/To a child's bright eyes."



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Such evocative verses abound in the collection, and amaze one that so much emotion and meaning can be packed in such few syllables. If this work is Merchant's entire collection since he began writing haiku two decades ago, it is a pretty small output. Yet considering the depth he imparts to each haiku, he needs to be complimented for not sacrificing profundity at the altar of prolixity.

Nevertheless, probably because of the limitations of this verse form and the long period devoted to this collection, Merchant tends to repeat himself. To quote three such cases in point: "The quiet of dusk/I hear in the far distance/Frogs in the lotus." And, "In dusky silence/Standing still and listening/The croak of old frogs." Here is another pair: "On Mount Everest/Cherry cumulus ring top/Like friar's bald pate." And "Cloud rings mountain-top/Like soft, white cherry blossoms/Friar's bald pate shines." Then again: "The world is like dew/To evaporate in time/A world so dear, fresh." And "Dew evaporates/And this world of ours is dew/So close, so fresh, weak." Tighter editing may have eliminated such repetition, and though that would have made for an even slimmer volume, the pleasure of reading and re-reading every haiku would have been heightened. Also, the capitalization of all words throughout the book could have been avoided as it makes the reading a bit tiresome.

The spiral binding of the book adds a fine complimentary touch, and considering the popularity of such books as gift items, publisher Hoshang Bulsara, also a Zoroastrian, could well explore this avenue to give Merchant's thoughts a wider audience.

Merchant's is a fresh new voice in the world of Indian poetry. His images may not be very Indian, given the fact that he has chosen to remain loyal to the landscape of the haiku's mother country. Yet, in those occasional pieces when he turns his gaze homewards, as in "Raised to pure love: Taj/Symphony in veined marble/For eternity," Merchant displays the surety of his craft. He has the potential of being a winner should he choose to write against the Indian backdrop, as demanded of Indian poets.

He could even experiment with the haibun, a similar Japanese form of miniature verse of 17 syllables, but dealing with inter-personal relationships. Let us make bold to say, "Merchant of images/Keep fond hopes alive/For your next collection." How's that for a start? Or rather, the end?

H. J. R

Aryans and the Avesta

Looking for the Aryans by R. S. Sharma. Published in 1995 by Orient Longman Limited, 3-6-272 Himayatnagar, Hyderabad 500029. Pp: 106. Price: Rs 50.

Belonging to the Aryan race has become a kind of cross its descendants have learnt to bear. Hitler had postulated that the Germans were a pure Aryan race, and hence entitled to hegemony over the world, a view occasionally shared by some members of the Zoroastrian community who consider themselves superior to other communities. Yet many authorities have considered the Aryans to be no more than a

Those who speak the same tongue need not necessarily belong to the same racial stock

conquering race. In India, the Aryans have been thought of alternatively as aliens or, as Bhagwan Gidwani now claims in his new book *The Return of the Aryans*, the original inhabitants of the country who went to different parts of the world and then returned to India.

Who were the Aryans? Where did they come from? Were they a race at all? These are the core questions considered in *Looking for the Aryans*, a publication brought out by Orient Longman as the first in their new series, 'Comeos in History and Culture.' Authored by historian R. S. Sharma, the book should be of particular interest to the Zoroastrian community as it delineates the similarities between Aryan culture and Vedic civilization, and draws many parallels between the *Rig Veda* and the *Avesta*.

According to the book under review, King Darius of Persia called himself an Aryan in the sixth century BC, the term *arya* meaning a master or person of noble birth in the *Avesta*. Sharma points out that

the characteristics of Aryan culture, which he affirms is a post-Harappan cult, are the horse, pastoral life, and use of iron, all of which are mentioned in the *Avesta*. Cattle wealth is important in *Zend Avesta*, "both the horse and chariot are repeatedly mentioned in prayers made to Mithra." The adjective 'swift-horsed' is applied in the *Avesta* to another divinity called Apam Napat, who is also a Vedic deity. Further, *aspa* or horse forms a part of several names of chiefs or warriors in ancient Iran: Vistaspa, Pouraspa, Karespa, Gustaspa. Sharma's work also points out that the cult of Soma, called *hoama* in the Avestan language, occupies an important place in the rituals of both the branches.

An interesting sidelight is that cremation is seen as a trait of pastoral people who did not bury their dead in the earth. Though the *Avesta* forbids cremation, the author quotes Geiger's conjecture that the *dokhma* was originally a place for cremation, and suggests that the original Mazda-worshippers did not recoil from cremation.

Looking for the Aryans is a slim monograph of 74 pages with 32 additional pages of notes and a bibliography. Written in simple language, it uses a variety of archaeological and linguistic sources to guide the reader through academic labyrinths down the ages to conclusions which are commonly known, but challenged in recent times. The footnotes are assembled in one place at the end of the book so that a layman may read it without being burdened by purely scholarly interest.

Sharma's lucid study identifies the main traits of Aryan culture, and advances the argument that those who speak the same tongue need not necessarily belong to the same racial or ethnic stock. An eye-opener for many staunch racists within the community, the book provides for a better understanding of history and culture without the blinkers of fanaticism.

H. J. R

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MILESTONES

This issue of *Parsiana* presents data for the months of January and February 1996.

Also included are intercommunity marriages registered both at the Old Customs House and at the MHADA office in Bandra (East) for the five month period September 1995 to January 1996. Civil marriages between Zoroastrians have also been listed. However, names that could not be confirmed as Zoroastrian have been omitted from the list.

There were 13 intercommunity marriages plus one civil marriage between Zoroastrians registered at the MHADA office and 37 and five, respectively, at the Old Customs House.

The age of Zoroastrian brides — as listed in this issue — ranged between 21 and 48 years, the arithmetic mean (the total number of individual ages divided by the

total number of brides) being 27 years. The corresponding figures for the grooms were 21 and 51 years, averaging at 30 years.

Compared to 27 babies born in Bombay, there were 167 deaths for the two month period of January and February 1996. Sixty-five Zoroastrians succumbed to heart disease of whom 20 were 80 years and above. The other major killers were pneumonia and lung disease (28) and cancer (17). Old age and general debility claimed 10 victims whereas hypertension and anemia took seven lives each. Four deaths were attributed to brain disease and three each to gastro-intestinal haemorrhage and kidney failure. Two patients each fell prey to head injuries, bronchitis, liver disease and haemoptysis (the coughing up of blood). The 11 isolated cases registered for the two month period

were arthritis, high blood pressure, dehydration, septicemia, suffocation, tuberculosis, burns, asthma, diabetes, myasthenia gravis (a disorder characterized by marked fatigability of voluntary muscles, especially those of the eye) and duodenal ulcer (ulcer of the small intestine). In the case of two deaths, the coroner's report was pending. A nine-year-old girl and three stillborn babies (two girls and one boy) were lost to the community. The eldest to breathe her last was a 96-year-old lady. The Zoroastrian life expectancy at birth, in Bombay, was 73 years for the two month period.

The data on births, marriages and deaths has been compiled from information supplied by various newsletters and anjuman in India and abroad, courts and hospitals. This information is not always complete or consistent:

we are unable to carry data from areas where the anjuman do not furnish the particulars; the birth figures for Bombay are supplied by four hospitals — births in suburban hospitals and private nursing homes are not included unless individuals send us information together with a copy of the birth certificate. There may be an inadvertent repetition of names in the marriage list when a civil marriage precedes a religious ceremony. In the breakup of deaths according to illnesses, especially of the elderly, death is often due to a combination of several diseases.

If readers have any births/marriages/deaths they would like published, some proof to ensure the veracity of the report would be required. We are sure our readers would appreciate this requirement and cooperate with us.

AHMEDABAD

MARRIED

Behroz Manek Chhindiawala and *Berziz Rustom Contractor* of Baroda on December 28, 1995

ALLAHABAD

DIED

Ratan Hormusji Sagar, husband of *Perin* and father of *Feroz* and *Hanoz*; January 8, 1996

BANGALORE

MARRIED

Delna Shahuna of Madras, daughter of *Zavera* and *Kersi* and *Arun Baidur* of Delhi, son of *Mira* and *B. Nagesh Rao*; December 27, 1995

BHAVNAGAR

BORN

A girl, *Tehnaz*, to *Havovi* and *Hormazd Kotwal*; January 16, 1996

BOMBAY

BORN

A boy, *Jehan*, to *Zenobia* and *Kersi Engineer*; September 7, 1995

A girl, *Janine*, to *Arnavaz* and *Naoshad Eduljee*; October 31
A boy, *Zal*, to *Parizad* and *Marzin Shroff*; January 5, 1996
A girl to *Mehernaz* and *Freddy Elavia*; January 6

A girl to *Mithra* and *Shahzad Kalantary*; January 8

A girl to *Zenobia* and *Shahrookh Davar*; January 14

A boy to *Sonali* and *Yazd Goiporia*; January 15

A girl, *Roshni*, to *Pervin* and *Daraius Dadachanji*; January 17

A boy to *Rukshana* and *Marzban Lelinwalla*; January 18

A boy to *Kumud* and *Bomi Manekshaw*; January 18

A boy to *Neeta* and *Kurush Irani*; January 19

A girl to *Kashmira* and *Zubin Patel*; January 19

A girl to *Persis* and *Percy Batliwalla*; January 21

A girl to *Diana* and *Firdosh Tolat*; January 27

A girl to *Anahita* and *Sorab Parekh*; January 30

A boy to *Nilofer* and *Hormazd Cooper*; January 31

A girl to *Bakhtavar* and *Homi Mistry*; February 2

A girl to *Ava* and *Farokh Ghadiali*, sister to *Benaaz*; February 7

A girl to *Shanaz* and *Homyar Limbuvala*; February 7

A girl to *Kashmira* and *Firdaus Tarachand*; February 8

A girl to *Firoza* and *Porusp Tarapore*; February 9

A boy to *Gulshan* and *Firdaus Shroff*; February 10

A boy to *Parveen* and *Porus Pardiwalla*; February 12

A boy to *Shiraz* and *Rustom Daruwalla*; February 14

A boy to *Kashmira* and *Shapoor Khodadadi*; February 14

A boy to *Pearl* and *Homyar Madan*; February 17

A boy to *Nazneen* and *Murad Daruwalla*; February 18

A girl to *Farzana* and *Sharukh Chothia*; February 23

A boy, *Vahishtaad*, to *Farida* and *Hector Engineer*; February 26

MARRIED

Parendi Kersi Solina and *Anvesh Ramchandra Kommoji*; September 7, 1995

Lata Motwani and *Vispi Rusi Patel*; September 16

Catharine John Furtado and *Bhagchand Aspy Driver*; September 22

Geraldine M. Hansotia and *Rattan M. Hansotia*; September 22

Sharmeen Noshir Marphettia and *Kevic Anant Setalvad*; September 26

Binaifer R. Damania and *Samrat Bedi*; October 3

Hufrish Phiroz Irani and *Sameer Saibuddin Rajguru*; October 6

Pariza Adi Shroff and *Khushroo Hoshang Mehta*; October 16

Shernaz S. Kharegat and *Gerard F. Desa*; October 19

Tinaz Homi Sukhadwalla and *Vinod Manipal Singh Kaniyalal Chande*; October 27

Seena Sarasappan and *Shahrukh Aspandiar Irani*; November 5

Armaity Noshir Cooper and *Jal Rustomji Amroli*; November 8

Naazneen Jehangir Sholapurwala and *Akshay Pennal Solomon*; November 10

Faith Dinshaw Nagporewalla and *Dhunjishaw Sheriar Wadia*; November 10

Sonika Verma and *Rashid Irani*; November 15

Achala Rastogi and *Dara Naval Ichhaporia*; November 18

Yashmin Nariman Chergeman and *Mehernosh Soli Pithawalla*; November 21

Pearl Salim Akhtar and *Viraf Sohrab Todywalla*; November 21

Kalavati Sakham Navale and *Eric Nariman Dhatigara*; November 23

Havov Burjis Vesuna and *Samir Firoz Vastani*; November 24

Ketayun R. Petigara and *Bosco Winston Pedro*; November 25

Seema S. Honarmand and *Farhad F. H. Khurshed*; November 30

Dilbar Chinwalla and *Ishrat Hussain*; December 1

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 Rashmi Jaibhagwan Sharma and Adi Behram Sethna; December 4
 Kainaz B. Gandhi and Shilpi S. Shyamani; December 8
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 Yasmine Lovejoy Mehervanjee and Hoshang Kali Katrak; December 13
 Nandini Ranjithkumar and Zareer Contractor; December 18
 Anita Vishwanath Deshmukh and Cyrus Rusi Gandhi; December 19
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 Dilkash Nozer Mazda and Parshid Sheriar Falahati; December 21
 Mehr Sorab Poonawalla and Avinash Ganpat Gujar; December 22

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 Nergish Meher Dalal and Khusrul Rustomji Italia; December 25
 Soonu Homi Ghadially and Rohinton Rustom Mehta; December 25
 Armin Rohinton Sachinwalla and Nauzer Jimmy Mistry; December 25
 Rozbeh Mehelly Karbhari and Adil Faramroz Patrawala; December 25
 Meher Khushru Wadia and Hormuzd Neryosang Sinor; December 25
 Heena Sadrudin Bilawala and Adil Aspi Engineer; December 26
 Vahbiz Homi Kasad and Fersosh Phiroze Mistry; December 26
 Caroline Mitchell Soans and Zubin Rustom Mullanferoze; December 26
 Jehanara Behram Dalal and Rusi Noshir Namerian; December 26
 Armin J. Rangoonwala and Najeeb Ali Yousuff Ali Mirza; December 27
 Priya Kumar Sharma and

Manek C. Pardiwalla; December 28
 Armine Cawas Tukina and Firdosh Sam Mehta; December 28
 Kamal Dhunji Sidhwa and Kaikhusrul Vicaji Taraporevala; December 28
 Sotoudeh Namdar Shahvir and Mehrban Baman Afsaddizadeh; December 29
 Parizad Homi Munshi of Umarsadi, Gujarat and Paurasp Peshotan Patel; December 29
 Zubeen Minoo Mehta and Meheryar Noshir Rivetna; December 29
 Diana Robert Viegas and Rayomand Kersi Tijoriwalla; December 29
 Farzine Adi Parelwala and Hormuz Soli Adrianwala; December 30
 Hilda Firoze Elavia and Neville Sam Deboo; December 30
 Daliah Kersaspe Solina and Porus Homi Kermani; December 30
 Behroze Minoo Mistry and Yezdi Dadiba Patrawalla; December 30
 Binaifer Bahadur Soonawalla and Tehmtan Framroz Irani;

December 31
 Monaz Rohinton Davar of Ahmedabad and Homiar Kersi Kadodwalla; December 31
 Roshan Allahmurad Khushnami and Sanjay Niranjani Maniar; December 31
 Farzean Aspy Mistry and Anil Devanand Kamaria; January 1, 1996
 Meher Dhanjishaw Billimoria and P. D. Baburaj; January 2
 Ferzana Faredun Madan and Zubin Soli Behramkamdin; January 2
 Shireen Pasy Dinshaw of Pune and Shiavax Jal Vazifdar; January 2
 Tanaz K. Bhagat and Rajiv Yadav; January 2
 Persis Bomi Jehangir and Viraf Dhunjishaw Mistry; January 4
 Dilnaaz Adi Patel of Massachusetts, USA and Eruch Rusi Rustomji; January 4
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Dilmeher Soli Irani and Tehmul
Rusi Mistry; January 9
Lyla Jangoo Bativala and Sam
Erach Todywala; January 10
Parvana Farokh Irani and
Raten Dorab Patel; January 11
Nilloufer Minoo Dastoor and
Rohinton Jal Irani; January 12
Roxanne Parvez Hakim and
Nicholas John Ichiro Kumol
Pilgrim; January 12
Niloufer Noshir Palkhiwalla
and Cyrus Dara Shroff;
 January 12
Zeeba Keki Karanjia and
Darayus Jangoo Shroff;
 January 12
Hufriz Baman Irani and
Hosheder Adi Jehangir;
 January 13
Jasmin Rustom Zandbaf and
Rustom Jamshed Jamsheedian;
 January 14

Kaneejeeh Dara Kadva and Vispi
Dinshaw Patel; January 15
Natasha Padam Sethna and
Rahul Nityanand Singh;
 January 15
Kashmira Sarosh Todiwalla
and Vispi Jehangir Vesuna;
 January 15
Homai Ardesir Umrigar of Mira
Rd, Thane and Noshir
Mondegar Irani; January 16
Minaz Naozer Kavarana and
Jimmy Nauzar Maneckshaw;
 January 16
Parizad Manek Daruwala and
Farad Adi Modi; January 16
Harsha Nalinikant Kilachand
and Mehernosh Ardesir
Heeramanek; January 17
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Jeroze Faramroze Bhadha of
Jamnagar and Dinyar Jal
Gilder; January 21
Tanaz Pheroze Chikhliwala and
Burjis Dadi Sethna of New
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Dimple Noshir Karanjia and
Hoshang Dara Vevaina;
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Zenobia Percy Pastakia of
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Armaity Kekobad Mody and
Parimal Prabhuhai Patel;
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Veera Freddy Shroff and Neville
Minoo Sanjana; January 25
Kamal Ardesir Karkaria and
Farokh Kershasp Anklesaria;
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Aileen Andrade and Zubin C.

Watchmaker; January 27
Shum Menglin and Adil
Tehemasp Kelawala; January 28
Pouroochisti Dara Wadia and
Shahzad Firoze Dorabshaw;
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Rayomand Nariman Irani;
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Kermeen Dadi Bharthania and
Shahrukh Adi Kanga of Thane;
February 5
Zeenaz Jamshed Irani and
Dinyar Rustom Tatary;
February 6
Maharukh Noshirwan Dastoor
of Sanjan and Percy Navalshah
Khandhadia of Achad, Dist
Thane; February 8
Jasmine Jamasp Palia and
Cusrow Minoo Damania;
February 9
Simone Jehangir Dubash and
Farokh Dinshaw Pandole;
February 9
Parizad Hoshang Bilimoria
and Rumi Hoshang Ranji;
February 9
Rukhshana Firoze Batliwalla
and Hoshi Sohrab Edulji;
February 10

Avan Jamshedji Patel and
Zubin Keki Bhungara;
February 12
Shazneen Pestonji Aspar and
Zubin Murzban Mehta;
February 13
Delna Jimmy Bulsara and
Jamshed Pervaz Mistry;
February 13
Farzana Kersy Tata and
Sharukh Minoo Baria;
February 16
Meher Dinshaw Dadina and
Adil Phiroze Master of
Calcutta; February 16
Binaifar Noshir Buhariwalla
and Hoshang Jehangir Nazir;
February 19
Anaita Faredun Delkhah
and Yazad Jehangir Boga;
February 22
Roshni Polly Udwadia and
Darayas Edulji Palsetia;
February 25
Kamal Aspi Medhora and
Kersas Hoshang Vesuna;
February 26
Vahbeez Dara Bhavnagri and
Yezdi Tehmuras Shroff;
February 27
Maharookh Adi Dumasia and
Pourusasp Burjor Sidhwa;
February 27

DIED
Behramshaw Bomanji Sethna
(78), residing at Hirji Sethna
Bldg, Zoroastrian Clny, Tardeo
Rd, 400007; December 31, 1995
Baby girl of Nilofer Noshir
Bhiwandiwalla (stillborn), F/2,
Bhiwandiwalla Ter, Dhobitalao,
400002; January 1, 1996
Khurshid Behram Havewala
(39), Above Chakala Post
Office, Andheri-Kurla Rd,
Andheri (W), 400093; January 1
Najamai Navroji Karadia (85),
6/A, Kaka Block, Marzban
Clny, Lamington Rd, 400008;
January 1
Roshan Pesi Masani (73), 9,
Malbari Bldg, New Khareghat
Clny, Hughes Rd, 400007;
January 1
Jaiji Minocher Batliwala (93),
30, Sleater Rd, 400007;
January 2
Banoo Fredoon Bhowmagri
(71), 11, Deluxe Apts, 664,
Altamount Rd, 400026;
January 2
Kaikobad Rustomji Dalal (68),
Banoo Mans, Cumballa Hill,
400026; January 2
Soli Cawasji Dhalla (79),
Meher-Behram Bldg, Khetwadi

7th Lane, 400004; January 3
Homi Hiraji Kapadia (78), D,
Bhatia Soc Bldg, Princess St,
400002; January 3
Kairsas Nariman Daruwalla
(82), 3, Maneck Mans, Station
Rd, Mahim, 400016; January 4
Adi Maneksha Kapadia (78),
Queens Chmb, Queens Rd,
400020; January 4
Dinamai Jehangirji
Achhadwalla (85), 5/2, Kendra-
Side, Godrej Clny, Vikroli (E),
400079; January 5
Palonji Rustomji Bhathena (60),
N/12, Nowroz Baug, Lalbaug,
400012; January 5
Rattanshah Rustomji Choksi
(68), Albless Bldg, Chikalwadi,
Grant Rd, 400007; January 5
Mani Fakirji Randeria (65),
162, Mody St, Fort, 400001;
January 5
Freny Keki Sethna (68), 4,
Rustom Baug, Victoria Rd,
Byculla; 400027; January 5
Maneck Ratanji Karkaria (79),
166, Sir J. J. Hse, Bora Bazar
St, Fort, 400001; January 6
Mehra Manchershaw Madon
(75), 3/28, Todiwalla Bldg,
Sunmill Rd, Lower Parel,
400013; January 6

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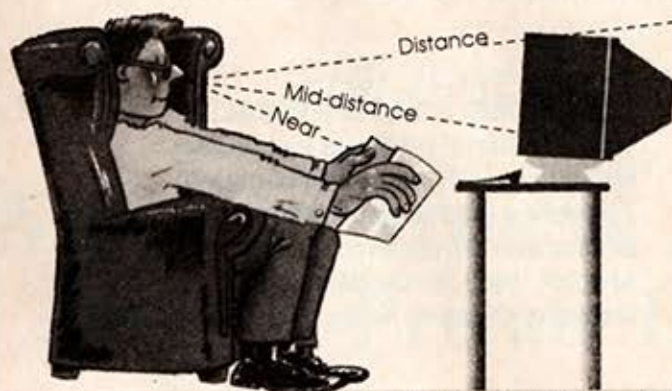
Freny Homi Irani (79), Sea View, Opp Shivaji Park, Mahim, 400016; January 7
Rati Jal Marker (82), B. Satya Bhama Nivas, Kashinath Rd, Tardeo, 400034; January 8
Tehmi (Tehmina) Rustom Bharucha (70), Alpawalla Bldg, M. M. Chotani Rd, Mahim, 400016; January 9
Minoo Shapurji Screwvala (70), B/24, Cusrow Baug, S. B. Rd, 400039; January 9
Dally Meherji Vazifdar (58), Dadiseth Bldg, Wadia St, Tardeo, 400034; January 10
Rustomji Limjibhai Patel (95), 752, Dr Jal Vakil Bldg, Dr Ghanti Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; January 11
Minoo Erachsha Bharucha (69), D/17, Rustom Baug, Victoria Rd, Byculla 400027; January 12
Bahadur Jehangirji Kapadia (70), 303, Sunder Baug Co-op Hsg Soc, Opp Jain Temple, Mathuradas Rd, Kandivli (W), 400067; January 12
Navroze Bhikhaji Panthaki (79), C/o Rustom Faramna Agiary, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; January 12
Mitha Jamshed Subedar (85),

Gool Manor, Near Colaba Telephone Exchange, Colaba, 400005; January 12
Freny Ratansha Dadachanji (96), Bilwa Kunj, Pandita Ramabai Rd, Gamdevi, 400007; January 13
Noshir Sorabji Ghaswalla (76), 14, New Mistry Bldg, Balaram St, Grant Rd, 400007; January 13
Dolat Keki Marfatia (54), 8-7/C, Sir Ratan Tata Clny, Tardeo, 400034; January 13
Loveji Motabhoj Contractor (76), 17, Heera Meher, Wodehouse Rd, Colaba, 400005; January 14
Jehangir Darabsha Engineer (75), 8/5, Tata Clny, Tardeo, 400034; January 15
Jan Hormusji Framji Manekshaw (87), 45, Valentina, N. Gamadia Rd, 400026; January 15
Kercy Rustomji Mistry (85), A/8, Satyabhama Niwas, Kashinath St, Tardeo, 400034; January 15
Edul Hormusji Soonawalla (75), 605/B, Venus, 4th Cross Rd, Lokhandwalla Complex, Andheri (W), 400058;

January 15
Temina Keki Basla (83), 3, Bandstand Apts, B. J. Rd, 400050; January 16
Goolbai Behramsha Contractor (85), Kotwal Hse, Sleater Rd, Grant Rd (W), 400007; January 16
Sohrabmasa Merwan Irani (73), Hirabai Petit Bldg, Opp Grant Rd Rly Stn, Grant Rd (E), 400007; January 16
Khorshed Jehangirji Kotwal (80), B/57/551, M.I.G. Clny, Gandhi Ngr, Bandra (E), 400051; January 16
Tehmina Manekshaw Laly (86), J/13, Cusrow Baug, S. B. Rd, 400039; January 16
Perin Minoo Master (78), Sky Scraper, 143, Breach Candy, 400026; January 16
Freny Dara Bativala (59), 4/31, A. H. Wadia Baug, Parel Tank Rd, Kalachowki, 400033; January 17
Perin Framroze Billimoria (78), 707, South Wing, Bridge View, Hansraj Lane, Byculla, 400027; January 17
Minoo Dhunjishaw Daruwala (60), 20, Hormus Bldg, Sussex Rd, Victoria Gardens, Byculla,

400027; January 17
Sorab (Soli) Aflatoon Irani (62), A/12-A, Ness Baug, Nana Chowk, 400007; January 17
Bhikha Faramroj Jokhi (71), 41, Soonaiji Mans, 66/K, Forjett St, Gowalia Tank, 400036; January 17
Jini Sorabji Bhathena (52), Tapia Bldg, Jalbhai St, Charni Rd Jn, 400004; January 18
Tehmi Dhunjishaw Gazdar (92), 45, Gazdar Hse, Bhulabhai Desai Rd, 400026; January 18
Burjor Phirojshaw Mistry (70), 219/A, Amroliwala Bldg, N. M. Joshi Marg, Lower Parel, 400013; January 18
Sam Navroji Patel (59), F. S. Parukh Dharamshalla, 34, Hughes Rd, 400007; January 18
Roshan Behram Engineer (58), Seth Nusserwanji Block, Tata Blocks, Bandra, 400050; January 19
Shapurji Nowroji Adajania (76), Awabai Mans, Henry Rd, Colaba, 400039; January 20
Ala Rustom Dadyburjor (83), Banoo Manor, 12/B, Dadyseth Rd, Chowpatty, 400007; January 20
Padam Pestonji Dehnugara

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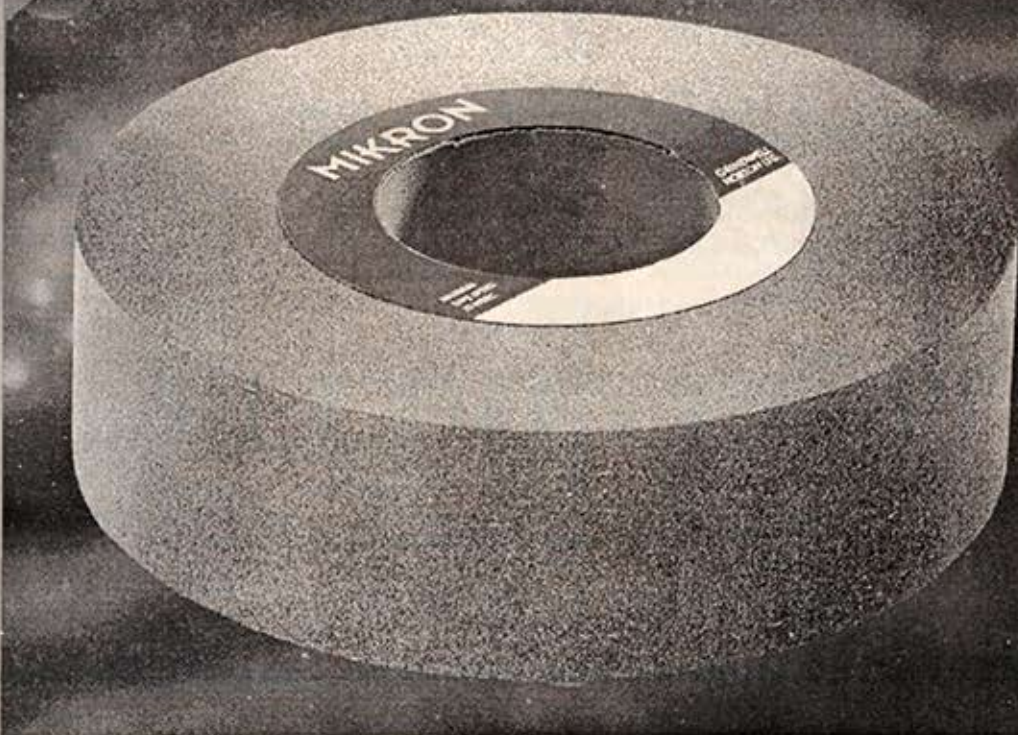


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- **Elimination of in-process gauging and frequent wear compensation.**

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**GRINDWELL
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(94), 608, Khareghat Rd,
Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014;
January 20
Manijeh Cawasji Ghadialy (80),
8, Hormuzd Bldg, 33, Sleater
Rd, Grant Rd, 400007;
January 20
Baby girl of Navaz Sarosh
Palkhiwala (stillborn), 785/A,
M. Joshi Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar,
400014; January 20
Keki Jijibhoy Santoke (85),
Pandey Dharamshalla, Colaba,
400005; January 20
Aloo Noshir Tata (74), G/16,
Nowroz Baug, Lalbaug,
400012; January 20
Soli Nowroji Bharucha (80),
4/7, Himalaya Hse, 109, Worli
Sea Face, 400018; January 21
Homai Bamanshaw Karkaria
(87), 789, Kerawala Bldg, Jame
Jamshed Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar,
400014; January 21
Soona Phiroz Daruwalla (72),
F/14, Cusrow Baug, S. B. Rd,
400039; January 22
Khurshed Eruchji Desai (78),
B, Wassiamull Bldg, Grant Rd,
400007; January 22
Sakar Hormusji Motiwalla (73),
Gazdar Hse, 45, Bhulabhai
Desai Rd, 400026; January 22

Homayun Dhunjishaw Setna
(87), 34/A, Jolly Maker Apts
No 1, Cuffe Parade, 400005;
January 22
Kaikobad Kaikushru Bengali
(90), 78, Bhagya Apt,
Bhardawadi, Andheri (W),
400058; January 23
Mehera Ratanshaw Cooper
(86), 8/16, Rustom Baug,
Victoria Rd, Byculla, 400027;
January 23
Dina Keki Engineer (73), 22,
Station Ter, Naushir Bharucha
Marg, 400007; January 23
Keki Bomanji Jasoomany (70),
S/5, Dalal Est, Lamington Rd,
400008; January 23
Mehra Kaikobad Katila (83),
D-1/302, Jumbo Darshan Soc,
Andheri (W), 400069;
January 23
Mottan Dhanjishaw Bhagat
(81), Umrigar Bldg, Zoroastrian
Clny, Chikalwadi, Tardeo,
400007; January 24
Daulat Minocher Master (86),
T/16, Dalal Est, Bhadkamkar
Marg, Near Bombay Central,
400008; January 24
Banoobai Maneckshaw Morena
(78), 730, Jehangir Vimadlal
Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014;

January 24
Tehmina Bamanshaw
Daruwala (84), 691, Albless
Bldg, Dinshaw Master Rd,
Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014;
January 25
Goolamai Khodayar Irani (80),
Old Wadia Bldg, Chandanwadi,
Dhobitalao, 400002; January 25
Pesi Hormusji Karkaria (72),
40, Gopal Mans, Turner Rd,
Bandra (W), 400050;
January 25
Manek Edulji Patel (83), Fakhri
Manzil, Shankerseth Rd, Grant
Rd (W), 400007; January 25
Dinshaw Behram Zack (75),
190, Princess St, 400002;
January 25
Framji Ferdoonji Bode (77),
Princess Bldg, 275, Princess St,
400002; January 26
Behli Bomanshaw Dastoor (53),
Silver Arc Apts, T. P. S. Rd,
Borivli (W), 400092;
January 26
Aloo Jamshed Kapadia (76),
Bag-E-Sara, 16, Nepean Sea
Rd, 400036; January 26
Jer Kekobad Palkhiwala (92),
Patel Wadi, Hathi Mohalla,
Vasai, Dist Thane, 401201;
January 26

Vistasp Jehangir Punagar (84),
Rajesh Mans, 109, M. Karve
Rd, 400020; January 26
Hormasji Maneckji Seervai
(89), Shiv Shanti Bhuvan, 146,
M. K. Rd, Churchgate, 400020;
January 26
Minoo Ratanshaw Medhora
(45), 508, Vikas Tower, Amboli
Fatak, Andheri, 400069;
January 27
Jamshed Jehangir Colah (41),
63/C, Kismet, Bhulabhai Desai
Rd, 400026; January 28
Dolly Cawasji Tukina (77), Y/6,
Cama Bldg, Cama Rd, Andheri
(W), 400058; January 28
Mahafreen Burjoo Chinoy (9),
Bhesania Bldg, Fort Market,
Fort, 400001; January 29
Doly Parvez Daruwala (65), A,
Mistry Park, S. M. Rd, Antop
Hill, Wadala (W), 400037;
January 29
Coomi Minoo Mistry (79), 620,
Rajiv, Jam-e-Jamshed Rd,
Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014;
January 29
Meherbai Dinshawji Bharucha
(94), 35/C, Jairajbhai St,
400008; January 30
Homai Ratanshaw Karanjia
(95), 524, Commissariat Bldg,



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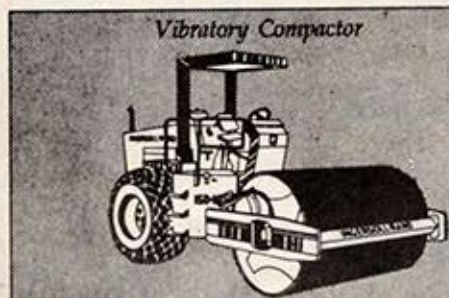
Shapoorji Pallonji Centre, 41/44, Minoo Desai Marg, Colaba,
Bombay-400 005. Phone: 2870211/2870195/2870197.

Adenwalla Rd, Matunga,
400019; January 30
Jalejar Dadabhoy
Kudyaniwalla (88), Room 89,
189, Hirabai Petit Charity Bldg,
Opp Grant Rd Stn, 400007;
January 30
Jal Kaikhushroo Makhania
(80), 1/26, Dhunbaiwadi Parsi
Clny, Dadabhai Rd, Vile Parle
(W), 400056; January 31
Dhun Nadir Vania (78), A/14,
Rustom Baug, Victoria Rd,
Byculla, 400026; January 31
Homai Ardeshtir Bharucha (72),
A-1/7, Shapoor Baug, V. Patel
Rd, 400004; February 1
Khorshedbanoo Rustomji Irani
(85), D-2, 61, S. B. Bharucha
Baug, S. V. Rd, Andheri (W),
400058; February 1
Motibai Framroj Panthaki (74),
Mota Mans, Motibai St, Tardeo
Rd, 400007; February 1
Dorabji Dinshaji Sadri (82),
286/A, Bhatia Society Bldg,
Princess St, 400002; February 1
Aimai Jivanji Vesuna (84), 672,
Society Bldg, Rd No 14, Parsi
Clny, Dadar, 400014;
February 1
Khorshed Dadabhaji Mistry
(85), 612/C, Janak Deep, J. P.

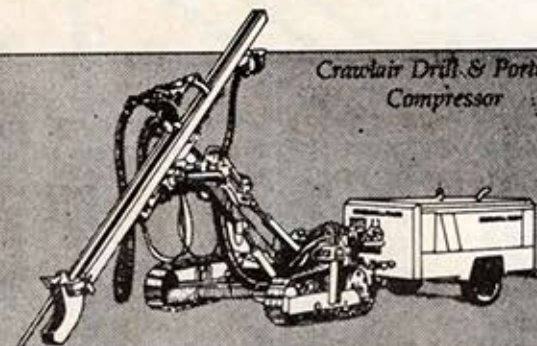
Rd, Andheri (W), 400061;
February 2
Dorabji Keikhusru Panveliwalla
(76), 628, Turel Ter, Homavazir
Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014;
February 2
Nargesh Pesi Dastoor (69),
15/4, Contractor Bldg, Gamadia
Clny, Tardeo, 400007;
February 3
Hilla Darabsha Shroff (77),
Petit Widows' Chawl,
Thakurdwar, 400002;
February 3
Putla Rustomji Anklesaria (87),
648, Kaka Bldg, Firdoshi Rd,
Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014;
February 4
Pesi Ardeshtir Kanga (92), 34,
Boyce Bglw, Sleater Rd,
400007; February 4
Tehmina Eruchshaw Vatchha
(90), G/44, Cusrow Baug, S. B.
Rd, 400039; February 4
Jimmy Bapuji Dubash (85),
Wagla Cooper Bldg, Opp Super
Cinema, 400004; February 6
Mary Nasserwanji Kanny (90),
South Ville, 106, Nathalal
Parekh Marg, Colaba, 400005;
February 6
Behmanshaw Hormusjee Mehta
(66), 2, P. B. Mody Bldg,

Golanji Hill, Parel, 400012;
February 6
Amy Soli Irani (52), D-2/91, S.
B. Bharucha Baug, S. V. Rd,
Andheri (W), 400058;
February 7
Bachan Boman Kohinoor (68),
F/3, Cusrow Baug, S. B. Rd,
400039; February 8
Darayesh Rashid Badshah (41),
Phirozshaw Bldg, Next to
Soonaiji Agiary, Gowalia Tank,
400036; February 10
Aspi Behram Irani (70), 9/3,
India House, Kemp's Corner,
400026; February 10
Firoze Jamshed Nariman (82),
10, Kalpana Villa, Viman Ngr,
Pune; February 10
Minocheher Nusserwanji Lala
(79), 14, Tarachand Block, Old
Khareghat Clny, Hughes Rd,
400007; February 11
Dhunjishaw Nanabhoy Sethna
(80), 34/A, Jolly Maker Apts
No 1, Cuffe Parade, 400005;
February 11
Arnavaaz Phiroz Bulsara (69),
10, Mehta Bldg, Panthaki Baug,
Hargovindas S. Lane, Andheri
(E), 400069; February 12
Jer Sorab Mody (64), 19,
Colaba Chmbs, Colaba Rd,

400005; February 12
Phirozsha Darabsha Pundole
(87), 6/4, Rustom Baug,
Victoria Rd, Byculla, 400027;
February 12
Pherozeshah Behramsha
Wankadia (66), 1/803, Gulshan,
Juhu Lane, Andheri (W),
400058; February 12
Fali Dinshaji Mistry (79),
Atash Apts, 3, Mehella Patel
Agiary Lane, Grant Rd, 400007;
February 13
Ramyar Dadabhoy Tata (81),
50, Hill Rd, Bandra (W),
400050; February 13
Navroji Bomanji Patel (80),
104-A/2, Chabia Park, Kapoor
Bawadi, Thane (W), 400601;
February 14
Sorabji Godrej Sopariwalla
(76), C/o, H. S. Sopariwalla,
286, Sweethome, 102, Sher-E-
Punjab Clny, Off Mahakali
Caves Rd, Andheri (E), 400093;
February 14
Maneckshaw Edulji Mistry (89),
D/2, Jer Baug, Dr Ambedkar Rd,
Byculla, 400027; February 15
Aloo Jal Chibber (75), Mayo
Hse, 9, Cooperage Rd, 400039
February 16
Banoo Bomanji Choksey (90),



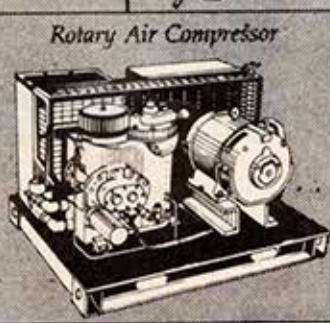
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126, St Cyril Rd, Bandra,
400050; February 16
Manecksha Pirojsha Deboo
(75), 83/A, Mazda Mans, S. S.
Gaikwad Rd, Dhobitalao,
400002; February 16
Najoo Minoo Hodiwalla (78),
F/20, Navajbai Contractor
Baug, Mori Rd, Mahim,
400016; February 16
Rustom Rattanshaw Cooper
(73), 348, Fence Piece Rd,
Chigwell, Essex, IG 75 DY,
England; February 18
Meherwan Merzban Dalal (74),
422/F, Panchseel III, Raheja
Township, Malad (E), 400097;
February 18
Meharbai Dhunjisha Hazary
(96), C/o Jer Jussawala, Besant
Villa, Theosophical Clny, Juhu,
400049; February 18
Dara Fali Master (60), G/2,
Nowroz Baug, Lalbaug,
400012; February 18
Khurshid Cawas Bhabha (82),
42, West Minster, 294, V. N.
Purav Marg, Sion, 400022;
February 19
Boman Darabshaw Dubash
(74), Firuz-Ara, 160, M. Karve
Rd, 400021; February 19
Bomi Jamshed Irani (70), F. S.
Parukh Dharamshalla, 34,

Hughes Rd, 400007;
February 19
Homai Kaikhasroo Khajotia
(67), 12/3, Lentin Bldg,
Gamadia Clny, Tardeo, 400007;
February 19
Gool Kekhashru Marolia (82),
A. Shirin Manzil, Dinbai Petit
St, Grant Rd, 400007;
February 19
Fali Shapurji Master (78),
Motiwalla Mans, 66/B, Gowalia
Tank Rd, 400036; February 19
Sherbanoo Cawasji Patel (93),
O/13, S. B. Bharucha Baug, S.
V. Rd, Andheri (W), 400058;
February 19
Viraf Khodabux Irani (43),
Kuka Sadan, Sopari Baug,
Parel, 400012; February 20
Baby boy of Nilufer Neville
Patel (stillborn), P/4, Godrej
Baug, Off Nepean Sea Rd,
400036; February 20
Dali Rustomji Dastur (69),
M/57, Cusrow Baug, S. B. Rd,
400039; February 21
Mehera Homi Doctor (92),
73/A, Fareedon Ct, S. B. Rd,
400005; February 21
Rohinton Behram Irani (37),
1/B, Petit Bldg, Avabai Petit
Lane, Balaram St, Grant Rd,
400007; February 21

Darabshah Khursedji Karanjia
(84), 78, Acharya Hse, 1st
Marine St, Dhobitalao, 400002;
February 21
Bacha Jamshedji Sarkari (69),
504, Mahavir Apts I, Off J. P.
Rd, Andheri (W), 400058;
February 21
Jal Maneckshaw Doctor (90),
610, Jame-Jamshed Rd, Parsi
Clny, Dadar, 400014;
February 22
Dara Hormusji Ghadially (55),
Wadia Fire-Temple, Princess
St, Dhobitalao, 400002;
February 22
Amy Homi Katki (66), 2/12/A,
A. H. Wadia Baug, Parel Tank
Rd, 400033; February 22
Perin Cawasji Tengra (69), 4,
School Bldg, Cusrow Baug, S.
B. Rd, 400039; February 22
Dhunjisha Firozsha Vesuna
(66), 3/12, Bhedwar Bldg,
Chotani Rd, Mahim, 400016;
February 23
Roshan Adi Irani (70), B/35,
Meherzin Soc, 109/A,
Wodehouse Rd, 400005;
February 24
Gool Jal Mehta (87), Dhana
Patel Bldg, 232, Tardeo Rd,
400007; February 24
Sheroo Sorabji Patel (75),

Maneck Mans, M. M. C. Rd,
Opp Canosa Convent, Mahim,
400016; February 24
Behram Dorabji Contractor
(85), 203, Jupiter Apts, 41,
Cuffe Parade, 400005;
February 25
Jaiji Jehangir Shroff (80), 32,
Jame Jamshed Bldg, Dadar
T. T., 400014; February 25
Banoo Hormusji Antia (80), 9,
Lentin Bldg, Gamadia Clny,
Tardeo Rd, 400007;
February 26
Eruch Fardunji Minbatiwala
(63), 2, Mayflower, Carmichael
Rd, 400026; February 26
Maneck Nariman Mobedjina
(69), 681/B, Firdausi Rd, Parsi
Clny, Dadar, 400014;
February 26
Tehmuras Kaikhashru Divecha
(83), 10/12, Bhiwandiwalla
Bldg, Wadia St, Tardeo,
400034; February 28
Cawasji Pirozsha Batliwalla
(89), 815, Engineer Bldg, Jame
Jamshed Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar,
400014; February 29
Phirozeshaw Jehangir Dumasia
(83), Gool Mhl, Sleater Rd,
400007; February 29
Perinbanu Dinshawji Fitter
(83), 148, Abbasi Bldg, Opp

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400008; February 29
Saam Noshir Nanabhai
(Master) (70), 724, Society
Bldg, Dinshaw Master Rd, Parsi
Clny, Dadar, 400014;
February 29
Boman Darabsha Pithawala
(63), 25/5, Godrej Clny,
Vikhroli (E), 400079;
February 29

CALCUTTA

BORN
A boy, *Nikhil*, to *Gina*
and *Dicky Shrestha*;
December 11, 1995
A boy, *Chirag*, to *Lisa* and
Varun Shukla; January 1, 1996
A boy to *Tehnaz* and *Arun*
Punwani; February 23

MARRIED

Farida Jeejeebhoy and *Savindar*
Singh; January 7
Naomi Daroga of Delhi and
Percy Mistry; January 28

DIED

Nergez Sethna; January 6
Najoo Sorabhji Batliwalla,
sister of *Behram*, late *Heera*
Dubas, *Sarah Batliwalla*, *Moti*
Dubash, *Boman*, *Framjee*,

Hirjee and *Palon*; January 20
Dinshaw Rutton Kotwal,
husband of *Pilloo* and father
of *Shiraz* and *Firoze*;
January 26
Jaloo Navroji, husband of
Arni and father of *Aban*
Confectioner and *Jimmy*;
February 14

DARJEELING

DIED

Jehangir Kaikhushroo Gora;
January 26

DELHI

BORN

A boy, *Mehrab*, to *Margarita*
(*Cookie*) and *Armin Shroff*,
brother to *Sheriar* and *Maneck*;
January 9

MARRIED

Sharu Dhunta and *Malcolm*
Anjirbag of Bombay, son of
Najoo and *Framroze*;
February 8

JHANSI

MARRIED

Roshni Bhagat, daughter of
Aban and *Jimmy* and *Zahl*
Feroz Tantra of Dehradun;
October 25, 1995

JAMSHEDPUR

MARRIED

Persis Daraius Antia of
Bombay and *Zubin Diky Mody*;
December 26

DIED

Perin Gheyara, mother of
Kelly; August 19

NASIK

BORN

A girl, *Shaanaz*, to *Veera* and
Rohinton Mehta, sister to
Benaisha; September 7

NAVSARI

MARRIED

Tenaz Bhagalia, daughter of
Shahbanoo and *Parvez* and
Kaizad Dumasia, son of *Firoza*
and late *Dinshaw*; November 19

POONA

BORN

A boy to *Benaifer* and *Phiroze*
Suratia; November 20

DIED

Homayum Kekashru Namiryani
(82), Asiatic Bakery, Opp
Police Chowky, Yerwada;
January 9, 1996
Pesi Ardeshtir Bharucha (90),

A/2, *Hermes Classic*, 3,
Mangaldas Rd, 411001;
January 26
Nargis Homi Patel (60),
941, *Nana Peth*, 411001;
January 26
Homai Khodayar Kayani (84),
624, *Sachapir St*, 411001;
January 29
Behramji Hormosji Pestonjee
(98), 257/2, *Makki Villa*, *Green*
Park Soc, *Baner*, 411045;
February 1
Piroja Burjourji Vakil (90), 11,
Pushpak Soc, *Kalyani Ngr*,
411014; February 4
Rohinton Dinshaw Aga (60),
Boat Club Rd, 411001;
February 16
Khurshid Bezon Vakil (91), 23,
Gidney Park, 411001;
February 17
Bacha Eruch Behramsha (78),
2064, *Jan Mohammed St*,
Camp, 411001; February 19

SECUNDERABAD

BORN

A girl, *Shiraz*, to *Parizad*
and *Jehangir Pilcher*;
October 5, 1995

MARRIED

Dilnawaz J. Batliwalla and

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Mehernosh M. Irani;
January 5, 1996

DIED

Soona S. Mistry (78);
October 8, 1995
Burjor B. Baria (86);
October 21
Pirojshah Pestonji Debara (83);
November 11
Tehmurasp Motahji Dastoor
(83); December 2
Gool Pesi Bodhanwalla (63);
December 6
Bomi Rustomji Mehta (64);
December 24
Rashid Hormusji Debara (75);
January 11, 1996
Rusi Dadi Banaji (73);
January 20
Jal D. Bengalli (64); January 28

SURAT

MARRIED

Jasmin Amalsardiwalla and
Sairus Minoo Aibara of
Nagpur; December 26, 1995

DIED

Eruchshaw Shapurji Dumasia
(84); Paliga St, Nanpura,
395001; January 2, 1996

Jamshed Pirosha Coopar (72),
Station Rd, Pardi, Dist
Surendranagar, 396145;
January 6
Sheramai Minocher Dumasia
(84), Alahi Baug, Rustompura,
395002; January 9

Marzban M. Siggurwala (45),
Village Siggur, Dist Songadh;
January 12

Ketty Pestanji Patel (68), Mota
St, Rustompura, 395002;
January 16

Beroz Nevil Pithawala (35),
Vadi St, Rustompura, 395002;
January 16

Jerbanoo Rustamji Menina
(82), Vanki Bardi, 395003;
January 19

Roshan Eruchshaw Italia (52),
Bibini Wadi; January 20

Aspi Faramji Elavia (40),
Village Timbarra, Taluka
Magrole, Dist Surat; January 24

Palonji Barjorji Meer (74),
Nariman Home and Infirmary,
Shahpore, 395003; January 24

Goolbai Faramji Bhesania (95),
Taxshila Apts, Nanpura,
395001; February 15

Ardeshir Nasarwanji Bhethna
(82), Rustompura, 395002;
February 19

February 19
Soli Beharamji Patel (69),
Sangawad, Navsari, 396445;
February 21
Firozshah Rustamji Elavia (52);
February 28

...

AUSTRALIA

Sydney

DIED

Jal Pavri, husband of Shera and
mother of Vahbeez Boman
Kalapesi and Rayomand;
January 3

Behmane Jamshidi, mother of
Fariborz, Khushroo, Kourosh
and Dolly Bhojti; January 27

Kolamai Doctor, mother of
Behram; February 1

Neelu Chinoy; February 2

Rustom Demehri, father of
Fareedoon and Jamshid;
February 7

CANADA

Kelowna, British Columbia

DIED

Shirin Guiv (64), wife of
Keikhosrow and mother of
Guiv, Freny and Shahpur;
December 14, 1995

Toronto

DIED

Khorshed Pevekar, wife of Indu
and mother of Mehroo Sattha;
December 6

Jerbai Khodabux Divecha,
mother of Daulat, Goolcher
Farokh Bharucha, Ruby

Meherwan Dubash,
Navaz and Soli;

December 17

Manouchehr Akhtar Khavari,
son of Khorshidchehr and
Bahram and brother
of Faroukh and Esfandiar;
January 6, 1996

Vancouver

DIED

Homa Djamtorki (68), wife of
Kaikhosrow and mother of
Parviz; November 27, 1995
Sirous Shahriari (70), husband
of Firouzeh and father of
Shahriar and Minoo;
December 13

HONG KONG

BORN

A girl, *Zoe*, to Fizzy and
Kawas Pavri, sister to Tina;
January 10, 1996

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IRAN**Tehran**

DIED

Azar Farahmand (71);
January 3

Yazd

DIED

Shirangoal Lohrasbi, mother of
Homa Yazdgerdi; February 6

KUWAIT

DIED

Noshir Ichaporia (58);
November 29, 1995

PAKISTAN**Islamabad**

DIED

Jamsheed Savak Poonegar (18);
October 23

Karachi

DIED

Shirian Jal Dhunjibhoy (96);
November 17
Gulbanoo Jamshed Banji (73);
November 27
Sheryar Jamshed Irani (92);
November 29
Minoo Framroze Golwalla (77);
December 17
Keki P. Panthaakey (67);
January 2, 1996
Miloo E. Sidhwa (81); January 3
Siloo P. Sidhwa (74); January 3
Jamshedji S. Daruwalla (86);
January 11
Rustom Merwanji Irani (64);
January 11
Bezonji Dinshaw Bhagaria (95);
January 15
Noshir Jehangir Cooper (80);
January 28
Navroji Rustom Dubash (57);
February 5
Shera D. Kapadia (76);
February 7
Eruch P. Nicolwalla (77);
February 12

SINGAPORE

BORN

A boy, *Rayan*, to *Shernaz* and
Kaizad Heerjee, brother to
Rushad; October 21, 1995

UAE**Dubai**

BORN

A boy, *Rehan*, to *Bakhtawar*
and *Gev Ayrton*; October 21

UK**London**

BORN

A girl, *Tishtrya*, to *Avi* and
Vispi Jamooji; February 9, 1996

TOTALS FOR 1995 AND 1996

	Bombay			India			World		
	A	B	C	A	B	C	A	B	C
BORN									
Boys	14	112	13	5	11	3	8	37	1
Girls	15	108	14	2	6	1		24	3
MARRIED									
Parsi	91	283	64	7	15	2	--	13	--
Intercommunal	50	94 [^]	17 [*]	3	2	2	--	10	--
DIED									
CONSIGNED									
Males	80	473	79	24	91	20	21	36 [*]	13
Females	83	464	83	16	94	12	8	36 [*]	6
CREMATED									
Males	--	3	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Females	--	1	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

A: Total numbers in this issue

B: Running totals for 1995 (February-March 1995-February-March 1996 issues)

C: Running totals for 1996 (February-March 1996)

[^] Males married out in 1995 -- 43
Females married out in 1995 -- 51

^{*} Males married out in 1996 -- 9
Females married out in 1996 -- 8

^{*} Overseas deaths are listed in the consigned column as *Parsiana* does not have any breakup of those cremated.

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

A boy, *Zubin*, to *Vera* and
Farraokh Parekh, brother to
Darius; October 7, 1995

DIED

Piloo Jal Vajifdar (84), mother
of *Farrokh*; November 24

USA**Atlanta, Georgia**

BORN

A boy, *Rohan Cyrus*, to
Nilofer and *Swapan Mondal*;
August 23

Bethesda, Maryland

BORN

A boy, *Neville*, to *Firoza* and
Mark Fitch, brother to *Cyrus*;
October 21

California

DIED

Daulat Rustom Jangi (79),
mother of *Faramarz*,
Sohrab, *Kaikhosrow*, *Parvin*
Dastaki, *Banoo Irani* and
Kharman Dehmobed;
January 1, 1996
Bomi Challa (58), husband
of *Soonu* and father of
Mahtaab and *Nazneen*;
January 11

Chicago

BORN

A boy, *Darayus*, to *Bepsi* and
Pesi Sanjana, brother to *Avvan*;
January 25

Colorado

BORN

A girl, *Monaz*, to *Rashna* and
Hoshi Engineer; January 11

Dallas, Texas

DIED

Gulbanoo Rustom Irani (73),
mother of *Goolkhursheed*, *Aspi*,
Naazneen and *Neenaaz*;
October 23, 1995

New Jersey

BORN

A girl, *Farzana*, to *Behroze* and
Navdeep Jaikaria, sister to
Darius; February 14

DIED

Rumi Chavda, husband of
Aban and father of *Eric*;
December 9, 1995

Olney, Maryland

DIED

Jehangir Boomla, husband of

Freny and father of *Pearl Soli*
Choksi; September 26

San Francisco

DIED

Dhun Pocha (93), husband of
Godafid and father of *Jehangir*
and *Mike*; August 28

Stuart, Florida

BORN

A girl, *Nina*, to *Almitra* and
Darius Desai; December 8

Texas

BORN

A boy, *Armand*, to *Saghar*
and *Kamran Behrooz*;
November 10

Washington DC

BORN

A boy, *Farhad*, to *Persis* and
Mehernosh Choksi; October 28
A girl, *Anyia*, to *Avi* and *Darius*
Lilaonwala; November 1

Weirton, West Virginia

DIED

Nergish Edulbehram;
October 18

Compiled by Roxana A. Driver

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