

JUNE 1996 Rs 22

Parzianā



Petit vs Jejeebhoy



*The right
to elect trustees
The Parsi Punchayet
Case 1906*



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It would be a pity to hide it in the kitchen.



Parsiana

June 1996
Volume 18 Number 10

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Cover: Sir Dinshaw Petit, II Bart (left) and Sir Jamsetji Jejeebhoy, IV Bart
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Readers' views are welcome on any subject of interest to the community and should be sent to the Editor, Readers' Forum, Parsiana, G.P.O. Box 892, Bombay 400001. Letters are subject to editing for reasons of space and clarity. Unsigned letters or those without an address will not be published.

All-India Youth Seminar

The Federation of Zoroastrian Youth Associations of India (FOZYA) will be holding the 10th Annual Zoroastrian Youth Seminar at Mumbai in November 1996.

This event attracts Zoroastrian youth from all over India and, for the first time, participants from overseas are also expected to attend. The event involves the interaction of youth from different places. Workshops and discussions on different topics will be conducted.

On this occasion, the organizing committee will be issuing a souvenir containing the various activities of Parsi youth in Mumbai, the achievements of FOZYA and other necessary information. The souvenir will be circulated among the delegates and eminent guests.

We appeal to generous and supportive persons to advertise/donate generously towards this souvenir.

For further information, kindly contact Khushnooma Deboo, 194, Talati Bldg,

Khetwadi Back Rd, Mumbai 400004 or Burzin Mehta, 2/B, Sonawala Bldg, Tardeo Rd, Mumbai 400007 (Tel: 3083035) or Neville Todiwalla, A.F.P., Block 1, Flat 3, J. Petit St, Grant Rd, Mumbai 400007.

PERVEZ S. IRANI
Hon Secy, FOZYA

2nd World Youth Congress

For a week, from July 4 to 11, 1997 you have the unique opportunity to attend an eight-day World Zoroastrian Youth Congress and visit the United Kingdom at the same time.

For the first time in their history the UK Zoroastrians have the privilege to host a World Zoroastrian Youth Congress. In order to ensure both work and play, the Congress will be split into two parts. The first part, July 4-7, will include seminars and workshops. The second part, July 8-11, will consist of evening sessions where smaller groups meet to discuss. This format will enable delegates to not only attend an educational and interesting Congress, but also to take in the sights and hospitality of the UK and its Zoroastrians.

Our theme — "Faith in the Future: Zoroastrian identity into the next millennium" — has been chosen in order to provide a wide coverage of areas of potential interest. The topics detailed below are indicative of some of the initial suggestions made by the UK Congress Committee:

- Our religion, history and culture — in the future, the present and the past.
- The role of Zoroastrianism in our daily lives.
- Who is a successful Zoroastrian?
- Global issues — a Zoroastrian perspective.

Any suggestion is welcome. On behalf of the Young Zoroastrian Congress Committee UK we extend a cordial invitation to you to attend the Congress, and join us in what promises to be a unique experience. If you require further details, please do not hesitate to contact the Congress Organizer: Young Zoroastrian Congress Committee UK, Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe (Inc), Zoroastrian House, 88 Compayne Gardens, London NW6 3RU, UK or the undersigned at 24 Griffiths Road, London SW19 1SP, UK (Tel: 0181-5427195; Fax: 0181-2417150).

KERMAN Y. JASAVALA
Young Zoroastrian Congress Committee, UK

The Mahatma on the Parsis

I read with great interest the article "The Mahatma on the Parsis" (*Parsiana*, April 1996). I have with me a book, *Correspondence with Mr Gandhi August 1942-April 1944*. In one of his letters addressed to the additional secretary, Home Department, Gandhiji inter alia writes, "The Congress is unconcerned as to who will rule when freedom is attained. The power, when it comes, will belong to the people of India, and will be for them to decide to whom it should be entrusted. May be that the reins will be placed in the hands of the Parsis for instance — as I would love to see happen — or they may be handed to some others whose names are not heard in the Congress today. It will not be for you then to object saying, 'This community is microscopic. That party did not play its due part in the freedom struggle; why should it have all the power?' Ever since its inception the Congress has kept itself meticulously free



Gandhi's return from South Africa

of the communal taint. It has thought always in terms of the whole nation and acted accordingly."

Further on the Mahatma writes, "Dadabhai (Naoroji) and Pherozeshah Mehta carried Congress India with them. They were lovers of Congress. They were, therefore, also its masters. But above all, they were true servants of the nation. They became rebels. But they never counted

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nanced murder, secrecy and the like."

I feel readers of *Parsiana*, nay the entire Parsi community, will feel elated reading the above.

R. A. E. CAMA

"I'm a man in a hurry"

I was very surprised to read ("I'm a man in a hurry," *Parsiana*, February-March 1996) that Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP) trustee Mr Rustom Tirandaz on the one hand says that "the spirit of the top Parsis is dead" and on the other hand says, "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." I feel both his statements are contradictory and it is in fact his latter statement which is the root cause for the dying spirit of the Parsis.

I very firmly believe that the singular prime reason why our community today has lost its spirit of enterprise, risk taking and the diminishing population is due to the fact that for the last several decades the BPP has wrongly given top priority to housing and comparatively ignored all other important priorities.

There is no doubt that the largest Zoroastrian population in the world lives in Bombay. That has been the case this entire century. But for how long? No one will deny the fact that the Zoroastrian population today in Bombay is far less than what it was before our philanthropic forefathers started constructing the various baus. Why? If housing the majority Zoroastrian population in these baus and colonies was to assist the so called "deserving Parsis," our population should have increased by now and not decreased. But it is not so. In fact, this has played havoc with our community.

In Bombay there is one Zoroastrian for every 150 of the sister communities. Who gives the latter housing? Do they have a pampering godfather like the BPP? Whom do they go to demanding their "right?" Yet, they manage to fend for themselves, whether it is on the footpath, slums or the high-rise apartments. By doing so they have gained the satisfaction of succeeding on their own rather than on the crutches of others. On the other hand, the majority Zoroastrian population has totally lost its spirit to come up in life on their own because they feel the BPP is always ready to give them a house and if they do not do so they go around raising a hue and cry that they have a "right"

to get a house from the BPP.

It is high time the BPP changes its focus from housing to other priorities of the community. In today's fast paced and extremely competitive world, if our youngsters are going to be pampered with readymade houses and thereby spouses, I wonder where our community will stand 30 years from now. In fact, a survey projected that the Zoroastrian population in Bombay 30 years hence will be around 20,000-25,000 only whereas the city population by then would have crossed the 30 million mark. Probably then, sadly, there would be no takers for these houses and it would be too late then for the BPP trustees to ponder as to what went wrong in their top priority of the 20th century.

Our community has had a glorious past and the youth look forward to an even brighter future. What is required today is nothing short of a "master plan" which can stop the slide that the community is going through. A coordinated "master plan" and a strong long-term program that meets the needs of today's youth can turn the trend of our diminishing population gradually.

JEHANGIR R. BISNEY

Secunderabad

"Captaining the WZO"

I have read with great interest Arnavaz Mama's article "Captaining the WZO (*Parsiana*, February-March 1996)." I wish to respond to Mr Captain's opposition on the formation of an international Zoroastrian body. According to Mr Captain and his followers, the WZO can adequately represent Zoroastrians worldwide.

The truth of the matter is that after the change in the constitution of the WZO in April 1993, the WZO is a charity like any other charity organization.

To achieve charitable status, clauses (g) (h) (i) and (j) of the object clause in their memorandum had to be removed. These clauses dealt specially with respective services WZO could provide worldwide. Hence clauses dealing with worldwide representation were specifically removed.

They also altered the qualification of the members clause of their articles of association to permit non-Zoroastrian spouses and their children, whether they were Zoroastrians or not, to be members of the WZO.

With both these changes in their constitution, the WZO has forfeited its right to be called a Zoroastrian body or a world body. In fact constitutionally they may not be able to affiliate with most of the existing

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Zoroastrian bodies. Over here, i.e. in London, WZO is considered no more than a private club having one annual function where out of some 120 participants only 40 are Zoroastrians. At their AGM the average number of people present is about 40 to 50. Their accounts do not reflect worldwide activities.

I was one of the founder members and a signatory to the memorandum and articles of the WZO where the goal was to represent "Zoroastrians born into and confirmed into the Zoroastrian faith" worldwide. Now with the new constitution, one day you may have a non-Zoroastrian president of the WZO.

The other important observation is that the WZO has two bodies — one registered in London and the other registered in India. The proxy votes from the Indian members are used at the AGM in London, but the accounts submitted for approval are for the London operation only!

Whilst I salute the charitable work done by the WZO, especially by the WZO Trust India, one must face the reality that the WZO has neither the constitutional mandate nor the class of leadership to represent Zoroastrians all over the world.

The formation of a global Zoroastrian body is imperative. Collective leadership brought about by all the apex Zoroastrian bodies of the world coming together has been my dream and I am sure that dream will come true before the turn of the century.

Ervad ZAL N. SETHNA
Middlesex, UK

Zoroastrian entrepreneurs

The special issue of *Parsiana* (January 1996) recognizing North American Zoroastrian entrepreneurs made interesting reading.

The cover page appropriately depicts the American flag. However, Canada is a part of North America, and Canadian entrepreneurs are also included in the issue. Canada houses a very large and thriving Zoroastrian community. Consequently, the Canadian flag (maple leaf) should have been appropriately represented on the cover page.

Ervad TEHMTON F. MIRZA
Ontario, Canada

The Editor replies
Parsiana regrets the oversight.

"Iranshah's anniversary"

In Readers' Forum, (*Parsiana*, December 1995), I came across, "Iranshah's anniversary" where Cyrus Cooper says, "As you know on Adar roj, Adar mah YZ 90 (i.e. November 24, 720) our great Atash Behram... was consecrated."

In the same issue "The Parsi Flag - A Tribute to the Parsi Vexillographer" reads, "We Parsis never had our own flag (since we arrived at Sanjan in India on about November 22, 745 AD) etc..."

How did we manage to build the Iranshah in 720 if we arrived in 745?

Ms BEHROOZE BOGA

The Editor replies

According to scholars, Zoroastrian history in India is not well documented. The earliest reference to the landing of immigrant Zoroastrians is said to be in the *Qissah-i-Sanjan*, a ballad written several centuries later. The conflict in dates persists but most historians put the date around the 10th century A.D.

However, this does not prevent individual Zoroastrians from believing what they choose and propagating theories to which they subscribe. Incidentally, the Parsi flag item to which you refer was an advertisement, as noted on each of the two pages on which it appears.

"Marking Masani's 90th"

Just 10 short of a centenary, Minoo Masani, a veteran parliamentarian, founder of the Swatantra Party and perhaps the only surviving member of the Indian Constituent Assembly, celebrated his 90th birthday at the Royal Bombay Yacht Club ("Marking Masani's 90th," Events and Personalities, *Parsiana*, November 1995).

On this memorable occasion the leadership of the liberal movement in India which he had started passed on to Sharad Joshi of Shetkari Sanghatana. Joshi has been fighting a relentless battle for the last 15 years for so many Indian farmers who are involved in the bondage of socialism.

S. V. Raju, editor of *Freedom First*, originally founded by Masani in 1952, said that when Masani saw that the liberalization in the Congress party was failing and the voter had to choose between the unwilling liberalizers and the encouragement of mandals and mandirs, he appealed to the younger generation to form some strong movement to educate the people of this country on the importance of liberalization.

During the memorable function Nani Palkhivala pointed out that Masani is one



Masani (center): birthday celebration

of the noblest Indians ever. "I can recall that on his 80th birthday in the presence of J. R. D. Tata I said that if the country does not respect Masani's efforts it does not deserve to prosper or survive because he was the man who has helped frame the sublime document, better known as the Indian Constitution."

Retired Justice Bakhtawar Lentin also complimented Mr Masani on his 90th birthday by saying that he is a man of rigid principles. "I think he gets younger and younger every year." A number of complimentary books of his writings, speeches and tributes were presented to him. Among these was *Vanguard of Freedom*. After the presentation Mr Palkhivala wished him long life and happiness and said, "Minoo, may you live long until the country realizes how badly it needs you."

Our country needs such political stalwarts as Masani. Very few of them are left now. We had stalwarts like Vinoba Bhave, Morarji Desai and Jai Prakash Narayan who rigidly adhered to their principles and fought relentless battles against the evils in politics. I only hope the younger generation will follow some of the good qualities of Masani to preserve democracy in our country.

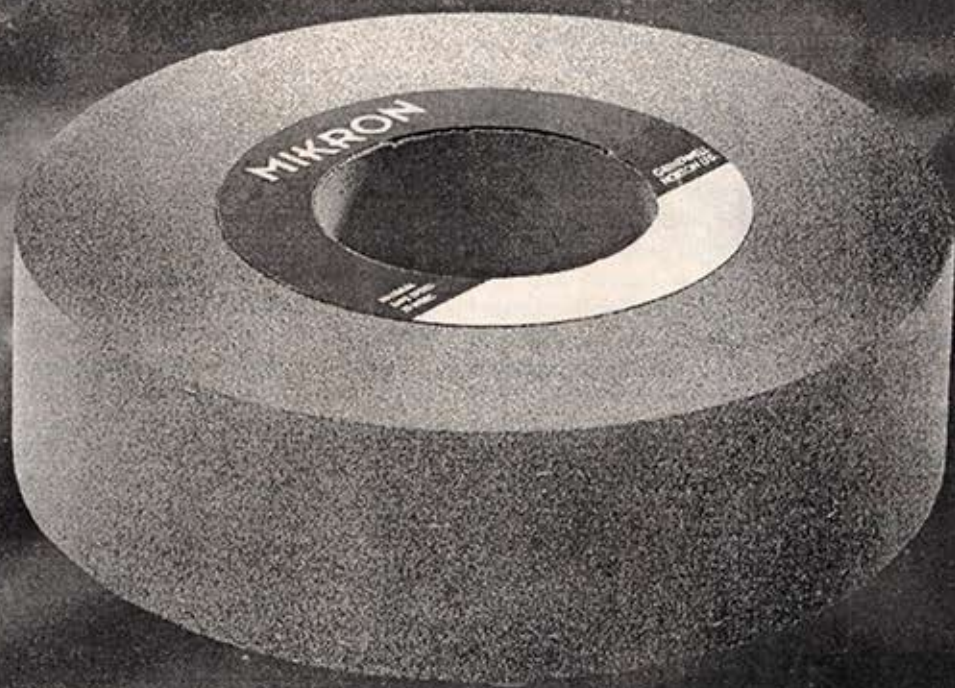
D. D. NETERWALLA

A dadgah at Valiv

Responding to a public invitation extended by the Manijeh Pirojsha Sachinwala Charitable Trust, I and members of my family visited Valiv. To reach Valiv, we had to get down at Vasai Road station on Western Railway, then proceed in a rickshaw to Panchwati Hotel on the busy Ambadi Road from where we boarded a reserved bus for Valiv. Valiv is about 10 to 12 km from Vasai Road station.

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The Advertiser

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It is said that during Portuguese rule there was a good number of Parsis living in Bassein (Vasai). With the passage of time, the rule came to an end and the population of Parsis there declined. At present, the number of Parsis is estimated at 250.

There being no agiary or dadgah to cater to the religious hunger of these and other Parsis living beyond Borivli, the trustees of the aforesaid Trust decided to establish a dadgah in Valiv. A jashan ceremony was performed on *roj Tir, mah Adar*, 1365 YZ (May 1, 1996). The ceremony was performed by Ervad (Dr) Peshotan F. Peer and his son, Ervad (Dr) Rooyintan Peer, recited prayers in a sonorous voice and also prayed in Pazand (which is rare to hear now-a-days) that evoked rapt attention. After the ceremony, lasting nearly two hours, a humbandagi was recited followed by a short speech by Ervad Peshotan asking the audience to live up to the precept as taught in the simplest of our prayers, namely, *Ashem Vohu*.

Bomi Sachinwala, one of the trustees, then exhibited to the audience different Zoroastrian mementos and requested the gathering to offer whatever they could so that all these mementos be lowered in the foundation pit for posterity. After sealing all these paraphernalia, a stone slab was placed on them and whoever was willing, male or female, was urged to draw earth (*maati*), five times each, from the nearby ground to throw into the pit.

The entire ceremony was witnessed by about 100 Parsi Zoroastrians, men, women and children.

We were told that the lands adjacent to the proposed dadgah would be utilized for construction of houses, on ownership and rental basis, for members of our community, under the auspices of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet whose chairman Mr Jamshed N. Guzder was also present at the above function as chief guest.

After partaking of a free, vegetarian thali lunch and strolling through the spacious garden full of different flowers and plants, the participants dispersed.

BHIKHAJI M. ADENWALLA

Bardoli Dharamshala

The Bardoli Parsi Dharamshala has been rendering yeoman service over the last 100 years to needy and poor Zoroastrians residing in the surrounding villages who come to Bardoli for medical treatment, education, etc as also to those visiting Bardoli from all over India.

This Dharamshala is in a very dilapidated condition which could cause harm to

life and property and the Bardoli Municipal Corporation has served a notice on us. Therefore, we, the trustees of the Bardoli Jarthosti Anjuman, have decided to rebuild the existing Dharamshala in such a way that it can offer shelter as well as livelihood to poor and enterprising young Parsis, while continuing to provide dharamshala facilities.

We plan to build shops on the ground floor to be given to Parsi entrepreneurs at low subsidized rent. The first floor will house a hall to be used for auspicious occasions, along with rooms for the Dharamshala. There will be five flats each on the second, third and fourth floors, which will be let out to genuine poor Parsis, especially the young, again on a very low rent.

In this way we will be able to provide suitable accommodation to at least 60 to 75 poor Parsis. As per her socio-economic survey, Dr (Ms) Cashmira P. Bhaya had identified 687 Parsi families in 209 villages, including our district, living in abject poverty in hut-like houses made of mud and cowdung.

As Bardoli is fast turning into a prominent industrial center of South Gujarat and is only 30 km away from Surat and Navsari, we feel the poor Parsis will be greatly benefitted by our plan.

The total expenditure as per our architect's estimate is Rs 30,00,000. We have been able to raise around Rs 4,00,000 from our own funds, which includes Rs 1,00,000 expected from the scrap of the old Dharamshala building.

We hereby make this humble appeal to all philanthropic individuals and trusts to help us uplift our fellow Zarthostis and the Parsi community.

Anyone who donates Rs 10,00,000 or above will have the privilege of naming a wing. The donor or his/her nominee would also be on the selection committee for the allotment of flats. All donations above Rs 10,000 will be mentioned on a marble plaque, to be placed in the Dharamshala building.

Cheque/demand draft, drawn in favor of Bardoli Jarthosti Anjuman A/c Dharamshala Building Fund, may be addressed to the Anjuman's honorary president, Mr Edulji N. Dumasia, At & Po, Madhi 394340, District Surat (Phone: 42237) or the undersigned at 'Aashish,' Suthar Falia, Bardoli 394601, District Surat (Phone: 20965).

PERVEZ BOMANSHA MEHTA

Hon Sec, Bardoli Jarthosti Anjuman

Edited by Arnavaz S. Mama

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Events and Personalities

Accord and discord

The nine-page newsletter brought out by the Parsi Zoroastrian Anjuman of Secunderabad and Hyderabad early this year devoted maximum space (two and a half pages) to providing an update on the court cases and related property disputes confronting the trustees.

The present team of trustees headed by Ms Gulbanoo Chenoy as president continues to discharge its duties despite a suit filed by former president Bezon F. Dittia who sought their removal from office. Following the Endowment Department's suspension of the trustees and appointment of Dr F. D. Vakil as sole trustee to manage the Anjuman's day-to-day affairs, the trustees filed a writ petition which was admitted the same day and the impugned proceedings suspended forthwith. With counter affidavits and independent writ petitions being filed, the matter still does not stand fully resolved.

Some immovable property at Boggulunkunta, bequeathed to the Anjuman by Ms Banoobai Khoorshid, is also under dispute. Initially the trustees sought to sell the dilapidated premises but when the sale could not be completed, they opted to redevelop the building after demolition which was objected to by Dittia on the basis of which the sanctioning authorities have refused permission to the Anjuman and an appeal has yet to be heard, as per the newsletter.

The activities of the Zoroastrian Stree Mandal which organized a Zoroastrian Leadership Camp, the Twin Cities' Zoroastrian Youth League which held its annual festival for children and a Zoroastrian Gala Nite, the Zoroastrian Club's

efforts to promote indoor and outdoor sports also find a mention in the newsletter.

A cause for celebration for the community in the twin cities was the renovation of the over 75-year-old Khan Bahadur Seth Edulji Chenai Dar-e-Meher which was marked by a machi and jashan on January 21, 1996. "While giving a new look to the building the originality was retained. The jashan hall has been artistically finished...The outdoors have been



Two generations celebrating together: Roda and Homi Mistry, Tehmina and Gerard Alphonse

landscaped," mentions the newsletter. Among those who were instrumental in giving a new look to the Dar-e-Meher was Behram Vakil who was supervising the labor, adds Secunderabad's Naval Vakeel.

Another occasion for celebration in Hyderabad was the golden wedding anniversary of Roda and Homi Mistry, and the silver wedding anniversary of their daughter Tehmina and Gerard Alphonse of New Jersey. More than 800 invitees including family and friends from the United States attended the function at Hyderabad's Jubilee Hills International Center on February 29, 1996, informs Ms Lylah M. Alphonse.

Save this earth

In recognition of Carcy K. Marfatia's "exemplary efforts to protect the ozone layer" he was one of the 61 individuals and organizations selected from 14 countries to receive the 1995 EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) Stratospheric Ozone Protection Award, notes a press release. Deciding on the awardees on behalf of the United States government are the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Environment Programme — Industry and Environment, the World Bank and the executive committee of the Multilateral Fund of the Montreal Protocol, adds the release.

Former vice president and currently consultant with Real Value Appliances Limited, the company where he undertook his case study and which encouraged him to attend seminars, as acknowledges his wife Gool, Marfatia is presently actively involved in United Nations programmes propagating the use of alternative fuels like compressed natural gas and propane to save the ozone layer. Another area of his research — to bring back clean air and blue skies through the use of catalytic converters on static and mobile diesel and petrol driven engines above and below ground level in India — is proceeding with Canadian collaboration.

At the many conferences and seminars where Delhi-based Marfatia has represented India and the non-aligned nations, he has presented papers stressing the need to conserve the ozone layer. He is now on the all-India panel of the Halons Alternative Option Committee and has participated in making a country strategy regarding the halon phase-out from India, just as he had

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Marfatia: protecting the ozone layer

earlier in the case of halon phase-out from Real Value. Their most important message, states Gool, is that "this earth is not inherited by us from our ancestors; it has been loaned to us by our children. Let us protect their future."

Drawn by polarity

"My mind works in a kind of polarity, driven by two great forces — destructive as well as generative," says artist-poet-doctor Gieve Patil while commenting on the eight paintings and eight drawings on view at his exhibition at Bombay's Gallery Chemould from December 15, 1995 to January 15, 1996. The theme of the exhibition being *Looking into a Well*, three of his paintings were on this subject which he perceives as addressing the quieter aspects of his mental framework. In other works, like the *Battered Body in Landscape* where he portrays a grossly mutilated corpse lying against a serene background, Patil has depicted the destructive force.

"Each work stresses a different aspect.

I find the subject so fascinating that I hope to continue to work on these two areas for many years and seek a relationship; it is sure to present very interesting problems and solutions," says Patil who maintains that he has no favorites. "With each work a certain range of problems get clarified and certain problems remain. The important thing is whether I have been able to do justice to the subject matter."

His series of *Heads*, executed in black acrylic on paper, Patil seems to have "scooped from the trunks of dour banyans; dark arbored phantoms that we approach with a certain trepidation," as notes Ranjit Hoskote in his review of the exhibition.

The Water-Tank at Nargol, 67" x 75" acrylic on canvas, is "perhaps the most commanding work in the present exhibition," opines Hoskote. He is fascinated with the ancient tree trunk dominating one half of the painting; a boy bathing a pair of buffaloes in the pond nearby and the white bird in flight that seems to link the tree to the boy "in one swift signature." To Patil, Nargol is of special significance for he grew up in this small coastal town and likes to return to it as often as he can to recharge his creative energies as he confessed in an interview with Narendra Panjwani.

The 56-year-old artist's paintings find a place in public and private collections in India and abroad including The National Gallery of Modern Art, New Delhi and The Museum of Modern Art, Menton, France; in The J. Nicholson Collection at the National Centre for the Performing

Arts and The Tata Collection, Bombay, The Papachristides Collection, London, The Barbier Collection, Geneva...

The current exhibition was held after a period of three and a half years for Patil has to combine his medical practice with his creative outpourings: working at the clinic in the evenings and applying himself to his paintings and poems during the day. In fact, a draft of his forthcoming book of poems is ready too, he informs.

Advertising packages

"In my own way I want to put back into advertising all that I have gained from it over 30 years as managing director of Interpub," writes Ms Nargis Wadia. Her latest venture is the New World Certificate Course in Advertising (NWCCA) which she has set up to assist promising youngsters who wish to benefit from further professional training.



N. Wadia: teaching the rules

Among the new courses she has introduced are MedVENT, a five-day certificate course for media planners from advertising agencies, and MedMARK, a five-day certificate course for media sellers from publications, satellite channels and event

organizers. With the fees being Rs 7,500 per participant, Wadia says, "We are tailor-making courses to fit the varied niches in the complex world of advertising and marketing. We are keeping the number of participants to just a handful...who will benefit from the one-to-one training im-

Patil with paintings The Water-Tank at Nargol (center) and Looking into a Well





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Their course ADVENT-1 for client service executives, being well received the first time round, was to be repeated for a new batch of trainees. The participants' reaction to the first course was "very interesting and helpful though intense and hectic... They certainly packed in a lot!"

"Learn the rules before you break them," is the motto of NWCCA which has Wadia serving as course director and an advisory board comprising Rajiv Agarwal, Sushil Behl, Ernest Fernandes, Larry Grant, Ms Roda Mehta and Gautam Rakshit. Their office is at 8AB Andromeda, 89, Worli Sea Face, Bombay 400025 (Tel: 4938228/4950680).

How much are you worth?

In most families, there is usually one member, often the breadwinner, who is knowledgeable about their finances, investments, insurance covers and the like. In the event of the breadwinner's demise the family finds itself in a turmoil for besides having to bear the personal loss there is also considerable financial insecurity. To minimize grief on such occasions, retirement and financial planner Jehan Wadia has brought out the *Record Book of what my family should know*.

The 30-page handbook is meant to be a databank organizer helping one to main-

tain records and keep track of one's personal and business matters like bank accounts, fixed deposits, shares, debentures and other investments, tax records, real estate property, insurance programs, etc. Besides, it also finds space to list one's advisors, location of important papers and documents, renewal dates and obligations. The inclusion of the net worth chart is intended to assess how much a person is worth.

In addition to this Rs 50 booklet which is in its eighth edition, Wadia has also brought out two other reference manuals: *Personal finance and tax planning*, and *Planning your retirement*. He further organizes full-day seminars on these subjects for he is of the opinion that the Indian financial market is not customer oriented; and also because retirement, which can be perceived as an enhanced holiday, is not planned for in advance.

"The future belongs to those who plan for it... now!" concludes his record book which contains a perpetual calendar for 200 years. Those interested in the book can contact Wadia at A-2, Ness Bag, Nana

Chowk, Bombay 400007 (Tel: 3870652 or 3862017).

Of the same name

When Godrej Engineer's name featured in *The Statesman* in connection with a financial irregularity, those who knew him in Calcutta prior to his family's emigration to New Zealand were shocked, reports the *Calcutta Gavashni* of October-December 1995.

They were however relieved to receive a clarification from Dr Russi Anklesaria, trustee of the Calcutta Zoroastrian Community's Religious and Charity Funds who, being the surgical consultant for prisons in West Bengal, was able to trace the culprit to Alipore Jail. Bearing no re-

semblance to Calcutta's Godrej Framroze Engineer, the prisoner reportedly told Anklesaria that he was from Maharashtra and born of a Parsi mother and a non-Parsi father.

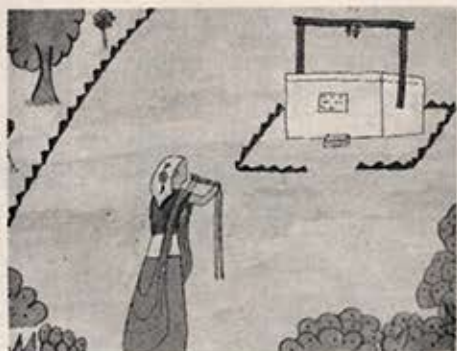
In a subsequent issue of *Calcutta Gavashni*, a grateful Godrej Engineer, the one known to the Calcuttans, thanked the anjuman for clearing his name.



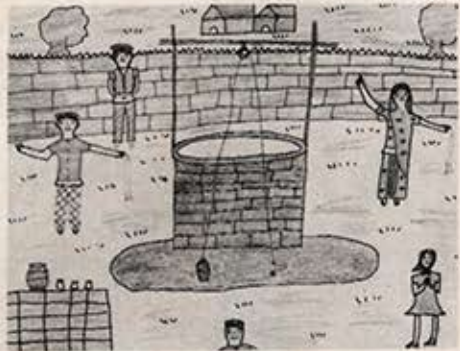
J. Wadia: planning the future



Some of the prize winning entries for the drawing competition organized by the Bage Parsi Adariyan of Surat in early 1996 on the occasion of its centenary celebrations. Of the 40 entries, (top row, left to right) A Child in Prayer by 16-year-old Khushru Umrigar won the first prize in the 19-25 age-group. Both the first and second prize winners in the 13 to 18 age-group Kayzad Mistry and Malcolm Patel chose for their theme: Kusti Prayers before a Well. In the under 12 age-group (2nd row, left) Ms Lilly Dordi won the third prize for her painting on Asho Farohar and Mehernosh Dotivala won the second prize for his depiction of Ava Ardavisur. The



choice of subjects offered to the participants in the drawing as also the essay and elocution competitions pertained to the Zoroastrian religion and the Parsi



community, reports Dr Ratan Marshall, special officer of the Surat Parsi Panchayat in his write-up accompanying the enclosures.

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Bengalee vs Tamboly

After the last two predictable election results for the Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP) trusteeship seats, the forthcoming election between sitting trustee and former vice chancellor of the Bombay University Dr (Ms) Mehroo Bengalee and Dinshaw Tamboly, chairman of The WZO Trust Funds, appears to be a keen tussle.

"What the community needs are leaders to guide and help youngsters to settle down early in life, both career-wise and family-wise," notes a write-up accompanying Bengalee's statement announcing her intention to stand for reelection as BPP trustee. "On going through the genuine and remarkable work being done by Mr Tamboly, we feel that a trustee like him is genuinely needed on the BPP board," writes a supporter A. B. Dastur, in his letter to the *Jam-e-Jamshed* of July 21, 1996.

"During my tenure, I have tried my level best to build up the image of the Parsi Punchayet by increasing its activities manifold, more for the younger generation..." states Bengalee enunciating the different projects initiated by her. Bengalee was instrumental in establishing the educational board comprising 12 principals of Bombay schools who are available for



Bengalee (left) and Tamboly: a keen contest for trusteeship is expected

educational, vocational and personal guidance to Zoroastrian students and their parents. Special coaching classes for students in their final year of school, a leadership training program for students who had completed their schooling (and now being run as the Holiday Youth Programme), organizing seminars and conferences to evaluate the possibility of job openings for youngsters, have all been attributed to her initiative. Assessing students' merit for scholarships and grants has also come within her purview.

"Since early eighties, the program of housing has taken the prime place on the agenda of the Punchayet and the trustees' elections have been so manoeuvred that likeminded persons having the same manifested interests are given preference to others who can guide the educational, vocational and social development of the members of the community," mentions the write up while advocating the necessity for a greater number of lady trustees of distinctive merit on the BPP board who can serve as role models for young girls.

Whilst serving on 14 different subcommittees of the Punchayet, Bengalee is known to support the orthodox voice. As she admits, "I have been very consistent in my views on principles of convention, religion and conversion and have always registered my dissent, even on occasions offending my seniormost colleagues."

"We have industrialists, lawyers, social workers who have their role to play in the Parsi Punchayet. But to get another educationist with the qualities of head and heart like Dr Bengalee may well nigh be impossible," stressed Ms R. D. Wadia, senior school supervisor of Queen Mary School, in the *Jamé* of July 21.

Chairman of The WZO Trust Funds, Tamboly is known essentially for his commitment to social work — generating funds, distributing alms, creating avenues for self-employment and improvement in the quality of priests. "Dinshawji Tamboly is literally worshipped in the villages of Gujarat where he has done so much to improve the living conditions of poor Parsi farmers," confirmed Sarosh H. Dastur in the *Jamé* of July 21. "He is a living legend," added Dastur. "I have never seen anybody doing such selfless work with so much humility."

Tamboly had announced his willingness to contest for a trusteeship seat way back in 1995. However his respect for BPP chairman Jamshed Guzder and sitting trustee Minoo Shroff, both of whom sought reelection, made him defer his decision. This time though, as he assured the community through the *Jamé* of July 14, "I will positively be contesting the elections when they are next held and do look forward to (your) support."

Evidently backing Tamboly's candidature, an editorial in *The Bombay Samachar* of July 21 stated, "The community has been led along the primrose path of promises only to find itself in a slough of despond... The new trustee... should have close contact with and deep sensitivity about the poor, needy, homeless and suffering. Along with this he must have done a lot of field work... The track record of the person should be such that the donors have implicit faith in his integrity and ability to deliver the goods..."

Compiled by Parinaz Gandhi

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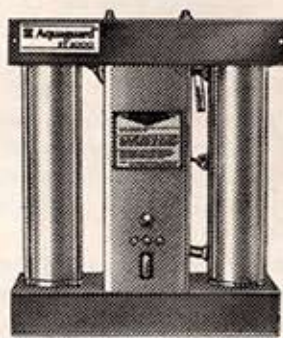
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Dawn interviews Dorab

Amid the political ferment in Pakistan, its English daily *Dawn* (March 18, 1996) carried a full page interview of retired Supreme Court justice and chairman emeritus of the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan Dorab Patel, which was forwarded to *Parsiana* by subscriber A.



Patel: prized objectivity

B. Madon of Karachi. The interviewer, Maisoon Hussein provides the *raison d'être* for the interview in his introduction: "Known for his independent judgments, particularly his dissenting opinion in the

Bhutto case and his refusal to take oath under the Provisional Control Order (PCO) in 1981 whereby he relinquished the highest judicial office — that of chief justice of the Supreme Court to which he would have been elevated — Dorab Patel has won an enduring place in the legal community. (Patel had refused to oblige his political bosses by acceding to their demand that former Pakistan Prime Minister Z. A. Bhutto be declared guilty of treason. Under the PCO General Zia ul Haq could alter the constitution of Pakistan in any manner he wanted.) He is highly respected for his objectivity, principled stand and commitment to human rights."

Patel answered probing questions regarding the public outcry against recent judicial appointments ["because (the people) believe these were done on a political basis"], on whether politicians/civil servants make better judges than purely professional lawyers, on the need to appoint a person initially as an additional judge, the rationale for appointing acting chief justices and judges in the superior courts, etc.

All of Patel's answers reflect his abiding concern for the rule of law, the independence of the judiciary from the executive so essential to the proper working of a democracy and the overriding need for integrity of the incumbents to ensure the faith of the people in the institution. Some telling words: "No judge should be beholden to a political party for his appointment... An advocate who has been in poli-

tics can be appointed if, and only if, he is an advocate of good standing and has a reputation for integrity... If a civil servant is appointed... I do not see how he can remain aloof from the executive... If you keep a judge on tenterhooks (by not confirming his appointment), the government can pressure him. The expectation is that an acting chief justice would be more obedient (to the government) than a chief justice... (If) the appointments would not serve the paramount objective of an independent judiciary... the bell is tolling for the judiciary."

Life in Houston

Construction on the Zoroastrian Association of Houston's (ZAH) community center is likely to begin in the third quarter of 1996, according to Ms Arnavaz Sethna (née Bharda from Karachi), ZAH recorder who passed through Bombay earlier this year.

Though the ground breaking ceremony was held one and a half years ago, the project with its "very high ideals" had been stymied for lack of funds.

"The designing was way off our budget," noted Sethna in a brief telephonic chat with *Parsiana*. Simultaneously the community went through a difficult phase during the recent economic recession. Having weathered the storm "better than expected" and with the center plans realistically pruned, Parvez Rustomji, chairman of the building fund under the ZAH umbrella, is ready for action but must await fresh permission from City Hall before he can proceed, informs Sethna. And, as she notes, "government offices anywhere in the world are just the same. There's no speedy, expeditious way of handling it!" Sethna, who is involved in paralegal work and has been 18 years in the States, should know.

As and when the center is ready, the community plans to establish a *dadgah* with perhaps a full-time mobed or panthaky in attendance. There are four acres of land, but economic uncertainty has made the community cautious and the overall approach is to "play it by ear," for the depressed economy is just picking up. Zoroastrians in the area are "not too well off and everyone is finding his own level," says Sethna. The general tendency is to get together at weekend parties.

In the meantime ZAH members have launched innovative fund-raising projects.

Ms Armaity Mehta has been collecting traditional recipes into a cook book with the dual purpose of preserving Zoroastrian heritage and culture while the sale proceeds will add to the building fund, as notes the ZAH newsletter.

Another source of funds suggested by Ms Aban Rustomji is to honor hosts at a party — be it a birthday, jashan or any happy occasion — by contributing to the building fund on their behalf and giving a card to the hosts to let them know. The cards are available with Rustomji and Ms Behroze Daruwalla, informs the newsletter. Ms Nargish Sethna on the other hand is distributing Kroger share cards to members and friends of the ZAH. When presented to the grocery checker, Kroger Grocery Stores will donate one percent of the total amount of the purchases to the ZAH building fund, informs the *FEZANA Journal* (Spring 1996).

Even more ambitious is the nomination of Houston as the host for the Seventh World Zoroastrian Congress scheduled for 2000 AD.

In the meantime there's a *Gatha* Conference scheduled in Houston from August 31 to September 2, 1996 where 26 internationally renowned *Gatha* scholars have been invited to speak.

Islington's Naoroji Street

Britain's first Asian Member of Parliament was immortalized when Islington borough's Insurance Street was renamed Naoroji Street.

The change was marked by a short ceremony preceded by a light buffet in the Finsbury Town Hall where the Mayor, Councillor John Burke, welcomed the guests. Councillor Talal Karim spoke on behalf of the Council and chaired the ceremony. India's High Commissioner in London Dr L. M. Singhvi presented a resumé of Dadabhai Naoroji's life in India and Britain while Lord Meghnad Desai, Labor peer and director of the London School of Economics' Center for the Study of Global Governance, spoke on the significance of Naoroji's achievement for Asians living in contemporary Britain.

The only Zoroastrian speaker at the ceremony was prominent London citizen Faridoon Madon MBE — the originator of the street renaming concept.

"As a long term campaigner for equal rights and racial justice in this country, I am gratified to find Islington Council con-

ceding to my lone campaign for renaming a street after Dadabhai Naoroji, the unflinching stalwart; and in doing so let me state without any hesitation that it has put this Council streets ahead of other London boroughs in setting yet another landmark, not only in the A to Z of our metropolis but in the wider context of multi-ethnic Britain," declared Madon.

Among those present on the occasion was Mahatma Gandhi's grandson Gopal (Gandhi as a student barrister had been Naoroji's protégé) who said to reporter Gareth Davis, "My grandfather would have been very happy. They were very close and both very determined!"

Islington's Race Equality Officer Omar Ralph is said to be in the process of producing Naoroji's biography.

Serve and volley Italia

"A fiercely competitive and aggressive player," Ms Khushchehr Italia, 15, is a "serve and volley type player" who idolizes former tennis star Martina Navratilova, notes a news item from California. The young tennis enthusiast had finished fourth among 32 outstanding players from the USA, Canada and Hong Kong at the Pacific Coast National (USA) Junior Tennis Championship 1995. In local tournaments for the under 16 age-group Italia had won two first place and one runner-up trophies.

An 'A grade' student who enjoys mathematics, singing American country music and basketball, Bombay born Italia

Italia: aggressive tennis



Irani: "Citicorp at its best"

accompanied her parents Bakhtavar and Cyrus to California where, as a six-year-old, she began playing tennis with her father. Within two years she had her first tennis title under her belt and since then has accumulated 13 wins and 22 runner-up trophies, mentions the write-up.

Excellence at Citicorp

Citicorp awarded its Service Excellence Award to Ms Tanaaz Jimmy Irani in Karachi at the end of 1995 "in recognition of your dedication to Citicorp customers and your outstanding service performance," as notes the citation. The award comprised a medal plus airfare to Pindi for two.

Intimating Irani of her nomination for the award, Citibank vice president for human resources Ms Rukhsana Asgnar noted, "Service Excellence is not easy to define. We all know it must include qualities like courtesy, efficiency and commitment. But Service Excellence is best defined by example, the kind of example your performance has set for all of us. We're proud of you — you exemplify Citicorp at its best."

Despite the odds of a shaky financial background Tanaaz, née Hiloo, has demonstrated that determined effort can lead to success, says Ms Mitha Dinshaw Petit. Her mother Najoo Sam Hiloo recalls Tanaaz's gruelling days studying for masters in history along with a full-time executive secretarial course at the J. J. College of Commerce, giving tuitions during spare hours to help with the family's finances.

Irani joined Citibank in Karachi where she has accompanied her husband Jimmy. She is Citibank's only female employee in Karachi to receive this award. Hiloo states that she is due for promotion to general manager at the bank.

Compiled by Arnavaz S. Manna

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Honing for excellence

The Bombay Parsi Punchayet's Holiday Programme for Youth completes its first decade

Arnavaz S. Mama

"What you really need to do is... to see that you stick your neck out when opportunities are available. In 1971, when he had the opportunity, (Field Marshal Sam Manekshaw) stretched his neck out and we know what happened." Pune industrialist Darius Forbes' advice to the approximately 120 young participants at the valedictory function of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet's (BPP) month-long Holiday Programme for Youth (HPY) targetted the yen for security that has been perceived as a growing malaise in the community.

This tenth edition of the BPP's "star program," as per senior trustee Minoo Shroff had been inaugurated on April 30, 1996 at Patkar Hall, been conducted at the Byramjee Jeejeebhoy Parsi Charitable (BJPC) High School and Junior College at Charni Road and concluded on May 27, 1996 at the Rustom Baug Pavilion. With registrations from Calcutta, Madras, Pune, Surat and Navsari, apart from Bombay, the camp began with a strength of 151, averaging a 20 percent dropout over the month. As always, community celebrities were chief guests and guests of honor at the two functions. These included Justice Sam Variava of the Bombay High Court, Manekshaw, Forbes and Padma Shri Homi Taleyarkhan. Air India chairman Russi Mody was to have been chief guest at the inaugural function but had to opt out at the last minute.

Last year the program had been conducted at the J. B. Vachha High School for Parsi Girls at Dadar Parsi Colony and for the first eight years at the Mancherji

Khareghat Hall. The change of venue was initially prompted by the increasing number of participants and the second time around, by a desire for a more central location.

The activities this year included visits to the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA), the Braille Press and National Institute for Training in Industrial Engineering (NITIE) at Powai, as informed

spersed the many talks on a range of careers provided by outstanding proponents in their respective fields, a grounding in the doctrines of Zoroastrianism, career counselling and guidance on social deportment. Indoor and outdoor sports and a range of competitions aimed to build a spirit of healthy rivalry among the four groups into which the participants were divided. On the lighter side was a fashion show organized and presented by HPY participants.

That the aims of the HPY are multifarious was best demonstrated by the various speakers at the two functions. Thus Air Vice Marshal Eruch Lala spoke of the youths' need "to show enthusiasm towards work and sincerity of approach... aim at excellent performance, not just good performance."

Going a step further, Zoroastrian Studies' founder Khojeste Mistree noted, "Excellence does not come from the middle of nowhere; excellence comes from a certain religious perception which I believe Zoroastrianism offers extremely well... If we are constantly made aware what it means to be a Zoroastrian, then I think the future torchbearers of our community are going to be proud bearers of this wonderful tradition."

True to his national credentials and lest Mistree's message further reinforce the trend towards ghettoization in the community, Taleyarkhan, former member of the Government of India's Minorities Commission, was quick to note that the duty of the BPP and its organizations was "to find out ways and means by which we can



Participants of HPY 1996 at the finale at Rustom Baug Photographs: C. C. Gandevia

BPP social worker and BJPC vice principal Ms Diana Marfatia, the linchpin of the program who has been with it over the decade, the last eight years as its principal organizer. Their social service activities included visits to the aged and ailing at the F. S. Parukh Dharamshalla and J. J. Hospital's Parsi Ward, the cleaning of the Soonaji and Vachaghandhy Agiaries, the collection of funds towards the navjote of two Parsi children and a blood collection drive.

All these activities, aimed at widening the social perceptions of the youth, inter-

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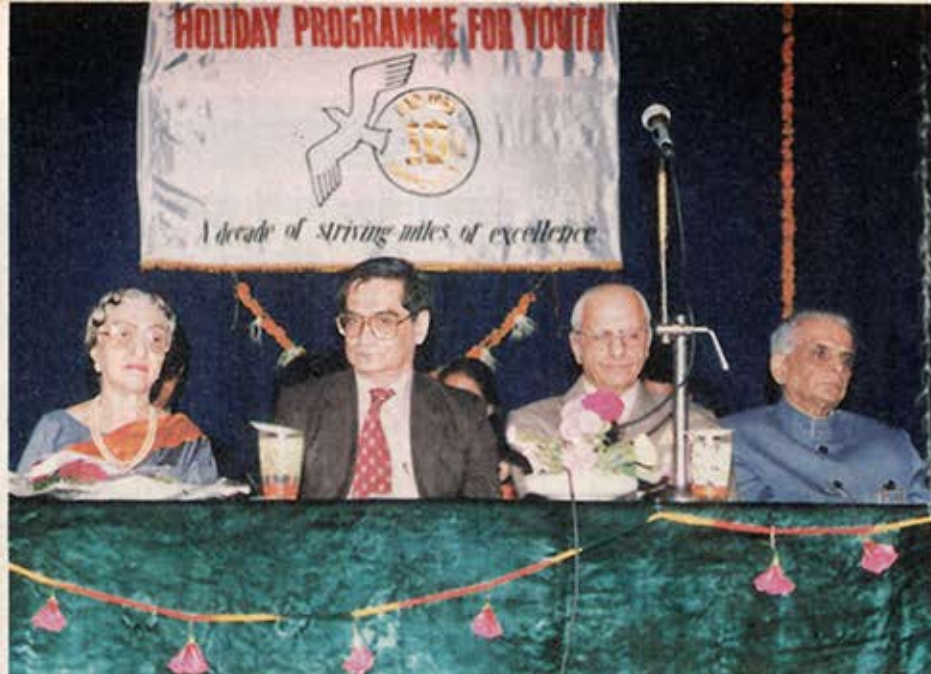
Ms Dilnavaz Variava with BPP trustees Dinshaw Mehta and Engineer (Above right) Ms Thirty Taleyarkhan, Variava, Shroff and Taleyarkhan at the inaugural Marfatia: "growing year after year"

associate ourselves with the programs and the prospects and the development of our country," leading to a vista of "Parsis in minority, but Parsis in command," in India and elsewhere.

Variava urged the youth to "come into the legal profession (where) there is a dire need of good, competent people... To succeed as a counsel, apart from just intelligence and knowledge of law, you require a certain aggressiveness... because your opponent will be trying to run you down and very often, a firm judge like myself will be running you down. There you have to combat and to deal in a manner which does not cause any offence. This is not a simple thing to do."

According to Darius Bhappu, an ex customs officer who is president of the Rustom Baug Association, the HPY is intended to inculcate in the participants a spirit of sharing and receptivity to the ideas of others. "Tolerance is one of the greatest virtues and a very important aspect of Hindu philosophy, but for which our forefathers would have been pushed into the sea... The basic idea of the HPY is to learn to live together with the spirit of accommodation."

The HPY has instilled in the youth "a legitimate pride of their ancestry and religious heritage. It has brought together the best of the community to give their best to the community's future—its youth," noted Ervad Ramyar Karanjia, principal of the Athornan Boarding Madressa at Dadar.



Noting that "tremendous opportunities exist in our own country," Forbes referred to the 1960s when a foreign exchange crunch first prompted the J. N. Marshall group of companies to venture into manufacturing, much against the grain of J. N. Marshall himself. As recalled his nephew Forbes, "It was necessary in those years to pioneer everything and we had to be entrepreneurs to succeed. We had to make sure that we went all out to see that anything that we did was the best (just) as you've been told now, and that if you wanted to succeed, you had to specialize... Think in terms of what you feel you are best at... I still feel that the organization which I have pioneered and succeeded, is still number one as far as that strength and activity is concerned," noted the patriarch who is now chairman emeritus of the Forbes-Marshall group of companies. He urged the youth to "stand like a rock" in matters of principle, "swim with the current" in matters of taste.

Manekshaw refused to give any advice: "I hate people giving me advice, so I never give advice to anybody." Winning over the audience by his usual mix of humor (much of it self-deprecatory) and unabashed

appreciation of pretty young women, Manekshaw concluded his roll call of Parsi achievers in India with this little gem: "In the marital sphere too we did not do badly. We produced a bride for Mohammed Ali Jinnah. We produced a groom for Indira Gandhi. We've also produced our share of crooks. Way back in 1970 we produced a Parsi who did away with lakhs and lakhs of rupees... and when I was born, we had a Parsi named Cyrus who was sent to jail (when the Manekshaw family learnt of this they changed the name of the new baby from Cyrus to Sam)." Manekshaw added 'humor' to the list of qualities — integrity, loyalty, hard work — responsible for the community's success.

It has become the tradition for the BPP board's senior trustee (the seniormost after the chairman) to chair the inaugural function and the BPP chairman to preside over the valedictory event. Accordingly management consultant and Raymond Limited vice president Shroff presided over the inaugural function. In the absence of BPP chairman Jamshed Guzder who was out of town, the valedictory function was chaired by BPP trustee and noted solicitor Dadi Engineer.

At both events of what is considered to be the BPP's best program, the Punchayet's board was well represented leading Mistree to remark, "I think it is perhaps the only function that I have ever attended where six of the seven Punchayet trustees have been in my midst and it makes me positively nervous..." Responding to the banter, Shroff noted, "He is the only formidable person who said that he is rather nervous in the presence of the trustees. At least somebody takes the trustees seriously! Thank you."

Placing the Punchayet's concept of the

program on record, Shroff said, "(It) is to prepare the youth to face the future with greater confidence, plan a career, dream about the future, and set out a path — as to how they want to achieve." In the last 40 years the Indian economy had grown 10 times over, opening up opportunities and competition, said Shroff, adding how the Parsis who made up nine percent of the total population of Bombay a century ago, now barely constituted 0.4 percent of it "and yet we have been able to hold our own." Not so, however, in the spheres of

politics and the armed forces where our presence has been declining, and the bureaucracy where it is now zero, says Shroff. "It is said that you can't drive a car well by looking (only) at the rear mirror. This applies to life as well. If you plan, you get results. If you don't, you get consequences. A winner has a plan; a loser has an excuse. But the temptation is to take short cuts. Today I find that a lot of youth want to

climb right to the top, want to get very affluent, get into the jet set, resort to dubious ways to achieve temporary success — and society lets you... At the end of the day you must judge yourself (by) your own benchmark, with your own yardstick — what did you want to achieve and where you have got. 'Success' comes before 'work' only in the dictionary... In life you must have both luck and pluck, but I think pluck is more important. Pluck is great determination; luck is a bonus."

Speaking of the HPY as a program designed "to mold the thinking of the young along the right lines," Engineer advised the young in the words of the 18th century English poet Oliver Goldsmith: "If I am a cobbler, the best cobbler I will be/If I am a tinker, no tinker can mend a kettle like me," even as he pleaded with the assembled parents and guardians, "Do not force a young man or woman to take a particular career."

In Shroff's words: "I see a distinct predilection for women here in terms of orga-

Manekshaw: "no doubt in my mind"
Awards and salutations: from Silloo Engineer to Hoshedar Wadia (middle, left) and from Maharuk Forbes to Fabian Panthaky; Bhappu, Anklesaria and Master on the valedictory dais with Engineer speaking (below, left); Forbes, Shroff and BPP chief executive Behram Laskari: evaluating a month's effort at instilling values, promoting competitiveness, generating confidence



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nizing." With the exception of former BPP chief executive Rustom Anklesaria who continues as its honorary advisor (projects), Dr (Ms) Mehroo Bengalee, BPP trustee and ex vice chancellor of Bombay University, was known to have been the initiator of the project and Ms Sheroo Master, the Punchayet's additional joint secretary, has supported it every step of the way. The principals of Parsi schools like Ms Roshan Driver of the BJPC, Ms Daulat Doongaji of the New Activity, Ms Khorshed Bharucha of the J. B. Vachha High School have been actively associated with the project. Doongaji (who has contributed two trophies to help enthuse the children on current affairs and on health, hygiene and diet as she believes "Parsi diet is very, very wrong, especially *lagan-nu-bhonu* — too much protein and everything fattening") is keen that the Punchayet create a course for the benefit of teachers — "a refresher course to prevent them from stagnating."

To the participants, "the essence (of the HPY) is that you do things that you would never have dreamt of doing. For example, a month ago half of us musn't have dreamt of being in a fashion show!... (But) nothing was *haath ka khél* (sleight of hand). Everything had to be planned out and worked hard at, which is why today healthy com-

petition we are quite used to," attested participant Hoshedar Wadia. In addition Wadia said, "We not only understand ourselves better today but we know where we

**"Excellence comes
from a certain
religious perception
which I believe
Zoroastrianism
offers extremely well"**

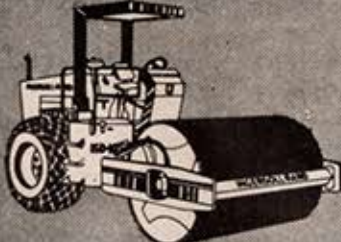
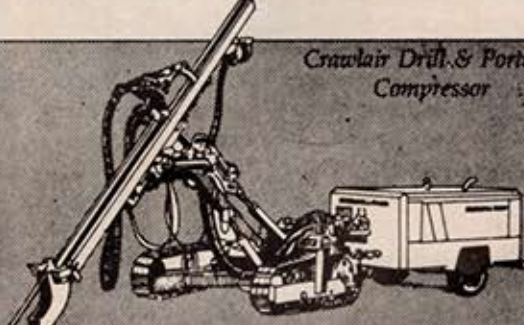
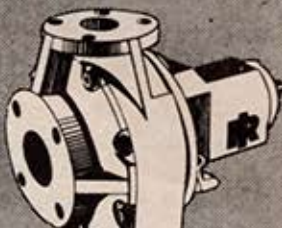
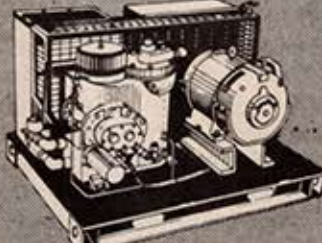
are headed," and assured Marfatia, Monaz Tarapore, Priya Bhujwala, Urvakshi Mistry, Burzin Mehta and others on the HPY team of organizers, "We (have) started striving for excellence and I promise you we will continue to do so."

An impromptu speech by co-organizer Bhujwala was an index to the success of the HPY and particularly of the efforts of Marfatia, though it obviously caught the latter by surprise. A standing ovation and resounding cheers from the young participants demonstrated beyond doubt where Marfatia stood in their esteem. "Although

each and every participant of HPY feels sincere gratefulness to Diana, it is not everyone who realizes the extent of her efforts, richness of her contribution towards this program... We who have worked with Diana over these years (know) the multiplicity of demands that she has met... There is no denying that (the participants) take away a little bit of Di with them as so many of us have done over the years... So Diana, thanks for HPY, and more importantly, thanks for being you..."

A dazed Marfatia who had been surreptitiously wiping her eyes through Bhujwala's words of praise, responded with "I am growing year after year only because of your affection and respect," and was greeted by a second standing ovation by the youth.

Manekshaw's words fittingly described the emotions prevailing over the Rustom Baug lawn: "For generations the Parsi youth has been told by their fathers that the Parsi youth is deteriorating. My father said the same thing of my generation. People are saying the same thing about you. Don't believe it. You have inherited in your blood the genes of your ancestors. I have no doubt in my mind that in the future some of you — I hope most of you — will do as well for the community as past Parsis have done..."

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CONTRACT JR 131.94

The Parsi Punchayet Case — I

Challenging the trustees

In the absence of approval from the anjuman the Punchayet could not claim to be constituted of duly authorized trustees, alleged the plaintiffs

Should the entire community have a say in the election of trustees of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet? There is a constant fear that by disregarding the present scheme for election of trustees, a time-honored institution may be abused and power may vest in the wrong hands.

Many community members may not be aware that originally the Punchayet, whose selection was ratified by the entire anjuman and in whose hands the affairs of the community were entrusted, were invariably accountable to the anjuman or the community at large. Though the Punchayet members could suggest new names on its body as replacements or additions, it was only after the anjuman sanction was obtained that the changes were recognized as official.

These facts come across clearly in *The Parsi Punchayet Case* (Suit No 689 of 1906) when in the historic plaint filed by Sir Dinsha Manockji Petit, II Bart and others against Sir Jamsetji Jejeebhoy, IV Bart and others, Justices Dinshaw Dhanjibhoy Daver and Frank C. O. Beaman ruled on two issues in 1908: whether the Punchayet trustees were validly appointed and entitled to fill up vacancies in their ranks; whether the funds and properties in the custody of the trustees were intended for all Zoroastrians (including converts) or only the born Zoroastrians. The six others who joined Petit as petitioners were Sir Cowasji Jehangir, Rustomji Behramji Jijibhoy, Ratanji J. Tata, Bapuji Sorabji Patel, Ratanji Dadabhoy Tata and Nanabhoy Naoroji Katrak. Arraigned as the defendants were Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy, Hormusjee Edaljee Albless, Jamsetjee Cursetjee Jamsetjee, Merwanji Muncherji

Cama and Bomanji Dinshaw Petit.

The verdict on the latter issue had been serialized over 16 issues of *Parsiana* from October 1981 to March 1983. In four episodes, beginning this issue, we will be



Daver and Beaman: in agreement

carrying at length Justice Daver's opinion (fully supported by Justice Beaman) reflecting the careful scrutiny he made of varied documents. In his words, "The members of the Punchayet were the appointees of the community...They had themselves no legal right to appoint trustees of property that belonged to the community, and they had certainly no right whatever to confer on others the power which they themselves never had."

The court however noted that the defendants were of impeccable integrity and honor "and their management of properties devoted to charity have been so fair and faultless that not a complaint has been heard against them." The judges observed that they were forced to remove the trustees from office on technical defects. Thus, while ordering a scheme of elections to be framed, Daver authorized the surviving trustees to once again take charge of the

Bombay Punchayet funds and properties.

The judgment on this topic is being carried almost in its entirety barring those references which are technical, or of common knowledge to the community, or repetitions of statements made earlier. Minimal editing and stylistic corrections have been undertaken to facilitate smooth reading.

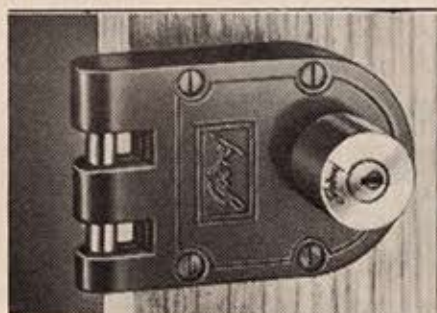
The first instalment gives an account of the origin and necessity of establishing the Punchayet as a governing body to regulate the internal affairs of the community. The nature and constitution of the earlier Punchayets is analyzed in the second instalment such that it establishes "beyond all doubt that the right of electing members of the Punchayet always was in the general body of the Parsi community of Bombay."

In the subsequent instalments we learn how exigencies of administration necessitated the appointment of the first four trustees who assigned to themselves the power to nominate successor trustees, an authority later codified by the deed of 1851. However, as per the court ruling, "nothing that is subsequently done can validate an act which in its inception was invalid and unauthorized."

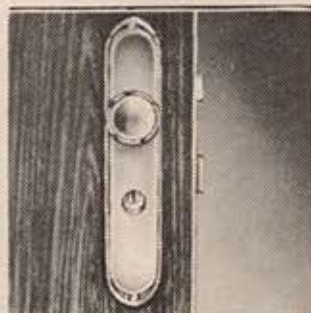
The original intention of the donors of immovable properties, analyzed in depth by Justice Daver, has been summarized by *Parsiana* and carried in parenthesis for reasons of brevity. *Parsiana* has also abridged the last part of the judgment that refers to the status of the defendants. The developments in the Punchayet after the judgment, presented in the article, have been taken from Sapur Desai's *History of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet: 1860-1960*.

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The seven plaintiffs in the suit are members of the Parsi community of Bombay. They profess the Zoroastrian religion. The five defendants are also members of the same community and profess the same religion...

No authentic record exists as to when the Parsis first came and settled in Bombay, but it seems fairly well established that a small number of them were settled in the island some time before it was ceded by the Portuguese to the British as a portion of the dowry of Princess Catherine on her marriage with King Charles II in 1668. They continued to inhabit the island of Bombay, increased in numbers, and became in time a prosperous and flourishing community under the British Government. They built for themselves many fire-temples and from time to time erected dokhmas as the increasing wants of the community required them. They started many charitable funds and institutions for the benefit of the members of their own community, and as the community grew more numerous and more prosperous, their charitable institutions and endowments became richer and more extensive. At the present day, there are many valuable immovable properties in Bombay dedicated for charitable purposes exclusively for the benefit of their community, and the funds in cash or securities dedicated to charities of religious or public nature amount to over 53 lakhs of rupees. These properties and funds are in the custody and management of the five defendants in this suit. These properties and funds came into existence either by public subscriptions amongst the members of the community or by gifts and bequests made by individual members thereof. The defendants are generally known by the members of the community as trustees of the properties and funds of the Parsi Punchayet. They have all been appointed trustees by their predecessors in office as vacancies occurred by resignation or death amongst them, and they claim to have the power of filling in vacancies in their ranks whenever such vacancies may occur.

The plaintiffs contend in this suit that the defendants are not validly appointed trustees. They contend that their immediate predecessors in office were also not validly appointed trustees and that they had no power to appoint the defendants. They claim that the right to appoint trustees of these charitable funds and properties belonging to the Parsi Punchayet has always been vested in the general body of the Zoroastrians of Bombay and that the trustees have usurped those powers and exer-

cised them for some time though they had no legal right to do so. In their plaint the plaintiffs make no charges of misconduct against any of the defendants, but they claim that as the right to appoint trustees is and always has been in the general body of Zoroastrians in Bombay, such right should be declared and established in this suit. They pray for a declaration that the defendants are not validly appointed trustees — that the right to appoint trustees is in the general body of Zoroastrians in Bombay, and they ask that a scheme may be framed for the appointment of trustees and for the due administration of these funds and properties.

The defendants deny these allegations and contend that they are validly appointed trustees of these properties and funds and

The most powerful weapon in the hands of the Punchayet has always been the power of excommunication

claim that they have the right to fill up vacancies in the ranks of the trustees as such vacancies occur. They say that their predecessors in office had a right to fill in vacancies and that they had continued to do so for over 50 years, and they submit that this arrangement has worked satisfactorily for all these years and that therefore it should not be disturbed and no scheme should be framed either for the appointment of trustees or for the administration of the trust properties and funds. This is the first branch of the case...

At the hearing before us, in addition to the rather lengthy oral evidence called by the parties, a large number of documents have been put in as exhibits and a great number of passages were read from various books — such as dictionaries, histories, encyclopedias and journals of various societies. Also, we were given the benefit of the impressions of various travellers who had visited India and Persia at different times. I do not think that any of these have been very helpful in forming our opinions on the various questions that were argued before us...

The ancient documents put in before us as exhibits are more useful. They extend over many years. Out of the documents available to them at the present time, both parties have put before us such of them as they thought would assist us in deciding the questions that arise in the case. I have gone through every one of these exhibits with care and attention and the study of them has absorbed the best portion of the summer vacation that followed the conclusion of the hearing of this case...All these exhibits, however, taken together and carefully studied, are sufficient to enable me to come to conclusions which leave my mind, at all events, free from all doubts...

I will now proceed to discuss the first of the two principal questions: Are the defendants validly appointed trustees of the funds and properties belonging to the Parsi Punchayet and now in their possession and under their management, and are they entitled to fill up vacancies in their ranks as they occur?

The consideration of this question mainly depends upon the documentary evidence recorded by the court. To appreciate the present position of the defendants, it is necessary to see how the body known as trustees first came into existence, and for that purpose it becomes necessary to correctly appreciate the constitution and position of that ancient body — now defunct — which was formerly known as the Parsi Punchayet. The history of the origin of the Punchayet — the vicissitudes it underwent during its existence and its eventual demise — is to be gathered from the documents before us. This evidence is necessarily of a fragmentary description.

The Punchayet, as I understand the meaning of the word, is a body composed of some of the wealthy, influential, and elderly men of a community or a caste. Such an institution was wholly unknown to ancient Persians. It is an institution that is essentially Indian. The original Persian emigrants, after undergoing great hardships and sufferings, eventually found a peaceful home in India. The Hindus extended to them a friendly welcome, and, out of gratitude for the kindly consideration shown to them, the Persians seem to have shown great anxiety to do nothing to wound their feelings or hurt their susceptibilities. As time passed, they adopted many of the customs and usages of their Hindu brethren and copied some of their institutions. Amongst the institutions they copied was the system of entrusting the power of

regulating the internal government of their community in all social and religious matters to a committee of a few headmen of their community. Such a committee has been known in India from the most ancient times as the Panchayet. The most powerful weapon in the hands of the Panchayet for enforcing their orders and behests has always been the power of excommunication, which means exclusion from all benefits which a member of the caste is entitled to and ostracism from all social functions and religious rites.

We are at present concerned with the Parsi Panchayet as it existed in Bombay. As the Parsis began settling in Bombay and their numbers began to increase, they found it necessary to have some sort of constituted authority to govern the internal affairs of their community, and to check — and if necessary punish — social, moral and religious transgressions on the part of individual members of their community. They regarded themselves in exactly the same position as one of the numerous Hindu castes by whom they were surrounded. They were in official documents spoken of as the "Parsi caste." Although the Panchayet is long dead and although the small community of Parsis that first settled in Bombay over 250 years ago has

now grown into a large, wealthy, and by no means an uninfluential community of Bombay, they have, for all practical purposes, remained today what they were when they first settled in Bombay — a caste amongst the many castes that exist in

"I do not think any community would render obedience to or submit itself to the orders of such a body"

this city. One of the absolute essentials of the constitution of the Panchayet of a caste is that its members should be elected by the whole of the caste in a meeting assembled.

There is no reliable evidence before us as to when exactly the Parsi Panchayet first came into existence and how the first Panchayet was elected. Speaking of the Parsi Panchayet, the late Mr Dossabhoj Framji in his *History of the Parsis*, at page 217 of Volume I, says that the first Parsi

Panchayet was a self-constituted body. This statement can only be based on surmise. The documents placed before us as the result of elaborate and laborious research by both sides negatives this assumption. The Panchayet exercised certain powers of correction and had the right to impose penalties and inflict punishment on the delinquent members of the caste. Such powers can only be delegated to them by the consent of the caste, and I think no caste would submit to the exercise of those powers unless such powers were exercised by those alone who were chosen by the body of the caste to perform the functions of the Panchayet. It does not recommend itself to my mind that five, 10, or 15 persons getting together can say we elect ourselves the Panchayet and we will govern the members of our community, and I do not think any community would render obedience to or submit itself to the orders of such a body. The essential element of a Panchayet is the delegation of authority by the people of a community to its chosen headmen. The documentary evidence before us as to subsequent election of members of the Panchayet negatives the assumption that the body in its inception was a self-constituted body.

To be continued



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For 58-year-old Rusy Jal Kapadia life has been, literally, a rags to riches story. Over the past three decades he has made the finest filter paper from rags, steered a family concern founded by his father-in-law into a leading manufacturer of specialty paper and spawned an equally successful sister company to pioneer the manufacture of a wide range of filter pads. "It's the result of plain hard work," affirms Kapadia, looking up from a letter he has just put his signature to, while dedicated staff members buzz around in his longish cubbyhole of a cabin which he shares with his sons Adil and Zubin.

It is a Thursday, the weekly holiday in Pune where Kapadia runs his eminently successful White Cloud Paper Mills and White Cloud Filter Pads Private Limited. But for the portly Kapadia it is business as usual, and he is on the line personally attending to calls from his clients, following up on outstanding dues and carefully examining the samples brought to him. "Nothing can be achieved without hard work," he states, adding a wee bit reluctantly, "We Parsis are too pleasure-loving."

For Colombo-born Kapadia, 1995 had been a particularly successful year, as if in vindication of his lifelong belief that hard work pays. On August 19, he received the Rajiv Gandhi National Unity Award 1995 for excellence. Three months later his valuable contributions were once again recognized when R. K. Dhawan, minister for urban development, presented him the Indira Gandhi Priyadarshini Award '95. And, as the year came to an end, Kapadia crowned his achievements by organizing a very successful Trade Fair in Pune to commemorate the diamond jubilee of the Mahratta Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI), an association of over 2,000 members, which has a Small Scale Indus-

try (SSI) wing to which Kapadia has been elected chairman for two successive terms, a unique distinction.

Yet Kapadia wears his achievements nonchalantly, almost shrugging them off with a modesty that could be a journalist's bugbear. He is reticent to speak about himself, preferring to talk, if he must, about his companies, which he has been



Kapadia: "highly specialized" business

nurturing since 1965 when he was "first brought into the picture." His father-in-law, Meherjibhai Karkaria, started a small unit to manufacture handmade paper on retiring in Pune, after spending most of his working life in Iran. "Being active his whole life, he felt resting would be equivalent to rusting," Kapadia says of him. The initial sales figure (in 1963-64) was less than Rs 23,000 and "anyone else would have wound up the show." But Karkaria persisted and, with the help of a *jamai* (son-in-law) who seems to have imbibed the older man's work credo and a belief in

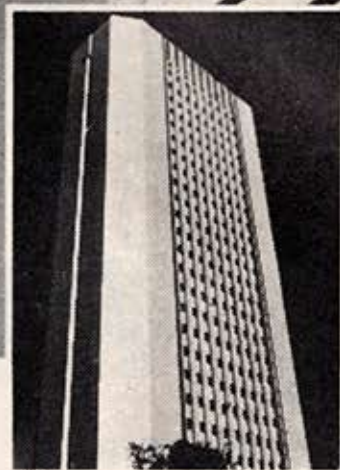
Meher Baba whose portrait hangs in the room, business prospered. "Sales figures doubled in the very first year of my joining the company on July 1, 1965," recalls Kapadia with quiet pride. They have never looked back since then.

The White Clouds have floated happily, though there has been the occasional black lining caused by labor problems about which Kapadia is reticent to speak. "My father-in-law employed people indiscriminately, providing them with housing (in *kholis*) on the factory site," says Kapadia, who turned the business round from being labor-intensive to a fully automated unit. Today, the factory is a lean setup with 50 workers and 18 engineers against the earlier staff strength of over 200, and manufactures around 30 different grades of filter paper to the exacting standards demanded by reputed industrial concerns and laboratories. The crucial aspects of the business are still looked after by the family members themselves. "We deal directly with our clients, otherwise relationships get spoilt."

According to Kapadia, the business of manufacture and sale of filter paper and pads "is highly specialized, and calls for a lot of reading and hard work." These are two qualities never found lacking in Kapadia, and P. G. Thombre, deputy secretary, MCCI, an unabashed fan of his SSI chairman, talks of the time when an "extremely well-read Kapadia" squashed the anti-asbestos lobby by pointing out the environmental value of asbestos. "Though he is not a scientist, he keeps himself well posted on subjects of his interest," says Thombre.

And Kapadia, despite being a self-confessed workaholic has several interests which he pursues with the same intensity he brings to his work. Deeply fond of western classical music — a passion shared

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by the entire Kapadia family — he has been involved with the Poona Music Society. During his 10-year tenure as an active committee member, he organized for the Society (established in 1947) its first ever International Piano Festival Competition with performers coming in from Australia, Europe and Russia. "If I'm not mistaken," adds Thombre, "Kapadia was a program associate of Zubin Mehta too, when the latter came to India."

Last year, as a "true Zoroastrian, and believer in Zoroastrian principles," Kapadia made time to be involved in raising funds and organizing charity shows and programs to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the Sir J. J. Agiary in Pune. "The task of raising the eight lakh rupees required for undertaking full repairs on the Agiary seemed daunting," admits Kapadia, one of the four members of the local (Pune) managing committee involved in the project. But by spearheading this effort and personally contributing Rs 25,000 to the fund, Kapadia made this figure achievable.

"He is one person who never hesitates to be right in the center of the action," mentions Thombre, recalling the time when Kapadia led the Pune contingent of small scale units to demonstrate against excise.



Kapadia greeting Narayan, executive director, Bank of Maharashtra, Pune

"He is probably the first chairman to do so," states Thombre, suppressing a slight chuckle at the thought of his portly but dignified chairman shouting slogans as the procession wended its way through Bombay's streets from Azad Maidan to Mantralaya.

Kapadia has always been an outspoken man conscious of his rights. When the NCAER (National Council for Applied Economic Research) study on SSI seemed to indict the small scale units in its findings, Kapadia immediately commissioned an impartial study of the report and organized a meeting, through the MCCI, to acquaint the SSI members with the fallacies in it. He is happy that several recommendations made by him to the Ministry of

Commerce and Industry for small scale units have now been implemented. "I don't believe in socialism or capitalism," he laughs, "but only in humanism." This explains his guiding force in life.

His humanism is manifest in one more sphere: family planning. "All our problems are linked to over-population," claims Kapadia, "be it health, food or housing." He is perpetually spreading the message of family planning amongst his staff, and should family planning be introduced on a massive scale throughout India, he would like to take part in such a campaign. His views on family planning are exemplified in his own *hum do hamare do* family.

Kapadia's plans for the future are like a mirror reflecting his own life and beliefs. The best testimony to his credo of work is his own approach to it. He wants to add an agricultural wing to the MCCI. This is a natural extension of his own active involvement in horticulture, and he plans to go into floriculture as well. And his simple mantra to the youth, "make your own way; don't be dependent on others," is rooted in the poignancy of his having 'made it' despite being orphaned at a tender age.

As Kapadia puts his principles into practice, the message of a life well lived filters past with telling transparency.

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ZOROASTRIAN COLLEGE

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6TH WORLD ZOROASTRIAN CONGRESS & PILGRIMAGE TOUR OF HISTORICAL IRAN



(1) President of Iran Rafsanjani's daughter, Madame Fatema Seen discussing with Zoroastrian College President Dr. Meher Master-Moos.
(2) Zoroastrian College Delegation members in front of the Tomb of Achaemenian Emperor Cyrus the Great at Pasargade — L to R Ervad Godrej Sidhwa, Mrs. Roshan Riventa, Mr. Farhad Sidhwa, Mrs. Homai Billimoria, Dr. Meher Master-Moos, Mrs. Amavaz Mirza, Mrs. Roshan Doctor, and to the sides, Mrs. Tehmina Turel, Mrs. Rashida Shahparast and Mr. Cyrus Cama.

The success of any tour programme largely depends on the Grace of God, and the expertise, willingness to please, and management ability of the Tour Conductor. We were blessed with having an excellent person in **Mr. Sohrab Poormandegarian**, a Tehran based Zoroastrian Tour Manager, and thanks to his personal care, and contacts at local level throughout Iran, ours was not only the best Tour amongst all those who visited Iran during the 6th World Zoroastrian Congress, but also the only truly International group attending the Congress, with persons from India, Pakistan, Canada and U.S.A. Sohrab provided us with a Zoroastrian coach driver — a Mobed named **Daryush**, a naturally gifted Ambassador of the Zoroastrian Community in Iran. He taught us the Iranian equivalent of the Parsi National Anthem — **Chaye Hame Jurtoshti** — whose opening words are "Bamdad Asho", a song which predominated in the Opening and Closing Sessions of the World Congress. Sohrab also took great care to provide us with Zoroastrian style Iranian food cooked by a lady from near Shiraz, and even served vodka and Shirazi wine within the safe precincts of the Agiary and Dhamarshala complex in the heart of Shiraz, although at all places we stayed at good hotels; and enjoyed the fresh fruits and "maeva" that Iran is famous for, apricots, cherries, honey-dew melon and watermelon, pistachios and walnuts being included in our daily fare, to offset the monotony of the "Chello Kabab" — or rice with sheep mutton, chicken or fish, and for the vegetarians — rice and yogurt. For anyone wanting to visit Iran, a tour conducted by **Mr Sohrab Poormandegarian** is highly recommended.

The 6th World Zoroastrian Congress had several highlights, which included for the about 50-60 Zoroastrians from other countries — India, Pakistan, Canada, U.S.A., New Zealand, England, France, Russia/Tajikistan — an invitation to meet the **Chief Ayatollah — Khamenei** — in his Masjid; and the **President of Iran Mr. Rafsanjani** in his Presidential Palace. The security arrangements were stringent — ladies having to wear the compulsory "Burka" — coat and with all ornaments including wrist watches removed. A special wreath-laying ceremony with Military Guard of Honour and music at the Mausoleum of late **Ayatollah Khomeini** formed part of the Opening Ceremony proceedings. There was a special visit by **President Rafsanjani's daughter Madame Fatema** and the **Chief lady Dy, Minister of Majlis, Madame Shahla Habibi**, who held a meeting with the leading foreign and Iranian lady delegates. The Congress programme, with simultaneous translation facilities in Persian/English was held in the prestigious Iran Govt. T.V. Centre, with 4 T.V. cameras

continuously recording the entire proceedings, broadcast within Iran as well as in foreign countries. The World Congress was ably organised by **Dr. Farang Mehr** (formerly Chancellor of Shiraz University) and **Dr. Mahiyar Ardeshtari**, supported by the Organising Committee Members and the **Zoroastrian Women's Associations**, who hosted the excellent dinner functions every evening.

The Speakers from around the World included **Mr. Rohinton Rivetna** of U.S.A., who suggested the formation of another World Organisation of Zoroastrian Anjuman; **Ms. Dolly Dastoor** (Canada) FEZANA President; **LT. Gen. Adil Sethna** of Delhi and the Federation of Parsee Anjuman of India; Zoroastrian College President, **Dr. Meher Master-Moos**, (who released the Zoroastrian Flag designed by **Dr. Jehangir Medora** of Canada, which was in great demand) and who spoke on the International Education Work of the College; and **Mrs. Homai Billimoria** who spoke on Social Work Education and various projects of Social Service for Zoroastrian Community. From India, **Ervad Peshotan Peer** and other Mobeds who had accompanied **Ervad Nader Turel**, performed, Jashan and spoke about the conditions of the Priests. From Iran there were many speakers, including the wife of the Mobed of Yazd who wanted to become a qualified Mobed herself (as she was anyway doing most of the work in the Yazd Atash Behram). **Prof. Faredoon Juneldi** released his **Magnumopus**, the 4 volumes of **Avesta-Persian Dictionary** (and presented a set for the Zoroastrian College Library). **Prof. Kasra Vafadari** of France, and **Madame Golrokhshor** of Tajikistan, spoke of the Tajik Govt's efforts to introduce the teaching of Avesta in Schools and Colleges curriculum. **Zoroastrian College is invited to send its Delegation to the World Avesta Conference in Tajikistan in September**. There were many interesting personal inter-actions between the Iranian Delegates and the Foreign Delegates. From India and Pakistan the ZOROASTRIAN COLLEGE DELEGATION comprised of **Dr. Meher Master-Moos**, Mrs. Homai Billimoria, Mrs. Tehmina Turel, Mrs. Rashida Shahparast, Mrs. Roshan Doctor, Mrs. Amavaz Mirza, Ms. Hovavi Kolah and Ervad Hormuzd Dadachanji, all of Bombay, Surat and Udwada; and Ervad Godrej Sidhwa, his son Farhad and Mr. Rustom Degamwalla of Karachi. The Canadian and American Delegates included **Mr. & Mrs. Rohinton and Roshan Rivetna**, **Mr. Kersi Shroff**, **Mr. Rusi Kaywalla**, **Mrs. Hutokshi Contractor**, her daughter **Lyla** and nephew **Cyrus Cama**, **Mazda Antia**, **Prof. Frank Crocitto**, **Behroze Daruwalla**, **Bapsy Pavri**, and **Ms. Dolly Dastoor**, who joined the Zoroastrian College tour half way at Shiraz, the ancient capital of Fars Province.

THE ZOROASTRIAN COLLEGE HISTORICAL TOUR OF IRAN commenced with a long coach drive from **Tehran Rustom Baug Agiary** where the coach driver, **Darius Mobed's** father is the **Panthaky**. This is a beautiful Fire Temple in the heart of a Zoroastrian Colony in the suburbs of Tehran. We drove through Zanjan, Gilan, and Kermanshah provinces via the world famous **Ali Sadr Limestone caves near Hamadan**. The underground lake and stalactite formation are amongst the largest in the world. At Kermanshah, we caught up with Sassanian history of the 4th and 6th centuries A.D. at **Takht e Bostan**, where the tragic sculptor **Farhad** ended his life, after spending a lifetime carving the historical bas-reliefs of Emperor **Kushro Parviz**, in the hope of marrying the Empress **Shirin**. There too is the famous bas relief of the coronation of **Shapur I**, receiving the Royal Seal from his father **Ardeshr Babegan**, the founder of the Sassanian Dynasty, with the Parthian Emperor **Artabanus**, conquered and crushed underfoot. In this famous carving the Emperor is seen being blessed by a holy person, whom some historians identify as **Mani**, the founder of Manichaeism and others as holy Prophet **Zarathushtra**. The former is likely more correct.

Enroute from Kermanshah to Hamadan, (the ancient Achaemenian capital called **Ecbatana**), we passed the rock carvings of **Darius the Great** high up on the cliffs of **Bisutun**, overlooking a river on the Great Silk Road, which went from Rome to China via Iran. **Darius** was a great administrator of his vast Empire and constructed the longest and best roads which merchants with their caravans could traverse in 3 months from **Babylonia** to **Central Asia Khozand** and his fleet postal system horses within two weeks. He was an official law maker and administrator and founded the postal system, banking system, customs duties and taxes and judicial system which remain a model for the people of today. Here he depicted putting down with firm hand the rebellion of 9 kings of different Satrapies who disobeyed his laws. The present Iranian Govt. is busy restoring ancient monuments and it was difficult to get a good view of the carving due to scaffolding. At the **Ganjnameh** near Hamadan are also rock inscriptions of **Darius the Great** and his son **Xerxes** in Cuneiform script in Old Persian, Elamite and Babylonian languages. Hamadan is also renowned for the Tajik 10th century scientist **Avicenna**, father of Unani medicine, and the Tomb of the **Jewish Queen Esther**, whom **Xerxes** married, to annex the Kingdom of **Susa** to the Empire. We paid homage to **Avicenna** at his Museum.

Zoroastrian Migrations into India originated in various places of Iran and frequently the migrants called their new home in India after their original home in Iran. From the fortress near **Neyshapur** in **Khorassan**, named **Sanjan**, came the group led by **Mobed Mobad Naryosangh Dhalav**, who consecrated **Iranshah Atash Behram** in "Sanjan" India about 1275 years ago. The Palace built by **Shapur I** at **Neyshapur** stands ruined by the invading hordes of **Genghis Khan**. From **Sari**, the capital city of **Mazandaran**, came the people who settled the Zoroastrian settlement of **Navsari** in India. And from the historical **Anahita Temple of Kangavar** came the line of Priests bearing the surname **Kanga** in India. This ruined temple is well worth a visit enroute from **Bisutun** to **Hamadan**.

From **Hamadan** we headed for the beautiful **Caspian Sea Coast** via **Rasht** in **Gilan province**, and **Mangil**, famous for snakes, high winds, floods and olive plantations, to **Bundar e Anzali**, the beautiful Queen of the sea ports of the **Caspian Sea**, where big ships take the merchandise to **Azerbaijan**, **Russia** and **Turkmenia**. The most beautiful women of Iran are to be found here, and with typical sea port insouciance, they walked in public without **Burka**. From there we motored every inch of the scenic **Caspian Sea Coast** from **West** to **East**, savouring the famous **sturgeon fish**, and fresh olives, cherries and other delicacies of this coast. At **Noshahr**, the private beach-side Motel enabled us, (including the ladies) to have a swim in the cool waters of the **Caspian Sea** with its pebbly beach underfoot. The mountains slope down to the sea. A 4 to 5 hours drive through breathtakingly beautiful mountain scenery took us to the mountain top resort known as "**Khandelous Museum**," renowned for its herbal medicinal oils. From **Noshahr** via **Noor** and **Sari** we proceeded to **Gorgan**, the North Eastern entry into Iran from **Turkmenia**, which boasts a small but well kept museum with artefacts going back 3000-4000 years. We proceeded onwards to **Toos**, the home of the **Tajik poet Firdausi**, of **Shahnameh** renown. The **Reza Shah Pahlavi** Dynasty has constructed a magnificent memorial and mausoleum to commemorate his work; and the museum is worth a visit. We lit **agarbati** at his shrine, to honour the greatest poet the world has ever known.

From there our group proceeded to **Mashad**, the Holy of Muslim Holy Cities of Iran, where we were privileged to visit the magnificent **Masjid of Imam Reza** of the 10th century, with its gorgeous golden and blue tiles domes, sparkling chandeliers and rich carpets. From **Mashad** we visited **Neyshapur**, the Shrine of **Omar Khayyam**, and a five hours trek in the blazing noon day Sun,

was rewarded by being able to visit and walk over the ruins of the **Palace** and City that **Shapur I** built. From a fortress nearby this City named Sanjan the ancestors of the 9 families of Mobeds of Iranshah originated, and they called the place in which they settled in India also 'Sanjan.'

A long coach ride took us all the way back to Tehran in time to board the evening flight for Shiraz the city of roses, poets and culture. The Tombs of the **Sufi poets Sadi and Hafiz** are located here amidst beautiful gardens and 'chaikhannas'. Shiraz boasts an excellent **University** located atop the mountains, with its most modern Persian language Regional Computer Science Research Centre funded by the Govts. of Italy, France, Germany, U.K. and U.S.A. This services the entire Persian speaking region as far as Central Asia. Shiraz has beautiful museums and rose gardens of which the **Nargestan** is the most famous; and the **Vakil bazar** which caters to the needs of the Iranian nomads and gypsies who travel with their flocks of sheep to wherever the pastures are green. The **Zoroastrian Centre in Shiraz** has a Fire Temple and Dhamshala Complex in the heart of the down-town city. Although we stayed at an excellent hotel, our breakfast and dinner was cooked by a Zoroastrian woman at the Dhamshala complex. Using Shiraz as a base, and escorted by good English speaking guides — a Jewish lady named Hilda and a Muslim gentleman named Jamshid who informed us that many Muslims used the Asho Farohar symbol in Fars province — we proceeded for day trips to the historical sites in the surrounding areas. One day was a visit to the city of **Bishapur**, in ruins, built by Ardeshir Babagan and Shapur I, where a famous **Atash Behram** cum **Anahita Water Temple** were excavated by the renowned Archeologist Girshmann. This site also has bas reliefs showing the victories of the Sassanian Emperor over the 3 Roman Emperors Valerian, Philip the Arab and Emperor. There are also bas reliefs of other Sassanian Kings carved into the mountain rock overlooking the river. All over Iran there are many ancient 'ghansats', underground rock and bricks-lined canals, to carry the cool mountain water as a supply for the cities and villages in the plains. Some of these go back to Achaemenian and Sassanian epochs.

Another full day trip took us to **Pasargade**, the ruined **Palace of Cyrus the Great** and the Tomb of the great Monarch and his Queen, also near the Pasargade river. To stick the colossal stones together, the Achaemenian builders used iron rods coated with zinc as an anti rust measure. Here is the stone carving depicting the Great Emperor Cyrus wearing the Egyptian crown, (although he died before he could complete his Egyptian campaign) and with the wings of the Assyrian Genie. After a picnic lunch in the fields of the Palace we reached **Naksh e Rostom**, the site of the historic ashtodans of the **Achaemenian Emperors, Darius the Great, Xerxes, Artaxerxes, and Darius II**. A Fire Temple in ruins still stands there. The Sassanian Monarchs have covered the lower portions of the cliff face with their bas — reliefs; one of which is also an Elamite carving. Next came a visit to **Naksh e Rostam** with 3 Sassanian carvings depicting the coronation ceremony of **Ardeshir Babagan, Shapur I** and a scene depicting Shapur I being given the Divine Right of Kings to rule.

From there we proceeded to the highlight of the Achaemenian Dynasty, the great complex of Palaces and the most glorious **Royal Atash Behram** constructed at persepolis by **Darius the Great, Xerxes and Artaxerxes**. **Persepolis Royal Palaces** were used for the grand **NOWROZE** and **Fravardegan Festival**, when tribute was paid to the King of Kings by the subordinate Kings and Rulers of the 28 Satrapies (or Provinces) of the greatest Empire of Iran. The grand staircase of the **Apadana Palace** has bas reliefs depicting the gifts brought as tribute from each province on the Nowrooze festival, and these were stored in the Royal Treasury adjacent to the Military Palace. The Women's Palace has been renovated and converted into a museum housing archeological artefacts. In the 1935 archeological excavations gold and silver tablets, buried in the four corner foundation stones of the **Atash Behram** were unearthed, in which the Great King Darius inscribed the praises of the Great God Ahura Mazda. The stone door jambs of the **Tachera Palace** of Darius the Great depict the Monarch over-coming all the evil in the Cosmos, battling with a creature composed of the stars of the face of Leo the Lion, the wings of Aquila the Eagle, the scaly neck of Draco the Dragon, and the tail of Scorpio the Scorpion, the predominant star constellations over Iran. When that Greek Barbarian Alexander, misnamed the Great, the first Palace he set fire to was the private **Palace of Xerxes**, in revenge of Xerxes having burnt the Acropolis, and Temple of Pallas Athaena in Athens, Greece, over a century earlier. The cedarwood beams and strawmat ceilings were engulfed in the flames leaving only the stone columns and door jambs surviving.

On the last day in Shiraz, Jamshedi escorted us to the historical **Palace of Gur**, re-named Firuzabad, where **Ardeshir Babagan** had constructed one of his three famous **Atash Behrams**, named **Adar Gushnasp**? Here again the Govt. was busy with

restoration work. This Palace is a magnificent example of bricks structure construction of domes with a central hole for the smoke to escape. We lit a fire using 'Sukher, Loban, Agarbat' under the dome of the main Kebla of the **Atash Behram** room and recited 'Atash Niyesh'. The Sassanians had the know how to construct circular brick domes over square buildings. This architectural style was later copied both in Europe and by Islam, for masjids in Iran and other countries. The structure has withstood the ravages of time, for over a millennium and a half.

An over night coach journey from Shiraz to Yazd took us past a famous ancient living **Cypress tree**. The Municipality notice board, dimly visible in the glimmer of the moonlight and the early dawn, read that the tree is 4500-5000 years old, a magnificent poem to the power of Almighty God, that Civilizations had risen and fallen but this living tree still survives.

YAZD in the midst of desert lands surrounded by arid mountains devoid of greenery, is the head quarters of Zoroastrian survival in Iran. In the small old villages around Yazd, Agiary fires, some over 1000 years old, are still burning; and in the hills, 'Peeruns' (places of Pilgrimage having high spiritual power,) provide sustenance to the soul, for the Zoroastrians from all over Iran. When considering the situation of Zoroastrianism in Iran care must be taken to distinguish between the existence and survival of the faith in 'Baaten' or mystic, invisible Iran through the holy Maghavan and Abeds; and the 'Jaheer' or outward visible ordinary folk living in Iran, in Yazd and in other places.

Amongst the 'Jaheer' Iran or outward places, the only **Atash Behram** building in Iran is located in Yazd, constructed by donations from India given by the Petit family, when the then Shah Abbas invited Dr. Dadabhoji Naoroji to send a Zoroastrian fact-finding mission to locate and uplift the Zoroastrians in Iran and Mr. Manekji Hataria was sent with funds from India for the purpose. This sacred fire has great power, and responded to the sound of the Avesta Manthras, by sending up a wiff of smoke from the smouldering embers, when sandalwood offerings from India were placed on the glassed-in window parapets, in the absence of any Mobed within the precincts. A sign-board outside the gate in Persian states 'Admission is for Zoroastrians only.' But despite this, in all the Fire Temples that we visited throughout Iran, the law and the practice is that Muslims, Christians and persons from all other religious communities may and in fact do enter the sacred precincts of the Fire Temples. The Mobeds also do not stop anybody from entering.

We visited a very old **Agiary in Yazd**, now used as a school and Gahambar Community Centre with old style kitchen having huge tandoor ovens for making 'Daroos' and 'Naan'. There are 3 old Dokhmas on the mountain tops near Yazd, but they are disused; and the present practice of the Zoroastrians is burial. We visited the cemetery at Yazd, where a 'ghansat' brings cool healing water from the mountains; and a quaint old Zoroastrian man, perched atop a donkey is the keeper of the cemetery.

There is a holy shrine called the **City Peer**. This was constructed as a memorial of a miracle which occurred in a well on that spot. A lady of nobility fully dressed had fallen into the well several centuries ago. Her body was not found and remained in the well. About a century ago, a Zoroastrian man of Yazd had visited Mashad. He was caught attempting to enter the shrine of Imam Reza, the Muslim Holy of Holies, and he was captured, imprisoned and sentenced to death. In a dream the lady came to him and requested him to go to this well recover her remains, and build a shrine in her memory over the well. When he protested that he had no funds, she promised to help him for that and also to save his life. He agreed to do as she requested. Next morning he awoke in Yazd; and narrated his story to the local Mayor. The Mayor did not believe him, and sent a messenger to Mashad to make enquiries. The messenger returned confirming that a Zoroastrian man had been captured but he had mysteriously disappeared from the prison. Then believing his story, the Mayor helped him to clean the well; and the bodily remains of the noble lady and her jewellery were found. The funds raised from the sale of the jewellery were used to construct this 'City Peer' Memorial building over the well. We visited it at night, and many persons had come to pray there.

Near Yazd were were fortunate to visit the old villages among them **Cham**, where there grows another old Cypress tree. **Cham** village also has a fine old 'Badgir' — wind tower which provides natural air conditioning system for the basements rooms of the entire village. The **Dokhma of Cham** is located on a hill top nearby but is in disuse, although the 'Bungli' buildings are said to be still in use. Nearby is the village of **Zainabad**, of Flying Fires Fame. The ancient Agiary, with its kebla room in one corner and spaces for placing additional fires, is tended by a local Zoroastrian shepherd and his family. The building is being modernised and under renovation. This Shepherd's mother and wife were weaving Kustis, and carpets, on their looms in their home, next to a barn full of sheep and goats. The wool from the sheep is cured after

shearing, carded and combed, and made into fine thread for weaving. They hospitably offered us 'chai' and 'kharbooch' — melons, and we were fortunate to purchase these home-made Iranian hand-woven Kustis from this family. Another old village is **Shanjabad**, where we visited a Zoroastrian family. The old grand mother was sitting on carpets on the porch, with an old style Kusti weaving 'jantar' making a kusti. Some of the ladies from Udwada and Surat in our Zoroastrian College Delegation, being accustomed to weave Kustis, sat down at the 'jantar' with her and gave her a hand. She was delighted to be able to sell her entire stock of Kustis to the persons in our Delegation. She averaged making one Kusti in three weeks of hard and detailed labour of weaving. All these village houses have underground basements. The further down you go the cooler it is. Outside the summer heat is blistering and even the rocks are pulverised to dust. These chambers are comfortable with carpets on the floor for keeping and sitting and modern amenities such as T.V. and telephone. The Zoroastrian women wear a typical costume of 'Ejar', covered with a frock, Sudreh, Kusti, and a short blouse or 'Budian' and over all this, they cover their foreheads with a kind of band over which they wear a big semi circular shawl called a 'Chaddar'.

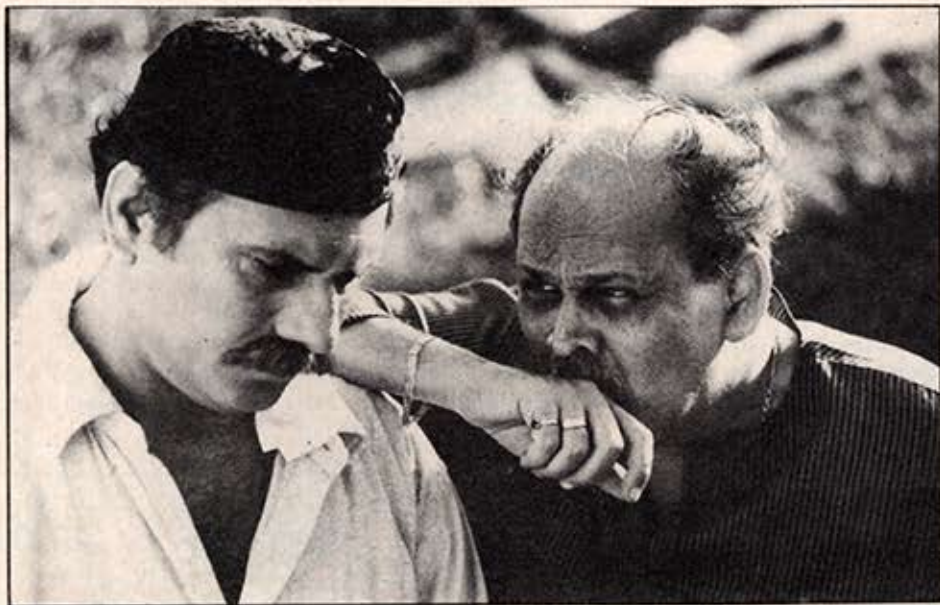
Another old Zoroastrian village with an Agiary, is **Taft**. High up in the mountains are places of pilgrimage **Pir e Hirsht**, has an excellent Badgir with four towers and a big water tank dome. This holy place has high spiritual power; whose vibrations can be positively felt. The story of the miracle of this place is that the servant woman of one of the daughters of King Yazdagard III was carrying a small baby in her arms; when the Arabs in hot pursuit followed and overtook her. She called to the mountain for help. The outline of a woman with a baby is visible in the black basalt volcanic rock of the mountain side; now covered and converted into a shrine. Photographs of Zoroastrians who had contributed funds for the construction of the shrine and its Dhamshala adorn the walls around the central altar-place, where fragrant herbs, dried fruits, nuts, 'maevo' and agarbat are placed around a small fire urn. The old shrine-keeper and two old women worked as caretakers; and they served the customary 'herbal chai' and watermelon to all pilgrims visiting this Pir.

Enroute from **Pir e Hirsht** to **Pir e Shabs Chak Chak**, perched high up on a mountain side, we passed through a most sandy desert, and were caught in the midst of a dust-storm typhoon around 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. The coach ground to a halt with dim visibility and the Sun darkened and hiding behind the dust clouds. Surprisingly, on emerging out of the storm about 6 p.m. we saw the only rainbow during our entire trip, arching over the blue sky from the foot hills of the mountains on which this most sacred **Pir e Shabs** shrine is located. In the natural rock formation there appeared the face of a woman looking up at the rainbow. Just then a motor car carrying **Mrs. Parichar Farhang Mehr**, accompanied by her brother and Mr. Afiatoun and Majlis member **Mr. Parviz Ravani** crossed our coach on the desert road. They were awaiting the arrival of our Zoroastrian College Delegation all day at the special **Gahambar** function being celebrated at **Pir e Shabs**. This is an annual event of great significance which all Zoroastrians from all over Iran try to attend. Staircases winding up the steep mountain side require a climb of over 2000 ft. All the guest houses built along the entire mountain side were buzzing with people who had camped there for the five days festival, using sleeping bags and carrying their own portable stoves for doing cooking. The aromas of mutton and chicken being roasted and 'naan' being baked filled the night air, with the sound of Iranian music. Way up on top is the actual shrine. Here water is dripping through the mountain rock; where green ferns and mosses grow. In the centre of the rock-hewn shrine is the fire altar place. The room was full of pilgrims. It is beautifully adorned with marble, and has a place for collecting drinking water and pictures of persons who had given funds to build the shrine. The water has curative properties. The story of this Pir is that the two daughters of King Yazdagard III were fleeing from the Arabs; and reached the mountain rock face. They called to the mountain to help them. The mountain opened into a cave and rescued them; and closed the rock wall behind them. A piece of clothing remained fluttering in the rock where they had entered inside the mountain. At this spot, a natural spring of water having healing properties bubbled out of the mountain side. This place too has high spiritual vibrations.

The third mountain side **Pir** we visited enroute from Yazd to Isfahan. This is known as **Pir e Banoo**. The small white shrine with a few deserted buildings is perched clinging to a mountain side. An old woman was selling apricots and fragrant herbs as offerings for the shrine to the pilgrim visitors. This place was arid and had no water even in the bathrooms; although a mountain stream was trickling down the mountain side near by. Of all the Pirs that we visited this one had the highest spiritual power and several members of our Delegation had mystic experiences and visions approaching this place.

Rahul da Cunha's
I Am Not Bajirao
adapts an American
play to the life-style
of the Parsi and
Maharastrian
communities of Bombay

Dina Mehta



Universal experience, local color

The audience that packed the Tata Theatre on the evening of June 2, 1996 was resolute in one thing: they had come to laugh their heads off. One could read the determination in their eyes, in their air of suppressed merriment, of excited anticipation. After all, wasn't *I Am Not Bajirao* advertised as a hit comedy?

The two very gifted actors had barely spoken their opening lines on stage when the bottled fizz spilled over. (As during the plays of Adi Marzban?) And the sputtering and the guffaws accompanied all the lines throughout the performance, whether they were meant to be frothy and bubbly or whether they seriously alluded to the attitudes and mindset of the two elderly protagonists and, by cutting through their antics and posturing, to the sadness of old age.

Which was a pity. Because by his adaptation of American playwright Herb Gardner's *I Am Not Rappaport*, Rahul da Cunha has essayed a welcome trend in Indian English theater which breaks away from the usual imitations of foreign scripts. *Bajirao* is distinctly local. Distinctly *aapuro*. Then how was it that that evening the nuances and subtleties that give the script its significance got buried under the ha-has?

They had surfaced when I saw an excerpt of the play-in-progress as it was presented by da Cunha one evening at Chauraha (an offshoot of Bombay's National Centre for the Performing Arts, where the artiste — dancer, director, writer, etc — may meet a small informal audience for feedback and sharing of problems and insights). On this occasion what came

through the reading of da Cunha's text was the bonding of two endearing old men who are as different as chalk from cheese, but are drawn to each other as with courage and humor they try to banish the fear of loneliness and infirmity inherent in the condition of old age.

The hilarity was there, but also the scary, hurtful moments as the two 75-year-olds struggled to come to terms with their mortality on a park bench located at Five Gardens, in the heart of Bombay. Why, then, was this dimension lost in the full production mounted at the Tata Theatre? Who was to blame for turning a sensitive, thoughtful script into a farce?

Not the actors. Sudhir Joshi (46) is a veteran of the Marathi stage. His casting as Madhukar, the Maharastrian from Hindu Colony, Dadar (in Gardner's original script this character is a Jew) is as inspired as the casting of Boman Irani (38) who brings to life Dhanjisa, a Parsi from Parsi Colony, Dadar (the black janitor in *Rappaport*). Madhukar's tragedy is that he is a Mr Fix-it who dismally fails at everything he tries to fix, and the timing of Joshi's lines is impeccable.

Irani is a relatively new stage artiste and, by his own admission, had to fall back on his observations of senior citizens at his family wafer shop to bring out on stage the subtle shadings of an old Parsi *bawa* who was nurtured on the *baug* ambience. Once the strapping Irani slips into the sudreh, shirt, Parsi *topi*, spectacles and slouch of advanced age, he steps into the psyche of Dhanjisa. And this psyche has its share of

mental and emotional stress, its insecurities and fears, yet his lines (like Madhukar's) were received by the audience as if they were written only to elicit giggles.

Could it be that the minor characters were not fully rounded and indifferently played, and by default they eroded the underlying seriousness (and validity) of the theme? There was no real menace in Kunal Roy Kapoor's portrayal of the young roadside *goonda* who extorts money from the old men for the use of the park bench. It was a caricature of a scene — and the audience laughed. (Is there not also a slide into parody in the characterization of the Parsi?)

Kunal Vijaykar as Kamli the drug pusher is more believable. And Shahrukh Irani has his moments as the Harvard-returned Parsi who must perform the distasteful task of throwing out the almost-blind Dhanjisa from his flat and a job in which he has become redundant. But as Madhukar's daughter Archana Pathankar's filial concerns are not very convincing (the writing seems to be at fault here), and her voice lacks the resonance required of a stage actress. And the high jinks the old duo engage in to rescue a reformed junkie (Po-oja Mehta) from the clutches of the drug pusher somehow lack credibility — and only succeed in orchestrating more laughs.

But what the audience apparently found irresistible — and mirth inducing — was the language. The spoken language of *I Am Not Bajirao* is what may be called Bombay English. The way a Parsi speaks English,

with smatterings of Gujarati words, and the way a Maharashtrian weaves in Marathi/Hindi words in his speech pattern, is explored with zest here. No doubt the experiment helped the audience to identify with the characters on stage — and tickled it pink.

But because the raw material of ordinary speech can never be the language of theater — even the most natural-sounding dialogue has to be edited, molded, distilled, etc if it is not to be repetitive and

uneconomical — the danger of this kind of experiment is that the ad-libbing and casual patter can overwhelm the text. The interpolations end up by playing to the gallery at the cost of blunting the insights and the thrust of the play — in this case the tragi-comedy of ploys that don't work as we grow older. The laughs were there, the poignancy was blurred.

What one does appreciate is that producer/director da Cunha has recognized that we in India must have an indigenous

English stage. We have yet to evolve our own idiom, but it is clear that it is not enough to have a foreign script, a cast that works hard at shoring up its American/British/European accent, or an audience that flocks to the theater for the snob value of sampling an item from abroad — as it would an imported shampoo or deodorant!

I Am Not Bajirao is a landmark on our journey to a relevant English theater. And for that reason we applaud it.

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A tale of Zoroaster's progeny

Dilnavaz E. Bhagwagar

Creation by Gore Vidal. Published by Ballantine Books, 400 Hahn Road, Westminster, Md, 21157, USA. Pp: 593. Paperback edition price: US \$6.99.

Creation is a compelling novel of vast dimensions. Gore Vidal impresses with his deep study and comprehension of eastern philosophies and religions. The reading becomes more meaningful for a Zoroastrian because running parallel to the exploration of other schools of thought, is a commentary on the Wise Lord (Ahura Mazda) and his teachings, as propounded by His Prophet Zoroaster.

The novel which opens in Persia, takes one on a panoramic tour of 5th century BC from Babylon and Athens in the west, through the plains watered by the Tigris, the Euphrates, the Indus, the Ganga, the Jamuna, to the Yellow River of China.

From a number of Persian and Greek characters there emerges the central figure of the novel, Cyrus Spitama the "...last living grandson of Zoroaster, the Prophet of the one God, Ahura Mazda." The novel consists of the recollections of Cyrus Spitama as recorded for posterity by his nephew Democritus.

Creation can best be described as historical fiction. It tells of a time as much shrouded in legend, as recorded in history. While the geographic locations and the dynastic rule of Cyrus, Darius, Xerxes and Artaxerxes are accurate and historically acclaimed as the Golden Age of Zoroastrianism in Persia, Cyrus Spitama himself is fictitious. The head priest of our Nagpur Agiary demolished Cyrus Spitama in one stroke by telling me that Zoroaster was a celibate. He never married, had no children and so there could never have been a grandson. (This, of course, has been disputed.)

Anyway, Vidal fleshes out the character of Cyrus Spitama with convincing strokes. Cyrus' father was Zoroaster's third and youngest son. His mother Lias, was a Greek. Cyrus Spitama was supposedly the only person alive to have heard his grandfather's last words. He was seven years old then and witnessed the butchering of Zoro-

aster and his followers by the Turanians. By some miracle, Cyrus Spitama escaped and so came to be looked upon with awe and respect in the Persian court. Kings are always respectful of popular religions and fate had thrust an unwanted onus upon the young Cyrus.

As he grows older, he is often infuriated by the new doctrines Zoroastrian priests pronounce in his grandfather's name to suit their own convenience. When he retaliates by telling them Zoroaster said no such thing, with a straight face they reply, "You are right. The Prophet did not say it in this life. He spoke the verses to me in a recent dream and ordered me to write them down the moment I awoke." Thus the Truth is defeated by the Lie.

When the story unfolds, Darius is king of Persia. As his covetous eyes turn eastwards for trade, he sends Cyrus Spitama as the Persian ambassador to India and Cathay (as China was then known). He, however, warns Cyrus not to challenge their gods but to find points of similarity between their religions and his own.

Thus does the grandson of Zoroaster go forth in all humility and faith. And he came to realize what we today would do well to remember: "Nothing is true except from a single point of view. From another point of view the same thing will appear to be quite different. Hence the story of the blind men and the elephant."

In looking for similarities, Cyrus Spitama notes that the Indians also worship *agni* (fire), and one of the chief Aryan gods is Ashura Varuna or Ahura Mazda. Indians also believe that fire is an aspect of goodness because it destroys darkness and dross. They make abundant use of the soma juice in their ceremonies: a variation of our own haoma juice.

When an Indian boy is old enough for what is called his second birth as an Aryan, he is given a cord of three intertwined

threads, which he will wear for the rest of his life across his chest. For the warrior the cord is of cotton, for the priest, hemp, for the merchant, wool. Persians have a somewhat similar rite of initiation but without any visible differentiation of caste.

In his quest for answers to the riddle of creation and annihilation, Cyrus Spitama comes across an array of philosophers — Socrates, Pythagoras, Gosala, Mahavira, the Buddha, Master Li, Confucius. Sometimes their words make the complexities of life fall so easily into place; but more often, the more Cyrus learns, the more confused he becomes.

Jains, he finds, believe in the passage of souls from person to person, or to an animal, tree or rock, till finally one ceases to be. To be blown out like a candle, is to attain nirvana.

Cyrus finds this appalling. "I cannot imagine anything more horrifying than hopping from body to body, or from snake to wasp

to tree." He is more comfortable with the Zoroastrian concept that once free of the body, the soul returns to the Wise Lord. But first the soul must cross the Bridge of the Redeemer. Those who have in life followed truth and virtue, will go to the house of happiness. Those who have followed the lie or Ahriman, will suffer torment. Eventually, when the Wise Lord overwhelms all evil, all souls will be as one.

He found the doctrines of Buddhism opposed to those of the Wise Lord. For Buddhists and Jains, man moves towards nirvana or extinction. A passive philosophy. According to Zoroaster each man must make his way through life exercising a positive choice between right and wrong.

Buddhist sacrifices are not of animals but of the animal in man. There are five moral rules. Don't kill; don't steal; don't lie; don't get drunk; don't indulge in sex. When Cyrus Spitama questions this last rule and asks what would happen to the human race if everyone obeyed it, he is

"Nothing
is true
except from
a single
point of
view"

With
best wishes
from

**Farah
&
Tanya**

told that the human race would cease to be and that in the Buddha's eyes is the perfect, ultimate state. "Like *sunyata*. It is the word for a circle that stands for nothing, yet still exists."

While in India, Cyrus Spitama is wedded to Princess Ambalika, granddaughter of Bimbisara, the mighty king of the Magadh empire. It was a marriage of diplomacy, and Cyrus went into it prepared not to like his bride but, to his surprise, found her beguiling. Recounting the event, he tells how both of them were carefully and elaborately painted for the wedding night. "Inside the tent, Ambalika let slip her shawl. I was delighted to find she was a fully developed woman. Around each small breast, leaves and flowers had been drawn. At her navel, a bird stretched its red wings beneath the flowering breasts. 'This is Garuda,' she said, patting herself. 'Vishnu rides him.'" Ambalika was well versed in the 64 arts of keeping a man fascinated.

Cyrus returns to Persia, promising to come back for their son and Ambalika, now ripe with their second child. But the great king Darius sets his sights on the far-off lands of Cathay and sends the trusted Spitama there, to establish trade routes.

Interacting with the aristocracy of China, the grandson of Zoroaster comes in contact with Master Li and Confucius and is fascinated by their teachings.

The basic premise of Tao or Chinese philosophy is harmony — with oneself, and with one's surroundings. To accept with tranquility whatever happens, is to put oneself beyond sorrow or joy. It asks you to cast yourself into the ocean of existence, forgetting what is good and what is evil. Neither exists, except in relation to the other. The ideal is to free one's spirit and to make oneself as serene as a flower or a rock.

"To do nothing is an immense spiritual labor. The really wise man has no ambitions. Therefore, he has no failures. He who never fails, always succeeds. And he who always succeeds, is all powerful" — Master Li.

In later years when Cyrus Spitama recalls these philosophies, he remembers Confucius' advice: "To think without having first learned is dangerous. To learn and not to think over what you have learned, is useless."

Entertaining and educative, *Creation* has received wide acclaim in the US Press. It doesn't make for light reading but is strongly recommended to the reader — specially a Zoroastrian — who wants to learn and think over what he has learned.

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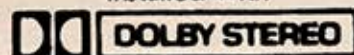
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MILESTONES

The age of Zoroastrian brides — as listed in this issue — ranged between 19 and 44 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 23 and 43 years, averaging at 31 years.

Compared to 83 Zoroastrians who were consigned to the Towers of Silence there were 18 babies born in June. Heart disease claimed 24 victims of whom 11 were 80 years and above. The other killers were pneumonia and lung disease and cancer (nine each), general debility and old age (six) and hypertension, brain disease, septicemia, kidney failure and diabetes (five each). There were 10 isolated cases registered for June: marasmus (wasting away of a body), hemiplegia

(paralysis of one side of the body), urinary tract infection, arteriosclerosis (degenerative arterial change associated with advancing age), asthma, urinary infection, tuberculosis, Parkinson's disease, anemia and hepatitis (inflammation of the liver). A still-born female child and a 20-month old girl were lost to the community. The oldest to breathe his last was a 99-year-old male. The Zoroastrian life expectancy at birth, in Bombay in June, was 74 years.

The data on births, marriages and deaths has been compiled from information supplied by various newsletters and anjumans in India and abroad, courts and hospitals. This information is not always complete or consistent: we are unable to carry data from areas where the anjumans 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.

(74), 204, Flyover Apts, Telligalli, Andheri (E), 400069; June 2

Fakirji Fardoonji Mistry (86), 38, Dubash Bldg, Walchand Hirachand Marg, 400001; June 2

Shahrugh Merwan Irani (47), Mistry Bldg, Widows' Chwl, Jame Jamshed Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; June 3

Rustomji Cawasji Kakalia (80), 625, Nariman Bldg, Dhobitalao, 400002; June 3

Kekobad Sorabji Khan (54), Chhatrivala Bldg, Wadia St, Tardeo, 400034; June 3

Dina Rustom Patell (85), 16/A, Altamount Rd, Cumballa Hill, 400026; June 3

Jal Minocher Mistry (53), 803/A, Mistry Manor, Dr Ambedkar Rd, 400014; June 4

Kersy Sorabji Pardiwalla (66), 808, Khushnum, Dr Ambedkar Rd, Dadar, 400014; June 4

Jamshedji Limjibhai Taraporewala (90), B/11, Rustum Palace, 222/E, Tardeo Rd, 400007; June 4

Bachanmai Taimuras Badhniwalla (87), 502-501, Kavita Bldg, Yari Rd, Versova, 400061; June 5

Jaiji Naoroji Jadashapur (78), F. S. Parukh Dharamshala, Hughes Rd, 400007; June 5

Roshan Eruch Master (74), B, Reward, Tardeo, 400007; June 5
Pervez Jamshedji Sabawala (69), 11, Malcolm Baug, Jogeshwari (W), 400102; June 5
Fali Jehangir Shroff (72), C/23, Cusrow Baug, S. B. Rd, 400039; June 5

Shavaksha Mervanji Bhagalia (89), 83, Yad-El, Malcolm Baug, Jogeshwari (W), 400102; June 6

Keki Boman Irani (72), Mogra Village, Western Express Highway, Andheri (E), 400093; June 6

Dhunmai Nariman Sidhwa (81), C/18, Atul Clny, Post-Atul, Dist Valsad, 396020; June 7

Dinsha Dosabhai Bhacka (83), 12, Haji Habib Bldg, Nigam Cross Rd, Dadar, 400014; June 8

Manchersha Dhanjisha Driver (73), 1, Sir Ratan Tata Bldg no 1, S. V. Rd, Bandra, 400050; June 9

Aloo Nariman Madon (78), B,

BOMBAY

BORN

A boy, *Zaal*, to *Dehlina* and *Cyrus Cama* on April 6, 1996

A girl to *Benaifer* and *Adil Elavia*; May 31

A girl to *Ava* and *Kersasp Bhot*; June 1

A girl to *Bachu* and *Mehernosh Kasad*; June 2

A boy to *Gulshan* and *Porus Daruwalla*; June 7

A boy to *Binaifer* and *Homiyar Mistry*; June 9

A boy to *Rasna* and *Dhanjisha Tangri*; June 11

A boy to *Binaaz* and *Hoshi Mistry*; June 18

A boy to *Sharmeen* and *Kevic Setalvad*; June 18

A girl to *Ketayun* and *Kersi Sui*; June 18

A girl to *Arnaz* and *Phiroz Soonawalla*; June 19

A boy to *Tannaz* and *Mehernosh Bhiwandiwala*; June 20

A boy *Monaz* and *Rayomand Noble*; June 20

A boy to *Behroze* and *Yezdi Cooper*; June 21

A boy to *Maharookh* and *Pesi Bilimoria*; June 23

A boy to *Mehroze* and *Firdosh Gardin*; June 23

A boy to *Madhavi* and *Ruzbeh Irani*; June 23

A girl to *Soonoo* and *Pervez Sinor*; June 24

A boy to *Parvin* and *Homiyar*

Aibada; June 29

A boy to *Roshini* and *Firdosh Bhathena*; June 29

MARRIED

Havovi Jehangir Amroliwala of Pune and *Khushru Homi Kanga* of Pune; April 27

Armaity Noshir Cooper and *Jal Rustomji Amroliwala* of Billimora; May 12

Persis Maneck Shroff of Charai, Thana and *Shahzad Hormuzdyar Wadia*; May 14

Naazneen Soli Billimoria and *Mehernosh Firoze Deboo*; May 19

Shehnaz Sam Vasania and *Kairas Jehangir Vakharia*; May 25

Diana Minocher Bacha and *Dinshaw Rustom Doctor*; May 26

Katayun Bhikhoo Daruwalla and *Vispy Nader Kapadia*; May 26

Dinaz Kersi Panthaki and *Merzy (Merzban) Behram Patel*; May 27

Yasmin Sarosh Tavadia and *Ermin Homi Sarkari*; May 30

Firuzi Homi Achhadwala and *Aftab Sohrab Meherhomji*; May 31

Khushnam Aspi Screuwala and *Rohinton Hoshang Polishwala*; June 1

Hutoxi Framroze Buhariwala and *Adi Soli Kapadia*; June 2

Anahita Percy Vacha and

Behram Kaikhushroo Tafti; June 3

Farzeen Phiroze Dhabhar and *Jamshed Aspi Patel*; June 7

Jenifer Kavas Katpitia and *Aspandiar Noshir Sarkari*; June 9

Rashna Dhunjishaw Goiporia and *Kobad Minoo Bulsara*; June 14

Bakhtawar Keki Buhariwala of Pune and *Yezdi Firoze Canteenwalla* of Pune; June 21

Gulnar Rustom Irani and *Minocher Tirandaz Irani*; June 22

Kashmira Eruch Dastur and *Burjor Pallan Ichaporia* of Womelsdorf, USA; June 28

DIED

Roshen Noshir Dhanbhoora (69), residing at C/o R. B. Dharukhanawalla, B/5, Godrej Baug, Nepean Sea Rd, 400026; May 31

Khorshed Pirojshaw Mistry (75), Jamali Hse, 12, Police Court Lane, Fort, 400001; June 1

Ratan Dosabhai Variava (90), 3, Baria Bldg, Gamadia Clny, Tardeo, 400007; June 1

Nergish Behram Garda (76), D, Dinbai Petit Lane, Balaram St, Grant Rd, 400007; June 2

Perin Minoo Gobhai (89), Dharbharga Mans, Carmichael Rd, 400026; June 2

Dolatbanoo Kavasji Karanjia

- Seervai Bldg, Sleater Rd, 400007; June 9
Behram Darabshaw Mistry (69), 11/A, Sea Pearl, Off Jay Prakash Rd, 7 Bglws, Versova, 400061; June 9
Hirabai Sorabji Siganporia (84), F/19, Nowroz Baug, Lalbaug, 400012; June 9
Ardeshir Vicajee Taraporvala (82), 621, Khush Villa, Khareghat Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; June 9
Alamai Maneckshaw Waghmar (78), Bacha Mans, Bai Dinbai Marg, Tardeo, 400007; June 9
Sorab Rutonji Daruwalla (76), M/63, Cusrow Baug, S. B. Road, 400039; June 10
Saker Kekobad Katki (85), L/3, Dalal Est Apts, Opp Bombay Central Stn, 400008; June 10
Piroja Khodaram Kermani (86), 1, Kanga Bldg, Opp Hindmata Cinema, Dr Ambedkar Rd, Dadar, 400014; June 10
Tehmina Hormusji Mobedji (83), 18, C. M. Banaji Bldg, Forjett St, Cross Lane, 400036; June 10
Navroji Cawasji Mody (85), 16, Sangam, B.P.T. Qrts, Dumayne Rd, Colaba, 400005; June 10
Mehra Darabshaw Patel (69), 42, Golden Palace, Guru Nanak Rd, Bandra (W), 400050; June 11
Dinshaw Jamshed Hakim (47), 53, Jame Jamshed Bldg, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; June 12
Rustum Jal Mehta (69), 11, Summer Breeze, 15th Rd, T.P.S. III, Bandra, 400050; June 12
Dolly Rustumji Motiwalla (85), B/8, Rustom Baug, Victoria Rd, Byculla, 400027; June 12
Baby girl of Kashmira Cyrus Vatcha, (stillborn), 65, Piroj-Amin Villa, Malcolm Baug, Jogeshwari (W), 400102; June 12
Savak Erachshaw Munshi (66), B/2, Avabai Petit St, Balaram St, Grant Rd, 400007; 400102; June 13
Dosa Kuversha Pardiwalla (72), 280-C/7, Bhatia Soc Bldg, Princess St, 400002; June 13
Ruttonshaw Shapoorji Patel (84), A/26, Raghavji Bldg, Raghavji Rd, A. K. Marg, 400036; June 13
Roda Ardeshir Daruwala (77), M/8, Cusrow Baug, S. B. Rd, 400039; June 14
Firoz Rustumji Kavarana (85), Daulatram Mans, 6, Kittridge Rd, Colaba, 400005; June 14
Khorshed Cawasji Mistry (80), M/40, Cusrow Baug, S. B. Rd, 400039; June 14
Maneck Minocher Pandole (58), Yusuf Mans, Khetwadi Back Rd, 400004; June 14
Ardeshir Pirojshaw Sanjana (85), 3, Maneck Bldg, 1/2, Lamington Rd, 400008; June 14
Dina Dinshaw Karany (71), 1-C/7, Blue Arch, 4 Bglws, Andheri (W), 400053; June 15
Noshir Rustumji Romer (84), Rajesh Mhl, Opp Oval Maidan, Churchgate, 400020; June 15
Goolbai Rustumji Bharucha (92), 44/B, Gool Mhl, Sleater Rd, 400007; June 16
Mani Kekobad Rohinton (Doctor) (72), 376/A, Karanjia Bldg, Grant Rd, 400007; June 16
Eruch Hormusji Daruwalla (63), Daoodi Mans, 1st # Lane, Off Sleater Rd, 400007; June 17
Merwan Sheriyar Irani (49), L/7, S. B. Bharucha Baug, S. V. Rd, Andheri (W), 400058; June 17
Khurad Behramgore Anklesaria (76), Meher Villa, Besant St, Santacruz (W), 400054; June 18
Homee Ardeshir Hattria (86), L/4, S. B. Bharucha Baug, S. V. Rd, Andheri (W), 400058; June 18
Amy Sorabjee Mehta (80), 650, Karani Bldg, Firdausi Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; June 18
Mehra Dorab Mehta (89), 580, Patel Palace, Jame Jamshed Rd, Matunga, 400019; June 18
Homi Ardeshir Bhacca (77), 625, Nariman Bldg, Dhobitalao, 400002; June 19
Pesi Merwanji Bharaohacha (82), 17/1, Silver Arch, 66, Nepean Sea Rd, 400006; June 19
Bomansha Khushroo Irani (70), Hakim Bldg, Opp Novelty Cinema, 400007; June 19
Tehmina Hormusji Todywala (92), Godiwala Widows' Chawl, Mazgaon, 400010; June 19
Yezdi Savaksha Pardiwalla (58), 17/17, Mehta Bldg, Panthaki Baug, Andheri (E), 400069; June 20
Rati Sam Bamjee (68), B/DI, 16, Dhunbaiwadi, Dadabhai Rd, Vile Parle (W), 400056; June 21
Bhikhamai Dadiba Sarkari (78), 12A/10, Panthaki Baug, Hargovindas Sanatorium Rd, Andheri (E), 400069; June 21
Noshir Eruchshaw Tantra (74), 645, Naju Villa, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; June 21
Dinshah Kaikhushroo Malegamvala (80), Shengre-La, 4, Carmichael Rd, 400026; June 22
Byram Barjorji Masani (99), 10, Ganga Vihar, 55, Marine Drive, 400020; June 22
Jamshed Rustumji Mistry (82), Navyug Chmbs, 165, Lamington Rd, 400007; June 22
Pervin Firdosh Shroff (45), 72/B, Cozy Bldg, Gowalia Tank Rd, 400036; June 22
Shirin Rustumji Bhajiwalla (81), 1/D, Ambawadi Matarpakhadi Cross Rd, Mazgaon, 400010; June 23
Aloo Homi Irani (71), 47, Ram Mhl, Opp Mahim Rly Stn (W), 400016; June 23
Cawsi Jehangir Balaporia (51), Kavarana Bldg, Dadar Cross Lane, Near Ranjit Studio, 400014; June 24
Dinshawji Cawasji Calagopi (83), 386/B, Sir Jagmohandas Bldg, Chira Bazar, J.S.S. Rd, 400002; June 24
Minoo Dinshaw Contractor (74), F. S. Parukh Dharamshalla, Hughes Rd, 400007; June 24
Rebecca Kersi Hilloo (20 mths), Forjett Hse, Forjett St, 400036; June 24
Jeroo Kersasp Shroff (72), F/6, Cusrow Baug, S. B. Rd, 400039; June 24
Nergish Ardeshir Chinoy (87), Goolestan, 37, Cuffe Parade, Colaba, 400005; June 25
Dhunjibhoy Meherjibhoy Billimoria (86), 29, Alexandra Ter, Opp Palace Cinema, Byculla, 400027; June 26
Freny Cooverji Ghadially (74), Mahalaxmiwala Bldg, Sleater Rd, Tardeo, 400007; June 26
Fali Nariman Pardiwala (62), 15, Dinshaw Bldg, Parsi Galli, Doodh Naka, Kalyan, 421301; June 27
Kaikhushroo Jehangir Dotiwalla (93), 757, Jashan Committee Bldg, Rd no 7, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; June 28
Mehroo Maneckshaw Hozdar (68), 275/C, Chothia Bldg, Zoroastrian Clny, Chikalwadi, 400007; June 29
Rusi Sorabji Patel (68), G/16, Captain Clny, Tardeo, 400036; June 29
Ardaviraf Manchershaw Zaveri (44), 203, Shree Prastha, Nallasopara (W); June 30

POONA

DIED

- Pilloo Homi Irani* (67), Darga Rd, Anand Bhavan, Gulbarga, 585101; May 2
Pesi Dorabjee Pocha (67), 8, Napier Rd, 411040; May 4
Vispi Sorabjee Watchmaker (56), 159, M. G. Rd, 411001; May 5
Jal Savaksha Khurshdjie (71), 6, Napier Rd, 411001; May 9
Homai Burjourji Sadri (76), E/15, Geeta Soc, 411001; May 20
Roshan Jal Patel (73), 716, Canopus Apts, Boat Club, 411001; May 22
Ruzwa Jahan Tambuwalla (44), 637, Le Repos, Parsi Clny, Dadar, Bombay, 400014; May 22
Banubai Temulji Mistry (95), 423, K. P. Tower II, Fatima-nagar, 411013; May 26

SURAT

DIED

- Hirabai Jahangirji Bhesania* (86), Nariman Home and Infirmary, Shahpore, 395003; June 3
Banoo Shehri Kotwal (86), Kotwal St, Nanpura, 395001; June 4
Faramroz Nariman Lakadawala (74), Shahpore, 395003; June 4
Jahangirji Meharwanji Nalawala (83), Nanpura, 395001; June 5
Faramroz Sorabji Ankleshvaria (78), Parsiwad, Sayedpura, 395003; June 9
Aban (Alloo) Eruch Umrigar (66), Nariman Home and Infirmary, Shahpore, 395003; June 10
Dhanjisha Rustumji Palia (65), Agano Vad, 395003; June 15
Kerbanoo Dadabhai Dotiwala (90), Dangore St, Nanpura, 395001; June 16
Aban Firoze Bhatporia (54), Village Bhattha, Dist Surat, 394510; June 25
Manchersha Pirojsha Katpitia (94), Muglisara, 395003; June 28

...

AUSTRALIA

Victoria

BORN

- A boy, Ryan, to Zarin and Cyrus Irani; February 11
 A girl, Meher, to Parizad and

Hoshi Kayani; March 5
A girl, *Ruhae*, to *Dainaz* and
Sohrab Illava; May 3

HONG KONG

DIED
Minnie Talati, wife of *Pesi*
and mother of *Delnar Dowse*;
May 14

IRAN

Tehran
DIED
Fiروز Namdor Azargoshab
(83); June 25

PAKISTAN

Karachi
BORN
A girl, *Natalya*, to *Yasmin* and
Sheroy Haveliwala; March 9

DIED
Savak Byramji Mistry (75);
May 8
Eruch Burjorji Gazder (72);
May 9
Khorshed Minocher Kaikobad
(76); May 30
Phiroze Gustad Mehta (81);
May 30

UK

London
DIED
Khodarahm Pourkarimi, brother
of *Iradj* and *Gity Marzbani*;
March 26

USA

Corona, California
BORN
A boy, *Areya*, to *Sheila* and
Rohinton Aresh; June 12

Munster, Indiana

DIED
Perin F. Bilimoria, mother of
Yaz; January 17

New Hartford, New York

DIED
Seran Keki Kotwal, mother of
Jehangir and sister of *Yezdi*
Antia; February 24

New Jersey

BORN
A girl, *Tanaz*, to *Kashmira*
and *Zarir Karai*; March 22
A boy, *Shawn*, to *Dinaz* and
Minoo Bengali; April 13

San Jose, California

DIED
Marzban Mehrafshani,
father of *Fariborz*; March 1

Compiled by Roxana A. Driver

TOTALS FOR 1996

	Bombay		India		World	
	A	B	A	B	A	B
BORN						
Boys	14	54	—	4	3	9
Girls	6	38	—	1	4	9
MARRIED						
Parsi	20	126	—	3	—	—
Intercommunal	—	17*	—	3	—	1
DIED						
CONSIGNED						
Males	46	222	8	51	6	27 ^o
Females	38	245	8	36	4	16 ^o
CREMATED						
Males	—	—	—	—	—	—
Females	—	—	—	—	—	—

A: Total numbers in this issue

B: Running totals for 1996 (February-March 1996-June 1996 issues)

* Males married out in 1996 -- 9
Females married out in 1996 -- 8

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

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

The Telling Figures

Births and deaths in the community continued to show a downward trend in Bombay in 1995. The birth count as recorded by *Parsiana* was 221, a decline of 27 as compared to the 1994 count of 248. (With the Bombay Municipal Corporation no longer specifying the religion of the newborn on the birth certificate and our source of information mainly restricted to four hospitals in south Bombay, we presume that *Parsiana* accounts for only 50 percent of the births in the community in Bombay.) The tally of deaths was 941 showing a reduction of 77 as compared to the previous year's figure of 1,018.

Marriages in the city, however, indicated a marginal increase of six over last year's total of 372 to give a count of 378 for 1995. Here too, although community marriages reduced by 10 as compared to the 1994 total of 294, there were 16 more intercommunity marriages this year, giving us a total tally of 94. With the percentage of intercommunity marriages rising to 25, (from 21 in 1994) if calculated as a ratio of intercommunity marriages to the total number of marriages (94:378) it means that one-fourth

of all marriages contracted by members of the community were to non-Parsis in 1995. If the percentage is calculated as a ratio of intercommunity marriages to community marriages (94:284) it indicates 33 (in 1994 it was 27), or a third of the in-marriages. The first time *Parsiana* had computed intercommunity marriage figures (for the period October 1987 to September 1988) the percentages were 12 and 14 respectively. This year there were a greater number of females, 51, who married out of the community as compared to the 43 males, thereby indicating that 54 percent of the females as versus 46 percent of the males contracted intercommunity marriages.

The birth count of 221 accounted for 112 boys and 109 girls. When compared to the 1994 figures it means a decline of 21 in the case of boys, and six in the case of girls. Assuming that *Parsiana* must be reporting on only half the total number of Parsi births in Bombay, it still indicates that the birth rate in the community is nearly half the death rate. From September 1994 we have also been presenting the figures for Life Expectancy at Birth (LEB)

each month. For the year 1995, the highest LEB, 78 was in the month of May and the lowest 71 in the month of June, the mean LEB working out to 74 years.

Although lower than the 1994 death count of 1,018, the 1995 figures indicate 941 number of community deaths in Bombay, 476 males and 465 females. While there were 22 who opted for cremation in 1994, in 1995 there were only four, of whom three were males and one female. This, of course, need not be the total number of Zoroastrian cremations in Bombay as our knowledge of those cremated is restricted to the Chandanwadi crematorium. Our count of those consigned at the doongerwadi, 473 males and 464 females, is based on the monthly list of the deceased furnished to us by the Bombay Parsi Punchayet.

We list below the 1995 figures as collected by *Parsiana* for Bombay:

Born: 221
Boys 112, Girls 109
Married: 378
Parsi 284, Intercommunal 94
Died: 941 Consigned: 937
Males 473, Females 464
Cremated: 4
Males 3, Female 1

Banking on his honesty

Parinaz Gandhi

Died: Maneck Nadirsha Goiporia, 63, erst-while chairman of the State Bank of India (SBI), and three other nationalized banks, on October 18, 1995 in Bombay following cardiac arrest during his sleep.

Reputed for his integrity and acumen on banking related subjects, Goiporia has been paid tributes by outstanding financial wizards of this country. Senior advocate, Supreme Court, Nani Palkhivala knew him as "one of our most upright and honest Indians in a country where crooks and dishonesty have become a way of life." "He was one of the finest, honest and gentlemen bankers I have ever come across. I shall miss him...as a great banker whom one contacted for advice and guidance," wrote Ghulam Ghouse, chairman of the Bombay Mercantile Co-operative Bank Limited. "He was with me on some committees on important subjects and he made significant contributions as a member of these committees," acknowledged Amitabha Ghosh, former deputy governor of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). "By nature he was unassuming, sober and straightforward," added Ghosh mentioning that "In his death the country has lost an outstanding banker (who) had vast knowledge in banking and financial matters."

"I have not met a banker who had a greater sense of honor and integrity than Maneck Goiporia had," wrote Palkhivala in *The Bombay Samachar* of October 22, 1995. "I have always found him totally above board and always ready to help," stated the legal luminary, particularly perturbed that Goiporia was "the man who was sacrificed at the altar of the lowest depths of injustice to which India has sunk." Following the bank scam of 1991 (gross irregularities in stock exchange transactions had implicated certain leading bankers of the country) when it was made clear to Goiporia that his tenure as chairman of SBI would not be renewed, he resigned from the post. "Nothing was proved against him and he was not found guilty of any wrong...I mentioned to him how pained I was that he had been singled out for disapprobation when nothing had been done to the swindlers and the cheats,"

wrote an indignant Palkhivala. Yet "during my meetings with him I never once found him utter a word of complaint about the wrong done to him...and the humiliation which he was made to suffer."

Corroborated Homi J. H. Taleyarkhan, former member of the minorities commission, "A man of highest integrity in the banking world, (Goiporia) was also most



Goiporia: a gentleman banker

efficient, hard-working and result oriented... He was about to be appointed deputy governor of the Reserve Bank of India when unaccountably...he was removed from the chairmanship of SBI which he served with such distinction...Even after his unceremonial removal from SBI he was much in demand as consultant by a number of companies."

Letters of condolence from Jyotindra Vakil, president and managing director of The Premier Automobiles Limited, Arvind Mafatlal, chairman of National Organic Chemical Industries Limited, Jamshyd Godrej, managing director of Godrej and Boyce Manufacturing Company Limited, M. Ramani, secretary of SIV Industries Limited, indicate that he had enduring business associations with these corporate houses.

Starting with the chairmanship of Dena Bank that he took over in 1978, Goiporia had held this apex position with other banks like Bank of Baroda, Central Bank of India

and finally State Bank. As chairman of SBI he was ex officio vice president of the Indian Institute of Bankers. He also served as chairman of the Indian Banks Association and the committee on customer service. Referring to his chairmanship of different banks Goiporia had said in an interview (see "Goiporia's mounting credit," *Parsiana*, June 1990), "Cross fertilization (leads to) a healthy interaction."

On other national bodies too Goiporia had played a significant role: as director of the Agricultural Finance Corporation Limited, of the Industrial Development Bank of India, the Discount and Finance House of India Limited; as member of the governing board of the National Institute of Bank Management and on the state level security committee of the RBI.

Pune-born Goiporia did his commerce graduation from Bombay's Podar College following which he did his articles for chartered accountancy from A. F. Fergusson's. For 25 years he served the Union Bank of India, starting as an accountant and gaining varied exposure including on an assignment overseas with the National Westminster Bank Limited, London in connection with district office management and foreign exchange.

A bank job is a "very challenging and rewarding experience but only if one is willing to work anywhere in India," Goiporia had maintained in his *Parsiana* interview. "The majority of Parsis, while preferring bank jobs, do not desire responsibility outside Bombay and prefer to stagnate in clerical or junior banking positions throughout their lives."

In the course of the 18 years that Goiporia spent in Calcutta while working with Union Bank, "his contribution to the welfare of our community was immense," wrote Dr Russi Anklesaria, trustee of the Calcutta Zoroastrian Community's Religious and Charity Funds. "We recall with deep gratitude his help to us in raising funds for our community," he recalled.

Although very religious he was not very orthodox, informs Goiporia's daughter Zenobia Patel. In fact, much to her own pleasant surprise, her choice of a non-

Zoroastrian spouse elicited no opposition from her father, she notes. Visiting an agiary daily was a must for Goiporia. As often as possible he would frequent the Bhikha Behram well. And yet believing in the universality of all religions he would accompany his daughter to the Mount Mary Church every month, as also regularly attend Pandurang Shastri Athavale's discourses on the *Gita*.

His main interest in life was to do good and to help others in need, believes Patel. Despite his preoccupation with banking, he was "actively involved" in ameliorating the plight of the visually handicapped and serving the National Association for the Blind Committee on Rehabilitation, Training and Employment which "made a lot of progress under his chairmanship," as notes their condolence letter.

Always willing to bestow affection and respect on others, he endeared himself to his colleagues. Remarked management consultant R. K. Ghotgalkar, "Success in life and the high positions which he held did not go to his head," although he had the good fortune to be placed on "a higher pedestal as compared to most of his peers."

Goiporia is survived by his mother Gool, wife Dolly, daughter Zenobia Patel and son Yazd.

Sagar's solace

Died: Dr Ratan Hormusji Sagar, 68, former president-trustee of The Allahabad Parsee Zoroastrian Anjuman (APZA) for 16 years and a fellow of the Allahabad University, at his Allahabad residence, January 8, 1996.

"During his tenure as president-trustee of APZA he always led the community in (making) the right and honest decisions," remarked Capt Homi Dandiwalla, president-trustee, at the condolence meeting convened by the Anjuman. "He was also responsible for reviving the APZA which had become defunct and for recovering the funds of APZA seized by the law courts," added Dandiwalla.

Though Sagar had opted for cremation, the refusal by the priest to recite after-death prayers resulted in his body being interred at Allahabad's Parsi aramgah, we are informed. Contrary to prevailing traditions, neither was Sagar's body laid on marble slabs with hands tied nor was it placed in a coffin before burial. Further, non-Zoroastrians too were permitted to



Sagar (second from right) at one of the early meetings of the Federation in the mid 70s at Delhi

carry the body. "Even after his death he is still leading us as we have done away with four traditions which have nothing to do with religion," remarked Dandiwalla.

As president-trustee he used to frequently represent his Anjuman at the executive council meetings of the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India. Besides, he was an active member of the World Zoroastrian Organisation and his papers on poultry farming helped them in their work of ameliorating the poor Parsi farmers of south Gujarat.

An eminent veterinary surgeon, Sagar

***With Best Wishes
from***

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

and

Mrs Purviz R. Shroff

was a professor at the Allahabad Agricultural Institute and a fellow of the Allahabad University. "very helpful to his students, very kind to his friends and very dedicated to his medical work," wrote Dr Sohrab Mehta in the *N. I. Patrika* of January 18, 1996. Seeing his commitment to his work, his Institute sent him to America to gain further knowledge in animal husbandry. His teaching stints in different corners of the world included the last one at Sydney.

"I had seen the loving and friendly 'teacher-taught' relationship he had with his students," stated Mehta recalling the incident when he had to rush his dog to Sagar after an accident. Opining that an urgent operation was necessary he made Mehta hold the dog while his students surrounded the operation table so that they could see each step as he proceeded with deft hands. "Dr Sagar spoke to me before the operation and to the students during the operation, with such confidence and in such a light-hearted manner that it brought relief to me and made the procedure seem so easy to his students. It appeared as if he was applying first-aid to a minor injury."

Known for his wit and humor, his high-spirited company made him the life of different social gatherings, acknowledge his varied contacts. However it was not only the well-to-do who were comfortable in his presence. He was sought even by poor villagers who would approach him at odd hours of the day and night with their problems being sure of his unfailing help.

Sagar is survived by his wife Perin, sons Phiroze and Hanoz. P. G.

Master on the move

Died: Ervad Framroje (Fali) Shapurji Master (Elavia), 78, honorary secretary of the Athornan Mandal, the Iran League and the Seth N. H. Karani Agiary Trust on February 19, 1996 at Bombay's Jaslok Hospital following cardiac arrest.

Instrumental in reviving community institutions like the Athornan Boarding Madressa at Dadar as also in organizing community activities like the annual competitions held under the auspices of the Iran League, representatives of different organisations had come to pay their tribute to Master at a condolence meeting held in his honor on April 14, 1996. Referring to Master's hard-working temperament, Ervad Rustom Panthaky, former principal of the Madressa, recalled how Master would come to the Madressa by seven in the morning to start work. At a time when the Madressa was hard-pressed for funds, Panthaky would,

depend on Master's co-operation to raise the necessary resources for this institution and also for some personal needs like stitching a *jaamaa* (priest's robe).

When the Madressa required funds for its annexe, once again it was Master's enthusiasm that surfaced. Trustee Farokh Sidhwa recalled his surprise on finding a pile of 500 appeals readied by Master and left on his desk for signatures within one day of their discussion. When Sidhwa questioned the logic of sending out so many appeals, Master's characteristic response was "Even if no monies are received at least they will create an awareness about our organization."

To the children of the Madressa, Master epitomized the spirit of Santa Claus, mentioned the present principal of the Madressa Ervad Ramyar Karanjia. Master was also known to share a rapport with the children who apparently had no inhibitions when approaching him.

Just as he was easily accessible, Master was as comfortable when approaching others. Often he would barge into Sidhwa's office at Little and Company without an appointment. If a meeting with a client necessitated making him wait outside, Master did not mind. After a while when Sidhwa would go to summon him into his chambers he would find Master asleep outside! When many of his well-established colleagues on different trusts voiced some apprehensions in approaching a particular dignitary, Master would succeed in arranging the necessary introduction, irrespective of whether he did or did not know the personage himself!

Despite his limited knowledge of English, his scant knowledge of accounting procedures, he would strive to maintain regular records for the trusts with which he was associated, confidently urging his fellow-trustees to sign the same saying "*Jail javu parsé tau* (if the erroneous accounts attract a jail penalty) I'll go." When he erred in his eagerness to do work, he would often annoy his colleagues, but as acknowledged Panthaky, "We could not stay angry with him for long. He would promptly send a letter, of apology signed 'Fali (*Ghotalona*) Master'—master of mistakes."

His father's demise when he was yet a schoolboy compelled Master to discontinue his education to financially assist his widowed mother. Reciting prayers at the Farvardian would then earn him 25 paise per day, recalls his son Shapur to whom would be related an account of those trying

days. Master took over as panthaky at the H. B. Wadia Atas Bahram in the 1970s following the death of his brother Minoo. During the nearly two decades he functioned as panthaky, he would be among the first to report to the Atas Bahram, often opening the doors of the fire-temple himself by 5 a.m. every morning.



Master: mark of zeal

Before he accepted the panthaky's post, Master was employed with the Atomic Energy Establishment, Trombay for 15 years where he handled secretarial and supervisory work. In the 10 years prior to this assignment he had gained varied work exposure: as a salesman with R. M. Karkaria and Company, Muller and Phipps and Lever Brothers; as a supervisor with P. Kanga and

Company and Abraham and Sons; as a secretarial assistant with The Tata Aircraft Limited, The Tata Sports Club, The Tata Institute of Fundamental Research and The Bombay Presidency Adult Education Association.

For the 18 years he was associated with the Athornan Mandal as office secretary "he evinced keen interest and great enthusiasm in the working of the Mandal and took active part in its activities..." notes their condolence resolution.

After nearly two decades of active involvement with the Athornan Mandal, when he was asked to tender his resignation on October 31 due to old age and failing health, he seemed to have lost the verve and initiative that was so characteristic of his life that even at the age of 75 he would be organizing religious tours. Until he was 77 he was seen driving his scooter with a side-car. Many of his friends and associates remember getting pillion rides from him and even having to push his vehicle in the event of an empty petrol tank!

Despite his personal finances being limited he would always assure the organizers of a new project that for a good cause funds were sure to follow. When the Iran League started organizing competitions, in the first year there were only five participants, all of whom were given prizes with Master donating the first trophy in memory of his late wife Homai. Presently, over 150 children participate and vie for the 28 trophies in different events, Master was given credit for his foresight. Throughout his life his deeds and demeanor were governed by one principle: "the show must go on."

The dedicated priest is survived by his sons Shapur and Rohinton. P. G.

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