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Parsiana

July-August 1996
Volume 19 Number 1

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Parsiana is published by Jehangir R. Patel for
Parsiana Publications Pvt Ltd at C/o H. L. Rochat,
Navsari Chambers, ground floor, 39 A. K. Nayak
Marg, Fort, Bombay 400001 and printed by him at
Kaiser-E-Hind Pvt Ltd, 300 Perin Nariman Street,
Bombay 400001. Color processing, Comart
Lithographers; black and white processing, Samir
Scantech. All rights reserved. ISSN: 0971-3786.
Phone: 2078730, 2072624. Fax: 2074541.
For editorial enquiries: 2078183.

E-mail: parvo @ giasbm01.vsnl.net.in.
For subscription enquiries and payments:
C/o Kaiser-E-Hind Pvt Ltd, 300 Perin Nariman St
(Behind Reserve Bank of India), Bombay 400001;
Phone: 2658619, 2665661. Fax: 2654585.

Annual inland subscription for one year
(10 issues) Rs 200; for two years (20 issues)
Rs 375. Foreign subscription rates: Seemail for
one year Rs 375/US \$ 14/UK £ 9; for two
years Rs 700/US \$ 23/UK £ 15 (please allow
six months or more for delivery from the time
of publication). Airmail for one year Rs 700/ US \$ 23/
UK £ 15 (for Pakistan, Indian Rs 500); for two years,
Rs 1,300/US \$ 43/UK £ 27 (for Pakistan, Indian Rs
950). For Indian upcountry cheques add Rs 10 for
bank charges; for US cheques add \$ 5;
for UK cheques add £ 3. Cheques and drafts
are to be drawn in favor of Parsiana and posted
to GPO Box 892, Bombay 400001.

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Cover: Traditional Iranian welcome at the Sixth World Zoroastrian
Congress Photograph: Arnavaz Mama



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 Unsigned letters or those without an address will not be published.

Zoroastrian literature

The World Zoroastrian Organisation (WZO) is hosting a two-day seminar on the "Literature of the Zoroastrian Tradition," jointly with the World Zarathushtrian Trust Fund at Zoroastrian House, 88, Compayne Gardens, West Hampstead, London N.W.6.

To be held over the weekend of November 16 and 17, 1996, the specialized conference promises to be yet another unique event in the Zoroastrian calendar(s).

The internationally invited panel of speakers will consist of Professors Francois de Blois, Carlo Cereti, Ilya Gershevitch, Gherardo Gnoli, Helmut Humbach, Stanley Insler, Kaikhosrov Irani, Farhang Mehr, Antonio Panaino, Martin Schwartz, Nicholas Sims-Williams and Fereyduun Vahman. An introductory paper will be by Farrokh Vajifdar.

Details may be obtained from WZO president Shahpur Captain, 25 Willow

Close, Bishop's Stortford, Herts CM23 2RY, UK.

FARROKH VAJIFDAR

London, UK

"Status of Women..."

As always, it was a pleasure to read the erudite article about the ancient culture of Iran, in the series "Status of Women: sacred and secular" by Dr (Ms) Ketayun Gould, (*Parsiana*, October 1995 to May 1996). May I humbly offer my congratulations for the admirable piece of work she has so painstakingly researched from the ancient texts, analyzed and put forth so well?

I can't but help sharing a couple of my own ideas after reading these articles.

To ancient man, and here we are talking about all humankind, the excrements from every orifice of the living organism were not only a disgusting, but also a frightening experience, and therefore when at puberty a young girl came up with an additional excrement by way of menstrual blood, the innocent human mind got terrified, considering it an evil visitation — how else could she explain it? As our Lord Zarathushtra based his whole religious concept on "Ashoi" and hygienic principles, he had to lay down the tenet that excrements being impurities from the body, the true Zarathushtrian had to make himself/herself "Pav" again, through prayers and purificatory rites, before returning to routine tasks of life. Hence, while she was bleeding, no intercourse, no domestic chores, healthful yet frugal diet and rest were recommended for the menstruating young lady, as also a lady after delivery. It was only some two millennia later that scientific discoveries led us to realize that the bleeding was an essential physiological cycle, necessary for the preservation of the race.

It is the mother who plays the key role in nurturing, directing and disciplining the children to maturity. So apart from the routine domestic chores of catering to the physical welfare of her family members, she was also the prime teacher of the ethical and hygienic tenets of the good religion. And, so down the centuries, she had the important duty to teach her children that our beautiful religion is not just a bundle of superstitions and barbaric rituals, but, when carefully analyzed, is a definite science of life, as understood by generations of Zarathushtrians (starting with the very first disciples). Nor was it a



Gould: studying the status of the Zoroastrian female

power struggle between man and woman — each man, each woman, no matter what his/her status in life, could make the world a happier, healthier and better place to live in. Making the requisite changes in the practise of rituals, through "Ashoi," one can change so-

cioeconomic milieu and advance in scientific knowledge — for are we not enjoined to "perceive, think, reflect, and then accept to practise?"

I think, with a very few exceptions, our community has been able to advance and change with the changing times. Maybe, we are making too much about the differences between male and female — where our Lord Zarathushtra saw none.

Dr (Ms) ROSHEN S. MASTER

Pune

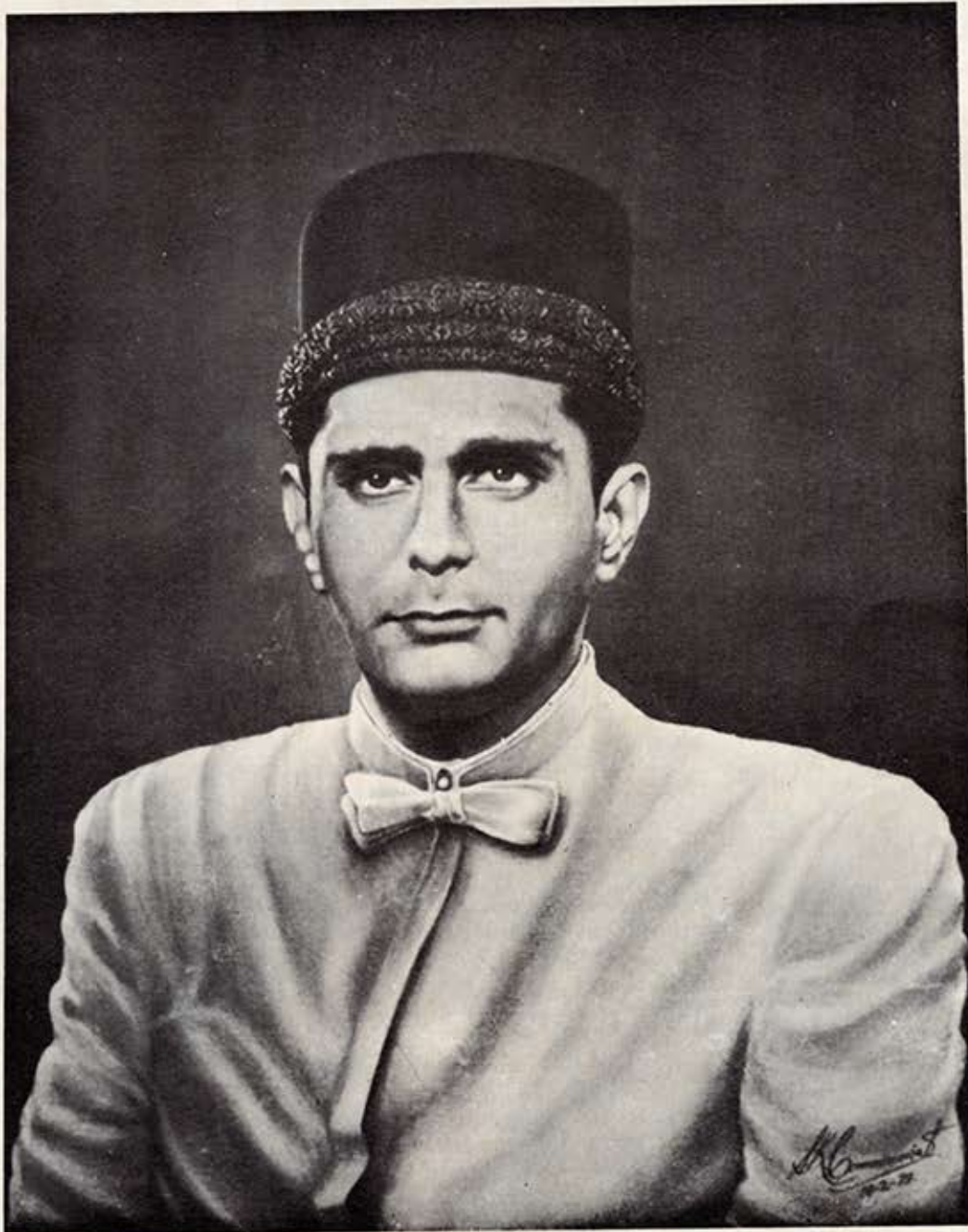
"The Priests' Rebuttal"

Apropos the letter from Mr Farhad D. Sethna (*Parsiana*, April 1996), which states "When was the last time any of us went up to our serving mobeds, dasturs or wada dasturji sahebs and said: Thank you?"

I wish Mr Sethna had been in Bangalore on June 7, 1996 when almost the entire Zoroastrian community of Bangalore gathered at the Kothari Hall to felicitate our panthaky saheb Ervad Nadirshah Unvalla on his retirement after serving our Zoroastrian community and the Bangalore agiary for 60 long years with dedication and devotion unmatched in the annals of serving panthakies.

The grateful Parsi community not only said "Thank you" to this devoted panthaki saheb but also presented him with a shawl and citation in a silver scroll and raised him to the status of a High Priest (Dastur). There were also innumerable messages of congratulation and good wishes from many anjumans, societies, individuals etc. Nadirshah Unvalla not only served as a panthaky but gave his services to the community in many other matters well beyond the call of duty as an ecclesiastic.

Mr Sethna is correct in his views that our wada dasturs should be given the respect due to them, but, it is also expected



In Memoriam
Mr Fali Meherji Variava
Ex-Director

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by the community that they should guide the community in religious customs and ritual matters in a way that should be fair, bold and show transparency in their views, that would be acceptable to the community irrespective of the power, social status, wealth, etc of any individual.

The recent unfortunate controversies over the navjotes performed for Mr Neville and Mr Nusli Wadia and justified by the four Wada Dasturs in their joint article "The Priests' Rebuttal" in *Parsiana* (November 1995) created a lot of confusion in the minds of Zoroastrians. Nobody has yet come forward to enlighten the community as to why the name of the priest who performed these navjotes has not been announced and why the presence of a notary and his subsequent certification was necessary when thousands of navjotes of Parsi children are done without such legal formalities.

The position of a dastur is vindicated by an exemplary life-style, dedication and devotion to the religion, and service to the community which can be appreciated by an average, even a non-scholastic Zoroastrian.

Dr M. D. DISAWALLA
Bangalore

This has reference to several letters, more particularly, the letters of Dr M. D. Disa-

walla, Bangalore and Mr Filly Maravala captioned, "The Priests' Rebuttal" in context of the acceptance of Mr Neville and Mr Nusli Wadia into the Zoroastrian fold (*Parsiana*, February-March 1996).

In my humble opinion, socially, morally and legally speaking, the decision of four (then five) priests of accepting the Wadias into the Zoroastrian fold was an action in the right direction.

In this context, may I draw your readers' attention to a book published by the late Dastur Khurshed Dabu entitled *Message of Zarathushtra* where he notes:

"There is nothing to prevent anyone not born a Parsi from professing his spiritual allegiance to Zarathushtra and adopting his message as it is the privilege of each soul to accept truth from any source. Thus Zoroastrianism is still open to adoption by the world to which the religion was offered. But if an alien embraces Zoroastrianism, he or she cannot claim amenities of the trust deeds with definite injunctions."

Needless to say, the Wadias are unlikely to claim such amenities now or in the future. On the other hand, the Wadias' charity to the community is enormous and unconditional. It should not be forgotten that Sir Ness Wadia was a born Parsi and therefore both Neville and Nusli Wadia are full blooded Parsis.

Disawalla queries that a number of citizens of Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan may lay claim to join the Zoroastrian religion on the plea that their ancestors were Zoroastrian. By the same token Mr Maravala feels that our Iranian brothers who converted to Islam against their will, may wish to be once again converted to their ancestral faith.

The answer is 'Yes,' regardless of the precedent of the Wadias. However, they would not be allowed to claim amenities of the Parsi community, funded under trust deeds with definite injunctions. But there is no bar to such non-Parsi Zoroastrians having their separate temples and other facilities at their own cost whilst observing the tenets of Zoroastrianism. A. B. MADON
Karachi

"The Farohar"

Every issue, it would seem, is either misunderstood and/or controversial. The latest emerges from Ervad Hormazd M. Pavri's letter on the Farohar (*Parsiana*, February-March 1996).

It would help for a start to universally distinguish right from left. Out here in the woolly West we commonly understand right to mean the direction of finish of this line, and left to mean its commencement. When, therefore, we are confronted with

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the splendid outline of the Farohar on pg 28, the profile figure facing towards the left margin of that page, we describe it as left-facing. Yet we are told it is facing its right. Strictly speaking, it is staring straight ahead in profile which here points left, but never mind!

The point of this explanation is to indicate to the ervad saheb that he is both right and wrong. He mentions Persepolis and Naksh-i Rostam where all depictions are in profile. At Persepolis the reliefs on the Triple Portal door-jambs show on the one side King Darius with Crown Prince Xerxes facing right (as the viewer sees them); overhead is the Farohar figure facing right. On the other side, King Darius is backed by two attendants who all face left as does the Farohar on that panel. On the Treasury/Throne-room relief, the seated King and the Crown Prince Xerxes standing behind him both face right, as does the Farohar. It is of interest to note that the existing reliefs at Persepolis/Parsa all show the Farohar with precisely preened wings.

We encounter oppositions of the facings of King Darius and the Farohar on Mount Behistun and at Naksh-i Rostam. Here the king faces right and the Farohar left; both Farohars are shown with wavy wings. The unfinished rock tombs of Artaxerxes II (?) and III (?) on the Koh-i

Rahmat behind the Persepolis platform both have their intended occupants facing right, while their wavy-winged Farohars face left. A famous cylinder-seal impression shows both the charioted King Darius and his accompanying Farohar (wavy) facing right. It is a hunt scene which had figured on a pre-Achaemenid ninth century BCE relief from Nimrud; there the hovering spirit form faces in the same direction as the King and, what's more, exactly imitates the bow-holding position of the hunter!

How the ervad saheb will view these captions is his affair. But since his letter anguished over the facing problem, may it be suggested that as we Zoroastrians are taught from infancy of the appropriateness of the right hand, then his navjote and lagan invitations should show the Farohar, right-handed as he correctly observes, also right profiled.

We think it is far more important to enquire into the identity of the bearded figure arising out of the winged circle. The Bahistun political testament and the Naksh-i Rostam and Koh-i Rahmat rock tombs would suggest Ahura Mazda. Darius' inscriptions seem to support this view. Persepolis and the cylinder seal could indicate the King's own fravashi, but here we are guessing. The Sasanian rock reliefs

represent Ohrmazd/Ahura Mazda in fully human shape conferring the ring of divinely approved sovereignty upon various kings, and the earlier Farohar question does not arise with these. What do your learned readers think? FARROKH VAJIFDAR

London, UK

"Doctors Unplugged"

These are a few observations that I would like to make with reference to the article "Doctors Unplugged (Events and Personalities, Parsiana, February-March 1996)."

People like me, who have been regular fans of the Parsi Medical Amateurs, the group of talented and dedicated doctors, sadly miss the presence of the real heart and soul of the band... Dr Jimmy Sidhwa. Dr Sidhwa's absence from the recent performance of this group has greatly diminished its ability to entertain our audiences which, in recent years, has become extremely discerning in its evaluation of onstage entertainment. Dr Sidhwa has that rare gift — the ability to establish an immediate rapport with the audience. He also has a fine sense of the ridiculous, the ability to ad-lib with finesse and, most of all, somehow manages to make his co-actors look good. Unfortunately, he did not participate in *Doctors Unplugged*, and was sorely missed.

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It must also be remembered that the Parsi Medical Amateurs are appreciated particularly for their ability for making fools of themselves (deliberately), and we, in the audience, are not there to hear and see a variety revue which is, in the main, a rehash of old skits, plagiarisms of the inimitable Mr Bean and poor attempts at professional singing [it must be said however that Dr (Ms) Villie Bamboat sang with great sweetness and professionalism, and her tuneful excellence cannot be criticized]. However, we sorely missed the traditional Dr Jehangir Wadia plays, with all the *koylagiri*... The recent amateurish attempt cannot compare with the professionalism of the past.

The other regular participants to be sorely missed were Dr Marzban Nalladaru, his wife Dr Thrity Nalladaru, Dr Pervin Modi, Dr Darius Anklesaria. Of the current group, Drs Dordi and Rustom Patel were the only stalwarts of the old guard to be appreciated. In *Unplugged*, the honorable mentions for a good effort would be Dr Dordi, Dr Bamboat and newcomers Dr Marzban Katrak and Dr Anaita Pundole (Dr Pundole has been on stage with the group in the past as well).

Unfortunately, the compere Dr Pardiwalla did not establish adequate contact

with the audience and therefore the items did not reach any height. The production values were rather poor by today's standards. However, we appreciate the efforts put in by this dedicated group, led by the eminent surgeon Dr Fardoon Soonawalla.

We hope that in future there is a grand reappearance of Dr Sidhwa and also of the talented regulars, in a Dr Wadia-type play.

B. M. MEVAWALLA

Late Dhunjisha Kalfati

Regarding the late Dhunjisha Kalfati (Readers' Forum, *Parsiana*, September 1995) I have some personal reminiscences.

I was born in Bombay in the year 1915. My father Shapurji Pallonji Kapadia was the brother of the (late) Sorabji P. Kapadia, editor of *The Bombay Samachar*.

When the Prince of Wales arrived at Bombay's Gateway of India "Apollo Bunder" in 1924, I was eight years old and lived in Balaram Street. I remember going to see the parade with my parents as did hundreds of Parsis.

When we returned home there was a riot between Parsis on one side and the Hindus and Muslims combined on the other. Many Parsi houses were set on fire. In a day or two I saw my father in his Parsi dagla and pheta carrying a revolver, and all

the young and old Parsi men patrolling our Balaram Street day and night. My father used to say that the police commissioner had given hundreds of firearms to Parsis to save their families, and their agiaries and atash behrams.

Had it not been for this bold action of the police commissioner of Bombay I think 50 percent of the Parsi population would have been killed in that riot of 1924.

I was too young and I never saw the late Dhunjisha Kalfati. If you refer to *Jam-e-Jamshed* or *The Times of India* of the year 1924 you may find all the details you want.

HOMI S. KAPADIA

Calcutta

Teaching Zoroastrianism

Beneath all the recent controversy between orthodox and liberal Zoroastrians, the issue of religious education does not warrant being regarded as "water under the bridge." It is a concern to all who care for the transmission of the faith from one generation to the next. If we do not get it right — and so far the outlook has not been very inviting — the future could be bleak.

Even those with no great faith of their own are coming to realize that in providing a secure foundation for the moral education of young people, no adequate substi-

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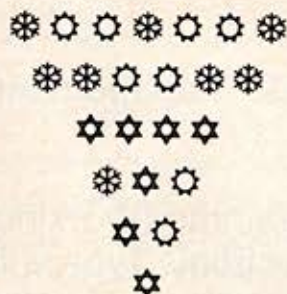
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tute for religion has yet been found. And they might well conclude that if Zoroastrianism cannot do it, then nobody can.

Many ordinary Zoroastrians who look with dismay at the rate at which their children abandon their faith and lapse from Zoroastrianism — particularly, in the West — put the blame at the door of Zoroastrian education.

Religious education is not exempt from educational fashion, and it too has been influenced by the emphasis on non-judgmental child-centered teaching. If it is not fashionable for the alphabet to be taught by rote and recitation, then neither is it fashionable for the *Avesta* and Zoroastrian prayers.

There is a natural spirituality about children before adolescence. They may not be able to discover the existence of Ahura Mazda for themselves, but the information does not surprise them when they hear it from parent, priest or teacher. They like the idea. It makes sense. The task of religious education at that age is to lay foundations that will endure, as children increasingly come to realize that the adult world is largely godless, and that other systems of belief (self-interested individualism, scientism, even metaphysical cynicism) constitute life beyond the classroom,

for the majority of people. We live in a culture that is opaque to God. It cannot see Him even when He is there.

It is said that religion is not so much taught as caught — almost as one might catch a cold. It is in the air and other people. It is urged to place more emphasis on the ethos of the whole establishment as a caring Zoroastrian community. It is difficult to make good progress if the values being inculcated in a learning zone are not reflected at home. Religion without doctrine does not work. A lot of what the Zoroastrian religion has to say rests on the authority of the *Avesta*. That is because it is about what Lord Zarathushtra has revealed, and about the transmission of that revelation down the ages. This produces a clash between the criteria set by current educational ideology and the demands of religious faith. It is a false contradiction, as science, history and most other subjects on the curriculum are also taught as true on the authority of the teacher. A child can no more check the statement that the Battle of Hastings took place in 1066 than the statements attributed to the teachings of Zoroastrianism.

So what religious education needs, in the Zoroastrian sector, as much as any other, is a willingness to sit in judgment on

the current theories of the educationalists (rather than vice versa) and a refusal to be overawed by their academic credentials and professional standing. In religious education schools, Zoroastrianism can and should be taught confidently "as true," and not as an option. The only option should be to opt out, not opt in. FURHOK K. TANGREE

La Roche-sur-Foron, France

Parsi profiles

I have long felt that many Parsi Zoroastrians are not aware of the rich heritage of the community and its earlier leaders and hence I have decided to compile a book, *Profiles in Parsi Achievement*.

It will include all Parsi Zoroastrians who were conferred knighthood, baronetcies, titles like Khan Saheb, Rao Saheb and/or awards like K.C.I.E., K.C.S.I.E., C.I.E., etc in the British Indian Empire. I would also like to include the names of Parsi Zoroastrians who have been conferred Indian national awards like "Padma Shri," "Padma Bhushan" and "Padma Vibhushan."

I appeal to the families of all persons who may be in possession of the photographs of these worthy persons to kindly spare me a copy along with their bio data, coat of arms, etc to reproduce in the book.

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MARAZBAN PATRAWALA

Parsis of Hongkong

Hongkong is a flourishing colony under British rule. This place of plenty will face its toughest task when it will be taken over by Mainland China within a year.

Billionaires and millionaires, it is reported, have already started moving their bases elsewhere, as they fear communist China will not be so benign as the Britishers were.

What about Parsis living in Hongkong? How many are living there? Whilst under Chinese law, all Hongkong Chinese will become citizens of China at the stroke of midnight of June 30, 1997, there are evidently no provisions in that law for persons who are non-Chinese residents to become Chinese. Will Parsis face statelessness? Have they planned to migrate to pastures new?

Will any relatives of Parsis of Hongkong



Hong Kong's new Zoroastrian Building

or any other knowledgeable Parsi in any part of the world throw any authentic light on the above questions and what will be their plight after the handover of the Dependency to China? BHIKHAJI M. ADENWALLA

The Editor replies

The optimism of Hongkong Zoroastrians was reflected in the inaugural of their new

18-storey Zoroastrian Building in 1993, completed at a cost of approximately 13 crore rupees. On that occasion long-time Hong-kong resident Jimmy Master had estimated 186 Zoroastrian residents in the British colony, 40 of them being children.

Thanksgiving mission

A lifetime's ambition was achieved on December 12, 1994, when I completed my "goodwill missions" across the length and breadth of India on my moped, covering a distance of nearly 7,500 km from Kanya Kumari to Kashmir and the Gulf of Cutch in Gujarat to Arunachal in the East.

It was made possible by the encouragement of Parsi philanthropists, industrial houses, anjumans and individuals who contributed to make my endeavors successful.

The Parsi Press like *The Bombay Samachar*, *Jam-e-Jamshed*, *Parsiana*, *Fed News-letter*, have been responsible for a wide coverage among our community which also helped in netting contributions.

It is for this reason that I would like to undertake another "goodwill" mission:

- To personally thank those who have so generously contributed for the successful completion of this odyssey;

- To meet as many Parsi families as possible and enjoy Parsi hospitality;

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•To make this a pilgrimage to visit our atash behrams and agiaris. On my Kanya Kumari-Kashmir trip when I was honored on November 16, 1990 by the Parsis of Nagpur, the ervad saheb impressed upon me to visit as many religious institutions of our Parsi community as I could. The same sentiments were also expressed by the late mobed of Ajmer who had performed the navjote ceremony of my grandson earlier; •I have entered my 74th year and am seeking a calm, quiet and peaceful place to spend the remaining years of my life away from the bustle of a big city. Any person reading this and having such a 'Shangrila' in view, may please write to me.

The manufacturers of the TVS Champ have bestowed a unique honor on me by presenting me a brand new latest model Champ absolutely free and I will use this machine on this thanksgiving trip.

I propose to start around October 1, 1996 from the Gandhi Ashram in Porbander after paying my homage to the Father of the Nation, whom I have admired from my childhood and who has been a beacon of inspiration in my life, after spending a day or two in meditation and prayer.

I will travel down the west coast to Kanya Kumari and then up the east coast, through Jamshedpur, Patna, Allahabad, Lucknow to Delhi, visiting as many atash behrams and agiaris as possible on my route and stay in Parsi dharamshalas, if I am unable to stay with any Parsi family.

This trip, just as the past ones across India, is for the joy of living and not to break any records or hanker after awards. I hope to complete it by December end, being three months on the road.

This time I do not wish to tax the Parsi community for financial assistance — though it is always welcome — and will try to utilize my savings over the past decades.

D. C. PATELL
 Secunderabad

Whither, Parsiana?

Please be fundamentalist rather than reformist. Secondly, try to write something comparable to Persia, not to India, America. Try to be in tune with the title or change the title to any other word which might give you good luck astrologically and if you want any such help, I would be glad to help the company.

The title can be a way to riches or can be a way to spiritual development. I am a fundamentalist, so the contents of your magazine are not appealing.

MARZBAN PARVEZ MANECJI

Edited by Arnavaz S. Mama

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Events and Personalities

Promising priesthood

"Mobedi as a profession has all along been embraced by most athornans as a last resort after having eliminated all other available options... For any community to sustain itself, consolidate, remain resolute and thrive, an important requisite is an enlightened clergy, capable of providing effective spiritual leadership... it is imperative that a beginning be made to develop such a breed of athornans," notes a statement jointly signed by Dinshaw Tamboly, chairman of The WZO Trust Funds and Nadir Modi, president of The Athornan Mandal.

Backed by a corpus of 40 lakh rupees raised by The WZO Trust Funds, the two organizations have jointly formulated a scheme such that the mobedi profession is "made viable enough to attract the cream of the athornan youth."

Depending on the candidates' inherent capabilities they will promote different kinds of clergy:

- formally educated practising priests who can offer religious and spiritual guidance as also leadership to the community;
- full-time practising priests who may not be formally educated yet be able to earn an income only from this vocation;
- young priests who on completion of their navar-maratab are willing to undergo a priestly internship under the guidance of a senior priest in certain fire-temples. Such chosen candidates with differing academic qualifications for whom periodic progress reports will be maintained will draw a stipend varying between Rs 1,000 to Rs 4,000 per month and will be provided free boarding and lodging, as also college fees and other incidental college expenses.

Further, as an incentive for athornans to enrol their children at the athornan madressas, financial support of Rs 500 per month will be extended to the families where the sons are boarders at the Dadar or Andheri madressas.

MY SIMPLE BOOK OF ZOROASTRIANISM



Moos and her book: simple faith

pelled to bring out a simple and informative book to educate children on the Zoroastrian religion."

The scheme also clarifies that all incentives under this scheme would be made available only until such time that the beneficiary remains a full-time mobedi.

While pursuing this venture the two organizations will also continue with their independent projects for the betterment of the clergy and the laity. To ameliorate the plight of poor, elderly mobedis, the WZO stands committed to its program initiated four years ago and which has subsequently expanded to give a monthly contribution of Rs 1,000 each to 100 beneficiaries.

"What is important is that we should all involve ourselves in the evolution of a breed of athornans who would in themselves be a dynamic and motivating force for the community in spiritual and religious matters," specifies the new scheme.

Religion made simple

"I am not a Zoroastrian, nor am I an authority on Zoroastrianism," candidly admits author Ms Lorraine N. Moos in the foreword to her recently published work, *My simple book of Zoroastrianism*. Her marriage to Neville, a Zoroastrian, and their decision to bring up their two children as Zoroastrians was the reason Lorraine "felt com-

The 63-page book, priced at Rs 150, starts with The story of Creation and ends with song lyrics from audio cassettes brought out by Zoroastrian Studies. The maximum number of pages, 10, are devoted to The Birth and Life of Zarathushtra while the Teachings of Zarathushtra are summed up in just one page.

The visuals accompanying the text are reproduced from *Zarathushtra, the Golden Star* by Ms Preen Lalkaka, *Zarathushtra and His Teachings* by Dastur Khurshed Dabu and *In search of my God* published by The Zoroastrian Foundation. In addition to these works Moos has also referred to the writings of Ms Piloo Nanavutty and Ms Ava Mehta who have considerable experience in making religious literature appealing to Zoroastrian children. However, it was her friend and neighbor Ms Shernaz Cama whose "knowledge, guidance and support helped me complete this book," acknowledges the author.

Born and raised in Bombay, Moos did her commerce graduation from Sydenham College after which she worked for five years in corporate finance at Voltas Limited. Following her marriage and emigration to the States, she worked as finance

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consultant with Digital Equipment Corporation for five years and before the birth of their second child elected to raise their children on a full-time basis. This book, with three dedications to her immediate family members, is introduced as "the result of her energy, love and devotion."

"We hope this book conveys the essence of Zoroastrianism to our children and also instills in them a sense of pride on being Zoroastrian," states the USA based Moos who has undertaken this mission during a temporary posting in India. Unfortunately, some of the Gujarati monajats included in this work and meant primarily to rouse loyalty to the religious tenets and the community are not explained. The meaning of the basic prayers though are invariably included alongside the English transliterations.

In the three-page chapter on some spiritual concepts, the subject of after-death occupies two pages. There is almost a fairy-tale narration: "Zoroastrians believe that after death the soul separates from the body and begins its journey to God. However, at first the soul is confused, and sits for three days at the head of its own bed. A *divo* is kept to comfort the soul. On the dawn of the fourth day, the soul leaves the earth for Paradise. This is confirmed by the priest who has been praying over the dead body, when he can see the tiny hairs on his hand at dawn, without any artificial light." Perplexing as the last statement is, even for an adult, what correlation should a child reader perceive?

Some words about... navjote, sudreh kusti, fire and ses give simple and succinct explanations which a child can comprehend. The chapter on History of Zoroastrians in India recounts the ever popular sugar-in-the-milk story and how the Parsis "are known for their good, honest and charitable ways."

Actually, even the financial returns of this venture, after meeting the basic costs, will go to charities for Parsi children, inform the publishers, M/s Business Communicators.

Those interested in procuring a copy of the book should send a draft for Rs 170 (Rs 150 being cost of book plus Rs 20 postage) payable at New Delhi in favor of Business Communicators — A/c Book Publishing, B7/64 (Main) Safdarjung Enclave, New Delhi 110029.

Stamp of success

Heading the Philatelic Congress of India as its new president for the next two years

is Bombay's Vispi S. Dastur who was installed as the chief at the biennial convention held in New Delhi on April 28, 1996, notes a press release. Reportedly the first Parsi to hold this post, Dastur, who has served on the Government of India's Philatelic Advisory Committee, is also president of the Empire of India Philatelic Society and honorary editor of *India's Stamp Journal*.

At several world exhibitions Dastur, the first Indian and Asian to win the UK's



From Brig D. S. Virk to Dastur: the President's pin on the lapel

Roake Trophy for original research in philately, has won gold medals too, mentions the release.

President of the Bombay Parsee Association as also chairman of the Sir J. J. Dharmashala and the District Benevolent Society, Dastur had earlier released a special cover with a special cancellation on the occasion of the Dadar Athornan Boarding Madressa's platinum jubilee in December 1995. Portrayed on the cover is the Madressa's old building encased in a platinum colored border. Below that is depicted the afargani and the crossed maces each ending in the shape of a cow's head that is supposed to represent the priestly class who tend the fire in the fire-temples. Five lines of the Avesta script appear in pale lemon against the white background of the cover. The special cancellation bears an afargani encircled with the lettering "Athornan Boarding Madressa — Platinum Jubilee." According to Dastur, the cover and the cancellation were designed in consultation with

Cyrus Sidhwa, past student and presently teacher at the Madressa.

Pursuing adult franchise

The method of electing a trustee to the Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP) denies adult Parsi citizens the right to choose a trustee of their choice on the basis of universal adult franchise, bemoaned Porus Eruch Kateli in his writ petition filed before the Bombay High Court. Considering that the election scheme as applicable to the BPP was sanctioned by the Bombay High Court, Justice Ajit Shah, while summarily rejecting Kateli's plea, held that the remedy, if any, was to apply for modification of the scheme, notes a report in the *Indian Express* of June 22, 1996.

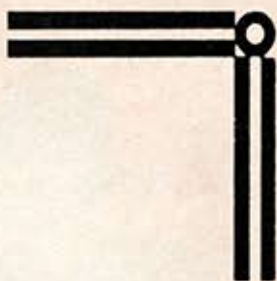
Among those who have been consistently campaigning for adult franchise is Pheroze Ardeshir Bana (Vatcha), author of the *Parsi Public Trusts Directory*. As per the statistics compiled by him, in the course of the last seven elections held between March 13, 1993 and June 8, 1996, the voter turnout has declined from 2,397 to 340. These voters represented 2.7 percent of the adult Parsi population (which in his estimate would be 25,000) during the 1993 elections and barely 1.2 percent of the total adult Parsi population during the last, Minoo Shroff election, notes Bana.

"Let all Parsis think and unite and cooperate in our campaign for adult franchise," urges Bana who is attempting to conduct a census survey of adult Parsis, obtaining their names, address, sex and age-group. Claims Bana, "The mandate given by more than 600 members of the elected constituency, and about 100 donor members also, is sufficient enough for this campaign to be presented before the learned legal authorities..."

"I'm still running"

"In India sports should be made compulsory in schools. This will make children more disciplined and India can look forward to a gold medal in Olympics which has been eluding this country for more than a century," emphasizes Ms Zenia Ayrton who had won a silver for India at the Beijing Asian Games and was at 18 years of age acclaimed the fastest woman in the country.

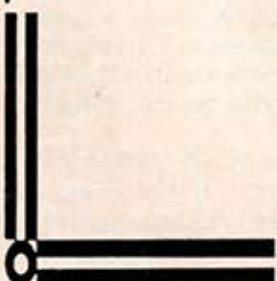
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Ayrton: learning to run faster

faster movement to your legs. Also sports medicine has advanced so much. In European and American countries they have a doctor and sometimes a psychologist accompanying an athlete... We are behind them in time... Indian sports is all messed up because of politics entering the arena," believes Ayrton.

Presently studying for her masters in computer science at the University of Pittsburgh, USA, it is her University coach Steve Lewis under whose tutelage she is improving her timing in the 100, 200 and 400 m sprint events as also the 100 m hurdles. In her rigorous schedule for the day, the first round of practice cum training session starts at 6.30 in the morning. Then she is at the University where she is trying to pack in four years of work in two-and-a-half so that she can save money. In the early evening she is back at the gym or the tracks for another round of training. By the time she returns home it's around 8 p.m. when she has to cook food, do her studies and prepare herself for the next day, she gives an account of her busy routine. "After so many injuries I'm still

running. This is possible only because I think positively and have set a goal in front of me — to represent India at the Olympics," says the sprinter.

For the juniors, 23-year-old Ayrton's advice is: "Try and pay respect to your parents and coaches because they are the people who guide your career." Ayrton acknowledges that she was influenced considerably by her school (Convent of Jesus and Mary, Fort) physical training instructor Ms Naazneen Irani who, having spotted Ayrton's potential when she was barely seven, made her run for the 80 m sprint at the interschool athletic meet which she won easily, and subsequently her coach in Bombay, Adille Sumariwalla.

Family support for Ayrton has come from her parents Bomi and Arnavaz, brother Jawahar, and now husband Vibhu Ranjan who invariably accompanies her to the training sessions as also to the competitions. In the absence of any official sponsorship it was her dad who had to finance her coaching initially, she mentions. Her earnings as an athlete, as a model in a couple of ad films, and her part-time job as network administrator in a telecommunications firm have helped defray costs too.

Holding the distinction of being the youngest Indian to represent the country at the SAF Games where she won a silver and a gold for India when she was just 15, the following year she had earned the title of open national champion. As for the future, Ayrton does not disclose much, stating guardedly, "Within a few months...people will hear more about me." In her pursuit for excellence the athlete is goaded by her conviction: "There is no substitute for hard work."

Aspi Ustad

Community involvement

All the 161 competitors in the five to 90 years age category who had participated in the various competitions organized by the Iran League last year were rewarded at the annual prize distribution function held on April 20, 1996 at Cama Baug, notes a press release. The participants were adjudged for their talent at rangoli drawing, elocution, recitation of Avesta prayers and the *Shah Namah*, essay writing and music. They vied for the 28 trophies, cash prizes worth Rs 9,635, 12 medals and honor certificates. Consolation prizes were assured to all. Also distributed were religious books and cassettes by the trustees of the F. H. Sethna Legacy Trust, states the release giving a detailed account of the proceedings.

Jimmy M. Panthaki, managing director of Poonawala Group of Engineering Companies and his wife Saroshbanoo who were the chief guests at the function had arranged for all the participants to partake of a free dinner.

Guest of honor, Jamshed Guzder, chairman of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet, pointed out that it was Jimmy Panthaki's father who had donated land for Panthaki Baug at Andheri where today reside hundreds of Parsi families.



Guzder, S. Panthaki and Y. Panthaki at Iran League's prize distribution

The newly appointed joint honorary secretary Ervad Yezdi Panthaki referred to Saroshbanoo as being the granddaughter of Seth Mancherji Eduljee Joshi, the founder of the Dadar Parsi Colony, and of Pirojsha Mehta, the founder of Boys' Town School at Nasik. In their endeavor to encourage Parsis to join this institute they have offered free admission as also boarding and lodging to deserving Parsi students.

While recapitulating the history of Iran League, joint honorary secretary Ervad Parvez Bajan appreciated the efforts of its stalwarts like the late Ervad Fali Master who was instrumental in reviving these competitions, according to the press release.

A hotel-friendly package

A corporate house in Bombay is expecting a foreign delegation. One of the members wants to be booked in a hotel which is close to the corporate office, has fax facilities and a color photocopier, as also a swimming pool and a beauty salon, accepts American Express credit cards, and provides a baby-sitter. A senior executive expects his office attendant to stay in Pune for two days on a budget of Rs 100. Where does one go scouting for information of this kind?

DataSoft Exports has the answer. Percy Ghaswala, director of the company launched in January 1995, has compiled an all India database on hotels, resorts and

B. Sorabji

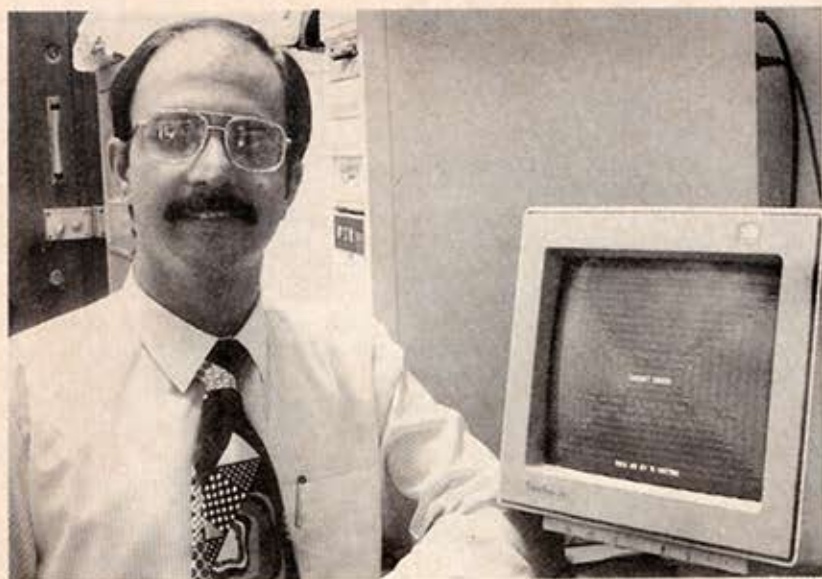
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Ghaswala: hotel friendly software and Patel (right): emoting monologues

restaurants. Helping him in his business are: father Soli who is the "financier, consultant and advisor," while brother Framroze looks after the advertising and public relations.

The all-India database is a computerized comprehensive directory. It has three floppy diskettes which cover more than 960 hotels, 550 restaurants in 125 business and leisure cities all over India. The kind of information one gets is the tariffs of the various hotels, the facilities provided, cuisine, distance from other important centers, cost of reaching the airport, and alternative forms of transport (even a tonga)! A list of travel agents and tour operators as well as government tourist offices, STD/ISD codes and climatic conditions are all keyed in.

The idea for this user-friendly package took root when Ghaswala was down with jaundice and needed a holiday with his family to recuperate from the illness. He searched laboriously for an ideal place to go which would be easy on his pocket too. He first started compiling data for hotels and restaurants in Bombay and Pune. A seven-page questionnaire (asking every minute detail including facilities for the handicapped) was sent out to hotels, resorts and restaurants. Some were very forthcoming with the information while others were not, states Ghaswala. The package is, in his words, "value for money. It saves time and gives one the best option suited for one's needs and budget." Not only frequent travellers but businessmen as well as travel departments of corporate houses have shown a keen interest in his product,

claims the 34-year-old computer buff. Depending on the individual need of a client, the package ranges between Rs 800 and 8,000. The updating of this database is a continuous process. Those who wish to buy the package may contact Ghaswala on 2007621, 2004350 or 6436842.

Ghaswala's earlier exposure to computers was at Computer Software Consultants where he was a general assistant. Following a masters in biochemistry, he contributed articles on neuro-immunology in connection with leprosy. For three years, from mid 1985 to mid 1988, he had been research assistant at the Sir Hukisondas Nurrotumdas Medical Research Society in Bombay. His reviews of international publications on computers and biomedical sciences have been published in local journals, mentions his curriculum vitae.

Roxana A. Driver

One-woman show

For her one-woman performance on August 16 at the American Center, Bombay, Avaan Patel selected a wide-ranging program of monologues from Shakespeare, Euripides, Tennessee Williams and a new musical by Aimee Young entitled *Yolks*, where as 11-year-old Andie she tried to cope with singing and breaking eggs on stage.

The evening's mix of comedy, tragedy and musical was varied enough for 26-year-old Patel to showcase her talents and sensibility as an actress. As Rosalind disguised in a young man's garb in the forest of Arden (from Shakespeare's *As You Like It*), Patel was pert and apple-cheeked as she half mocked, half wooed the lovesick Orlando. If she was fetching in a boy's apparel, gowned in stark black as the bereft Hecabe in two scenes from Euripides'

tragedy of the same name, she was an image of despair. Lights designed by Michael Nazareth and operated by Saloni Zaveri lent shades and subtlety to her role as in the first scene Hecabe pleads with Odysseus to free her daughter Polyxena, who has been claimed by the Greeks as a sacrificial victim; and again in scene two, addressed to Agamemnon, when she offers a spirited justification of her revenge on Polymestor, killer of her youngest son.

In emoting the monologues Patel made use of weighty pauses between lines and even between words to portray the sorrowing, desolate mother; but with too much repetition the technique (resorted to by the actress in other roles as well) was in danger of becoming a device, a stage mannerism that should be more honored in its breach than usage. Indeed, with her very expressive, mobile face, Patel needs no such ploys.

With playwright Gieve Patel for father, and mother Toni being well-known as a director in Bombay's theater world, it is not surprising that Avaan (who studied at the Bombay International School) gravitated to the stage. After her performance she spoke to the audience about her training and work experiences at the Trinity Repertory Conservatory in Providence, Rhode Island, USA. Founded by Adrian Hall, who directed the acclaimed production of Sam Shepard's *Buried Child* which toured India some years ago, the Conservatory curriculum provides rigorous training in acting, directing and playwriting.

Patel has an engaging personality on stage. The area she needs to work on is her voice. Perhaps yoga could help her improve on its range and resonance?

Dina Mehta



Happy New Year!

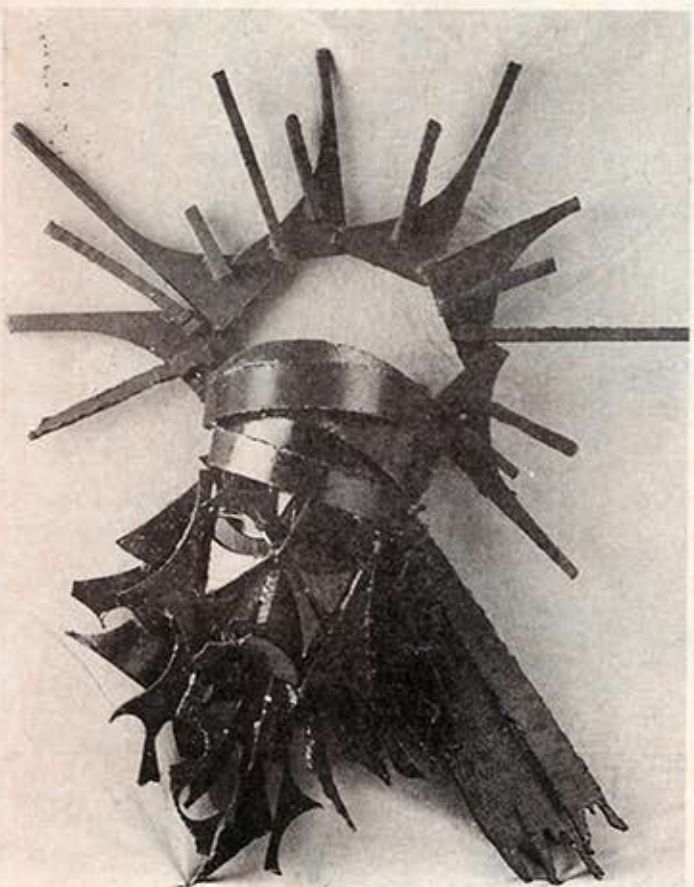
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Striking Scaptures

His *Seated Moghul* waits outside the Jewel of India restaurant at Bombay's Nehru Centre. *The Rhino* at the Nariman Point road island is a massive 18-foot landmark designed by architect-interior designer Arzan Khambatta. Gaining popularity among the city's art lovers, Khambatta held his second solo exhibition, *Scaptures*—scrap metal sculptures—at the Jehangir Art Gallery from February 15-22, 1996.

This self-taught craft requires Kham-

batta to frequent junkyards periodically, clear the rust off exposed surfaces, paint them with epoxy compounds and then assemble them such that he transforms them into works of art.

Among his recent creations are *Royalty*, *The Bathtub* and *Zarathushtra*. While in some cases the theme strikes first for which Khambatta has to scout around for the required fragments to express his subject, at other times he just sits at his workshop in the midst of his junk and a shape

materializes, he explains his style of working. Jovial and humorous human subjects appeal to the sculptor rather than abstracts.

The 29-year-old artist's creations have also found a place at other exhibitions organized by the Bombay Art Society, the Lalit Kala Akademi and The Bombay Show. For the last event, his two exhibits, *Megapolis* and *The Great Gizmo* were rated as among "the most striking items on display."

SPOTLIGHTS

Securing the first rank from the Gujarat University at her BA examinations, **Ms Navaz F. Pithawalla** is the pride of the Seth N. B. Choksi Charities Home for underprivileged children in Navsari. Like many other inmates who have availed of

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this Home's facilities in the last 27 years, Pithawalla too has benefitted from the free food, education and medical aid proffered by them, notes a press release.

Vice president, marketing, of Toshniwal Brothers, Bombay, and secretary of the Lions Club of Byculla, **Aspi Minocher** won double honors at the recently held Lions Multiple District (including Maharashtra, Gujarat, Rajasthan and Madhya



The Governor of Bihar, A. R. Kidwai, presenting the Vikas Ratna Award conferred by the International Friendship Society of India to Diniar Darab Mehta of Dini Tours and Travels Private Limited. This award for 1995 was earned by Mehta "for enriching human life and outstanding attainments," as notes a press release.

Pradesh) Convention at Ahmedabad, according to a press release. He was adjudged the Best Secretary as also declared a joint winner of the Multiple Quiz Contest.

CORRECTION

In "Joy in cooking," Events and Personalities, *Parsiana*, May 1996, it was erro-

neously stated, "Unfortunately, in the case of most recipes we are not told how many people could partake of the dish from the quantities of the ingredients specified therein." Actually, the servings have been specified at the end of almost every recipe. *Parsiana* regrets the error.

Compiled by Parinaz Gandhi



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Probing for Zoroastrian roots

FEZANA's new research *Journal* documents Zoroastrian cultural evidence in Central Asia

Arnavaz S. Mama

The *Journal of the Research and Historical Preservation Committee of the Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America (FEZANA)* made its debut in early 1996. Described as a research tool for the needs of scholars, students and general public interested in Zoroastrian studies and related fields, the *Journal's* editorial board comprises FEZANA president Ms Dolly Dastoor, long-time German proponent of Avesta-Pahlavi scholarship Dr Helmut Humbach, emeritus professor of philosophy at New York's City College Prof Kaikhosrov Irani and FEZANA founder Rohinton Rivetna with Dr Pallan Ichaporia as editor-in-chief. The editing and processing of the text has been undertaken by Ms Sabar Balsara of Toronto.

The 63-page publication in clear, easy-to-read type and language provides three articles aimed at widening the historical horizon of the lay reader: "Journey to Sogdia, an Ancient Zoroastrian Land" by Adi Davar, "Historical Evidence of Avestan Culture and the Apparent Zoroastrian Beliefs in Modern-Day Tajikistan" by Ms Khorshed F. Jungalwala and "The *Gathas* of Zarathustra and the 'Rule of the Community' in the Dead Sea Scrolls — Theological Similarities and Differences" by Ichaporia. Footnotes and bibliographies follow each article. All dates are according to Gregorian years, together with the Yazdegardi notations where applicable.

"Zoroastrianism being one of the oldest revealed religions preached by Prophet Zarathushtra 3,500 years ago has had a following that today spreads over more than a dozen countries from Anatolia (modern Turkey) to China. Consequently, there are relics, monuments and archeological findings spread throughout that region. If we were to consider Mithraism as having its roots in Zoroastrianism then we spread the sphere of Zoroastrian influence still further in every corner of Europe wherever

the Roman soldiers went. This wealth of the ancient world has not properly been identified and studied. Further there are ideological influences that are discernibly Zoroastrian and customs of groups of peoples that can be traced to having Zoroastrian roots still practiced today. Much work in these areas needs to be done," notes Ichaporia in his editorial.

Davar, whose work for the World Bank and the United Nations has taken him to a variety of places in the Middle East as well as the countries of the Asian Steppes, relates what he heard and saw during a recent visit to Uzbekistan (known to the ancients as Sogdia). He learnt that "the heroes of the *Shah Nameh* — Zal, Faridun, Rustom, Sorab... — are national heroes there; the tale of Shirin and Farhad is such a favorite legend that a lake and a dam have been named after them; the legendary bird Simurgh which is supposed to have nurtured Zal, has been adopted as the country's national emblem; that the people of Bukhara not only come to pray at an unearthed mausoleum with many other graves around it, mainly in the week preceding the country's new year on March 21, but light fires on two large stone pedestals, which resemble the stone altars in the ancient fire-temples of Iran, as they pray; that many non-Jewish Uzbeks in Bukhara, Samarkand and elsewhere kept small ongoing fires in their homes. It appears that these people did not know why these practices were followed — despite being denounced by the Imams as heretical — except that they were hereditary.

Explaining how these are the Turanian lands referred to in the *Shah Nameh*, Davar notes, "The persistence of some of the Zoroastrian practices, legends and myths even to this day (despite a few centuries of Islam and 70 years of communism), is not easy to explain... Since the legends of primordial kings and warriors like Hushang,

Zal, Faridun, Rustom and Sorab talk of events, adventures, loves and wars in Turan, would it be entirely speculative to suggest that they might have first originated with the clans and tribes living in Turanian countries where Zoroastrianism was embraced some thousand years before the Achaemenian empire? And thereafter, when these countries became a part of successive Persian empires, those myths and legends became so much a part of the Zoroastrian folklore of Iran as well, that the Sassanians embodied them in the *Khwaday Namag* in the 4th century AD, to make (them) their own. After all, it is the 9th century AD translation of this work into Arabic which provided Firdausi with the basis for the *Shah Nameh* that he bequeathed to the world in the 10th century AD...

"For one thing, it simply confirms the historical fact that since the time of Zarathushtra (some 3,600 years ago) and up to at least the 10th century AD, Zoroastrianism had been practised in Uzbekistan and adjacent Turanian lands, by those of non-Iranian origin."

Writing about Tajikistan and the surrounding regions Jungalwala notes, "There is ample evidence to prove the existence of Mazdayasni Zarthushtrianism through the ages in that part of the world going back to about 2000 BC and sufficient proof to establish the fact that Zarthushtrianism did flourish as a 'state religion' between the sixth century BC and eighth century AD, interspersed with periods of decline." Jungalwala notes that an estimated 45,000 practising Zarthushtrians lived in the Badakhshan-Yagnab region — a remote mountainous area — during Arab rule, until the communist takeover. After that the ancient culture and traditions began to be preserved "at an intellectual level. Studies were encouraged, books were written, research and excavations carried out and

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preservation of ancient local heritage was given priority... (But) in all this intellectual frenzy, the practice of religion and rituals had no place to go but go underground or pass off into history!" The *Avesta* was translated into Russian and Institutes of Oriental Studies in Moscow, Leningrad, Tashkent and Dushanbe are said to possess an excellent collection of manuscripts.

Navroze and Mehrgan are national holidays and the only public ceremonies celebrated, writes Jungalwala. And though there are no ceremonies for the dead, when a corpse is laid out on a platform, a nail is passed around it three times "so that no one crosses the circles and touches the body, and a candle or diva is lit at the grave for three nights."

The Pharisees, Sadducees and Essenes were the three main Jewish tribes often locked in combat of whom the Essenes who "regarded themselves as the only true Israel and remained separated from their fellow Jews," are believed to be the authors of the Dead Sea Scrolls, informs Ichaporia. They also rejected the sacrificial service of the temple.

The concept of God as the sole creator is common to both the *Gathas* and the

'Rule of the Community (ROC)' which is the first document of three belonging to the *Scroll* found in cave number one. Other common facets in the theology of both documents is the torment of humanity which is caught between good and evil, light and darkness in the fundamental dualism that pervades the world, as Ichaporia illustrates through quotes: "By the Angel of Darkness comes the aberration of all the sons of Righteousness; and all their iniquities...(ROC)" "When these two spirits confront each other (to fight for a person, then that person) determines (his/her) first existence (with) vitality or lack of vitality and how his/her existence will be in the end (*Gathas*: Yasna 30:4)."

There are however two basic differences of approach in the two theologies: whereas the *Gathas* emphasize the concept of freedom of choice ("Humans, false gods and God are expected to choose the concepts preferred by them," says Ichaporia), the Jewish document speaks of predestination ["And all their afflictions and the appointed times of their sufferings (are caused) by the dominion of his (God's) hostility... He created the spirits of light and darkness and upon them

he founded every work."]

Even the final end of evil's existence is by God's decree according to the *Scroll* whereas Ahura Mazda will renovate the world by the help of human beings guided by Zarathushtra: "Thus may we be those who make existence brilliant."

"Zarathushtra lived in the eastern Iranian lands and had no contact with Judaism in the west and as such it is unlikely that Jewish monotheism influenced Zarathushtra's *Gathas*," writes Ichaporia. "Zarathushtra's religion is considered as the dualistic religion par excellence, i.e. a religion in which evil in the world is not attributed to God's inscrutable ways or God's mysterious understanding... As a matter of fact, the life of the world is a continuous conflict between the principle of truth and that of deceit... Yet... the dualistic interpretations must be modified: In the *Gathas*, Ahura Mazda has no individual antagonist, such as Evil Spirit."

Published by FEZANA with inputs from dedicated amateurs, not professional academicians or publishers, the *Journal* is an example of what the community is capable of when required. The few proofing errors that are apparent may be transitory.

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ZSO's task force reports

The [Zoroastrian Society of Ontario's (ZSO)] task force was set up to enquire into the practice of intermarriage among the Zoroastrian community. From the very outset, the task force realized quite clearly that the practice of intermarriage affected the existence and very growth of the Zoroastrian community. Our principal task was to find out why the practice prevailed and to recommend the guidelines by which to reduce the incidence of intermarriage in North America.

Initially, the task force consisted of Xerxes Bamji, Ms Bina Behboodi, Ms Huzan Daver (née Kharas), Ms Pervin Mistry, Kawus Nanavati, Percy Patel and Keki Shroff. After the third meeting, Shroff resigned for personal reasons. After the fourth meeting, Daver had to proceed to India and so resigned. These two were replaced on the committee by Ms Swapna Photographer and Sam Vesuna. The committee, at one of its later meetings, elected Nanavati as its chairman.

Through the ZSO newsletter of December 1995, intermarried couples were requested to contact the task force and share their experiences arising from an interfaith marriage, at either a personal or a telephone interview (but) there were no volunteers.

It was appreciated that the task force had neither the time, talent or resources, to conduct a full-scale academic research into the reasons for intermarriage in Ontario. We were content to accept Daver's conclusions on the basis of her research into the problems of intermarriage among Parsi women in Bombay, expecting that our conclusions would not be too different. So we concentrated on the solutions.

A simple questionnaire was prepared, to solicit the views of our community on intermarriage. This questionnaire was mailed with about 350 copies of the newsletter of December 1995. Only 22 responses were received (six percent).

Bamji, contacted some of our mobeds, in order to obtain information about the number of intermarriages conducted by them. Only registered priests keep a record and they were unwilling to disclose names, but they did give the number of intermarriages contracted.

The statistics on intermarriage are quite interesting. In India, going by the figures from *Parsiana*, from January to the end of August, 1995 there were 171 marriages, of which 61 were intermarriages (36 per-

cent). Of these, 27 were Zoroastrian males and 34 were Zoroastrian females. According to the *ZSO Directory* of 1993 there were 466 married couples, 58 being intermarried (12.5 percent). Of these, 34 males and 24 females were Zoroastrians. So, more females in India and more males in Ontario were intermarried.

We all recognized that intermarriage was not desirable, from the point of view of the community, and possibly for religious reasons too, though this was open to interpretation. But intermarriage was a fact of life. Things change, and what may be relevant in one age may become inappropriate in a later age. We have to act in keeping with the need of the times. Under conditions prevailing in North America today, intermarriage is almost impossible to stop. Our task is to see why it happens and how to try and reduce its incidence.

Why does intermarriage occur?

- A person falls in love with another individual. (We may meet many people outside our community and socialize with them, at school or at work, form friendships, fall in love. There is nothing you can do about it, once two persons have decided to marry!)
- Lack of strong religious and ethnic identity.
- Lack of opportunity to meet other Zarthusti youth.
- Lack of parental guidance and parents' limited role in mate selection.
- Rejection of parental religious indoctrination by today's children. Some parents have a limited knowledge of our religion and cannot teach their children.
- A very restricted choice for a lifetime partner, from a small community spread Canada-wide.
- Seeking greater educational and career interests, and financial security, than a spouse from our community can offer.
- Strong Judeo-Christian influence in western society, affecting one's attitude. To some Zoroastrians, intermarriage is not a problem.
- All minority communities in a majority host society tend to get assimilated to some extent.

How can we prevent intermarriage?

- The emphasis here is on education and motivation, when the individual is very young.
- Educate children about our religion at an early age, and explain to them in a rational

way about our religious practices and the importance of not doing anything which harms our small community.

- Live a Zoroastrian life at home each day.
- Give our youth many opportunities to meet with other Zoroastrian youth, on a regular basis, with parents sacrificing time and effort to drive them there and back. These meetings may be more effective if grown-ups are not always present.
- Make Zoroastrian youths feel comfortable with each other from a young age, and increase the cultural, social and religious activities among different age-groups.
- Have camps for Zoroastrian youths. It is a very good way to help form enduring friendships. Perhaps a well supervised group of boys and girls, at a camp, would be even better.
- In addition to the age-old matchmakers, set up official marriage bureaus, and may be even use the computer network to help get our youth together.
- Inculcate pride in our religion, culture and community.

According to Dr Homi Dhalla, exhaustive surveys by American psychologists emphatically affirm that intermarriage is a threat to the stability of communal groups and religious denominations. "Let children choose for themselves," is often the stand taken by intermarried couples on religion, with the result that, very often, the child is nurtured in a spiritual void. The preponderance of Zoroastrian opinion is heavily weighted against intermarriage.

It is now up to our local Zoroastrian community, as well as up to all individual Zoroastrians, to take the necessary steps to ensure that, as far as possible, every effort is made to reduce the incidence of intermarriage in our community. However, as pointed out by one member and generally agreed to by most members, every effort should be made to welcome the children of mixed marriages into the Zoroastrian faith. They should not be shut out from our community.

Remember the best advice... Educate your children in their religion at a very young age. The Roman Catholic church has a firm belief that if you give them your children for the first seven years of their life, nothing you do later can veer them away from their faith. That is something which we can learn from.

Edited and abridged from the Report of the Task Force on Intermarriage addressed to the ZSO president on April 26, 1996.

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AZA goes Fasli

President Noshir Sachinwalla of the Australian Zoroastrian Association (AZA) of New South Wales declared a referendum on two issues in his Presidents' Column in *Manashni* (Jan-March 1996), the AZA newsletter.

"I would like to appeal to our community to allow this committee to accept the Fasli calendar, which is the most accurate, for our AZA functions. I, as your president, feel that most of our religious functions should be carried out according to the Fasli calendar. You may still use whichever calendar you prefer in your own home. To have the Fasli calendar officially acknowledged will put us in line with a number of other Zoroastrian communities around the world who have already accepted it. In order to keep pace with changes occurring in other parts of the world, it is time that our community ... accepts a more accurate and progressive calendar," urged Sachinwalla. The referendum provided for individual members to accept/reject the Fasli calendar. The Fasli calendar was accepted by 76 voters and rejected by 17, according to the results published in *Manashni* (June-July 1996).

The second exercise in democracy (it had been accorded priority by Sachinwalla) concerned two hand-painted portraits of Zarathushtra gifted to AZA House in Sydney by local Zoroastrian artist Ms Amy Bonshahi, described by *Manashni* as a petite, self-effacing grandmother. One is the traditional picture, the other is "as he is seen through the eyes of western culture," noted Sachinwalla. "Unfortunately we have often forgotten and neglected that there are worshippers and followers of Zarathushtra's teachings and philosophies in the Western world. In fact we often read translations and explanations of them by the Western scholars like F. Spiegel, M. Haug, J. Darmesteter, N. L. Westergaard, F. Max Muller, A. V. W. Jackson and Mary Boyce. In fact, the present Book of Vandida Sade, was prepared with the help of a Frenchman, Anquetil du Perron. I think it is interesting for us to sometimes look at our heritage, which we know so well, from another perspective."

Long-standing community priest and yeoman Ervad Peshotan Katrak had a contrary viewpoint: "Many, if not most of us have grown up with the traditional image of Zarathushtra which has been placed in our hall since its inception. The recently

displayed 'non traditional' picture which shows an old man in a long cloak, is totally different to the mental image we have of Zarathushtra. Whilst no one knows with certainty whether either of these images is a true likeness of Zarathushtra, I believe it would be wrong to place two different images of the Prophet in our hall. Young children attend our Sunday School from a very early age and this may create a confusing situation for them.

"I would therefore urge each member to advise the committee against placing this 'non traditional' picture of Zarathushtra in our Darbe Meher."

The AZA committee decided to sort out the controversy democratically. "You have the opportunity to view them both and then cast your vote either for only one of the paintings or both. To this end, we have placed a survey in this *Manashni* leading to a referendum on the matter. We would like each and every member of the family to have the opportunity to vote separately, including children."

The votes on the portraits were to be examined by three independent judges. The decision — whether and which pictures remain permanently at AZA House — was published in *Manashni* (June-July 1996). There were 70 votes in favor of both pictures being displayed in AZA Hall as against 31 who favored only the traditional picture.

ZAC's new team

The new, 23-member board of directors of the Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Chicago (ZAC) is headed by Ms Dilshad Antia, informs the July 1996 issue of the ZAC newsletter. Vice-president Hosi Mehta, treasurer Behram Daboo, secretary Ms Dinsoo Rivetna, assistant secretary Ms Anahita Antia and assistant treasurer Zubin Avari constitute her team of office bearers. The 16 directors-at-large are outgoing president Pesi Vazifdar and, in alphabetical order, Mazda Antia, Bomi Damkevala, Rustom Deboo, Ms Arnavaz Elavia, Cyrus Grant, Neriosang Karanjia, Kayomars Mehta, Ms Roxana Mehta, Ms Roshan Patel, Minoo Press, Ms Jehan Rivetna, Ms Farida Sharyari, Ms Zenobia Tantra, Ms Aban Vazifdar and Ms Dinaz Weber.

Ervad (Dr) Kersey Antia continues as a director in his role of the Chicago community's high priest.

A unique aspect of the ZAC constitution ensures that all those willing to work

are opted on the board of directors after a "show of hands" election by the general members. "The executive officers are then elected by the board, from within the board," informs Ms Roshan Rivetna in the cover story "Keeping the Hearth Fires Burning" in the summer 1996 issue of the *FEZANA Journal*.

After the annual general meeting at which the new team for 1996-98 was elected, a well attended meeting discussed the expansion of the Arbab Rustam Guiv Darbe Mehr, informs the ZAC newsletter. Expansion plans are estimated to cost \$ 200,000. The amount is proposed to be raised by the 200 families in the area contributing \$ 1,000 each, according to the newsletter.

The Chicago Darbe Mehr, inaugurated in 1983, is the first one in North America where the building was designed and constructed for the purpose. Each family had then pledged \$ 650, notes the August '96 edition of the ZAC newsletter. Here "the Jashne Sadeh, Navroze, Mehrgan and the ghambars are celebrated with Iranian flair, usually orchestrated by Iranian families. Parsi traditions prevail at the Pateti function in August and for the preceding five days of the muktad ceremonies," writes R. Rivetna.

The Zoroastrian population in the Chicago area, which numbered around 40 in the 1960s, is over 600 in the 1990s. "While not one of the largest in size... the Chicago community can certainly claim to be one of the more enterprising, involved, dynamic, and most importantly, cohesive, groups of Zoroastrians in North America," notes R. Rivetna. Their array of social, religious and cultural activities range from the couples' night out on Valentine's Day to the New Year's eve dinner dance, all-day dar-ni-pori making on Avan-Ardevisur parab to monthly board meetings, sleepovers, religious education classes and much else.

The very first attempt to found an association in Chicago had proved premature. Keki Bhote and 30 others who formed the Zoroastrian Association of North America, Chicago, in 1965, "to preserve our identity and our heritage while participating fully in the American way of life" had attracted a broadside from Vancouver where local Zoroastrians were considering the formation of their Society of British Columbia, informs the *FEZANA Journal*. In an open letter addressed to Bhote and Jim Modi the

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Vancouver Zoroastrians queried, "How can a handful of Chicago Parsis meet one fine evening and just like that, over a 'glass of whiskey' form the 'Zoroastrian Association of America,' to embrace all Zoroastrians across the continent? Were you all deranged by a severe attack of ego-mania?..."

The impugned association folded after functioning for three or four years as a local association serving the Chicago area. Since its rebirth as ZAC in 1975 it has pursued the middle course, with a reputation for stability that prompted the associations of North America in 1985 to place upon its then president Rohinton Rivetna the task of evolving a constitution for a North American federation. With the formation of the Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America (FEZANA) based in Chicago, the wheel had turned full circle!

ZAPA's accent on youth

The Zoroastrian Association of Pennsylvania (ZAPA) has elected Behram Kapadia president of its 1996-97 board of trustees with Farhad Cama to assist him as vice president, Ms Veera Siganporia and Cyrus Cama are secretary and assistant secretary, Ms Lily Dastur and Khushru Kadwa, treasurer and assistant treasurer respectively.

Ms Jerroo Kadwa and Sheriyar Pesika are directors-at-large, informs the *ZAPA Newsletter* (July 4, 1996).

Four two-member committees look after specific areas of interest. Thus Ms Houtoxi Contractor and F. Cama are responsible for the community's religious activities while Ms Meher Dastur and Ms Zarin Balaporia take care of the social ones. Membership and fund-raising falls within the purview of L. Dastur and K. Kadwa while C. Cama and Darius Siganporia constitute the program committee.

With about 75 individual members ZAPA's three-event religio/social calendar has been buttressed by a fourth — the celebration of Zoroastrian Unity Day on October 1.

With an accent on youth participation ZAPA revised the composition of its board of directors to include a minimum two youth members, writes L. Dastur in the *FEZANA Journal*. Concurrently the age limit for office bearers was reduced from 18 to 16 years. Are Indian anjumans listening?

A measure of compatibility

Dr Jiji Patel presides over the Zarthoshti Anjuman of Northern California's (ZANC) executive committee for 1996-97, informs the Anjuman's newsletter (November-December 1995). In his message to the

community, in the newsletter of January-February 1996, Patel has quoted from Irach Taraporewala, "God has granted mankind three inestimable gifts — the head, the heart and the hand. Through the fullest and most perfect use of these three can a man hope to attain his goal and to obtain his divine heritage."

Assisting in the hectic organizing of the Tenth North American Zoroastrian Congress which was held in conjunction with the Persian Zoroastrian Organization (PZO) on July 5 and 6, 1996 at San Francisco's Cathedral Hill Hotel and Convention Center were also other members of the ZANC committee: vice president Bomi Patel, secretary Mehran Sepehri, treasurer Yezdi Unvala, and members-at-large Ms Zarin Batliwalla, Ms Ernaz Irani and Cyrus Karkaria.

The three ZANC trustees are Dhun Engineer, Bejan Malbari and Erach Tarapore.

This is J. Patel's second term as ZANC president, informs the newsletter. With wife Silloo and five children, the cardiologist-internist has his own social service agenda. He has been involved with the program that sends physicians to India to provide free service, has inaugurated a free clinic in India and serves on its board, and is working towards the goal of uniting the



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Zoroastrian associations of Northern California.

Science and technology are well represented on the board, according to the newsletter: B. Patel markets computers, Sepehri teaches computer information systems at Santa Clara University, Irani is an electrical engineer for Hewlett-Packard and Karkaria, a mobed, is into bio-technology! Financial planner and stock broker Unvala and real estate broker Batliwalla are the only exceptions.

In "A Brief History of ZANC" former president Maneck Bhujwala notes in the newsletter that the earliest known Zoroastrian resident in the area was Rustom Bana who arrived in 1942. The informal, dhan-saakia association of 1976 was formalized in March 1980. At the Pateti dinner, the same year they received a pledge from Arbab Rustam and Morvarid Guiv of \$ 350,000 towards a dar-e-mehr.

However, that was the time of increased immigration from Iran, the formation of the PZO and the nadir of Parsi-Iranian relationships in the new world: The Dare-mehr was eventually kept under the ownership of the Guiv Trust and leased to the PZO. It was only when ZANC members donated substantially to the construction of a separate atash kadeh on the Daremeher property, and its inauguration in March 1992 with ZANC and PZO members' joint participation, that the rift between the two organizations began to heal, informs Bhuj-wala. Since then the youth of both communities jointly hosted the 1995 Zoroastrian Youth Congress on the Stanford University campus and ZANC and PZO worked to cohost the Tenth North American Zoroastrian Congress in San Francisco.

A fall-out of the Youth Congress at Stanford was the creation of the Zoroastrian Youth of the Bay Area (ZYBA) which is "breaking the barrier between the Persian and Parsi communities by allowing both ZANC and PZO youth to participate," notes the newsletter. Picnics, parties, ski trips, camping trips, bowling nights and more will, hopefully, ensure a cohesive, burgeoning community whose identity crisis is a part of its past.

The ghambar of the spirit

That is how Australia's Zoroastrian Association of Victoria (ZAV) projected an evening of jashan, humbandagi, monajats and religious quiz and games. The full-page advertisement in ZAV's newsletter *Rathaeshitar* (February 1996) projected the event, scheduled for May 11, 1996 with pizzazz, promising "the traditional feast plus the joyful sharing of manual labor." The advertisement listed a few "offerings" like sukhad/loban, fruits, dryfruits, sweets and desserts, drinks, home-made eatables or other items, adding "in the tradition of ghambar all offerings offered will be gratefully accepted and shared."

Much soul-searching seemed to precede the announcement. In his editorial in the same issue ZAV president Perviz Dubash wrote, "Can an entity like ZAV initiate a pure thought, perform a pure act?... It is a real paradox, that Zoroastrians, who would qualify as one of the most benevolent people in the world, have an unusual affinity for bickering over the most trivial happenings... Have you ever pondered that Ahriman comes in small ways. He is too smart and sly to upset your whole apple cart and make you start thinking seriously. Nay, he will trip you in small ways — petty ways. What can an anjuman like ours do? Why can't we take up a project in which we are truly united? Why can't we take up a project in which 'bickering' does not enter?... Why can't we give Spenta Mainyu (pure thought) a try? Who knows it might be a lot of fun?..."

A surgeon and his daughter

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Thoracoscopic bypass surgery using a laser (above) and its practitioner Dr S. Bakhshay (center) and Amalsad Far left: California Miss TEEN Perrine Bakhshay and earlier as figure skating champion (below)

Drs Shahroukh Bakhshay and Alan Coulson. The first such operation in end December 1995 has been followed up by others, as notes an article in *The Record* (January 13, 1996).

Bakhshay, an Iranian Zoroastrian originally from Bombay, told reporter B. D. Spence that the new laser cutting and stapling gear used for such surgical work is feasible only for single bypass operations. Where two or more coronary arteries need to be bypassed, the visibility and access of open heart surgery are required. The endoscopic or keyhole surgery greatly benefits the patient physically and financially as the reduced physical trauma of a smaller cut permits him or her a return to relative normalcy much earlier, with shorter periods of hospitalization that can save up to a week of \$ 2,000-a-day hospital care, notes Spence. Earlier the surgeons had used the technique to remove a cancer in the right upper lobe of a 61-year-old lady's lung.

Sharing the limelight with Bakhshay is his (and his wife Dymna's) daughter Perrine. The 17-year-old beauty was crowned the 1995-96 California Miss TEEN in Anaheim when she won in four of the five categories in which the candidates were judged — scholastic achievement, speech, personal interview and formal presentation, notes *The Record Today*.

A straight A student in her school who



is taking calculus at the University of the Pacific, Perrine is a former skating champion who teaches the visually impaired to ice skate and helps children develop their reading skills, informs the newspaper.

Professional speaking

"Success is not in hitting the headlines. Success is in reaching the heartline," asserts Meher Amalsad in an audio cassette, *In search of your quest — How to do your best*, forwarded to *Parsiana* through advocate and Kshnumist propagator Kaikhusroo N. Dastoor.

A professional speaker, seminar leader and author of *Gifts that Lifts, Shifts and Uplifts* (sic), Amalsad provides an inspirational thrust to various groups of people to work on their lives. According to the introduction on the cassette, Amalsad is billed as "dynamic, articulate, perceptive, courageous and outspoken," one who has influenced the lives of "thousands over the last decade," inspiring them "to work on their lives (and achieve) the American dream."

Quoting the world famous cellist Pablo Casals who at 95 continued to practise "because I think I am still making progress," Amalsad argues that if one continues to make progress, if one "holds on to one's dreams," success is bound to follow because "dreams keep success alive."

The second item on Amalsad's cassette deals with "unconditional love." Quoting the American steel magnate and billionaire, the late Andrew Carnegie, Amalsad says people are like a gold mine: one needs to remove tons of dirt to reach the gold. But "if you don't touch a life, you will be out of touch with life," he adds. There are no bad people — "only good people and



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people who do bad things," says Amalsad, claiming he learnt the lesson from his five-year-old daughter Anahita.

A good-looking pocket book with gilded lettering, *Gifts that Lifts...* has a message a page, most of them a telling play on words. Some are ponderable: "If you work on your job, you will only make a living. If you work on yourself, you will make a life worth living." "Turn your inhibitions into ambitions." "When dealing with children, practise the art of rubbing out their mistakes instead of rubbing them in." Others are rather vague (viz "We set our life by the images we get. But we get our life by the imaginations we set." "In life instead of getting all wired up, stay all fired up.") or verbose (viz "Association brings simulation that leads to progression or retrogression." "May the love of all humanity fill your path and fulfill your life with a succession of successful successes." Nonetheless, the messages remain wholly positive, making it a giftable item for young or old, hale or ill.

The book and cassette are available from Amalsad at 15842 Villanova Circle, Westminster, CA 92683, USA (Tel: 714-895-3097) on a cheque payment of \$ 7.00 and \$ 8.00 respectively (plus \$ 1.00 handling charges per item). Two dollars from each book sale to a Zarthushti will be donated towards the FEZANA Welfare Fund, informs *FEZANA Journal* (Summer 1996).

A Karachi boy, educated at the Bai Virbaiji Sopariwala Parsi High School for Boys, Amalsad proceeded to the US to obtain his masters degree in electrical engineering and rose to be a senior staff engineer for Hughes Aircraft Co, a world leader in aerospace engineering, informs *What's On* (April 1995), the newsletter of the Karachi Zarthushti Banu Mandal (KZBM). Actively involved with Zoroastrian community activities in North America, Amalsad was the founder chairman of FEZANA's Helping Hands Zoroastrian youth communication network and chaired the First North American Zoroastrian Youth Congress in 1987 as also the First World Zoroastrian Youth Congress in 1993 and has been visiting professor in electrical engineering at some southern California universities, notes the newsletter. An earlier (1992) audio cassette, *Navjote Master*, provided a "unique method of teaching" the prayers to the very young, notes *What's On*. Its copyright for Pakistan had been gifted by Amalsad to the KZBM.

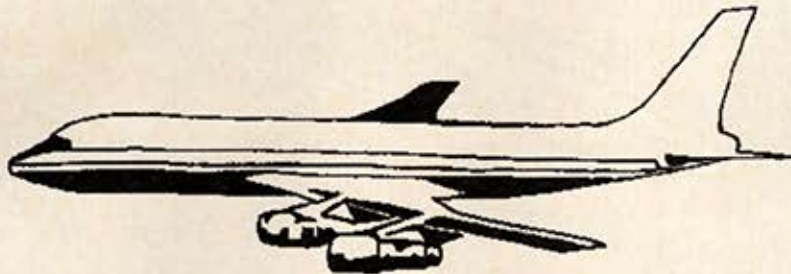
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The elevation of Nadirshah Unvalla

The appointment of a dastur, a high priest, has traditionally been the preserve of the clergy. But in February this year, Ervad Nadirshah Unvalla was appointed High Priest of The Bangalore Parsee Zoroastrian Anjuman at a special general body meeting of the Anjuman held on February 24, 1996 in light of his "glorious and dedicated service" for over 60 years as panthaky of this Deccan Plateau city. The resolution "was passed unanimously with a standing ovation, truly reflecting the appreciation of our members," notes a circular letter issued by the honorary secretary D. N. Billimoria dated March 4, 1996 which reached the *Parsiana* office only on May 28, 1996.

The same letter also intimates of a felicitation function planned by the Anjuman on June 7, 1996 to honor Unvalla. The report of the function carried in the *Jam-e-Jamshed* of June 16 referred to the presentation of a citation in a silver casket and a shawl on behalf of the Bangalore Anjuman with president Kali Cowasjee remarking, "Few people can hold on to their principles as Unvalla can."

The news of Unvalla's elevation was widely acclaimed by many but viewed with some apprehension by the three High Priests in Bombay, Dastur (Dr) Hormazdyar Mirza, Dastur (Dr) Kaikhusroo JamaspAsa and Dastur (Dr) Firoze Kotwal. As per their letter of June 4, "Before passing the resolution, your Anjuman should have taken into consideration the 'dasturi' system prevalent in our community. At present there are two types of 'dasturship' in the community: hereditary dasturship; dastur appointed for his special qualifications. The hereditary dasturship comes down from ancient times, from generation to generation for centuries. This 'dasturship' was established by priestly anjumans of those times.

"As for the 'dasturship' of the second category, a dastur is appointed, when required, only for his high intellectual and spiritual achievements, particularly in religious, scriptural, linguistic and historical studies of ancient, middle and modern Iranian times.

"The resolution of your Anjuman does not cite any of these special qualifications



The Bangalore anjuman's decision to create a new dastur has been challenged by three scholar High Priests

and no one lays any such claim in the present case. Only 'retirement after long services' and 'standing ovation' are no qualifications at all; they are only emotional outbursts.

"Faith runs into all spheres of life, but in religious matters faith without knowledge and understanding degenerates into fanaticism and even threat of violence, as it happens on some occasions. This is detrimental to the very existence of our community.

"Moreover, Bangalore is under the dasturship of Dasturs of the JamaspAsa family of Pune. Installation of the Dar-e-Meher and the opening of the dokhma were presided over by the late Dastur Noshervan Kaikobad of Pune as the Head Priest (Dastur) of the Bangalore Anjuman. On the occasion of the jubilee of the Dar-

e-Meher, Dastur Hormazdyar Noshervan of Pune presided over the jashan and function when Dastur Hormazdyar Mirza of Udvada was also present.

"In these circumstances, your resolution and appointment would not do any good to our religion and community, but would be harmful and create further trouble and dissension in the community."

In response, an aggrieved secretary of the Bangalore Anjuman wrote in his letter of June 27, 1996: "Nadirshah chose to retire after a distinguished and dedicated service of over 60 years to the Bangalore Parsee Zoroastrian Anjuman (BPZA) and the Parsi community of Bangalore at a ripe old age of 81 years. His dedication and zeal towards the religious cause of our community can be perceived from his involvement in the construction and consecration of our agiary and dokhma in which he played a major role. Thereafter, his continued dedication to their perseverance (sic), safety and sanctity itself symbolizes Nadirshah's and BPZA's unflinching faith in our religion.

"Today the Bangalore Zoroastrian community is an active, well-knit body, thanks to Dasturji Nadirshah. All this will go down as a unique and unparalleled effort in the lifetime of any priest in our community in India or anywhere in the world. He may not be a qualified 'dastur' as per your interpretation, but in Nadirshah we have a dastur who is known to be a man of strong convictions with a deep and abiding commitment to the Zoroastrian faith and its time honored beliefs and precepts. Totally uncompromising in his principles, he has often provoked dissent and debate on various sensitive issues. Moreover, he is one of the few, nay, the only priest, who takes a personal interest in the welfare and well-being of every family in Bangalore. These were the very qualities which the BPZA was looking for in a dastur. Nadirshah fulfilled all these qualities and the true testimony of that appreciation is the large turnout at the felicitation function held on June 7, 1996 at Bangalore...

"Regarding your statement on Bangalore being under the dasturship of

Unvalla: integrity and conviction (top)

Jamaspa family of Pune, this has not been disputed. On the contrary, messages of congratulations have been sent by Dastur Hormazdiar Noshirwan of Pune, on the occasion both to the Anjuman and to Ervad Nadirshah...

"Your opposition has left us anguished. You have lost out on an opportunity to emerge as the true leaders of the Parsi community, ever ready and willing to reward and recognize devoted, selfless and dedicated service. We are confident that Dasturji Nadirshah Unvalla, along with you gentlemen, will usher in a new era of faith and understanding of the true tenets of the Zoroastrian religion. Your fear and apprehension that it may degenerate into fanaticism and violence is unfounded. Thankfully our religion does not encourage or tolerate religious fanatics. Besides, each and every one of us has been touched by the goodness and kindness of Dasturji Nadirshah in our hour of need.

"Many will agree that if ever a case existed for an elevation to the position of a 'dasturji,' surely Nadirshah's would stand out like a beacon. A failure to recognize this on your part would go down in history



Cowasjee presenting the traditional shawl

as abject indifference and insensibility to merit. His has truly been a monumental contribution to our Zoroastrian cause.

"It may not be out of place to mention that in the past, late Dasturjis Hozdar and Aderyanwalla, both of Pune, and late Dasturjis Bhesania and Sena of Surat were made Dasturjis and neither yourself or your predecessors raised any doubt or objection.

"May we therefore humbly request you to reconcile with our decision and wel-

come Dasturji Nadirshah P. Unvalla and give him your blessings."

"A staunch traditionalist, he has not deviated from his orthodox stand on certain issues for either money, power or fame," mentions the *Jamé* report. (Among the principles that Unvalla has adhered to are refusing entry into a fire-temple or a dokhma to Zoroastrian women who have married out of the community or performing the navjote ceremony for a child whose either parent is a non-Zoroastrian. He had made a trip to Bombay in 1991 to voice his Anjuman's opposition to the Bombay Parsi Punchayet resolution permitting Zoroastrian women who had married non-Zoroastrians to have their bodies consigned to the Tower of Silence. This was in the aftermath of the Roxan Shah incident when the 25-year-old woman's body was denied a final resting place at doongerwadi. He has also steadfastly held the view that the Bangalore Anjuman should not be a member of the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India since the apex body includes anjumans whose constitutions confer certain privileges to non-Zoroastrian spouses of individual members.

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Unvalla has also been a vocal critic of the five High Priests who initially sanctioned the navjote of industrialist and philanthropist Neville Wadia.)

"Even his critics admire him for his total integrity and courage of conviction. There are many Parsis in Bangalore who are opposed to Unvalla at an ideological level on the dokhma-aramgah issue, but they all came in large numbers to do him honor" and joined in giving the veteran priest "another standing ovation (when) some ladies even began to cry," notes the *Jamé* report.

In his thanksgiving speech Unvalla stated that he was proud to be an orthodox, for an orthodox is one who walks on the

**"A dastur is
appointed only for
his high intellectual
and spiritual
achievements"**

straight path. He further gave credit to his parents, particularly his father Pestonji who was the first panthaky of the Bangalore Dar-e-Meher, for his achievements in life. It was to assist his father that Nadirshah, who was then an outstanding student of the M. F. Cama Athornan Institute, was summoned to Bangalore as an assistant mobed on a princely salary of Rs 20 per month. Following his father's demise he had been officiating as panthaky until his retirement last year.

The addition of Unvalla to the existing list of seven Dasturs in India was welcomed by most of the orthodox sections. The secretary of the Udvada Athornan Anjuman, Ervad Framroze Sidhwa, was specially airdashed to Bangalore to present a shawl and greetings on behalf of the Sanjana clan. Among the many congratulatory letters received by Unvalla and read on the occasion were messages of goodwill from Keikobad Phiroze Dastoor, High Priest, Iranshah; Sardar Dastur Hormazdiar Noshirwan Kaikobad Dastur, High Priest of the Deccan; Ervads (Drs) Peshotan and Rooyintan Peer; Ervad Parvez Bajan, joint honorary secretary of the Athornan Mandal; Cowasjee Nusserwanji Dinshaw, president of The Bombay Zoroastrian Jashan Committee; Jamshed Guzder, chairman of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet; Nariman Mogrelia, president of the Madras Parsi Zarthosti Anjuman, Noshir Nagarwalla, secretary of the Parsi Zoroastrian Anjuman of Secunderabad and Hyderabad, and from representatives of other community bodies and the Parsi Press.

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The tale the Yashts tell

If the Gathas provide the message of the Prophet, the Yashts give the history of the people, says Dr Pallan Ichaporia

Arnavaz S. Mama

"*Dadestan i dinig, Bundahishn* and other Pahlavi texts were all written by members of one athornan family in about 900 AD when Zoroastrians were still in the majority in Iran though politically subjugated," says Dr Pallan Ichaporia, chairman of the research committee of the Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America. In Bombay for the wedding of his son Burjor to Kashmira Dastur in June 1996, Ichaporia gave a series of three Government Fellowship Lectures at the K. R. Cama Oriental Institute (KRCOI) on the historical and theological aspects of the Yashts, with special reference to the *Farvardin* and *Jamyad* (or *Zam*) Yashts.

The Yashts became predominant as Zoroastrianism spread in Achaemenian times from Eastern Iran to Western Iran, says Ichaporia. Not all of them are believed to have been composed at the same time. The *Hormuzd, Khordad, Astad* and *Hom Yashts* were composed fairly late and may have been composed by laymen, says Ichaporia quoting Prof Richard Frye. What we have inherited are said to be the fragments that survived successive invasions of Iran, beginning with Alexander's, which were pieced together in sometimes clumsy attempts at reconstruction during Parthian, Sasanian and later periods. However, "to reject them by wrongly interpreting them is unacceptable," says Ichaporia. "We'd lose our heritage! As it is, the extant *Avesta* comprises only one-fifth of our original literature."

Most of the Yashts follow the same general pattern—the introduction of Ahura Mazda and Zarathushtra, a description and praise of the yazata including the physical attributes, dress, etc. This comprises the "mythical, legendary, cosmological, section," says Ichaporia. It is generally followed by a request for knowledge on how the yazata should be correctly worshipped,

the exclusion of unwanted individuals from participating in the prayer, requests for rewards or boons. Could the yazata be vindictive? Can a god be angry? These fears do percolate into the Yashts though

it was because of the references in the *Avesta* that we were aware of our history. The advent of the saoshyants and the concept of resurrection after Frashokereti (renewal of the world) were first revealed in the *Zam Yasht*, he notes. The Kayanian seat of power was in Sistan, and Mount Ushidarena was where Zoroaster is supposed to have received his revelation.

The two parts of the *Jamyad Yasht* — the *Zam Yasht* with its geography and the *Kayan Yasht* with its historical references — were fragments of two separate original compositions that were pieced together with the aid of certain common phrases and paras in the time of Ardashir Babagan, founder of the Sasanian dynasty,

says Ichaporia. "Karl Geldner showed that the continuity of the *kardas* (paragraphs) did not coincide with the text," says Ichaporia. (J1 manuscript was discovered at the KRCOI, Ichaporia informed his audience, urging them to preserve the Institute, make it strong for "if the KRCOI collapses, we have no other resource.")

Ichaporia avers that though the *Zam Yasht*, which is said to have been composed in the Hindu Kush region and provided the complete geography of Iran, was largely destroyed, the *Bundahishn* (as also the first chapter of the *Vendidad*) reflects its entirety because when this text was written in the ninth century all 21 *nasks* (books) of Zoroastrian literature were extant and had been translated into Pahlavi.

The *Farvardin Yasht*, said to have been composed in the Afghanistan region, provides three concepts of the Fravashi, according to Ichaporia: "Let the Fravashi go back well pleased. Let them not complain," says the *Yashts* numbering these spiritual entities "in thousands, millions." Additionally the Fravashi connotes the essence of our forefathers as also a component of human personality. The meaning depends on the connotation, notes Ichaporia.



Ichaporia with wife Hutoxy

Ichaporia believes that boons sought with evil intentions are not granted.

The Yashts are a repository of Iranian history with names that recur from yasht to yasht, says Ichaporia. This is particularly true of the *Farvardin* and *Zam Yashts*, the first providing a biography of Zarathushtra and the history of the Kayanian kings, the latter providing the glory (*khorena*) of the divine names including those of Ahura Mazda, the Amesha Spentas, the spiritual and material yazatas, the born and unborn saoshyants (divine saviors) as also of the Peshdadian, Kayanian and Kavi dynasties. These historical references are corroborated by the *Shah Namah*, says Ichaporia.

But there is much more that they offer. The *Zam Yasht* provides a list of mountains. "Recent research shows that this yasht was largely composed in the time of the Achaemenians (Darius I and Xerxes)... The Kayanians have been ignored by Western scholars, but they are important to Zoroastrian history," he declares.

Did the *Avesta* exist in Achaemenian times? "We lost it," declares Ichaporia, but there seems no doubt in his mind that

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poria. The reference to the Fravashi as guardian spirit is first found in *Yasna Haptangaity*. In their composition, according to the *Bundahishn*, the Fravashis don't have a choice — they are always good. Having come to the material world to help fight evil, they cannot choose evil, says Ichaporia. They comprise the spiritual entity that provides protection all the time — they protect the environment, the saoshyants to come, the good everywhere.

There are also the ancestral spirits who are received back during Farvardegan. But Ichaporia is emphatic: "We don't worship the dead... Zoroastrianism is concerned with the here and now. Man is Ahura Mazda's co-worker. The four-day funeral ceremonies relate to the *urvan* or soul — not to the Fravashi. It is *urvan* who is judged (on the Bridge of the Separator), not Fravashi. The Fravashi has nothing to do with the soul. The *Avesta* never mentions Fravashi in the context of the last rites. The Pahlavi people got confused since they translated later editions of the *Avesta*," says Ichaporia. Moreover, "the Fravashis of the living are more powerful than the Fravashis of the dead because the Fravashi is moving us toward Frashokereti," he adds. Ichaporia is unable to answer how far back the confusion between *urvan* and Fravashi dates and believes that it is unlikely to be cleared. But all prayers after the first four days (beginning with the Bamdad ceremony, on the fourth day) relate to the Fravashi according to *Shayest-ne-Shayest*.

The Fravashi exists even for the unborn. The *Farvardin Yasht* speaks of the Fravashi protecting the foetus against abortion, evil attacks, onslaughts of the Lie. There is a tale of how Vohu Mana helped Zarathushtra's Fravashi lull Angra Mainyo by pretending to forsake Zarathushtra. Angra Mainyo relaxed his grip and Zarathushtra was able to enter the world — laughing! "The Fravashi is always of the truthful and never of the *dragvant* (evil doer). Why? Does the truthful man who becomes a *dragvant* lose his Fravashi? Do evil people have a Fravashi? Is it worthy of worship? We do not know. But the Fravashi remains pure so perhaps the Fravashi of the evil man just goes back (to its source), uncorrupted," says Ichaporia, admitting with scholarly humility that the concept of the Fravashi helping Ahura Mazda in the struggle against evil is confusing. "There is no adequate answer about the origin of the Fravashi," he declares.

Ichaporia who recently published a new translation of the *Gathas* in conjunction with Prof Helmut Humbach, the German patriarch of Gathic research, is currently involved in organizing the Second International *Gatha* Conference in Houston come August 1996. Stolid, somber, with measured, unhurried speech, Ichaporia's personality, academic background and professional occupation make for an unorthodox mix. Bombay born Ichaporia says he was inducted into Avesta-Pahlavi studies when he was 11 years old. He completed three exams in Iranian languages and won prizes, noting cryptically that the inducement was monetary. Along with two years of MBBS he completed an optional BA in Avesta-Pahlavi, dropped it all to go to Pakistan where he picked up a BSc in pharmacy and migrated 12 years later to the US where he did a postgraduate stint in North East Asian studies at Columbia University before acquiring a doctorate in business administration from the University of Oklahoma. He is currently into marketing research for the pharmaceutical giant Bristol Meyers and lives in Pennsylvania with his wife Hutoxy, Burjor, daughters Farida and Rashna.

Referring to the current attitude of most Zoroastrian in the West to rely only on the *Gathas* to the exclusion of later Avestan and Pahlavi texts, Ichaporia says that the latter complement and



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supplement the *Gathas*: "Pahlavi literature definitely helps us in understanding the difficult phrases of the *Gathas* along with the Sanskrit translation by Neriesang Dhaval. The *Gathas* are very archaic. Each word can give a different meaning. We have to be very careful."

While Western scholars look at ancient texts from the viewpoint of linguistics and philology only, unconcerned whether or not they are revealed scriptures, "we see them through different eyes," says the ardent Zoroastrian. Nonetheless Ichaporia is too disciplined a scholar to accept theories that do not gel with the texts. Thus, he places the era of Zarathushtra at about 1200 BC. "10,000 BC was the Stone Age. It is impossible to put Zarathushtra there," he dismisses claims based on astrological charts that are vouchsafed to ensure Zarathushtra's position as the world's first prophet. Ichaporia believes our prophet preceded Moses by 100 or 200 years, "though Humbach thinks the opposite." Similarly, he parries queries about reincarnation on the basis that there is no reference to it among the Zoroastrian texts.

Referring to the controversies surrounding intermarriage and conversion, Ichaporia places them squarely in the domain of social problems. "Our house is not in or-

der" for us to accept converts. He feels that everyone should be at least knowledgeable about the basic tenets of the religion before others can be invited to join. Taking the example of marriage between a Zoroastrian and a Catholic, Ichaporia says, "The Parsi knows nothing. The Catholic has been attending Sunday school since the age of seven and will do likewise with his or her kids. The same applies to Islam. In Pakistan every Muslim boy and girl is well versed in the elements of Islam."

"Our children should be taught younger. When the Caliphs Omar and Usman conquered Iran, they were told that recently converted Zoroastrians were not really converted. So they got children between the age of six and nine and put them under training... You can only convert people if you have the strength to convert their thinking."

Referring to Bombay's three scholar dasturs, Ichaporia noted that their world class intellectual skills should be utilized in generating a religious education program. "The average priest does not know the theology behind the ritual. How can he teach? This is the age of reason. Children need to know... Our infrastructure is very bad. It is better to patch it up and renovate (rather than await consensus from all sides).



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The infighting will continue. A hundred years ago it was the same... Your future for revival (in India) lies with the scholar priests," he reiterates.

In North America "the average Zoroastrian has become more interested to know his religion, his roots, his history. We are doing our utmost to disseminate the information through regular congresses," says Ichaporia, estimating the probability of Zoroastrians successfully maintaining their community identity in the generations ahead at a positive 60 percent.

Ichaporia's penchant for optimistic self-reliance was also illustrated when a listener asked him at the end of his lecture series, "Has the saoshyant been born? Is it Behram Varjavand?"

Unfazed by the query that was distinctly beyond the realm of scholarship, Ichaporia replied, "The idea of the Redeemer, Saoshyant, Mahdi (in the Christian, Zoroastrian and Muslim traditions respectively) has kept people going. It is the ideal of despairing people. It has helped Iranian Zoroastrians to overcome their darkest hours. Let us hope there will be one. Better yet, let us go back to the *Gathas*: If we are righteous we can be our own saoshyants, our own saviors, leave the world better than we found it..."

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The rivayat of 1996

Arnavaz S. Mama

Reopening channels of communication with Iran was the keynote of the Sixth World Zoroastrian Congress

If a world council of Zoroastrian federations/anjumans takes shape within the next four years, the Sixth World Zoroastrian Congress (6WZC) in Tehran, Iran (June 19-22, 1996) may well go down as a turning point in history. Nearly 13 of the 38 papers cleared for presentation at the Congress sought an international union/council/body to advise/regulate/control social change/religious education/international philanthropy and amelioration. When session chairman Rusi Dalal sought the response of the delegates, a sea of hands rose in favor of forming a World Council of Zoroastrian Federations. No one voted against it.

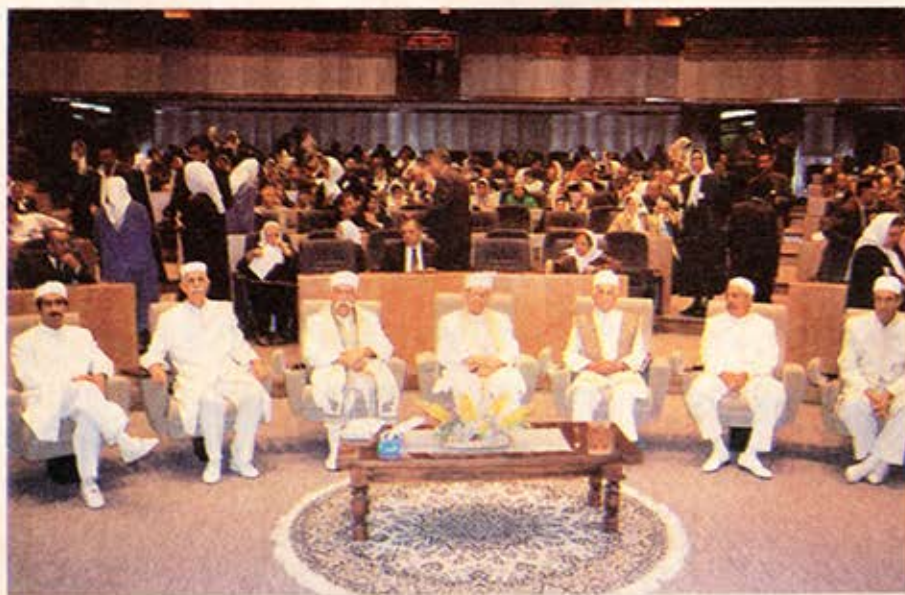
To an extent the 6WZC formally established that the fulcrum of the international community had shifted away from Bombay, India; that Zoroastrian thinkers and workers now resided largely in the western communities; that Iran's growing Zoroastrian population with more than 40 percent in the below-30 age-group is likely to play an increasing role vis-a-

vis the aging and dwindling population of Indian Zarthushtis. This was a far cry from the First World Zoroastrian Congress held in Tehran's Khosravi Hall in 1960 when, as recalled Anjuman Zartoshtian Tehran (AZT) president Dr Mehraban Gudarz-Mehr, Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP) chairman Eruch Nadirshaw had presided.

In other ways too, the Sixth Congress was different from its earlier Indian counterparts. Apart from its theme, "Unity with purity," which seemed to embrace everything, the extent of Governmental participation was awesome. Thus, the first morn-

ing and a part of the afternoon was spent in the formalities of the inauguration and wreath-laying at the spectacular mausoleum that enshrines the remains of Islamic Republic of Iran (IRI) founder Imam Ruhollah al Mousavi al Khomeini; the second day's program was subservient to the audiences granted by IRI Leader Imam Seyyed Ali Khamenei and President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani; and the concluding session and summing up had hardly begun when the ladies were called away to a private audience with the president's daughter Ms Fatemeh Rafsanjani.

A welcome sight at the Congress was the presence of Prof Farhang Mehr and his wife Parichehr. Chancellor of Shiraz University, finance minister and vice premier before the Islamic Revolution who has since settled in Boston, USA, Mehr identified himself totally with his Iranian hosts and was greeted with a thunderous standing ovation. Expressing his gratitude Mehr, who had been president of the Tehran Anjuman for





more than 12 years, said, "I repress my conviction — I believe in the religion of Mazda... Being Zoroastrian is a good deal... (Zoroastrians are) famous for honesty, abiding by the rules of the country and the government, love and other attributes," and spoke of his "happiness to see (them) after 14 years once again." "For the Zoroastrian community, the presence of such an international personality like Prof Farhang Mehr is an honor. (I) thank the authorities and Farhang Mehr who agreed to take the trip," Gudarz-Mehr noted his appreciation.

The preoccupation with Zoroastrian heritage and traditions was a recurring theme of the Congress. Its corollary was a demand for the religious education of priests and laity.

Even as the Islamic officials began their address with an elaborate reference to Allah, Zoroastrian Iranians began with mandatory references to Ahura Mazda, international speakers picking up the cue.

The Congress began with six young Zarthushtis invoking the *Jashme Avenghe*

Top left: The speaker's podium at the right corner of the stage. Right: VIPs at the inaugural included Mohajerani (ext L), Dasturs Oshidari, Shahzadi and Mulla Kermani and (ext R) IRI consul general in Bombay S. K. Yasini. 2nd row (from left): Dastoor, Modi, F. Ardeshiri, M. Ravani, M. Ardeshiri. At right a view of the delegates. Facing page (top): Modi reading Capt Hormuzdiar Desai's message; (below) Iran's mobeds in focus

Mazda. They were followed by the Islamic Republic of Iran's national anthem and the *Ashem Vohu* song beautifully rendered by the Zoroastrian Students Chorus, while the audience stood at attention. A taped video version of the first day's rendition was replayed at the start of each of the following three days. Entertainment at the conclusion of the Congress also featured the choir which comprised young Zoroastrian men and women. An outstanding item witnessed on the last evening was the evocative play of tambourines by demure Zoroastrian beauties.

While instant translation in English and Farsi was provided it took the audience awhile to become acquainted with the sophisticated system. Initially, head phones took some time to be distributed and occasionally there was no translation on tap because the interpreters could not receive the input from the speakers. All Iranians — local residents or visiting emigrés — spoke in Farsi at incredible speed, a breathless interpreter in tow, sans punctuation or expression! At times, the hum of the translation in the ear had a benumbing, soporific effect!

Six sessions, each comprising three and a half hours as per the original program, were meant to accommodate 38 papers between them, each speaker being restricted to 20 minutes, with a 10-minute allowance for questions. Trips in response to the invitations from on high and the disregard for time restraints by some of the speakers led to the Congress being held for longer hours beginning at 8 a.m. instead of 8.30 and ending well after 8 p.m. instead of the stipulated 6.30 p.m. each day, with tea breaks cancelled (individuals could sneak

out for a quick cup of *chai*) and shortened lunch breaks.

Each night the dinner was hosted by a different organization viz the Zoroastrian Women, Fravahr, the Taft and Tavabe, Asha and Students and the AZT.

Delhi Parsi Anjuman president and Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India vice president Lt Gen Adi Sethna chaired the session on 'Strengthening the religious training of mobeds.' The sessions on 'Preservation of the Zoroastrian Religio-Cultural Heritage' and the 'Dilemma of Zoroastrian identity and demographic trends within the community' were respectively chaired by F. Mehr and Gudarz-Mehr. Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe (ZTFE) president R. Dalal chaired the discussion on 'Collaboration amongst World Zoroastrian Associations,' Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America (FEZANA) president Ms Dolly Dastoor presided over the session on the 'Promotion of religious convictions and awareness amongst Zoroastrian youth' and FEZANA founder president Rohinton Rivetna chaired the discussion on 'The spiritual and material welfare of Zoroastrian youth.'

Thus the BPP was totally bypassed despite its senior trustee Minoo Shroff and chief executive Behram Laskari attending the Congress. The only recognition accorded to Bombay was in the person of Ms Homai Modi who, as co-secretary of the Fourth and Fifth Congresses in Bombay, had made an earlier trip to Tehran to help the Tehran Anjuman organize the Congress and had been appointed its official representative in India. Shroff was constrained to seek time to remind the audience and the organizers of the BPP's haloed existence of over 300 years as a "centerpiece of Zoroastrian activity." Warning that though the Congress offered "religion and culture (as a) sheet anchor... economic and social activity can only be ignored at their peril," Shroff reminded them of the BPP's long-running socioeconomic welfare programs, notably housing,

Shroff's other reasons why the Indian community may not be written off by world Zoroastrians: Bombay accounts for 60 percent of the world Zoroastrian community; India is the 10th most industrialized nation in the world; that of India's top 10 companies, three are Zoroastrian, accounting for sales of more than 10 million dollars.

Though Shroff was heard in silence, one wondered whether the brush-off had any connection to the Iranians' peeve during the Fifth World Zoroastrian Congress.



Iranian mobeds: participating in the Congress

Parsiana (January 1990) had noted, "The large Iranian delegation felt at times that its presence was not adequately acknowledged nor was enough hospitality extended to it." Nor had the request for translation of the English proceedings into Farsi for the 250-strong Iranian delegation been considered sympathetically.

Earlier on Dastur Jamshed Oshidari had addressed the Parsi-Irani divide by reminding all concerned that both groups had common ancestors: "The burning fire was taken to India and you have protected it. Greetings to the Parsis for still preserving this fire."

The loan of 50 Pahlavi manuscripts from the K. R. Cama Oriental Institute (KRCOI) to the Tehran Anjuman at the latter's request in 1964 is also a source of friction. The folios were meant for the Iranians to reprint and return, as acknowledged F. Mehr. So far nothing seems to have been done. "It would be regrettable if we do not print them before it is too late and are completely destroyed," he noted,

adding, "(We) seek BPP funds."

The venue of the Congress — the six-month-old IRI Broadcasting and International Conference Center — was imposing without and impressive within, further beautified by arrays of artefacts, handicrafts, floral decorations and the 6WZC logo designed by Ms Nooshir Jamshedi. In contrast to the state of affairs in Bombay/India, the Center was immaculately clean, as were most of the Tehran thoroughfares (and indeed, the national highways and main streets in other cities of Iran that we saw).

Wearing the identity card with photograph was mandatory and security staff supervised peoples' entrances and exits. Communication, however, was a burden as few Iranian Zoroastrians spoke or understood English and even their identity cards bore Farsi legends.

The entry fee at the Congress had been slotted at US \$ 400 per person

inclusive of lunch and tea twice a day. It had been reduced to Rs 4,000 for individuals from the Indian subcontinent. Those whose papers had been accepted for presentation and the Press were accorded free entry but no lunch. Language problems, organizational or memory lapse had somehow conspired to keep these so-called invitees ignorant about their lunch status, leading Dastur Dr Jahangir Oshidari to quip, "Why have our Parsi brothers come here if not out of interest in the religion? Here there is no theater, no attraction. You came here to pay for your own lunch!"

Highlight

A paper of overriding interest for all Zoroastrians was read by Dr Keyghobad Behdin of Tehran University. He revealed that there were seven cases of spontaneous abortion in a group of 50 Zoroastrian couples. Four of these were the product of 10 first cousin marriages, three being from the remaining 40 couples. The abortions are scientifically ascribed to a chromosome malfunction. The finding was an offshoot of the Zoroastrian Student Organization's empirical research on chil-

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dren below five years. In the study, which is half complete, the nutrition of the children was being correlated to their weight, height and arm span to ascertain if their profile was compatible with WHO figures. "Children under five are susceptible to greater danger and a high mortality rate," said Behdin, adding, "Parents don't realize that these children need most attention. The difficulties arise because of differences in thinking (between American and Oriental people) rather than from the environment."

Behdin sought to impress on the audience the advantages of providing a research budget and the need to publicize the findings not only in fields of biology and hygiene but of social sciences as well, in order to improve the life of the community. In the absence of a data bank Behdin's group is unaware of the total number of preschoolers in its community. The first stage of the project deals with infant mortality. The second stage will address malnutrition or chronic hunger.

Zoroastrianism and national ambience

Zoroastrian culture was viewed by some as rooted in the religion — the thoughts, words, deeds that produce "love, truth, affection, glory," as per Ms Parvin Kaviani, and included the celebration of festivals and rites: "If we forget festivities, we might forget the thoughts and philosophies behind them. Man cannot adhere to something he knows nothing about," she maintained. According to her such education should start at the level of daycare centers and be supported by simple books to be produced by a group jointly supported by India and Iran. Field trips for the youth to tour archeological and pilgrim sites, suggested as a source of meaningful education, was later reiterated by Rusi Bastani.

Sethna viewed this Congress as a "rivayat" — on the lines of the earlier trips of Indian Zoroastrians to Iran to ascertain and clarify points of ecclesiastical practice. "Today the youth need understanding," said the general and urged the gath-

ered Zoroastrians to "flood the world" with simple books, videos, CD Roms which would answer this need as well as project the Zoroastrian religion on world consciousness. He was not clear however how "the danger...of too many schools, too many unauthorized products" could be avoided. Apart from the paucity of text-

However, Congress president Dr Mahyar Ardeshiri seemed to be of the opinion that it is best to "pray in the language in which we think."

Skits and dramas depicting Zoroastrian experience and history would enthuse youngsters, impress them with the spirit of the religion. Also it is time that the

Punchayet demanded some obligatory duties from the community, felt school supervisor Ms Rati Wadia. She was supported by social worker Ms Homai Billimoria who believed that the one-way aid from the Punchayet with no demands in return had led to dependency. Referring to the ideological and financial control of life where Parsi children are often powerless, Billimoria noted that Parsi baugs in Bombay require psychological and sociological in-

puts to identify activists and youth leaders, empower them to become more competitive.

The problem Mehrnoosh Khezri identified in Iran was somewhat different: Disharmony between Zoroastrian organizations, absence of facilities, lack of coaches and gymnasiums confines "sportsmen into a closed circle. They can't compete with others."

Advocating a better understanding of the links between values and religion, Rustom Kevala, chairperson of FEZANA's information receiving and dissemination (Journal) committee, noted, "Our religion was mostly internalized in the past — changes and mistakes went unnoticed." Referring to the deficiencies in the translation and interpretation of texts by evangelical missionaries Kevala cautioned, "Do not underestimate the impact of western culture on our children in the west. In India children are not taught to think. Our children in North America are receiving the best education in the world. Parents have to be ready (with credible explanations)." He urged Zoroastrians to learn to "externalize religion, speak effectively. There's a dire need for people who can discuss our faith with others in respectful debate."

Shifting the focus, Dr (Ms) Firoozeh



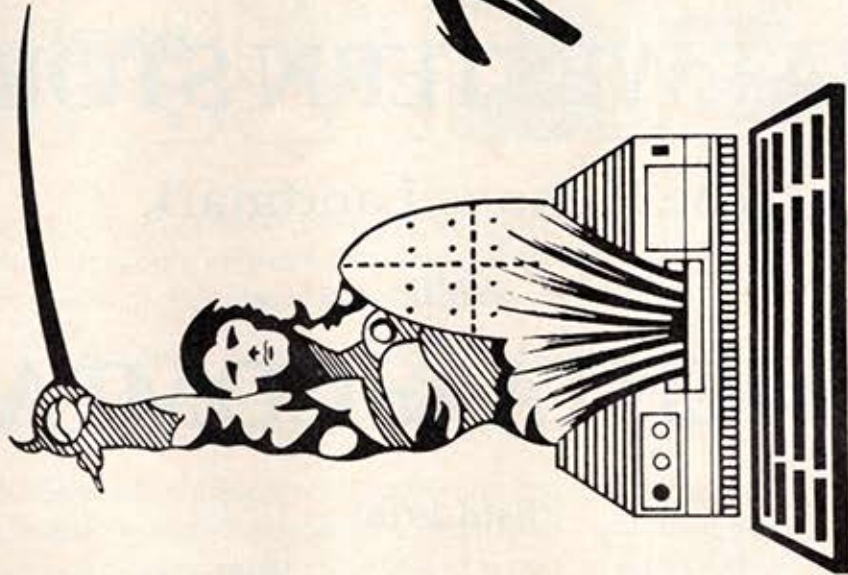
The mellifluous Zoroastrian choir

books (Dariush Farzaneh described available books on religion as "repetitive, old, not updated"). F. Mehr noted that "training (to impart) religious education does not exist among Zoroastrian teachers."

North American Zoroastrians were concerned about "gangs and drugs" because of peer pressure. One reaction is the revival of caps and white clothes, as noted Behram Deboo of Washington State. Recalling the late Dastur Navrooz Minochehr-Homji's words "Avesta is not a dead language; we are dead to the language," Deboo believed that the words of Zarathushtra should not be lost. "Give the youth translations to aid their understanding," he suggested although he was stumped by the same problem as Sethna — "there may be as many translations as scholars." Noting that rituals satisfy peoples' psychological, social and spiritual needs — "the ijashne ceremony draws us into tune with nature and the cosmos," the pragmatic Deboo simultaneously cautioned that "ritualism leads to conservatism and an attempt to hold off change." To the extent that they bring the Parsis and Iranians to function as one Zoroastrian community in North America, they would ensure its survival, he added.



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Ardeshiri felt that "women could allow their dreams to come true (if they) try to be educated in all fields." It was also essential "that women taste love and kindness to be able to communicate it to their children," the pediatricist told her listeners.

The cultural dilemma

The last speaker on the agenda, F. Mehr answered some of the queries raised from the floor, criticized myopic attitudes and summed up the preceding arguments. "Culture and heritage will be preserved only when we know what it is... Many of us are happy to be born Zoroastrian... The culture of a nation comprises everything — the way you eat, dress, give martyrs (martyrdom in the pursuit of religious and national ideals is highly rated in Iran). Culture should be known and practised. The first principle of Ahura Mazda is monotheism... He is transcendent... Whatever is present, God is in it. He is not in time and place but time and place are created by Him... Divine revelation depends on faith. We cannot prove it. Practise this philosophy, not just give lip service.

"Our religion was mostly internalized in the past — changes and mistakes went unnoticed"

"The dynamism of creation is ethical dualism — not good god and bad god... We are free to choose. If a Zoroastrian changes his religion, I would be sorry but I won't stop him because Zarathushtra has said, 'Study and use your own mind.'

"This religion's culture will be preservable only when it is relevant to today's life... There are certain attributions in the *Gathas* about psychology, sociology. We should derive and use them. But we abide by very minor matters like use of urine of the cow... Whether we bury or use dokhma or cremate. These issues have to be rated on points of importance... Go towards what's more practically useful... Keep our goodwill, loyalty, faithfulness... Consolidate the Vohu Mana. We have just a little portion... Human rights, equality of the sexes, freedom of religion and sanctity of private property — providing peace and tranquility — these are Iranian culture.

"What I'm trying to say is that you

should study your religion. There were religions with political power and whatever they said was right and we tried to integrate our religion with them. But we should teach our religion as it is...

"Mobeds? Unless there is a good financial situation, there can be no mobeds. They should have a complete study of the religion...

"I believe and prefer that Zoroastrians marry Zoroastrians. (Such marriages) will be much more successful. But some Zoroastrians have married non-Zoroastrians and they are very successful... If (someone) wants to accept Zoroastrianism logically, why should we prevent it? I propose that we should deliberate logically. To disrespect is non-Zoroastrian, and raises problems. Can we prevent Zoroastrian children

from going elsewhere? (We must) find solutions, learn something, not close our eyes...

"The issue of cooperation among national associations is important. It's a crucial issue. At my age I can say as a brother if not as a father, try to put vanity and selfishness aside. To establish banks and great associations (are) ambitious suggestions. I don't know how they can be implemented. Study them with respect and perseverance.

"If we are talking about the deviation of some of the youth, this is temporary. As the poem by (Prof Ebrahim) Pour Davoud says, 'The Iranian nation will not die/The Zoroastrian nation will not die/Our grandeur is obvious/ The Zoroastrian religion can never die.'"

A transnational body of Zoroastrians?

A call for the world council was set off by Capt Hormuzdiar Desai in his paper read out by Ms Homai Modi. His suggestion of a World Zoroastrian Union with a constitution framed in consonance with the UN's Human Rights Charter was echoed by 12 others with varying emphasis. Prof Kassra Vafadari saw it as a source of per capita funding to aid historical research and the setting up of a museum; Gudarz-Mehr viewed it as the international secretariat of the Congress, setting future agendas; Dr Mehran Sepheri considered it as a source of cooperation, coordination and empowerment for the community as a whole; Ms Rati Wadia saw the apex body as compiler/coordinator of religious knowledge, texts, classes, enforcing the obligations that community members owe to their associations and to each other and organizing exchange programs between youths of various areas; Alayar Dabestani felt that the global organization with global leadership and objectives would best be able to disburse charity where it is truly required or as the donor desires; Kaviani spoke of a global Zoroastrian bank or worldwide fund and Farzaneh supported such an institution as it would provide specialty education in the homeland and prevent "useless migration" which disturbs social stability.

Confidence was high. Defining a healthy community as one where "everyone knows where they are going and how... World bodies will only be effective if we allow them to be," Dastoor urged the dispersed communities to "develop a cadre of Zoroastrians who will lead in the 21st century, (make) conflict resolution a gift to the community."

The concept of a world body with "new opportunities...to build a worldwide community, coming together and staying together" was most cogently presented by Rivetna. Noting that "the face of the Zoroastrian community is changing on all continents... the need for formal linkage is critical," Rivetna described the world body as "primarily (one) to bring people together. The UN does not see us organized as a world community." Its functions would include networking between regional federations/anjumans; coordinating the census; coordinating congresses and their follow-up; representation at interfaith organizations; overseeing the resettlement of Zoroastrians faced by natural or political cataclysm; organizing research into Zoroastrianism; working towards its recognition as a major world religion; participating in the next Parliament of World Religions slated for 1999 and the Millennium Conference in Iceland in 2000; instituting a world council of mobeds; participating in the United Religions Organization which is being planned as a parallel body to the UN. "There is no intention to compete with or undermine the WZO (World Zoroastrian Organisation)," declared Rivetna, suggesting that the WZO and the proposed World Council of Federations could work together as a bicameral body.

"Zoroastrianism is no longer the monopoly of India and Iran," noted Dalal, professing his support for a democratically constituted body to cooperate and coordinate on a global scale.

Two meetings of an "ad hoc informal steering committee for the World Council" were held in a special room at the

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Center during the lunch break on June 21 and 22. Bombay/Federation, Madras/WZO, Karachi, Iran, ZTFE, Washington, Ontario, FEZANA and New Zealand were informally represented by individuals who belonged to them. Eventually, the designated contact persons in various areas were Shroff for India, Parviz Ravani for Iran, Dastoor for FEZANA, Dalal for Europe and Ervad Godrej Sidhwa for Pakistan. Rivetna as the "acting chair" has undertaken to correspond with the rest. The emphasis will be on the various associations in each of these areas coalescing into federations which would then depute representatives. Each member would be allocated voting rights on the basis of its area and membership in such a way that no single country can dominate the body, assured Rivetna.

It had been assumed that Rivetna would seek to base the Council in North America and there were voiced and unvoiced apprehensions about members being unable to attend meetings there. These were set at rest by his categorical assurance that the "center is not going to be in the US."

Despite statements like "To me, the WZO is not doing its job," "The WZO is a misnomer," etc, WZO members Ms Mani Clubwalla and Aspi Irani were delegated to make a "last ditch effort" to persuade the WZO, with its individual membership, to agree to be a part of the world body.

A draft constitution prepared by Rivetna and Adi Daver had been proffered to a similar ad hoc committee gathered in Chicago in the wake of the Second World Parliament of Religions in 1993. Though it had been circulated thereafter to the various associations including the Indian Federation, there had been scant response. "Our failing as a community is that we don't respond," said Rivetna and made it a ground rule that every missive would at least be acknowledged. He urged all concerned to get the feedback from their base associations to him by end December 1996 so that the document is ready for everyone to initial by July 1997 when the next meeting is planned to coincide with the Second World Youth Congress in London.

The possibility of basing the headquarters of the Council in Tehran was urged by ex-patriate Iranians like Dabestani: "To me the headquarters should be where the money is." Ravani himself was hesitant to accept the responsibility: "We may not be effective — we don't have facilities" but, Rivetna countered, "You have great human resources which are underutilized." Bombay and Paris were other likely locations considered in passing.

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Zoroastrian Congress: Islamic commitment

Excitement generated by the invitation from the Leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran (IRI), Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei to "100 non-Iranian and 50 Iranian Zoroastrians" to a meeting at his office at 10.30 a.m. on June 20, 1996 was spiked with disappointment by a subsequent announcement prohibiting the visitors from carrying cameras, pens, wristwatches or keys (Each individual was meticulously frisked before being admitted. Even a copy of *Parsiana* was not allowed inside!) A similar ban was enforced at the following meeting with President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, depriving the visitors of a chance to record what might have been a high point in their lives.

'The Eminent Leader,' as Khamenei is called, made certain references (as interpreted in English) to "Iran, the land of the divine Prophet Zarathushtra, ...your land," etc. The frustration at not being able to record the exact words was heightened the next day when all the three English language dailies — *Iran News*, *Tehran Times* and *Kayhan International* — reproduced a colorless press release. "Iranian Muslims consider the Zoroastrians worldwide as their own fellow countrymen...Iranians had lived and worked together in a society for a common cause free from religious discrimination and these facts... should motivate the Zoroastrians to strive for a common goal in order to obtain divine blessings... Islam bestowed on Iran independence, honor and dignity and the country's reputation should be considered as the greatest achievement for the followers of different religions," Khamenei noted according to the three dailies. Only the *Tehran Times* editorial of June 23 titled "Iran, Land of Freedom for Minorities" noted, "The Leader of the Islamic Revolution, the highest religious authority in the country, received the participants in the Congress on Thursday. Addressing the gathering the Leader noted that Iranians feel honored that the Prophet Zoroaster was born in Iran."

President Rafsanjani had stressed the "commonalities" between Islam and Zoroastrianism — the emphasis on good thoughts, words and deeds, the call to prayer five times a day and over and above all, their monotheism as the "pivot of

divine religions" and the "salvation of mankind."

Ayatollah Mohajerani, IRI vice president of parliamentary affairs who inaugurated the Congress, described Zoroastrianism as "a religion of love and affection... Zoroastrianism is not dualistic, it is monotheistic. It is important to consider this issue... Satan is against man like in Islam, a means for man to be sublimated." He said he had been studying the *Shah Namah*: "One verse is very interesting. Why does Firdausi end as though speaking to the sun? (He is addressing) not the physical sun but the spiritual sun which lights men's souls... Our life is nothing but a quest for the secret of purity. Hope the Congress will bring a better recognition of Zarathushtra's message of friendship and for people from everywhere to learn about the Islamic Republic of Iran, see the spirituality and purity which is a hallmark of Iran in different eras."

"This Congress is like a painting of ancient Iran," began Hojjatoleslam Mohammad Javad Hojjati Kermani, advisor to the foreign minister. "I myself belonged to a Zoroastrian family of Kerman; my father converted in early youth... some of my family members live in India," he continued. Kermani said his message was one of "love and friendship. Work for the construction of Iran wherever you are. One of the issues which could be raised abroad is the development of sound thought regarding the IRI... Hope the Congress will be a source of blessings for Iran and for all people."

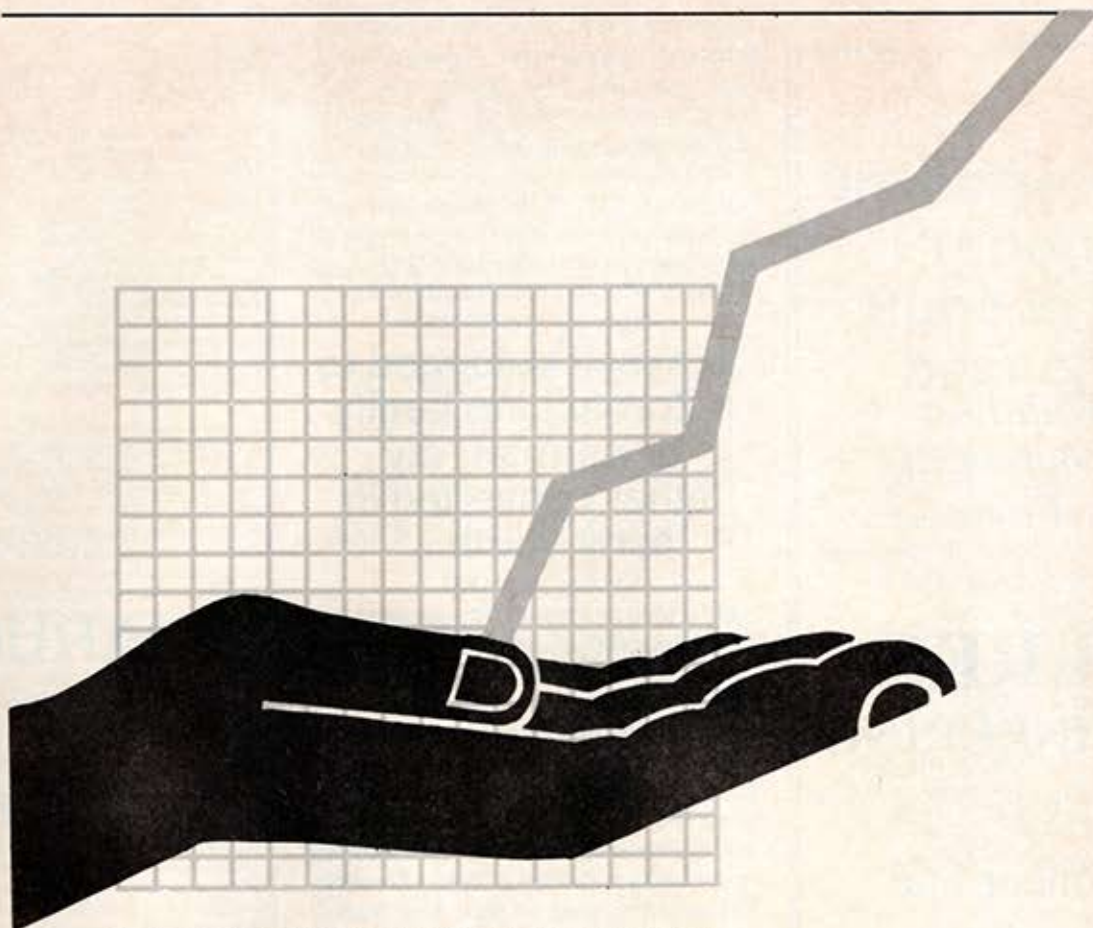
Ms Fatemeh Rafsanjani expressed herself as "happy in the friendly atmosphere of the Zoroastrian community." It had been mentioned informally earlier that the President's eldest daughter, who heads the Women's Solidarity Association and the Foreign Ministry's Women and International Social Affairs Department, had wanted to meet the Zoroastrian lady delegates — particularly Modi and those from abroad — on a suitable day after the Congress ended. However, the touring program of the various groups made this difficult to organize and eventually the Zoroastrian women were summoned to a separate hall, even as the Congress' concluding session was getting underway where she

was welcomed by the Zoroastrian representative of the Iranian Women's Organization at the World Women's Conference in Beijing earlier this year. Ms Rafsanjani noted that the important issue of the cultural values of ladies had remained unaddressed since World War II. She added that since Iran was "going towards advanced technology, we have to overcome the drawbacks of society, especially religion... especially wrong beliefs... upgrade the position of ladies in society." The literacy rate among Iranian women had risen from 35 percent to 75 percent in recent years with seats reserved for them in the universities, she observed. "An important task of the IRI was to (curtail) the rate of population growth from 3.2 percent to 1.8 percent," she noted, adding, "We want to increase the participation of ladies in the political field in the country." Ms Rafsanjani told the gathering how impressed she was by the statement of Ayatollah Khamenei that Iran is the land of Zoroaster.

Ms Shahla Habibi, president of the Bureau of Women's Affairs and advisor on women's affairs in the office of the IRI president, said she was "proud of being the citizen of a country where Zoroaster was born and spread his message throughout the world." Quoting the martyr Dr Beheshti, Habibi said, "Whatever is good belongs to Islam, and the good values preached by Zoroaster and followed by his followers are inseparable from Islam." She hoped that "mutual cooperation" between the Bureau of Women's Affairs and the Zoroastrian Women's Association would expand further. Modi was the only other Zoroastrian woman to address the gathering, registering official thanks to the IRI authorities for enabling the worldwide Zoroastrian community to meet in Iran.

The extent of help, support and involvement of governmental dignitaries in the nitty-gritty of the 6WZC was pervasive. From the inception of the idea, to the invitation to Lt Gen Adi and Ms Khorshed Sethna, Modi and industrialist Sohrabji Godrej to go to Tehran to acquaint the Tehran Anjuman with the modalities of the Congress, to the assurances regarding visas for Zoroastrians from around the world to visit Iran, to the reassurance from dignitaries visiting India like President Rafsanjani and foreign minister Ali Akbar Velayati, the message was that cooperation from the IRI government could be relied upon.

And as the Congress proceeded to its close, two factors became clearer. The



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courtesies and the messages were largely targetted at the Parsis. By implication, they were expected to spread the word of Iran's return to normalcy. The *Kayhan International's* editorial (June 24), titled 'Parsis at Home,' noted, "Zoroastrians living outside Iran, in the Indian sub-continent, are known as Parsis. As a matter of fact, their ancestors immigrated to India in the eighth century. And Zoroastrians pres-

**"I myself belonged to
a Zoroastrian family
of Kerman; my
father converted in
early youth..."**

ently settled in America, Europe and other places are mostly the descendants of Parsis from India... Welcoming the esteemed participants of the Sixth International Congress of Zoroastrians and wishing them success in holding the next session in the United States in the year 2000, we conclude this column by repeating what was said by President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani in a meeting with them... 'World Zoroastrians consider Iran as their true home.' You are most welcome to your home."

The second factor, one of overriding political importance to our Iranian brethren, is the need to accept the monotheistic message of the *Gathas* (perhaps to the exclusion of other scriptures) to be in tune with Islamic theological preoccupation.

On their part Iranian Zoroastrians seized the opportunity of the Congress to vouch support to the country's leaders. According to *Kayhan International* (June 22) Dastur Rustam Shahzadi said that Zoroastrians prayed for the longevity of upright and just rulers so that they would prevail over the wicked souls and Prof Fereydown Janidi noted that Zoroastrians owed their religious awakening to the Islamic Revolution. The latter registered his satisfaction that non-Iranian fashions, which militated against the religious beliefs of the people, had been replaced by traditional Iranian attire for men and women. Ravani, Zoroastrian representative in the Iranian Majlis noted, as per the *Tehran Times* report, that "to be honest to the political system of the Islamic Republic of Iran, to attempt to reinforce the society's economic condition and to struggle for the development of purity and virtue are among the religious and historical traditions of the Zoroastrians."



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Gudarz-Mehr: Steering the Tehran Anjuman

"The Congress is going well. Everything—the management, speakers, subjects—are suitable," said Anjuman Zartoshtian Tehran (AZT) president Dr Mehraban Gudarz-Mehr, though he conceded that "some are repetitive."

This was the AZT's first meeting with the Leader Ali Khamenei, though a group of Zoroastrians had been accorded an audience by Ayatollah Khomeini after the Islamic Revolution, Gudarz-Mehr noted. "It's because of the Congress and the presence of lots of Zoroastrians from abroad, especially India and Pakistan, that this occasion has happened," he affirmed.

The community has been presented with "lots of new directions," says the doctor. The officials were "very kind," very helpful in trying to sort out difficulties regarding the Congress.

Referring to the IRI Broadcasting International Conference Center as a "venue suitable to the Congress," Gudarz-Mehr noted that it had the largest hall with the

necessary facilities available in the Iranian capital but "I don't know what it costs," he admitted. "There was a council formed by the AZT which decided about topics and speakers," he added.



The council, headed by Dr Mahyar Ardeshtari as Congress president and executive director, also included Gudarz-Mehr, Dastur Dr Jahangir Oshidari, Dr Khosrow Dabestani, Jahangir Misaghi Tafti, Dastur Rostam Shahzadi and Mehraban Behmardi. Nearly 800 Zoroastrians attended the Congress, of whom

over 60 came from India, an equivalent figure being made up by Zarthustis from Canada, the US, UK, France, Italy, Japan, New Zealand, Tajikistan. A detailed, three-page questionnaire sought the delegates' assessment of the organizing of the Congress, the community's strong and weak points, its past, present and future roles and whether they were willing to take up permanent residence in Iran.

As *Parsiana* attended the parallel meet with Ms Rafsanjani, the resolutions of the

Congress have been condensed from the *FEZANA Journal*, Fall 1996: Basic religious principles are not changeable. Traditions/cultural differences vary with time and place. Proposed changes to be discussed with and approved by all anjumans before being instituted though the final decision rests with the proposing anjuman. •Financial status of mobeds to be buttressed by the local anjuman -- their knowledge of the history of our religion, of Iranian history and of comparative religions improved. Women understudies of mobeds could go to areas lacking in Zoroastrian clergy.

•Anjumans to provide for religious and higher secular education, libraries and sporting facilities for the youth.

•The WZO, London to make the necessary changes in its constitution as opined by various anjumans and to locate its headquarters in Iran. A bid has also been made for a permanent secretariat office located in Iran, to follow up on Congress decisions.

•The World Zoroastrian Congress to be held every four years in a country where Zoroastrians reside.

Ravani: Speaking for Zoroastrians

Into his second four-year term as the Zoroastrian representative in the Iranian Majlis (parliament), Parviz Ravani felt that "one benefit of the Congress was Ayatollah Khamenei's words on the divine religion. He gave us an impetus." He was excited too about the World Council which he described as "great but difficult work (because) everybody must decide for himself as Zarathushtra said." To the engineer-architect "creating an anjuman is difficult" work because it requires all points of view to be assessed and assimilated. To obey blindly is easier, but the ensuing result is not as productive, he avers.



According to Ravani most Zoroastrians are educated and his community boasts a high percentage of professionals — doctors, lawyers, engineers. He believes that Zoroastrians in Iran sometimes feel discriminated against but when the cases come to him he is able to fight on their behalf. "If I don't know..." he trails off with a shrug.

An atash behram each in Tehran, Yazd, Sharifabad and Zainabad (apart from

agiaries there and elsewhere) serve the spiritual needs of an estimated 37,000 Zoroastrians in Tehran, 7,500 in Yazd, 2,500 in Kerman and others spread out in Esfahan, Shiraz and other cities, according to Ravani. More than 15 young Zoroastrian men were martyred in the Iran-Iraq war, he believes. Three magazines — *Fravahar*, *Chista* and *Vohuman* — provide for the socio-religio needs of the community.

Ravani's father had a tea stall in Poona and at Bombay's suburban Khar railway station. His mother was six months pregnant when the family moved to Sharifabad where Ravani was born and educated in the Jamshedi Zoroastrian School before moving to Tehran's Firouz Behram High School. Married to pediatrician Firoozeh Ardeshtari, the couple have a two-year-old daughter Raeika (which means "likeable and good" says the proud father) and a nine-year-old son Mahyar named after his maternal grandfather, surgeon Mahyar Ardeshtari, the president of the Congress.

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The other woman

The bonhomie shared by the members of the Parsee Gymkhana draws the regulars to this institution

Text and Photographs: Gustasp Irani

She was a young girl from Poona with stars in her eyes. She had just met this wonderful young man from Bombay. Yes, they had liked each other and were willing to make a commitment for life. After he left, her family took stock of the situation. He was good-looking, from a decent family, had a good job...

"But he's a member of the Parsee Gymkhana," an elderly aunt had protested. "Take care child, you will have to deal with a second wife all your life."

Fifty years later, the two are very happy together, but the 'other woman' is still very much around and making demands on his time: two evenings of the working week, all mornings on weekends and holidays, and most of his spare time when the wife is not in town.

"I think the main attraction at the Parsee Gym is that here men do not have to grow up. Here they can remain boys forever," says Fali Gorimar, long-time member of the club. I remember the first time I visited the Gymkhana with my family as full-fledged member. I drifted through the colonial clubhouse on to the vast expanse of green dotted with tables and chairs around which families and friends batted the evening breeze. Here I was accosted by a burly lifetime member who welcomed me to the fold and then pretended — by clapping his own hands — to slap me hard on the shoulder, which resulted in my three-year-old daughter bursting into tears. The elderly man sadistically repeated this act each time till my daughter was grown up enough to be unfazed by his antics.

"The Parsee Gymkhana is a second home to me and to many of its members," says Kaisad Wadia, joint honorary secretary. And though the facilities here may not match those found in more reputed clubs, they are good enough to indulge the

Peter Pans of the community. In addition to the card room, they have access to two billiards tables, a badminton court, a selection of indoor games and, of course, cricket which, according to Wadia, "has been the backbone of the club right from its very inception."

And even as we write this, the language that filters out of the card room is colorful — very colorful and that is when things are normal. No names please, but members have informed us that the card room has witnessed violent scenes, especially across the bridge table, with players throwing cards, car keys and an occasional punch at each other. But after the bad blood has been wiped off, don't be surprised if you find the two foes laughing and joking with each other on the lawns with the glass that cheers.

The Gymkhana still remains an all-male bastion and though it now permits women on its premises as guests, it has stoutly resisted all efforts to grant them membership. Way back in 1913, the managing committee shot down a proposal to have a Ladies' Day once a week. Then in 1932, the committee fielded a similar proposal which sought to allow members to introduce one lady member of the family as a guest, but only on weekdays and during specified hours. N. B. Saklatvala, chairman of the managing committee at the time, sent in a scorching return right over the stumps: before ladies could be invited as guests, the committee should consider whether the Gymkhana was able to provide the conveniences and comforts the ladies would expect. The proposal was dropped.

It was only as recently as 1993, when the clubhouse had a major (Rs 22 lakh) face-lift, that these conveniences were finally provided. As part of the renovation

program, a segment of the card room was sacrificed to make place for a reading room and an excellent restaurant with its own separate kitchen that complemented the bar built earlier on the upper floor of the building. New floors, tiles, fittings and a fresh lick of paint restored the structure to its old colonial splendor. "The atmosphere now is so much better. At one time you had to think twice before you invited guests, especially if they were women. Now people tell me what a great clubhouse we have and my wife and children love coming here, especially in the evenings on Fridays, weekends and holidays," says Mehrwan Irani of Olympia Stores at the Metro Cinema building.

"We are seriously working on plans to build a swimming pool and even accommodation facilities," says Rusi Bhungara, the other joint honorary secretary, showing us a copy of the feasibility studies commissioned by the Gymkhana. "The aim of such an undertaking is not only to provide better facilities to members, but to establish a self-generating source of income by providing excellent boarding and lodging facilities at competitive prices for members and their guests," he adds. (We learn that the committee, reelected on September 22, 1996 has decided to proceed with the project.)

"The better part of our income is generated from leasing out our grounds for social and wedding functions. The problem is that after these events, we are left with a damaged cricketing outfield," says Wadia, a key player in the Gymkhana team who feels deeply about such sacrileges. Probably the only time Wadia and his colleagues did not mind was when the Parsee Gymkhana grounds were used for the ceremonial inauguration and the entertainment-cum-dinner offered to the dele-



*Flag bearer of Parsi cricket (top)
Colonial facade and salubrious sea breeze
The verandah (right): a place to digest
lunch or enjoy an evening's gossip*

gates to the Fifth World Zoroastrian Congress held in Bombay in 1990.

One way of cutting free of the dependency on revenue generated from leasing

out the grounds was to raise the membership fees which, after much agonizing and debate within the managing committee, was recently raised to Rs 30,000 for ordinary members and Rs 50,000 for life members. (Earlier the corresponding fees were Rs 25,000 and Rs 40,000. Subscription fees for ordinary members are Rs 107, quarterly.)

Currently the Gymkhana has 1,177 members of which about 10 percent are non-Parsis. "Earlier our limit was 1,000 members and only recently we have raised it to 1,200," says Marazban Dhanbhoora, president of the club. Periodically, when the number falls below the upper limit — "because of death and other reasons" — the club opens its doors to new members.

According to Dhanbhoora, the basic criterion for admission is that the applicant should have completed 18 years, and is proposed and seconded by members of minimum five years' standing. Then he is interviewed by the managing committee to determine if he is suitably qualified in terms of his profession, social standing etc before being accepted into the fold.

Presently the managing committee consists of Dhanbhoora as president; Cyrus Baxter, Hoshang Dadachanji, Minoo Panday and Hoshang Wania as vice presidents; Bhumgara and Wadia as joint honorary secretaries, Darius Darabi as honorary treasurer; and Kersi Commissariat, Tehmul Dalal, Noshir Driver, Noshir Khan, Burjor Lavangia, Keki Mobedjina, Percy Patel, Minoo Sarkari and Behram Sorabji as members at large.

"We are looking for members who will bring credit to our club, members we'll be happy to accept as part of the family," says Dhanbhoora. Sons of existing members, once they reach the age of 18 may become members by paying only 50 percent of the membership fees.

"The important point to remember, however, is that we are a sporting club and (give) concessions to promising young

sportsmen," adds Dhanbhoora. Further, if ... these young lads have represented the Gymkhana in any sport — cricket, badminton or billiards — they get to be full-fledged members by paying only 20 percent of the membership fee. "This is not a rule but a policy we follow to encourage sports," the president clarifies.

Out on the grounds young gladiators are put through their cricketing paces at the practice nets, while another group of young boys and girls hone their martial skills under open skies, making sure not to tread on the hallowed cricket pitch which is lovingly tended by the ground staff behind a cordon of ropes.

The Parsee Gymkhana has played a pioneering role in developing this very British game in India. We are talking about the Presidency Matches which were the cradle of cricket in India. According to an article in the Gymkhana's centenary souvenir of 1985, the series first started in 1895 with the Parsi team playing two matches each year against European teams — the Bombay Gymkhana and the Poona Gymkhana. The Parsi team, however, did not comprise members of the Parsee Gymkhana alone, but represented the cream of the community's cricketing talent se-

lected from the many all-Parsi maidan clubs that had their tented headquarters on the Azad and Cross Maidans.

One such club was the Liberal Esplanade Cricket Club founded by Behramji Surti, a prosperous wholesale liquor dealer. On important match days, Surti is reported to have visited all the fire-temples in the city and if his team won, liquor flowed freely at his Club.

Not all contests with Europeans were fought on the playing fields, and some had to be resolved in the boardrooms of the gymkhana. One issue was the matter of umpires, both of whom, according to the original agreement, had to be Europeans. In 1898, however, the Parsis threatened to boycott the matches if they were not allowed to select an umpire from their own community. After much diplomacy and negotiations, in 1900 the first Parsi — and Indian — officiated a match in which there were European players.

Apart from the annual encounters with Europeans, the Parsee Gymkhana team played a series of matches with the neighboring Hindu Gymkhana. But all did not

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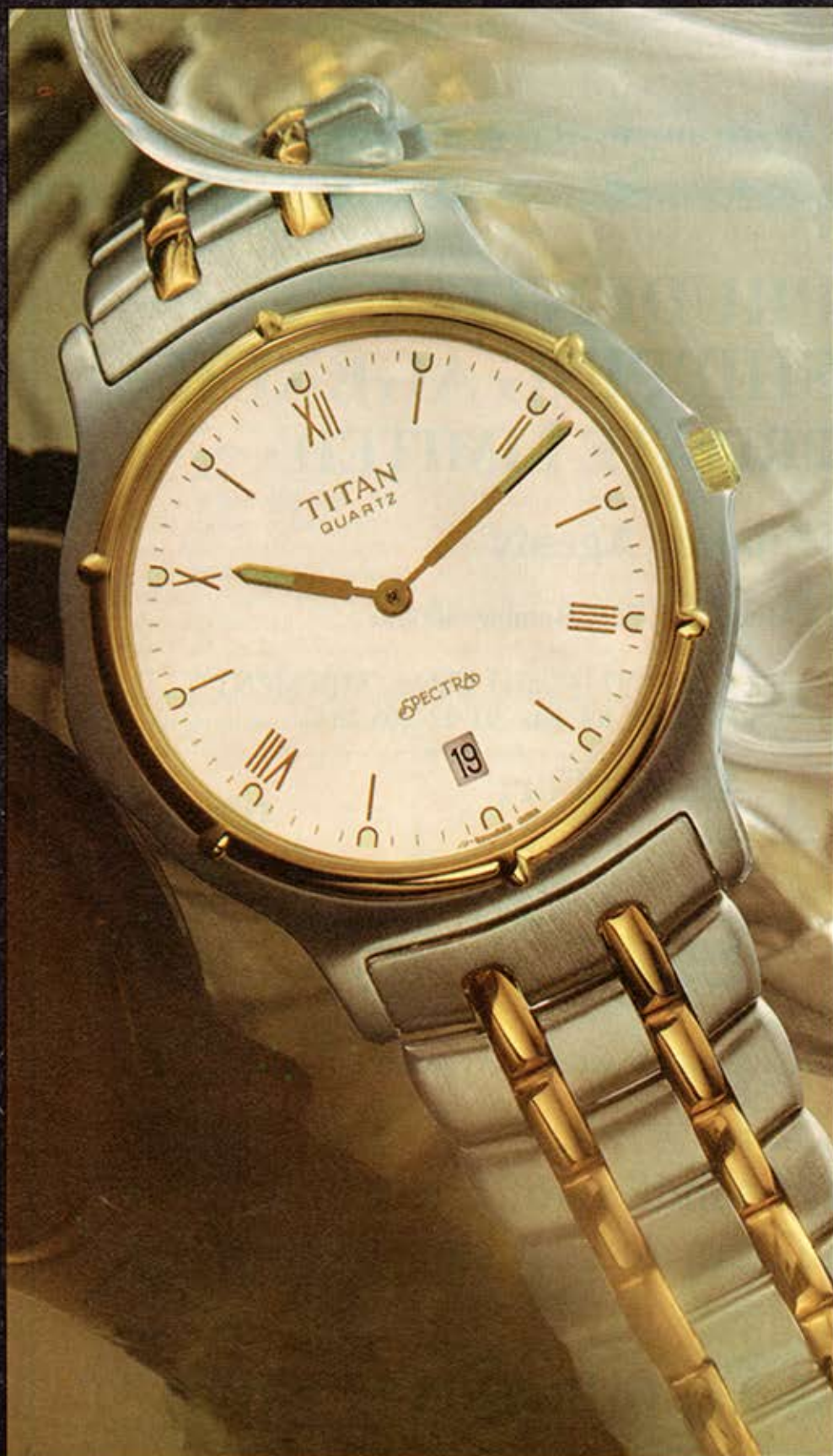
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Badminton court and locker room (above) and trophies to be proud of

go well with these showdowns and the Hindu Gymkhana committee imposed a ban on its team playing with the Parsis. Behind-the-scenes diplomacy resolved the dispute and by 1907 the two teams started meeting once again on the cricket field. A year later, in 1908, the Hindu team was invited to take part in the Presidency Matches and in 1911 the Muslim team joined the contest to make it the quadrangular series.

But Parsi and Indian cricket go back even further than the Presidency Matches. In 1886 — and then again in 1888 — an all-Parsi cricket team, the first team from India, set sail for England to play against Englishmen on their home ground. It was a remarkable achievement, considering that the Gymkhana club had been established only a year earlier.

But even in this rich tradition there are examples of little boy pranks. How else would you describe the antics of one opening batsman who, if he got out early in the innings, would come to bat again further down the order disguised in a lenga, sudreh, kusti and skull cap? One does not know if this really happened, but it is a popular story retold with great relish and laughter to new members and guests. The version we heard was that this stunt was pulled only against European opponents who anyway could not distinguish one Indian face from another.

"Even today the Parsee Gymkhana is

the proud flag bearer of Parsi cricket," says Bhungara. He points out that while most of the maidan clubs are Parsi in name only, being represented primarily, if not completely, by non-Parsis, the Gymkhana team comprises largely of Parsis though it does have a few members of other communities in its fold. Further, the team won the C Division title of the Kanga League in 1994 and earned the right to play in the B Division of the city's premier cricketing tournament the following year.

The origins of the Parsee Gymkhana go back to Wednesday, February 25, 1885 when members of the Ripon Club — founded by Sir Pherozeshah Mehta only a year ago — proposed to establish a gymkhana which, according to its prospectus, "in the beginning (would) confine its efforts to giving facilities... for playing such games as cricket, lawn tennis and badminton."

The prospectus itself was signed and endorsed by many prominent Parsis including, among others, Jamshetji Tata (the first chairman of the managing committee, a position he would occupy for 16 years), Pherozeshah Mehta, Framji Dinshaw Petit, Nowrojee Wadia, Jamsetjee Ardasher Wadia, L. N. Banajee, C. H. Dadysheff and A. P. Cama.

By May that year, the Gymkhana moved into its temporary home — a tent on the fringes of Oval in South Bombay — before it shifted to its present location at the south end of the famous sea-facing Bombay Es-

planade, now known as the Kennedy Sea-face. The grounds were leveled to accommodate a cricket playing field and four tennis courts. The tennis courts were later sacrificed to make room for the Western Railways' track expansion program. But before that happened the Gymkhana courts were the venue for a mixed double match when Lady Mehri Tata and Mr Row paired up to face their European counterparts for the first time.

In 1902, billiards was introduced and members had to pay a fee of one anna for a game of 50, without lights, and two annas for a game of 50, with lights. Among the other sports that briefly flickered and faded over the Gymkhana grounds were hockey and cycle polo.

In 1942, the Parsee Gymkhana had to shift when the government required the premises as part of its World War II effort. The managing committee not only handed over the property but also donated Rs 1,500 from its funds towards the cause. Four years later the Parsee Gymkhana was back, but its home was in ruins, with trenches dug across its playing fields and its clubhouse and pavilion in shambles.

Yes, it was the same pavilion, designed on the lines of an English county clubhouse, that had been erected way back in 1888. The Prince of Rajpipla, during his visit to the city that year, was so impressed by what he saw that he immediately applied for membership. His application was

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firmly but politely turned down. Parsee Gymkhana was exclusively for Parsis. It remained all-Parsi till 1963 when the government — which leases the ground to all the sea-facing gymkhanas — recommended that it be opened to all communities...

The skyline of Bombay across the bay starts to twinkle like a diamond pendent after the sun has set. In one corner, outside the clubhouse, a *bhelwalla* has set up stall. His arrival sparks off a flurry of activity amongst the members and their guests who

Not all contests with Europeans were fought on the playing fields

have spilled on to the grounds in front of the club. There is a hungry demand for his delicious concoctions that supplement the eats and drinks provided by the Gymkhana's caterer, Percy Bhada. Indeed, food, good food, is part of the ethos of the Gymkhana and many good caterers have bitten the dust trying to satisfy the discriminating palate of its members. The way many members see it, the Parsee Gymkhana is their home away from home and they have the right to be as demanding as little boys.

Slowly, as night claims the day, members melt away into the darkness to quietly rejoin the world of adults that awaits them outside the clubhouse. But the following day they are back. Early in the morning, members of and aspirants to the Gymkhana's cricket team work out at the nets, refining their playing skills. As the sun rises higher, white flanneled players take to the field, hurtling red missiles at each other across a 22-yard strip of dirt over the better part of the day.

By late morning, retired men start to drift in and immediately home in on their favorite easy chairs. "Where were you yesterday?" one new arrival is quizzed. "Was there a crisis at home?" "Are you keeping well?" "Have you found a new girl-friend?" After a hearty meal — the *dhan-dal-patio* was excellent — they laze around. On the verandah overlooking Marine Drive, they sprawl out with legs resting on the extended armrest of their easy chairs and doze over half read newspapers. Suddenly they are sharing conspiratorial smiles. Yes, they are going to indulge in little boy pranks at the expense of a fellow member in this Never Never Land which the Peter Pans claim for themselves forever.



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"Early prevention, early detection"

"Every problem is an opportunity for me," says Dr (Ms) Ketayun Ardeshir Dinshaw, the new director of Bombay's Tata Memorial Hospital (TMH), who in the course of her daily life has to encounter cancer patients for whom the road to recovery, if at all, is a tortuous process. In her dual role as director plus head of the Hospital's department of radiation oncology, Dinshaw states, "You can contribute in so many ways... This Hospital gives you opportunities to grow."

And grown she has over the 21 years she has been associated with this Hospital ever since she joined as assistant radiotherapist. Her qualifications from the London University notwithstanding (Diploma in Medical Radiotherapy and Fellow of the Royal College of Radiologists), she was made to wait for six months before the TMH accepted her in this her first career venture on completion of her training, she recalls. In the course of the next two decades the distinguished doctor was conferred many other appointments — as World Health Organization advisor for radiotherapy in developing countries, as International Atomic Energy Agency consultant for radiotherapy in developing countries, as honorary cancer specialist to the Governor of Maharashtra, as honorary consultant in radiation oncology to the Armed Forces Medical Services...

Her selection as TMH director is perhaps the single most notable achievement as this is the first time in the history of the 55-year-old institution that the post was

assigned to a female, and that too one who is not a surgeon. Try getting Dinshaw to elaborate on this issue and she'll make you feel apologetic for broaching such a trivial subject. "I look at myself as a professional," she insists, a laboratory coat, with her identity card pinned on to its lapel, draped over her sari. "I hate this attention on gender. I consider myself as an equal to male, maybe more than equal but definitely not less."

As director of the TMH Dinshaw feels "responsible for the whole hospital — vertical as well as horizontal. It is like weaving a fabric," she draws an analogy. In fact, the TMH is one arm of the Tata Memorial Centre (TMC). The other arm is the Cancer Research Institute whose director is Dr A. N. Bhisey. The post of director of the TMC was vacant when we interviewed Dinshaw on July 13, 1996. Since the TMC is one of the grant-in-aid institutions of the Department of Atomic Energy (like the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research and the Indian Institute of Science), the directors are accountable to a governing council comprising members who are nominated by the house of Tatas as also the Department of Atomic Energy (DAE). Invariably it is the DAE chairman who serves as chairperson of the council.

Very satisfied with this system of functioning, Dinshaw acknowledges the "tremendous support extended by the governing council," whether financial or moral. "The freedom they give makes you feel more responsible for doing things. This is

the culture of the Hospital," Dinshaw is glad that people at the helm like the late industrial doyen J. R. D. Tata and ace scientist Homi Bhabha had the foresight to hand over the management of the institution to the DAE and not the health department in which case it might have been like any other government hospital. With JRD taking a special interest in the treatment and research undertaken at this Hospital "we were considered a very special baby of the house of Tatas," relates Dinshaw. Even though radiation medicine was then in its infancy, it was recognized as a very useful tool in the treatment of cancer. And especially since radiation is a major peaceful use of atomic energy, it was decided to hand over the cancer Hospital to the DAE on the condition that the name of the institution should never be changed. The philosophy like in the case of other Tata institutions was, "We have started you out. Hereafter you will be on your own feet."

"We are very handicapped for space," points out Dinshaw although four new buildings have been created on their campus in the last 15 years. "We've reached saturation level in our present shape," she adds, disclosing that of the 27,000 cases registered at TMH last year, 17,000 were proven to be malignant. Since they only have 420 beds of which around 75 are in the private ward, the majority are treated on outpatient basis. Besides, 75 percent of the patients are treated totally free of cost. Dinshaw does not begrudge the expenses that have to be borne on their account as



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she explains, "This Hospital is meant for the poor people, for the people of India, (but) we just do not have the facilities for the kind of load we face." For the patients, therefore, treatment is invariably punctuated with long waits, realizes the director who says the administration is "desperately trying to improve" the state of affairs.

Presently it is estimated that there are nine million cancer patients in the world of whom 1.5 million are in India. In the next 20 years the world figures are expected to rise to 15 million with India showing a threefold increase in the number of cancer patients. These alarming statistics make Dinshaw stress, "We have to think in terms of early prevention and early detection... Luckily our cancers (those common in India — breast and cervix in females, head and neck among males) are very amenable to treatment, (chances of recovery being) 80 percent if detected in the first and second stage." However, the warning body signals being such that they don't stop a person from carrying on his normal duties, frequently, by the time the patient reports for a check-up, he may be in stage three or

four "when the dice is loaded against us," says Dinshaw. "At the end of the day you are zapped. All the time you are dealing with people who are very sick, with families facing problems; it can burn you up. Though there are bad days, there are also

"We should be prepared to stand up and stand out on our own"

better days when you see patients getting cured." Teaching and travelling in the course of her work also provide a healthy break for Dinshaw who finds a temporary departure from the hospital environment sufficiently rejuvenating.

Unlike the Indian population, the cancers preponderant among Parsis as an ethnic group are those of the breast and uterus in the case of females, and colon in the case of males. "All this is a reflection of our

lifestyle," believes Dinshaw referring to the late marriages, late childbearing, high consumption of red meat... "As is our lifestyle so too is our cancer," she reminds us. As patients do Parsis differ from other groups? The big smile on Dinshaw's face says it all. Her tactful response is "Patients will be patients," with a guarded amplification, "I guess you need to handle them a little differently."

When it comes to treatment, the Hospital offers a mix of surgery, chemotherapy, radiation therapy, depending on the site of the tumor, the onset of the disease, the age of the patient. The present emphasis is on conservative therapy such that not only the length but the quality of the patient's life becomes a yardstick. Removing a breast or amputating a limb may lengthen the lifespan of the cancer patient but what kind of a life would she or he be able to lead after the diseased organ has been removed, is the doctors' concern. "The psychosocial aspect of cancer is an important parameter for our plan of treatment," she notes. And now at the Advanced Centre for Treatment, Research and Education in Cancer,

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an extension of the TMC which is being constructed at New Bombay and should be operational by 1998, certain kinds of cancer as predetermined by the committee will be intensively studied. In Dinshaw's words, "There will be almost a 'mission mode' focus adopted at the new Centre."

A life of moderation, controlling the consumption of liquor, tobacco, spices, can definitely bring down the incidence of cancer, is the message Dinshaw imparts when addressing young school and college students to create an awareness of cancer. In fact, just prior to our interview she had addressed a group of collegians and hopes that the peer pressure they exert will serve to deter their friends from smoking.

Dinshaw is particularly disappointed to find smoking common among Parsis as also young college girls.

Does Dinshaw give credence to the claims of alternative forms of medicine in curing cancer? "As a scientific person, no," is her immediate response before she clarifies, "I don't want to be derogatory. Perhaps it hasn't been given an opportunity to be scientifically evaluated. It can do much in terms of symptom relief but there is a delay in definitive treatment," believes Dinshaw who not only heads the department of radiation oncology at the TMH, reportedly the busiest in India and perhaps in the world, but is also president of the Association of Radiation Oncologists of India.

It wasn't the application of radio isotopes and cobalt machines that initially drew young Dinshaw to radiation oncology, she admits. (By the way, while radiation oncology is involved in the treatment of patients, radiology involves use of x-rays, etc for diagnostic purposes, the distinction is made known to us.) After completing her MBBS from the Christian Medical College and Hospital, Vellore, Tamil Nadu she was undecided as to which branch of medicine to specialize in. She knew she did not want to be a physician, nor a gynecologist. There was a little hesitation to do surgery. So the next best option was to do radiation oncology especially since the Vellore Hospital had a full-fledged department and she had found a guru like Dr Padam Singh who headed that department. When she went to Cambridge to gain greater exposure in radiation oncology, she expected to return to Vellore. But instead she

made Bombay her new home, her explanation being, "As an undergraduate you are very happy in Vellore. But once you go abroad you realize there is a whole wide world beyond."

Until she left for Vellore, Dinshaw's base was in Calcutta where she was born, did her schooling from the Calcutta Girls High School and two years of undergraduate studies at the Lady Brabourne College.

(The big *bindi* on her forehead, characteristically sported by most women of Calcutta, reflects her roots.) With an elder sister who was pursuing medical studies, it was but natural for her to do the same, even if it meant going to Vellore.

The current debate on whether Parsis as a minority should claim certain reser-

vation of seats saddens her, making her comment: "That get up and go is missing among the youth. We should be prepared to stand up and stand out on our own," insists Dinshaw who serves as postgraduate examiner in radiotherapy for the Universities of Bombay, New Delhi, Jaipur, Indore and many others. "No doubt competition is difficult as we are small in numbers. But we have always been outnumbered and yet stood out. Why not now? Look how well the community is doing abroad. Given the infrastructure they shine out." At the TMH itself, there are barely half a dozen Parsi doctors although shortage of staff is a constant worry, she points out.

Within the community, "there is too much preoccupation with the past. We should move ahead instead of being bogged down by rules and regulations, old-fashioned social customs," and controversies surrounding departure from accepted norms "which continue ad nauseum," she stresses. "Too many dogmas make a mockery of your faith," she declares, adding, "I am no holy Joe. But I have faith in my religion. I always carry the *Avesta* with me. On my way to work, I pray from the *Avesta* in the car." A portrait of Zarathushtra hung on a wall facing her also reassures Dinshaw that there is someone watching over her actions. And yet, "there was a period when I stopped wearing the *sudreh-kusti*, and then drifted back to it, both for no definite reason."

The decline in community numbers is a cause for concern for Dinshaw making the 52-year-old spinster acknowledge, "I guess I contribute to that too." Born into a family

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of five daughters, having lost her mother when she was 11 years old, and her dominant engineer-architect father six years later who until then had served as the pivot for the girls, what were her reasons for not marrying? "I guess you can't be successful in everything in life; you have got to have some failures," she responds. "The world without Parsis would be a much less colorful place," she opines, seeking a confirmation of her views, like on many other issues, by rhetorically asking, "Isn't it so?"

A lover of classical music, both western and Indian, Dinshaw also admires visual arts, especially paintings, is fascinated by Indian culture and enjoys picking up Indian artefacts in the course of her sojourns. Dinshaw's manicured hands finger the assorted paper weights on her table. Fond as she is of reading, the doctor also finds time to serve on the editorial board of six technical publications like the *Indian Journal of Radiology* and the *Indian Journal of Cancer*. She has altogether 79 publications to her credit in national and international journals.

The philosophy that has guided her through life is: "We get so much; we have to even give of ourselves to society. And especially if you have the opportunity to do so, it's great."

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The corporate sleuth

Cracking the maze of corporate accounts is exhilarating work for auditor Yezdi Malegam

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He is not the stereotype sleuth you might find in novels, but in his own way is a hard-nosed detective who admits he loves a testing case. His assignments involve investigation into dull balance sheets of the country's leading corporate houses and, more recently, the major stock market securities scam of 1992 and the primary market crisis of 1995.

Yezdi H. Malegam, accountant and senior partner of S. B. Billimoria and Company (SBB), one of the country's oldest audit firms, looks trim, tall and far younger than his 62 years as he strides into the office on the dot of three. We are ushered into his cabin located strategically near the entrance. It is a compact room, devoid of hi-tech computers, and on the walls hang two paintings which we later learn were done by his son, now studying in America. From behind a desk piled with files and books Malegam observes: "In detective novels I suspect the author already knows the answer before he starts writing his books. In real life there are no easy answers, and our task is to find out what has really taken place. We are required to look into large volumes of data and account books where there are hundreds and thousands of transactions. It is interesting work, mainly because it is so difficult."

Interesting because it is difficult? Indeed, Malegam loves a challenge. "If something is easy and the solution obvious, (it) is no longer interesting. But if it's a situation where you have to perform, where you learn something new and educate yourself, it becomes interesting," says Malegam.

No matter what the situation might be, the bottom-line in Malegam's personal

and professional life, according to a *Business Today* feature, is governed by ethics. Of course, Malegam will not talk about it. "It is not proper for me to advertise myself

or my company," he says. But that does not stop others from doing so. N. Vaghul, chairman of Industrial Credit and Investment Corporation of India (ICICI), of which Malegam is a board member, observed in *Business Today*: "He is intelligent, innovative, and above all approaches a problem with a cool, clear mind... Even though he is soft-spoken, Malegam displays firmness whenever issues

involving professional compromises are involved."

It is these qualities that have endeared Malegam not only to the 180 clients SBB represents — the list reads like an Indian corporate Who's Who — but also to policy makers. So, during the securities scam of 1992, Malegam was the only member of the four-man committee, appointed to investigate the crisis, who was not a member of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). Then again in 1995, he was called upon to head the committee assigned to review the operations of the primary market.

Malegam recalls the challenges he faced when investigating the securities scam: "The challenge was to get a total picture of what could have gone wrong. (This) meant we had to go through records of the banks and individuals involved, which ...were voluminous. It was important (to be) fair in our report. It's easy to make allegations, but another matter to back up these allegations with facts. The primary task of the exercise was not to go around pointing fingers but to ensure that something simi-

lar did not happen again." According to Malegam, the reports submitted by the committee did succeed in that task.

The review of the primary market, though not related to the securities scam was, according to Malegam, in some way a fall-out of the 1992 market crisis. Before the scam, there was a boom in the stock market and everyone wanted to put in money without really knowing what was involved. "There was euphoria among investors at the time, but once the scam broke the euphoria disappeared and was replaced by disillusionment and lack of confidence in the stock market," says Malegam. "The job of my committee was to restore confidence in the market, and to do so it was important that companies provided investors with the right sort of information to know the risks involved... Judgment to invest or not to invest (should be based) on valid information."

According to Malegam, there are three factors that differentiate the stock market today from what it was in the days before the scam. First, there are numerous larger players like the Foreign Financial Institutions (FFIs — investing around six billion US dollars), and Indian financial institutions like mutual funds (with around Rs 80,000 crores to invest). "Earlier the stock market was like a retail market for small investors. Today it is more like a wholesale market for large investors," observes Malegam. Secondly, there are far more financial publications and analysts to guide investors. And finally, the market is no longer domestic but global, catering not only to FFIs but also to Non-Resident Indians (NRIs) who are used to receiving certain basic information that companies abroad provide.

At a personal level, Malegam welcomed the challenge of the assignment because it involved studying foreign markets. "It was essential," he said "to understand what information was required abroad and why." And, it was exciting to deal with a broad based committee with conflicting interests, and work out a consensus without compromising the objectives. "I believe we succeeded in our task in that most of the recommendations we made were accepted," says Malegam.

As a senior partner of a leading auditing firm, Malegam sees his role as not very different from the one he had to play as head of the primary market committee. "The main function of an audit firm is to



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lend some degree of confidence to the financial statement of a company, which is really the only way in which it communicates its performance over the year to its shareholders," says Malegam. According to him, there are a number of ways in which an audit firm may evaluate its own performance: the number of clients, the total billing, profitability, etc. And while these are valid yardsticks, he measures the performance of SBB by quality.

"The true measure of a good audit firm is the quality of its clients, the quality of its partners and the quality of its staff," observes Malegam. And to maintain this level of quality the audit firm has to have

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code of business
ethics"

the courage to say "No!" to prospective clients, as SBB has done repeatedly over the years. According to Malegam, the company has client acceptance and client continuance policies whereby companies are first reviewed before being accepted and then reviewed again before SBB determines to continue doing business with them. "Trust and honesty are essential between an audit firm and its clients. Our job is not to go around rapping companies on their knuckles, pointing out mistakes. Mistakes will always happen. Our job is to correct them and work together as a team," says Malegam.

Malegam singles out three people who have had a profound influence on him. One was his father, Hirji, a self-made man, whose most valuable gift to his three sons was to groom them to stand on their own feet. "Rather than leave money for us he spent it on the best education possible, and on vacations and holidays. He created an environment in which we imbibed good qualities. He encouraged us to speak freely and excel in whatever we did. He gave us all the opportunities we needed. What we made of our lives was up to us," says Malegam.

Similarly, his mother Bacha was one of the first women graduates in India and the principal of a local girls' school in Bombay before she met and married his father. She was always there when her children needed her, reassuring them at every stage of their lives. "At home, authority was never imposed on us. We voluntarily accepted the discipline," says Malegam.



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The third person to influence Malegam was Bhikaji Billimoria, son of the founder of the SBB and senior partner when Malegam joined as an articled clerk in 1955, three years after he had obtained his BCom degree from Bombay University. "What he inculcated in me was the question of ethics in the profession. He was the one who 'taught me the true code of business ethics. He made me realize the value of not compromising, of saying 'No' and even losing a client if it went against what we believed to be proper professional ethics," says Malegam.

In truth, it was not a very hard message to understand for one who had been brought up as a Zoroastrian. "I wear a sudreh and kusti and go to the fire-temple when necessary. But I am not what you may call a very religious man who prays endlessly. To me Zoroastrianism is a way of life. It helps you recognize what is right and what is wrong, and you do what is right not because of the reward you will get now, or later, but because it is right." And these are values that Malegam and his wife, Rizushe, hope to pass on to their son Jehangir and to daughter Farah studying at St Xavier's College.

Looking at the Parsi community, Malegam chooses to evaluate it as he might the balance sheet of a company. "A business

progresses by building on its strengths and rectifying its weaknesses. The greatest strength of the Parsi community is its reputation for honesty," says Malegam. People, according to him, expect a certain level of ethical conduct from Parsis, be it a business house, an employer or an employee. "If a Parsi is dishonest or dam-

"It's easy to make allegations, but another matter to back them up"

ages this image, he damages the prospects of every other Parsi," he observes with the obvious passion of someone who cares greatly for the tribe.

The other strength of the community in the past was its wealth. "It is not so much that we have lost wealth, but in relation to what is required to start an industrial enterprise today it is no longer enough," says Malegam. According to him, Parsis should now cash in on their assets of intelligence and education and move into professions like medicine, law, and accounting. "Not that I am suggesting we totally ignore industry. There are many areas like soft-

ware engineering, for instance, which require less capital investment and greater entrepreneurship."

The greatest weakness of the community, in Malegam's eyes, is that Parsis want things done for them rather than going out and doing the job. He refers to a problem he encounters repeatedly at SBB: "If I offer a job to a Parsi, his first concern is that he does not want to leave Bombay. By thus limiting himself, he is limiting his career prospects." The task ahead of the community is to instill a sense of pride in its youth. "I would like to see Parsis who say, 'I want a scholarship because I've earned it on merit,' and not 'I want a scholarship because I need it.'"

According to Malegam, there are essentially two kinds of Parsi youth: those who seek higher education and specialization — "Many go abroad and do not return" — and those who stop after graduation and are happy to land a clerical job. "It would be unfair to judge the community on the basis of the second group. If at all we must evaluate the community, we should take into consideration the total picture and I believe we are doing very well and will continue to do well in the future." It is a reassuring vote of confidence from a man who knows what assets and liabilities are all about.

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The Federation: Turning the Tide?

The project to save Udvada from the erosion of the sea netted donations amounting to Rs 1,26,000 at the executive council meeting of the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India on July 13 and 14, 1996 at Bombay's Muncherji Khareghat Hall. Udvada has been declared as one of nine pilgrim centers of India, as indicated former minorities commission member and Save Udvada Committee chairman Homi Taleyarkhan.

The rearguard action being waged by the Federation's defunct anjumans sub-committee has been buttressed by the all-India extension of the Bombay Parsi Panchayet's (BPP) newly constituted vigilance committee with the addition of youth stalwarts Eruch Irani, Poona Parsi Panchayet (PPP) trustee and vice president of the Federation, Porus Karanjawalla and Parvez Irani, president and secretary of the Federation of Zoroastrian Youth Associations (FOZYA), respectively. Their mandate is to keep community properties in far-flung areas under observation and to nip encroachment in the bud as far as possible. However, BPP trustee Rustom Tirandaz's attempt to enforce a 'no-sale of Zoroastrian land' policy on Federation members was shot down.

The board of trustees of the PPP has demonstrated that Zoroastrian property can be salvaged and safeguarded for the future if those at the helm can weather the initial storm. In their case, property extending 1.5 acres, valued at Rs 4.5 crores, has been

The Federation members
pledged funds
for saving the Udvada coastline

Arnavaz S. Mama

walled in without expense to the Panchayet, by seeking raw materials like cement, stones, bricks and gates from the community as material donations. In the process, the land which was being lost in terms of unauthorized access roads has been saved by the trustees' refusal to be intimidated by interested neighbors.

The question of forming an international body of federations with the representative clout to speak to governments and/or the United Nations/UNESCO has once again been revived at the insistence of North America, Iran and the UK at the Sixth World Zoroastrian Congress (6WZC). The cantankerous debate notwithstanding — the World Zoroastrian Organisation (WZO) projects itself as a world body — the terms of reference of the proposed World Council as conceived by Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America's (FEZANA) Rohinton Rivetna as also the WZO's objections to be provided by Dadi Engineer, BPP trustee and president of the WZO's India chapter, will be circulated to Federation members to enable them to formulate their position

on the matter before the next Federation meeting to be hosted by the Iranian Zoroastrian Anjuman (IZA).

Despite these positive developments, this meeting of the executive council may well go down in history as the noisiest, most indisciplined gathering of community 'elders.' At one end of the spectrum Tirandaz vented his lung power in the small hall with disastrous consequences to the auditory nerves and comprehension faculties of those present. At the other end, groups of representatives (unhappily the more prestigious groups) talked among themselves with flagrant disregard to the speakers. BPP chairman and Federation president Jamshed Guzder's gentle calls for order fell on deaf ears.

The question of adult franchise in the election of BPP trustees was raised by Tirandaz in the course of a discussion on the defunct anjumans. The Federation's honorary secretary Keki Gandhi attempted several times to prevent this unscheduled derailment of discussion on the basis of the Federation's constitution which specifically prevents it from discussing the inter-





Clockwise from top left: Guzder, Ghandhi, Mogrelia, H. Modi, Dossu Ghandhi, Katpitia, Dara and Eruch Irani

Facing page (from left): Shroff, Engineer, Tirandaz, Taleyarkhan



nal affairs of member anjumans. (It may be recalled that it was on the issue of then Federation president Shiavax Nargolwala criticising the scheme of BPP trusteeship elections in the Third World Zoroastrian Congress that the BPP had walked-out of the Federation in 1978.) Nonetheless Tirandaz, Engineer and

Taleyarkhan spurred a debate that though ruled as "out of order" by the secretary was eventually permitted by the chairman.

About a dozen youths attending the forum were disgruntled by the elders' failure to seek their opinion when discussing the community's "future."

According to Tirandaz, the BPP is in the process of installing a computer with a modem at 11, Jer Baug where the youth can access information from anywhere in the world at BPP expense.

Approximately two-and-a-half hours of debating time on the first day was devoted to a visit to the B. D. Petit Parsee General Hospital's (PGH) new Jokhi Wing, with its up-to-date intensive care unit (ICU) and state-of-the-art operation theaters, for the benefit of upcountry delegates who saw the facilities for the first time. Also on view were the Hospital's spanking new male and female geriatric wards which have replaced the ICU. The second floor, each furnished with foam mattresses on 12 comfortable surgical beds, lockers, baths with geysers, pantry and a sitting room with TV. Delegates from outlying anjumans took the opportunity to also view what Gandhi described as "the current demographic and health situation of the community."

Another topic that is periodically resuscitated is that of reservation for the community in educational institutions. Though politicians Taleyarkhan and Tirandaz were categorical that any such expectation for the community was totally untenable, the diehards persisted.

Congress

"Nothing at all was said (at the 6WZC) which had not been said before," attested



*L to R: Patel, Boman Cama and Mistry
Rustomji (center) and K. Modi*



the Congress' India representative Ms Homai Modi. Modi and BPP trustee Minoo Shroff provided the Federation delegates a description of events at the recently concluded Tehran Congress.

The quality of discussions was uninspiring according to Modi because the subjects had not been properly selected and "there was no linkage with past Congresses... There was no open forum, only questions... Demography did not feature on the agenda as they were not interested, probably because their population is going up while ours is going down," Modi noted. The rapporteurs made no attempt to report on their respective sessions. There was not much achieved, but then "in the past three Congresses very little was achieved anyway!" admitted the lady.

Modi, who had been joint honorary secretary of the Fourth and Fifth Congresses in Bombay, had been invited by the Tehran Anjuman in October 1995 together with Delhi Parsi Anjuman (DPA) president Lt Gen Adi Sethna, Ms Khorshed Sethna and industrialist Sohrab Godrej to help them with laying the Congress ground work. She had then attended one meeting of the Zoroastrian Iranian trustees when government officials were present. Indeed, the government presence was strong throughout the Congress which had been formally inaugurated at the Islamic Republic of Iran's new Television Broadcasting and Media Center by Iranian vice president Ayatollah Mohajerani on June 19, 1996. Iran's consul general in Bombay was often present at the proceedings.

Shortly after the inaugural the delegates witnessed the formal wreath-laying ceremony at the magnificent mausoleum of the IRI founder Ayatollah Khomeini. Visits at the invitation of the all-powerful Leader Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei and President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani accounted for the greater part of the second morning. On the last evening, the arrival of Ms Fatemeh Hashemi Rafsanjani, the President's daughter and Ms Shahla Habibi, a leading member of the Iranian Parliament,

clashed with the Congress' concluding session.

"Young Zoroastrians were anxious for more prominence, but were kept in their place... If there is a world organization, the Iranian youth are ready to handle it," felt Modi who stated that for the first time she got the impression "that people are beginning to feel that India is no longer the apex body (of Zoroastrians)."

"I hope someone mentioned our history and progress in the last 1,300 years," interposed Taleyarkhan anxiously and Modi confirmed that that had not been possible. "Even Sohrabji Godrej's paper could not be read. Dr Peshotan Peer and Ervad Parvez Bajan, whose papers had been accepted, found that they had not been accommodated in the program," though they eventually got a chance to speak, said Modi.

"I was greatly annoyed that India had no place at all. I had to remind them that of the 10 largest business houses in India, three belonged to Zoroastrians," noted Shroff.

Apart from its idyllic setting, the management expert found the identity-oriented Congress badly organized with too many papers, no discussions and mediocre representation. "I am convinced that Iran wants to ... build bridges with the west," he continued. The country and the community has "good, promising professionals—doctors, engineers." Shroff was particularly impressed by the "personalities of the mobeds."

Barring oil and gas, carpets, pistachio, dry fruit and caviar, there is not much else that the economy has to offer, said Shroff. Though the quality of textiles is very good, there are no takers, no tourists, commented Shroff who had seen a small group of westerners doff the ubiquitous manteaux with obvious relief at the airport. As he saw it, "the capital stock is well over 30 years old and new foreign investment is unlikely in the present conditions ..." But their "military hardware is supposed to be very good. Their armored cars, tanks, are not very much behind India's because they feel they are a threatened country," noted Shroff. Also, archeological relics are well maintained in this vast land (approximating half of India's land mass) with a population of only 63 or 64 million people.

World Council of Federations

"We need to give serious thought to the concept of an international council," Shroff told the assembled delegates as he recounted events in Tehran pursuant to Rivetna's paper suggesting a World Coun-



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L to R: Cursetji, Illava, Dick and Ginwalla



cil of Federations to represent Zoroastrians worldwide. When Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe's (ZTFE) president Rusy Dalal, who chaired that 6WZC session, took an impromptu vote, "It was passed overwhelmingly — there was no dissent," noted Shroff.

In 1993, after the Second Parliament of World Religions in Chicago, Rivetna had assembled the gathered Zoroastrians in an informal meeting to discuss the formation of such a body. A number of draft constitutions had been discussed — both with and without the WZO incorporated into the proposed structure. The WZO representatives present had rejected them all. The draft constitution had been circulated to other countries without eliciting much reaction. Now, in the wake of his speech at the Congress, Rivetna had invited representatives of all areas to meet for further discussions where it was conceded that the Council would need to be located either in Iran or India, North America being ruled out as too small a community and too expensive and distant a location for the rest of the world. "(Tehran Anjuman president Dr Mehraban) Gudarz-Mehr did not think Iran was an appropriate location... the options are open," reported Shroff.

A source of discontent for Shroff and other Indians at the 6WZC was India's "very poor presence in Tehran — an inkling of what could happen in North America (where the next Congress is slated in 2000 AD)." He strongly suggested that the constitution draft of the World Council — which had been "lying with us for three years" — be circulated, comments elicited and a considered response readied at the next Federation meeting to forward it for the London meet of the steering body of the World Council in July 1997 on the occasion of the Second World Zoroastrian

There should be no area of conflict. What is the problem if the WZO and the Council both work together for the betterment of the community?"

The ensuing WZO/Council debate produced its share of heat. The usual representations were made that the Federation and the WZO work out an acceptable via media. Characteristically, no one was bothered to enquire about the Council's realm of work, nor its anticipated mode of functioning, resulting in time being wasted in vague and inappropriate suggestions. Guzder was however explicit that "any world body will have to have only ... federations of the world (as members). None of these are members of the WZO. The needs of the community have been met by the WZO, but that does not make it representative as the world body of Zoroastrians. The WZO is incorporated in London yet the ZTFE is not a member of the WZO. Does it make sense?" He was of the opinion that the office bearers of the Council should be elected every two years and that the presidency of the Council should rotate between India, Iran and North America.

The history and origin of the WZO were once again presented — this time by Engineer — as an answer to the implied criticism. Referring to the separate session on the world body at the 5WZC, Engineer said that its session chairman Prof Farhang Mehr had detailed four conclusions:

- the present WZO be supported and

Youth Congress. Shroff urged the gathering to "stand up and be counted as Zoroastrians, wherever we are.

strengthened;

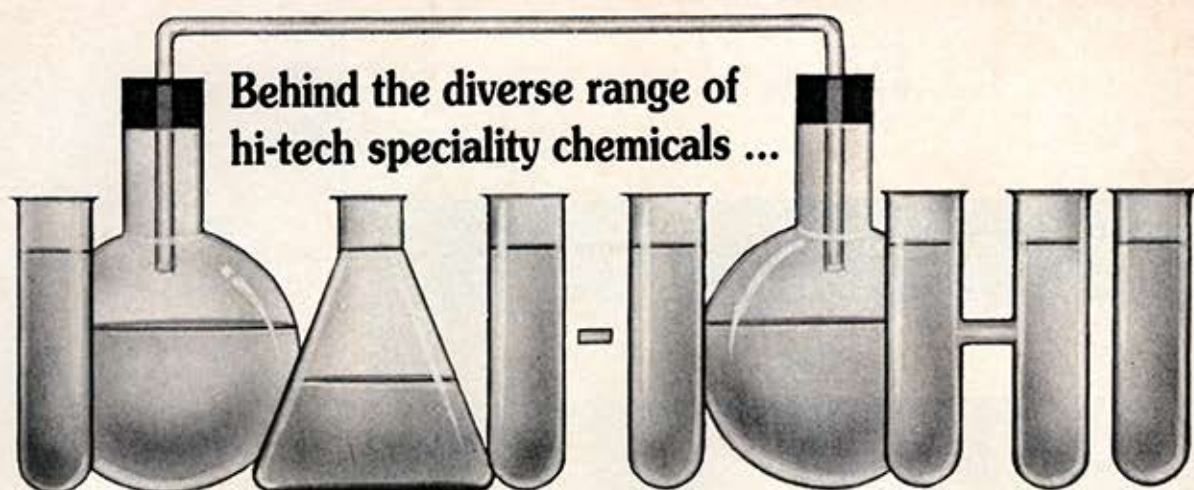
- that its headquarters remain in London;
- that there be no controlling interest for anjumans and that
- a bicameral system (of representation) be explored. "(Then BPP trustee and the Federation's joint honorary secretary) Eruch Desai and I were to work out a list (of subjects) on which the anjumans could have their say. The offer is still open," said Engineer, although he did not detail why the said list had not been compiled so far. "Very few people know that so many Zoroastrians are settled in other countries," he added.

As an example of the fissiparous nature of Parsis, Tirandaz noted that there are 2,500 trusts in the community of which 23 different organizations are in the Dadar Parsi Colony alone. "The oldest is the BPP at 350 years. Why not strengthen that?... If you want a world body, remove 'Bombay' and make the Parsi Punchayet a world body... If you've done something for the community, let not your right hand know what your left hand does. Charity should be a natural duty... Wherever money is involved, people who sacrifice life, limb, etc are nowhere... The WZO is praised to the skies because they are giving out money —

so many crores donation given in *The Bombay Samachar*. It makes people feel small. You are removing a physical want and destroying a mental quality. One more institution means only one more expense."

Even as Tirandaz rambled over the virtues of the cooperative sector as a source of wealth, an irate Taleyarkhan raised a point of order: "This is not a general discussion in a public meeting." He felt that "the Council and the WZO could work together

"You are removing a physical want and destroying a mental quality"



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Top (L to R): Dittia, Minochaheer Bharucha, Dandiwalla. Below: Pastakia and Nakra



again under the aegis of the Parsi Panchayet... The Council will increase the area of understanding (but) there can be no control from London. The majority is here."

Rebutting what he called Tirandaz's "verbiage of words," Engineer said that the "concept of the WZO is that we do not believe in charity. We have given infrastructure, information, loans to young entrepreneurs. If we get publicity in *The Bombay Samachar*, it's not because we wanted it..." According to him, the WZO has the infrastructure "to marry the concept of the world body."

Noting that "the WZO has so much opposition in London itself, the BPP has so much criticism in Bombay itself," Madras Parsi Zarthushti Anjuman president Nariman Mogrelia suggested the formation of a "body that brings all these bodies under one head." Promoting a "merger of all the bodies," as an answer to the current divisiveness, Mogrelia proposed, "Start afresh with a fresh slate rather than (with) the same eggs in conflict."

In the meanwhile Taleyarkhan and Engineer argued about whether or not the WZO can claim to have a corpus. Engineer spoke of a corpus of £ 200,000 from an anonymous donation. Taleyarkhan, who had been vice president of the India Chapter of the WZO until he resigned a few years ago, was sceptical. (According to Gandhi the WZO's balance sheet does not show any corpus of £ 200,000.)

Gandhi asked the delegates if they were agreeable to the concept suggested by Mogrelia — that the Federation secretariat

circulate copies of Rivetna's draft together with Engineer's objections (to be submitted by mid-September according to Engineer) and any other suggestions/comments that Gandhi may have received from the anjumans by then. Instead of an orderly response, the council broke into pandemonium. One school of thought, promoted by E. Irani, considered bypassing the WZO and forming the Council instead of wasting time. "After all, the WZO was formed without our knowledge," he noted in justification. Replied Gandhi, "That baby is already born... Now we are deciding whether the second baby can be born!"

Defunct anjumans

SPP chief executive and member of the Federation's defunct anjumans subcommittee Sorab Katpitia made up for a long absence from the executive council with a detailed report that not only covered each area of operation but once again raised questions of definition and approach for the council to deliberate upon.

The Nadiad and Junagadh properties now stand in the name of the Federation and will be sold as buyers materialize. At Junagadh a four lakh rupee offer was acceptable to the joint charity commissioner but the buyer is now trying to get out of the deal. In Khambhat two lakh rupees have been realized from part sale of the land,

while offers are awaited for the rest. A Mohammedan has got his name into the 7/12 records of the dokhma there, said Katpitia who is fighting to nullify it.

At Ambala a compromise formula is likely to yield good results in eight-10 months while Dharwar has consented to hand over the documents pertaining to the one acre aramgah to the Federation. Tombs cover half the area, the rest being bare.

Elsewhere the picture is bleaker. Repeated efforts have not convinced the Badhnera/Amravati anjuman to accept the Federation as co-trustee. Instead, the three families there are seeking donations to survive as an anjuman. From Gwalior and Hathras there is no response. At Bhow-nagar, valuable property in the city should be handed over to the BPP according to its original trust deed which requires this transfer of ownership if the Bhow-nagar anjuman finds itself incapable of maintaining the property. Despite that, two sale deeds have been authorized by the rump anjuman, informed Katpitia, urging the BPP to intervene as beneficiary and scotch the sale.

Regarding Banaskaka which has a fire-temple and dokhma and only three families, Katpitia had a difficult time tracing an ex-trustee in Navsari. After undertaking all the trouble of hunting out missing records, etc the anjuman has refused to accept the Federation as cotrustee.

Karanjawalla enquired why there was no barbed wire nor board at the agiary and dokhma properties in Khambhat. "There's no notice that the property is under litigation. The property is open to misuse. We need to take these precautions, otherwise we'll be back to square one..." But Katpitia countered, "Fencing without security is of no use. How long will it exist?"

DPA vice president Dadi Mistry again urged the BPP to seek compensation from the Indian Navy for the dokhma and other land the Navy has requisitioned in Uran. Mistry said that under the law the government was obliged to provide an alternate site. Though the property belongs to a private trust, if one BPP trustee undertakes the task, Mistry assured the assistance and support of the DPA as the matter would need to be taken up in the capital.

Engineer referred to the BPP's newly instituted vigilance committee consisting of people in various baugs whose mission is to catch encroachments in the nascent stage, report periodically regarding trespassing on properties. "Most problems result from negligence and delay," averred Engineer, adding, "Vigilance is the hall

PPP trustees (L to R): Firdous Kayani, Boman Irani, D. Irani, Farokh Irani, E. Irani and the wall under construction at Lullanagar, "blocking all possible ingress into Panchayat property and preventing any encroachment" — financed through anjuman members directly paying the bills



mark of democracy."

Welcoming the idea of a vigilance committee, Gandhi urged E. Irani, P. Irani, and Karanjawalla to assist Katpitia by way of a vigilance committee and to take the aid of youth from various locations. "The information should be backed by proof, not wild allegations," cautioned Gandhi. Davar Kavasji Modi, SPP trustee and president of several anjumans in the area, urged the Federation to save two dokhmas (of the original seven Tenna dokhmas) that still stand, in the interests of archeology. "The government is acquiring the land and if we don't act, they will demolish the dokhmas," he feared.

"Every three to six months I am asked about the progress of defunct anjumans. We are always faced with litigation, lack of records... It's a time consuming process," said an exasperated Katpitia. When dokhma/cemetery land is sold, "the general expectation is that the buyer will maintain the structures and land in a certain atmosphere. Generally the buyers do not accept this. They do not want to carry out this condition," noted Katpitia. He has also been repeatedly requesting a revision of the definition of defunct anjumans. "When property exists but there are no people, it's a defunct anjuman. Now redraft the definition so that when the anjuman is down to two or three or four families, they should come to this conclusion of their own accord. After everything is over it is very

difficult to get records.

They should come forward while two or three families exist."

Gandhi voiced his personal view: "The definition of defunct anjumans should be not whether there are Parsi Zoroastrians in the locality but how many are willing to come forward to work for the community. An anjuman is defunct if no one is willing to look after its affairs."

Another brick that Tirandaz dropped during the discussion on defunct anjumans was, "No Zoroastrian property should be sold, ever." "Let individual anjumans come forward and declare this on the floor of the Federation, starting with the BPP," challenged Gandhi. This led to another face-off between the chairman and the maverick trustee.

Tirandaz: "The BPP has taken this decision."

Guzder: "No, we have not!"

Tirandaz: "Yes, we have! Without my vote you can't sell!"

Gandhi reminded Tirandaz: "You were all for democracy when you spoke of adult franchise. How can we pass such a resolution regarding individual anjumans?... What about community property where there is no one to look after it?" An angry Guzder invoked the "understanding that the Federation will not interfere in individual anjumans' affairs."

Tirandaz would not budge. "We are finding our assets too great and our num-

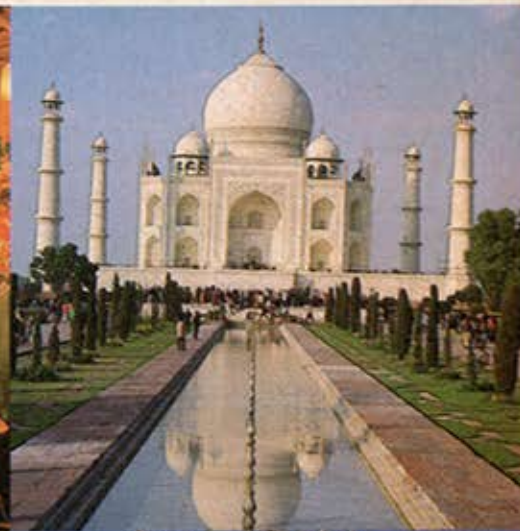
bers too small. Place an embargo on sale of land... in the interests of future generations when our numbers may increase."

Taleyard Khan rejected the argument as "more contention than persuasion. The anjumans are fully conscious of their responsibility... Utilize the funds for the betterment of Zoroastrians in the areas they represent."

"*Pun black né white nu soon* (What about under-the-table components of sale prices?)" demanded the un-put-downable Tirandaz. "No property can be sold without the Charity Commissioner's permission," noted Engineer but E. Irani reminded the delegates how the community had benefitted because the Federation had interfered and become a litigant on more than one occasion when properties were being sold at ridiculously low rates. Admitted Mogrelia, "Tirandaz makes good points but his vociferousness prevents them from reaching the delegates... He is not targetting everybody, but such cases do exist. A resolution is definitely not possible. The anjumans may walk out..." Agreeing with Mogrelia that "a little more persuasion and less rhetoric" would be more effective, Shroff provided the pragmatic touch: "We are living in a world where virtues are changing..."

When at last calm was restored to
continued on page 164

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Iron in the soul

A penchant for art, color and spiritual yearning spring naturally amid the austere beauty of the landscape

Text: Amavaz S. Mama
Photographs: Farrokh Khambatta



Wherever we went, they were there: clad in raiment of many hues — blue, purple, green, brown — welcoming or distant, benign testators to Iran's glories and follies, its loves, its hates, its immense artistry, its yearnings for divinity. In vastly amplified scale, Iran's mountains seemed the prototype of the "Ten Thousand Immortals" who constituted the permanent bodyguard of the Achaemenian kings.

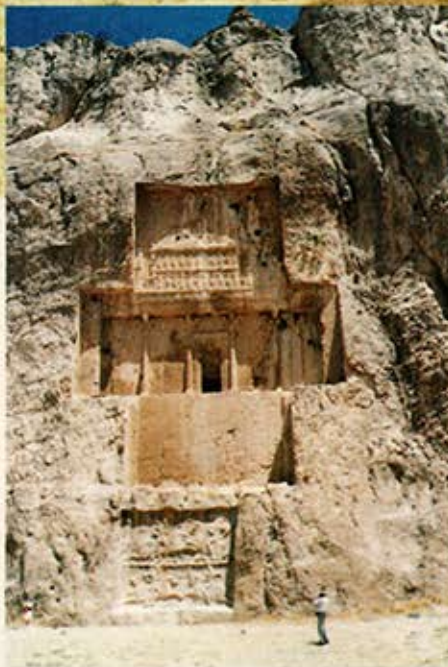
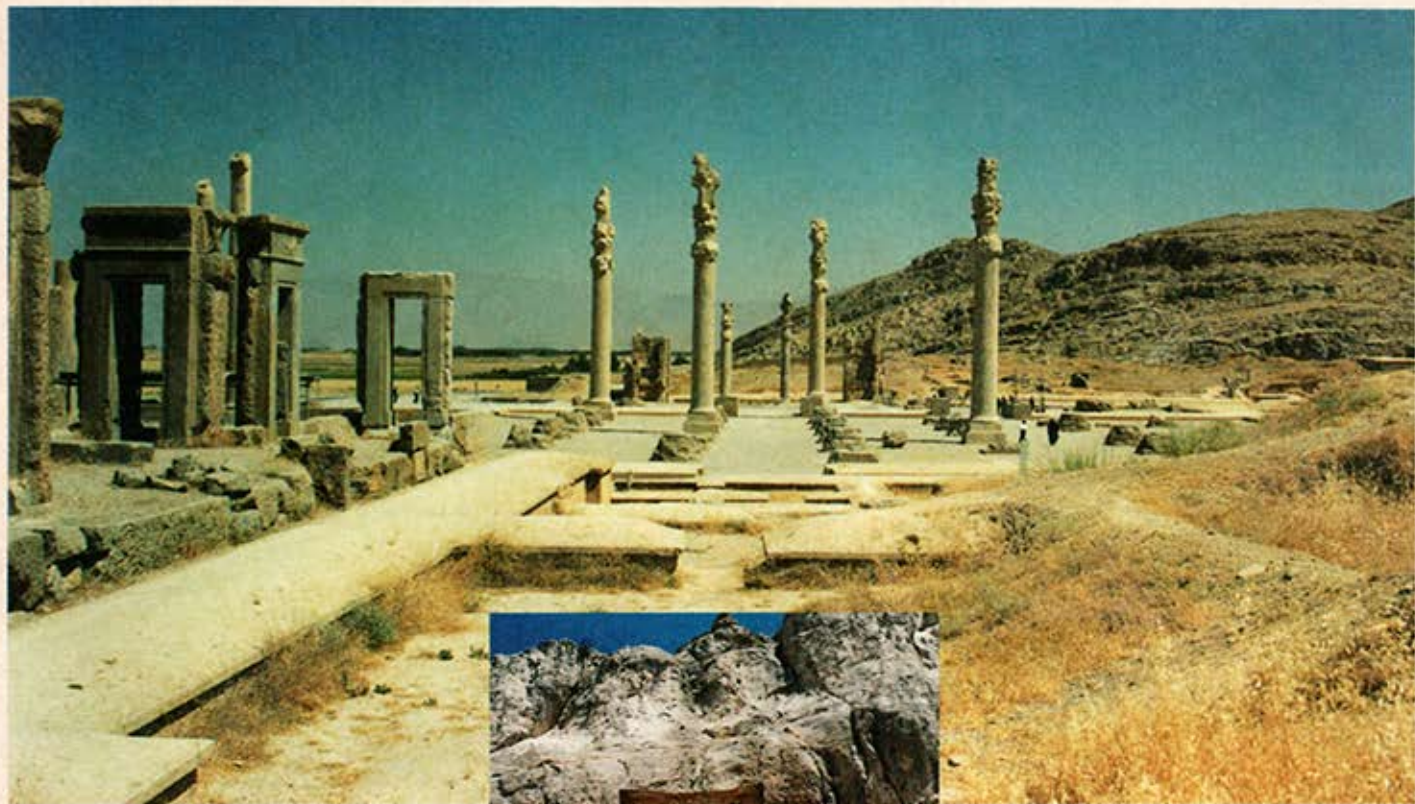
The Zagros, Iran's western backbone, the Elburz to the north, Tavalish Mountains between them, the Mercy Mountains of Pasargadae... enclose the Iranian plateau like a vast desert bowl. Some sheer as a knife-edge, others jagged, with gurgling gashes of fluorescent green highlights

among the scrub, sand and salt that was once a vast lake millennia ago, the perished civilizations on its periphery now a secret of the sands. Cultivable land is restricted to the north of the Elburz whose windward slopes catch the rainbearing clouds, banking their precious fluid on the narrow stretch of rich soil bordering the Caspian sea (with its wealth of caviar), "green gold" bursting with wheat, barley,

Clockwise from above: Hambundagi at Pir-e-Hirish; a dokhma in disuse in the background with one of the innumerable ventilators that keep the waters cool in the ghanats; Cyrus' tomb; roof-top jashan; caretakers at the Pir-e-Hirish







maize, oranges, tangerines and other citrus fruits, olives, apricots and grapes, tea, almonds, pistachios — and rice. Thirty varieties of rice are produced in Iran they say. Having received a couple of kilos of exquisite Iranian rice as a gift some 25 years ago — like silk to the touch, aromatic and inordinately long — one can well believe the claim.

Elsewhere too melting snows add agrarian sparkle to a life of quiet attunement with nature, proud, unhurried, independent of urban consumerism. And beneath the plateau underground canals, known as ghanats, carry the snowy discharge miles away to irrigate patches of the desert. The system is said to date back to 2000 BC — a specialized piece of engineering, dangerous and highly prized, in which the people of Yazd have traditionally been known to excel.

Super-smooth highways slice the desert, wind their tortuous path over the mountains where winter avalanches and landslides cut off sections of the country for weeks at a time. To maintain some control, iron girders cover the precarious areas like man-made caves. Each turn unfolds a different vista as the road winds from leeward to windward and back, barren brown and lush green alternating with kaleidoscopic unpredictability. Dusk metamorphoses the landscape to a purple haze until visibility is restricted to the reflectors on the edges of

the curves. But ere the sun sets at 8.30 p.m. in mid June, its rays fan out from behind the peaks, as though imitating a Cecil B. De Mille movie scene.

Iran's answer to the Indian *dhabas* are clean, unassuming cafes ensconced in a curve of the highway or perched jauntily on a protruding shoulder of the mountain, offering decent toilet facilities (answering nature calls in the open air is not an option) and often, a spectacular view in addition to the refreshments.

Speed limits on the scantily trafficked 4-lane highways restrict buses to 80 kmph in daytime, 60 kmph at night. But even where the concourse is comparatively crowded (traffic in the streets of Tehran is high even at 11.30 p.m. or midnight) honking is

A section of Persepolis

Inset: The rock-cut tomb of Darius I with the sovereign praying before the fire altar.

Seen below are the bas-relief motifs of the Sasanians Photo: Mani Clubwalla

rare and considered rude, high and dipped headlights being used politely to claim right of way.

In the pre-dawn purple Tehran glitters from the sky like a cascade of jewels. Daylight displays the sculpted grace of Azadi Square, the monumental allure of Firdausi whose *Shah Nameh* saved not only the history of Zoroastrian and pre-Zoroastrian antiquity but the very language, Persian, which the Arabs had tried to eradicate. Flowering bushes at the foot of his statue — roses, pansies, flox, et al — dress the lawns of Firdausi Square as well as almost every road divider in the national capital and the cities and towns of the provinces we travelled. The logistics of clearing the debris of dry leaves and desert sand (we failed to spot floating papers, plastic bags, abandoned slippers and such other detritus of 'civilization'), trimming the bushes, watering the plants, etc seemed a part of life. In Tehran, the clean, clear water from the Elburz gurgles in open canals, nurturing the foliage along the way, even as the range hovers above the city, crowning its main avenue like an



arrowhead. The same water flows through the residential pipes, crystal cool and potable. Other mountains, other streams, water other towns. And at the foot of the revered Mount Damavand a bottling plant taps the invigorating mineral water for areas not so blessed.

Despite the comfort of an air-conditioned luxury bus, traversing the land whose continental temperature spread ranges from 50°C to -50°C impacts the psyche as does an ocean voyage on a cargo carrier: concerns of traumatic importance in an urban milieu recede into insignificance in an amphitheater where Nature and Nature's God alone are relevant. The demands of westernized consumerism seem a million miles away.

And that is where the Islamic Republic of Iran's (IRI) government would prefer them to remain. The black chador covers the beautiful women from head to foot, preserving their translucent skin from the rigors of climatic extremes (Zoroastrian women wear a manteau or overcoat and white or colored scarves). In the towns, radio, TV and loud speakers provide an unending reminder of spiritual concerns buttressed by the strong arm of the religious police, present on highway intersections and even on the Caspian waters to ensure that travel and joy rides do not undermine the national dress code for women.

While the people must pursue the requirements of professed spirituality, the demands of realpolitik are met by inflation. The people of Iran must pay the price of power over the minds of men, allegedly sought through the Hezbollah's (an undercover organization believed to be financed by the IRI) international education, propaganda and medical aid programs — and terrorism. A similar dichotomy between

Left (from top): Yazd Atashbehr, keblah and entrance to the Esfahan Atashbehr and (right) devotion at the Pir-e-Hirsh Photo: Mani Nowroji



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Top: The Friendly Zoroastrian Tour group below Mt Damavand and tasting the water that is bottled at its base.

Below: The Ganj Nameh inscriptions (Photo: Mani Clubwalla) and boating in the Ali Sadr Caves (Photo: A. Mama)

profession and practice is evident too in the verbal acceptance of Zarathushtra's divinity and the Zoroastrians' right to a place in the Iranian sun while ancient laws remain unrevoked (eg. Islamic blood spilt by a Zoroastrian demands Zoroastrian blood in return; a Muslim need only pay blood money for his Zoroastrian victim. The Zoroastrian who converts to Islam inherits the family fortune to the exclusion of his Zoroastrian siblings. The entire family sometimes converts to maintain their claim to patrimony!).

Such current ironies are reflected in Iran's history. The glories of ancient Persia are known to the world today thanks to the historians of its arch-enemies — the Greeks. It was Cyrus the Great who conceived the first convention of human rights. A replica of Cyrus' cylinder, enshrining the concept, now lies at the United Nations headquarters (the original is in the British Museum) in the USA — Iran's current bête

noire — and is commemorated in the UN's own convention of human rights. The idea behind Darius' courier service, immortalized by the Greek historian Herodotus, is inscribed on the portals of New York's General Post Office. The Ali Sadr Caves under the Zagros were also discovered by American mountaineers! With barely a third of its land area arable, the country's fertility and beauty have attracted plunderers from east, west and north. And each time the vanquished Iranians rose phoenix-like from death and defeat at the hands of the Greeks, the Mongols, the Arabs, the Turks to civilize and Iranize their conquerors.

Ours was a 15-day odyssey of which four days were devoted to the Congress and 36 hours spent in the familiar bedlam of Bombay's Sahar Airport. [The incoming Iran Air flight burst four tyres (around 6 p.m. on June 14, 1996) — a fact revealed only under consistent badgering, with vague promises of rectification postponed from hour to hour. It was 2 p.m. the next day when Delhi Parsi Anjuman president Lt Gen Adi Sethna, who was invited to deliver a lecture to the Iranian institute of strategic studies, spoke to the Foreign Office in Tehran and declared his and the

group's desire to opt out of the trip and the Congress unless arrangement was made for another plane to ferry us across. The response was electric: by 4.30 p.m. we were on our way to the Centaur Hotel where we spent a second sleepless night, courtesy Iran Air. We finally landed in Tehran around 9 a.m. on the third day (June 16) in another plane specially flown out for all the stranded passengers.] The remaining nine and a half days were spent in large measure on the road, beginning with a glimpse of beautiful Hamadan, the summer capital of the Achaemenians in the upper reaches (3,000 m above sea level) of the Zagros (400 km from Tehran). Close by are the Ganj Nameh cuniform inscriptions of Darius and Xerxes avowing their faith to "Ahura Mazda — the Greatest God."

A nondescript entrance leads to the largest known caves in the world, the Ali Sadr Caves, said to be 1.5 million years old, spread under the Zagros through two Iranian provinces and not yet fully explored. A paddle boat tows a plastic gondola of tourists (entrance fee 4,000 rials, approximately Rs 40) through the cold clear waters, varying in depth from five to 11 feet, dodging stalagmites and stalagmites carved into exquisite shapes by the dripping waters



Shah Nameh fresco at the tea house, Shiraz; bazar at Esfahan; Matboi, Irani, Demehri, Sandbuf, Kashef and Sorab before the air-conditioned bus

(Photo: Mani Club-walla); boating on the Caspian



from the Zagros' crowns of snow. Electrically spotlighted, the eerie drama of the subterranean treasure is best explored in groups. The chill of the place where no sunlight has reached in millennia, also ensures total appreciation of the IRI dress code as we snuggle happily in our manteaux! Among the mountain ranges are housed some of the strategic installations pertinent to national housekeeping in the 1990s — bunkers for military hardware, atomic energy reactors, TV transmitters, the Karanj Dam which provides Tehran and its environs with water and power...

Sand colored tile facades blend with the sands of Fars in Shiraz, a former national capital, now a provincial capital and important university town. Only two percent of its population of two million are Zoroastrians. Though the town is said to have little commercial importance it is, we are told, the most expensive place to live in, apart from Tehran, with average rent for a two-bedroom apartment being around 200,000 rials (Rs 2,000). Its Afifabad Garden, a palace built by the Qajjar kings in the 19th century, had belonged to Shahbanu Farah during the Pahlavi rule. Now it is a rifle museum with two captured US-built

Iraqi tanks proudly displayed in the compound. Though a teahouse on the premises provides refreshments, including ice cream and soda pop, its tile-frescoed walls depict scenes from the *Shah Nameh* and its decor maintains its period ambience.

Shiraz also holds the tomb of Hafiz, the Sufi poet through whose verses people still seek solutions to the problems of living. A rebel against the establishment, Hafiz is said to have spurned the hypocritical clergy. The mullahs, in their turn, burnt his home and his books. The mausoleum to Hafiz was built in the 18th century, nearly 400 years after his death, with a beautiful mosaic canopy above his tomb.

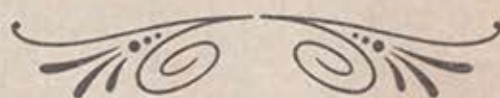
At Shiraz's Ave Zend Bage Vakhfe is the Anjuman Zarhostian, a large enclosure containing a courtyard, an agiary, and a 17-room dharamshala, a hall and a large verandah with a substantial table where we dined. Sarvar and Meraboon Khosraviani have been caretakers there since the past several years, their sons Jehangir and Mehernegar and a young daughter Yasmin all attending school. The family had come from Yazd and were happy to be in Shiraz.

Of course Shiraz's *raison d'être* on Zoroastrian (and perhaps most tourist) itineraries is its proximity to Takht-e-Jamshid

or Persepolis — the Greek caption for the city of the Persians — which had taken 200 years to build and, when destroyed by Alexander of Greece in 323 BC, was still under construction. Skilled workmen from around the empire were collected by Darius the Great to construct the religious capital of the Achaemenians who then controlled two-thirds of the known world. [Temporal affairs were managed from Susa, Babylon and Ectabana (Hamadan).] Here the king received delegations at the Navroze festivities in symbolic representation of the Divine Powers. Clay tablets with notations of the salaries of the workers and their names demonstrate that this edifice was not built on slave labor. And the art of different nationalities went into the melting pot to create a brave new world. Stone blocks from a distance of 60 km were joined together with iron hooks and clasps, each cubic meter of stone weighing 10,000 tons, each block yielding eight steps leading to Xerxes' Gate of All Nations where it is said that on the spring and autumn equinoxes the sun's rays enter precisely. Human headed bulls with eagle wings guard the entrance — the human head signifying the right mentality that Zarathushtra preached, the bull implying strength, the wings, free-



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dom. And high above, inscriptions in three languages — old Persian, Elamite and Babylonian — in tune with the cosmopolitan nature of the Achaemenian court, note: "I build this gate for the people who visit here... for the greatness of Ahura Mazda." At the Apadana Palace where the king received state delegations the 23 nationalities under Darius are depicted with a wealth of detail: Medes, Armenians (with a lioness and 2 cubs in tow — the lioness being the only female figure in Persepolis), Babylonians, Phoenicians, Bactrians, Sumerians with two woolly lambs, Balkians, Drangians, Aeschetians (with their pointed hats), Egyptians, Sogdians with rings in their ears leading camels, Indians, Capadocians, Ionians, Macedonians, Arabs, Lybians, Ethiopians with curly hair and upturned nose leading a giraffe... The sculptors did not even miss the pins on the cloaks or the lions' testes! By contrast the Thachera, the private palace of the great Darius, was small and simple so that it could remain warm in winter. A deep well at the base of the mountains supplied water to the palaces.

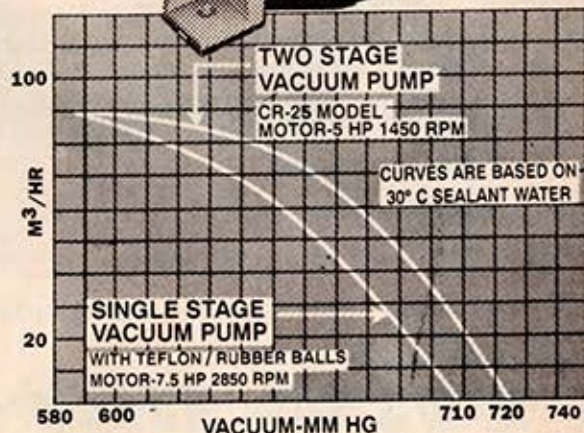
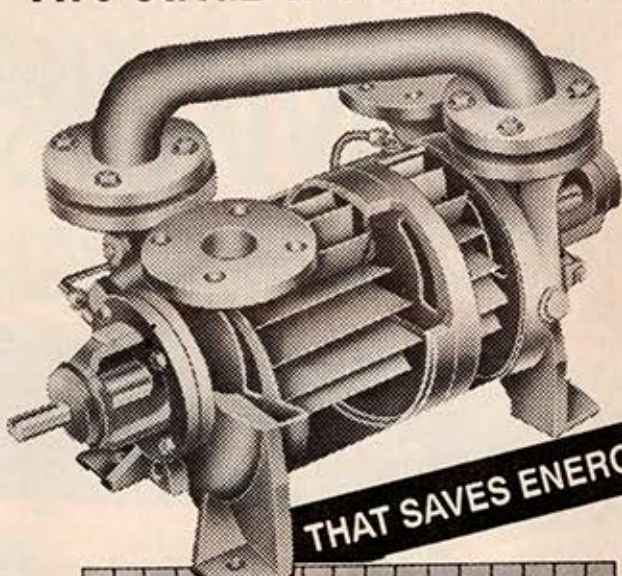
The queen's palace has been converted into a museum (with photographs of Ayatollahs Khomeini and Khamenei presiding over the 2,500-year-old relics) where are displayed the pulleys that were already a part of the knowledge of that world, flexible chariot wheels, metal and stoneware including ornaments.

Cyrus' capital at Pasargadae, 1,750 m above sea level, was by contrast a simpler, smaller establishment. Much less remains to view today apart from the emperor's tomb: seven levels leading to an unadorned stone sarcophagus where Cyrus is said to have been laid to rest with substantial riches in the Egyptian fashion, a stone inscription within, pleading to be left in peace. The story goes that when Alexander had conquered the land, he entered the edifice, read the dead king's request and respectfully withdrew. However, the rest of his conquering army was not as sensitive and the tomb was desecrated, though the structure remained unharmed. Centuries later the Arabs were told it was the tomb of Solomon's mother to preserve it from their destructive frenzy. This led them to bring pillars from Persepolis to build a mosque around it. Rezashah II is said to have had it all removed and rehabilitated at the time of Cyrus' 2,500th anniversary celebrations in 1972. Column stumps, the flooring paved in two types of stone, black and white, his figure with the eagle wings are but a few remnants of the secure, mountain-walled city of Pasargadae that was home to this daring yet God-fearing and just ruler whom the Jews revered as a messiah.

In a different sector of the Mercy Mountains is located Naqsh-e-Rustam. At the upper level are the rock-cut tombs of Darius, Xerxes and Artaxerxes, each sovereign portrayed before a fire altar in respectful devotion. Below them are a series of bas reliefs depicting the coronations of the Sasanian kings — Ardashir, Shapur I, Behram II, each on horseback (because the horse was considered sacred), each followed by their high priests and governors-general. A short distance away are two stone fire altars of the Sasanians, whose flames must have been visible far away on the plains below.

Stone, sand and scrub surround these archeological remains, maintained with care by the IRI government. The same vista, ageless, timeless, unrelenting, follows the road to Yazd where the very architecture merges into the sand. There, miles into the desert, far removed from each other, stand the Pirs — islands of greenery, reverence, nostalgia and Zoroastrian faith. Pir-e-Hirish, Pir-e-Saabs, Pir-e-Banoo-e-Pars... they represent spots where the wife, daughter and other female relatives of Yazdegerd III sought and gained divine refuge from the pursuing Arabs in the embrace of the mountains. Water and vegetation sprang up where they disappeared, and in each case a lost or seeking human who

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innocently chanced upon the spot, dreamt of a damsel asking him to build a shelter for the weary. In course of time these spots became Zoroastrian shrines with the community from all over the country visiting them on anniversary days, many an anjuman having its own set of rooms with water, electricity and toilet facilities built in. Dedicated caretakers who continue to reside in the arid isolation are living testators to the faith of Iranian Zoroastrians.

Dedication to the past was evident too at the Yazd Atash Behram where a bust of Maneckji Hatara and portraits of Sir Dinshaw and Maneckji Petit face the fire. It was Petit who had founded the Society for the Amelioration of the Zoroastrians of Persia in the latter half of the 19th century at the urging of his wife Sakarbai, herself an Iranian Zoroastrian refugee in Bombay. For years, the Amelioration Society paid the jazia tax (described by Prof Ms Mary Boyce as a humiliating and impoverishing poll tax on non-Muslims) on behalf of indigent Iranian Zoroastrians. And Hatara had been the Society's agent in Iran, his standing, influence and persistence finally resulting in the revocation of the hated impost.

A highlight of our Yazd stay was an open-air jashan on the terrace of Ardeshir Demehri's farmhouse. To hear the afarin prayers under a canopy of fruit trees (one had rained the most succulent apricots on our unsuspecting heads on a playful shake from Demehri), the gentle babble of a running brook in the background, a mountain like a backyard wall, omniscient, benevolent, reassuring, was a memorable, deeply moving experience, unlike any jashan witnessed earlier. Piles of fresh and dry fruit, sukhad heaped by the visiting Parsi Zarhostis, an old afargania and a small, nondescript, tarnished chach were the only items on the bare white sheet as Keikhosrow Khosiavi and Rustom Shahriari, the two Iranian mobeds, alternately recited and read from the *Avesta*. Perhaps it was because the priests better understood the language of the recital but there was expression here in tone and face that made the prayers come alive as they invoked blessings on the "buste-kustian (from) Bombay." The names of past achievers (which we could catch) had a place in Iranian lore — Ardeshir Babakhan, Shapur, Dastur Azargoshasb, the banoos of Yazde-

gard's court, Firdausi, Maneckji Hatara, Peshotan Marker, Ustad Daboo... In place of the flowers normally exchanged in the course of the ceremony in India, the Iranian mobeds held twigs (of barsom) crossed above the fire from time to time.

After the jashan the fruit was served — melons, water-melons, cherries, apricots — and further generously packed and distributed in plastic bags, as were the dry fruits. Indeed each of us must have consumed a quarter kilo of dry-fruit per day — handed out each morning in packets to munch during the long bus rides. And mid-morning and afternoon our expert driver Hossain Matboi (a wrestler in his college days with an undying fondness for Raj Kapoor melodies) would stop at a scenic grove or highway cafe as Demehri (alias



'Superman'), his unflappable son-in-law Farhang Irani of Friendly Zoroastrian Tours who was our tour leader from Bombay, the latter's ebullient, helpful friend Cusrow Sandbaf, Demehri's young grandson Sorab Kaviani and our tour guide Hossain Kashef — ex history professor, Jeeves and Man Friday rolled into one — would slice and serve succulent cantaloupes/watermelons which were downed with greedy abandon. Such juice, sweetness and abundance touched both taste and memory buds! Cold water and hot tea were available in the moving bus, sometimes interleaved with biscuits, peaches and cherries. And at each meal were platefuls of rice, chunks of meat, fish or chicken, yoghurt and salad, stereotyped but plentiful. The inevitable excess was packed and taken along and distributed to poor settlements along the highway. Could Iranian hospitality be leavened with Indian culinary variety, paradise on earth would be this!

And so to our final port of call — Esfahan. The capital of the Safavid kings, this lush Asiatic beauty needs to be seen and experienced! Old European travellers had called the city "half the world." Its center square is dominated by its high domed markets — cool in summer, warm in winter — the Blue Mosque at one end of the square, the Palace at the other. Built by Shah Abbasi with the 17th century passion for the color blue, the Mosque's four porches are said to have been influenced by the Sasanid art of Ctesiphon, the Sasanian capital where Byzantine craftsmanship had been drafted by the Sasanians after defeating the Christian king Valerian. Its mosaic tiled dome is zealously maintained by the Archeological Office with detailed pictures, each tile numbered

to enable immediate replacement when dislodged and destroyed in Iran's periodic earthquakes. Even as we walked through the edifice, workmen were busily etching tiles in a side enclosure.

The over 100-year-old Armenian church imitates the Vatican with ornate wall and ceiling frescoes depicting scenes from the Old Testament and the birth of Jesus. In regular use, the small but beautiful church is well-maintained with regular services.

Tovar and Meheraban Gushaspour rebuilt the Esfahan Atash Behram three years ago, the atash being transported from Yazd. Khushro Pookiani who retired from the iron and steel works came from Tehran to take charge of Zoroastrian House, as the Esfahan dharamshala is called, a year ago. The four rooms of the 60-year-old dharamshala are booked for Navroze and during summer, lie fallow in winter. The three unattached toilets and baths are well-tiled, modern, equipped with geysers. Indeed a washing machine is available on the premises for the use of the passengers.

The Esfahan dokhma built in Sasanian times, was in use till about 60 years ago. Once outside city limits, it is now enveloped by development but maintained as an archeological site, artistically photographed and striking framed on the walls of the Suiet Hotel where we spent the night. A series of bridges span the Zayandeh-rood river that flows through the city. The river banks have been developed as a park where groups of Esfahanis picnic and camp overnight in the balmy summer air. Known

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Regrettably, we made our way back to Suïet. Breakfast was, as usual, at 6 a.m. and dryfruit packages, guz and knickknacks happily acquired in the brimming bazaar needed to be packed! If we could find a satisfactory job, would we relocate to Esfahan? Yes, oh yes! Its allure was undeniable. Earlier we had asked ourselves the same question and returned the same answer in Shiraz. Perhaps other parts of Iran had different attractions. We needed to see it all... For now, it was back to Tehran and Bombay.



The Persians owed their achievements in various fields to their system of education which was singularly extolled by the Greeks... The type of education which the Persian youths received made them worthy citizens, and so molded their life as to make them capable of serving their native country with noble deeds.

Xenophon has given a rather detailed account of the system of education among the Persians. According to him the place for the education was the open space in front of the royal palace and the important civil buildings... All the boys, youngsters and elders, gathered in four separate rooms. The classes were held under the superintendents. They instructed the boys in righteousness. They were, also, taught the art of shooting arrows and throwing javelins. This training lasted till their sixteenth or seventeenth year, after which they were admitted to the youngster's class where they remained for nearly ten years, during which period they had to serve the government in various capacities, as watching and tracing out criminals, arresting robbers, etc. Besides, they had to accompany the king on hunting. After the age of twenty-

A detailed black and white line drawing of a rose branch. The branch curves upwards from the bottom left, bearing several buds and one flower that is partially open at the top. The leaves are small and pointed, clustered along the stem. The style is reminiscent of a woodcut or a fine-line engraving.

Nergish and Soli Arceivala

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The Parsi Punchayet Case — 2

The voice of the community

All the members had a say in the appointment and dismissal of the Punchayet members

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 Nana-bhoy 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, we are carrying at length Justice



Daver and Beaman: in agreement

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 gave 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 this 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 judgement 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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As much argument was addressed to us on this point (whether the Panchayet in days of yore was a self-constituted body), I think it is desirable to examine a few of the principal documents placed before us to see what they establish. That the Panchayet existed long before 1778 is evidenced by the fact that in that year certain parties styling themselves "the managers of the Panchayet of Parsis at Bombay," presented a petition to Governor Hornby, wherein they complain: "certain low Parsis who are ignorant of the rules of our religion are going to infringe the same." They say they desired to prevent the same and were unwilling to trouble justice every time, and therefore they pray that they should be permitted to shame these people in the Panchayet "by beating them with a few shoes agreeably to their crime." On July 5, 1778, Governor Hornby empowers the petitioners, amongst other things, to beat the delinquents with shoes, but they are told that they should not inflict any other corporal punishment. A copy of the petition and the answer thereto appears at page 219 of the first volume of Mr Dossabhoy Framji's book. This seems to be the first formal official recognition of the powers of the Panchayet.

Previous to the year 1787, there seems to have arisen a violent controversy between the priests and the laymen of the community with reference to the priests refusing to give their daughters in marriage to the boys of the behdins or laymen. The

"Certain low Parsis who are ignorant of the rules of our religion are going to infringe them"

disputes assumed such grave proportions that Government had to interfere and appoint a commission to bring about a satisfactory settlement of those disputes and one of the results was that the Parsi community were asked to submit to Government the names of 12 priests and 12 laymen, and out of these 24, Government in 1787 selected six priests and six laymen to form the Panchayet. In the whole history of the Panchayet, this is the only instance

when the powers of appointing members of the Panchayet were exercised by the Government, and it is quite clear that Government had to step in and interfere because the community was at that time divided by violent dissensions and it was not possible for the Parsis themselves to nominate members of their Panchayet.

The next incident in the history of the Panchayet is evidenced by (another) document (which) contains the minutes and resolutions of a meeting of "The entire Parsi anjuman." Amongst other things, that meeting, which was held on March 4, 1818, (passed a resolution): "The entire anjuman having this day assembled here it is resolved as follows: Hereafter a Panchayet consisting of 18 persons made up of 12 behdins and six mobeds is to be appointed for hearing family disputes relating to our community and to decide the same. Accordingly the undermentioned 18 gentlemen have been appointed Adhikaris of the Panchayet."

And then follows the names of the 18 persons appointed at the meeting. From the preamble to the resolution it appears that after the death of some of the members of the Panchayet appointed by Government in 1787 their sons stepped into the

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places of their fathers, but this can only be regarded as an unwarrantable usurpation of position which they had no right to occupy. The power to appoint was vested in the anjuman and was to be exercised at a meeting of the entire anjuman as appears to have been done in this instance.

(One more exhibit) evidences the minutes of another meeting of "the whole of the Parsi anjuman (community) of Bombay," held on July 2, 1818. At that meeting it was resolved that as Andhiaroo Hormusji Dorabji Laskari, one of the 18 Adhikaris appointed previously, had gone to China for the purposes of trade, Dastur Edalji Dorabji Sanjana was appointed in his place at that meeting. (Yet another exhibit) shows that vacancies were filled up at (a) meeting of the "whole of the anjuman" held in 1823. The resolution passed at that meeting is as follows: "Further, Parsi Nowroji Meherji and Punthaki Dorabdaru Framji, who sat and were members of the Punchayet, have become denizens of paradise. In order to sit in the Punchayet in their place, the whole of the anjuman have appointed Parsis Jamsetji Jejeebhoy and Hormusji Dorabji to sit in the Punchayet — the 15th of October in the year 1823." This resolution

is signed by Wadia Bomanji Hormusji and 46 other members of the community.

The next incident of interest during the existence of the Punchayet is evidenced by (the) exhibit (wherein) on June 8, 1836, Wadiaji Nowroji Jamsetji, a member of the Punchayet who seems to have been dis-

"At present many improper things take place in our community"

satisfied with the way the Punchayet was doing its work, tenders his resignation. He says: "At present many improper things take place in our community and no arrangement whatever is made to prevent the same."

In the course of circulation, this letter reaches Framji Cawasji Banaji, another member of the Punchayet. On June 10, 1836, he makes a long minute on his colleague's resignation and tenders his resignation also. In the course of his minute he

enumerates many abuses that seem to have crept in the community and which were allowed to pass unpunished. That minute is important on the other branch of the case, but on the subject at present under discussion it is important as showing that the resignation is tendered to the anjuman. Framji Cawasji Banaji at the end of his letter says: "I inform you the members of the anjuman as follows: When all of you gentlemen call the anjuman's meeting be good enough to make my request known to them which is to the effect that the gentlemen of the anjuman should relieve me from the Punchayet's work and that they should entrust the said work to some other person."

"By writing the above short note Wadiaji Nowroji has begged permission of the members of the anjuman to resign the post." The document shows that it is to the anjuman the resignation is tendered, and this is done because it was the anjuman who appointed them members of the Punchayet.

The tender of resignations by two of their prominent colleagues and their emphatic protests against the abuses which had been allowed to creep in, seem to have roused the other members into activity. They called a meeting of the "whole Pun-

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chayet," and the meeting was held on June 23, 1836, and at that meeting one of the resolutions passed ran as follows: "That in our Punchayet the members are very few, and whenever any work is to be done, several members do not attend and therefore the work of the anjuman is not done soon; and therefore it is resolved today that, in addition to the old members, other new members, making in all 37 men, are appointed and their names will be made public at the place where the anjuman will meet and then they will be entered in the book."

From this exhibit it seems the procedure followed was that the names of the additional members were selected by the members of the Punchayet and those names were to be submitted to a meeting of the community to be subsequently held. If the anjuman or community in a general meeting assembled approve of the nomination, then these persons would be appointed members of the Punchayet by that meeting and their names would thereafter be recorded in the dufturs (records) of the anjuman as elected members of the Parsi Punchayet.

This document is important also in another way. There was a considerable difference of opinion between the parties as

to when the Punchayet ceased to exist. Mr Dossabhoy, in his history at page 236, Volume I, says it passed away in 1836. Mr Jivanji Modi in his evidence says it ceased to exist in 1862. Mr Modi's statement is correct. He speaks after a careful study of ancient documents in the possession of the defendants and the reasons he gives for his statement are sound. That Mr Dossabhoy is evidently under a misapprehension is clear from the fact that, far from dying in 1836, the Punchayet in June of that year adds new strength to its body by resolving to elect more numbers, raising their number to 37, and thereby adding to the efficiency of their work and making an effort to perform their duties more expeditiously...

For many years previous to 1865, the Parsis had been agitating for special legislation. Government gave them this legislation in the shape of the Parsi Marriage and Divorce Act and the Parsi Intestate Succession Act. Both these Acts came into operation in April 1865. It was known long before this time that special legislation was coming into operation. When these Acts came into force the duties of the Punchayet ceased, and it is more than probable, as Mr Modi states, that the Punchayet died in anticipation of this legislation coming into operation. That the

Punchayet did not die in 1836, but was leading a fairly robust and active existence till at all events 1860, is again conclusively established by another exhibit. This is a pamphlet giving an account of what happened at a meeting of the leading members of the Parsi community held at the bungalow of Maneckji Nusserwanji Petit on April 5, 1860. It seems that the Punchayet had been subjected to considerable adverse comments, and attacks were made against it in newspapers, and in order to explain their action and the work done by them, the members of the Punchayet called a meeting of the leading members of the community. At that meeting Mr Sorabji Jamsetji Jejeebhoy read a long explanation which with certain extracts from their records were subsequently published in pamphlet form by the Punchayet. Reading this pamphlet, one cannot but come to the conclusion that the Punchayet was very much alive in 1860.

That the right to nominate members of the Punchayet belonged to the whole community and that such right was exercised by the anjuman of the Parsis is clear from another set of exhibits put in before the court. It appears that in or previous to 1843, the acts of the Parsi Punchayet were being adversely criticized. To refute these

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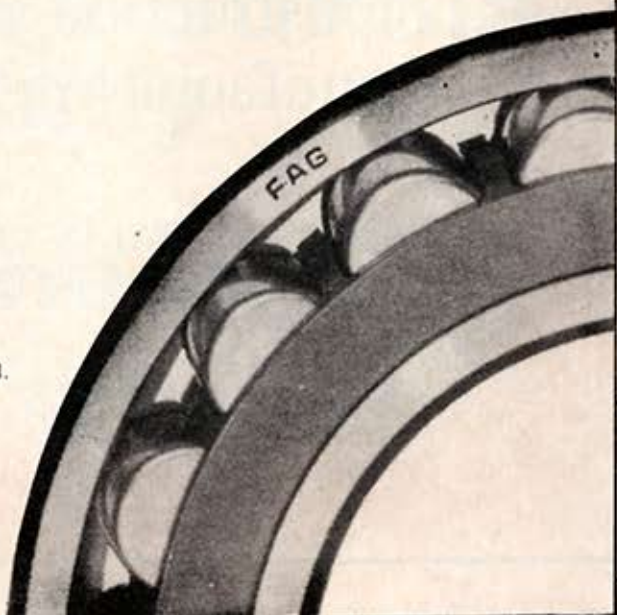
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adverse criticisms and give a true explanation of the acts of the Punchayet, a work was published in the year 1843, entitled Kholasa-e-Punchayet (explanations of the Punchayet). The author of this book veiled his identity under the anonym of "A servant of God and a follower of the Mazdayasni faith." The anonymity evidently did not long continue, and it is admitted on all hands that the author of this book was the first Parsi Baronet Sir Jamsetji Jejeebhoy, the grandfather of the first defendant...

(On) page 255 of this book, Sir Jamsetji describes how a member of the Punchayet was elected. After stating how the community met on March 4, 1818, and elected 18 persons as members of the Punchayet, he says: "And whenever any of these sahebs die another is appointed in his place, and whenever the Punchayet meets for any purpose whatever at that time it announces to the anjuman as follows: 'Such and such a person has died. Such and such a person has from this day been appointed in his place a member of the Punchayet on behalf of the anjuman. Do you approve of that appointment?' Thereupon out of the members present at the meeting some member says: 'Yes, Sir, we approve of it. Appoint him a member.' That fact is then entered in the Punchayet's books and the signatures

of all those present there are taken thereon. Then that person becomes a member of the Punchayet."... (In) the same book, ... Sir Jamsetji says: "Therefore in the place of the remaining five, new members are to be appointed at a meeting of the anjuman. But they are not yet appointed according to the ancient custom"...

Speaking of these five persons nominated by the Punchayet to fill up vacancies, Sir Jamsetji says: "But they remain unadmitted, as, according to the old rules of the Punchayet, their appointments are not noted in the book of the Punchayet after making the usual proclamation before the anjuman."

In or about February 1856, Mr Nowroji Fardunji, the secretary of the Parsi Law Association, delivered a speech before a subcommittee of the Association... In that speech, referring to some of the persons who then claimed to be members of the Punchayet, he says: "Many of these gentlemen cannot be called members of the Punchayet of our anjuman (community) because our nobility and gentry have not, by convening a small or large meeting of the anjuman according to our old practice, appointed them as members of the Punchayet, and, on their appointment having been made, their names have not been

entered in our Punchayet's duftur (record) according to our old practice."

The same gentleman, Mr Nowroji Fardunji, in giving his evidence before the Parsi Law Commission on March 31, 1862, says: "The old Punchayet used to be elected at a general public meeting held in some sacred place — as a fire-temple... It was a popularly elected body... The mode of filling up vacancies was usually this. The surviving members proposed new ones and if there seemed no objection they were duly elected. Their election was ratified by the Parsi community, and such ratification was signed and certified in the book kept for that purpose."

Lastly, (there is an) exhibit (of) a letter addressed by the late Bomanji Jejeebhoy, written to the members of the Sir J. J. Baronet Institution and the members of the Zoroastrian anjuman on October 11, 1859, wherein he refers with approval to the claim made by "many gentlemen of the Zoroastrian anjuman," who said that "the right of appointing a member of the Parsi Punchayet belonged to the Zoroastrian anjuman."

There is one other document that I must refer to before I conclude my examination of some of the more important documents relating to the subject now under discus-

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sion. The document I refer to is... the trust deed relating to immoveable properties — got, prepared, and executed by the defendants' predecessors in office on September 25, 1884. This is an important document on which the defendants have placed great reliance throughout the hearing. One of the recitals of the deed is in the following terms: "And whereas for very many years the management of the social and religious affairs and the settlement of religious, matrimonial and other social disputes of and between Parsis in Bombay were entrusted by the community to a Punchayet or committee selected from amongst the most influential or leading members of the community."

After this admission on the part of the defendants' predecessors in office in 1884 that the entrustment of power and authority to the Punchayet was by the community, it is, I think, hardly open to the defendants to contend — as was contended by Mr Strangman on their behalf — that the practice of submitting to the anjuman the name of the member to be appointed to fill a vacancy in the Punchayet had, in the words of Mr. Strangman, "died out prior to 1843."

There are many other documents before us, the effect of which is also, directly or indirectly, to establish that the Parsi Punchayet of Bombay was a body elected by the entire anjuman — in other words, the whole community. There are, of course, as is usual, instances at times of the rights of the anjuman being disregarded, but such instances cannot affect what seems to me to be the established usage of the community. On the evidence before the court, I hold that it is proved that amongst the Parsis of Bombay, after their settlement in the island, there was a usage to elect a few headmen from amongst them to act as members of their Punchayet,

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the numbers of men so elected varying from time to time as it seemed fit to the anjuman. The ancient usage prevailing amongst them proved before us was that, on a vacancy occurring, the surviving members nominated or selected the name of a successor. Such name was submitted for election at the next meeting of the members of the community, and if such name was approved of by such meeting he was elected a member of the Punchayet. His name was then entered in the dufturs of the anjuman and thereafter he was recognized as a duly appointed member of the Parsi Punchayet of Bombay. It is, I think, established beyond all doubt that the right of electing members of the Punchayet always was in the general body of the Parsi community of Bombay.

Having considered how the Parsi Punchayet came into existence — what was its constitution and what were its powers; having seen how its members were elected and by whom they were elected, it becomes necessary now to see how trustees of the funds and properties belonging to the community came first into existence and how the present defendants came to assume office as trustees. *To be continued.*

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Motlibai's act of faith

Dinshaw Joshi

On October 7, 1994, *roj Meher, mah Ardibehesht*, YZ 1364 according to the Shahenshahi calendar, the Bai Motlibai Wadia Atash Behram at Udvada, a small town about 110 miles north of Bombay, on the west coast of India in the state of Gujarat, celebrated its first centenary as the home of the holy pak Iranshah fire. It is not generally known that the present edifice, the fourth in Udvada, is administered by the Wadia Trust while the preservation of the holy fire together with the performance of rituals is the responsibility of a separate local organization of mobeds. This narrative relates the history of the present edifice and discusses other related topics.

Zoroastrians fleeing Iran after the Arab invasion of the country and the fall of the Sassanian dynasty first landed at Diu, a village in present day Saurashtra on the west coast of India, in about YZ 67 (697 AD). After 19 years in Diu, in YZ 86 (716 AD), these Zoroastrians moved to Sanjan. On *roj Adar, mah Adar*, YZ 90 (720 AD), the first Atash Behram on the Indian subcontinent was consecrated in Sanjan by Dastoor-e-Dastooran Neriosang Dhawal and the holy fire, created with divine help and assistance was enthroned therein. In YZ 667 (1297 AD), fearing an invasion by the Muslim army of Allaudin Khilji, the holy fire was removed to the caves of Bahrot in the surrounding hills where it remained for 12 years. In 1309 AD, three leading mobeds of Sanjan first moved the fire to a hilltop in the Vandsa forest (near Bulsar), and in 1419 AD to Navsari where it then remained for over 300 years.

Between 1737 AD and 1742 AD the holy fire was moved repeatedly from one town to another, to Surat and then back to Navsari, then to Bulsar and finally in 1742 AD to Udvada, which has been its home for the last 252 years. The repeated shifts were the result of disputes regarding the guardianship of the holy fire between the mobeds of Sanjan who claimed to be its sole guardians and the mobeds in the host towns who also claimed rights over it.

The detailed history of the first three atash behram structures at Udvada is not known; available records indicate only that the first atash behram in Udvada was built in 1742 AD by Muncherjee Bomanjee of Nargol, the second in 1751 AD by



Repairs to the fourth edifice housing the Iranshah fire has extended the life of the 100-year-old structure

Bhicajee Eduljee of Surat and the third in 1829 AD by the brothers, Dadabhoy Pestonjee Wadia and Muncherjee Pestonjee Wadia of Bombay. By about 1892 AD however the heirs of the two Wadia brothers were unable to maintain the dilapidated structure. With their consent and at the request of the Udvada Parsi Anjuman, Bai Motlibai Manockjee Wadia of Bombay agreed to replace the third atash behram structure with a new building in memory of her late husband, Seth Manockjee Nowroji Wadia.

Bai Motlibai Wadia purchased land measuring 6,660 square yards adjacent to the site of the third atash behram for the new building and the associated *nahan-khana* (the place where the mobeds stay for 10 days after the mandatory purification bath which they undergo before they can attend the holy fire). The corner stone of this fourth edifice was laid on *roj Adar, mah Adar*, YZ 1262 (May 22, 1893) by Nowroji Manockjee Wadia and Nusserwanji Jehangirjee Wadia, sons of Bai Motlibai Wadia. The building was designed by Dinshaw Dorabjee Mistree, architect; the contractor in charge of the construction is not known. The combined cost of the land and the Atash Behram and *nahan-khana* buildings in 1893-94 was (Rs 91,000). Apart from the current value of the land, it is estimated that to build two similar structures today — if that is at all feasible without the original materials and the artisans — would cost about Rs 50,000,000.

After the required consecration ceremonies including several *ijashnis* and *vendidads* performed over a period of several weeks, the holy fire was enthroned in the new Atash Behram designated Bai Motlibai Wadia Atash Behram on *roj Meher, mah Ardibehesht*, YZ 1264 (October 30, 1894), the death anniversary day of Bai Motlibai's husband, Seth Manockjee Nowroji Wadia.

The excellent design of the buildings by the then architects, the use of best quality materials, and the meticulous and sturdy construction by the contractor have all enabled the buildings to withstand the ravages of the heavy annual monsoon rains over the last 100 years, and the constant use of the fire-temple by the worshippers.



**The
Udvada
Atash
Behram also
suffers from
a severe
shortage of
professional
mobeds**



A critical examination of the structures by the architects and contractor during the 1993-94 renovation revealed that the buildings were still structurally sound. On the occasion of the centenary, a marble bust of Bai Motlibai was installed on the veranda of the renovated Atash Behram.

On September 22, 1896, the lady executed the Bai Motlibai Wadia Udwada Atash Behram Trust (hereinafter referred to as The Wadia Trust) with a corpus of Rs 61,000. Over the years, the Trust has seen substantial growth; the current corpus of



The Atash Behram's outer hall, two angles of the well-known exterior and the threshold of the inner hall

*Facing page:
Acommemorative bust of
Motlibai (1811-1897)
installed by the N. M. Wadia
Charities in 1994*

Photographs: Gustasp Irani

the Trust is about Rs 600,000 with an estimated annual income of about Rs 80,000, adequate for routine maintenance of the Atash Behram and *nahankhana* buildings. In 1909, under the will of Bai Motlibai's son Nowroji Manockjee Wadia who died in 1907, another trust titled N. M. Wadia Charities (hereinafter referred to as The Wadia Charities) was established in Bombay with the objectives of general secular charity, relief of poverty, educational and medical aid, performance of religious ceremonies and rituals, etc. The current common trustees of The Wadia Trust and The Wadia Charities (and three other associated trusts) are Ratan Nowroji Bhavnagri, Sorab Hormusji Commissariat, Sam Framroze Joshi, Jamshed Khurshed Setna and Burjor Hormusji Antia.

The maintenance of all Atash Behram properties is the responsibility of The Wadia Trust. The custody of the holy fire, its maintenance and perpetuation including the provision of kathi, the performance of the daily boi ceremonies, the maachis offered by devotees and all rituals and religious ceremonies are the responsibilities of the Shree Udwada Nav-Kutumbi Athornan Anjuman. All mobeds attending the holy fire are from the *nav kutumbs*

(nine families). The right to perform the boi ceremonies five times a day at the change of each gah is rotated between the families from month to month. The Udwada Anjuman has at present two presidents, Vada Dastur (Dr) Hormazdyar Mirza and Vada Dastur Kaikobad Dastoor Pheroozi; hence, the two high chairs in the outer prayer hall of the Atash Behram. Though technically the high priests are appointed by the anjuman, in practice the positions are hereditary. Though this dual control — one for the preservation and perpetuation of the holy fire and the associated religious ceremonies, and the other for maintenance of the buildings — has occasionally caused problems, these have been resolved, always amicably, through mutual understanding.

The last renovation and repainting of the Udwada Atash Behram had been carried out in 1982-83. With the approaching centenary of the Atash Behram buildings The Wadia Trust decided to undertake complete repair and renovation of the two buildings, including water-proofing of the roofs, retiling of the walls of the inner and outer prayer halls, installing a new carpet in the inner prayer hall and retiling of the outer prayer hall floor in the Atash Behram,

and repaving the outside courtyard. The total cost of these works was estimated at about Rs 2,000,000. The architects, Dara B. Mistry and Partners, and the contractor, Cyrus Unwalla, both graciously waived their own fees for this specific assignment. As The Wadia Trust did not have the necessary funds to finance these costs, The Wadia Charities (which currently has a corpus of about Rs 70 million, and an annual income of about eight million rupees) financed the entire cost of repair and renovation of the Atash Behram.

Since the major repairs were required to be carried out by non-Zoroastrian laborers, the holy fire had to be temporarily relocated in the adjacent Petit Dar-e-Mehr building on October 21, 1993. By early June 1994, major repairs and renovation of the Atash Behram had been completed at a cost of Rs 1.20 million; only some minor work in the open courtyard was left to be completed after the end of the monsoon season. However, before the renovated building could receive the holy fire, the inner sanctum and prayer hall and the outer hall where the other rituals and ceremonies are performed had to be individually re-consecrated: one vendidad and three

continued on page 144

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Once **JAMSHED**,
then **JIMMY**,
now **JAMES**

**The Americanization of Jamshed
was swift and complete**

Dilnavaz E. Bhagwagar

When he left India 15 years ago, he was Jamshed, the second of three children born to my aunt. Like most middlelings, he carried a chip on his shoulder all his life for being so cruelly sandwiched between two siblings.

Jamshed left for England with his shining new stethoscope and the ink still wet on his MBBS degree. Living on endless cups of tea and packets of fish 'n chips he determined to master the intricacies of medicine. In the process of adding a string of alphabets to his degree, he altered a few in his name and became Jimmy. Then deciding that England was not his cup of tea nor the English his cake, he left for New York.

The Americanization of Jimmy was as swift as it was complete. In two years he

ran through two wives, two cars, two tons of T-steak and 20,000 hours of television. In addition he grew begonias, he grew a beard and he grew prosperous. Though we were both in New York it was not possible to meet very often as we were busy pursuing our own careers. We, however, kept in touch over the phone and an occasional dinner or theater evening to celebrate some special occasion, or to meet and entertain a friend or relative from India.

One Christmas I received Jimmy's usual scrawl of 'season's greetings.' The letter paper was thick and expensive and bore a single elegantly embossed line on top, proclaiming it to be the stationery of Dr James Cooper. Wow! Cousin James had really arrived!

In early spring I got a phone call from

cousin James. Phone calls from cousin James were not uncommon and by now even their content had ceased to startle me, but the opening line of this one did throw me off balance. "You must come and see me at the hospital tomorrow evening, Dil."

My first reaction was one of alarm. "Whatever for? Is something the matter?"

"Nothing that can't be remedied, fortunately," said cousin James. "I am going in for a bit of plastic surgery. To be precise, I am going to have a bit of bone removed from my shin and added to my chin."

"James!" I exploded. "I've heard your woes and held your hand through a great many mad moments but this is going a bit too far. Why, your chin is not even visible under its growth of beard." Good looks run in the family and cousin James was no exception. He was wide shouldered and fair and had melting brown eyes with a fringe of thick dark lashes. A luxuriant head of hair and beard completed the 'swoon at sight of doctor' effect he had on his patients.

"Please hear me through, before you bite my ear off," pleaded James. "I have decided to shave off my beard but I can't possibly expose my weak and receding chin to the world! If I am to walk the earth without my beard, I must have my chin repaired. Don't worry, it's not a serious operation."

"Why this sudden decision to look like the under-belly of a fish?" I asked.

"Well, I was going through this American Medical Journal where it is stated that according to recent research Americans prefer the clean look. They have greater faith in the crew-cut, clean-shaven, all-American image. I think there is a lot of truth in this observation. I always suspected it, but this research confirms it."

"Look James," I said with mounting irritation. "If you are a good doctor — and you are — they will come to you anyway, with or without your beard. When will you stop taking every American pronouncement as the gospel truth and start thinking for yourself? It is absurd to undergo major surgery involving a bone graft just because of some American research finding. The Americans have not solved the problem of their own chaotic, dope-ridden lives but they will go and research the drinking habits of tropical fish and the mating habits of the Masai. Why not! As long as there are suckers like you to swallow it all. Come on, kid. Grow up!"

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Mrs. Homai Billimoria, Dr. Meher Master-Moos, Mrs. Anawaz Mirza, Ervad Godrej Sidhwa, Mrs. Tehmina Turel, Mrs. Roshan Doctor, standing in front of the great Citadel of ARGEHAM built by Founder of the Sassanian Dynasty Ardashir Babagan. (2) Dr Meher Master-Moos, Z. C. President presenting the Zoroastrian flag at the 6th World Zoroastrian Congress, designed by Dr Jehangir Medora of Canada, the Parsi Vexillographer.

(Continued from June 1996 issue)

Yazd is a bustling and big city. Its market place is equal to those of Kerman, Shiraz and Isfahan in the variety of goods. It has speciality "mithai" and bakery products, pistachio and dried fruits; and the goldsmiths in the bazaar specialise in making Zoroastrian figures such as that of the Asho Farohar. It is also noted for its melamine crockery and household products; and also for the trade with China for ceramics imported via HongKong. The carpets made here are also special, being woven by hand by Zoroastrian women in their village homes to the accompaniment of songs sung in "Dari" language.

A full day's coach drive brought us by night to Isfahan, the "Paris of Iran." Straddling across the "Zayanderood" river are several bridges, the most famous of them being the "Si si Pol" or Bridge of 33 arches. Here the city people enjoy the cool river breeze sitting at chaikhans beneath the arches, or boating on the river. We stayed at the comfortable old "Pol and Park Hotel" overlooking the river. Isfahan has some excellent hotels, including the famous old "Caravansara", now renamed the "Hotel Abbas", which used to be rated by IATA as the third best hotel in the world — the old Taj Mahal in Bombay following as the fifth best, about a quarter of a century ago.

Named after the quartering place of the Achaemenian army soldiers, the ancient historical city of Isfahan has a modern University with a

spacious campus on the hills overlooking the city area. The traditional Unani medicine and modern allopathic medicine faculties are both taught here. Both Shiraz University and Isfahan University have good libraries with sections devoted to Avesta and Zoroastrian religious books. Our host Prof. Reza, of the Social Welfare Dept. Faculty took us to visit the University and also a Govt. funded very modern family welfare counselling centre. Women under the present Govt. regime are given much encouragement for education and all kinds of work, including being lawyers and taxi drivers.

In Isfahan we had a delightful visit to the home of Prof. Reza. Although living in a semi detached row house of flats, his mother and sisters still practised the traditional craft of carpet weaving at home. The bride-price paid by the groom in Iran till today goes up if the girl knows the art of carpet weaving, and can bring home revenue, making carpets after marriage. The family served a delicious home cooked meal of the traditional rice, pulao, with saffron, and fish from the Persian Gulf, and vegetarian d'shes with salads, fruits and maevo.

Isfahan is famous for its arts and crafts, with many museums and palaces. In the bazaar, around the renowned blue tiles mosque, craftsmen are busy at their forges, hammering copper plates into shape, with every fine detail of scenes of Persepolis. Each plate is hand made and unique.

Thick cotton cloths, hand printed with the famous carvings copies from Persepolis columns, hand woven carpets and the world renowned "Gaz" (Nougat Sweets of almonds, pistachios, sugar and egg white) jostle in the bazaar shops side by side with books and miniature paintings and prints.

In the Armenian quarter of Isfahan is the beautiful Wank Orthodox Armenian Cathedral, and the museum attached to it has some artefacts which are unique amongst the best museums of the world in Europe. Amongst these are the smallest book in the world, one thousand year old Armenian Manuscripts of the Old Testament, holy miniature paintings, costumes and other historical memorabilia of the Armenian Church. The Museum deserves the best part of an afternoon to see it thoroughly.

Isfahan also has architectural curiosities such as the Shaking Minarets, and the "Chaharsotol" or 40 columns palace set amidst rose gardens. The biggest mosque — the Juma Mosque — is constructed over the remains of one of the biggest Atash Behrams which used to exist here during the Sassanian period. The subsequent Muslim era architects copied the Sassanian technique of brick construction of domes atop square buildings. The original stone Afarganya — Fire urns are still preserved in the Courtyard. One of the saddest sights of Isfahan was to see brass Afarganya-shaped vessels being used as waste bins and spittoons and flower pot holders all over Isfahan, in public buildings and hotels. From how many old-time Agiaries did these come? we wondered.

In the Zoroastrian quarter of Isfahan there is a modern Fire Temple with big winged bulls figures, of Mithra Yazata, at the entrance. It is located in a garden behind high walls, and had beautiful modern marble-facing with a big hall; and the Mobed lives in a house nearby in the garden. But the place did not have much spiritual power in its vibration and the Priest welcomed all tourist groups from Japan U.S.S.R., Europe and U.S.A. to visit the Fire Temple and take photographs of the Holy Fire kept burning in an Afarganya behind glass, in the Kebia room. On the outskirts of Isfahan, on top of a mountain is an old Fire Temple in ruins. Some of our group members succeeded in walking to the top. They had a grandstand view of the country side, and reported that there are some old buildings made of stone, on top, around the Fire Temple.

Isfahan has excellent restaurants serving the local speciality foods in most beautiful surroundings. Our Tour Manager Sohrab took us to some of the best places for lunch and dinner; and one of them had an atmosphere as though it was a "Palace of Art" and had Frescoes with beautiful paintings of scenes of the Shahnamah and from other Persian Poems adorning the walls. The people are steeped in art and culture and the ladies are well dressed and quite modern in their outlook. People there enjoy being out in the Parks beside the river, close to Nature. The merchants travel all the way to India to buy cloth to sell in the bazaars of Isfahan.

Half a day's coach travel took us from Isfahan to Tehran past the great salt lakes and deserts south of the capital City. The salt can be seen shimmering on the desert sands giving the illusion of water. The water is so salt hardly anything living can survive in it.

The Capital City of Iran spreads over many hills. The 18 Palaces of the Reza Shah and Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi Family are spread over a large area of woods and streams in the mountains to the north of City. We visited the 7 Palaces open to the public and gained the impression that the present Govt. knows nothing about encouragement of Tourism. Not a single postcard is available; and though a stiff fee is levied on cameras, yet no photography is allowed inside the Palace buildings. Amongst the most beautiful is the old original Palace of Reza Shah with its exquisite carpets, mirror ceilings chandeliers and French style period furniture. Even the bathrooms are special and fit for a king. The big Palace of Mohammad Reza Shah has a magnificent staircase and murals on the walls, beautiful carpets, chandeliers and different styles of furniture from different countries in the several rooms. The Queen's Palace with its imitation of the Sphinx is converted into a museum of stuffed animals and butterflies. The Military Museum Palace is worth a visit to see the uniforms of the Iranian Army from Achaemenian times to the present. A picture album, or postcards should at least be made available, if for no other reason than historical education for all the school children. Two other Palaces are converted into Art Museums with lovely Persian Paintings.

The National Jewels are securely kept in a bank vault. These now consist mostly of the Jewellery of Muslim Kings of the last 200 to 100 years ago period, with a few pieces of Crowns and Swords of the Pahlavi period. But much of the Jewellery seen two decades ago is gone. One of the most outstanding pieces is the Orb of the world encrusted with gems, rubies, emeralds and diamonds on a gold mounting made to teach geography to a Prince. Princess Farah's Crown is amongst the prettiest pieces of the Crown Jewels. Much of it is Rajasthani style enamel work encrusted with gems of about 150 years ago Jewellery style.

Other museums in Tehran worth visiting include the National Museum where artefacts from Persepolis, Susa and other ancient sites are preserved; the Glass and Ceramic Museum with its exquisite pieces of porcelain and painted glass miniature bottles; the museum itself is a Palace with a period-piece circular staircase, French style furniture rich carpets and chandeliers; the keepers are most courteous

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and play delightful music for their visitors. The Carpet Museum houses a magnificent collection of Persian carpet with the patterns of the various provinces.

The Zoroastrian quarter in Tehran is located in the heart of the old city. There is a comfortable Dharamshala, much frequented by Parsis of India during their group tours, although our group stayed at the comfortable "Parsa Hotel" off the Vahd Avenue. This avenue is named after a person who is yet to be born. The Parsians believe Shah Behram Varzavand Sahab will come, and so the avenue is named after the Soshyant to come. The main Zoroastrian Anjuman office and Meeting Hall is also located here near the Agiary building. This Agiary is much used by the local Zoroastrian community; and there are kitchens and a Gahambar area in the compound. Zoroastrian women prepare special food for Mukhtad and after-death ceremonies. The ladies had arranged an exhibition of home made embroidered articles made by the Zoroastrian women of Iran, and also some of the dinners during the Congress were held here.

After the Congress we flew by Mahan Airlines local flight to Kerman, from where many Zoroastrians still come to India. This historic old city was one of the capitals of the Sassanian Monarch Ardashir Babagan; whose magnificent Palace in ruins straddles across the hill tops. From Kerman a long coach journey took us to the 18th century palace of the Gajar Muslim King of this area who had built a miniature Versailles, by landscaping the hill side and converting it into beautiful gardens, with a series of fountains, streams and water pools with roses, Cypress and apple trees to cool the countryside. The surrounding land is a hot barren desert, and the Palace is a green spot oasis, for the benefit of the people who make good use of the palace restaurant and also the gardens as a picnic ground.

Our coach reached the ancient Citadel of Ardebil, around sunset. This great city, built by Ardashir Babagan, straddles across hill tops, now in ruins, under restoration by UNESCO. Two hours of climbing from the entrance gates to the top of the Citadel were rewarded by a panoramic view of the surrounding countryside with the sun setting behind jagged black peaks of the distant hills. This city had one of the three big Atash Behrams constructed by the founder of the Sassanian Dynasty, now disused. In a corner of the Atash Behram courtyard is a well named "Shah Behram", after the coming Rastinidar Sahab. The Military Courtyard and Soldiers Barracks area has a whispering gallery, a marvel of architecture. The Army Generals standing on the command platform needed only to whisper their command for it to be heard clearly by all the soldiers in their quarters. The local people continued to inhabit the ruined city till this century. Right on top of the Citadel is the 4 Seasons Palace which remains cool even in the mid summer heat. Also from the top is a secret escape tunnel through which food and supplies could secretly be brought into this city when besieged.

The grand Citadel of Hoch Austerwitz in Klagenfurt region of Austria appears to be a copy of Ardebil. This region is famous for its pistachio nuts plantations and luscious dates.

Kerman can also boast of a good bazaar where artefacts made from copper and brass are hand crafted; and nuts, fruits and "maevro" are on the wholesale market. The Govt. run restaurant and chakhana attached to the public bath and wax museum depicting Unani style massage of about 4 centuries ago, serves excellent vegetarian food for a change. The first stone construction of a Fire Temple building, of the time of Ardashir Babagan is also still standing intact in Kerman. Next evening we took the return flight to Tehran, to reach rather late for a dinner party hosted by the Majlis Member Mr. Parviz Ravanai at his residence in honour of the Foreign Delegates attending the World Congress.

One of the highlights of this trip was a full day coach drive to Mount Demavand on the outskirts of Tehran. The weather in the Elburz Mountains changes rapidly; and the day we visited the mountain was in heavy rain with thunder storm, mist and fog. The entire mountain range in this area has panoramic scenery. Some of us ladies from India consecrated a "Jashan" by lighting a fire at the entrance of the cave near the bridge over the Demavand river, and placing fresh fruits, river water and other offerings, on the ground to the recitation of Avestan prayers. Several of the ladies said that they saw mysterious figures appear and disappear on the opposite bank of the river, clambering up the mountain slopes and then vanishing. The best biggest, freshest and juiciest apricots, walnuts and cherries and healing mountain-springs water are to be found here at Mt. Demavand. The shepherds construct stone cairns to collect snow and preserve it for providing drinking water for their flocks through the long hot summers. Mt. Demavand is a defunct volcano. Beautiful flowers and herbal medicinal plants grow on the Mountain slopes. People of the villages are friendly but poor and we came across beggar women in this area. Excellent honey is to be found here; and the mineral spring-water is bottled near a waterfall.

We are indeed thankful to Iran Air for all the courtesies extended to all the returning passenger groups on the flight of 28th June from Tehran to Bombay including waiving through the grossly heavy weight baggage of the Congress participants and serving of vegetarian food on flight. The Delegation members thanked Ahura Mazda for a safe return home to the friendly shores of BOMBAY, the City of the Parsis, with its 4 big Atash Behrams, over half a hundred Agiaries, dokhras still in use and Parsi residential Baugs, housing a living population of Zoroastrians who have kept the flames and fires of the Ancient Faith burning brightly with the performance of ceremonies, after a month of touring the ancient ruins of Iran.

"It's all right," said James, the hurt in his voice throbbing over the telephone. "You needn't take the trouble of coming to the hospital. I just thought I'd let you know."

I was immediately overcome by remorse. Heck, we'd grown up together back in the sunny and dusty town of Nagpur in

*In two years
he ran through two
wives, two cars,
two tons of T-steak
and 20,000 hours of
television*

central India. Besides I was his only kin in cold-hearted New York. If we didn't stand by each other at times like this, we didn't deserve to belong to the same fine family tree or share a grandma who had always stressed the thickness of blood over water. "Okay pal, I'll see you there," I said. "Just give me the name and address of the hospital ... and take care of yourself, James. You are the only cousin I have in New York."

Buttoning up my coat against the chill of the evening, I left the office half an hour early the next day. I picked up some flowers and a basket of oranges on my way to the hospital, where a pretty red-headed nurse directed me to the room of Dr James Cooper. Cousin James looked like Amitabh Bachchan in a hospital scene, victorious but battered after having fought five hoodlums single-handedly. His head, face and neck were swathed in bandages with elongated slits for his eyes, mouth and nose. A ghost of a smile cracked the white mask. I held his hand and told him he looked great. I talked to him of home and family and how they must be celebrating Navroze back in India. Now and then, James scribbled a few words in reply on a pad, and handed it to me.

About 20 minutes after I had come, a serious, clean-shaven, white-coated gentleman looked in and politely asked me if I would now leave. "The New York State University is doing some research on the effects of cosmetic surgery on the male psyche. Dr James has very kindly volunteered to be one of the subjects. The research team is here to talk to him."

I sighed in resignation. James was incorrigible but he was my cousin. I said goodbye and walked out into the American evening.

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MOTLIBAI'S ACT OF FAITH

continued from page 138

ijashnis were performed by a number of mobeds, separately, in the inner and outer prayer halls.

However, like most other atash behrams and agiaries in India, the Udvada Atash Behram also suffers from a severe shortage of professional mobeds, specifically those able to perform the elaborate consecration ceremonies. Currently, the Udvada Atash Behram has only about 10 resident mobeds. Consequently, the consecration ceremonies had to be programmed to the availability of the mobeds. Due to the very heavy monsoon rains between June and September 1994, the consecration ceremonies could not be completed in time for the holy fire to be relocated on *roj Meher, mah Ardibehesth*, YZ 1364 (October 7, 1994), the centenary date of the Atash Behram. The holy fire was finally shifted in the *Ushen gah* on *roj Aneran, mah Ardibehesth*, YZ 1364 (the night of October 21/22, 1994). In preparation for the shift of the holy fire from the Dar-e-Mehr to the Atash Behram, all street lights in the area around the Atash Behram were turned off to avoid artificial light shining on and polluting the Holy Fire during its passage; all lights in the two buildings were extinguished and the whole area totally darkened. Thereaf-

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ter, the nine mobeds who had taken special nahans jointly carried the holy fire back to the inner sanctum of the Atash Behram.

The first boi and maachi were offered to the holy fire in its newly renovated home by the son of Dastur Pheroozi (who was in Bombay, recovering from a heart attack) in the Ushen gah. The next day, in the Havan gah of *roj Hormuzd, mah Khordad*, YZ 1364 (at about 6.30 a.m. on October 22, 1994), a maachi was offered to the holy fire on behalf of The Wadia Trust, followed later in the morning by a jashan performed in the outer prayer hall of the Atash Behram by Dastur Mirza and nine other mobeds including the son of his compeer Pheroozi, the manager of the Atash Behram and the secretary of the Udwarda Nav Kutumbi Athornan Anjuman, both of whom are mobeds. Attending the jashan was a representative trustee of The Wadia Trust, the architect and the contractor all of whose roles in renovating the venerable structures were highly commended. Devotees have been exuberant about the fire-temple's overall appearance — the choice of the tiles, carpets and color schemes. The world Zoroastrian community commends with gratitude their execution of this onerous task which has ensured the preservation of the holy Iranshah fire, in befitting status, for the generations ahead.

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"Throw away that lump, Ms Manekshaw." I looked up in sheer horror. "You have handled it too much, the texture is ruined. The outcome will be hard inedible pastry, if you can call it that."

This was my first lesson in making pate sucree, the sweet French pastry, at the Cordon Bleu School of Cookery, London. This was the advanced course to which one was supposed to come equipped with knowledge of the lesser types of cakes and pastry.

So I started all over again, bearing in mind that one handles pastry very lightly, and kneads lightly till smooth. From that day onwards, I have been extra careful how I handle this particular pastry.

PATE SUCREE

Plain flour (4 oz — 115 g)
Castor sugar (2 oz — 60 g)
Butter (2 oz — 60 g)
Eggs (2 — large yolks)
Salt (a pinch)

Sieve flour with salt on a marble top or pastry board. Make a well in the center with the back of your hand. Place butter, castor sugar, and egg yolks in the well. Using the finger tips of your right hand, soften butter with sugar and egg yolks till smooth and no lumps remain. Now with a palette knife in your left hand, draw in the flour, and (this is the crucial moment) knead very lightly till the paste is smooth. Do not overknead at this point. Put paste in a clingwrap and chill for at least one hour before using, so that the pastry is relaxed.

How to roll pastry

There is a method in rolling pastry. We do not roll like we do our roties or chappaties.

Place the paste on a floured board and pat into a round. With a floured rolling pin (the flour should be on the surface and on the pin, not on the paste, as that would add extra flour to the paste and make it hard: all these

*Treat it as you would
a friend — gently
and with respect!*



little tips one never finds in cookery books). Place the rolling pin at the base of the paste nearest to you. Roll two ups and one down with a firm hand, pick up the pin and start again from the point you left off. Repeat this movement till the outer rim of the pastry is reached. Make the circle large enough to line the tin which is going to be used.

BARQUETTES FRANGIPANES

Take about 8-10 barquette tins (boat shaped) and place them close together, almost touching each other. Roll up the paste on the rolling pin and unroll on to the barquette tins. Lightly stretch pastry into each mold with a small ball of pastry dipped in flour. Cut off pastry with the rolling pin rolled over it. Prick the barquettes in tins with a fork and keep in a cool place till required.

FRANGIPANE

Castor sugar (4 oz — 115 g)
Butter (4 oz — 115 g)
Eggs (2)
Almonds (4 oz — 115 g — ground)
Flour (1 oz — 30 g)
Lime/lemon juice (2-3 drops)
Softened butter with a spatula or wooden spoon. Add sugar and beat till smooth, light and fluffy. Beat eggs lightly and add gradually to mixture, beating all the while. Add almonds, flour and lime juice. Mix well. Fill three quarter barquette molds lined with pastry and bake for 5-8 minutes in a preset oven with temperature 375°F (190°C). With the same paste one can make Tartlettes aux Fruits.

TARTLETES AUX FRUITS

Line small tartlette tins with pate sucree. For this roll out pastry into a round. Choose a pastry cutter one size larger than the tartlette tins.

Pastry dough: friend or foe?

Bhicoo J. Manekshaw

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Place cut rounds of pastry in molds. Press twice with two thumbs, taking care not to press the edges. Prick and bake blind for 5-8 minutes.

Filling

Apricot glaze or black or green grapes (seeded), or cherries or strawberries.

Apricot Glaze

Apricot jam (3-4 tbsp)

Water (2-3 tbsp)

Place jam and water in a pan and bring to a boil. Stirring all the while reduce the mixture by about 1/3. Sieve and brush the cooked pastry while glaze is still hot. Cool, and fill with fruit. Add fruit in the tartlettes and brush again with hot glaze. Leave to set and get cold.

PATE AU CHOUX

(Oven temperature 420°F — 220°C)

This paste is used for eclairs or for savory fillings.

Flour (5 oz — 115 g)

Butter (3½ oz — 100 g)

Water (½ pint imperial or 10 oz)

Eggs (4)

Salt (a pinch)

Sieve dry flour with salt on a plate or stiff paper. Melt butter with water in a pan,



bring to a boil. The ideal is to melt butter and bring water to boil at the same time, if possible. Remove from heat. Shoot in flour all at once. Beat till smooth. The mixture should now leave the sides of the pan and

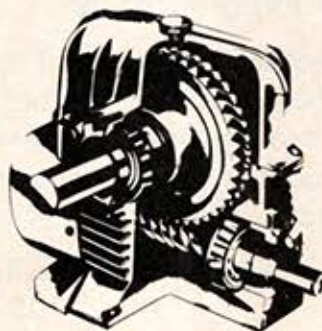
form into a ball and, if pressed with a finger, the pastry should not stick to it. Do not overbeat at this stage or the butter will separate, making the pastry heavy when baked.

Cool mixture. Lightly beat eggs.

Add a little of egg mixture to the cooled pastry and beat well till all the eggs are used up. Beat thoroughly till pastry is smooth and shining.

Grease a baking sheet and flour it lightly. Either pipe paste into eclairs or pipe into balls or spoon paste on baking sheet with two wet spoons. Smooth over with the back of a wet spoon into a ball. Bake in a preset oven and increase heat to 425°F-220°C as choux paste rises better in rising heat. Bake for about 30 minutes. Do not get deceived if you see the pastry well risen, puffed up and light brown. It has to stop "singing." This trick was taught by my ustad in the bakery department at the India International Center where I used to work as their catering consultant. Once I told ustadjji that the pastry should be removed, as I thought that it was done. He said, "Nahiji, unhé gaana nahi bund kiya (no, they have not stopped singing)." He took one out and pressed it to my ear — it was hissing! He said that until the hissing stopped, they were not baked through and

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would collapse as soon as they were brought out. I timed the pastry to 30-35 minutes, and all the guesswork was cut out. Do not be impatient, wait for them to be light golden brown and they must stop "singing"! One can never stop learning in this wonderful profession. And here is another trick: immediately they are out, pierce them with a skewer to release the steam, so that they become nice and crisp and not soggy. Place them on a cake rack to cool. Then slit open and fill with any of the following fillings:

Savory Fillings: 1) Cooked prawns with bechamel sauce and chopped celery, with a dash of tobasco. 2) Cooked prawns with mayonnaise or in Thousand Island dressing. 3) Cooked diced chicken in bechamel sauce or in demi glaze sauce with a little red wine or in mayonnaise. 4) Cooked mush-rooms in bechamel sauce, or demi glaze with a little red wine. 5) Cooked vegetables with bechamel sauce mixed with a little oyster sauce or with mayonnaise.

Sweet Fillings: Sweeten cream flavored with brandy with the top dipped in praline sauce or caramel. 2) Filled with sweetened cream and the top covered with chocolate sauce. 3) Filled with creme patissiere and covered with chocolate sauce.

CREME PATISSIERE (Confectioner's custard)

Egg (1)
Egg yolk (1)
Castor sugar (3 oz — 85 g)
Flour (½ oz — 15 g)
Cornflour (½ oz — 15 g)
Milk (½ pint imperial or 10 oz)
Vanilla

Separate egg. Cream two yolks with castor sugar till white and light. Add flour and a little cold milk to make a paste. Scald rest of the milk, pour over egg mixture, blend, put on low heat. Stir all the while till mixture boils. Remove from fire, add vanilla. Whip egg white till stiff. Fold into the mixture. Cool and use as required.

LINZER TORTE

(Oven temperature 375°F-190°C)

This recipe has been taken from *Gourmet's Old Vienna Cook Book*.

Butter (1½ cups)
Sugar (1 cup — fine confectioner's icing sugar, sifted)
Egg (1 — large)
Flour (2 ¾ cups — sifted)
Hazelnuts (1½ cups — ground). Can use walnuts or almonds instead, if hazelnuts are not available.
Salt (a pinch)
Cinnamon (½ tsp — powder)
Raspberry jam as needed, extra confectioner's sugar.
Cream butter with confectioner's sugar till light. Add egg, beat well. Fold in flour alternately with hazelnuts, salt and cinnamon. Mix and chill for ½ hour.

Roll out in a round 1/4" thick. Place in a flan ring or a spring form pan with the pastry 1" rim up the sides of the pan. Prick. Spread jam about 1½ to 2 cups, with a dash of lime/lemon juice.

Roll out rest of pastry dough. Cut into ½" wide strips and form a lattice on top over the jam. Bake for 40 minutes. Cool, and remove from pan. Fill squares with more jam and sprinkle sides with extra confectioner's sugar and serve.

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

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The Turning by Armin Wandrewala. Published in 1996 by Astarte Publications, 1-A, Metro House, 23-25, Colaba Causeway, Bombay 400001. Distributed by UBS Publishers Distributors Private Limited, 5, Wallace Street, Bombay 400001. Pp: 160. Price: Rs 98.

Step aside Perry Mason. *Aapro* Zerkxes Avari is here to solve complicated crime cases. With knowledge of the law, and assistance from his part-time live-in girlfriend, Scherezade Vatcha, an ex-freelance journalist turned copywriter. Vatcha provides no intricate play on words despite her vocation, but the plot of Ms Armin Wandrewala's maiden novel *The Turning* twists its way to an absorbing finale on why (more than 'who') Ms Dina Prakash Sattar was killed.

The Turning is a tale of two families, and the sad chain of events that grips them within a month. On the 10th anniversary of Prakash Shahane's wedding to Dina, his first wife Karuna, who had refused to give him a divorce and permit his remarriage, commits suicide. A fortnight later, Dina is found dead. An autopsy conducted on her 'cadaver' (Wandrewala being a practising lawyer prefers to use legalese in place of the more familiar 'corpse') reveals that what could have passed off as a natural death is in actuality an almost perfect murder. And 70 pages through the book, the stage is set for unravelling the answer to 'who killed Dina Prakash Sattar' (the new Moslem surname adopted by the couple after their wedding).

Wandrewala assembles a large cast of suspects for her whodunit and manages, despite ponderous language and a rather pedantic style, to keep the reader interested as Avari, the 'cold-blooded'-looking criminal lawyer tracks down the murderer. The case is made all the more interesting by the fact that Dina, in her search for sex and happiness, abandoned her faith and converted to Islam to marry Prakash, a

Hindu who also converts to Islam without divorcing his first wife. Such a conversion and marriage "to avail of the benefit of a second wife" has ramifications on inheritance as well. Earlier Dina had gone through a divorce from her wimp-like husband Khurshed Sooneji and an involvement with another man who left her pregnant.

The novel hence becomes a murder mystery where it's not just the murder that is being probed, but also the socio-religious implications behind it. To that extent Wandrewala, who has to walk a tight-rope to balance all the elements of crime and law in a novel, turns out a gripping new genre of 'why-dunit.'

Zoroastrian purists who have long fretted over conversion could well send up a cheer as Wandrewala explores in her maiden work the effect of religious conversion on inheritance —

and, more importantly on the mind. Dina, writes Wandrewala when introducing her 'cast of characters' (an unusual device in a novel, being more suited to the writing of a play or film script) "could never come to terms with her conversion...or herself," and would spend hours agonizing on how her relatives and the "intransigent orthodoxy of the priests" would deny her a place in the Towers of Silence. With precisely this fear in mind, Dina had willed her body to medical research, and hence unwittingly opened the doors to a probe on her sudden death — just a day after her birthday.

Dina's birthday, and her sister Shirin Dumasias wedding anniversary a few days earlier, provide a fine excuse for Wandrewala to bring together the cast of her scenario. The writing sparkles for a few pages here as the author writes with a wealth of detail on the Parsi home, and on the Parsi way of life and entertainment. Wandrewala uses the occasion well to take some pot shots at the community's societal behavior (all tongue-in-cheek): the inter-

actions between the characters, as well as their foibles are etched with an observant eye. However, Wandrewala is not able to maintain this felicitous streak. As she shifts towards building up the tale to its somewhat labored finale, her characters appear predictable; they do not evolve.

This does not mean, however, that the author does not strew the mandatory red herrings over her pages. Rather, to increase the complexity of the novel she packs in as many as 33 characters in its 160 pages. There's Aftab Dastoor, cousin of Dina's first husband Khurshed, a rabidly orthodox priest who has seen Dina sneak into a fire-temple at Bandra. He sends word through Khurshed (who coincidentally chooses to visit her on the morning of her death) that he would take matters in his own hand if he ever saw her repeat the act. Even Dina's brother, Fredun, is portrayed as never having forgiven her for the 'sin,' and identified by the reader as a possible suspect.

It would not be fair to tell more about the plot, but there are two more deaths and lots of steamy sex before Avari tracks down the killer. In the denouement he explains the motives and manner of the murders.

Wandrewala's work lacks the wit and style of her famous English counterparts, P. D. James and the earlier grande dame of crime fiction, Agatha Christie. She is unnecessarily bombastic, strewing the novel with words like 'hitherto,' or sprinkling her sentences with repetitive words like 'inevitable' [a Wandrewala favorite, considering the innumerable places at which it inevitably (sic) pops up]. Equally distracting is her style of leaving many sentences incomplete or loosely connected with the assistance of three dots.

Yet, the author is on sure ground when it comes to writing dialogue. She sheds her stylized manner and slips into an informal sing-song speech for her Parsi characters. Take, for example, the sentences interspersed with 'boyo' uttered by the bluff good-humored senior inspector of police, Sheri-yar Irani; and the delightful cameo of an archetypal old solicitor, Gustad Kabraji, whose fussy manner and mien are redolent of the kind one encounters at ancient Parsi-owned/partnered legal 'shops.' Though Wandrewala is not preachy about the subject, one gets the impression that she would prefer to have uniform civil laws rather than that a nation like ours be governed by personal religious laws. *The Turning* sketches the disastrous consequences that



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befall two families as a result of such disparate codes.

Wandrewala's maiden attempt at crime fiction may not be in the league of Erle Stanley Gardner, Colin Dexter, P. D. James or Ruth Rendell. But, with her skilful blending of all the elements of a potboiler, who knows, *The Turning* may just be her turning point for a career in Bollywood script-writing. A prudent Wandrewala already seems to have exercised an eagle-eye on this medium by reserving for herself "all rights, including film rights." With the synergy of sin, murder, passion, voodoo, incest et al that Wandrewala combines in *The Turning*, and the promised future adventures of Avari, quite a few from her legal fraternity (and her Ahirman-fighting community) must be gasping, "O Law(d)!"

Dadachanji's diversity

Parinaz Gandhi

Speeches and Writings on Zoroastrian Religion, Culture and Civilization by F. K. Dadachanji. Published in 1995 by the author, Dadachanji House, 4 Katrak Parsi Colony, M. A. Jinnah Road, Karachi. Pp: XV + 449. Price: Rs 400.

In his eightieth year of life Karachi's Faredun K. Dadachanji launched his second book *Speeches and Writings on Zoroastrian Religion, Culture and Civilization*. The author's rationale for this present work as per his preface: while he waited in the departure lounge of the terminal airport waiting to be carried to his final destination, he could not sit idle doing nothing. Actually his article on Parsi Character notes, "A Parsi never rests. As a matter of fact, laziness is a sin according to the Parsi religion."

The 449-page volume contains some of the speeches and articles the author had delivered and written during the past nearly 30 years, plus some other contributions from varied sources. "This book is like a grand buffet-banquet, where all sorts of food for thought are spread out, from which you may select any item you like, digest it, and try another one. But you do not have to consume all items at one go..." Dadachanji outlines his objectives. However when sampling such varied fare one should also be prepared to come across the same thoughts and words more than once.

Including controversial subjects like

conversion, mixed marriages, unified Parsi calendar in his collection, the author writes, "A healthy controversy should always be welcome." Clearly he is in favor of continuing with time honored traditions whether it be following the Shenhshahi calendar, debarring converts or dissuading females from marrying out of the community. To justify the differential religious privileges accorded to males and females he offers simplistic explanations like a woman "always adopts her husband's religion." Such reasoning may not be very convincing. On another issue as to why non-Zoroastrians are refused entry into fire-temples he states: "When a devotee goes to the temple, he first has to go to the temple-well in a corner of the compound, wash his hands, and untie and recite his kusti... Then only can he enter the fire-temple. Even a Parsi who has not worn the sudreh-kusti cannot enter the temple." On this reasoning even children whose navjotes have yet to be performed would not be entitled to enter fire-temples.

Dadachanji's six-fold recipe for survival stresses on the need for individual members to subordinate their personal interests to the larger interests of the community, realize the importance of duty, and exercise rights with responsibility. Commenting on the economic condition of the community the author despairs, "Our community today is again maintaining a very high and artificial standard of living. We are getting used to a life of comfort, ease, extravagance and indulgence... Even in advanced countries... the present slogan (is) 'Save and Prosper' whereas the Parsi slogan is 'Eat, drink and make merry...' Our motto today should be 'Back to Simplicity.'"

The section on Ancient History elucidates the reigns of the glorified Persian rulers and their monuments which are a lasting testimony to their greatness. Unfortunately we do not get to know the source of some of these writings. The photographs accompanying the text are impressive.

Prominent Parsis include mention of those known to the author like the Dinshaws and Avaris of Karachi, and Dr Aspi Gollwalla and Parvez Katrak of Bombay. It is through these pages that we learn of Dadabhai Naoroji's patience and tolerance in

supporting a mentally retarded wife; of Jamshedji Kanga receiving the governor of Bombay at his residence in his *sudreh-lenga* (pyjama)...

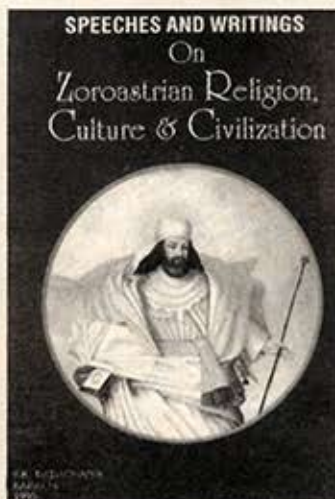
Throughout the book there are several references to the house of Tatas and members of that leading family. The most

interesting and entertaining however is the farewell message delivered by J. R. D. Tata on Sir Homi Mody's retirement and the repartee he earned from the quick-witted director. At one point JRD commented, "Of all men I know, none enjoys farewell functions as much as Sir Homi. This is the third he has got from us... He is a very resourceful man, and in spite of all the precautions we have taken... he might well infiltrate again into the board of

Tatas..." Take now Sir Homi's response: "As Mr Tata has rubbed it in, this is the third occasion on which Bombay House is holding a function in my honor, and I was going to say that it looks like being the last, until I heard the heartening words of the chairman... We have as chairman a most unusual person. He has a very keen intellect, a little too keen..."

Even though there are some spelling errors and a mix-up of certain pages, the book gives an overall impression of being a neat, presentable work. That the frontispiece of the book has been designed by Jimmy Engineer who deserves a mention in the work is understandable. But to see over a dozen pages devoted to this artist seems disproportionate. Similarly reproducing the foreword and reviews to Dadachanji's first book, *Parsis: Ancient and Modern*, seems unnecessary.

As comments Dadachanji's colleague Behram Rustomji, "It's a valuable, informative and inspiring volume which makes pleasant reading... should be in every Parsi home." Available in Karachi for Rs 400, for the book to be mailed to India, it will cost Rs 530 per copy if sent in a parcel of six books. The proceeds of the book have been promised to the Dastur Dr Dhalla Memorial Institute which will open a Special Endowment Fund Account and utilize the interest therefrom to invite Zoroastrian and non-Zoroastrian scholars to deliver lectures and papers, as notes a newsletter issued by the Informal Religious Meetings Trust Fund.





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Making crime pay

Following *The Turning*, her first release, counsel Armin Wandrewala already has five other books in the pipeline

Homi J. Rogers

For quite a few years, Ms Armin Wandrewala was just one of those black robes who walk purposefully down the sun-streaked corridors of Bombay High Court, holding their clients' briefs — and destiny — in their hands. Then one monsoon morning in 1996 she surprised everyone with the release of her book *The Turning*, a detective novel. For our interview we met in her office enlivened with potted plants. A wreathed-in-warmth Wandrewala greeted us, trying to shuffle aside the papers that crowded her desk: testimony to the twin careers she now straddles — writer/publisher and practising lawyer.

Wandrewala has had a checkered life. Having lost her father Ratan when she was just seven, she worked her way through school and college by giving piano lessons and winning scholarships, then dabbling in marketing before straying into law, almost at the cost of sacrificing her earlier ambition to become a writer.

"I have sold space in *Gentleman* magazine, and marketed sites for the Asiad in Bombay and Calcutta for a Dubai-based firm," she reveals. She recalls those early years when she worked for a law degree from Bombay's Government Law College, a city Navsari-born Wandrewala came to in her infant years and grew to love immensely. "I missed Bombay tremendously, when we (the family, including mother Homai and younger brother Hoshi) migrated to Canada in the '70s," she says. A possible reason why the Wandrewalas winged back home? It is also probably why Wandrewala has set her first novel in Bombay, etching out in detail the sights and sounds of the bustling city and life in

the Parsi baugs, which is another facet of the city she loves. "I grew up in the Bandra Parsi Colony, a beautiful place. And like most Parsi colonies, an enduring testimony to Parsi culture," she states.

Another place close to her heart is her school, Bombay's J. B. Vachha High School for Parsis Girls in the Dadar Parsi Colony. Wandrewala recalls her schooldays with dewy-eyed nostalgia. "Such a lovely place... superb teachers..." she raves, adding that they were the ones to spot her talent in writing. "I won numerous essay competitions at school, and always got the highest marks for composition," she recalls, traipsing merrily down memory lane. "My love for writing is a debt I owe my school," avers Wandrewala, adding that her mother also

played a role in encouraging her fondness for this activity. "She is a very imaginative person, with a great love for books and literature, a passion shared by my father as well." So, call it genes or upbringing, the young Wandrewala had it within her to write — and write well. At St Xavier's College, too, Wandrewala secured the highest marks in English in her first year BA, and bagged the Father Degan and Father Divine Trophies.

For some time her yen for writing had to take a back seat, as Wandrewala was drawn into the world of law by a strange quirk of fate. A practising lawyer who heard her talk and saw the way she carried herself during a litigation case involving her mother, was convinced she would make a good lawyer. "I was born on June 22 — don't ask me the year, please. On my birthday after my graduation in philoso-

phy he gifted me an entire set of law books for the first year." That marked Wandrewala's story-book entry into the musty world of statutes and tomes, though not all the dust and dreariness of the courts could stop her from viewing life through rose-colored glasses. Wandrewala fell in love with, and subsequently married her boss, then an advocate's assistant at Romer Dadachanji Sethna and Company, the law firm she signed up with on becoming a lawyer. Her husband, Shiraz Rahimtoolah has been her friend, philosopher and guide, and, as she acknowledges in her book, "my harshest critic and staunchest supporter." Wandrewala, however, retains her maiden surname for her own legal practice and writing career.

Her own marriage to a non-Parsi (though he's half-Parsi, she reveals, "his mother is a Zoroastrian") has not clouded her views on conversion or intercommunity marriages. "I don't know enough on the issue of conversion to give my views," she states candidly, "and hence prefer to be non-committal. But on the subject of intermarriages, there appears to be a contradiction. While on the one hand we are told that inbreeding is bad, we Parsis scowl at marrying outside the community, as it would 'dilute the Parsi strain.'" It is a conundrum on which Wandrewala chooses to hold no brief, on either side, at least not for the present. "I would like to do research on Parsi philosophy one day," she sighs, wondering how she would find the time for such a major project.

"But intercommunity marriages," observes Wandrewala, "are bound to take place in cosmopolitan work-cities like Bombay. It is time the community accepted that, and also took into the fold children of Parsi mothers whose non-Parsi fathers have no objection to their navjotes being performed. If we can accept children of Parsi fathers with non-Parsi mothers, I see no reason why the community cannot accept it vice-versa." Wandrewala scoffs at the argument that such an acceptance would lead to a generation having names like Hutoxi Narayan, or Jehangir Varma. "What's wrong with that," she argues, "don't we have Frasers and Morris and Crawfords and such other English surnames in our community?"

Her spirited argument and unconventional thinking reminds one of a character in her maiden work. "Yes," she laughs, "friends do tell me that Scherezade in *The*



Wandrewala: an interest in writing fiction

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Turning reminds them of me." But then, all first novels are autobiographical in part. Yet *The Turning* has its roots in a case which presented itself to her a few summers ago. A five-month pregnant Frenchwoman visited her, and expressed her desire to get married to a Hindu after they both converted to Islam. The situation set Wandrewala thinking, and *The Turning* was conceived. Wandrewala added the corpses and a fair dose of sex and sin, so that her work does not become a legal case study; and thus she metamorphosed from a legal-eagle to a crime-czarina. "I'm so glad the book has succeeded," she gushes, "because it has helped to explode the myth that crime tales by an Indian author won't sell." Wandrewala, who published the book herself along with a well-wisher so as to retain total control over its production, says she has been flooded with orders.

It has also opened the floodgates for many more works to spring from Wandrewala's prolific pen, or rather personal computer, which occupies a prominent corner in her little room. A romantic thriller about the love that blossoms between a Hindu and a Parsi girl, *Moon Across Heavens* will be out soon, published by Magna Books (publishers of *Stardust* and a clutch of other magazines). The adven-

tures of Zerkex Avari and Scherezade Vatcha are to find a second expression in *The Ceremony of Innocence* due for release by the end of the year. In this novel Zerkex' father Sam plays a prominent role. Says the author, "I actually put him in *The Turning* when the book was at the proofing stage so that I could develop him in a later work." Also slated for early publication are two non-fiction books commissioned by UBS Publishers Distributors Ltd, one on a hard-core legal subject but written with the layman in mind, the other a general anecdotal book. "People are nowadays fond of reading non-fiction and managerial books, though my interest is in writing fiction," says Wandrewala.

But the book currently closest to her heart is *Alone in the Valley*, a travelogue to be published by Vakils Feffer and Simons Pvt Ltd, on Wandrewala's trek in the Garhwal Himalayas undertaken in August 1993. She had kept a diary of her travels, which involved a solo journey to Hemkund Saheb, a Sikh pilgrim spot some 15,000 feet above sea level, and the fabled Valley of Flowers, and thereafter a solitary adventure at the Vasudhara Falls past Mana, the last Indian village before the Tibetan border. "It is a place no tourist should go to alone," recommends Wandrewala. "I had

quite a few close shaves, though as predicted by Jagjit and Kamini Uppal whom I met at the beginning of my impulsive solitary trek, I emerged unscathed." The book with 120-odd pages of text and 16 to 24 color plates besides numerous photographs, awaits an early release and contains, according to the author, many commonsense tips for trekkers, in addition to her adventures.

With a profession as demanding as law, we wonder how Wandrewala finds the time for her writing, which includes not just the books in the pipeline, but also a weekly column on legal matters for *The Metropolis*, and reviewing books for the *Indian Review of Books*. "Writing is my passion," she says with a smile. "I write sometimes late into the night, and almost daily till around 8 or 9 p.m. in my office. Sometimes, an idea strikes me when I'm awaiting my case to come up in court; I get back to the office and write." Interestingly, Wandrewala who writes on criminal law is a counsel practising essentially in the Bombay High Court, having specialized in public and private international law.

"I was born on the cusp of Gemini and Cancer, and Geminians are supposed to have dual personalities," laughs Wandrewala.

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wala, explaining the reason for her twin vocations. "And my palm says I'm destined to write."

On a more serious plane though, Wandrewala attributes her success to perseverance and the courage of her convictions. "When I decided to go independent in my

"Sometimes an idea strikes me when I'm awaiting my case to come up in court"

practice, people said I would not succeed. They felt that law is a male-dominated field, and neither clients nor fellow lawyers could relate to a female. But I had confidence in myself. I knew I would get briefs, and I did. Similarly," she continues, "when I took to writing crime fiction, it was assumed that my book wouldn't sell because Indian authors in this genre have not been well received." Yet, as Wandrewala states with a bit of pride, her maiden book is the toast of literary circles in town. "If you firmly believe you can do something, do it. Don't be cowed down, or allow anyone to discourage you," she advises. "However, should you fail, don't flounder in recrimination; get on with your life. Let failure not daunt you. Remember, by the law of averages, the tide has to turn in your favor some time."

For Wandrewala, the turning has already come. Critics like M. V. Kamath, ex-editor of *The Illustrated Weekly of India*, and S. Muthiah, founder-editor of the *Indian Review of Books*, have praised her work in glowing terms, suggesting that Wandrewala has a second vocation all lined up and awaiting her. With a school-girl-like charm she exults, "I have even been approached by television serial producers to script some episodes for them, which I may soon do."

There is no doubt that with Wandrewala writing is a passion, and her return to an old love is filling her with unbounded joy. "Be happy in whatever you do; happiness is what you owe to yourself," remarks Wandrewala, then slips into Shakespearean sagacity as she quotes: "To thine own self be true... thou cans't not then be false to any man."

From a little girl who shouldered family responsibility at an early age by giving piano lessons ("I don't find the time now to play it"), Wandrewala has struck the right note in legal and literary circles, combining the two with rare élat.

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L to R: Karanjawalla, Marfatia, P. Irani. Below: PGH administrator Dr Nisar Siddiqui (3rd from L) guiding Federation delegates

FEDERATION...continued from page 102
Khareghat Hall, Mogrelia was heard jestingly advising his neighbor Tirandaz, "Rustom, *tumé calmpose lainé aavo* (swallow a tranquillizer before you come)!"

Udvada

Taleyarkhan apprised the council regarding the progress of work at Udvada where engineering and afforestation are seen as two arms of the attempt to curtail the inroads of the sea which has already claimed sections of the beach, compound walls and property on the seafront between Udvada and the fishing village of Kolak. Zoroastrian experts and government representatives together with the expertise of the Central Water and Power Station in Pune have come to the conclusion that a 3½ m high wall, approximately 300 m long, 30 m into the sea would act as a breakwater. The central and state governments "have agreed to bear the brunt of the estimated cost of Rs 40 lakhs" but have asked the Save Udvada Committee (SUC) to contribute whatever it can. "The total cost including afforestation will amount to 1.5 crores. We have agreed to pay about 10 percent," noted Taleyarkhan. The program's time-frame is estimated by him as two to three years and the SUC is seeking the 80G exemption from the Income Tax authorities but it is yet to register itself as a charity in Bombay or Gujarat.

Moved by Taleyarkhan's account, philanthropist Dossu Ghandhi of Allahabad set the ball rolling by promising to donate Rs 25,000. The DPA, Calicut and SPP offered Rs 10,000 each, the Mhow anjuman Rs 11,000, the Madras Anjuman Rs 5,000 and the BPP offered Rs 50,000. Mogrelia personally donated Rs 5,000.

Zoroastrian Chamber of Commerce?

A scheme of venture capital, mooted by

Guzder at the 1994 Federation meet in Baroda is yet to get off the ground. In the meantime Tirandaz announced that the BPP had taken the first step towards instituting a Zoroastrian Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Trade to be spearheaded by Shroff where "money bags will be patron members... We are all Zoroastrians, equal to one another irrespective of finance and wealth orientation," he declared. Voicing his sorrow at the loss of noted banker Maneck Goiporia, Tirandaz said, "We will try and take in (former chairman of the Central Bank of India) Noshir Mistry... All the Zoroastrians of the world will grow together... We'll go into the 21st century as the first, most credible community in the world."

In support Gandhi offered the 400 names



and bio data he had collected in the process of forming a body of industrialists, businessmen, professionals, etc under the Federation umbrella called Zotarians. "We shouldn't pull in different directions. You develop it in Bombay," he told the corporator.

Youth

The 10th annual Youth Seminar is scheduled to be held in Bombay during the Diwali holidays, according to P. Irani. With the cost estimate of the four-day fest (tentatively November 8-11, 1996) placed

at 4.5 to 5 lakh rupees, the primary concern is to generate funds. Guzder has already pledged one lakh rupees (for five consecutive years) from his personal trust. Mistry and Mogrelia pledged Rs 50,000 and Rs 25,000 respectively. Burzin Mehta of the BPP's Youth Club and one of the organizers of the scheduled fest noted that they were planning to publish a souvenir on the occasion and hoped their advertisement appeals will be well received. They are also looking for sponsors for meals each day at an estimated cost of Rs 25,000. Among the proposed activities is the selection of Mr and Ms Zoroastrian and a painting competition for those between 12 and 22 years of age, according to P. Irani.

Holiday Programme for Youth (HPY) organizer Ms Diana Marfatia gave a synopsis of the program that was held last April with 40 upcountry youths from Calcutta, Madras, Pune, Surat and Navsari participating along with 109 from Bombay. One of the program's most effective facets, according to Marfatia, is the opportunity it gives the budding adults to "interact and hobnob with very important people (who) leave their telephone numbers and visiting cards with the students, keep themselves on call."

The HPY youths, specifically Ms Khushnooma Deboo, are also supposed to be organizing a representation for the Second World Youth Congress to be hosted by the ZTFE in London in 1997.

Apart from these specific tasks which were barely referred to, the youths felt sidelined among the jostling egos of Federation representatives. "Why is it that people over 50 are discussing our future while we are sitting here for the past two days and not getting a chance to speak?" asked Mehta. While Ms Navaz Palkhiwala translated her opportunity to speak into a quick litany of the activities of the youth in Pune — Khordadsal function, trip to Bushir Dam, Agiary salgreh, badminton competition, etc — Mehta, P. Irani, Neville Todiwalla and Deboo were concerned about the issues that were ostensibly discussed by Federation members. Some telling comments:

•“Half an hour was spent in discussing whether the word ‘hulla’ should be deleted from the minutes... The same points were made again and again regarding the world body because many people here have a lot of ego hassles... There can be no progress if the same people come back and say the same things.”

•“Why should the youth waste time to come here and hear you quarrel?”

•“The future of the community is never discussed at these meetings — only whether the BPP, the Federation or the WZO are supreme.”

•“Remember one phrase — united we stand, divided we fall.”

While Gandhi protested that he had always given the youth a chance to speak but they had not availed of the opportunity, the only one to return the fire of the youth was E. Irani. “Can you... let me know what constructive work you’ve done for the community?” he challenged. On Todiwalla responding that they had been cleaning agiaries through the HPY, E. Irani countered coolly: “I am talking of FOZYA and the youth as individuals. The HPY is funded and backed by the BPP.”

The HPY has created its own corpus through a paper collection drive and other activities, Mehta and Todiwalla justified themselves. Mogrelia with customary conciliation urged them to “throw some constructive idea into the pool.” “Tell us when you have a project. We’re very willing...” offered the BPP Youth Club’s Urvakshi Mistry, but E. Irani was determined that the youth become self-motivated: “If you have financial problems with particular projects, come to us,” he reiterated.

Deboo’s query, “Why can’t the BPP have a youth representative?” led Gandhi to recall that at Madras the BPP, the Iranian Zoroastrian Anjuman (IZA), PPP and Madras had agreed to have greater dealings with the youth. “Not one of these zones has held meetings with the youth,” he charged and was corrected by E. Irani. The PPP has held meets with the youths, involving them in the beautification of the doongerwadi in Poona, he was informed. “We are motivating the youth and they are coming forward. But what about self-motivation? We expect them to come forward and work (of their own volition),” noted E. Irani.

Gandhi now suggested that youths in Bombay start with the BPP and the IZA, and urged the BPP to consider a youth wing in the Zoroastrian Chamber of Commerce proposed by Tirandaz.

A youth exchange had also been planned

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between Madras and Secunderabad that, according to Mogrelia, was scotched as being too close to the exams. An exchange between Pune and Madras was being planned in December. He now welcomed any BPP/ IZA youth who might wish to join.

Reservation

The community's impotent concern for its youths who earn over 90 percent marks but are unable to enter professional institutions of their choice adds to the poignancy of the situation. Again and again the demand for reservation surfaces and needs to be quelled. There is "no reservation for minorities in any educational institution," assured Taleyarkhan. "The Modern Education Society controls Ruparel College, Wadia College of Management and other Wadia institutions. Neville and Nusli Wadia have a great say..." noted E. Irani. "At (Pune's) Wadia College they tell us to get a letter from Neville Wadia," added PPP president Dara Irani. "At Jai Hind and K. C. Colleges, Sindhi students with 55-60 percent marks get admission while our students with 80 percent are turned down," corroborated Thana Parsi Zoroastrian Anjuman president Rustom Cursetjee.

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categories, the competition for the open 27 percent seats seems to be driving Zoroastrian children to the wall and delegates like Dr Syrus Irani from the IZA accused the top Parsis of egoism because they are not trying to get the required reservation, at least in institutions which had been founded on Zoroastrian funds. They got a hard-hitting reply from Tirandaz who alleged that: "The B. Y. L. Nair College had 'x' number of seats reserved for nominees of the Nair family who started charging three lakh rupees per nomination. On one occasion they changed the nomination in favor of someone who paid five lakh rupees and the original nominee went to court. The court struck down all donor reservations beyond 30 years. Fifty percent of the Indian population belongs to the scheduled castes, therefore 50 percent of the seats in educational institutions are reserved for them... The Parsi population is 0.0001 percent of the Indian population. So there have to be five lakh seats in medical/engineering colleges for one seat to be reserved for them... If BPP trustees ask for reservation, we'd make a fool of ourselves."

Adult franchise

Adult franchise was a runaway topic introduced into the discussion on defunct anjumans by Tirandaz, aided by Engineer and Taleyarkhan who joined the debate despite Gandhi's attempts to scotch the issue. Unlisted on the agenda, the long discussion played havoc with time limitations.

"If a small anjuman like Nargol can have universal adult franchise... bring all other anjumans to bear pressure on the BPP," began Tirandaz eliciting Gandhi's response, "Internal matters of an anjuman cannot be discussed in the Federation."

The matter might have ended there but Engineer mentioned how he was in favor of the system though the Bombay High Court had ruled it out and Taleyarkhan, voicing his appreciation of "Tirandaz's outspokenness," agreed with his principle though, he said he did not agree with "Tirandaz's manner." He then turned to Guzder, saying "Mr Chairman, you are also in favor..." Guzder, eyes round in amazement, shook his head from side to side indicating disagreement. Though Gandhi tried once more to prevent the argument proceeding, Tirandaz's superior lung power soon reduced him to silence and the debate became generalized.

According to Tirandaz, he was "liberating the community from the tyranny of the few which kept people like Sir Pherozeshah

Mehta outside the BPP. If the Government of India could do away with Privy Purses (which embodied the rights of the Indian princes who acceded to the formation of the Indian republic) what is the right of donors?" Besides, as he saw it, the donors were not being deprived of their right to vote. It was only the question of extending the right to all those over 18 years of age. According to Tirandaz, "If all seven trustees go to the High Court and tell it we want all Parsis over 18 years to have the right to vote and we have 350 years of history behind the Panchayet," there is no way the court would refuse to acquiesce to the request.

The back and forth battle and threats to expunge Tirandaz's remarks from the record had scant impact on the verbose trustee. The DPA's Farokh Rustomji and E. Irani were both in Tirandaz's favor as the DPA's and PPP's constitutions give every adult member the right to elect trustees. However E. Irani suggested that Tirandaz hasten slowly: "Can we start by motivating people to become members, then try to change the constitution?"

Reminding the delegates that the BPP is first and foremost a trust, not an anjuman, Gandhi noted, "That the beneficiary is entitled to elect the trustee is an innovation in legal practice. It is the settlor (of the trust) who nominates trustees and has the right to define how trustees will be appointed."

The argument continued but Tirandaz was adamant: "The High Court has no choice if all seven trustees ask for it."

Individual anjumans

Requests to Pune Zoroastrians yielded gates, cement, stones and bricks to the PPP, enabling them to fence off 1.5 acres of land valued at Rs 4.5 crores, informed D. Irani. Nearly 1,000 sq ft of the land was being used as roads since the past 10 to 12 years, as residents from neighboring colonies took short cuts through the property. "There was strong resistance from the neighbors. We just stood there and encouraged the workers... Till now the Parsis have been taken for a ride," continued D. Irani, recounting how the PPP's last recourse to legal action against outside defaulters had cost it a whopping Rs 50,000.

The enclosed area (under serial no 607 at Kondwa) amounts to 21,807 sq m where the PPP proposes to build rental housing for the community. Ninety percent of the layout developing charge of Rs 20 per meter has to be paid immediately and the total municipal charges of over Rs 19 lakhs

have to be deposited with the collector before construction can begin, informed E. Irani. Another area of 63,180 sq m is proposed to be developed as ownership housing for the community later. As the PPP is seeking funds for the project Tirandaz offered Rs 20 lakhs as a loan from the BPP against allotment right to five tenements but neither could the PPP trustees make an immediate reply nor did other BPP trustees endorse the on-the-spot offer.

Though the Zoroastrian population in Pune is estimated at between 7,500 to 8,000, membership of the PPP currently rests at 1,200 as per D. Irani. Their immovable properties are now worth Rs 300 crores and liquid assets total 21 lakhs, he added. Bodies of Zoroastrians in the vicinity, including Panchgani, Mahableshwar, Satara, etc are consigned at the Poona dokhma and are given four-day facilities at the Kayani bungalow, he informed. Until their mobed died recently even prayer services were provided, said D. Irani according to whom there are two nassessalars and two khandhias in the Panchayat's pay and "plenty of vultures" to take care of the 60-80 bodies annually consigned there.

The two priorities of the Allahabad Parsi Zoroastrian Anjuman as per its president Capt Homi Dandiwalla, was a census of the anjuman and the induction of younger members as trustees. Estimating the total number of Zoroastrians at 34 (of whom seven are in transit, generally being members of the Indian Army or Air Force), Dandiwalla said that since 1985 there have been 11 deaths, three births, eight marriages (of whom seven have settled outside Allahabad). He expected five-six deaths in the next 10 years and no births. Despite their numerical strength of 27 individuals (of whom three are above 70 years) they lack physical strength, noted Dandiwalla who has suggested to his fellow trustees that the Federation be inducted as a co-trustee.

Happy to be able to attend all meets of the Federation, Dandiwalla noted that the important thing is to convey the information gathered here to his anjuman at home. "My minutes are generally circulated well before the Federation secretary sends the official minutes!" the ancient mariner took a gentle dig at the Federation's honorary secretary. The aging community cooperates with sister communities in varied activities, said Dandiwalla, adding that he personally goes to pray at Anand Bhavan on Jawaharlal Nehru's death anniversaries.

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There are approximately 250 families in the Delhi area amounting to about 650 individuals plus 50 floating families who are in the capital on posting, according to Rustomji. As the detailed all-India survey questionnaire aimed at ascertaining the attitudes of the community was not ready even at the end of 1995, Rustomji says that the DPA has prepared its own questionnaire and involved the youth in the task of getting responses. As the demographers had warned from the start, this is no easy matter. "The responses have been poor. We don't know why," confessed Rustomji.

The DPA has consistently seen itself as the spearhead of Zoroastrian public relations in India, thanks to its position of vantage in the capital. Delhi Zoroastrians have projected a better understanding of Zoroastrian thoughts and ways by their interaction with other communities as also by a regular program of inviting VIPs to DPA functions. Last Jamshedi Navroze, the DPA entertained the Iranian Ambassador and his staff. The guests responded by presenting the DPA a 30-minute video tape *Iran: past, present and future* and set up an exhibition projecting their country. Rustomji informed the gathering. The resulting amity no doubt had something to do with the comparative ease with which

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Indian Zoroastrians were able to visit Iran during the 6WZC and the courtesies they received there.

The DPA will be co-sponsoring a women's conference in September and expect to participate in a march for peace and unity from Chandni Chowk.

SPP president Dr Sam Bhacca estimated the Zoroastrian population in Surat at about 3,500. "The SPP takes us from birth to death. Our vast dokhma lands are known to everybody, especially the Press," he noted cryptically, adding that the SPP receive their share of brickbats and praise.

K. Modi, who represents six anjumans of Gujarat, noted that in three of them everyone above the age of 18 is allowed to vote. The main problem in these small places is that their mobeds are lured away by larger anjumans. K. Modi suggested with due pragmatism, "Wherever Parsi population falls, agiaries should be amalgamated and one fire transferred to wherever required. There are 22 agiaries in Surat with a population of 3,000. The trustees must offer amalgamation."

Though the Ahmedabad Parsi Punchayet's (APP) housing stock has increased by four flats and four more are on the anvil, it prefers to give housing loans instead of houses, informed Karanjawalla who is a member of APP's governing body. Housing in Ahmedabad is not as critical as in Bombay. A donor has provided the Punchayet Rs 1.5 lakhs to distribute as a housing loan to one or two parties, added Karanjawalla. There has been a satisfactory increase in population, now estimated at 2,300 individuals, as couples from other cities are tending to settle here.

The 306 families in Baroda amount to about 1,000 individual Zoroastrians, estimated Baroda Parsi Punchayet president Shavak Patel as the census work had just begun. Despite its limited resources the Punchayet distributes an annual Rs 65,000 among 22 families. Awards and scholarships total more than Rs 4,000. The dharamshala facilities are availed of by 700 outsiders apart from students who use it at Rs 250 per term, inclusive of linen, electricity charges, etc.

In Bharuch, the 270-300 individuals have four agiaries and a dearth of mobeds though the Punchayet has one on its board of trustees. The once large and wealthy anjuman still musters an annual income of between Rs 75,000 and 80,000, informed

Bharuch Parsi Punchayet joint managing trustee Sarosh Ginwalla. The Punchayet helps with the repair of properties and with scholarships, he says.

According to the original trust deed women do not have the right to vote, though all men do. At their forthcoming elections the Bharuch trustees have invited women, 18 and over, to vote as well as stand for elections, despite the fact that their two-year-long application to the charity commissioner has failed to elicit a response. Engineer, senior partner at Crawford Bayley and Co, Solicitors, advised Ginwalla to move the Gujarat High Court with an urgent application to settle the question as the elections need to be held.

A rough and ready assessment of the community population of Madras placed the figure at 350, "with a 10 percent margin of error" as per Mogrelia. Having recently celebrated 200 years of Zoroastrian settlement there with a Federation meeting last Xmas, "All properties like the agiary and aramgah are looking pristine." The history of the Anjuman was sought to be encapsulated and buried on the Anjuman property, but the capsule proved too costly and now the trustees are on the lookout for some other container, said Mogrelia. He felicitated neighboring Bangalore on honoring Ervad Nadirshah Unwalla, urging others too to honor their priests of long standing.

Bhavnagar's 40 Zoroastrian inhabitants find it very difficult to make ends meet. The 103-year-old agiary is being sustained by donations from Ahmedabad and Surat but the dharamshala hardly has the flow of passengers required to enable it to break even, said the Bhavnagar Anjuman's honorary secretary Dr R. R. Mahuvawalla.

The 68 Zoroastrians in Jhansi ranging in age from five to 88 years, requested the BPP to organize a priest to go there at festival times as also to conduct the last rites. Recently an 87-year-old lady living with a non-Parsi was buried in the aramgah on her and her family's wishes after getting an affidavit from them regarding her Zoroastrian faith, as informed the Jhansi Anjuman president Ronny Dick.

He had also brought Jhansi resident Faram Merchant with him to Bombay and admitted him as a free patient at the PGH courtesy Dr Marazban Nalladaroo. Merchant a school master and inmate of the Jhansi dharamshala who had broken his leg in an accident, had undergone surgery in Jhansi and been tended by neighbor

Farokh Umrigar and members of the Anjuman, notably Dick. The surgery had been a failure and Merchant now hopes to walk again thanks to the orthopedic honoraries at the PGH. He is also hoping to undergo eye surgery for the removal of his cataracts. When *Parsiana* met him at the Hospital, he was full of praise for his friends in the Jhansi Anjuman, particularly Dick and Umrigar, underscoring the general consensus that caring remains an essential component of the small town community ethos.

The Vishakhapatnam Anjuman's 16 founding families are now reduced to three, comprising 12 adults — the majority being between 50 and 60 years — and two children. Their only property is the aramgah which, as notes Dinyar Nakra, it holds by adverse possession, not having any documents in support. A part of a Hindu cemetery, it was granted on the request of Ms Choksey when her husband died there.

Phiroze Illava, trustee of the Mhow Anjuman, thanked the Federation delegates for the Rs 22 lakhs in donations that helped them rebuild the Mhow Agiary — the only consecrated fire in northern and central India — at a cost of 17 lakhs and create a maintenance fund as well. The 125-member Anjuman's youngest trustee, Illava, says he is over 68 years of age. His sister, at 83, is "a mother figure and the people are unwilling to let her go." Mhow is the only anjuman to have accepted the Federation as a co-trustee and executor of its properties.

The Anjuman, said to be "more than 1,000 strong before I was born," as noted Illava, has 14 residential properties at very nominal rent. The usual story prevails: "People stay elsewhere but hang on to the properties. What do we do?" Illava asked the assembled delegates.

Illava informed the gathering that many of its 36 *khata*s (or accounts) no longer serve a valid purpose. Initially the trustees used the idle moneys as a loan towards more pressing needs. Thereafter they moved the district court at Indore asking for a blanket order to use funds wherever essential and got the ruling to their satisfaction in two years which other anjumans could emulate, said Illava.

At Bardoli there are the 111-year agiary and 120-year dharamshala. The latter needs to be pulled down and replaced as per the order of the municipality, informed J. J. Mohta. Its 27 families comprising 127

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individuals are impoverished and the appeal for funds for the project speaks of the need to provide shops, flats and dharam-shala in the rebuilt building.

The Borivli Anjuman's geographical spread from Jogeshwari to Dahisar enfolds 1,000 families (approximately 4,000 individuals), as per its secretary Khurshed Pastakia. A paucity of funds (total financial assets: Rs 51,000) however curtails them to peripheral activities. Due to the lack of a baug or centralized hall, the community can get together only six or seven times a year. Their newsletter is their medium of communication.

Conscious that their children are losing out on the communal and religious ambience of the baugs, Pastakia wondered if the Federation could finance video cassettes on rituals and religious tenets. He was also interested in the establishment of a correspondence course in the religion. In the meantime the Anjuman had invited the Zarhosty Brothers' Trust to hold their lectures in Borivli and Ervad Ramyar Karanjia was scheduled to give his first lecture shortly, informed Pastakia. He also sought BPP and Federation aid towards their long-term goal of a community hall.

While Guzder advised him to write to the Federation with a copy to the BPP,

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Gandhi was sure that video cassettes had been recorded in the West which may be available. Depending on the level of scholarship to which Pastakia aimed, Gandhi noted he also had a copy of the *Essays on the Gathas* edited by Ms Dina McIntyre. BPP chief executive Behram Laskari offered audio cassettes of Zoroastrian prayers available with the Punchayet. The BPP's fund for translation of books was also evoked.

Bombay's eastern suburbs of Mulund, Bhandup and Vikhroli also coalesce with the Thana Anjuman amounting to between 500 and 700 individuals (145 families), Cursetji informed the executive council. Though a census has not been undertaken, the new cosmopolitan colonies in the area have also attracted Zoroastrians. A census/directory is now on the Anjuman's agenda.

Happy that the Rs 8,000 in fixed deposits that the managing committee had inherited a little over 10 years ago had now burgeoned into a corpus of Rs 16 lakhs, Cursetji acknowledged the source as property improvement schemes and donations against housing allotments. The Thana Agiary is now very well attended because of the housing colony created on its property, with 50 to 60 individuals present at the bimonthly maachi ceremony, "con-

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tributing to the solidarity of the community." Current programs include the celebration of the Patel Ajiary's 260th anniversary and an Anjuman sponsored population growth support beginning with the second child of one family in Thane. Cursetji said the Anjuman intended to raise the amount gradually from the current Rs 6,000 per annum to support the child up to the age of 18. But he is aware that "providing finance is not the answer (to the declining population). Not every one needs finance."

The topic of financial support to young couples to enable them to increase their family size, so hotly debated a year ago, was now down to a joke as Tirandaz enquired if the Punchayet would support his efforts for begetting more children with a second wife. "The support is only for legitimate children," cautioned Gandhi. Tirandaz had the last word: "But then, I am called a bastard!"

The most recent construction of a building of 12 ownership flats has come up on the Thana dokhma land where the Anjuman has secured exemption from the Urban Land Ceiling Act. Since the past year the dokhma has not been in use "but if anyone wants to be placed there, the trustees must

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accede," said Cursetji adding that the present requirements do not justify the provision of complete dokhma infrastructure and it is more economical to use the BPP facility in south Bombay.

The current fly in the ointment in Thana is alleged non-Zoroastrian encroacher Anand Dighe, a prominent member of the Shiv Sena, who has used a 5,000 sq ft plot totally gratis for the past 15 years. Though the Anjuman has got a court decree in its favor, "for obvious reasons (it) has been unable to execute it." Anxious though they are to prevent the plot slipping out of their hands, Cursetji noted that "when we went to court (there was) one encroacher, (who has) since moved out and installed another."

Jamshedpur numbers 550 Zoroastrian heads (175 families) as per its representative Eruch Surti. While there are no problems and no factions in the liberal group, according to Surti, the youths generally move out after their 10th or 12th standard exam and hence there is generally no one around to represent Jamshedpur at FOZYA meets and seminars, explained Surti.

The IZA has initiated a new scheme of

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donating implant lenses directly to an eye hospital. Also, anjuman youths going abroad for further education receive subsidies from the Anjuman, IZA representative P. Irani informed the Federation.

Newsletter

The sponsorship amount per edition of the *Fed Newsletter* has been increased from Rs 4,000 to Rs 5,000, at the suggestion of Rustomji and with the acquiescence of Guzder and his cotrustees as the BPP is the *Fed Newsletter*'s biggest sponsor, footing four issues each year. For 1996-97 too the BPP has agreed to underwrite this quota with Guzder and Shroff personally contributing towards the cost of two and one additional issue respectively. The DPA, Madras, Surat, Calicut, Baroda and the WZO agreed to sponsor one issue each.

AGM

The expenditure of the Federation in the year ending March 31, 1996 amounted to Rs 1,43,197 of which the *Newsletter* accounted for one lakh rupees and the Federation's contribution toward the daycare center projects of the BPP amounted to Rs 40,000. Its income amounted to a little over two lakh rupees.

THE PARSIANA BOOK OF IRANIAN NAMES

The Iranian names of boys and girls along with their meanings which originally appeared in *Parsiana* have now been reprinted in an attractive 24-page booklet. The book, which is priced at Rs 25, is available on sale at:

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From Navroz, the dawn of the Parsi New Year, to navjote, the initiation ceremony of a young child, lagan or marriage, jashans and ghambars, there is a variety of food to suit every occasion.

In this unique book, Bhicoo J. Manekshaw takes the reader on a journey far beyond the traditional stereo-typical dhan sakh recipe. For those who love fish, there is a choice of patra ni machchi (fish in banana leaves), masala ni machchi or the famed tarapori patio made with sookha boomla (Bombay duck), amongst many others. Our weakness for eggs, on the other hand, has created a range of mouth-watering dishes from the kera per eeda (eggs cooked on bananas) to the humble scrambled egg. There are also teatime snacks, sweets and desserts and a chapter on kitchen medicine straight from grandmother's recipe book.

Published by Penguin Books India. Illustrations by Bindia Thapar
Price: Rs 200

Available at leading book stores or contact Mr Om Arora, Variety Book Depot, Flat no. 103, A.V.G. Bhavan, M/3, Connaught Circle, New Delhi 110001. Tel: 3327175, 3322567, Fax: 3714335

Sixty-seven of the approximately 90 anjumans of India are now Federation members though many do not attend regularly and some have never attended a Federation meeting. According to Gandhi, 20 to 25 anjumans are regular attendees, although only 10 were present at the last meeting in Madras when he had been instructed to write to the defaulting members. "People who don't come are those who live in far-off locations," he conceded, simultaneously praising the late Ardeshir Batlivala who travelled second class from Calcutta to attend every single executive council meeting (which was held quarterly in those days as against bi-annually now) and Homi and Shireen Dandiwalla of Allahabad who do likewise despite handicaps of old age and ill health. It was good to learn that Batlivala's grandson, Nauzer Batlivala, was present on this occasion to represent Calcutta.

If the 30 percent members who attend represent 80 percent of the community, it's okay, remarked Shroff, changing the numbers perspective.

In answer to a query from Vishakha-

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patnam's Cmdre Jal Postwalla, Gandhi informed the gathering that the Federation's 1994 Awards for Excellence have been held in abeyance as the main committee felt that substantial nominations had not been received. It is now intended to hold the 1994 and 1995 awards ceremony together, perhaps at the next Federation meeting.

Those attending the Federation meeting were: Porus Karanjawalla from Ahmedabad; Ms Shireen and Homi Dandiwalla and Dossu Ghandhi from Allahabad; Rustom Daruwalla from Badnera Amravati; Pervez Mehta and J. J. Mohta from Bardoli; Shavak Patel, Rusi Kasad and Boman Cama from Baroda; Ms Pilloo and Sarosh Ginnwalla from Bharuch; R. R. Mahuvawalla, M. B. Bharucha and Jal Irani from Bhavnagar; Jamshed Guzder, Minoo Shroff, Ms Silloo Kavarana, Dadi Engineer, Dinshaw Mehta, Rustom Tiran-daz, Behram Laskari, Ms Gool Tata, Ms Sheroo Master, Ms Homai Modi, Aspi Crawford and Peshotan Nargolwalla from Bombay; Khurshed Pastakia, Noshir Paghdwalla and Yezdi Motiwalla from Borivli; Nauzer Batlivala from Calcutta; Darius Marshall from Calicut; Dadi Mistry, Farokh Rustomji, Noshir Captain and Keki Gandhi

Do you have a G6PD enzyme deficiency?

The G6PD enzyme deficiency, common among the Parsis, makes them highly susceptible to certain drugs.* The deficiency may cause jaundice in the newborn and severe hemolytic crisis (destruction of red blood cells) in adults. Ask your family doctor to arrange for a blood test to detect whether you have G6PD enzyme deficiency. If you happen to be a G6PD-D patient, it is essential that you carry your card at all times so that in any emergency you would receive appropriate treatment.

*Analgesics: Acetanilid, Acetylsalicylic acid, Aspirin, Acetophenetidin (Phenacetin), Antipyrine, Pyramidone.

Sulfonamides and Sulfones: Sulfanilamide, Sulfapyridine, N2 Acetylsulfanilamide, Sulfacetamide, Sulfisoxazole (Gantrisin), Thiazolsulfone, Salicylazosulfapyridine (Azulfadine), Sulfadoxone, Sulfamethoxyypyridine (Kynex).

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Miscellaneous: Napthalene, Vitamin K (Water soluble analogues), Prodenecid, Trinitrotoluene, Methylene blue, Dimercaprol (BAL), Phenylhydrazine, Quinine and Quinidine; Sulpha containing compounds including Septran, DDS and Daraprim; Nitrofurantoin, Nalidixic acid including all derivatives of this group, Antistine, Diphenylhydramine, Pronestyl, Nitrites; Large doses of Chloroquine, Chloromycetin, Vit. C and Vit. K.

Published in the public interest by *Parsiana*

The Top Ten

**"Lives of great men
all remind us..."**

Who were the greats? Who are the greats? Zoroastrians talk proudly of the community's achievements in the past and present. Names are mentioned randomly but collectively no international list has been compiled of the most outstanding Parsis or Zoroastrians. *Parsiana* opens its columns to suggestions from readers as to who they consider to be the 10 most outstanding Zoroastrians globally in the 19th and 20th centuries (10 in each century). The nominees could be from any field of endeavor, from politics to poetry and science to soldiering. The purpose of the exercise is to create a greater awareness of the community's past and present achievements and to put these in perspective.

Readers should send in their suggestions stating the full name of the individual, his or her field of endeavor, the reason why they feel the person is deserving of this classification and the century for which they are being nominated.

The reason for choosing the two centuries together is to allow for the overlapping of many significant lives. The reader can decide in which century he or she wishes to identify the individual's contribution. Personages should be nominated according to the century in which they made their major contribution to humanity.

Send your entries to The Editor, *Parsiana* (Greats), GPO Box 892, Bombay 400001.

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THE BOMBAY SAMACHAR

All Parsis Annual Athletic, Aquatic and Cycling Meet

The Managing Committee of the All Parsis Athletic Meet will be organising their 17th Annual Athletic Championship on Saturday 8th and Sunday 9th February 1997, at University Stadium, Mumbai.

In order to encourage our youth to improve their standard in Athletics, we propose to offer handsome cash awards alongwith medals and certificates at the meet.

To begin with, we have selected the following events to try out this unique idea for which we require SPONSORS/DONORS.

EVENTS	AGE GROUPS
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2) 4 x 100 M. Relay	Girls Under 15
3) 4 x 100 M. Relay	Women
4) 4 x 400 M. Relay	Women
5) 4 x 100 M. Relay	Boys Under 12
6) 4 x 100 M. Relay	Boys Under 14
7) 4 x 100 M. Relay	Boys Under 16
8) 4 x 100 M. Relay	Men
9) 4 x 400 M. Relay	Men

We therefore appeal to all the members of our microscopic but enlightened community to come forward in large numbers and contribute their mite to enable us to encourage **CHAMPIONS** of tomorrow.

Interested persons may please write to Jt Hon Secretary, All Parsis Athletic Meet, C/o The Nowroze Baug Play Centre, E/18, Nowroze Baug, Lalbaug, Mumbai 400012, or Sir Cusrow Wadia Pavillion, Cusrow Baug, Shahid Bhagat Singh Road, Colaba, Mumbai 400001 or call on tel no 3443518 between 10 am to 12 noon and 3 pm to 5 pm.

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from Delhi; Syrus Irani and Pervez Irani from the Iranian Zoroastrian Anjuman; Eruch Surti from Jamshedpur; Ronny Dick and Farokh Umrigar from Jhansi; Nariman Mogrelia from Madras; Phiroze Illava and Rumi Panthaky from Mhow; Dara Irani, Farokh Irani, Eruch Irani, Boman Irani and Firdous Kayani from Poona; Homi Palsetia, Ms Rubi Palsetia and D. R. Patel from Saronda; Dr Sam Bhacca, Davar Kavasji Modi and Sorab Katpitia from Surat; Jal Postwalla and Dinyar Nakra from Vishakhapatnam; and Homi Mehta from Zai Bordi. Homi Taleyarkhan and Bazun Dittia were the special invitees. The Press was represented by *Parsiana*.

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This issue of *Parsiana* presents data for the months of July and August 1996.

There were 33 babies born in Bombay in this two month period as against 169 deaths. Twenty-seven Zoroastrians were 80 years and above from among the 53 who fell prey to heart disease. Nineteen deaths were attributed to pneumonia and lung related diseases. While cancer claimed 17 victims and brain disease, 15, hypertension took a toll of 12 lives. The other killers were old age and general debility (eight), septicemia (six), asthma, tuberculosis, bronchitis and kidney failure (four each) and gastro-enteritis (three). Two patients each succumbed to liver disease, diabetes, Parkinson's disease and anemia. The 10 isolated cases registered for the two month period: rheumatic fever, haema-

temesis (vomiting of blood), injury due to fall, tumor, gastro-intestinal haemorrhage, vehicular accident, suffocation, hypoproteinaemia (deficient protein in the blood plasma due to dietary deficiency or excessive excretion), malaria and gastro-intestinal tract infection. A 75-year-old lady was strangled to death. A stillborn female baby, a two-month-old baby boy and a 26-year-old girl were also lost to the community. The coroner's report was pending in the case of one death. The highest age at death was 100 years. The Zoroastrian life expectancy at birth, in Bombay, was 75 years for the two month period.

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.

(69), Sidhwa Bldg, Baram St, Grant Rd, 400007; July 1
Jamshed Aspiandiar Meherashahi (52), 18/5, Gamadia Clinic Bldg, Gamadia Clny, Tardeo, 400007; July 1
Khorshed Cawas Pavri (73), 764-B, Naval Hse, Dr Ganti Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; July 1
Rustomji (Rusi) Adarji Mistry (89), 4/G, S. B. Bharucha Baug, Andheri (W), 400058; July 2
Jal Jehangir Balsara (76), C/o Armin R. Elavia, 20, Banaji Hse, Contractor Baug, Mori Rd, Mahim, 400016; July 3
Jamshed Merwanji Bhathena (86), A/20, Gool Mhl, Sleater Rd, 400007; July 3
Aloo Eruchshaw Pavri (69), 20, Ahmed Bldg, Gunpowder Rd, Mazgaon, 400010; July 3
Sabarmai Pestonji Poncha (95), 301, Sand Pebbles, Master Vinayak Cross Rd, Bandra (W), 400050; July 3
Sheroo Homi Soonawalla (82), Sanjana Bldg, Forjett Hill Rd, 400036; July 3
Hoshang Jijibhoy Desai (56), 1202, Mazgaon Towers, 21, M. P. Rd, Mazgaon, 400010; July 4
Khorshed Dinshawji Driver (85), J/13, S. Bharucha Baug, S. V. Rd, Andheri (W), 400058; July 4
Maneck Ardeshtir Khumbatta (83), K/16, Cusrow Baug, S. B. Rd, 400039; July 4
Fali Peshotan Sethna (69), A/12, Rustom Baug, Victoria Rd, Byculla, 400027; July 4
Sohrab Jamshed Gazdar (69), 285, M. A. Rogay Apts, Thakurdwar, 400002; July 5
Jerbanoo Dorabsha Medhora (82), A/6, Shalimar Apts, S. V. Rd, Andheri (W), 400058; July 5
Dara Jal Vania (63), C/o F. J. Vania, 347, A/6, United Chmbs, M. S. Rd, 400007; July 5
Amy Sorab Vesuna (67), 688, P. A. Hormasji Bldg, Dinshaw Master Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; July 5
Keki Ardeshtir Ankalesaria (87), C/o Dinshaw Ankalesaria, 515, Ratan Mans, R. P. Masani Rd, Matunga, 400019; July 6
Adi Nadirshaw Hodiwalla (75), Karai Villa, Bhardawadi, Opp Navrang Talkies, Andheri (W),

AHMEDABAD

BORN

A boy, *Zubin*, to *Archana* and *Percy Muncherji* on June 23, 1996

BANGALORE

DIED

Mary Nariman Gazdar, mother of *Aban* and *Kaiwan*; June 22

BARODA

BORN

A boy, *Delzad*, to *Monaz* and *Adil Randeria*; June 20
 A girl, *Mahzarine*, to *Hutoxi* and *Jarsis Bonesetter*; August 16

DIED

Feroze Dady Muncherji (68), brother of *Bomi*, *Perin* and *Pesi*; August 10

BOMBAY

BORN

A boy, *Kiez*, to *Yasmin* and *Adil Kavina*; May 7
 A girl, *Shazneen*, to *Gulshan* and *Mehernosh Patel*; July 5
 A girl to *Anahita* and *Behram Ardeshtir*; July 11
 Twins (girl and boy) to *Roshan* and *Parvez Bharucha*; July 11
 A girl to *Faranak* and *Cherag Khandadia*; July 11
 A boy to *Khurshid* and *Jehangir Mistry*; July 11

A girl to *Khushmede* and *Maneck Patel*; July 11
 A boy to *Tanaz* and *Kersi Deboo*; July 12
 A boy, *Kaizen*, to *Nilufer* and *Cyrus Khambatta*; July 13
 A girl to *Anahita* and *Cyrus Nagporewalla*; July 23
 A girl, *Rian*, to *Parveen* and *Zarir Mistry*; July 24
 A girl, *Areeza*, to *Yasmin* and *Karl Divecha*; July 26
 A boy to *Yasmin* and *Feroz Ebtedai*; July 27
 A boy to *Rohira* and *Cyrus Mistry*; July 31
 A boy, *Sunny*, to *Shirin* and *Mehernosh Patel*, brother to *Benaz*; August 1
 A boy to *Benaifer* and *Nitin Menon*; August 2
 A girl, *Anahita*, to *Julie* and *Mehernosh Mistry*; August 5
 A girl to *Shehnaz* and *Karl Mistry*; August 6
 A girl to *Farzana* and *Kali Bordinwalla*; August 7
 A girl to *Persis* and *Paurus Irani*; August 7
 A boy to *Freni* and *Neville Patel*; August 7
 A boy to *Shermaz* and *Cherag Khambhatta*; August 8
 A girl to *Jinoo* and *Sarosh Daruwalla*; August 10
 A girl to *Farzana* and *Navil Doctor*; August 10
 A boy to *Yasmin* and *Percy*

Hansotia; August 10
 A girl, *Kayan*, to *Tanaz* and *Meherwan Daruwalla*; August 11
 A girl to *Sunita* and *Percy Bulsara*; August 16
 A boy to *Faith* and *Dhunjee-shaw Wadia*; August 21
 A girl to *Jasmine* and *Burgis Daruwalla*; August 24
 A boy to *Manize* and *Tirandaz Irani*; August 25
 A girl to *Rukshana* and *Cyrus Siganporia*; August 25
 A boy to *Shaheen* and *Hormuz Irani*; August 27
 A girl to *Benaifer* and *Porus Irani*; August 30

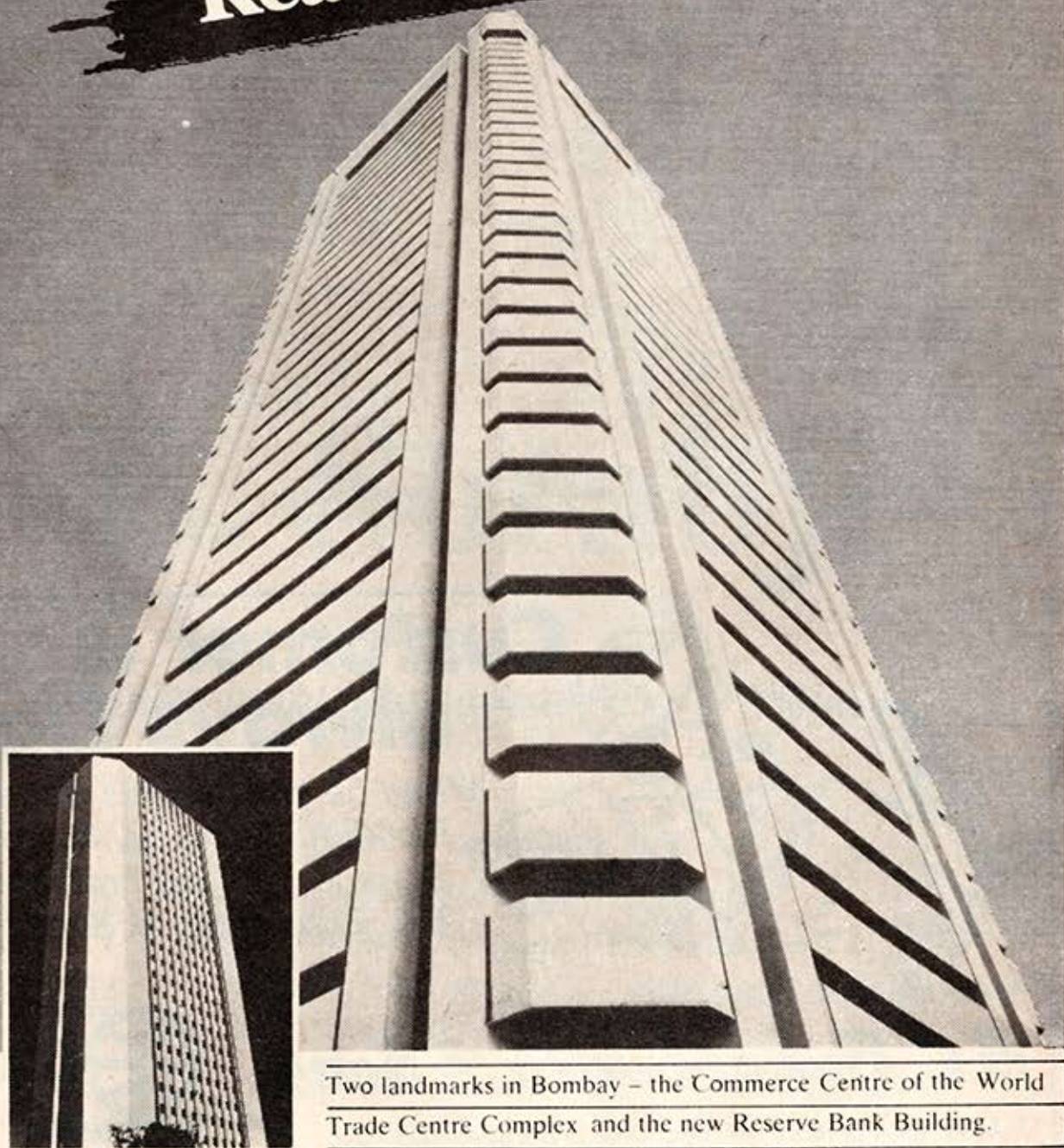
MARRIED

Mahatab Cawas Kohla and *Khushru Fakir Randelia* of Poona; August 25

DIED

Pirojsha Dinshaw Sachinwala (86), residing at 275, Village Vali, Tal Vasai, Dist Thane, 401201; June 30
Framroze Burjor Vajifdar (86), V/7, Dalal Est, Lamington Rd, 400008; June 30
Villoo Kawas Baria (74), Dhun Mhl, Garden Rd, Colaba, 400039; July 1
Noshir Jamshedji Batiwalla (90), B, Shirin Mans, Tardeo Rd, 400007; July 1
Banoo Darabshaw Khambatta

Reaching for the Sky



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400054; July 7

Rustom Behram Irani (43), Dahanu At & Post, Dahanu, Dist Thane, 401601; July 7
Mehernosh Rustomji Mistry (59), Godrej Clny Rly side, X99/3, Vikhroli (E), 400079; July 7

Ratan Faramji Pardiwalla (78), 89, Banoo Villa, Malcolm Baug, Jogeshwari (W), 400102; July 7

Soona Rustomji Nanporia (86), Arya Bldg, 209, P. D'Mello Rd, Fort, 400001; July 8

Themina Rustomji Sidhwa (85), 4, Petit Widows' Chawl, Mody St, Fort, 400001; July 8

Tehmurasp Hormusji Bamboat (72), M/12, Cusrow Baug, S. B. Rd, 400039; July 9

Dinoo Jamshed Bamji (79), 11, Rukhshana Apts, 9, Pali Hill Rd, Khar, 400052; July 9

Mehra Burjorji Daruwala (90), 51, Sainara, 17, Cuffe Parade, 400005; July 9

Merwan Khushru Yezdmaildi (Irani) (72), Irani Bldg, Dr Cawasji Hormusji St, Dhobitalao, 400002; July 9
Framroze Ratanshaw Elavia

(80), Pundole Bldg, Opp Mithaiwalla Fire-temple, Sleater Rd, 400007; July 10
Gool Rustamji Mehta (77), Patel Bldg, Cama Rd, Andheri (W), 400058; July 11
Barjor Jehangirji Dastoor (78), 2, Ramesh Bldg, Pauwalla St, 400004; July 13

Behram Ardesheer Dhondy (76), Lily Lodge, 3rd Pasta Lane, Colaba, 400005; July 13

Boman Ardesheer Irani (50), 9, Mehta Bldg, Panthaky Baug, Andheri (E), 400069; July 13
Maneckbai Khurshedji Sanjana (86), B, Karanjia Bldg, Grant Rd, 400007; July 14

Minoo Behramji Setna (90), 162, Jivanji Mistry Bldg, Khetwadi Back Rd, 400004; July 14

Jalamai Faramroze Bhagat (80), Hirabai Petit Bldg, Opp Grant Rd Rly Stn, Grant Rd (E), 400007; July 15

Burjor Ardesheer Daruwala (91), 805, Tehmi Ter, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; July 15
Aban Dhunjishaw Karma (57), 3, Jamasji Toddywalla Bldg, Sunmill Rd, Lower Parel,

400013; August 15

Homi Jalejar Manekshaw (68), E/7, Captain Clny, Haji Ali, 400034; July 15

Goola Khodamurad Tafti (85), 53, Aderbad, Hughes Rd, 400007; July 15

Homi Pallonji Bharucha (81), 10/B, Mehta Bldg, Pasta Rd, Dadar, 400014; July 16

Framroj Pirojshaw Karwa (83), 803/D, Ghatalia Mans, Dr B. Ambedkar Rd, Dadar, 400014; July 16

Percy Polly Parekh (36), D/3, S. Bharucha Baug, Andheri (W), 400058; July 16

Gool Burjorji Bodhanwala (70), 25, Fakhri Manzil, Shanker Seth Rd, Grant Rd, 400007; July 17

Motibai Dhanjisha Mistry (94), Banaji Bldg, Forjett Cross Lane, August Kranti Marg, 400036; July 17

Pesi Manchershaw Motashaw (76), Achalkar Bldg, Kamal Niwas Bldg no 2, Nehru Maidan, V. R. Rd, Dombivali (E), 421203; July 17

Parviz Hosang Gagrati (70), K/7, Cusrow Baug, S. B. Rd,

400039; July 18

Adi Nadirshaw Sarkari (60), 2/18, Avabai Bldg, Sleater Rd, 400007; July 18

Piroja Khurshed Katrack (86), 674, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; July 19

Behram Ardesar Sunavala (83), Bayside, Chimbai Village, Bandra, 400050; July 19

Rumi Darabsha Balsara (51), Mistry Bldg, Captain Clny, Tardeo, 400034; July 20
Sheroo Sheriarji Daruwala (73), 13/B, Satyabhama Nivas, Kashinath Rd, Tardeo, 400034; July 21

Jal Framroz Nariman (72), Lal Bahadur Shastri Rd, Opp Police Stn, Manmad, 423104; July 22
Firoze Framroze Shroff (63), Shroffs, Malcolm Baug, S. V. Rd, Jogeshwari (W), 400102; July 22

Banubai Pirojsha Hirjibhoy (81), C/o K. R. Nariman, 1/5, State Bank of India, Hill View Soc, Andheri (W), 400058; July 23

Ratanshaw Nadirshaw Mithaiwalla (80), 16, United Chmbs, Grant Rd, 400007;



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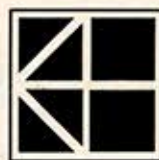
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July 23

Pinky Minocher Irani (26), Nilambari Azad Rd, Vile Parle (E), 400057; July 24
Shirin Noshirwan Patel (80), Takshila, 31/B/3, Mahakali Rd, Andheri (E), 400093; July 24
Bahadur Kaikaus Rabadi (78), 16, Modern Flats, 128, Wodehouse Rd, Colaba, 400005; July 24
Zenobia Phiroz Banaji (72), The Cliff, 27, Pochkhanawalla Rd, Worli, 400025; July 25
Namdar Rashid Irani (75), F. S. Parukh Dharamshalla, Hughes Rd, 400007; July 25
Rati Godrej Mullan (81), 804-D, Jai Bhagwati, Dr Ambedkar Rd, Dadar, 400014; July 25
Minocher Darabshaw Patel (92), 275/B, Captain Bldg, Chikalwadi, Grant Rd, 400007; July 25
Mehroo Jamasji Todiwalla (78), 16/B, Suman Apts, Sleater Rd, 400007; July 25
Najoo Hosie Amroliwalla (63), 627/A, Homavazir Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; July 26
Gool Jamshed Kapadia (76),

921, Al-Ghurair Centre, Dubai; July 26
Tehmina Kaikhushru Contractor (79), 20, Todiwalla Bldg, Supari Baug Rd, Parel, 400012; July 28
Farokh Hormusji HirjiKaka (76), Naju Manor, Oliver Rd, Apollo Reclamation, 400039; July 28
Farrokh Bomansha Kasad (70), 3/27, Wadia Baug, Parel Tank Rd, 400033; July 28
Nergish Ratanshah Engineer (84), 4/33, Hormuzd Bldg, Sleater Rd, 400007; July 29
Jehangir Savaksha Irani (Kermani) (82), Pedder Hse, Proctor Rd, Grant Rd (E), 400007; July 29
Homai Kersi Mistry (52), Lady S. Petit Bldg No 2, Marzban Clny, Gilder Lane, 400008; July 29
Dhunjisha Pesi Langrana (75), F. E. Dinshaw Bldg, 2nd Dhuswadi, Near Fish Market, Dhobitalao, 400002; July 30
Dhunmai Eruchsha Dastur (82), C/o Perin Dadachanji, 153/A, Cumballa Hill, 400036; July 31
Mani Yazad Puneagar (77), 1/9,

Rustom Baug, Victoria Rd, Byculla, 400027; July 31
Jimmy Dar: Sabavala (62), Pearl Mans, M. Karve Rd, 400020; July 31
Neville Ness Wadia (85), Beach Hse, P. N. Balu Marg, Prabhadevi, 400025; July 31
Jamshed Kaikhushroo Master (85), Paowalla Bldg, Opp Cama Baug, Grant Rd, 400007; August 1
Gulshan Homi Palsetia (62), 54, Ocean Crest, 85, B. Desai Road, 400026; August 1
Faramroz Bomanji Patel (85), 5, Patel Hse, L. T. Rd, Mulund (E), 400081; August 1
Hilla Banaji (75), Terrace Cama, Altamount Rd, 400026; August 2
Nargez Jehangir Marker (89), 19/B, Akash Ganga, B. Desai Rd, 400026; August 2
Dhun Manekji Mehta (91), 24, Nepean Sea Rd, 400026; August 2
Allamai Burjorji Patel (92), M/64, Cusrow Baug, S. B. Rd, 400039; August 2
Tehmina Burjorji Chaina (89), Rubans, Setalvad Lane, 30,

Nepean Sea Rd, 400036; August 3
Framroze Rustomji Engineer (88), Danawalla Bldg (Akhilwaya), Dr S. S. Rao Rd, Lalbaug, 400012; August 3
Putla Nadirshaw Mistry (67), 83, Goga St, 400001; August 4
Russi Manchershaw Divecha (58), 10/51, Contractor Bldg, Victoria Gardens, Byculla, 400027; August 5
Aloo Boman Irani (64), Chamarbaugwala Chwl, Dr Ambedkar Rd, Parel, 400012; August 5
Soli Framroz Mistry (74), Daruvala Bldg, Proctor St, Grant Rd, 400007; August 5
Bomanji Cawasji Coachbuilder (84), 67, H. Mirador, B. Desai Rd, 400026; August 6
Naval Merwanji Hilloo (74), 585, Khan Bldg, Chira Bazar, 400002; August 6
Dali (Darayes) Maneksha Masalawalla (58), 524/9, Commisariate Bldg, Adenwalla Rd, Matunga, 400019; August 6
Jerbanu Pestonje Bhakka (70), Yogeshwar Dham, Kisan Ngr no 3, Thane, 400601; August 7

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Pilloo Minocher Chinoy (78),
4, Lady Dorab Tata Bldg no 3,
Tata Blocks, S. V. Rd, Bandra,
400050; August 7

Homi Nawroji Kotwal (70),
Joothica, Opp Grant Rd Post
Office, N. Bharucha Marg,
400007; August 7

Baby of Freni Neville Patel
(stillborn), M/52, Cusrow Baug,
S. B. Rd, 400039; August 7

Khushru Savaksha Shroff (59),
97, Almeida Rd, Bandra,
400050; August 7

Dhunjishaw Shawakshaw

Dolikuka (78), Amtobai
Blocks, 170/D, S. V. Rd,
Bandra, 400050; August 8

Bachamai Jamshedji Ghadiali
(93), 10, Modern Plots, 128,
Wodehouse Rd, Colaba,
400005; August 8

Banoo Faridoon Irani (76),
A3/35, New Khareghat Clny,
Babulnath Rd, 400007;
August 8

Fredoon Nawroji Rabady (78),
788, Avanbai Mans, Jame
Jamshed Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar,
400014; August 8

Daulat Dara Soonawalla (57),
764E, Umrigar Bldg, Tilak Rd,

Dadar, 400014; August 8
Dhanjishaw Hormusji Zaiwala
(69), Santook Hse, Dadi
Santook Lane, Dhobitalao,
400002; August 8

Dinamai Manchershah Bharucha
(85), 605, Karim Manzil, J. S.
S. Rd, 400002; August 10

Aimai Rustomji Deputy (86),
1/2, Sir Ratan Tata Bldg, S. V.
Rd, Bandra (W), 400050;
August 10

Gev Sorabji Godiwalla (79), 61,
Jupiter Apts, 41, Cuffe Parade,
400005; August 10

Darabshaw Pestonji Khambatta
(79), 8/8, Tata Clny, Tardeo,
400034; August 10

Perin Dali Oomrigar (68), C/o
Jasmine D. Pestonji, Mody Hse,
Padamjee St, Grant Rd, 400004;
August 10

Dinyar Behram Salamati (80),
793, Family Hse, Jame Jamshed
Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014;
August 10

Hilla Barjor Daruwalla (78),
M/8, Cusrow Baug, S. B. Road,
400039; August 11

Adi Pochaji Kharas (80),
764/D, Meherbai D. Wadia
Bldg, Opp BEST Depot, Parsi

Clny, Dadar, 400014; August 11
Dinamai Jehangirji Chinoy
(80), 2/2, A. H. Wadia Baug,
Parel Tank Road, 400033;
August 12

Phiroj Savakshaw Fatakia (71),
674, Society Bldg, Parsi Clny,
Dadar, 400014; August 12

Tehmi Eruch Major (70), 89,
Queens Chmbs, M. Karve Rd,
400020; August 12

Aspi Rustom Irani (60), A,
Sanjana Bldg, Forjett Hill Rd,
Tardeo, 400036; August 14

Rumi Jalejar Masalawala (48),
2A/28, Tata Mills Co-op Hsg
Soc, Elphinstone Rd, Parel,
400012; August 14

Mehroo Kersi Variava (70),
D/12, Parijat, Union Bank Hsg
Soc, Patel Est, S. V. Rd,
Jogeshwari (W), 400102;
August 14

Tehmina Naval Balsara (95),
M/44, Cusrow Baug, S. B. Rd,
400039; August 15

Ardeshir Dhunjishaw Chothia
(93), 757, Rd No 7, Parsi Clny,
Dadar, 400014; August 15

Meher Pestonji Dubash (93),
Dhun Lodge, Next to Bhatia
Hospital, Tardeo Rd, 400007;

August 15
Bachan Ardeshir Jaspatal
(74), Memorial Bldg, Marzban
Clny, Gilder Lane, Tardeo,
400008; August 15

Dolat Noshir Karanjia (75),
Yusuf Mans, 204, Khetwadi
Back Rd, 400004; August 15
Bapai Cavasji Katrak (80), 15,
Khareghat Clny, Hughes Rd,
400007; August 15

Cooma Bomansha Patel (83), 2,
Batliwalla Agiary Comp Bldg,
Tardeo, 400034; August 15

Perin Homi Bulsara (69), 8,
Tejpal Bldg, Pan Lane, Off
Hughes Rd, 400007; August 17

Mani Sapal Crawford (85), 6,
Jalbhair Seth Bldg, Opp Matru
Mandir, 279, Tardeo Rd,
400007; August 17

Freny Jamshedji Desai (85),
238, Dr Cawasji Hormusji St,
Dhobitalao, 400002; August 17

Jaloo Dhunjibhoy Kapadia (84),
E/6, Cusrow Baug, S. B. Rd,
400039; August 17

Hilla Hoshang Dubash (67), 28,
Station Ter, Sleater Rd, Grant
Rd, 400007; August 18

Homi Darabsha Minocher (80),
Tarasova, 5, Odhav Ngr,



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Borivali (E), 400066; August 18
Jer Burjor Mistry (85), 14/5,
 Rustom Baug, Victoria Rd,
 Byculla, 400027; August 18
Jerbanoo Jehangirji Bhesania
 (86), B/14, Godrej Baug, Off
 Nepean Sea Rd, 400026;
 August 19
Thrity Kaikhushru Colabawalla
 (82), Sir J. J. Bldg, Khan Est,
 Station Rd, Mahim, 400016;
 August 19
Perin Noshir Driver (90), 12,
 Station Ter, 63/A, N. Bharucha
 Marg, 400007; August 19
Rhoda Nariman Jassawalla
 (75), 808, Boman Lodge, Dr
 Ambedkar Rd, Dadar, 400014;
 August 19
Jerbai Manekshaw Bharucha
 (90), 5, Vijay Bhavan, Sleater
 Rd, 400007; August 20
Minoo Fakirji Master (75), 5,
 Todywalla Chwl, Sunmill Rd,
 Lower Parel, 400013;
 August 20
Mehran Shavaksha Nazir (84),
 6A/816, Mistry Widows' Chwl,
 Jame Jamshed Rd, Parsi Clny,
 Dadar, 400014; August 20
Burjor Hormusji Ghadiali (62),
 4/1, Rustom Baug, Victoria Rd,

Byculla, 400027; August 21
Khorshed Sorab Saklat (83),
 3/6, Dhunbaiwadi, Dadabhai
 Rd, Vile Parle (W), 400056;
 August 21
Alu Khurshed Dastur (90), 759,
 Rd No 7, Parsi Clny, Dadar,
 400014; August 22
Moti Cavas Kharas (85), Mistry
 Bldg, 162, Khetwadi Back Rd,
 400004; August 22
Parvez Darabsha Mahava (63),
 788, Avanbai Mans, Jame
 Jamshed Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar,
 400014; August 22
Dolly Nariman Adenwalla (85),
 Automobile Company Bldg, 41,
 Queens Rd, 400002; August 23
Gool Mancherji Aderyanwala
 (75), Botawalla Bldg, 257,
 Thakurdwar Rd, 400002;
 August 23
Bhikhan Cawasji Pithanwalla
 (77), Petit Bldg No 3, Jamshedji
 Petit St, Grant Rd, 400007;
 August 23
Xerxes Nadirshah Avasia (71),
 44/B, Soonawala Bldg,
 Proctor Rd, Grant Rd, 400007;
 August 24
Sheru Rusi Gilder (63), C/o
 Ketayun Bana, 52, Bakhtawar,

Narayan Dabholkar Rd, 400006;
 August 24
Hoshang Nadirshah Sabavala
 (75), B/10, Nancy Clny,
 Western Express Highway,
 Borivali (E), 400066; August 24
Aloo Nariman Daruwalla (92),
 693, Dinshaw Master Rd, Parsi
 Clny, Dadar, 400014; August 25
Dinshaw Nariman Mistry (60),
 Patel Hse, Nawab Tank Rd,
 Dockyard, 400010; August 25
Jehangirji Behramji Patel (94),
 10, Jer Mans, Gowalia Tank,
 400036; August 25
Bapai Pestonji Captain (80),
 M/38, Cusrow Baug, S. B. Rd,
 400039; August 26
Villoo Burjor Joshi (76), Joshi
 Apts, 290, S. V. Rd, Bandra,
 400050; August 26
Manek Sorabji Taback (86), 8,
 Doctor's Bldg, S. Bharucha
 Baug, S. V. Rd, Andheri (W),
 400058; August 26
Feroze Jehangir Engineer (76),
 16, Aziz Bldg, 135, Tardeo Rd,
 400034; August 27
Khurshed Rustomji Feniwala
 (82), C/o Rusi J. Katrak,
 Mehella Patel Agiary Hse,
 Balaram St, Grant Rd, 400007;

August 27
Bejan Dadabhoy Katrak (78),
 Abbas Bldg, Jalbhoy St,
 400004; August 27
Piloo Hormusji Motiwalla (72),
 81, Kapadia Hse, Trinity St,
 Dhobitalao, 400002; August 27
Ruzbeh Rayomand Patel
 (2 mths), 4/A, Sir Ratan Tata
 Clny, Sir Ratan Tata Rd,
 Tardeo, 400034; August 28
Banubai Jamshedji Siganporia
 (86), E/21, Jerbai Baug, Dr
 Ambedkar Rd, Byculla, 400027;
 August 28
Jehangirji Pestonji Sarkari
 (100), Doctor Bldg, 149/A,
 August Kranti Marg, 400036;
 August 29
Sheriar Behram Irani (60),
 59/C, Bazar Rd, Bandra,
 400050; August 30
Jamshed Navroji Kanga (83),
 Sea Breeze, Ram Krishna
 Mission Rd, Santacruz (W),
 400054; August 31

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DIED

Dhun Nanavatty, daughter of
 Amy and Dady and sister of
 Putli Martin; July 26

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Kolla Bulsara, wife of Minoo and mother of Hormuz, Maku and Jeroo Keki Pherozsha; August 5
Katy Gherda, wife of Noshir and mother of Sarosh and Kerman Aspy Mehta; August 7
Bhikamai Dorabji Punivala, mother of Erach, Perviz Tarapore, Rhoda Mogrelia and Mani Langrana; August 13

POONA

DIED

Tehmina Rustomji Patel (83), 10/A, Mody Clny, Synagogue St, 411001; June 4
Ardeshir Faramroze Kaikobad (98), 481, Rasta Peth, Sardar Mudaliar Rd, 411011; June 5
Nusserwanji Jamshedji Bharucha (90), 2127/A, Centre St, 411001; June 9
Dina Firoz Bharucha (80), 14/A, Wellesly Rd, 411001; June 14
Soli Jahangir Laher (70), Parsee Dharamshalla, Sassoon Rd, 411001; June 15
Alamai Homi Vaghaiwala (87), Cheranjeev Apts, Mohan Ngr, Chinchwad, 411019; June 28
Homai Jahangir Ghyara (65), 2607, United Apts, East St,

411001; June 29
Maneck Phirozeshah Talati (77), 404, Shirin Apts, 929, Synagogue St, 411001; July 2
Zarin Sam Motafaram (54), 176, M. G. Rd, 411001; July 10
Dinshaw Maneckshah Cama (56), 815/14, Padamjee Palace, Bhavani Peth, 411002; July 13
Mehra Minoo Daver (78), Bakhtavar, Nagar Rd, 411006; July 15
Hilla Jahangir Shroff (78), C/7, Orchids, Koregaon Park, 411001; July 17
Burjor Darabsha Cooper (73), 95/5, Parade Ground, Near Liberty Cinema, 411001; July 20
Mehru Naval Vakharia (62), 12/1, Canopus Apts, Boat Club Rd, 411001; July 28
Banu Dhanjishah Rustomji (74), 19/8, Mody Clny, Synagogue St, 411001; August 2
Noshir Savaksha Meherhomji (68), 4, Charu Apts, Salunke Vihar Rd, 411040; August 4
Minocher Manecksha Daruwala (73), Kapadia Bldg, 873, Dastur Meher Rd, 411001; August 7
Homi Rustomji Balsara (73), 2, Sunshine Apts, IC Clny,

Borivali, 400066; August 18
Nariman Rustomji Dorabjee (68), Mody Clny, Synagogue St, 411001; August 27
Perin Hormasji Cabinetmaker (77), 44, Central Apts, Convent St, 411001; August 28

SECUNDERABAD

DIED

Minocher Khambatta (92), father of Sarosh; July 4

SURAT

DIED

Aloo Khushrw Elavia (56), Bibini Wadi, 395003; July 5
Dhunjisha Navroji Patel (80), Parsi Wad, Sayedpura, 395003; July 5
Noshirvan Eruchsha Engineer (72), Vallabh Nagar Soc, Varachha Rd, 395006; July 14
Nariman Sorabji Santok (55), Khatkiwad, 395003; July 22
Ratanbai Nasarwanji Bhagwager (93), Vakil St, Shahpore, 395003; August 1
Jarbanoo Rustamji Daruwala (83), Bhavnagri St, 395003; August 3
Homi Eruchshaw Bharucha (63), Nariman Home and

Infirmary, Shahpore, 395003; August 7
Diniyar Rustamji Kapadia (51), Machlipith, Shahpore, 395003; August 7
Dadiba Navroji Dandivala (84), Agiary St, Bilimora, 396321; August 11

...

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Shaan Nari Nargolwalla and *Behram Dubash*, son of Siloo and Framroze of Toronto; May 18

Montreal

MARRIED

Natasha Dastoor, daughter of Dolly and Phiroze and *Adel Irani* of Houston, son of Katy and Dinshaw; May 25

Toronto

MARRIED

Mandana Jam, daughter of Parvin and Jamshid and *Mehraban Mondarai*, son of Behdukhot and Jamshid; May 17
Farahanaz Felfeli, daughter of Katayoon and Fariedon and

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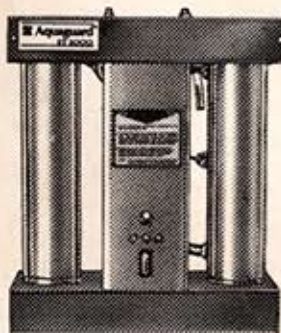
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Ramin Dehmoubed, son of Golcheher and Ardishir; May 24

DIED

Perin Antia, wife of Yezdi and mother of Rayomand and Zahir; June 16

Vancouver

MARRIED

Mitra Lohrasb, daughter of Mahin and Khodadad and *Mehrdad Misaghi-Tafti*, son of Azarmidokht and Jahangeer; August 24

DIED

Daryoush Dinyar Parsi (55), husband of Mehri and father of Ramin and Lila; August 10

OMAN

Muscat

BORN

A boy, *Rushad*, to *Shernaz* and *Dossabhoy Medhora*; July 27

PAKISTAN

Karachi

DIED

Jerbanoo Murzban Dalal (83); June 3

Keki L. Spencer (60); June 3
Cawas A. Noshirwani (66); June 4

Goolamai J. Divecha (92); June 10

Shirin Rustom Mehta (90); June 14

Jal Jamshedji Dholu, father of Aspy (84); June 19

Shahpur J. Kermani (54); June 20

Khorshed C. Laskari (82); June 20

Rusi B. Mobed (80), father of Bakhtaver Byramji; June 20

Hoshang R. Parekh (54); June 20

Dolly G. Irani (63); June 21

Bakhtawar N. Purveyor (51); June 27

Jehangir P. Collector (76), husband of Roshan and father of Sarosh; July 1

Gool Jamshed Sethna (80); July 2

Zarin Pesi Gamwalla (59); July 11

Najoo Rustomjee (84); July 19

SEYCHELLES

DIED

Noshir Wadia, son of Pilamai

and late Burjorji; July 16

UK

London

DIED

Fali Talati; June 2

Dina Master, wife of Soli and mother of Hilda Rumi Sethna and Phil; July 22

USA

Austin, Texas

DIED

Vahishta Engineer, wife of Soli; July 22

Broward County, Florida

BORN

A girl, *Persis Roxanne*, to *Kashmira* and *Polly Bhadha*, sister to Cyrus; February 9

Burbank, California

MARRIED

Zarin Maneck Dastur and *Vistasp Dumasia*, son of

Minnie and *Keki*; July 14

Chicago

BORN

A boy, *Sam*, to *Mahazabeen* and *Jimmy Eduljee*, brother to Cyrus; July 11

MARRIED

Homa Yazdgerdi and *Bahman Abesteh*; June 15

Houston

DIED

Burjor Hormusji Mehta, father of Armaity; March 19

New York

BORN

A boy, *Darius*, to *Shernaz* and *Yezdi Bamji*; June 29

MARRIED

Ferzin Jungalwalq, daughter of *Khorshed* and *Firoze* of Boston and *Rajan Patel*, son of *Usha* and *Jayanti*; April 6

Pennsylvania

DIED

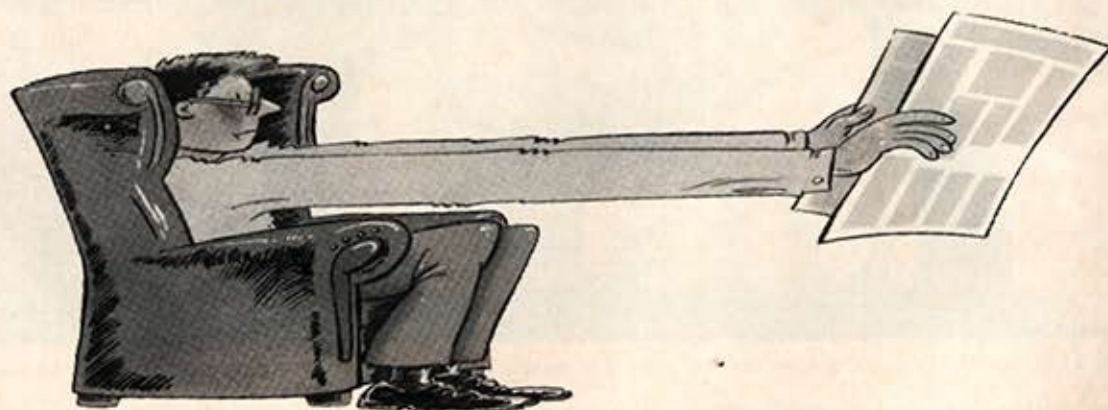
Caws J. Balaporia, brother of *Adil*; July 23

San Jose, California

MARRIED

Persis Madon, daughter of *Perviz* and *Jamshed* of Bombay and *Sorab Vatcha* of Mountain View, California, son of *Scylla* and late *Rustom*; June 14

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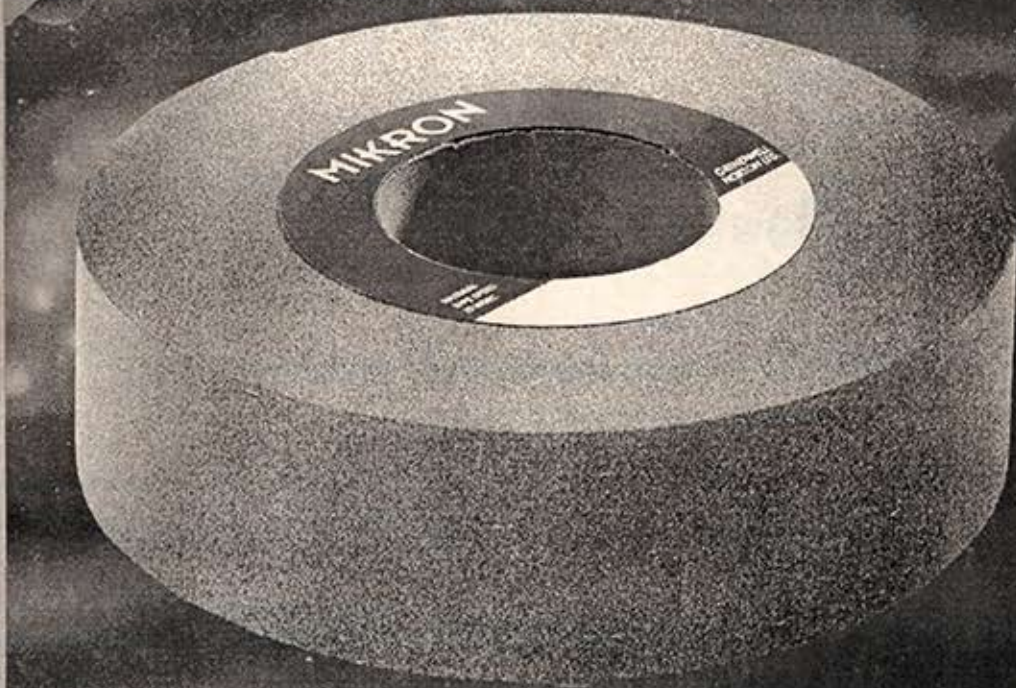
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A boy, *Jahan*, to *Cathy* and *Cyrus Bamji*; February 23**Somerset, New Jersey**

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A boy, *Sam*, to *Nawaz* and *Hoshi Merchant*; May 22**Tampa, Florida**

BORN

A girl, *Sanaya Meher*, to *Anahita* and *Hoshedar Tamboli*, sister to *Cyrus* and *Sarosh*; March 13**Texas**

BORN

A girl, *Nadia Tara*, to *Afsaneh* and *Manoucheher Samiya*; March 18**Washington**

BORN

A girl, *Amitis*, to *Farnaz* and *Farhad Aidun*; May 18**Woodbridge, Virginia**

BORN

A girl, *Roxanne*, to *Jasmine* and *Kaikobad Jussawalla*; March 9

Compiled by Roxana A. Driver

TOTALS FOR 1996

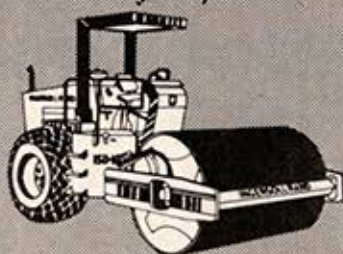
	Bombay		India		World	
	A	B	A	B	A	B
BORN						
Boys	15	69	2	6	5	14
Girls	19	57	1	2	5	14
MARRIED						
Parsi	1	127	--	3	8	8
Intercommunal	--	17 [^]	--	3 ²	1	2 [*]
DIED						
CONSIGNED						
Males	83	305	18	69	12	39 [*]
Females	86	331	18	54	12	28
CREMATED						
Males	--	--	--	--	--	--
Females	--	--	--	--	--	--

A: Total numbers in this issue

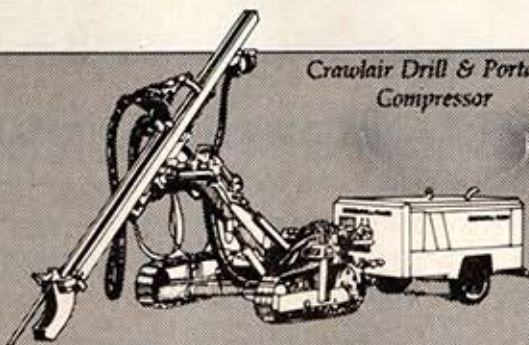
B: Running totals for 1996 (February-March 1996-July-August 1996 issues)

[^] Males married out -- 9
Females married out -- 8² Males -- 1
Females -- 2^{*} Males -- 0
Females -- 2^{*} Overseas deaths are listed in the consigned column as *Parsiana* does not have a breakup of those cremated.These figures pertain to information provided to or collected by *Parsiana*. They do not represent the total number of births, marriages and deaths in the Zoroastrian community in India and abroad.

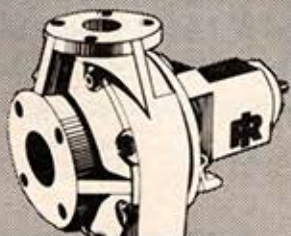
Vibratory Compactor



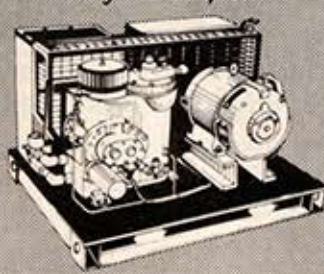
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The legal legend

Parinaz Gandhi

Died: Hormasji Maneckji Seervai, 89, recognized as the headmost authority on the Constitution of India and former advocate general of Maharashtra for a record number of 17 years, on January 26, 1996 at his residence in Bombay following cardio-respiratory failure.

"If I were asked who is the real jurist in India today, I would easily mention Seervai," wrote P. B. Gajendragadkar, former Chief Justice of India, in his autobiography *To the Best of my Memory*. "He (Seervai) was not only the country's foremost authority on constitutional law but also a moral influence for the entire legal profession," remarked the Chief Justice of Gujarat M. Jagannadha Rao at the full court reference made in Seervai's honor. As a mark of respect



Seervai: respect from bar and bench

to the outstanding legal personage both the Gujarat and Delhi High Courts, where too a full court reference was made to Seervai, remained closed for a day.

In the Bombay High Court, not only the bar but all the members of the bench too remained standing throughout the full court reference, mentions Seervai's wife Feroza, and the large Central Court Room was packed to overflowing.

As wrote former Chief Justice of the Bombay High Court M. C. Chagla in his book *Roses in December*: "Seervai possesses intellectual integrity of a high order. He is most hardworking and conscientious and never argues a point in which he does not believe, and which he thinks is untenable... Judges can always depend on him not to mislead them... He is so sincere and so convinced about the validity of the argument he is advancing that sometimes he fails to realize that there can be equal

force in the arguments of the opposite side..."

"As a young junior working with him, I thought he seemed to have an almost naive faith in rationality and in the ultimate triumph of right and justice," mentions former advocate general of Maharashtra Tehmtan Andhyarujina in his article in *The Times of India* of February 1, 1996. "Over the years I have come to believe that he was right in his conviction, however idealistic it appears," adds Andhyarujina who felt that sometimes his revered senior "lost the essential sense of proportion in his views and actions. But no one could ever doubt the sincerity of his effort or his honest belief in the cause he espoused." He was wont to quote

Sir Walter Scott: "Without courage there cannot be truth, and without truth there can be no other virtue."

Such was the confidence and esteem in which he was held that when he was the advocate general of Maharashtra his services were requisitioned by other states in important constitutional law cases. One such instance was when the President of India referred the conflict between the Uttar Pradesh Vidhan Sabha and the Allahabad High Court to the Supreme Court for its opinion. To defend their action in issuing warrants for the arrest of two High Court judges, the Vidhan Sabha engaged Seervai's services where his performance was rated by Andhyarujina as "the most brilliant one in his career."

In the celebrated Keshavananda Bharati case, the Government of Kerala chose Seervai to plead its case; Seervai led the team of lawyers representing the Govern-

ment and in effect carried the burden of defending the Union of India as well. Before the largest bench of 13 judges of the Supreme Court in 1972-73 Seervai urged forcefully for unlimited power to amend the constitution. However, the abuse of the amending power during the Emergency made Seervai change his views as he candidly acknowledged in his magnum opus, *Constitutional Law of India* which saw four editions, the third volume of which he completed on the day prior to his death.

This treatise earned him the distinction of "undoubted master of Indian constitutional law," by *The Law Quarterly Review*. "On the constitutional law of India it is from several considerations, perhaps the best book ever written," states the *Journal of Constitutional and Parliamentary Studies*. For over 35 years he toiled over its four editions, and the book was one of the reasons why he refused the offer of judgeship of the Supreme Court as also the attorney general's post. Among the several issues on which Seervai felt strongly, and on which he has enunciated his bold stand in the book, was the Government's inability to prevent the demolition of the Babri Masjid, and the insensitive treatment meted out by the Supreme Court to social activist Ms Sheela Barse in her struggle to procure better maintenance facilities for children detained in state-managed remand homes. Other books authored by Seervai include *Emergency, Future Safeguards and the Habeas Corpus Case* and *Legend and Reality: The Partition of India*.

The man of principles had also represented the Government's policies on prohibition and banning of private lotteries. So dedicated was he to his responsibilities as advocate general that during his tenure of office, which earned him limited monetary returns, he appeared in only four or five private cases that involved close associates. When he had to appear before the Krishna River Water Disputes Tribunal he took up abode in New Delhi for three years and would ensure that his boarding and lodging costs were minimal. The same legal titan who had been conferred the Padma Vibhushan in 1972 (the country's second highest civilian award) had opted to step down as advocate general two years later following some differences with the then law minister A. R. Antulay, notes a write-up in the *Indian Express* of January 28, 1996.

The only Indian to be conferred the

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corresponding fellowship of the British Academy, Seervai had earned this honor "reserved for scholars of the highest academic distinction," as notes their condolence letter. "His election to the British Academy in 1981 paid tribute to his outstanding contribution as jurist, law officer and advocate to constitutional law, primarily in India where he fearlessly and dispassionately maintained the constitution of which he was the principal exponent and interpreter, but also as a comparative scholar recognized as of outstanding merit throughout the jurisdictions which participate in the British and American constitutional legacies."

Yet another distinction conferred on Seervai was the Living Legend of the Law Award presented to him by the International Bar Association at New Delhi in 1994. Here was "a man of singular modesty and humility," remarked Prof David Williams, vice chancellor of the University of Cambridge. An Honorary Fellowship of the Asiatic Society of Bombay and the Dadabhai Naoroji Award were the other honors to come his way.

Blessed with a prodigious memory, Seervai had by heart the speech he had heard, when yet a little boy, Dadabhai Naoroji make when he was conferred the doctorate by the Bombay University, informs Feroza. Innumerable were the poets and authors he would quote at the apt moment to buttress a point he was making. Particularly fond of Wordsworth, Seervai would oft repeat that a man should belong to the "Type of the wise who soar but never roam/True to the kindred points of heaven and home."

Grandson of Hirjibhai Meherwanji Wadia (of Wadia Master Builders fame) and Nusserwanji Bachaji Seervai who was the rajvaid to the Maharaja of Baroda, Hormasji had studied at the Bharda New High School in Bombay. Following his graduation in philosophy and law he started his legal career with Sir Kenneth Kemp and was a junior to Sir Jamshedji Kanga for 25 years.

Besides teaching English at the Elphinstone College he had also worked as examiner in English at the matriculation examination of the Bombay University and the first LLB examinations. He later served as a trustee of the Elphinstone College for over 35 years, was founder member of the Philosophical Society of Bombay, inspired by his revered professor at the Elphinstone College, Prof J. C. P. Dandrade, and had officiated as president of the People's Union for Civil Liberties, Bombay unit for 10

years.

Although proud of the Parsi community's contributions and the moral courage of the Parsis of yore, Seervai, who had been ordained as a navar when he was eight years old, was not particularly religious, says Feroza, who described herself as an atheist and her husband as an agnostic. Rather than have prayers said on his anniversary day every month she prefers to invite their circle of close friends who share passages from works that have inspired them during the preceding month. In fact, on the last day of his life Seervai was reading *Peter the Great — His Life and World* by Robert K. Massie.

"It was wonderful how he preserved his vigor of mind and his great industry right to the end of his long life..." commented Prof Sir William Wade of Cambridge's Gonville and Caius College. The last case in which he appeared concerned a constitutional challenge to the Public Premises Eviction of Unauthorized Occupants Act (1971) whereby government companies or corporations sought to summarily evict tenants from properties owned by them. The case went on for about five months and throughout the hearings managed to read even very fine print with a reading lamp specially placed for him in court, adds Feroza. Breathing his last on the 46th anniversary of India's Republic Day, the day when the nation was granted her Constitution, Seervai always sought to uphold the spirit of the document, believing that the role of a constitution is that of a chart or compass — to study, to consult and to obey.

Seervai is survived by his wife Feroza, daughters Meher Jehangir Pocha and Shirin Pheroze Madon, and son Navroz.

Strategy for energy

Died: Rohinton Dhanjishaw Aga, 60, chairman and managing director of Thermax Limited, the Pune-based industrial concern where its 3,000 strong work force is committed to manufacturing and promoting energy generating and conservation equipment, on February 16, 1996 in Bombay following cardiac arrest.

Starting as a small company in Pune making industrial boilers, over the last 30 years Thermax has diversified into pollution control equipment, water treatment plants, speciality chemicals and energy conservation equipment. "I am convinced that Thermax has progressed as rapidly as it has because Rohinton's leadership and

vision caused the people of Thermax to believe in themselves and strive for significant results," remarked Paul Koenderman, senior vice president and group executive of Babcock and Wilcox Power Generation Group with which Thermax had entered into a collaboration in 1988. "Whenever we talked about challenging opportunities or new initiatives, I do not ever recall Rohinton saying that Thermax, or for that matter Thermax Babcock and Wilcox, was incapable of rising to the occasion. He had a great deal of pride and confidence in his people and, of course, expected great things from them. While very demanding in his own quiet way, he appeared always to have a deep respect for individuals and tried always to keep the business issues on an objective basis," added Koenderman.

Known for introducing some of the most "forward thinking human resource and motivation policies," Aga expected "every last employee of Thermax to feel that the company was his or her own and be responsible for making the right things happen, no matter what it took. It was his unique way of conveying to all his people that their roles had no boundaries and their potential had no limits. He was impatient with those who pointed out problems without suggesting solutions," remembers Kiran Gandhi, divisional manager of human resources at Thermax.

In fact, one of Pune's toughest union leaders is once known to have reassured the Thermax staff, "As long as you have a man like Mr Aga at the helm, I don't think your company will ever have any union problems!" Among the joys that Aga looked forward to, as listed in *Living a Mission*, a commemorative issue brought out by Thermax, were: "The satisfaction of a job well done; the joy of a repeat order from a happy customer; the thrill of exporting successfully against global competition; the glow of seeing members of the corporate family improve their standard of life; the fulfilment that comes from sharing one's time, energy and resources for larger causes."

"A man of great vision and broad perception, he had few peers... His pioneering contribution to building a kind of industrial and entrepreneurial temper in the Pune region would be a long lasting tribute to his memory, to his personality and to all that he did. He really practised what he preached," stated Dr Vijay Bhatkar, executive director, Centre for Development of Advanced Computing.

"His passing away has deprived indus-

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try in India and Pune in particular of, if I may put it, an elder statesman," remarked Wilhelm Sehardt, managing director and president of Sandvik. Aga made the time to serve on the board of Sandvik Asia Limited, Finolex Industries Limited, Kinetic Engineering Limited and Peregrine Capital India Private Limited. "Throughout his life he took his commitments very seriously," says Aga's wife Arnavaz (better known as Anu) who has since his demise taken over as executive chairperson of Thermax. "He felt very responsible if he took up any position -- be it as a board member or a trustee. He would make it a point to attend meetings, to study, to contribute. If he felt he could not make a difference, he would resign. I have never seen him accept positions for acquiring status," she further elaborated. Committed as he was to perfection, he chaired the Maharashtra Chapter of Quality Circle Forum of India from 1987 to 1990.

For two years Aga had served as chairman of the national committee on energy of the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) during which term he had led the CII energy mission to the USA. As writes CII president Rajive Kaul, "Rohinton was so much of a leader in CII with his outstanding contribution on energy policy and energy strategy... We shall miss his quiet sense of humor, his modest and low-key profile and presence, his intellectual and visionary approach and, most of all, his friendship and warmth."

These humane virtues that were admired in Aga were, as the industrialist had earlier acknowledged, ingrained from two women: mother Piroja "taught me in my formative years, the virtues of thrift, honesty and a sense of commitment in whatever I do;" wife Anu "taught me the value of being human (and) humble. As one grows and tastes success, (there is a) danger of being self-important and opinionated. When that happens, Anu brings me down from that pedestal -- down to mother earth."

"The motivation for any activity must be that it adds value -- that was one mantra which guided him throughout his life," believes B. K. Khare whose firm served as auditors for Thermax. Recalling Aga's words, Khare continued, "More often than not he used to tell me, 'I am prepared to pay any tax if it were to add value.' Unquestionably, he could add value to every rupee saved from tax by ploughing it back with a view to cross-fertilizing the corporate base from which sprouted many products, technologies, skills, missions, managers'

commitments -- the surest way to contribute to the economic prosperity so necessary for building an egalitarian society."

"The best is yet to come," was the inspiration for Aga who prided himself on having achieved whatever he had without compromising his conscience. Aga's "great talent was apparently organization, planning and continuity," notes Dr Sammy Mody, head of the N. M. Wadia Institute of



Aga: visionary workaholic

Cardiology, in whose opinion Aga "had the ability to analyze a problem and come to a decision without lengthy or erudite discussions. His ability to look into the future and his sense of timing was uncanny -- except when it came to catching a plane or attending a dinner party!" Besides being his friend, Mody was also Aga's doctor who had witnessed Aga's travails following a quadruple bypass operation in the UK in 1982 and the subsequent paralytic stroke which affected his right side as also his speech and memory.

"He had to start at the very beginning -- learning the alphabet, deciphering colors with objects, even tying his own shoe laces. His effort was truly remarkable," credits his daughter Meher Pudumjee who remembers imbibing many lessons from him, one of which was "Nothing is impossible." "Performing any task, whether it was my homework from school or work at Thermax, was never a chore to him. He somehow had the capacity to make one enjoy what one was doing," she reveals. She can never forget the confidence he reposed in her

when just before a piano competition he advised his nervous daughter: "Darling, play to express rather than impress." Not one to inflict his view on others, Aga did not insist that Meher or her brother Kurush should join Thermax. He would have been content so long as they did something useful with their lives. He was delighted though when they both joined the company for he had already clarified that they should not expect any position as their birthright.

Aga himself had worked his way up the corporate ladder before he established himself as the leader. His hero, where private enterprise was concerned, was Jamsetji Tata. Bombay born Aga's early education was at Karachi. After his graduation in commerce from Bombay's Podar College he proceeded to Cambridge under a Tata scholarship to do his economics tripos. "He would have loved to be a professor but mindful of the fact that he had to repay his loan and the responsibility of looking after his parents, he turned to the corporate world," says Anu. Starting with Burmah Shell he later joined Duncan Brothers in Calcutta and then took up responsibilities at National Steel Equipment Company which was managed by Anu's family. When Anu's father Ardesir S. Bhathena launched Wanson India as a simple boiler maker, Aga devoted his all to this business and succeeded in making this company (later known as Thermax) into a giant with a turnover of Rs 350 crore without having to go public. It was the first Indian private company to open an office in Moscow. "Faced with difference of goals with the company founder, Aga executed a sort of management buyout in the mid-1980s, but without a leverage," reports Shreekanth Sambrani in *The Economic Times*. When the company decided to open its doors to the public last year, it got a premium of Rs 180 per share and the prices remained steadily above Rs 300, mentions Sambrani, impressed that "one of India's best engineering companies was headed by an economist."

The workaholic and visionary enjoyed his moments of rest too. He loved holidaying in Mahabaleshwar (his favorite place in the world), playing cards with his wife each night before retiring to bed, enjoying the company of Bimbo, his Lhasa apso, western classical music particularly compositions by Bach, Vivaldi and Beethoven, doting on his grandson Zahaan, driving his Honda Accord rashly, and indulging in wrong food habits with Anu trying desperately to keep him off cigarettes and oily

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non-vegetarian foods. Discloses his wife, "I would go out of my way to prepare dishes which were low in cholesterol and he would say, 'Delicious; do make it when I am out of town!'" His visits to the fire-temple were more to please his mother for whom he also made time, when she was 94 years old, to accompany to Mahableshtar.

Aga's book *Changing The Mindset — Reflections of a Chief Executive* which was published in 1994 is a masterpiece valued by many and wherein one can get glimpses of his personality, states Khare. Multifaceted Aga was "well read with a superb intellect, a great articulator, teacher and student throughout his life, a very intense listener, a keen observer with a finger on the pulse of markets and customers and their needs of today and tomorrow, a great visualizer and dreamer with a capacity to translate his dream into reality, a great charmer because of his qualities of head and heart." One of the most touching tributes on Aga's demise came from Moreswar Sevekari, a blind employee of Thermax, who confessed, "The sadness I feel today is much more than the sadness I felt when I lost my sight."

Aga is survived by his mother Piroja, wife Anu, daughter Meher Pheroze Pudumjee and son Kurush.

P. G.

Iran's scholar priest

Died: Dastur Firooz Azargoshasb, 83, in Tehran, Iran on June 25, 1996, following cardio-respiratory failure.

Dedicated to religious study, this son of Dastur Namdar Azargoshasb was a prominent member of the panel of priests who shared places of honor with the Islamic clergy and representatives of the Islamic Republic of Iran who attended various sessions of the Sixth World Zoroastrian Congress in Tehran.

The austere-looking, bespectacled priest had taken ill during the session on "Strengthening of Religious Training of Mobeds" on the second afternoon of the Congress and was escorted off the podium shortly after he delivered his address. He was said to be suffering from asthma. He succumbed to



Azargoshasb: Gathas in Persian

the illness five days later.

Azargoshasb's two-volume translation and interpretation of the *Gathas* is "the best possible translation in Persian," notes the tribute forwarded to *Parsiana* by Meherban Kushesh a former committee member of the Anjuman Zartoshtian Tehran. The late Dastur had also helped in the English translation of the *Khordeh Avesta* transcribed on audiotape by the Council of Iranian Mobeds of North America. In the course of his dedicated life, he gave 1,000 lectures, and wrote numerous papers on Zoroastrianism, notes the August newsletter of the Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Chicago (ZAC). He was respectfully remembered at the muktad prayers conducted by ZAC at their Darbe Mehr.

After graduating from Albourz College, he pursued religious studies for seven years at Bombay's M. F. Cama Athornan Madressa in Andheri. Thereafter Azargoshasb graduated in law from the University of Tehran ere his marriage and the birth of four daughters who are now settled with children of their own. One of his sons-in-law is a mobed, informs Kushesh.

The priest is survived by his wife Simin Adarbad and daughters Shahnaz Parsi, Mitra Kianian, Mahnaz Ormazdi and Parvin Mazdayesnie.

Arnavaz S. Mama

The Respected Ritualist

Died: Ervad Jehangir Hormusji Turel, 71, the seniormost priest at Surat's Sheth D. N. Modi Atash Behram acclaimed for having performed 160 nirangdins and other high liturgical ceremonies, on May 27, 1996 in Bombay following myocardial infarction.

Regarded as a "diamond in Surat's crown" by the chairman of the Surat Parsi Panchayat (SPP) Dr Sam Bhacca, Turel is believed to have spent almost a tenth of his life in fire-temples undertaking the rigorous nirangdin ceremonies. In addition he has been credited with having performed innumerable vendidads, ijashnes and visperad ceremonies, supervised the consecration of new fires as also re-enthronement of fires whose shift was necessitated because of repairs to the fire-temples. In fact, barring the consecration of a dokhma, the ritualist was involved in every other high liturgical ceremony.

Commenting of his rare dedication, at the felicitation function co-hosted by the Bombay Parsi Panchayet and the SPP two years ago (see "Ritual Honor," *Parsiana*, July-August 1994), Dastur (Dr) Firoze



Turel: passion for prayer

Kotwal of the H. B. Wadia Atash Bahram referred to him as "the last of a dying breed." Such was the respect and admiration earned by Turel that he is said to have attracted lakhs of rupees to the Modi Atash Behram by way of kathi and maintenance funds and to have personally donated over a lakh of rupees. Actually the felicitation function (and the executive council meeting of the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India earlier that day) was yet another occasion when donations from Turel and others led to the eight atash behrams being gifted Rs 40,000 each towards their maintenance funds.

Rather than let sacred fires languish due to want of maintenance or poor patronage, Turel believed that they should be shifted to areas where they could be well looked after. On the subject of mixed marriages, though, the priest held conservative views.

Secunderabad born Turel, who had been orphaned while he was in his eighth year of life, had received his education at the M. F. Cama Athornan Institute in Andheri. Drawn to prayers since his youth, he had started his vocation as a priest when he was 16 years old while his brother Edul, former chairman of the Bombay Mercantile Co-operative Bank Limited opted for a secular career. Among the events which Turel considered particularly noteworthy was a trip to Iran when he got an opportunity to perform a jashan at the foot of Mount Damavand.

His passion for prayers, Turel sought to ingrain in the next generation. The advent of a savior, he believed, would infuse new life for Zoroastrianism to flourish in India.

Turel is survived by his wife Tehmina and daughters Farida Tehemton Mistry, Dhun Noshir Anklesaria and Yasmin Kerfegar Cooper.

P. G.



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