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DECEMBER 1996 Rs 22



The Bapunas of Nagpur



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Parsiana

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Cover: Dinshaw Bapuna with sons (from left) Abad, Aspi and Adil

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 Unsigned letters or those without an address will not be published.

"The elevation of..."

With reference to "The elevation of Nadirshah Unvalla (*Parsiana*, July-August 1996)," it is relevant to recall the eternal message of *Yenghe Hatam*, one of our three most sacred *manthras* (free English rendering by Dr Irach Taraporewala):

"Those men and women both do we adore, whose every act of worship is alive with *Asha* (righteousness), the eternal law of life; Who are in sight of Mazda Ahura/as best and noblest mortals recognized; These are the truest leaders of mankind."



Unvalla: "righteous"

This is acutely relevant in the priestly sphere: the overriding requirement for true spiritual leadership is *Asha*, which knows not inconstancy or compromise in matters of religious principle. The practice of righteousness is not taught in the ivory towers of academe and does not automatically accompany degrees in theology and philology. Though these do have their own worth, in the sight of Ahura Mazda not all the world's university qualifications and scholastic skills can match the merit of a single righteous person. Welcome, *Vada Dasturji* Nadirshah Unvalla! RONI K. KHAN Nasik

"Parsis of Hong Kong"

In my letter "Parsis of Hong Kong (Readers' Forum, *Parsiana*, July-August 1996)," I had requested any knowledgeable Parsi to throw light on the fate that would befall the Parsis of Hong Kong when China takes over the colony from the British in 1997.

As per the particulars forwarded by the president, the Incorporated Trustees of the Zoroastrian Charity Funds of Hong Kong, Canton and Macao, Mr Jal S. Shroff:

"No one can accurately predict the future but based on the evidence available to us at present, I am pleased to say that the local Zoroastrian community is confident that after the change of sovereignty, Hong Kong will continue to flourish, maintaining its present prosperity and stability.

"It is very much in China's interest to ensure that the promised 'one country two system' concept is allowed to develop and be successfully implemented in Hong Kong.

"Our community has been in Hong Kong and China for many generations contributing in a small way to the success of the region and God willing we will be here for many generations to come."

Mr Shroff was also good enough to send a copy of the historical outline of the above Trust, its activities and its people. It makes interesting reading. We find that at least three roads are named after the Parsis—Bisney Road, Kotewall Road and Mody Road, the last named after the outstanding philanthropist and a true Hong Konger, Sir Hormusjee Nowrojee Mody, one of the founders of the Hong Kong University and the Kowloon Cricket Club. A Parsi cemetery in Macao is located on "Estrada Dos Parses" or "Parsee Road."

Readers interested in the historical outline may contact me on telephone no. 3087606. BHIKHAJI M. ADENWALLA

"Honing for excellence"

Your article titled "Honing for Excellence (*Parsiana*, June 1996)" on the Holiday Programme for Youth (HPY) function was most encouraging and interesting to read. However, I found Ms Arnavaz S. Mama's unnecessary comment — "...lest (Khojeste) Mistree's message further reinforce the trend towards ghettoization in the community..." — most crass and unprofessional.



Mistree: "religious perspective"

Mr Khojeste Mistree has for the last 10 years unflinchingly given the HPY and other Zoroastrian youth the Zoroastrian religious perspective and mechanism to excel in their own secular fields of interest. The HPY religious sessions with Mr Mistree have by far been the most dynamic and interactive, judging from the written feedback that is received from the youth, as it offers them for the first time a sense of pride and identity with a solid religious knowledge base at a very critical age in their young lives. How this knowledge and encouragement can lead to "ghettoization" is completely unfathomable.

The comment, unnecessary as it is, is in very poor taste and does not behave well for an objective journalist's standards of 'excellence' or professionalism.

Ms M. H. COOPER
Dubai

Arnavaz Mama replies

The trend towards ghettoization among Bombay Zoroastrians has been noted and commented upon by community leaders at various fora and programs.

Even as Ms Cooper refers to Mr Mistree's "dynamic and interactive" religious sessions at the HPY and the feedback of "a sense of pride and identity," we feel that there is much that a persuasive speaker like him could accomplish for his youth audience by helping them place their Parsi Zoroastrian heritage within the larger framework of India and the world.

It was not our intention to make any disparaging remarks but to point out the shift in emphasis between the two speakers.

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Whither, *Parsiana*?

I am inclined to agree with Mr N. S. Mobedji of Indore ("Whither, *Parsiana*?" Readers' Forum, *Parsiana*, September 1996) on almost all counts.

Newswise, much of the contents becomes outdated due to its late arrival at our doorstep. Also, the magazine would do well to inject a lively serial or two on themes/subjects which are relevant and also which, given sufficient time and coverage, could be eagerly looked forward to by its readership.

The serial I have in mind could be based on Firdausi Tusi's *Shah Nameh*, related in lively prose form, so that *Parsiana* readers, both young and old, would come to know about our community's ancestors who lived in ancient Iran (Persia). The serial would go a long way in not only revealing our antecedents but also make the community proud, especially the youth, about belonging to a race that has outlived most other civilizations over the ages, and which is still going great guns!

The only drawback as I see it for such a serial is the very vehicle it is expected to be carried in. *Parsiana* must make it a point to bring out the issues every month so that the foregoing episode(s) could be recalled easily by readers.

Alternatively, *Parsiana* could print the serial, under its masthead, as a separate leaflet or folder or even booklet, depending upon the length of each episode. Perhaps a small, extra, nominal charge could be fixed for this approach as it entails printing a separate publication as such.

May I invite your other readers to air their views on this suggestion? Who knows, instead of losing readers — and their interest in *Parsiana* — you may stand to gain by winning over more readers!

ADI F. MERCHANT

Spread true knowledge

We are happy to find that over the years *Parsiana* has helped to rid the community of many wrong beliefs and narrow-minded ideas. The latest example of this is Dastur Hormazdyar Mirza's acceptance of Neville Wadia and his son in the Zoroastrian fold after they had professed Christianity for several years.

Our prayers, specially the *Gathas*, and *Yashts* such as the *Haptan Yasht*, definitely demand the members of our community to spread the true knowledge of God among men. The *Haptan Yasht* tells us, "If you know something that is good and true, teach it also to others." Also the same *Yasht* further states that we pray for the

safe return of our men who as missionaries have gone to distant lands to spread the great truths of religion about the creation, the Creator, man's place in the creation and his duty to live in accordance with God's will and the laws of Nature.

Let us hope that Zoroastrians who are now migrating to foreign countries will be helping to spread the divine truth.

God sends his prophets, philosophers, scientists and artists to spread true knowledge and also to purify old knowledge when it gets corrupted.

D. R. EDIBAM

Religion renamed

For over a year I have enjoyed reading *Parsiana* and hope to continue to do so for quite a while.

One thing bothers me — the consistent use of the terms Zoroastrian and Zoroastrianism. Both these terms derive from Zoroaster, which is the Greek corruption of the name Zarathushtra. The derivations from Zarathushtra are Zarathushti (follower of Zarathushtra) and Zarathushti din (religion of Zarathushtra). As mentioned in the *FEZANA Journal* of Winter 1996:

"Dastur Khurshed S. Dabu in his book *Zarathushtra and His Teachings* mentions that the three syllables of the name meant *Zara*: golden, *thush*: shining, and *stra*:

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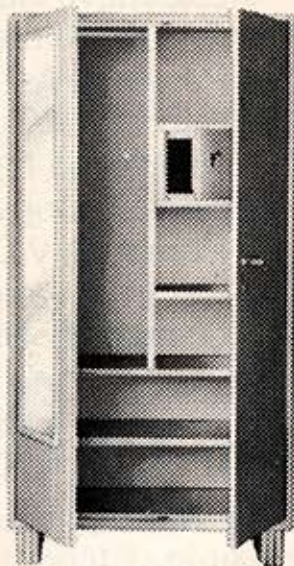


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star. The Greeks dropped the middle syllable and translated it to 'Zoroaster.'

"The Persian religious books were taken by Alexander of Macedonia during his conquest of Persia around 330 BC and later given to the Greeks. The Greek writings influenced the West..."

The *FEZANA Journal* has already adopted Zarathushti and Zarathushti din as standard nomenclature for some time now. It was also endorsed by the *Gatha* conference, at which Dastur Firoze Kotwal and Ervad Rooyintan Peer of Bombay were present. May I persuade you to adopt these standard terms in your magazine also?

I grew up in Bombay and Parsis always used Zarathushti and Zarathushti din when they spoke in Gujarati but switched to the other terms when they spoke or wrote in English, under the mistaken notion that those were the English translations.

JAMSHED R. UDVADIA
Lansing, USA

Readers' views are welcome — *Editor*

Global umbrella

The global Zoroastrian community lacks unity and leadership. We are split between

orthodoxy and liberalism. The exodus of population continues due west or south. A total demographic extinction is clearly written on the wall, but who cares? The universe is rapidly changing all around us at a vastly accelerated rate; but we, the Rip van Winkles, heirs to an ancient and noble tradition, continue to be oblivious to the needs of harmonizing our faith to the changing milieu.

The Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP) is more interested in housing a diminishing population than in our ultimate survival, barring some good educational work for the youth. Our priesthood is more interested in scriptural translations, doctoral theses and performing rituals than in directly educating the community in understanding religion. The knowledge, skill or use of techniques of community organization and development is lacking or ignored, except by the academe. Each individual believes that he/she has the right solution and that all opposing views are wrong. The right of 'choice' inherited by us in a different context, is contemporarily playing havoc with our unity and survival. Strong egos, power politics and vested interests are inhibiting the global diaspora

from coming together to work out a proper solution.

Our traditional and respected, though limited (trust fund managing) leadership is vested in the BPP. If the BPP has to assume this vastly enhanced responsibility, then it will need to restructure itself as a fully democratic elected body, change its constitution and objectives as well as its geographic scope (global), induct competent men/women in the fields of community organization and social development, ensure priestly support and invite the Zoroastrian diaspora around the world to join the new structure. It could start on an experimental basis for a limited period of time and continue upon evaluating the results.

Failing that, a new global democratically elected body will need to be constituted by a select, capable leadership acting as the founding directors, leaving the BPP to continue in its trust affairs but extending financial support to this new global body. Elected or nominated representatives would be invited to its membership from all over the world, wherever a stable, substantive community exists and has formed into a local association. This must include Iranian Zoroastrian associations too.

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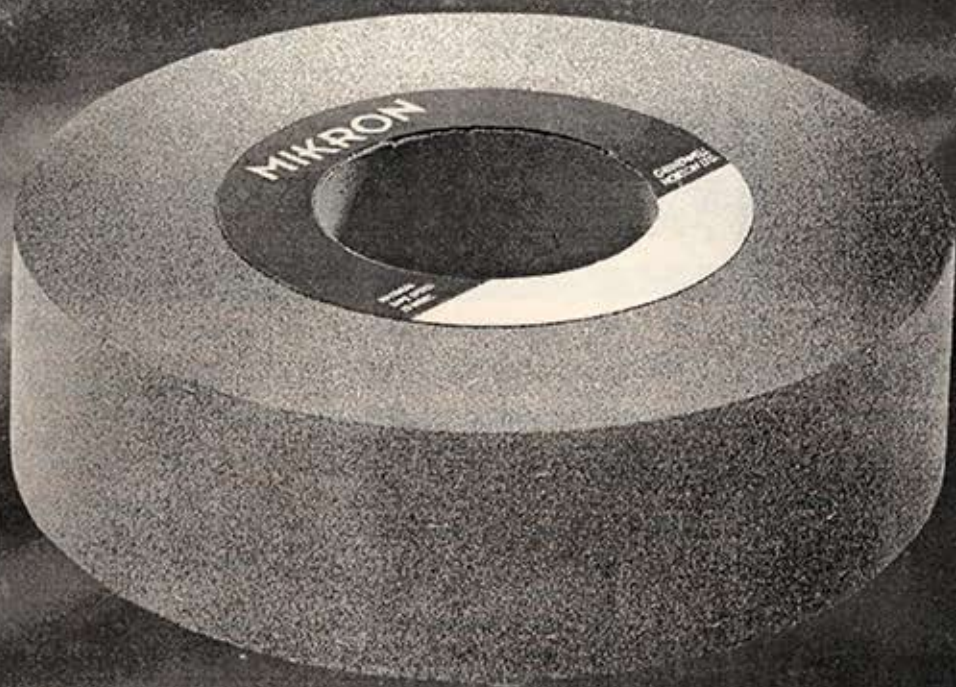
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This Federation of Global Zoroastrian Associations would assume the responsibility of leading the world Zoroastrian community into the next century and millennium, as a strong, well identified body, with a clear vision of the demands of a changing universe, so as to be in harmony with it. It would not be bogged down by blind traditionalism and media pressures, but retain our Gathic core essence and spirit to a point and yet be flexible enough to reorient itself to the changing universal demands. This will be a very informal body, open to all views, by presence or proxy. No restrictions on opting in or opting out at any time. No compulsion to accept majority decisions, but the ability to modify them or reject them. The whole purpose is just to keep coming together under a global umbrella and sound out views on various burning topics (which currently in the absence of such an organization is creating acrimony), so as to find out ways and means of harmonizing them.

It could be financed by all participating members and certainly in a big way by the BPP. It could deal with ways and means of reversing our dwindling demography and harmonizing the geographically shifting population pressures by transferring the priest class and community institutions to where they are most needed and can be best utilized. We have about 30 years within which to shape up this idea, establish the forum and get in control of our destiny. Else we will be lost in the limbo of history.

Failing such action, associations and federations around the world may tend independently to work a way out of this mess as best suited to their individual local environment, pressures and politics. Maybe, such a movement is already under way. Once this global body is formed and our continuity ensured, it will be time to assess the universal changes that are taking place



Ahmednagar's Palantin Dar E Meher

and think about appropriate readjustment, reform and renaissance of the Good Religion.

If the suggestions made here are deemed valid by the readers, they may come up with criticisms and suggestions for further improvement. If so expressed in the media (or directly to the undersigned at 2085 Islington Avenue, Apartt. 1003, Weston, Ontario M9P 3R1 Canada) the writer would be only too happy to elaborate on its details, step by step, in consultation with like-minded individuals around the world who may wish to serve the community.

HOMI B. MINOCHER HOMJI
Toronto, Canada

Union Press mementos?

The well-known Union Press will be celebrating its 140th anniversary in 1997 with a number of programs. On this occasion it is also collecting archival material in order to document its history and development over the last 140 years.

Readers in possession of any publication (like dictionaries, Bombay Law Reports, magazines, etc) brought out by Union

Press between 1857 and 1920 may kindly forward the same to Mr Rohinton Chinooy at Zoroastrian Association Building, 13, Homji Street, Horniman Circle, Fort, Bombay 400-001. Suitable compensation will

Union Press completes 140 years

be considered in case of valuable archival material.

R. P. CHINOY
Proprietor, Union Press

Ahmednagar's appeal

The Zoroastrians of Ahmednagar are celebrating the 150th anniversary of our atash-e-adaran saheb housed in the Palantin Dar E Meher on *Ava mah*, Adar roj 1366 YZ i.e. Friday, March 28, 1997.

On this auspicious occasion we hope to collect Rs 10 lakhs from kind donors all over the world for the following purposes:

- To renovate our agiary, dharamshala and mobed quarters situated in the same complex and in need of urgent repair.
- To build up a corpus to meet our expenses for these buildings, electricity, kathi, etc. Above all we would like to employ an assistant for our panthaky saheb Ervad Navvalshah Karkaria who has single handedly managed the *boi* ceremonies for 11 long years.
- We need to repair the walls of our Tower of Silence and bungli there.
- We also need to fence 16 acres of prime land which is under threat of encroachment. As of today we have no money even to employ a proper security guard.

Our total strength is only 97, but we are committed to maintaining our properties and our heritage. Therefore we appeal to our fellow Zoroastrians to contribute generously to our Anjuman.

Cheques/demand drafts in the name of "Ahmednagar Parsi Anjuman Trust" should be forwarded to Parsi Agiary, Davare Lane, Ahmednagar 414001.

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Events and Personalities

New Gallery in old Hall

After innumerable postponements the Bombay branch of the National Gallery of Modern Art was finally inaugurated at the refurbished premises of the city's Sir Cowasji Jehangir (C. J.) Hall on December 23, 1996 at the hands of S. R. Bommai, union minister for human resource development. "This new gallery will be a center of attraction for lovers and learners of art," he said referring to the city's willingness to encourage and nourish art and culture, and the Parsi community's contribution to the development of Bombay. "The Government of India is prepared to do all it can, even spend more (it had reportedly incurred Rs 3.3 crores, according to *The Times of India* of March 3, 1996), to make this an institution of national and international importance," he was quoted in *The Times* of December 24.

Sponsored by TimesBank, the inaugural show of 200 paintings entitled *The Moderns*, featured the works of the Progressive Artists' Group and Associates and included names like S. H. Raza, F. N. Souza, M. F. Husain, H. A. Gade, S. G. Bakre and the late K. H. Ara. The collection was spread over the building's five floors spiralling up at split levels. According to curator Yashodhara Dalmia, the largest group of paintings on display at the show was from the Jehangir Nicholson collection. The new Gallery has a corpus of 1,400 works that have been transferred from its New Delhi counterpart, states a report in *The Times* of December 22.

"If you view the C. J. Hall (strategically located opposite the Prince of Wales Museum) from outside, you would think that nothing has been done. But take a look inside, it is unrecog-

nizable," noted N. Vijayalakshmi in *The Afternoon Despatch and Courier* of January 10, 1996. Rated as a heritage stite, the architects were not permitted to touch the exterior stone structure. "Creating this gallery has been a real challenge," admitted architect Romi Khosla who emerged the winner in the late '80s when a competition for its design was held. The project finally took off his drawing board in mid-1994 after overcoming all the bureaucratic hurdles. "I was not interested in freezing the old-world look," maintains Khosla, "I have made certain deliberate interventions in order to create an honest contrast and a totally new ambience."

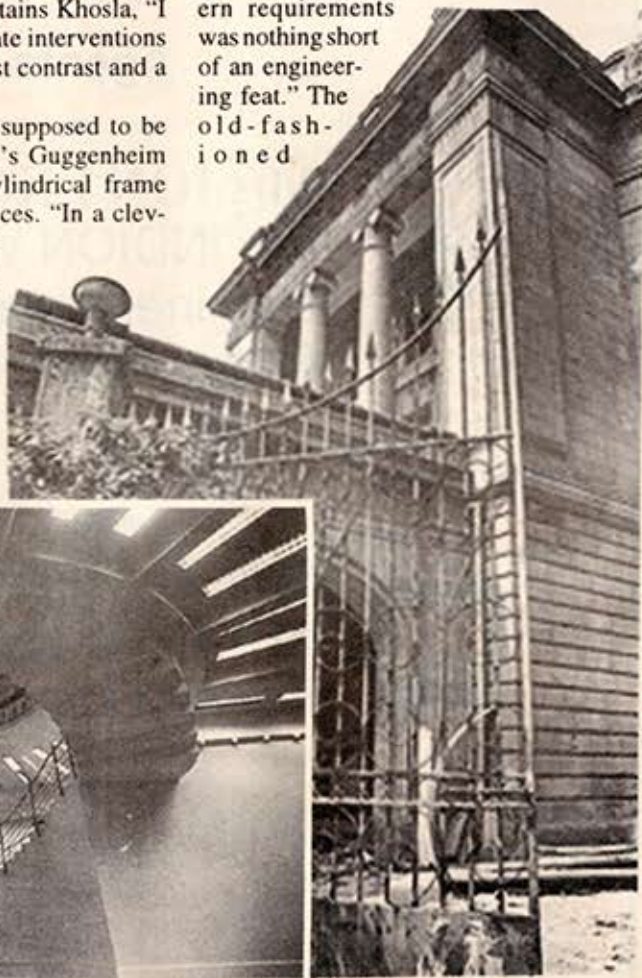
The interiors are now supposed to be reminiscent of New York's Guggenheim Gallery because of its cylindrical frame and split level gallery spaces. "In a cleverly adaptive re-use of historic space, the architect has now created 20,000

square feet of exhibition area," acknowledges Gunvanthi Balaram in *The Times* of March 3. There is also a mini auditorium for audiovisual presentations and seminars with a seating capacity of 120 and provision for a bookshop and cafe.

"The museum will be a boon to Bombay," said senior artist Jehangir Sabavala, grandson of Sir Cowasji Jehangir, admitting to *The Afternoon's* correspondent N. Vijayalakshmi, "To turn around a structure which no longer fitted the modern requirements was nothing short of an engineering feat." The old-fashioned

Newly renovated Sir Cowasji Jehangir Hall

Photo: Vishwanath Salian, *The Afternoon Despatch and Courier*



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domed Hall designed by the renowned George Wittet in 1911 and built at a cost of four lakh rupees by cotton merchant Sir Cowasji Jehangir was gifted to the city as there was need for a public hall then "for public meetings of consequence and concerts of importance." World famous violinist Yehudi Menuhin is known to have performed here; for a while it became the home of the Bombay Symphony Orchestra led by Mehli Mehta. The decline set in when the Hall could not compete with the airconditioned sound-proof new auditoria that were built. It then came to be used as a boxing ring, for fetes and bargain sales. When the idea of a modern art gallery was mooted the descendants of Sir Cowasji Jehangir had to be consulted because as per the original agreement any change of user required the sanction of the Jehangir family. "The museum had to weather the vagaries of bureaucratic lethargy and artistic fastidiousness before it could finally take off," reported *The Times* of March 3.

While it is agreed that the National Gallery of Modern Art will spend one lakh rupees every month on the maintenance of this Bombay branch, a keeper has yet to be found to look into the day-to-day administration and maintenance of the paintings, states *The Times* of December 22. Never-

theless, as expressed an optimistic Sabavala, "We can finally look forward to some good exhibitions of modern art from the rest of the country and indeed from all over the world."

Festivities in Nagpur

A Mock Parliament, TV's channel 'B' (the 'Bawa' channel), cooking, art and fancy dress contests, quiz, games, music, food, discourse and a jashan, of course, marked the five-day rejoicing to celebrate the 101st anniversary of the recently renovated Bai Hirabai Mulla Dar-e-Meher in Nagpur. "The *salgirah* celebrations had something of interest for everyone," writes Ms Dilnavaz Bhagwagar reporting on the various functions organized from October 6-10, 1996 under the auspices of the Nagpur Parsi Gymkhana when president Shiraz Gimi, secretary Ms Mehru Watchmaker, Rusi Godha and several others "gave unstintingly of their time, talent and money."

For his outstanding contribution to the Parsi community, Dinshaw Bapuna, the president of the Shri Nagpur and Kamptee Parsi Zarthosti Anjuman, was conferred the honorary life membership of the Gymkhana, mentions Bhagwagar. Inculcate the values of truthfulness, righteousness and charity, stressed guest

speaker Noshir Dadrawala in his address on the occasion. Citing the community's demographic figures he urged the audience to be proud of their Zoroastrian identity.

The Mock Parliament session put together by Ms Khushnoor Chugh and Ms Parveen Cassad saw youngsters in the age-group of 10-13 enacting the roles of the speaker, finance minister, defence minister and other veterans, debating national issues with much flair.

The two hours of TV viewing on the 'Bawa' channel was conceived by Ms Nargis Desai and Ms Havovi Govadia. It featured Parsi news and views, aerobics, the Parsi Top Ten set to Gujarati lyrics and dances, a soap titled *Khadus ané Khubsurat* (a takeoff on *The Bold and The Beautiful*), advertisement spots marketing products and services of Nagpur Parsi business houses and even an ingenious fashion show with models draped in Parsi attire!

The cooking competition included a section for men which was keenly contested, states Bhagwagar. The Forum of Young Zoroastrians held a quiz when Aftab Pithawalla won the Marazban Hormusji Rolling Trophy for being the best informed Parsi youth. Besides academic excellence, the Anjuman also recognizes adventure sports. Fel-

icitations were accorded to Ms Parinaz Buxy for state level excellence in fencing, Ms Aban and Abeeza Bhamgara for trekking in the Himalayas, five-year-old Ms Peenaz Mavalwala for climbing the Bhivgarh hill, Homiar Godha for his participation in a motorbike rally and Ms Gulrukh and Shiraz Mehta for winning a scooter treasure hunt, writes Bhagwagar.

Khabardar's works

Well-known poet Kavi Ardeshir Faramji Khabardar

Participating in the Nagpur celebrations

Top row (from left): Thrity Patel, Keki Bala, Bapuna, Parizad Daver, Bommy Vazifdar and Rushad Patel; Gimi and Shernaz Daver with her trophy

Bottom row (from left): Tauby Bhagwagar and Yasmin Rao modelling saris while men are engaged in the cooking competition





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At the release of Master's book in Madras (from left) Mogrelia, Patel and Mistry

wrote his magnum opus *Darshanika* while he was a resident of Madras. He was finally laid to rest at the aramgah there. It was only fitting therefore that Kavi Khabardarna *Gadhyalekho*, a collection of Khabardar's prose articles, compiled and published by Prof Dharmendra Master, were released under the auspices of the Madras Parsi Zarthosti Anjuman.

At the function held at the Phiroj Clubwala Memorial Hall on October 26, 1996, Anjuman president Nariman Mogrelia mentioned how he had been influenced by the never-say-die philosophy of this poet who was supposed to be a favorite of Mahatma Gandhi. Chief guest P. S. Patel, president of the Tamilnadu Gujarat Samaj, while expressing concern that Khabardar's works, simple yet rich in content, had not been given the recognition they deserved, generously donated towards Master's research efforts, mentions the press release sent by the Anjuman.

Relentlessly pursuing his goal of collecting and publishing Khabardar's works, Master's dedication was acclaimed by the secretary of the Madras Parsi Association, Ms Zarin Mistry in her vote of thanks. The function ended with a delicious Gujarati style dinner catered by Kersi and Khorshed Amrolia, adds the write-up.

A poem a day

In its new section dedicated to Indian poetry, *India World* featured works of two Zoroastrian poets, Rashid Khosravi and Jimmy Avasia in August and Septem-

ber 1996. As notes the introduction to Indian Poetry, "Our aim is to make the section useful at a variety of levels: to an international audience keen to be made familiar with the work of Indian poets, to people who would like an introduction to poetry in India, to students of literature and to poetry lovers."

For the six days of the week beginning Monday, August 19, 1996 Khosravi's poems were featured — *The River, Wave-Work, Morning Gold, Snow-Skin, Branch-*



Khosravi (left) and Avasia

Beauty, The Wound. A lawyer by profession with a penchant for poetry, 52-year-old Khosravi's poems have been published in *The P.E.N. India journal*, *Poesis* and the *Brown Critique Journal of Indian Writing in English*, notes a brief write-up on the poet. Besides fluency in French and Persian, Khosravi holds a certificate in Spanish and can read Russian and German. After his schooling from St Mary's, Khosravi graduated in physics and chemistry from St Xavier's College before joining the Government Law College for a law degree. He had represented his college and the Bombay University at weight lifting championships, we are informed.

In *The Wound*, Khosravi says: If his wound can speak,

it won't blame the road,
nor the man at the wheel
it would blame his ego.
If her wound can complain
it won't speak of the pain.
It would feel the defeat of a woman,
the emptiness of her womb.
The wounds are saved as scars
or in myths

wrapped carefully in the soul's sheath.

Avasia's six poems were carried in the week beginning September 2. Taken from his collection *The Man In Dark Glasses*, the ones chosen for *India World* were *A Future is Assured, Mana, Grandad Was, Atlas Divided, Confessional, To Wife (For S., Naturally)*. Avasia's works have found a place in *Imprint* magazine, *Debonair*, *Kavi India*, *Bequest*, *Poems of the Emergency*, the *Junior Statesman* and "a few other places he'd rather not talk about such as the wall of the ladies toilet on the Andheri East railway station. Err, that's a joke," mentions the introduction to the poet. A counsel by profession, Avasia had studied at St Xavier's Boys' Academy and St Xavier's College where he majored in English literature and psychology before studying law at the Government Law College.

In *A Future is Assured*, 42-year-old Avasia writes:

A future will come with its trimmings,
A wife and child thrown in,
A respectable job.
I will believe in god,
Mellow with age.
Life will find me threads to patch it
And I will dismiss old scores.
Bury the hatchet, swallow my rage,
I'll meet my maker, bored
As if I were a sage.
The future is assured.

Spirit of success

Sikkim Distilleries Limited is the first Indian distillery to receive the Golden Europe Award for Quality, according to a press release. The managing director Marzban Parekh received the award along with a gold badge to commemorate the 10th year of the presentation of the awards at a ceremony in Paris on October 28, 1996.

This is Sikkim Distilleries' third international award, the other two being gold medals won at Madrid, Spain in '84 and '85 for "Quality and Excellence of Products." The company's other achievements include the Niryat Rattan Award and the National Trade Excellence Award, states the release.

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In addition to its range of "fine whiskeys, robust rums, mature brandies, gentle gins and luxurious liqueurs," as notes the brochure, Sikkim Distilleries also manufactures for the local population country liquor in pouches packed by fully automated French designed form-fill and seal machines. Their products have been "well-received in Australasia and the United Arab Emirates" while their Paan Liqueur has become "the only Indian alcoholic beverage accepted for commercial sale in the USA," according to information provided by the company. There is also a small but prosperous aromatics division, making after-shave lotion, perfumes and eau de cologne.

Set in a sprawling 16-acre complex in Rangpo in the eastern Himalayas, Sikkim Distilleries was established in 1954 by the late Jimmy R. Contractor with a 48 percent share of the state government, informs the write-up. At that time, Sikkim was a remote mountain kingdom better known for its sylvan solitude than for its climate of business enterprise. In addition to Mount Kanchenjunga (the third highest mountain in the world at 8,534 m, revered by the Sikkimese as their "protective deity," it boasted 600 varieties of orchids, 550 species and sub-species of birds and 600 spe-

cies of butterflies, states the company's brochure. This once isolated area has been transformed with the advent of modern boiler and distillation plants, elevators, computers and STAR TV, informs the write-up.

Contractor came from a family who had been in the liquor business for seven generations. After his double graduation from Bombay's Sydenham College, he set up his first distillery in Ratnagiri in 1937 with government assistance followed by two more in Panchmahals district, notes the brochure. By 1940 he had a couple more, in Ghodasar (then Ahmedabad State) and Sudasana near Mount Abu. Disaster struck in 1946 when he lost his distilleries in "one sudden sweep" due to the prohibition policy. Undaunted, he moved to Assam and built a plywood factory and sawmill, only to be destroyed by a devastating earthquake. He rebuilt them two years later — to be washed away in a flood. That might have been enough to break any man's spirit, states the write-up, but Contractor persevered, establishing Sikkim Distilleries at the invitation of the then Chogyal of Sikkim. He nurtured the company as its managing director till 1977, guiding it thereafter as "director, friend, philosopher and guide" till his death in 1988. He was

succeeded as managing director by Sam E. Mehta, followed in 1983 by Dadi Contractor. The present incumbent, Parekh, took over in 1989 as the distillery's "youngest managing director at the age of 39." An engineering graduate from the Indian Institute of Technology Bombay, Parekh has received many awards, including the Rajiv Gandhi Excellence Award, the Udyog Rattan Award and the Arch of Asia Award at Bangkok, indicates the brochure. The senior management cadre has many Zoroastrians, some of whom have been with the distillery for over two decades.

In keeping with the ideals of the founder who believed that "it is in giving that you receive," the workers and their families are well looked after. They receive free housing, medical care is provided (to the extent of denture and spectacle costs being subsidized), their children have the benefit of school bus facilities, uniforms and woollens, scholarships, etc as notes the brochure.

Tourism awards

Its pivotal role in the development and promotion of inbound and outbound tourism in India has been fetching Travel Corporation (India) Limited (TCI) accolades from varied sources. In end October TCI was conferred the Government of India Tourism Award for maximum foreign exchange earnings in Category I for the year 1995-96, according to a press release. Two months earlier, TCI director Adi Katgara was presented the Hall of Fame Award instituted by the Indian Association of Tour Operators in recognition of outstanding achievements by leaders in the tourism industry. At the recent Travel Agents Association of India's annual convention, the Indian Airlines Trophy for excellence in publicity promotion was once again bagged by TCI, mentions the release.

Reputed to be India's premier tour and travel organization with 27 offices in India, 10 sales offices overseas and a staff of 1,200, TCI organizes both leisure and business travel. For pioneering tourism to Sikkim, Bhutan, Ladakh, the Lakshadweep and Andaman Islands, developing cruises in the Indian Ocean, introducing tourist air charters and incentive tourism in India, the credit should go to Katgara, states the TCI handout. Involved with this industry for the last 50 years, Katgara's expertise is sought by various national and international associations. For the last 10 years he has been officiating as chairman of the Tourism Council, Travel Agents Association of India, and also enjoys the distinc-



Parekh (left) receiving the Golden Europe Award for Quality Below: Contractor and the array of Sikkim Distilleries' products



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Adi Katgara (extreme left) being presented the Hall of Fame Award
Jehangir Katgara (extreme right) receiving the Government of India Tourism Award

tion of being the only Asian to be elected chairman of the international division of the American Society of Travel Agents and the only Indian to win two awards — Pioneer of the Pacific and Award of Merit — from the Pacific Asia Travel Association.

Travel writer award

In 1995-96, the first time the Department of Tourism instituted a national tourism award for the 'travel writer' category, it was bagged by Ms Jerroo Irani, managing editor of *Voyage*, a periodical keeping the readers abreast of development in the travel and tourism industry. Her article, "On the tail of the Tiger," carried in the October 1995 issue of *Voyage* "takes the writer on a wild life safari and in the process the author stumbles onto one of the most beautiful sanctuaries in the country," Bandhavgarh, as mentions the 1995-96 brochure featuring the winners of the awards of excellence.

"It is... only appropriate that the diversity of the constituents of the tourism product are recognized for their services," writes Ashok Pahwa, director general (tourism), commending the efforts of all those who have made Indian tourism "more tourism friendly."

Involved in travel journalism for over two decades, Irani started her career as a journalist with *Parsiana*. During her long association with Parsiana Publications Private Limited, publishers of *Parsiana* and *Voyage*, she has handled various responsibilities and assignments, including a stint as managing editor of the *Diners Club* magazine *Signature* when it was being published by Parsiana Publications.

Concern for the coach

To 82-year-old Eddie Aibara goes the credit of being the only Indian cricketer to play first class cricket for 25 years continuously (from 1934-58) for the Hyderabad Cricket Association (HCA) during which time he



Travel writer awardee
Jerroo Irani

had played in the Ranji Trophy matches and also against foreign visiting teams. He was to be felicitated by the HCA for his "65 years of devoted and sincere efforts" as notes the communication from HCA

vice-president G. P. Surana lauding him for being active at this age and occasionally even coaching the youngsters from the twin cities of Hyderabad and Secunderabad. Although he had played against teams from Australia, England, Pakistan and West Indies, often as captain of his team, "it is the view of the old and experienced cricketers that he was most unfortunate not to have played for India," writes Surana. "He played glorious cricket for decades, unfortunately before the game became a money spinner for the cricketers," mentions his associate, Ms Dinoo Parakh. In the Bombay Pentagulars and Nagpur Quadrangulars he had represented the Parsis. Aibara was

Lahore, and again in 1957-58 by the *Indian Cricket Almanac* published in Madras, states his bio data.

The training that he received at the hands of Bill Hitch of England, Frank Tarrant and L. P. O'Brien of Australia, Prince Duleepsinghi and others, he imparted to the innumerable fledglings who came to him in the course of the different coaching camps that he conducted. When affiliated to the Board of Control for Cricket in India, the National Institute of Sports in Patiala and the Motilal Nehru School of Sports, he had occasion to monitor the progress of aspirants like Sunil Gavaskar, Kapil Dev, the Amarnath brothers, Shivlal Yadav... who went on to win fame for themselves and their nation.

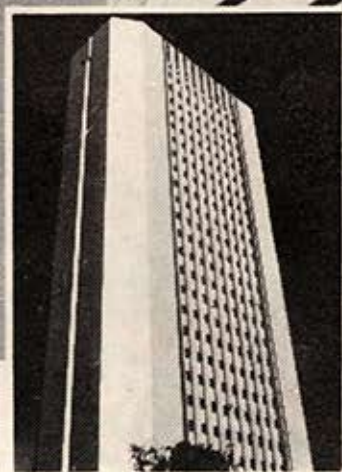
To assist Aibara in his old age, a fund has been started to which donations are invited. The HCA "sincerely appeals to the sports lovers and sports institutions to contribute generously as he richly deserves it," reiterates Surana. Cheques or drafts may be sent in the name of E. B. Aibara at Parsi Agiari Compound, 125 Mahatma Gandhi Road, Secunderabad 500003.

Compiled by Parinaz Gandhi

Dastur Kaikhusroo JamaspAsa (left) felicitating Ervad Aspandiar Nalladaru with a shawl and a garland on the occasion of the Banaji Atash Behram's 152nd anniversary on November 6, 1996. During his 50 years of service at the Banaji Atash Behram, Nalladaru is known to have performed innumerable boi and pav mahal ceremonies and been instrumental in arranging congregational prayers and lectures at that fire-temple every Monday evening, mentions a press release



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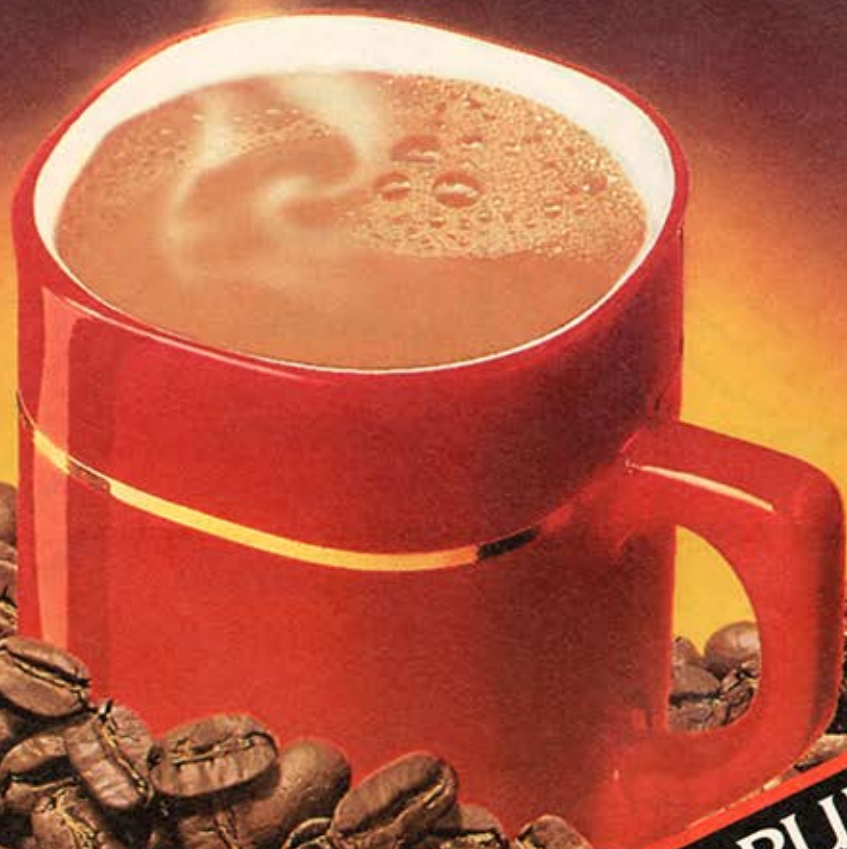


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"What kind of legacy will we leave behind?"

An early Zoroastrian settler in North America, Keki Bhote surveys the changing scene

Arnavaz S. Mama

It was a fleeting interview. Keki Bhote, former president of the Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Chicago (ZAC) and founder member of the erstwhile Zoroastrian Association of America (ZAA) had only 25 minutes to spare before rushing off to a meeting at Bombay House.

The man who retired in 1992 as Motorola's senior corporate consultant for quality and production worldwide had been among the earliest wave of technically qualified Zoroastrians to settle in the US. "There were very very few Parsis in Chicago then and most of them were bachelors," he recalls. The tendency was to congregate in the Bhote household where Keki and his wife Mehroo provided a Zoroastrian nucleus.

As Bhote tells it, by 1964 the 30 odd Zoroastrians in the Chicago area began to feel that they "needed something more formal, some organization to perpetuate" the community's presence. Wanting isolated individuals in the heart of the continent to "also belong," they formed the Zoroastrian Association of America in 1965. During its five-year existence their membership rose to 250 persons. They published a North American newsletter, started to study their religion in organized groups, used the Association as a conduit for small-scale charity work and tried to publicize their religion to the host community. Bhote described the membership as comprising "the highest percentage of PhDs in any organization, anywhere in the USA — well informed, well coordinated... The big wave of immigrants came later." They had their share of detractors, says Bhote, but not before the Association had had a catalytic action among North American Zoroastrians. It was, he says, instrumental in the creation of UZANA

(United Zoroastrian Association of North America) which eventually evolved into FEZANA (Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America).

At one time, about 20 years ago, when there may have been about 1,000 Zoroastrians or less in North America, people like Bhote were worried about the permanence of the Zoroastrian presence there. "The new generation, born in North America may not necessarily perpetuate the religion," Bhote had felt at the time, expecting the Zoroastrian presence to disappear by the turn of the century.



Bhote: reasonable formulae

estimates. Bhote is happy at the "renaissance of study of the theology of religion. We feel we are doing more about studying, understanding the religion, than the Parsis of India." Acknowledging that "to some extent we are saddled with the baggage of Parsi controversies which detract from the purity and beauty of the religion," Bhote is nonetheless convinced that the religion of Zarathushtra is "the world's most beautiful religion, the most applicable to modern man — a religion that anybody can practise." Without getting into the topic of conversion per se, Bhote's definition of a Zoroastrian is "one who practises the prin-

ciples of Zarathushtra, leads the kind of life He taught."

Optimistic about a definite revival, Bhote says the North American youth is "taking up the torch. It's my feeling," he says, "that if and when the population in India decreases to vanishing point in 50 to 60 years, North America will probably be the center of gravity of the Zoroastrian religion." By then he expects that they will have left behind "the irrelevant controversies that detract from the beauty and theology of the religion, concentrate on living life as Zarathushtra would have wished us to live."

The creation of the ZAA, the establishment of the biennial North American congresses which began as symposia, the creation of FEZANA and the more recent seminars on *Gathas* and *Yashts* where congregate some of the best intellectuals within the community as well as non-Zoroastrian scholars from across the globe, are some of the milestones of the community's settlement in the New World, as Bhote views it. The revival of interest in the *Gathas* is a plus point in his opinion and he is particularly optimistic about the study group in Harvard, including Ms Khorshed Jungallwalla and Prof Octor Skaervoj among others, which looks at all the translations of a particular ha of the *Gathas*, before coming to their own interpretation.

More than 30 years ago there were about 10 Iranian Zoroastrians to every 90 Parsis in North America, says Bhote. Now the ratio has altered radically. Bhote sees the Parsis and Iranians as "two cultures, two value systems" bound by a single religion. The Iranians "have no qualms about conversion or non-Zoroastrian spouses, which are big items with Parsis... In North America Muslim Iranis are at-

tracted by Iran's pre-Islamic roots." Bhote estimates conversions effected by the California based Zarathushtrian Assembly at nearly 400 and informs that the Assembly is setting up centers in three or four European capitals. "Their viewpoint is that Zarathushtra never barred anybody, so why should we?"

What Bhote sees as an unfortunate development is that "very conservative elements have entered into FEZANA. (They have) banned Ali Jafarey and Daraiyus Irani (both of the Zarathushtrian Assembly) from speaking at FEZANA functions... Some conservatives from India, who have been successful, are throwing their weight around... (They may) have a point but FEZANA is a pioneer. They shouldn't let such elements sway the general body." Bhote believes that if public opinion was polled, 80 percent would be associated with liberal elements. "The FEZANA executive is afraid to stick their necks out," he says, adding, "We should take part in interfaith community activities. Rohinton Rivetna is doing a good job of representing Zoroastrians."

As a member of the World Zoroastrian Organisation (WZO), Bhote is loath to see "two world bodies for a community of our size." Describing the embryonic World Council of Zoroastrian Federations (WCZF) as a "sticky wicket," Bhote suggests that "perhaps the WZO could change its constitution to accommodate the WCZF... make a distinction between association members and individual members. A reasonable formula can be worked out... Only if that can't be done, the WCZF may be necessary," he says. He is afraid that "in looking at the minutiae we will make no progress in unifying Zoroastrians from all over. What kind of legacy will we leave behind?"

Of the Bhote's four children, daughters Safeena and Shenaya are respectively interested in catering and the graphic design business, son Adi is a quality control manager at Motorola while Xerxes is a trader on the stock exchange.

After 41 years in Motorola Bhote says he has established his own consultancy servicing 300 companies in 20 countries of the world. The resources generated enabled him, says Bhote, to substantially fund the recent *Gatha* conferences and other deserving activities. After all, it was his interest in the religion that had begun his community involvement in the first place.

Teaching Gujarati in the UK

Integrating British and Asian cultures is a goal with Manchester based Maneck Mehta

Amavaz S. Mama

"A whole person is like a three-legged stool (comprising of) language, religion and culture. Take one away and it falls," says Maneck Mehta, deputy director of the Lancashire-based Preston College's community culture and languages unit.

Into his second term as president of the 60-member North-West Zoroastrian Community (NWZC) based in Manchester, Mehta is a teacher of Gujarati. His intensive weekend courses have enabled nearly 5,000 English people, specifically primary level teachers, to converse in simple Gujarati, he told *Parsiana* in the course of an open-air interview at the Bai A. F. Petit School on November 9, 1996 after the inauguration of the Tenth All India Zoroastrian Youth Seminar. Mehta is concerned that most immigrant children in the UK are "psychologically damaged during their first week in school." He believes that the sudden change in environment, accentuated by the language barrier, inflicts a deep and far-reaching trauma for Asian children in England. The truth of his statement — "Bilingualism, multilingualism is not a problem; it's an asset" — should be obvious but tends to be submerged in the racist vision of the ruling British Conservatives, he implies in a paper published by Trentham Books in 1992: "Who am I? The fifty-fifty syndrome."

According to a press release, Mehta has spent the last 16 years working with bilingual pupils and monolingual British adults. The write-up further notes that Mehta initiated and organized a number of conferences, long and short courses both local and national, related to bil-

ingualism, teachers' training, and the teaching of Gujarati, Hindi and Urdu to English teachers.

In India to promote what he called the "dual twin track education system," Mehta advocated that Indian students study for the British GCE (general certificate in education) and A-level (university entry qualification) respectively along with their SSC (secondary school certificate) and HSC (higher secondary certificate) respectively. These would hone their creative and analytical thinking and enterprise skills to British standards and enable them to opt for short, fast-track courses (two weeks to six months) in the UK, he adds. "To get English university education for three years will cost £ 30,000-40,000. If your father has that much money, start your

business here. *Tan tau aaviné vaara dhova parsé* (There, you will end up cleaning toilets)," he advised the youths attending the seminar. Those interested in gaining Indian and British qualifications at the same time with minimal extra effort and cost may contact Mehta at Preston College, St Vincent's Road, Preston, Lancashire PR2 84R, UK or Kersi K. Commissariat in Bombay on telephone 2873888 (fax 2853426).

As NWZC president, Mehta voices the common concern for the future of their 20 youths ranging in age between 12 and 25 years and 10 more who are younger. The 30 odd families largely comprise teaching, medical, accountancy, computer and management professionals. A couple of Zoroastrians are on the dole, he says. Some have

continued on page 34



Mehta: a Parsi first

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Cast in a different mould

Two movies that seek to understand the traumas of social bias

Kamalini M. Parpia

The movies shown on December 18, 1996 at NCPA's Little Theatre, Bombay, were entitled *BOMgAY* and *A Mermaid Called Aida*, and it was strange to find myself sitting in an audience that appeared largely gay. But I did not feel uncomfortable, for a sense of camaraderie prevailed among us as the first scenes of *BOMgAY* unfolded on the screen.

India's first short film on homosexuality, *BOMgAY*, directed by Riyad Vinci Wadia and Jangu Sethna, is an impressionistic, at times surrealistic, visualization of six poems by R. Raj Rao. Rao's poems are earthy, no holds barred, shot straight at you. They are not for squeamish stomachs: he writes of goo and defecating humans, of gents' toilets, constipation and noisy shit jets.

Enema is the title of one of his poems and the greenish tints in which its images are captured on camera connect it unmistakably with the secret goings-on in the human gastro-intestinal tract. Its eerie dreamlike quality is shattered when the 'enema' turns out to be an 'elixir' administered nightly in bed, no, not by the doctor and not with the tube.

Then a jolting change to a normally colored bathroom with the recipient of the enema sitting on the toilet, his loosened bowels emitting 'noisy shit jets' throws me back to reality. Rao's biting, acerbic lines jar my sensibilities, make me squirm; they make me laugh at times and yet sadden me.

Lefty is set in a Fort campus library where: "readers stare at you/for writing with your left hand./You want to tell them/you don't get it right/when you write with your right."

The visualization of this poem is truly surrealistic with naked young men looking for books and at themselves, to be followed by explicit homosexual scenes.

Wadia told us later, during the discussion that followed, that as one of the actors (Rahul Bose) lay almost naked on the library table with two fried eggs resting on his chest, the alarm was sounded that the librarian was about to make an unexpected entry into the room. Garments were flung on, Bose stood juggling a fried egg in each hand so as not to break the

yolks, and finally a semblance of sanity was restored. Obviously, the librarian was satisfied that all was well and the explicit scenes followed uninhibitedly! After *Bandit Queen*, why not?

The most poignant poem for me was *Friends*: "You want to claim/exclusive rights/to the word friend./Husbands have wives./lovers have beloveds./vocabulary to which/you cannot be admitted. Friends only have friends/over for dinner."

Wadia and Sethna have with intent depicted a varied social and cultural setting in their visualizations of *Opinions* and *Underground* — to show that homosexuality transcends all socio-economic-cultural parameters. In India homosexuality is still punishable with life imprisonment.



BOMgAY: to squirm, laugh, empathize



Aida: fulfilling transformation

Yet, according to Wadia, 50 million men are estimated to have sex with other men. This is the truth we have to face.

The poems are narrated by Rajit Kapur and Rahul Bose. Kushal Punjabi, Tarun Shahani, Farud Cambata, Freddy Phiroz, Eric Rosenbaum and R. Raj Rao perform in it and hundreds of citizens of Bombay make it 'throb with Bombay life.'

This film is made for non-commercial release in India and for international television and video markets by Wadia Movietones Private Limited. It is hoped that it will lay the ground for honest discussion and public debate in today's atmosphere of liberal thinking, and that multimedia will contribute to this by giving the issue the requisite exposure.

A Mermaid Called Aida

After the success of his very first documentary *Nadia — the Fearless* which was a fine tribute to this amazing woman of yesteryears' Indian screen who did all her extraordinary stunts herself (today's hero/heroines please note), Wadia was on the lookout for another subject.

In January 1996 as he sunbathed in Goa, Wadia had the pleasure of meeting a fabulous transsexual — Aida Banaji. As he delved into her real story he made a new friend and found the subject for his new documentary, *A Mermaid Called Aida*.

The Abode For The High Fliers.

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Tata Housing's 'Glen Eagle' is a premium project in the heart of the metropolis of Mumbai. A marvel of modern architecture, Glen Eagle offers much more than you could ever imagine.

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Wadia and Sethna: surrealistic visualizations

Rizwan Gubitra, also keen to produce a film on transsexuals, joined forces with Wadia. They then interviewed Aida on camera over a three-day, eight-hour session. Family and friends who were interviewed refused to be on film and perforce Wadia had to create prototype characters to reflect their mindsets. On the screen, it is Aida herself as she is today, who tells the story (along with inputs by raconteurs who represent the people in her life) of her traumatic childhood and adolescence. This method of narration leads to some confusion, specially as to the time sequences.

The documentary attempts to unravel the harrowing struggles of a child born as Adi Banaji, to fulfill his desire to become a woman. The boy, Adi, loved to dress up as a girl and was allowed to do so but only at home. Around the age of six, whilst playing 'doctor-doctor' he discovered that he was different from the other girls and was promptly thrown out of their circle. He still liked to play with them and shunned rough boyish games. Around the age of 13, he had 'bumps' under his nipples. His churning mind desperately hoped that he was going to be a girl.

Fascinated by an article on transsexuals that he came across in *Playboy* magazine, Adi followed this up by clandestine research from his father's medical books. At the age of 16/17 he fell in love with a Greek sailor and would have run away with him if he had not been stopped by his parents. Now, emotionally fragile, unable to study, he was allowed to work in his father's office. Here he met a boy from Bahrain and had a torrid love affair with him, unknown to his parents, for almost six years. A chance remark by his father that since Adi was such a sensitive boy he should try to be

a spiritual medium made him try automatic writing (a psychic exercise in which the writing is telepathically dictated), which found him a lover from a former life!

The desire to be a woman and remove all the hair from his body made Adi personally burn out each hair follicle by electrolysis — an excruciatingly painful process. His father now seemed to understand the complexities of his son's mind. He wanted to send Adi to Ger-

many for a transsexual operation and let him stay on there with relatives. His mother disagreed violently and battles between father and mother followed. Then suddenly his father died, the German trip was cancelled and the boy from Bahrain left him. Totally traumatized, Adi's suicide attempt failed.

One does not know why he did not seek psychiatric help. Also the film does not make it clear when he started on plastic surgery. Silicone breast implants, changing of hairlines, ear, nose and jaw 'jobs' followed. After one of the silicone implants, the stitches gave way, the implant slipped out and resulted in massive bleeding. This was narrated by Aida herself very casually: "The surgeon slipped it in again and stitched me up." Now at least he looked like a woman but was not one. The penultimate step had to be taken. The penis had to be replaced by the vagina.

Adi got more confidence after his meeting with another transsexual — Farah Rustom. After a series of operations (the details of which brought home the fact that all this was an expensive, painful and long drawn out process) extending over three years or more, Aida has now got a clitoris. Not everyone can spare so many years, spend so much money and bear so much pain. But today, the boy Adi is the fabulously glamorous Aida — a woman in all respects except the ability to bear children. And she is going to get married!

What director Wadia has so courageously portrayed on the screen is the true story of a woman trapped in a man's body — "a venus with a penis," says Aida. At the end of the screening, glamorous Aida herself appeared on stage to confidently answer questions put to her by a slightly dazed audience. I left the auditorium with the hope that Aida had at last found herself.

LIFESTYLE

View of Bombay from Malabar Hill.

*one of the most picturesque
Views of Bombay at all sea-
sons of the year.
"one of the finest prospects in the East."*



Leaves from a diary

*Details of daily life in a Zoroastrian home
in 1896-97 as gleaned from an anonymous diary*

It was the 'city of gold' of 1896. The threads that spun life's tapestry were different. The air over Bombay was cleaner and more breathable, the pace of life more leisurely. The rat-race and tensions of today's pressure-cooker world may have been absent. But there were joys and there were sorrows — of living and dying as the cycle of life in the city relentlessly created and ruthlessly destroyed.

An unidentified diary, forwarded by Ms Sylla Vatcha of Bombay for possible use in *Parsiana* — and culled by Hilla Guzder — provides glimpses of lifestyle in a well-to-do Parsi household. By reproducing excerpts exactly as contained in the original, *Parsiana* seeks to provide its readers with a flavor of the language, nomenclature, values and prices that then prevailed in

Bombay when an elite bungalow could be oil painted for Rs 50, when a funeral cost Rs 10 and holiday entertainment consisted of an evening ride in the 'gharry.' If relatives stood by each other, infighting among the wealthy was not unknown and a gentleman's word did not necessarily hold... If any of our readers can identify the unknown diarist, we trust they will share the knowledge with the rest of us.

5th June 1896

My dear father received a letter at about 8 a.m. from Mr Nusserwanjee stating that Temina had grown very ill. Doctor also said that the case was serious. Father at once went there with me. I let know Pirozbai about the matter. Nusserwanjee obtained a room in the Colaba Sanitarium. They at

once resolved to go there without any previous preparation. I was sent there to see the room. I found it very small, unclean and damp. They however removed Temina in the evening in our carriage. Pirozbai staying with them during the night.

We became very sorry about the inconveniences and troubles which they suffered.

6th

Early in the morning, Jamshed brought a letter asking for our gharry to be sent there to bring Temina to our house. Stating that the room was quite useless. They had no

View of Bombay from Malabar Hill

All pictures from the F. D. Alpaiwalla Museum Collection, courtesy the Chairman and Trustees, Parsi Punchayet, Bombay. Alpaiwalla's notings can be seen on the picture postcards pertaining to the 19th century. Dates, where known, are mentioned. Photographs of postcards by Chetan Mistry.

sleep during the night and was warm as a furnace. Temina came here and was accommodated on our east floor.

7th

Dr. Temuljee having refused to come except for a fee of Rs 10. Dr. Rozario was sent for by my father who came and prescribed a blister for her liver. My father paying all the expenses. In the afternoon fever rose as high as 105°. She was spunged yet the fever was just the same. Bachoo-bai and my father became very dejected. Nusserwanjee was sent to bring Dr. Temuljee who forthwith came...

8th

I attended college during the morning hours.

Thursday 9th July 1896

Jaiji with her son came to live at house...

15th Tuesday July

My father brought for Nusserwanj his pay

for two months each half pay and an additional Rs. 50 to be deducted henceforth from his pay Rs. 105.

16th August Sunday

We went to witness the thread ceremony of Jaiji, Pirozbai's daughter at her grandfather's at 3 p.m. My dear father gave a pearl pair of bangles to Jaiji, fifty Rs to Pirozbai and eleven to Master Cowasji Nanabhoy Daver who was also initiated in our religion.

The Kadimi New Year's day

20th August 1896

Jaiji gave birth to a girl at 8 o'clock at night. Mrs O'Hill attending her.

4 September 1896

Muktad ceremony commenced today being the yearly day of Jeejeebhoy.

6th

In the evening I with Misses Tehmina,

Goolbai and Master Maneckjee went for a drive to the Victoria Gardens...

Tuesday 8th September 1896

Goolbai for the first time suffered confinement. At night my poor sister Bachoo-bai under travail Mrs. Gibbons was sent for, she came and at quarter past four in the morning she delivered a boy.

27th September

White-wash began and lasted till 8th October the cost amounted to Rs 20 and ans. 6. Merwanjee having got plucked in the preliminary examination obtained private form to appear in the Metric examination.

22nd (October 1896)

We went to the Moon-light band with Furdoon and Rustom.

23rd (October 1896)

We are going Mahim to enjoy for a few days.



Sir Wm. Erskine was Governor of Bombay after Sir Jonathan
 Duncan's death in 1841 on 12-8-1841.
 Viscount Falkland (after whom the Falkland Ids. of the Atlantic are called) was
 Governor of Bombay from 1848-1853



Null Bazar Street, Bombay
 (Erskine Road) Sukimani Chowki



PARSI MARRIAGE PROCESSION BOMBAY

Marriage of Gul-zard. Dowry of Birschaar
 with 12 pairs of Birschaar Horn - Boro, Boro,
 Boro.

28(th October 1896)

We returned from Mahim.

3rd (November 1896)

The university Mandap consumed on 31st by fire. Examination postponed till 16th November. The Metric taking place as usual on the 9th.

5th (November 1896)

Khanbahdur Dadabhoy Hormusjee Dubash died of diabetic erysipelas after four days sickness. Father being very sorry, as he was an esteemed friend and patron of my dear father. His sons contributed 14,000 Rs in charity on the third day ceremony of the deceased. He leaves about eleven lakhs of rupees together with a flourishing business.

Friday 6th November 1896

Baichobai's little baby Dhunbaijee died in the night from fever... in consequence sum of Rs 10 was spent. Peroo Mahomed's son Cassum died of fever lasting for 3 days. Our old servant Dada suffering from diarrhoea. He is much pulled down can't stir and I think he will not live for a six months more. We paid him a visit, I gave him Rs 10 which my dear father had sent for him.

Thursday 12th November 1896

Sorabjee Cowasjee & Co auctioneers sold Aba's property to-day by the Mortgagee's order. It was bought in by the same person at Rs 3,600. Mr. Ardeshir came to our bungalow and took Tea.

18th

Whitewash of our house called Nabob's bungalow began and lasted till 26th the total cost amounting to 16 Rupees...

20th

I proposed Temina's hand to my friend Rustom but he refused the offer alleging his father's old ideas and his company among Daroowallas which made him completely averse to society.

December 3rd

Bubonic plague increasing in Bombay as many as 20 deaths in a day recorded on 3rd December 1896...

Oil painting of the Nabob's house began. The total expense being more than Rs. 50.

January 1897

Bubonic plague daily increasing. Dadabhoy Naigamwall died.

February 1st 1897

We went to Panchgani with Bai Pirozbai Mama as her health was very bad on account of the stroke of paralysis which she had two and a half a month ago.

Null Bazar Street

A Parsi marriage procession

23rd

Our servant Burjorjee died from plague.

We were at Panchgani

March 2nd 1897

Bachobai's little son aged 6 months died of convulsions. We had to ask for a certificate from Dr. Rozario who was treating the case to show to the Municipal ward doctor... necessitated expense of Rs 128 annas.

On the 1st of March 1897 we returned from Panchgani. Mr Framjee Nanabhoy Daver had an accident today. While climbing up his carriage he missed his step thereby causing something like dislocation. However he went for a drive.

8th

Mr Nusserwanjee went to live at his house.

Monday 15th March 1897

The red letter day in my life. I went for the first time to my father's office and was introduced by my pa to Mr. Gilbert who asked me what I intend doing and asked me whether I would like a service of plague inspector at Bandora. My pa said that it was out of the way and so he would not like it. I took my seat at Mr. Gunpatram's table as he was absent for more than three months. The business slack on account of the plague. Mr Nusserwanjee assisted me.

16th (and) 17th

I attended the office.

17th

I suffered tooth-ache and called at Dr. Ghiesta.

30th

Framjee Nanabhoy Daver died at 7 o'clock at night from diabetes and general debility.

8th April 1897

The tenth day ceremony of Framji Nanabhoy Daver deceased.

14th

Bachobai went to her home. She had come on the 6th June 1896 and remained here for 10 months and 8 days.

I attended Ruttonbai Doctor's affairs about the Letters of Administration.

I accompanied Mr. C. D. Banajee to an auction sale at Colaba where he bought a cupboard of Robert's make at Rs 48.

16th

Tomorrow being the first day of Easter Holidays I proposed going to Deolali with Messrs Cursedjee and Nusserwanjee. They both consented and I wrote a letter to Mr Maneckjee the proprietor Deolali Hotel asking whether there was room for 4 persons the answer was received to-day in a telegram saying that there was room sufficient for 6 persons. But Nusserwanjee absented himself from the office so the plan failed.

17th

My dear father and we remained at home. He went to Mr. F. N. Davar's bungalow in the morning as the sons and Maneckbai intended to make an agreement for living together. They disagreed and postponed it till Monday.

18th

We remained at home but went for a little shopping in the evening. I purchased a pair of brown leather lacing boots at Rs 9 from Hussunally Moolahakimjee and a bottle of Cream for the same.

20th

Today our gunga's mother-in-law died at our stable in the compound. My dear father went at Framjee Daver's as arranged previously to take their signatures on the agreement. After a long discussion and hesitation on the part of Dinshawjee, Cowasjee and Sorabjee who all wanted to pay Rs 50 instead of their whole share of Rs 100 they signed the document on condition that it should be in force as long as Probate could be taken. In short they signed to remain together for six months upto 31st September 1897.

Soonabai Gheewalla's daughter Mherbai again sick. Jaijee's little daughter suffering from convulsions at Lanouli. Dhunbaijee went there 4 or 5 days ago.

April 1897

26th Monday

Soonabai Gheewalla went to her home to-day at 3 P.M. after staying here for about four months. Ruttonbai again attended the Court in the matter of probate of her husband there being one share Mortgaged to my father.

3rd May 1897

We are again going to Panchgani for a change of air. We had been there during the whole month of February but my dear father had remained here all the time attending to various domestic troubles. He is in need of a through change of air as was said by all who came in contact with him.

4th May 1897

Reached Panchgani this morning safe and sound. Mr Ali Abbas Baig the Oriental Translator to government opened negotiations for purchasing "Dalkeith" Mr. Spier's property mortgaged to Pirozbai for Rs 6,500 and interest thereon at the rate of a rupee per cent per month amounting to all Rs 8,500.

Mr. Baig agreed to purchase the property for Rs 14,000 but subsequently when the deeds and title of Jame's property were investigated by Mr. Dharmis they were found defective to certain degree and Mr.

Baig taking this as a good excuse for lowering his stipulated money extorted from James a consent to decrease the amount by Rs 1400 thus buying it at Rs 12,600 a property with two bungalows, out-houses and a compound measuring about 44 acres of land. My dear father was very sorry at this bargain and he wished to have purchased the property himself as it would have yielded something like Rs 20,000 in the long run. But however the matter had come to an end.

24th May 1897

We left for Bombay as we could not get a gharry later on and arrived on the following morning at our sweet home.

25th May

Fuimai had an attack of paralysis but it left no effect on her body.

1st (and) 2nd June 1897

I attended my father's office. Mr. Gunputram had also returned from Surat so I had to put a separate table for my sitting thereat. Since this day I am attending regularly and hope to get a pay at the end of this month of Rs 40 to 50. Business is resuming.

4th June

I ordered out a cashmere coat for Rs 12 at Batliboi and Virjee.

Mr. Sorabjee Dossabhoj Baxter gave my dear father a horse (flea-bitten in colour).

Dr. Karlicar the Municipal authority for examining houses and reporting on their condition, ventilation etc came with an civil engineer and two parsi clerks to examine our house. He was ashtomished at finding the house so large, comfortable and well ventilated. When my father said that Municipality intended to purchase his bungalow Mr Karlicar said "You must not sell this house it is so nice. You should be proud of this bungalow, etc."

7th

Mohurram festivals commenced.

Court re-opened. I attended with Nusserwanjee as I did afterwards.

19th

Dear father got an attack of fevere consequent on wetting in our gharry.

21st

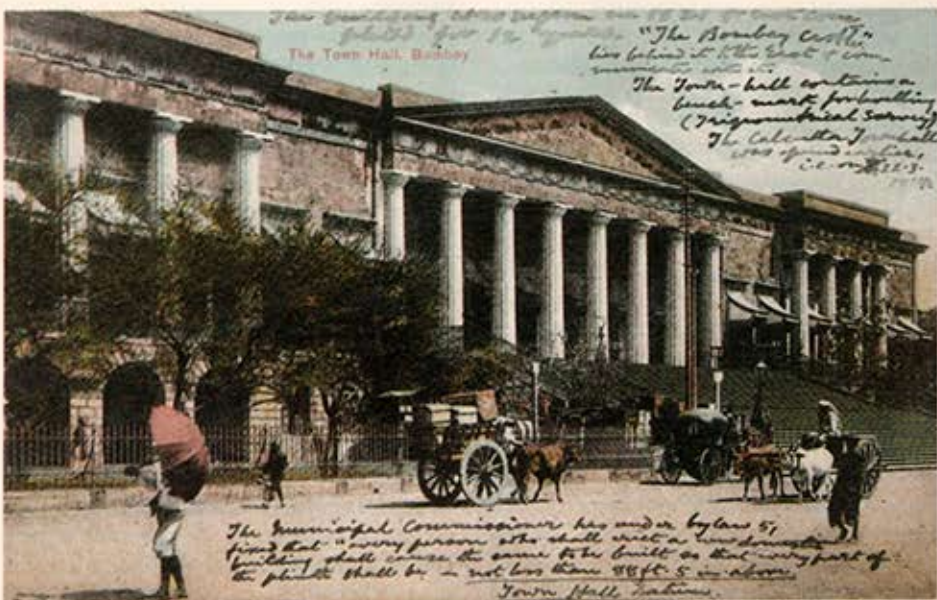
Dear father all right again. Thank God! Anxiety over.

22nd

Diamond Jubilee Public Holiday.

We went for a drive in the evening and saw Bai Hirabai Bottlewalla. She is much

*Hummum (Hamam) Street, Fort
The Plague Hospital, Arthur Road
Town Hall, Fort*



reduced Sorab's conduct giving her great pain and remorse.

23rd

Bachobai's Birthday. My dear father sent dinner to her house in the evening. Her pregnancy causing fear and anxiety to beloved pa. Attended office as usual.

6th (and) 7th July 1897

Goolbai's birth-day. Sorabjee Framji Daver asked for a loan of Rs 500 from my dear father who gave the sum required. He wanted to be a partner in C. Fredoon's shop and wants to open a branch under his management at Calcutta.

8th

I bought the three volumes of Civil Court Manual for Rs 10-8 as I wanted to study law as my future guidance in my line.

10th

Saturday being a public holiday we remained at home and in the evening went for a drive to the market.

11th Sunday

My dear father gave the certificate for transfer of one of his shares in Soonderdass S and W Co. to Bachobai she being desirous of investing her Rs 800. The share was of Rs 850 she agreeing to let papa have the first dividend of the share of Rs 40.

12th Monday July 1897

Dear papa received a letter from Mr. M. C. Murzban asking him to come and have a few minutes conversation with him about the purchase of our bungalow for the construction of the new road.

I wrote a letter to my friend Rustom D. J. Mistry rebuking him for his negligence in keeping up our friendship. His reply is very flattering. I have preserved it in my drawer for future help. He intimated that he was admitted as a member of the Freemason's Lodge.

August 1897

Sorabjee Framji Daver wrote a letter to my dear father, as a notice to say that he would take and ask for every rupee which his brothers have borrowed from my dear father at 3 quarters of a rupee per cent and that he would appear with his attorney on the day when such an account would be adjusted and he therefore gave this warning saying inter alia that he had great respects for my dear papa and that he meant no harm to my father etc. This letter was replied by my papa by explaining to him the situation of the affair and asked him to furnish us with a loan for Rs 5,000 which was badly needed for giving probate duty. But he could not procure this large amount from anybody. So my dear father procured it from Bai Pirozbai.

Re our Mazagon property Mr Murzban

negotiated with my dear father for the acquisition of our property at Mazagon for the purpose of the new Wari-Bunder Road. He offered 23,000 at first then increased the value to 26,000, but my father seeing Mr. Murzban in a good mood he was always in good moods with my dear father whom he gave every respect and pleased him in many ways, asked Rs 30,000 thinking that he would haggle over the matter but to papa's surprise he consented at once. Now remorse took possession of papa. He repented for not asking more say 35,000 Rs. But this difficulty was overcome by writing a letter to Mr. Murzban as directed by him and saying that he would be glad to accept the offer of Rs 30,000 plus 1/5 (not legible — Editor) p.c. for his property at Mazagon though he thought the price far below his reckonings and his engineer's estimate...

Govt Loans

There was a great dispute between the Govt. Bank and my dear papa for 3 Govt loans amounting to Rs 1,200. Their contention was that it was not properly signed by several previous transferees. Communication went on for more than 2 months, affidavits in verification of signatures were... sent to Calcutta. But it was of no avail. At last the instructions from Calcutta were received by the Bombay Bank that an Indemnity Bond should be executed by the owner of the loans with two securities. Should be registered and should be signed before the manager Govt. Bank. Mr Nusserwanji Gheewall and I stood and signed as securities for Rs 3,000 and it was duly registered and sent to Calcutta for realization.

Framji Nanabhoy Daver's effects and estates amounted to Rs 2,37,000 among which was the land opposite their bungalow which was valued at Rs 1,68,000 and a house in Fort for Rs 3,500. There were outstandings amounting to some Rs 15,000 and shares in spinning and weaving Cos and Govt. paper of the value of Rs 6,000.

Rs 4,000 were paid as probate duty and Rs 200 as office bill.

Bai Hirabai Framjee Bottlewalla made her will and disinherited her eldest son Sorabjee for his gross and treacherous behaviour.

Re Trust of Limjee Banajee

My dear papa was greatly desirous to settle matters in Trust of Limjee Maneckjee Banajee. The trust money were lent and advanced to a wealthy Marwari firm on the

mortgage of a property in Memonwada. The firm subsequently failed and the opposing party made Hunath Roopajee the owner of the firm an insolvent and denied our validity of the mortgaged premises. We waited for more than 2 years expecting every month that some settlement would arrive between us and the first Mortgagor. But this time I urged my father to do something in the matter so he wrote out a case for opinion and sent it on to the Advocate General Mr. Lang for his opinion. His opinion was that we should at once file a suit against the disputer otherwise our claim would suffer greatly. This gave the impetus which was badly needed in this matter and a plaint was at once filed in the High Court at Bombay. Some brokers came before this to my father asking him to settle the matter at Rs 12,000. But this offer was refused.

Plaints drawn by me...

Ahmed Allana vs Cowasjee K. Dubash 26/6/97

Hajee Joosub Haji Ally vs Haji Sha Mahomed Haji Ally 29/6/97

Coma Thakree & ors vs Ramchander Gopinath & ors 1/7/97...

Some accounts from the diary

July 15th Treacher's bill of Tehmina's medicines paid Rs 27 8 annas

July 23rd Cologne water 10 annas

(July) 27th Brandy (1) flask Rs 1 4 annas

July 30th Dr. Rozario for Mr. Nusserwanji Rs 3

August 1896

5th Milk for Bachobai's children for July Rs 13 9 annas

Treacher's bill for July 1896 Rs 9 4 annas

September 4th The Parsee Hakim and his son send by my dear father Rs 4

6th Parsee Hakim Rs 3

Treacher's bill for Nusserwanji's medicines for September Rs 5

To Hira, Bachobai's nurse Rs 10

To the milkman for milk for Nusserwanjee and his children Rs 13, 8 annas

5th November Dr Merwanjee called for the baby Rs 2 Cologne (2 bottles) Rs 1

6th Bachobai's daughter Dhanbaiji died To priests and others Rs 10

To Dr Gibbons for Bachobai's accouchement Rs 60

To milkman for October Rs 11 12 a

corner shops which is a last ditch attempt of those who have been rendered redundant. Mehta himself is into the publishing business and editorial consultancy for a number of books in Gujarati.

About 50 percent of the 10-year-old NWZC's members are also affiliated to the Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe (ZTFE) and the World Zoroastrian Organisation (WZO). "It helps networking," says Mehta, adding that they are contributing towards ZTFE's new Zoroastrian House project. And though London is about 225 miles away many of them go once a year for the muktads to Zoroastrian House in the capital. Mehta says he takes care of "local prayers when necessary," even though he is not an athornan, because he has the necessary implements.

The NWZC, which has no center or property of its own, offers associate membership without voting rights to non-Zoroastrian family members. The community meets five times a year and holds at least one jashan which is conducted by Ervad Behram Dastoor from Wolverhampton in the Midlands. Weddings and

navjotes require help from London, says Mehta.

A facet of the NWZC's constitution is that one can hold office for three years at a time, followed by a moratorium of three years, thus creating opportunities for the youth, informs Mehta. Reflecting sadly on our "very divisive society, both in Britain and here (in India)," Mehta believes that if all associations and anjumans in the two countries "had such a clause in their constitution, they wouldn't have this problem... There is definitely a need for an international body... a common approach is required... but the World Zoroastrian Council shouldn't become another ego base, another talking shop."

Tough-talking Mehta considers himself a Parsi first, Indian second and British last. When he migrated in 1968 he had had his schooling at the Bharda New High School and Pune's J. N. Petit Institute, a BSc degree from Siddharth College and experience as a demonstrator in Jai Hind College's physics department behind him. He "always wanted to teach" but British institutions would not recognize his Indian degree. So for 10 years Mehta eked out a living as taxi driver and bus conductor,

working at the Orthodox Jewish Boys' School, running a sari/materials shop wherein he was supported by some Jewish parents from the school and as a technician in colleges. Thereafter his wife Binaifer, a professional credit controller, took over financial responsibilities enabling him to get a BEd from Bradford University in the bilingual Welsh model of teaching. It is this model that Indian schools in the UK now use, says Mehta. Of the 19 languages acknowledged by the national school curriculum, 11 are Asian, including Gujarati, Hindi, Urdu and Bengali, he informs. That facilities to promote them are decidedly poor, is a grouse with Mehta.

A member of the India League in Blackwell, Mehta once belonged to the Liberal Party but switched loyalty to Labour. He believes "the Conservatives have destroyed the welfare state." The 56-year-old who lost his mother in an accident when he was 16 and has a sister who came to the UK to be a nurse, says he has "total faith in destiny. Someone is guiding me in my work... I wear my sudreh like a badge (and) say with pride that I'm a Parsi and that I am a scholar of English, Gujarati and Persian!"

MATRIMONIAL

Matrimonial alliance invited for a tall, fair, home-loving graduate girl, aged 29, of a respected family and widely travelled, from boys well-settled in business, profession or job with similar family background. Please apply with recent photograph (returnable) to:

The Advertiser
Parsiana, Matrimonial (Dec/41-96)*
GPO Box 892, Bombay 400001

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MATRIMONIAL

Matrimonial alliance invited from professionally qualified, well-settled, Non-Manglik, Parsi bachelors, up to 35 years, having a pleasing and presentable personality, for only daughter, a doctor, 29 years, 5'2", good-natured, charming and smart. Apply with bio-data and a recent photograph (returnable) to:

The Advertiser

Parsiana, Matrimonial (Dec/39-96)*

GPO Box 892, Bombay 400001

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Economic pilgrimage tour to Iran

9th May 1997-23rd May 1997

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*The Bapunas of Nagpur
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to success* Dilnavaz E. Bhagwagar

"When I was only five years old, an astrologer read my horoscope and his predictions have been 100 percent correct till date," says Dinshaw Framroze Bapuna, the patriarch of Nagpur's Bapuna Group of companies. He had reportedly come to this provincial town in the scorching summer of 1940 with only a matriculation certificate and his principal's letter of recommendation, to work as a manager for Byramji Doongaji and Sons at Rs 40 per month. Today, he and his three sons, Aspi, Abad and Adil are regarded as prominent liquor barons of Central India with the Group's annual turnover quoted as Rs 300 crores according to family sources.

The line-up of the newest cars in the courtyard, the silent staff padding in and out of the well-appointed living-room, the discreet but distinctive dress code of the seniors, whispered wealth but did not shout it. For all their success and accompanying prosperity, the Bapuna family does not flaunt its wealth in vulgar display. The money is well used for their own comfort and pleasure, and generously given to any person or cause in need of help.

With two distilleries in Gwalior, Madhya Pradesh (MP), sprawled over 300 acres of land, and six bottling plants in Nagpur (Maharashtra), the Bapunas have the capacity of turning out three million cases of IMFL (Indian made foreign liquor) and 900 lakh litres of spirit annually. Gwalior Distillers Limited with a plant

outlay of Rs 100 crores is one of the largest and most modern distilleries in the country. With technology and equipment imported from France and Finland, they have set up a continuous fermentation system which is much superior in terms of higher yields and lesser effluents, to the older and more conventional methods of distillation. It has enabled Gwalior Distillers Limited to become one of the biggest exporters and sellers within the country of ENA (extra neutral alcohol) which is the base for making all liquors. Aspi, the eldest of the Bapuna sons, gives these facts and figures without any brag or boastfulness.

The plant is fully automated and has its own in-house laboratory for quality testing. Methane gas, a by-product in the treatment of effluents, is used along with coal to fire the boilers. The steam from the boilers energizes the turbines to produce electricity. Gwalior Distillers produces two-thirds of the electricity it needs. Apart from being eco-friendly and energy conservative, these techniques increase volume and profitability, enabling them to produce 1.4 lakh litres of alcohol per day, Aspi explains their functioning. And while ENA, rectified spirit and IMFL form the base of the Bapuna Group of companies, they have interests in finance and real estate as well.

Popular brands of whiskey like McDowell No 1, Diplomat, Bagpiper to name a few, are made and bottled by

Bapunas for United Breweries. Only the label is UB. "We are in the same league — Shaw Wallace, United Breweries, Khodays, Jagatjit and Gwalior Distillers," says Aspi. Under their own brand name, they sell the medium and regular range of whiskeys like Silver Jet, Golden Jet and Boxer, mainly in Punjab, Haryana, the north-eastern and southern states. The demand and turnover in this segment makes for larger sales volume and profit. They are breaking into the more sophisticated markets of Maharashtra with Lady Di, a gin and fresh lime mix, and Pure Gold whiskey, mellow, mature and smooth. "A 24 carat experience," says the advertisement blurb.

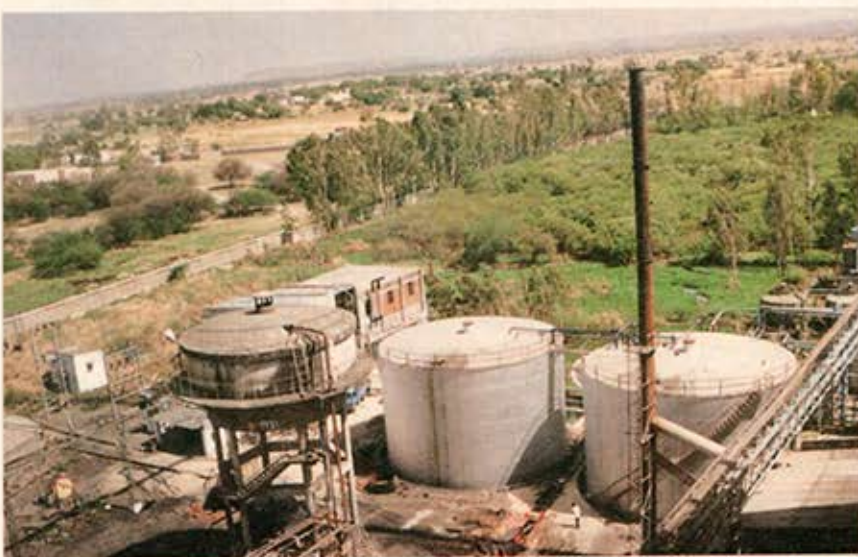
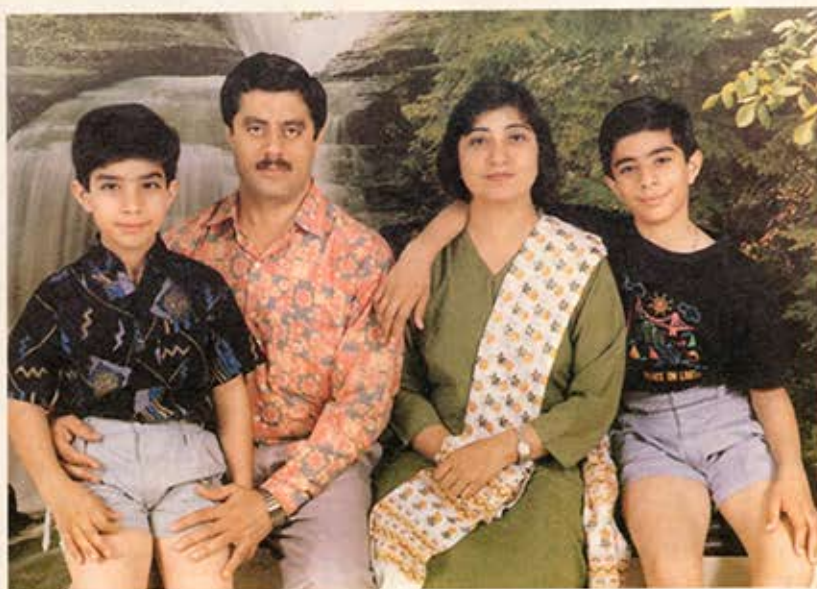
Dinshaw has now retired from active participation in the business and handed over the reins to his three sons. Aspi is the chairman of the Bapuna Group of companies, heading a work force of 1,500, according to Iqbal Bhabha, vice president, marketing. He looks after the business' finance and administration from Nagpur. Though the distilleries are at Gwalior, Aspi has an update on all activities, with daily reports of production figures, stocks, movement of finished goods and all related matters. Aspi was the recipient of the Rajiv Gandhi National Excellence Award for entrepreneurship for the year 1995.

The younger two brothers, Abad and Adil are twins, "but totally unlike each other," laughs their father. Abad who is in



The Bapuna family (top row, from left): Mehru, Kashmiri, Aspi and Jamashp; patriarch Dinshaw; (middle row, from left): Villoo, Ramin, Abad and Sanaya, Mazdiar, Adil, Daisy and Parvez

Bottom row: Famous product Lady Di and the molasses storage tanks



Nagpur, manages the six bottling plants and their other business interests as managing director. He appears to be an intense young man; quiet but deeply committed to whatever he is doing.

Adil, as vice chairman, is Gwalior based and in charge of production at the Gwalior Distilleries. The machinery in their ultra-modern plant is extremely sensitive and needs skilled operators and close supervision. Fortunately for them, they have not faced any particular labor problems. Adil reportedly rules the plant with a tight and effective rein.

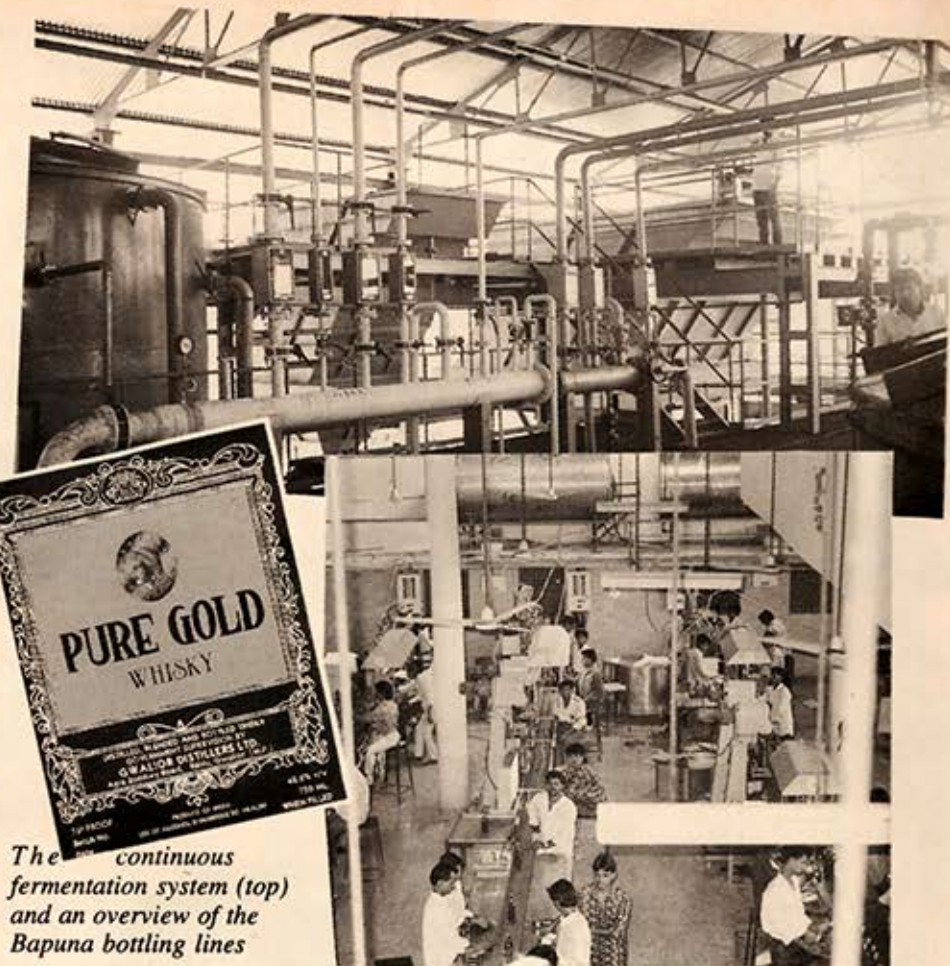
While they aren't complaining, they do stress that business is no bed of roses. As they further point out, it is extremely competitive and quality conscious; survival without political connections is difficult. (The Bapunas are said to have built up strong political connections, particularly in MP, but they maintain, "We are not interested in politics.") In a trade where direct advertising is not allowed, marketing strategies have to be shrewdly planned and executed. Of every rupee earned, 70 percent goes directly to the state in the form of excise duty. The remainder must pay for the cost of production, marketing, income-tax and other overheads before a profit is made, they observe.

How does one become a billionaire after all this? "Hard work," says Dinshaw. "And foresight," adds Aspi. They may not sound grandly eloquent or original, but these few words hold in them the seeds of their success.

From the narration of Dinshaw's life story we learn that he was the eldest of a family of six brothers and sisters in Nargol, a small town in Gujarat, and was sent to the Surat Parsi Orphanage where he studied till his matriculation. Further education was out of the question, because by then he was expected to support his aged parents — his father was a subsistence farmer with a small trade in liquor and toddy, — and his younger brothers and sisters. In 1936 he went to Bombay and took up a job in the Water Works Department of the Bombay Municipality for Rs 35 a month. He supplemented this by giving two tuitions. "I was very good at maths," he reminisced.

Keeping indifferent health and unhappy about his future prospects with the Bombay Municipality, Dinshaw responded with

**Of every
rupee
earned, 70
percent
goes
directly
towards
excise duty**



The continuous fermentation system (top) and an overview of the Bapuna bottling lines

alacrity when a cousin's wife mentioned that there was a job opening in Nagpur, as manager with Byramji Doongaji and Sons.

Living in an outhouse of the Doongaji bungalow, Dinshaw learned the ropes of the liquor business rapidly as the sethias depended more and more on this hardworking, quick-witted young man. In time, Dinshaw became a partner in the business and in 1971 personally invested Rs 50 lakhs to set up Vidarbha Distillers in Nagpur that specialized in making country liquor from Mahuva flowers. Gwalior Distillers Limited and Rairu Distilleries Limited came into being in 1985 with an investment of Rs 10 crores, reports Aspi.

Recalling his early struggles, Dinshaw says his marriage to Banoo in 1946 was one of the nicest things that happened to him. How they met and married is like a 'reel' life story. In those pre-TV days, *nataks* (plays) and concerts made for much of the entertainment and cultural activity

among the Parsis of Nagpur. These events were eagerly looked forward to by the actors and the audience. With a smile Dinshaw joyously recalls one such Gujarati *natak* of Dr Jehangir Wadia. The name of the drama eludes him now but he remembers he played the hero, Jamshed Lashkari, with Banoo as his sweetheart. The play ended much too soon, but by then the two of them had decided on a lifelong commitment to each other. Banoo Bapuna was known to be a gentle and gracious lady who stood by her husband in the hard times (Dinshaw's early involvement in the mining business turned out to be more of a hassle; and a cinema house provided more problems than profits), brought up her children with a fine sense of values and even after their fortunes rose, remained a warm and sincere person. Her passing away in 1990 was a sad time for her husband, three sons and two daughters, Aban Adi Magra and Parvin Burjor Avari.

Like his father, Aspi is convinced that "a good interpretation of one's horoscope can help you chart your life and your moves so as to make the best of good opportunities and avoid pitfalls." "It is important to have the exact time of birth to



Mehru and Aspi with family dogs Elsie and Rambo

make a good horoscope," believes Dinshaw. They all have a horoscope and everyone's wedding was arranged with the matching of horoscopes in mind, among other things.

If the Bapuna daughters-in-law — Mehru, Viloo and Daisy — are any indication to go by, there is a lot to be said for matching of horoscopes. Each of them has a strong but unobtrusive presence and provides her husband with the support every successful man needs. They themselves are directors in the Bapuna Group of companies and have an awareness of what is happening in the business, though they do not actively involve themselves in policy or its day-to-day running, we are informed. A large measure of the credit for the three brothers harmoniously working and living together, must go to the women.

The house the Bapunas have lived in since 1957 belonged to the former Chief Justice of India, Justice M. Hidayatullah. After 40 years there they have now built a new, sprawling, multi-storeyed house, into which they will be moving very soon. "But this old house has been lucky for us and we will always keep it," says Dinshaw.

Today Dinshaw spends much of his time enjoying his children and grandchildren, directing the affairs of the Shri Nagpur and Kamptee Parsi Zarthosti Anjuman, where he is president, and dispensing homeopathic medicines. During his tenure as president, the corpus of the Anjuman fund has reportedly increased from around Rs 16 lakhs to Rs 51 lakhs, and immovable property has gone up from about Rs 8 lakhs to Rs 24 lakhs. He is not without his critics

though who say he tends to be autocratic.

While Aspi and his wife Mehru are keen Rotarians, Dinshaw, Abad and Adil are avid gardeners. They have won many prizes in the Garden Club annual Flower Show. They have now stopped competing in the show and have instituted running trophies in the name of Bapuna. Recently, the Bapuna Group has also been involved in promoting sports. They sponsored the Pure Gold Cup Cricket Tournament, for selection of the Vidarbha Ranji Trophy team.

When asked what advice he would give his teenage son, Aspi said, "I would encourage him to set up something new, on his own, rather than just step into an already successful business. I entered the liquor business when I was only 18 years old, directly after my BCom and I have worked my way up, learning every step of the trade."

The Bapunas have come a long way but they aim to go much further. The three brothers have plans to set up a brewery to manufacture beer in Maharashtra. It seems a logical extension of the distillery business but their next announcement came as a surprise. Wind farms to generate power! Feasibility reports for this project, which will be located somewhere in South India, are already under way.

Power driven and spirited, the Bapuna Group of companies has a third generation of six young Bapunas waiting in the wings to continue what granddad started.

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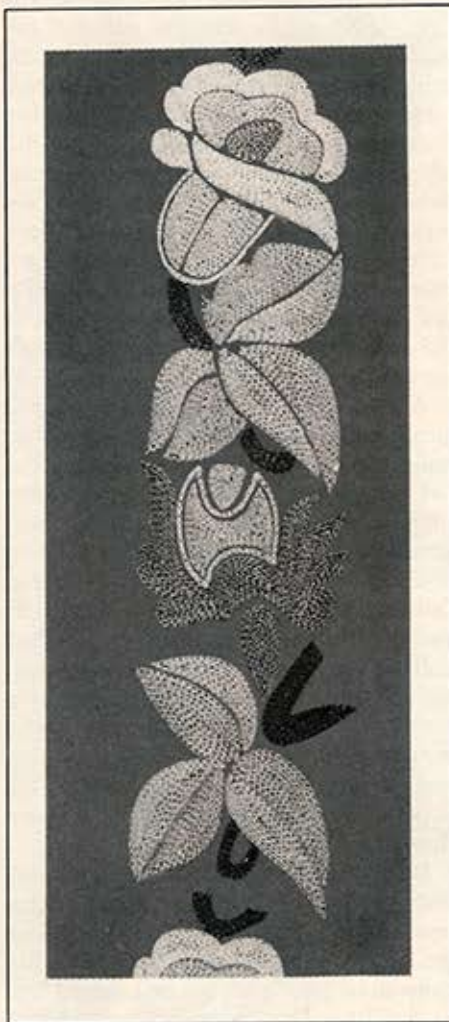
Bordering the beautiful

Parinaz Gandhi

Here she is in Bombay meticulously tracing every leaf and petal and bird in pencil from the sari *kors* (borders) in the priceless collection of her mother, relatives and friends. There she will return to Madras and breathe color and vibrance into these forms so as to appeal to the aesthetics of the South Indians who constitute her clientele. "It is such beautiful work and it is dying," is the concern of Ms Hilla Mazda, partner of Perfit who, beginning early 1996, joined hands with Rajyashree to rekindle this time-consuming embroidery.

Initially the customers placed their orders as panels for kurtas. When they wanted a little more of this exquisite embroidery they requested that it be done on dupattas. Not satisfied with this length they asked for saris. The cost for a three-inch border, nine meters in length, would vary between Rs 15,000 to 17,000 depending on the work involved. "Even then it is far cheaper than in Bombay where it would be available for around Rs 25,000," points out Mazda. Machine embroidery may bring down the cost by 50 percent, but Mazda is not interested, insisting that "the finish is never the same. Machine embroidery tends to pucker also," observes Mazda who is very meticulous about neatness.

Sometimes two months, sometimes six months is the duration of time taken to complete one sari border, depending on the embroidery work involved. The customer is proffered a choice of 20-30 designs, some are copies of original borders, others a combination of different designs put together by Mazda. "*Ghana bhi hoi to guchvai jaay* (a choice of too many designs may confound the buyer)," she fears. The threads and the colors are chosen by Mazda who then gets one of her embroiderers to work on a six-inch specimen. On receiving the client's okay either one or two embroiderers are assigned the task of completing the border. So far she has not been asked to embroider a full sari which would cost much more. "No one really wants to spend



Recreating the traditional Parsi *kors*, Hilla Mazda has found a market among South Indian women

on that," believes Mazda.

Another distinguishing feature of the Perfit embroidery is the medium on which the handwork is undertaken — pure silk or charmeuse silk since South Indians in particular like silk. Others who do embroidery work on polyester/satin therefore are not perceived as any threat to Mazda's business.

At Perfit's workshop at Gandhinagar, Adyar, four experts are busy doing embroidery and four tailors cut and sew western outfits. Rajyashree's original handwork unit, which specialized in typical Indian motifs, has therefore seen substantial expansion and diversification. Mazda herself visits the workshop four or five times a week. When it is a difficult pattern or figure to be cut, Mazda takes charge for they like to live up to their Perfit name which denotes 'perfect fit.' When clients want to discuss a color scheme or dress pattern with Mazda they are advised to come after fixing an appointment to ensure her presence.

"For western clothes I always give my frank opinion to the wearer. Not all cuts suit everyone. If I feel a woman looks ghastly in a particular kind of outfit, I tell her so and suggest she choose another style. Most customers take these hints positively because they know it is for their own good," remarks Mazda who has 20 years of tailoring experience behind her, having learnt the art from Bombay's Ms Katy Shroff.

Nevertheless, were a patron to insist on a particular preference, Mazda would, reluctantly, execute that order. She however shudders at the thought of the adverse publicity she would earn were that customer to announce that her garment was made at Perfit.

Inspiration for embroidery came to Mazda from both her grandmothers, for art, from her mother Jeroo Katgara who paints on ceramics.

Besides a knowledge of color combinations, it is essential to know which fabric

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suits which style. "These things won't come automatically unless you have a good dress sense. I also try to be the best advertisement for my clothes," mentions Mazda whose choice of trousers or jeans for day wear suits her lean body and hectic schedule.

In addition to Perfit, Mazda also makes time for her public relations duties at the Madras office of the Travel Corporation India (TCI) Limited, her father Adi Katgara being director in the firm. She has her fingers in yet another pie, literally, for she accepts orders for western and continental dishes, her speciality being salads. She explains her recent plunge into all these activities by saying that the first 12 years after marriage she devoted to her family and child rearing. Now that son Rustom and daughter Freya are at school, she puts her time to other use.

A must with Mazda is the hour she spends riding each morning, schooling polo ponies. In the days prior to marriage she had won prizes in riding, as also swimming, judo, badminton and squash, representing her school, college, club or state on different occasions. After her schooling at Cathedral and John Connon, she went to St Xavier's College for a couple of years. But realizing she was not academically inclined, she opted out and started practising as a beautician for three years. Then followed an eight-year stint at TCI's Bombay office doing costing and planning the itinerary for incoming groups until marriage to Syrus Mazda took her to Madras.

Her husband is into car racing now, after much tennis and cricket in his younger days. His passion for flying fructified at the age of 40 years when he obtained his commercial pilot's licence and started flying for Blue Dart, reveals Mazda. Until then he was directly or indirectly involved with his family's business concerns — ice factory, warehousing, real estate, Mayfair Hotel in Mahableshwar... Holiday time for the children therefore invariably means a trip to Bombay to meet the maternal grandparents or to Mahableshwar to visit the paternal grandparents. Sometimes they sojourn abroad. "We love to travel... It's all in the blood," states Mazda.

In fact, it was only because they were out of Madras in December 1995 that they

were unable to participate in the bicentenary celebrations of the Parsis in Madras, conveys Mazda. Otherwise the family members are involved in different activities of the Madras Parsi Association and make a trip to the 'Parsi Club' as they call it, at least once a month. At the last New Year's eve (Shehenshahi New Year in August) function at the Connemara Hotel, it was Syrus who officiated as master of ceremonies. At their sing-along sessions, Hilla is often found playing the guitar. A talk that they heard on Iran has inspired many of them to plan a visit to that country next year. Her son Rustom attends the prayer sessions for pre-navjote children.

"I believe in prayers but not the need to go to the fire-temple daily," says Mazda who admits that "I'm not a very staunch Zoroastrian. I wear the kusti all the time," though not the sudreh. She attributes this distinction to Madras' hot, sultry climate. An issue on which she speaks vehemently is the discrimination meted out to children of Zoroastrian women who have married out of the community. "I strongly feel that when a man can, why can't a woman (married to a non-Parsi have her children navjoted)?" Regarding disposal of the dead she indicated that the most convenient method should be adopted especially since there are not more than five deaths a year in Madras.

"Some more Parsis in Madras would be very welcome," she says. Mazda does not appear to make this statement because many members of the community come to her for stitching their garments. Embroidery orders from Parsis have been nil so far because, as she believes, most of them have their family heirlooms. Presently Mazda has set her sights on the Bombay market and is trying to find an outlet from where she can accept orders for her embroidery work.

Constantly on the go, Mazda maintains, "I have to keep my fingers occupied. Even when I'm looking at the TV you'll find me doing cross-stitch..." Tailoring and embroidery is "something that I have always enjoyed doing and when you find enjoyment in your work, you tend to do your best, which is bound to be good!"

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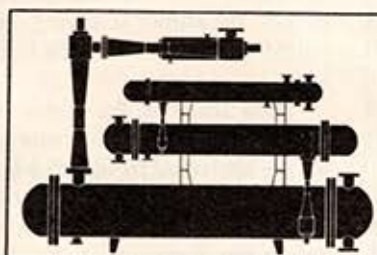
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"Where was God?"

Dina Mehta

A Fine Balance by Rohinton Mistry. Published in 1996 by Rupa and Company, 7/16 Ansari Road, Daryaganj, New Delhi 110002, by arrangement with Faber and Faber, London. Pp: 614. Price: Rs 295 (hardcover).

Rohinton Mistry is a master storyteller. He has an omniscient eye and assumes unlimited authority over his characters. As he shapes their overlapping destinies on a crowded canvas his empathy with his creatures is total, yet he allows them no escape from their unenviable lot. They remain firmly within his grasp and yoked to a relentless narrative which for its stamina (614 pages) and technical conservatism (no post-modernist fragmentations and innovations here) brings to mind the monumental novels of 19th century Europe.

A Fine Balance begins as the story of Dina, an attractive Parsi widow (husband Rustom is killed

in a street accident on their third wedding anniversary), who must hunt for tailors who will stitch garments on a piecework basis, under her supervision, for an export company. This is to pull herself out of penury and also from under the thumb of her chauvinist but well-meaning brother Nusswan who wants her to marry again. To help with the rent of her flat Dina also agrees to take in as paying guest a college student, the son of an old school friend. And lo and behold, one afternoon all three of them arrive together: the tailors Ishvar and Om (uncle and nephew) and Maneck who, brought up in the cool comfort of his mountain home, finds the dirt and the ragging at his college hostel hard to stomach.

Once Mistry has posited the widow, the two untouchable tailors and the collegiate in the Bombay flat in the year 1975, the year of the Emergency, he weaves his tale back and forth between city, village and mountains. Alas, it is a world in which

everything ends badly.

There is village India. Mistry takes a good look at our rural poor by digging into the history of the tailors' family. They were cobblers by birth, but to better their lot patriarch Dukhi Mochi had cut across caste lines to apprentice his sons to a tailor — a Muslim — since Hindu *darzis* (tailors) would have no truck with lower caste

assistants. The saga of the *mochis* (cobblers') family dwells on communal riots; on brutal caste crimes which include rape, mutilation and arson perpetrated by the *thakurs* (village heads) and their minions; and on indigence, dire indigence which drives Ishvar and Om to make the desperate move to the big city. But here their life is at the mercy of *goondas* (hoodlums) and slumlords, corrupt officials and protection money, sudden police swoops and flattened

jhopadpattis (shanties), beggars and casual street murders. The poor are getting poorer, the author is saying, and only the corrupt become rich. This is city life for you.

Then there is the India of the hill-stations and mountain resorts, a British legacy cherished by the brown sahibs who inherited it. Here the realm of Maneck's ancestors, who had lived as in paradise before the Partition, is invaded by 'progress.' Roads are blasted out of hillsides, garages and eating places sprout along the routes for truck drivers who foul the air with their exhaust fumes, and finally developers begin to build luxury hotels. But the jobless continue to outnumber the jobs and a hungry army shelters permanently on the hills. Forests are devoured for firewood and rain descends torrentially on the denuded slopes, causing landslides. Greed and a flawed development policy have resulted in a hideous rape of the hills.

Things get so bad that wherever

Maneck's father Mr Kohlah turns (he owns a General Store — all that is left of a vast estate), he sees only the spread of slums in what had once been a breathtakingly beautiful mountainscape. The degradation reminds him of "the rapidity with which mange had overtaken his favorite dog." It depresses him utterly. Enough to sour his relationship with his son. And Maneck is sent off to college to study refrigeration in a bid to cope with the killing competition that is the aftermath of 'modernizing' the mountains.

In the city a bond of sorts grows between Dina and the tailors; Maneck and Om become good friends; and for one brief year there is a tenuous feeling of security in the Bombay flat. In this time Dina fights off the *goondas* sent by her scheming landlord to oust her from her flat. Ironically, it is not the law that comes to her rescue but Beggarmaster, the *dada* (kingpin) of a local beggar organization who has been collecting *hafta* (periodic bribes) from Ishvar and Om. And for a time the underworld insurance proves effective.

But the camaraderie is short-lived. For everyone the respite has been too brief, the happiness 'unreliable.' A visit back to their village to find a bride for Om turns out to be disastrous for the tailors who are forced into the government's sterilization program. Om is recognized as a caste trespasser by a local don and, under orders from him, castrated. Ishvar falls a victim to the tubectomy quota. Gangrene sets in after his operation and his legs are amputated. They return to the city to become beggars. In trying to escape starvation and caste atrocities in their village, they finally sink into the nightmare anonymity of the city.

Things do not work out for Dina or Maneck either. Beggarmaster is murdered and with her 'protector' out of the way, Dina is evicted from her flat and has to move in with her brother's family. Thus a brave woman's bid for independence ends in failure. And though Maneck's prospects have always been bright — the only son of doting parents, he's being groomed to inherit the grocery store — he, too, is checkmated by life. In the end nothing is saved for him, not his friends, not the happy times, not his mountains of snow.

The story derives much nourishment from the language in which it is told and Mistry's comments on one of his charac-



Mistry: compelling imagery

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REPORT OF THE AVESTA CONFERENCE HELD IN TAJIKISTAN, DUSHANBE & 5TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS OF THE REPUBLIC, & 675TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS OF KAMAL E KHUJANDI, THE TAJIK IRANIAN POET



Dr Meher Master-Moos, Mr Firoze Andhyarujina, Miss Khurshid Cooper with Tajikistan Technological University Vice Chancellor Dr Pulat Pulatov at Khojand

At World Avesta Conference 1996 September. Dushanbe, Dr Meher Master-Moos, President Z.C. with Dr Kaiyomarz Keyanian of Australia (ZC Delegation member) with Dr Massov History Dept Head of Academy of Sciences and Dr Jamshedi Parvonakhon of Avesta Society.

Opening Ceremony of 5th Anniversary Republican Parade Miss Khurshid Cooper with Indian flag laying flowers at the statue of Firdausi, Tajik-Iranian poet

THE FIFTH REPUBLIC ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS

President Emomaliy Rakhmonov, had invited all Tajiks residing in other countries to participate in the Celebrations, and also Delegations from Iran & Afghanistan, in an effort to bring about an end to the border war through Peace Dialogue. Through these Delegations, he wanted to organise Peace Talks in Kabul & Tehran. The Iran Ambassador, P. E. Mojtahed — Shabestari was doing his best to revive the Iranian culture of the Tajik people through books, films and other cultural exchanges; and also develop the Trade through Iran for Tajikistan. The Indian Ambassador, H. E. Muthu Kumar was also doing his best to improve Indo-Tajik Trade, and showed most gracious hospitality to our Delegation; including breakfast and dinner with the President at the President's Palace; and also to attend all the Anniversary Functions, arranging for transport in the Govt. vehicles & planes, with proper escorts and music. The main functions of speeches, had the Ambassadors of U.S.A., Russia, Iran, Uzbekistan, and representatives from Austria, Germany and other countries making the official Republic Day Speeches followed by music & dance programmes of Tajik Culture. The Republic Day Parade was an eye-opener. The President wanted to emphasise the ancient Fire Ceremonies

being performed by old men dressed in the old style costumes of the mountain people. This was followed by a Fire Ceremony of several hundreds of ladies dressed in red, forming dance patterns on the stadium. Several floats were devoted to scenes from the Vendidad showing that this Avestan Text is a way of life still practised by these mountain people — sowing the corn in Spring, threshing & harvesting in autumn, preparing the wheat flour & making naan in the tandoor ovens with the families enjoying the good food together. The last scenes were very sad depicting the terrible damage being done to families being torn apart by the war, with old people left without support of sons and widows and fatherless children of the dead youth — the soldiers killed in the war. There were many meetings with distinguished persons and poets of Tajikistan, including Poet Aieni, Prof. Dodikhodo, Dr. Jamshidi Parvanah, Dr. Yusuf Shah, Prof. Yakub Shah, Mr. Husain Waheedi, Prof. Yusuf Yusufshah Yakubsha and others.

Madame Maisara Kolonova had arranged special dinner hospitality at the homes of the leading citizens, Judges, Doctors, and others. Many of them had visited Bombay as guests of Zoroastrian College in the past. From these

private visits, the terrible situation in the country became more vivid. One of Tajikistan's leading orthopaedic surgeons who had requested to be invited to the Z. C. Medicina Alternativa World Congress and be trained in Bombay in plastic surgery, sadly and candidly stated that he had given up surgery for lack of anaesthesia & medicine available in the country and had open a shop to sell American Cigarettes, whisky and chocolates to earn dollars to finance his daughter's education at Oxford. Many many other Tajiks bewailed the fact that the cotton carding factories were closed as Govt. was selling raw cotton to get dollars to finance the war, to buy arms & ammunition from U.S.A.; so the factory workers were jobless sitting starving at home; the factories for weaving cotton cloth were closed for lack of cotton yarn and their workers were also jobless; the factories employing women for manufacturing clothes & embroidery on cloth were also closed; so both men & women earning members

of the families were jobless, and old & young family members were suffering as dependents. This cruel economic policy of U.S.A. and E.E.C. was clearly aimed to cripple the economy of the country and thereby attempt to make the Tajik people into a kind of low cost labour factory dependant on the West within a short time. This kind of Neo Colonialism in Central Asia is two pronged — one to kill the youth through the war and the other to ruin the economy and thereby make the people lackeys of the West. Educated people were willing to sweep the roads and do menial labour to earn a meagre livelihood.

The President is doing his best to revive the ancient glory of the Tajiks and restore their pride in their own history & culture; but the economy requires top priority attention. International Business Houses of India are trying to help Tajikistan through import export Trade; but what is required is for Indian Business Houses to set up factories and hotels in Tajikistan to develop the industry and Tourism. Tajik soil is rich in mineral wealth and gem stones; and Indian Engineering Experts would do well to set up collaborations with the Tajik Govt. to mine the mineral wealth and export it from Tajikistan via India to the West and the Far East. In the meantime the British Govt. has got in first & fast to mine the precious Tajik gold and carry off the gold nuggets to U.K. for refining and making into internationally accepted standard of Bars. India has lost its opportunity although the Tajik Prime Minister first came to India in 1993 January requesting this collaboration, from Indian Govt.

KHUJAND AND THE NORTH

This 5000 years old ancient city was formerly the Capital of the Satrapy established by Darius the Great about 2500 years ago. In the mountains around Khujand, the original homeland of the Zoroastrian faith, there still exist villages with people of Zoroastrian ancestral stock practising the way of life indicated in the sacred Avestan Text of Vi-de-o-dat. This region became Islamised about 800 years ago; but the people still preserve the Zoroastrian traditions.

Kamal-e-Khujandi the famous poet who lived about 700 years ago, was born in Khujand and composed Persian poetry which is considered to be classical. He later settled in Tabris; as in those times Khujand and Tabris were both within the Iranian Empire. Khujand is the commercial capital of Tajikistan, located on the Syr Darya river, and the ancient Silk Route. Around Khujand are agricultural farms, dairies, sheep, wool products, silk worms and sericulture, fruit orchards, and factories for making silk cloth and woolen carpets; also cotton fields and factories for making cotton yarn and cloth. The famous Atlas Company factory, still makes beautiful rainbow coloured silk cloth with the Iranian 27 inches GAJ measure which we Parsis still use for measuring the Kusti length. Nuclear fissioning and making gold alchemically for weaving into the silk cloth first took place in the research laboratory of this factory.

continued overleaf

THE MAYOR AND CITY GOVT. OF KHUJAND had made tremendous preparations for this celebration. All the ladies of Khujand wore the traditional Atlas Company rainbow silk cloth traditional Salwar-Kameez dress; the musicians playing their old traditional musical instruments were lined up in bands at the important stops enroute. The Tajikistan President filled 3 plane loads of his invited guests delegations at Dushanbe airport and flew us to Khujand where all the delegations were accommodated at the Five Star leading hotel of Khujand. There were memorable and beautiful performances of traditional Tajik music including Zame Zame, and a play on the life of Kamal-e-Khujandi, with banquets for all the guests by the river side and in the Peoples Palace of the Arbob. The entire city and region was in a festive mood. The carpet factory had woven special carpets with the new emblem of Tajikistan and the portrait of Kamal-e-Khujandi.

After the President returned to Dushanbe our Zoroastrian College Delegation stayed on as Guests of the Tajikistan Technological University, Vice-Chancellor Dr. Pulat Pulatov and enjoyed homestay hospitality in a typical Tajik home for some days. At the Technological University we had the pleasure of meeting Prof. Kosimjon Fozailov, Vice Director of the Hudjand branch of the Technological University. He informed us that he had direct communication with a group of about 2000 persons residing between Khujand and Penjikant in the Zarovshon river valley and mountains who are Zoroastrians. He had visited Karachi as a Guest through the Zoroastrian College of Ervad Godrej Sidhwa, Ms. Toxy Cowasjee and Mr. Byram Avari and stayed with the Parsis and learnt the Zoroastrian ceremonies and customs as practised in Karachi. He was very keen to teach the University students Avesta prayers and Zoroastrian ceremonies and ethics and teachings of Zarathushtra through the English language books translated by the Karachi scholar Mr. Tehmuras Sethna, and the Mazdayasnie Monasterie books.

We were taken for a day visit to Ura Tybe, about a 100 miles away, to the ancient archeological site of the Palace of the Zoroastrian King who defeated Alexander the Greek. The Curator of the Museum at Ura Tybe, showed us all the old archeological and historical artefacts excavated in this region including stone astodans and jewellery, and the costumes of the Royalty. Ura Tybe is a market town with a big factory for making cotton knitted fabric garments and wool knitted garments. The factory is willing to do collaborations with Indian readymade garment manufacturers to knit readymade garments for export to India and via India to other countries. Reputable Indian Companies with international trade could use this as an additional factory for making readymade garments. This is one of the biggest bazars of Tajikistan and very colorful; and goods made in other countries are brought here for sale to Tajiks. There were considerable quantity of goods made in Turkey and Iran, especially consumer goods such as soap and toothpaste.

There is a beautiful lake called the Tajik Sea near Khujand and we were taken to visit its heavily wooded shores where there are many health resorts for the factory workers and wounded soldiers to recuperate. The air is fresh and clean and so is the water.

We left Tajikistan by the same road from Khujand to Tashkent in a vehicle provided by the University. Due to the war, only vehicles from Uzbekistan could enter Tajikistan and return across the border. Our vehicle flew the Indian flag and we left as we entered without any visa or passport check at the border checkpoint.

The Indian Embassy staff in Tashkent were most hospitable again although busy with the visit of the Vice President of India. We had a day in hand to sight see in Tashkent, and had the pleasure of visiting the museums and art galleries, department stores as big and fashionable as in London and as well stocked and the Alexi bazar where the best "maevo" is available. Our return flight in the early hours of the morning of 15th September on the Uzbek airline Tashkent-Delhi flight was in a plane three quarters empty. The people of ex-USSR countries could ill afford to travel to India five years after the breakup of the USSR. They have very high regard for India and we were very well received in all places.

ters, the lawyer Valmik, may be transposed in toto to the author himself. Of Valmik he writes that though he depicted life as a sequence of accidents, there was nothing accidental about his expert narration. "His sentences poured out like perfect seams, holding the garment of his story together without calling attention to the stitches."

Certainly the narration of *A Fine Balance* is seamless, travelling all the way from Independence to the 1980s. There is a fine meshing of characters and events, all told in effortless, fluent, unaffected English. Perhaps one feels this because Mistry appears unselfconscious about giving the language liberal transfusions of new blood to swell the mainstream. Words and phrases like 'bilkool (absolute) nonsense,' 'fakeology,' 'Dastur Daab-Chaab' (for an amorous priest), 'chikna (slick) hairstyle,' 'all you do is drama and natak (histrionics),' flow from his pen (his word processor?) unapologetically and without italics.

And his imagery can be compelling: "Radha brought the lamp out to the dusk-devoured porch, instantly populating it with shadows." And, "Coolies conducted aggressive forays to offer their muscular services." And again, "The capricious breeze escorted the stench for hours into the shacks before changing direction."

Also humor makes this fat tome immensely readable. Ironies shine in the abiding gloom. When Ibrahim, the landlord's lackey, who has repeatedly terrorized Dina, is about to lose his job, she asks him sympathetically, "Can't you... use more threatening language or something?" The Potency Pedlar's spiel on virility, at a time when the country is subjected to a hysterical sterilization program, is hilarious. As is Dina's relationship with her lover Fredoon after her beloved husband's death. "The bed... was out of bounds, sacred and reserved for married couples only. So they used a chair." Soon the chair was out of bounds too, because the act of straddling Fredoon reminded her of Rustom flinging his leg over his bicycle. So what did Fredoon do? "He put on his trousers and made tea." They next explored the standing position. But in the throes of vertical lovemaking Dina could see the rain falling outside the window. This reminded her that the first time she held hands with Rustom there had been a fine drizzle. She begs Fredoon to desist. He did. "He put on his trousers and made tea."

Many other examples come to mind. The Emergency platitudes are mouthed trippingly by morons but to the reader they

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sound tongue-in-cheek. *Jhopadpatti* dwellers must do their morning business on the railway tracks, *lota* (mug) in hand, and when the train schedules are upset, so are the digestive tracts of the slum colony...

But the humor does nothing, in the end, to dissipate the gloom. Mistry is a creative writer — and a fine one. But in this work he has forgotten that the human being is a creator too (in the sense that we are co-creators of our destiny) and while the individual is helpless to prevent large events like, say, communal riots overtaking him, he is never without options. One is to be a passive victim; the other, by actively changing his response to adversity, he can surmount it. It has been done before — history is replete with such examples.

But one gets the feeling that Mistry's view of Indian history is garnered from newspaper clippings. What he's picked on is every possible disaster — from the suicide of the three dowerless Kanpur sisters to accounts of demolitions, evictions, castrations, communal carnage, venality, what not. But while the negative stories we read in newspapers dwell vividly on the traumas suffered by life's victims, there must surely be other stories (if we cared to dig them out) that demonstrate that we are meant to be life's masters?

Surely in his own life Mistry has demonstrated this? His first years in Canada cannot have been easy. He was working as a clerk in a bank when he started taking night classes in English literature at the University of Toronto. "I set myself this dream... of trying to write..." Exactly. He set himself a dream. And today two of his

"His sentences poured out like perfect seams holding the garment of his story together"

novels have been nominated for the Booker Prize; twice he has won the Commonwealth Writers Prize and there have been other substantial literary accolades...

Good for him! We are proud of *aapro* Rohinton.

But of all the creatures he's given life to in *A Fine Balance*, not one succeeds in breaking out of the difficulties in which he is enmeshed. And those who do make the effort, like the tailors, like Dina, merely

invite sorrows on their heads.

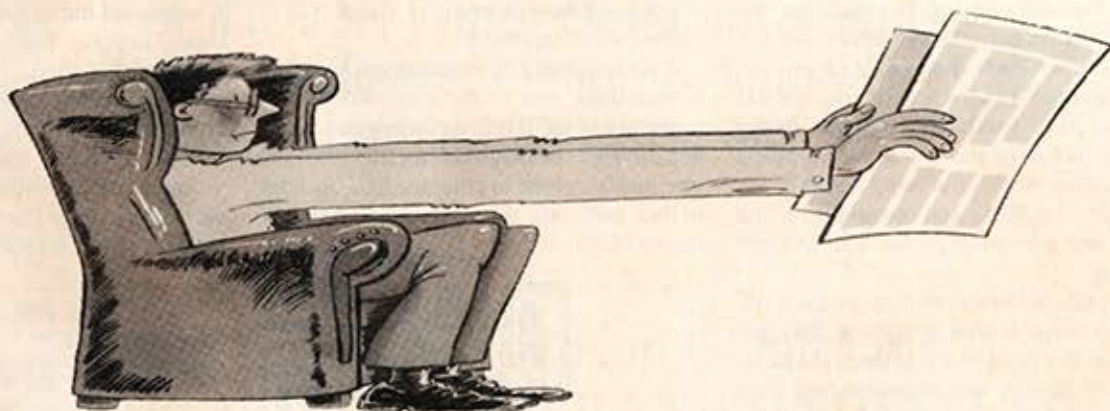
Okay, in his omnipotence Mistry has every right to portray Ishvar and Om as victims who are powerless to control or influence the events in which they are caught, like flies in a web, and we mourn their fate. We even shake an angry fist and echo Maneck's anguished cry: "Where was God, the bloody Fool?... the things he allowed to happen..."

But what happened to Maneck? Surely he could have found adequate responses to new situations — or even new inner resources with which to triumph over the old situations? But the calamities that befall his friends and the vicissitudes of life prove too much for him. They bruise his spirit to the extent that he gives up the fight and succumbs to his despair.

A Fine Balance would have been more balanced if one character, just one, had swum against the tide and gained the other shore. True, one shares the author's sense of wonder at the ability of human beings to endure. But endurance is not enough. The universe is an incredibly balanced place and we have been programmed to win. How else can we be here to tell the tale?

In this novel Mistry treads heavily on people's dreams. Whereas the greatest artists manage to kindle them.

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Beware of the community grapevine that thrives on others' fortunes and misfortunes

"Maalam chë ké péli Siloo ni dikri péla so and so na dikra sathé faréch? (Do you know that Siloo's daughter is going round with so and so's son?)" "Né péli Roshan no dikro;... (And that Roshan's son...)"

I'm proud to say that we, the Parsis of Pakistan have elevated common gossip to a fine art. The way we manage to ferret things out is magical. I'm sure Sherlock Holmes would consider us to be the most "singular" investigators he had ever had the (mis)fortune to meet. By the way, did old Sherlock have any skeletons rattling away in his closet? You can be sure that if there were, someone from our sorority would have discovered them by now. In fact, I think we'd be a credit to any country's intelligence service!

Let's face it, we'd be lost without gossip — the TV and VCR provide us with just so much entertainment, beyond that we have to rely on our own resources. And, if I may add, we Parsis have a lot of sources — if someone's in a mess or having marital problems, the local BBC (*Bètha Békar Club*) is sure to be the first to know. Not a day goes by without a juicy bulletin released by the BBC and, considering the size of our community, that's downright amazing.

Such finely-honed instincts do the BBC reporters possess that somehow they are always at the right place at the right time: always in time to see an unattached chap talk to an unattached girl, and so wide a circulation do their bulletins enjoy that by the evening of the same day the entire community has been informed of the "impending wedding" of the parties concerned. Fast work, eh? But then the BBC always has been a smooth operator — it never ever commits itself on paper, no sree, no libel suits for the Karachi BBC, it's all strictly by word of mouth.

Here are a few time-honored gossip-collecting methods of the BBC: Interro-

gate the servants of parties concerned (if possible subject them to the third degree). Interrogate the relatives of parties concerned (do it very discreetly). Be sure to attend all social functions — you just might stumble on to a scene worth reporting. Collect bits and pieces of information. These can be elaborated and embellished with other such piecemeal information recorded in the files of the parties concerned.

However, the newest trend discernible in BBC's investigative reporting sector is more in keeping with our mechanical jet-set age — just switch that radio on, adjust the setting to FM and enjoy in the tranquillity of your home the conversation your next-door neighbor is enjoying unawares on his cellular telephone. It's one small push of the button for the BBC's reporter, but it's a giant leap forward in the world of investigative reporting.

The following is an interview with Ms Bomanshaw, one of the more industrious members of the BBC. An important member of this prestigious institution, she graciously agreed to grant me half-an-hour of her precious time. We shall refer to her as Ms B.

DJ: Ms B, everyone maintains that you are a malicious gossip. Is there any truth in that statement?

Ms B: Arré dikra, look at me. I'm a harmless old woman. Tell me, who would I want to hurt?

DJ: Ever heard of *Arsenic And Old Lace*?

Ms B: I beg your pardon?

DJ: Just kidding.

Ms B: Now look here dikra, I feel that in a small community like ours one should share the joys and woes of others. That is why I feel it my solemn duty to inform others about likely weddings, possible divorces, etc. Sometimes I may also slip in a word of caution about a person, if necessary, to the parties concerned.

DJ: In other words ma'am, you're a gossip.

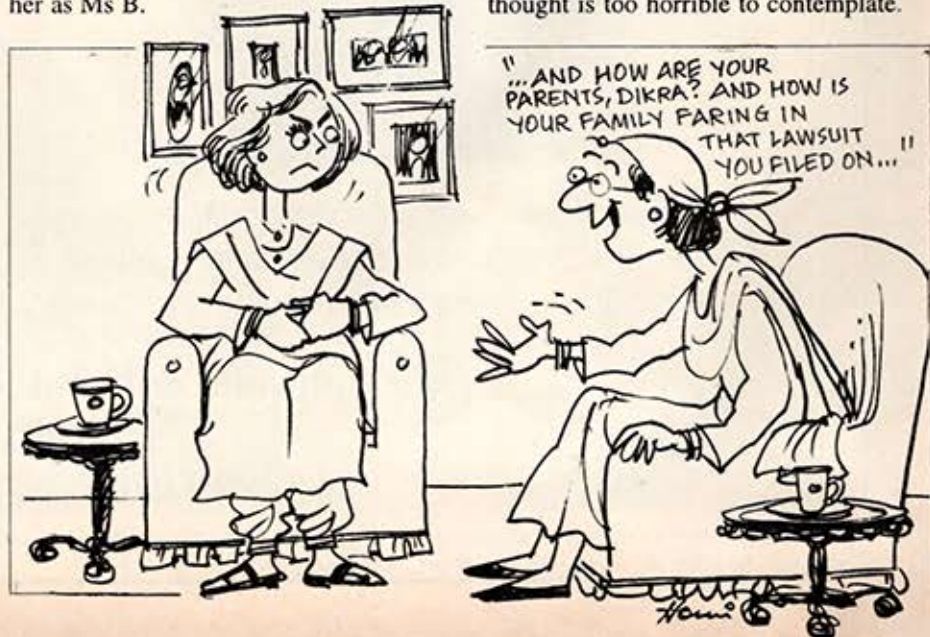
Ms B: No, no, no! You children misconstrue all our actions. I am not a gossip. Tell me, was the old town-crier ever branded a gossip?

DJ: So you liken yourself to a town-crier. That figures. Would you consider revealing some of your sources?

Ms B: Child, I am shocked! Being a reporter yourself you should know better than to ask someone who is practically a member of your noble profession to disclose her sources. But tell me, how are your parents? And how is your family faring in that lawsuit you filed on...

During the rest of my allotted time Ms B subjected me to a mini Spanish Inquisition. They say forewarned is forearmed, but though I tried not to succumb to her insistent probing, how could a mere mortal hold out against such a formidable snoop?

Gee, to think that my family's most intimate affairs will be dinner table conversation in most Parsi homes tonight! The thought is too horrible to contemplate.





FOR ALL THOSE WHO STILL BELIEVE THAT EQUALITY IS A BASIC TENET OF ZOROASTRIANISM

**The Association of Inter-Married Zoroastrians would like to make sure
that the rights of inter-married Parsees are not compromised.
We would welcome your support — whether or not you are inter-married.**

Formed in 1991 with a view to ensuring that Zoroastrian Parsis married to non-Parsis are not deprived of their rights, the Association of Inter-married Zoroastrians has, for the last five years, been steadily working towards this goal. We have not, as many of our supporters feel, been inactive. We have always maintained that we are a "GINGER GROUP" or catalyst and not a militant association. But our very presence reinforces our stand that Parsi men and women should be treated alike. The number of inter-married Parsis is already substantial, and growing almost daily, and our efforts are geared towards ensuring that one day they will not be discriminated against in matters regarding rights to worship, rights to death ceremonies and, above all, the right to bring up their children in the Zoroastrian faith.

Subtle changes towards these ends are already taking place. A notable one is the resolution passed by the Parsi Panchayat, permitting inter-married Parsi women to avail of the facilities at the Towers of Silence. Although there were three restrictive clauses originally passed by the BPP we are happy to note that in the case of Mrs Kumudben Shah, two of them have already been waived, setting the right precedent.

Another is the navjote ceremony of the late Mr Neville Wadia (followed by his son Nusli's) an act not only condoned, but actually approved of by our high priests. At his funeral at the Doongarwadi his daughter-in-law Maureen was even allowed to sit on the verandah adjacent to the Bungali. These are as yet only isolated incidents but, even so, they are strong steps in the right direction.

At A.I.M.Z., we are doing our utmost to make sure that these steps are carried on. The changing tide of public opinion is very much in our favour and, perhaps, one day it will be strong enough to make our association unnecessary.

Till then, however, we have pledged ourselves to fight for equality in the true Zoroastrian tradition. We do, however, need support. More active help from our sympathizers and well-wishers who have so far often been content to give us silent support and we have no doubt that with a growing body of support, and the patience, dedication and perseverance of our members, it is only a matter of time before we succeed.

Contact us for membership details at A.I.M.Z., P.O. Box No 16159, Malabar Hill, Bombay 400006.

This issue of *Parsiana* includes intercommunity marriages registered both at the Old Customs House and at the MHADA office in Bandra (East) for the six month period of February to July 1996. Civil marriages between Zoroastrians have also been listed. However, names that could not be confirmed as Zoroastrian have been omitted from the list.

There were 17 intercommunity marriages plus four civil marriages between Zoroastrians registered at the Old Customs House and 11 and one, respectively, at the MHADA office.

Only one Zoroastrian cremation was registered at the Chandanwadi crematorium between September 1995 to June 1996.

The age of Zoroastrian brides — as listed in this issue — ranged between 21 and 40 years, the arithmetic mean (the total number of individual ages divided by the total number of brides) being 27 years. The corresponding figures for the grooms were 24 and 44 years, averaging at 30 years.

Compared to 25 babies born in Bombay in December there were 85 deaths. Heart disease took a toll of 26 lives of whom 13 were 80 years and above. The other major killers were pneumonia and lung related diseases (14) and brain disease (nine). Old age and general debility claimed five victims and septicemia, four. Three deaths each were attributed to diabetes, cancer and asthma and two each to kidney failure and hypertension. The 10 isolated cases registered for December were hemiparesis (a slight paralysis or weakness of one half of the face or body), angina, hypo-

proteinemia (deficient protein in blood plasma from dietary deficiency or excessive excretion), high blood pressure, cerebral malaria, dehydration, Alzheimer's disease, epilepsy, fracture of the skull and drowning. In the case of two deaths, the coroner's report was still pending. Two stillborn male babies and two youths, aged 29 and 37 respectively, were also lost to the community. A 101-year-old lady breathed her last. The Zoroastrian life expectancy at birth, in Bombay in December, was 75 years.

The data on births, marriages and deaths has been compiled from information supplied by various newsletters and anjumans in India and abroad, courts and hospitals. This information is not always complete or consistent: we are unable to carry data from areas where the anjumans do not furnish the particulars; the birth figures for Bombay are supplied by four hospitals — births in suburban hospitals and private nursing homes are not included unless individuals send us information together with a copy of the birth certificate. There may be an inadvertent repetition of names in the marriage list when a civil marriage precedes a religious ceremony. In the breakup of deaths according to illnesses, especially of the elderly, death is often due to a combination of several diseases.

If readers have any births/marriages/deaths they would like published, some proof to ensure the veracity of the report would be required. We are sure our readers would appreciate this requirement and cooperate with us.

BOMBAY

BORN

A girl to *Tanaz* and *Zubin Mehta* on December 1, 1996
A girl to *Perviz* and *Pervez Dubash*; December 3
A boy to *Anahita* and *Darius Pandole*; December 3
A girl to *Achala* and *Dara Ichhaporia*; December 6
A boy to *Zeeba* and *Darayus Shroff*; December 6
A boy to *Percis* and *Sarosh Daruwalla*, brother to *Aarish*; December 7
A girl to *Gospi* and *Firdosh*

Patel; December 7
A girl to *Mitra* and *Nevil Irani*; December 8
A boy to *Havovi* and *Zarir Chhor*; December 9
A boy to *Binaifer* and *Karl Sahukar*; December 11
A boy to *Diana* and *Homeyar Goiporia*; December 12
A girl to *Daulat* and *Anand Kumar*; December 16
A boy to *Khurshid* and *Mac Spencer*; December 17
A girl, *Zeenia*, to *Havovi* and *Burzin Khan*, sister to *Hushad*; December 17

A girl to *Roshni* and *Parvez Damania*; December 18
A girl to *Kaizad* and *Mhelly Bhamgara*; December 19
A girl, *Afreen*, to *Niloufer* and *Marzban Thanewala*; December 20
A girl to *Havovi* and *Rusi Bachana*; December 21
A girl to *Anaita* and *Mehli Colah*; December 21
A boy to *Yasmin* and *Kaiwan Mevawala*; December 23
A girl to *Niloufer* and *Vispi Daruwala*; December 25
A girl to *Pervin* and *Sharukh Irani*; December 26
A girl to *Daisy* and *Zarir Mistry*; December 26
A girl to *Avan* and *Zubin Bhungara*; December 28
A girl to *Avan* and *Cyrus Mistry*; December 29

MARRIED

Dolly Bharucha and *Homi Behram Bharucha*; February 2
Freny Pinto and *Deepak Ramaswamy*; February 5
Minai C. Agarwal (*Roda T. Elavia*) and *Kumaril Shivcharanlal Garg*; February 9
Chetna Gopalji Pandya and *Vispi Firoze Bardoliwalla*; February 22
Armin Rumi Wadia and *Hemant Moreshwar Barfe*; February 26
Jasmine Baji Mody and *Bhushan Shridhar Arolkar*; February 27
Sharmin S. Momin and *Khushru Freddy Cooper*; March 6
Harshvina Maganlal Chauhan and *Hosi Framroze Gheesta*; March 11
Neena Minoo Patel and *Jersaph Sam Valvadia*; March 11
Simeen Ibrahim Merchant and *Navroz Jamshed Lakdawalla*; March 21
Nifriz Dotiwala and *Subash Krishnan*; March 24
Geetabeen Bhagwanbhai Rajput and *Ratan Phiroz Irani*; April 2
Poonam Manohar Chhugani and *Kaiomarz Dosu Bhamgara*; April 20
Diana Joan Syiemiong and *Yazdie Noshir Panthaki*; April 26
Binaifer M. Hilloowala and *Samir K. Gupta*; April 28
Ferzana Doctor and *Aaron Chaze*; April 30
Harbarinder Raña and *Cyrus Yazdi Engineer*; May 4

Vidya Ramalingam and *Homiya Vasania*; May 9
Arpana Damodar Prabhu and *Jamsheed Aspi Bugwadia*; May 18
Roxana Sam Buhariwala and *Behram Aspy Daboo*; May 20
Mehér Jehanbux Gandevia and *Vikram Ramesh Kharwa*; May 20
Behroze J. George and *Sharud Mahendra Telang*; May 22
Maneck Homi Maneckshaw and *Hemansu Bhupendra Thakkar*; May 28
Armaity Sohrab Dehmubed and *Harold Jacob D'Souza*; May 30
Delnaaz Mehelli Irani and *Rajeev J. S. Paul*; June 4
Rukshana Akbarali Barodawala and *Shahrukh Rustam Delkhan*; June 7
Gulnar Rustom Irani and *Minocher Tirandaz Irani*; June 28
Smita Bhagwan Maske and *Syrus Rusi Mistry*; July 9
Anjali Avasthi and *Hoshi Karanjia*; July 25
Taradevi Damaiy and *Shahrookh J. Meher Shahi*; July 26
Farida D. Bhatena and *Neville Faramroz Patrawala*; July 26
Deepa Pribhdas Gidwani and *Fali Erach Poncha*; July 26
Zeenat N. Khalil and *Nirad Hector Karanjawala*; July 27
Franak Jahangir Contractor and *Hoshang Homi Baria*; December 1
Belfriz Khodadad Irani and *Farhad Jamshed Fataki*; December 2
Nilufer Adi Dubash and *Zubin Tehmulji Adajania*; December 3
Pervin Hormusji Patel of Ahmedabad and *Zal Rustom Irani*; December 3
Rhea Kali Vaid and *Kaizad Phiroz Naterwalla*; December 6
Kashmira Jamshed Fitter and *Cyrus Noshir Patel*; December 6
Behnaz Kaikhosrow Izadyar and *Farzin Boman Faramarzi*; December 8
Roxan Sam Patel and *Homayr Minoo Mistry*; December 8
Havovi Jehangir Ginwala of Ahmedabad and *Khushru Savak Jokhi*; December 9
Rashna Dara Zaiwalla and *Hoshang Jehangir Khan*; December 9
Naomi Darius Todiwalla and *Kurush Mehelli Kasad*;

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Mrs Purviz R. Shroff

December 12
Aban Manek Bhathena and
Yohann Jamshed Setna;
 December 12
Binaifer Jehanbux Dastoor and
Pervez Faramroze Aibara;
 December 13
Dinaz Namdar Irani and *Hezeer*
Noshir Kavarana; December 14
Daisy Percy Bhathenna and
Jehangir Burjor Dhondy;
 December 16
Shiraz Dinyar Marfatia and
Dineil Dinshaw Irani;
 December 17
Zerophie Ronnie Mistry and *Adil*
Nariman Kasad; December 20
Kamal Dadi Balsara and *Yazad*
Jehangir Bacha; December 21
Khurshed Barjor Gai and
Homi Nariman Vakil;
 December 22
Jasmin Homi Vania and
Mehernosh Jehangir Hormuzdi;
 December 24
Rukshana Noshir Bhathena and
Kerman Pirojshah Mehta;
 December 27
Natasha Rohinton Irani and
Homeyar Jimmy Mobedji;
 December 27
Scheherazade Rohinton Balsara
 and *Vispy Sorabji Bharucha*;
 December 28
Dilnawaz Rattan Vajifdar and
Mahendosh Hosi Daruwalla;
 December 28
Yasmin Rusi Patel and *Jamshid*
Pesi Buhariwalla of Pune;
 December 31

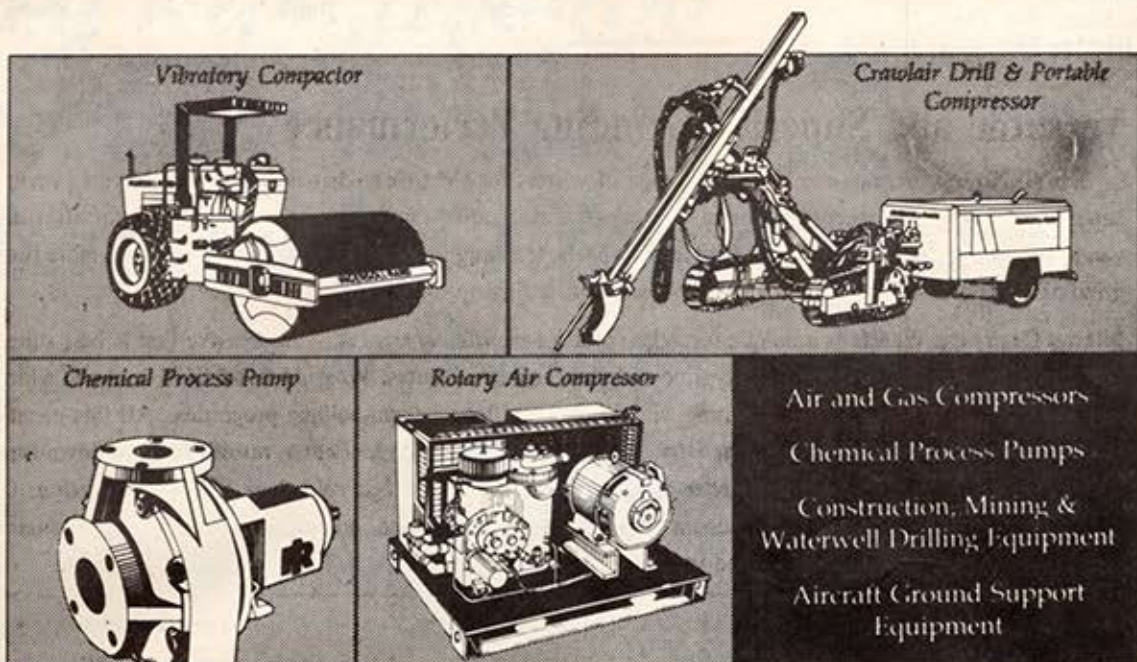
DIED

Banoo Dhunjisha Bamji (82),
 Soli Papa Cottage, Firdausi Rd,
 Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014;
 April 15 (cremated)
Jamshed Maneckji Desai (82),
 residing at C/12, Khalakdina
 Ter, August Kranti Marg,
 400036; December 2
Rohinton Faramroz Driver (37),
 Dadachanji Bldg, Marzban Clny,
 Dr A. Nair Rd, 400011;
 December 2
Manec Sorabji Patel (88), 12,
 Khareghat Clny, N. S. Patkar
 Marg, 400007; December 2
Mehernosh Ardeshtir Irani (70),
 C/27, Ascot, Shastri Ngr, Swami
 Samarth Circle, Andheri (W),
 400053; December 3
Jer Burjor Panthaky (88), Mistry
 Bldg, Padamji Rd, Off Pavwalla
 St, 400004; December 3
Dhunmai Pirojsha Bulsara (84),
 644, Dinabad, Rd no 10, Parsi
 Clny, Dadar, 400014;
 December 4
Khurshed Sorabji Bhadha (84),

Room no 7, Panday Sanatorium,
 Colaba, 400005; December 5
Alamai Kaikhoshru Daruwalla
 (85), 3/18, C. J. Clny, Sir Ratan
 Tata Rd, Tardeo, 400034;
 December 5
Kurush Jal Patel (58), 24,
 Glamour Bglw, Malcolm Baug,
 S. V. Rd, 400102; December 5
Pervez Hormuzji Tampal (58),
 7A/4, Tata Clny, Sir Ratan Tata
 Rd, Tardeo, 400034; December 5
Khurshed Nariman Daruwalla
 (85), C/o Soli Motafram, Godrej
 Bldg, Contractor Baug, Mori Rd,
 Mahim, 400016; December 6
Mary Homi Hathiram (76), F. S.
 Parukh Dharamshala, 34,
 Hughes Rd, 400007; December 6
Jamshed Kaikhoshru
Naigamwalla (83), 1, Sethna
 Hse, Mithaiwalla Agiary Lane,
 Sleater Rd, 400007; December 6
Dara Rustomji Contractor (92),
 P/29, Cusrow Baug, S. B. Rd,
 400039; December 7
Noshir Hormusji Master (55),
 Nicholson Bldg no 5, Wadia St,
 Tardeo, 400034; December 7
Zarin Jahangir Sanjana (59),
 301, Sahara Co-op Hsg Soc, Dr
 A. R. Nair Rd, Bombay Central,
 400008; December 7
Homayoon Rustom Meherashahi
 (72), Room no 10, 286/C, Irani
 Bldg, Sopari Baug, Parel,
 400012; December 8
Dinshaw Cawasji Mehta (70),
 36/B, Gool Mhl, Sleater Rd,
 400007; December 8
Jehangir Phirojsha Nagla (79),
 6/6, Khareghat Clny, 30/A,
 Hughes Rd, 400007; December 8
Namdar Darashah Sanjana (95),
 384, Bhavani Peth, Poona,
 411042; December 8
Allamai Aderji Sarkari (80),
 2/404, Yashodhan Apts, Four
 Bglws, J. P. Rd, Andheri (W),
 400058; December 9
Jer Maneck Masani (85), Sorab
 Manor, 8, Walton Rd, 400039;
 December 10
Twins (boys) of Rohinton Minoo
 Patel (stillborn), 2/669, Boyce
 Malegamwalla Bldg, Katrak Rd,
 Wadala, 400031; December 10
Purviz Keki Velvan (Purviz
Dinshaw Gandevia) (65), E,
 Wassiamull Bldg, Grant Rd,
 400007; December 10
Mani Bejanji Asha (80), 4,
 Saurabh Apts, Ambari Rd, Vasai
 (W), 401201; December 11
Dadi Meherji Kutar (76),
 Nanabhoy Chmbs, Rustom
 Sidhwa Marg, Fort, 400001;
 December 11
Khurshed Hormusji Sanjana

(84), Kusum Vijay Hse, 174,
 Modi St, 400001; December 12
Minocher Dadabhoy Bhandari
 (79), 14, Bhandari Bldg, Wadia
 St, Tardeo, 400034; December 13
Tehemuras Jamshedji Constable
 (80), 1, Naju Mans, 54,
 Wodehouse Rd, Colaba, 400005;
 December 13
Dinshaw Jiwanji Elavia (78),
 G/30, Munshiff Bldg, Captain
 Clny, Tardeo Rd, 400034;
 December 13
Jehangir Shapoor Master (75),
 19, Harbour View, Matarpakhadi
 Cross Lane, Mazgaon, 400010;
 December 13
Bomi Burjorji Sanjana (68),
 B/38, Shakti Sadan, Tardeo
 Bridge, 400007; December 13
Shera Dinshaw Shroff (73), B/8,
 Bhabha Sanatorium, Bandra,
 400050; December 13
Jal Khershedji Tarapore (78), 7,
 Lady Dorab Tata Bldg no 2, S.
 V. Rd, Bandra (W), 400050;
 December 13
Dinoo Feroze Wankadia (56),
 B/504, Ahura Apts, Divecha
 Complex B, Edulji Rd, Charai,
 Thane (W), 400601;
 December 13
Alamai Pirojsha Nargolwalla
 (97), Mithaiwalla Mans, 12th
 Khetwadi Lane, 400004;
 December 14
Jal Jehangir Mistry (80), 6/6,
 Old Khareghat Clny, Hughes Rd,
 400007; December 15
Dina Dadi Baxter (81), 52, Pali
 Hill, Bandra (W), 400050;
 December 16
Arnavaz Pherojshaw Driver (80),
 792, Dina Manzil, Parsi Clny,
 Dadar, 400014; December 16
Freny Noshir Engineer (90), 583,
 Vipin Villa, Jame Jamshed Rd,
 Matunga, 400019; December 16
Firoze Hormusji Patel (90), 6/2,
 Kamlesh Apts, Sher-e-Punjab
 Soc, Andheri (E), 400093;
 December 16
Banoobai Ardeshtir Randeria
 (88), 726, P. A. Hormasji Bldg,
 Corner of Dinshaw Master Rd,
 Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014;
 December 16
Framroze Jiwanji Billimoria
 (93), B/20, Ashirwad, Veera
 Desai Cross Rd no 1, Andheri
 (W), 400058; December 17
Banoo Shiavax Mistry (79),
 Moonlight, 158, M. Karve Rd,
 400020; December 17
Allan Boman Shroff (85), Room
 no 13, Petit Widows' Chawl,
 Mody St, Fort, 400001;
 December 17
Coomi Homi Choksey (85),

Room no 2, Sethna Bldg, M. M.
 Chothani Rd, Mahim, 400016;
 December 18
Dara Eruchsha Daruwalla (75),
 9/C, Sagar Sangeet, 58, Colaba
 Rd, 400005; December 18
Jal Jamshedji Mistry (83), 8/16,
 Old Dubash Bldg, Gamadia
 Clny, Tardeo, 400007;
 December 18
Bhikhamai Manecksha Poonegar
 (78), Sethna Hse, 46, Sleater Rd,
 400007; December 18
Dinabai Sorabjee Balaporia
 (96), 34/B, Nargis Dutt Rd,
 Bandra, 400050; December 19
Soonamai Darabshaw Kapadia
 (81), 6/B, Readymoney Blocks,
 Mancherji Joshi Rd, Parsi Clny,
 Dadar, 400014; December 19
Maneckshaw Navroji Postwalla
 (54), Feredon Abad, 21,
 Malcolm Baug, S. V. Rd,
 Jogeshwari, 400102,
 December 19
Jer Keki Shroff (68), 7, Lady
 Meherbai Tata Bldg, Tata
 Blocks, S. V. Rd, Bandra (W),
 400050; December 19
Sohrab Dinshaw Vimadlal (91),
 Goolstan, Cuffe Parade,
 400005; December 19
Fardun Behram Beramji (Chhor)
 (69), 301, Moru Mhl, Dr
 Ambedkar Rd, Near Pali
 Market, Bandra (W), 400050;
 December 20
Roshan Cavas Bhedwar (80), 51,
 Bakhtawar, Narayan Dabholkar
 Rd, Off Nepean Sea Rd, 400006;
 December 20
Hoshang Jehangir Engineer
 (44), B, Yusuf Mans, Khetwadi
 Back Rd, Grant Rd, 400004;
 December 20
Morvarid Khodadad (Khudabux)
Irani (Mondegar) (85), Room
 no 22, Petit Widows' Chawl,
 Thakurdwar, 400002;
 December 20
Ala Ardeshtir Mehta (91),
 Navratna Hsg Soc, Bombay
 Poona Rd, Lonavala, 410401;
 December 20
Roda Sorab Nirumvala (80), 5,
 Auburn Hse, 38, Forjett St,
 400036; December 20
Roshan Merwan Unani (55),
 E/16, Shapur Baug, 376, V. P.
 Rd, 400004; December 20
Ruzva Minoo Dastoor (29), 92,
 Loonat Manzil, Matarpakhady,
 Mazgaon, 400010; December 21
Gul Noshir Mahwa (85), B,
 Adam Mhl, Tardeo, 400034;
 December 21
Coomi Faramroze Birdy (58),
 585, Khan Bldg, Chira Bazar,
 400002; December 22



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Dinbai Rustomji Desai (96), B/8, Ness Baug, Nana Chowk, 400007; December 22

Erach Cawasji Mistry (80), The Beacon, 140, Backbay Recl, 400021; December 23

Mehroo Eruch Anklesaria (68), 79, M. B. Hse, Jamnabhoomi Marg, Fort, 400001; December 24

Ratanshaw Dinshawji Baria (82), 1/4, Tata Mills Co-op Hsg Soc, Elphinstone Rd, Parel, 400012; December 24

Jalunai Rustom Vakharia (101), 5/4-U, Cusrow Baug, S. B. Rd, 400039; December 24

Goolan Meherji Bhathena (81), 304/D/23, Yogi Ngr, Eksar Rd, Borivli (W), 400092; December 25

Dina Kaikhushro Dhabhar (88), 95, N. Bharucha Marg, 400007; December 25

Pirojhai Jamshed Bhungara (89), 17, Rustomji Bldg, Sleater Rd, 400007; December 26

Ardeshir Manekji Katrak (89), 79, Jehangir Mans, N. S. Patkar Marg, 400007; December 26

Hormusji Rustomji Damania (90), 36, Adi Marzban Path, Fort, 400001; December 27

Eruchshaw Naserwanji Marfatia (76), C/25, Nowroz Baug, Lalbaug, 400012; December 27

Kharmen Ardeshir Irani (77), 1, School Bldg, Cusrow Baug, S. B. Rd, 400039; December 28

Bhikhu Dinshaw Daruvala (85), 303/304, Mercury Bldg, 4th Cross Rd, Lokhandwala Complex, Andheri (W), 400053; December 29

Faramroze Arderji Driver (76), 29, Dadachanji Bldg, Marzban Clny, Dr A. L. Nair Rd, 400011; December 29

Mehli Peshotan (Pesi) Nargolwala (41), 2/B, Giriraj, Anstey Rd, 400036; December 29

Mani Keky Pajniagara (70), C/o G. K. Tempo, National Highway, Jalgaon, 425002; December 29

Villoo Napier Dhanidaduna (70), 646, Gai Bldg, Khareghat Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; December 30

Minu Ardeshir Irani (52), A/2, Petit Chawl, Balaram St, Grant Rd, 400007; December 30

Nergesh Ardeshir Joshi (83), 638, Mancherji Joshi Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; December 30

Faramroze Pestonji Wadia (90), 9/2, Rustom Baug, Victoria Rd, 400027; December 31

TOTALS FOR 1996

	Bombay		India		World	
	A	B	A	B	A	B
BORN						
Boys	8	97	—	8	2	28
Girls	17	118	—	4	1	32
MARRIED						
Parsi	30	193	1	6	—	15
Intercommunal	28	45 [^]	1	5 [*]	—	9 [*]
DIED						
CONSIGNED						
Males	41	457	6	98	4	59
Females	44	502	10	89	2	41 [*]
CREMATED						
Males	—	—	—	—	—	—
Females	1	1	—	—	—	—

A: Total numbers in this issue

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

[^] Males married out — 25
Females married out — 20

^{*} Males — 3
Females — 2

^{*} Males — 2
Females — 7

^{*} 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.

CALCUTTA

MARRIED

Indrani Ghosh, daughter of Anita and Bhaskar, and *Xerxes Anklesaria*, son of Dolly and Darius; December 9

DIED

Hoshang Kaikhushroo Tangree, husband of Putli and father of Rati Kharas, Roshan Master and Aspi; December 6

KANPUR

DIED

Jer Jehangir Shapurji, mother of Thrity Maneck Viccaji and Jasmine Kali Karanjia; December 18

OOTY

DIED

Silloo Lynn Townsend; December 9

POONA

DIED

Phiroje B. Udwardia (97), 839, Dastur Meher Rd, 411001; December 3

Piloo Cawasji Jesang (82), A/15/19, Kubera Park, Lullanagar, 411040; December 4

Gulbai Hurmuz Irani (73), 14/A, Parsee Mody Clny, 411001; December 9

Behram Ardeshir Surti (74), E/9, Ashoka Apts, 3, Naylor Rd, 411001; December 12

Shirin Bomanji Gandiwalla (93), 5, Fayer Phayre Rd, 411040; December 15

Sheera Darabshah Engineer (83), Samrath Bldg, Tungarli Rd, Lonavala, Dist Pune, 410401; December 30

Goolbanu Behramshah Khambatta (89), Phoolgate Bus Stand, Sholapur Rd, 411001; December 31

RATLAM

MARRIED

Benafier Kabir, daughter of Hutoxi and Godrej, and Cawas Bagli of Delhi, son of Dhun and late Darius; December 30

SURAT

DIED

Rati Jemi Vesuna (26), Vakil St, Shahpore, 395003; December 3

Bamansha Kuvarji Patel (68), Vad St, Rajpipla, Dist Broach, 392001; December 11

Kawasji Tehmuras Modi (74), Timaliya Wad, Nanpura, 395001; December 19

Dolatbanoo Godrej Daruwala (65), Nanpura, 395001; December 20

Jalamai Sorabji Bhatporia (70), Village Bhatha, Dist Surat, 394510; December 23

Kersi Kawasji Rao (75), Wadi St, Rustompura, 395002; December 29

AUSTRALIA

Sydney

BORN

A boy to *Katy and Neville Kapadia*; December 23

CANADA

Edmonton

BORN

A boy, *Imran*, to *Bhaktawar and Sarosh Wadia*; October 24

Ontario

BORN

A girl, *Zenia*, to *Anaheet and Farhad Sethna*, sister to Zubin; December 28

Toronto

DIED

Mondegar Mondegarian, father of Parveen Mehraban Irani; December 19

PAKISTAN

Karachi

DIED

Jer H. Billimoria (78); December 9

Minocher D. Hansotia (83); December 9

Feroose Buchome (74); December 21

Rata J. Banaji (28); December 28

Jal K. Katrak (70); December 28

Compiled by Roxana A. Driver

IN MEMORIAM (for my father 1917-1996)

Flesh
Shadows
Blood
Water
My body is a shadow
haunted by water
I live in a house
made of walls of water
The monsoon washes
away the ire
of my fathers from
Transoxiana
A trait I share with my lover
who has become my father

I took my lover's hand
at Fort
showing him my childhood
haunts
I caught a hand
in a city of 4 million people
and cried: Father!
And you? he said
He could not see
(Busy setting his great
house in order)
He passed me by in a
crowd
In a city of 4 million souls
My search ended
in rage

Two days later he died of
old age

Now my heart is a house
built of water
Shadows of a large bird fall
over a well
The bones are picked clean
All rage ends

And when he saw me
as one looks long
into the face of an ill-
beloved son
just before death
I smiled the smile of my
mother
with her eyes
Our mother is Death

Now I talk easy with the
dead
in the house of dreams
as I never did in life

The telephone is dead
Father visits my house he's
built
The one with bricks of fire
And it becomes a pyramid
I carry a canoe
into dry streets
We are pharaohs in a
necropolis
I awake rejuvenated

I have washed my hands
off my own blood
My father's house

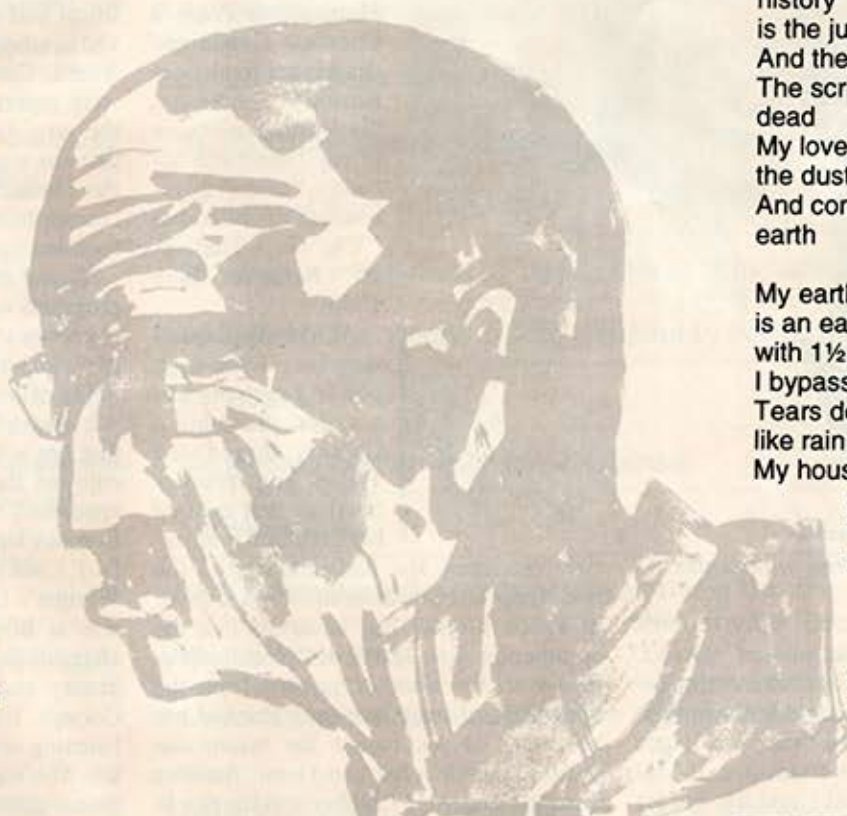
with mirrors by the sea
moulders in a bank vault
My father has left no legacy
The leaves fall
and grow into poetry

We have to make threes:
In his dreams
my father, he and I
bicycle to his childhood
home
The streets like dreams are
free

Now blocking the gate of
history
is the justice of Naushirwan
And the ghost of Ardeshir
The script on the coins is
dead
My lover and I join hands in
the dust
And come up with father's
earth

My earth
is an earth I made
with 1½ syllables
I bypassed blood
Tears don't stain
like rain
My house is a flood
of poems
The dead receive
no mail

Hoshang Merchant
13-9-96



Chibber's Concerns

Parinaz Gandhi

Died: Aloo Jal Chibber, 75, former member of the Maharashtra Legislative Assembly (MLA) and Maharashtra Legislative Council, on February 16, 1996 in Bombay following a comatose condition.

"Her contribution as a member in both the Houses is surely to be remembered. She strove hard for the upliftment of (the)



Chibber: A "contribution to remember"

downtrodden and her contribution towards parliamentary work was unique," wrote J. S. Tilak, chairman of the Maharashtra Legislative Council, in his letter to the family. Among the first to send their condolence messages were the chief minister of Maharashtra, Manohar Joshi, and the former chief minister Sharad Pawar. The Maharashtra State Social Welfare Advisory Board passed a condolence resolution in Marathi in honor of its former chairperson.

Induced to join politics by the then Prime Minister Ms Indira Gandhi, Chibber was offered a Congress ticket in 1972 to contest the MLA elections from the Colaba constituency. Securing the highest percentage of votes among the successful candidates from Bombay she went on to take active part in legislative matters serving as chairperson or member of various prestigious committees such as the estimates co-

mmitee, subordinate legislation committee, committee on petitions, government consultative committees, mentions a press release. She has also been credited with introducing some private bills in the legislature including one for the abolishment of the dowry system. Among the other posts she had held were as executive member of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Board and treasurer of the Maharashtra Pradesh Congress Committee despite her frank confession to Gandhi that "I even made mistakes in my household accounts," as she had recounted to *Parsiana* ("Chibber's challenge," *Parsiana*, June 1986).

When appointed member of the high power Panel on Minorities, Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Weaker Sections that entitled her to central ministerial privileges, she had emphasized the need for protective discrimination in favor of Parsis for she had observed that the community was losing its preeminence. However, for want of support from the apex body of the community she had not been able to accomplish the results she desired, recounts her son Homi. Another issue of concern to Chibber was the rise in intercommunity marriages. She felt that instead of wasting time and funds on housing, the Bombay Parsi Punchayet should promote greater social interaction among the youth and arrange religious discourses, he adds.

When she joined politics in 1972 she was the only Parsi MLA and among those responsible for getting the Parsi (Shenhshahi) New Year being declared as a state holiday in 1976. Though in 1986 she was contemplating contesting the Punchayet trusteeship elections on the strength of her experience as a social worker, she

ultimately did not file her nomination. As chairperson of the Maharashtra State Social Welfare Advisory Board she had travelled extensively in the rural areas to gain firsthand knowledge of their living conditions. In her capacity as chairperson of the Children's Aid Society she had sought to improve the condition of different remand homes in Bombay. When she was honorary general secretary of the Association for Moral and Social Hygiene she strove to acquire a piece of land at Mankhurd to start a home cum training center for rescued women. As commissioner of the Bombay Mahila Nagar Nigam she was entrusted the responsibility of training women for political and social work. She had also served as advisor to the State Family Planning Board. Details of her welfare activities were reported in the obituary write-ups in the city dailies. Among the institutions that she was closely associated with were the Dadachanji General Hospital and a cosmopolitan dharamshala for pilgrims founded by her family in Nasik.

Social education as also adult literacy programs was she keen to promote and she is known to have represented the country at various international conferences in the fields of education, social work and politics. According to the curriculum vitae listing her academic achievements, Chibber enjoyed the double distinction of being appointed a Fellow senate member of the Bombay University and Fellow of the S. N. D. T. (Smt Nathibai Damodar Thackersey) Women's University. Her early education was at Bombay's Young Ladies School after which she had graduated in arts with history and economics from St Xavier's College. For recreation, Chibber enjoyed listening to music and could play the piano too. She was appointed member of the regional committee constituted by the Government of India to adjudge films for national awards.

Railwaymen, armed forces personnel, paraplegics, the blind, besides many others, have reportedly benefitted from Chibber's fund-raising activities. "One must have the social worker's consideration and inclination and time..." she had earlier stated. As noted one of the condolence messages, "Memories of her lively nature and endless help to those in need will long outlive her."

Chibber is survived by her sons Homi, Dr Percy and Darius.

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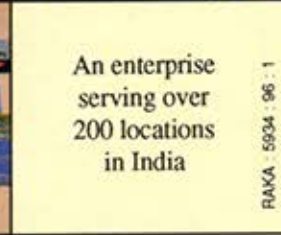
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