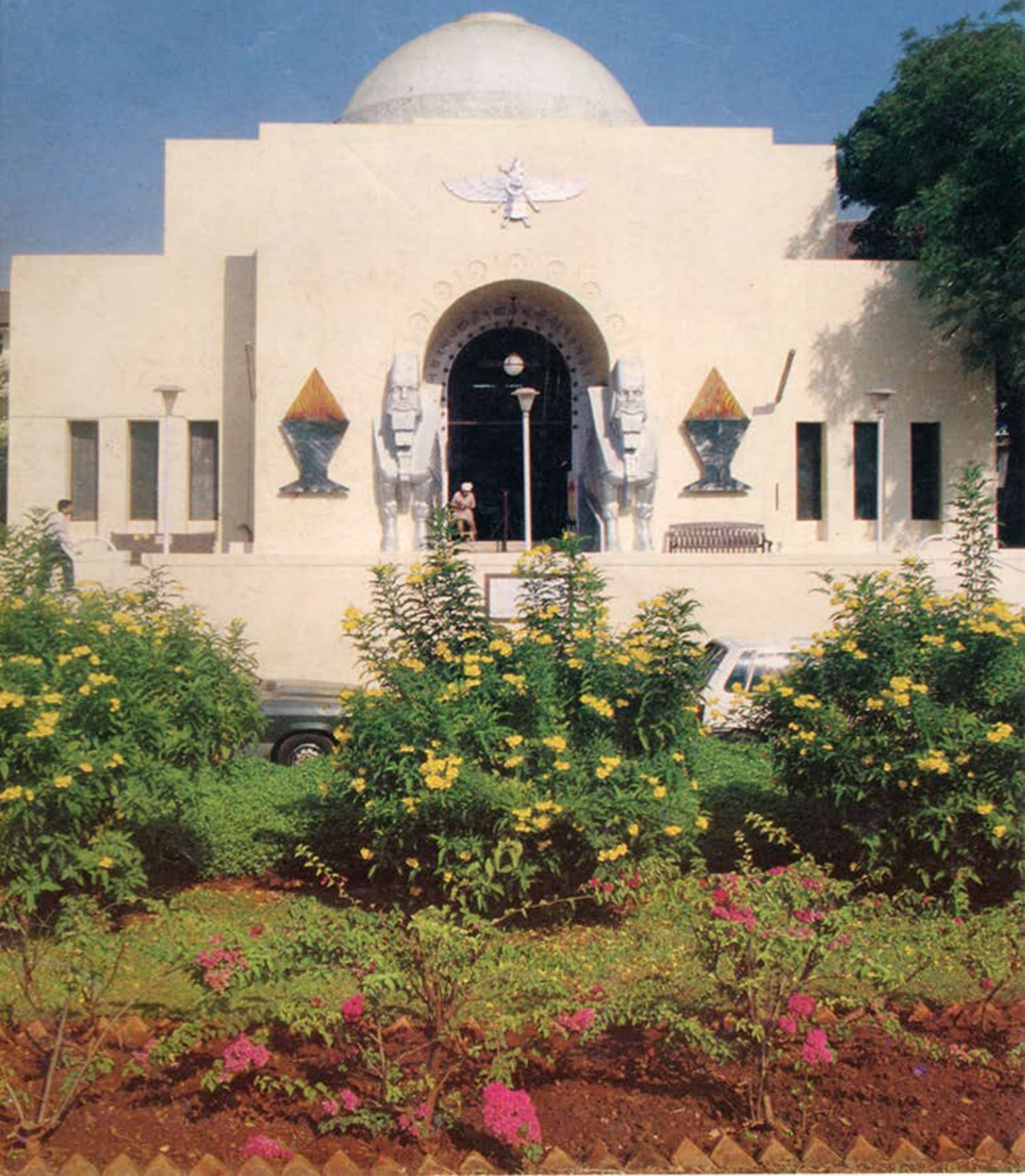


*Karani Agiary
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Parsiāna

JANUARY 1997 Rs 22





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Parsiana

January 1997
Volume 19 Number 6

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2 Readers' Forum

6 Events and Personalities

16 Zoroastrians Abroad

22 Federation's nod to world council by Arnavaz Mama

27 "A difference of approach" by Aspi Moddie

28 Karani Agiary: "We are here to defy extinction" by Hilla Guzder

35 Neville Bulsara: Warrior in cyber space by Gustasp Irani

38 Cymroza: A showcase for art

49 Books

52 Milestones

55 In Memoriam

Cover: Nusserwanji Hirji Karani Agiary at Cusrow Baug
Photograph: Chetan Mistry

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 Unsigned letters or those without an address will not be published.

Distaste and dismay

It is highly commendable of *Parsiana* to report, when warranted, with distinct candour and openness some rather disquieting trends evidenced in various meetings of the Parsi Zoroastrian anjumans on the Indian subcontinent. Such revelations would probably fade into nothingness when reviewed against the conduct of the proceedings of the annual general meeting (AGM) on November 10, 1996 of the Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe (ZTFE), London. Discourteous interruptions and raucous vituperations engendered more dismay than indignation, leaving the few British Zoroastrians present sadder for these members than wiser about their purposes.

The bluster and arrogance demonstrated indicated a lack of ability to listen to almost anything without losing one's temper or self-confidence. If this apparent trend continues, a once respected community could run the risk of drowning in its own rancor.

The memorandum and articles of asso-

ciation of the ZTFE do not in any way prohibit/deter the recording either in writing or by a speech recorder of the AGM proceedings. If the recording of the proceedings by a speech recorder was considered inconvenient, one would have expected a courteous request viz "please refrain from..." in consonance with accepted civilized norms. Allowing the mind to be clouded with emotional irrelevancies, as unequivocally demonstrated, engenders the failure to do what is right as per the teaching of Zarathushtra — the need of our times!

With such a scenario the ZTFE rightly forfeits any claim — real or imaginary — as being the representative body of Zoroastrians in Europe.

The fundamental question that needs to be meaningfully addressed is: Is there leadership in the ZTFE managing committee that will go beyond paying lip-service to sustainable development of the Zoroastrian community of the UK at least and act courageously to implement what is pledged at AGMs? (Hitherto the ZTFE — with remarkable exceptions — has had little or no meaningful interaction with the Zoroastrian community in Europe.)

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

Mates for the disabled

Finding a life partner is a very difficult task even today within our Parsi community. But the physically disabled face the additional embarrassment and problems arising out of certain misconceptions about their abilities and limitations.

Recently, I have been approached by a few young Parsi handicapped men and women (some blind, some deaf and some orthopedically disabled) in the age group of 25 to 40 years seeking a suitable match.

I must have already approached several Parsi charitable trusts, including the Parsi Punchayet to help me out with names of Parsi handicapped candidates who may have in the recent past approached them for any financial or medical help. But apparently there are no registers of handicapped Parsis.

We wish to form a data bank wherein necessary information including a passport size photograph of the handicapped person seeking matrimony will be maintained. Such a project is perhaps being undertaken in our Parsi community for the first time. We will also encourage inputs from normal Parsi candidates who due to

limited financial resources may be willing to marry these handicapped people from well-to-do families. Besides, we will be organizing a monthly get-together for such people so that they can interact with each other and widen their views.

This data bank will be operated from my office at 305, Varma Chambers, 11, Homji Street, Fort, Bombay 400001 and my contact numbers are: (O) 2660054 and 2660655 (telefax) and (R) 2614662 and 2652574. I would also like to mention that Ms Katy Dadachanji, Ms Varnan Palkhiwalla and Ms Rukshana Katrak will be assisting me by giving their valuable service for this worthy cause. A sincere attempt on our part will give an opportunity to these handicapped people to live a life with respect and dignity.

Ms FARIDA KANGA
President, Rotary Club of Bombay Sunrise

Fascinated with India

In January this year I came back to Sydney, Australia after having spent a few weeks in India. This was my first ever visit to India, a land steeped in history and ethnic culture. It was truly an adventure and an education.

We toured Udvada, Sanjan, Navsari and Surat. Visiting the atash behrams and agiaris for the first time in my life was an experience in itself. Udvada was a town filled with such religious faith and history.

The cities of Jaipur, Agra, Delhi and Poona were fascinating, full of beautiful architecture and Moghul history.

I would urge every young Zarthushti who has not had the opportunity to visit India to do so. It's amazing how much you can learn about your own religion.

I would like to thank everybody who made my stay in India a comfortable and joyous occasion, especially Ms Silloo Kavarana and Mr Farrokh Kavarana of Bombay.

KAIZER AUSTIN
Sydney, Australia

Shah Nameh on TV

A new 104-episode mega TV serial based on the internationally renowned epic *Shah Nameh* by the immortal poet Firdousi, full of tales to suit all ages and tastes, has been approved for transmission on Doordarshan.

Eminent writers are writing the serial and top technicians are being finalized. Chetan Anand will direct the serial produced by B. D. Chopra for Himalaya Television.

Search is on for an actor aged between

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25 to 30 years to portray the role of Firdousi. A good voice and knowledge of spoken Urdu is essential. Artists for other important roles in the tales of the *Shah Nameh* are also being selected from different countries.

Those interested may contact Himalaya Television, 108-A Bombay A/C Market, Tardeo Road, Bombay 400034; phone 4924866; fax 22-4950595. B. D. CHOPRA

Punctual priest

Exactly at 6.30 every morning a wizened 85-year-old Ervad Jal Rustomji alights from his scooter rickshaw and steps into Sardar Ratanji Patel Agiary in the city area of Pune. He comes to perform his duty of ushering in the *Havan gah* which he has been doing for the last 50 years.

Born in Bharuch, Rustomji was educated in Surat from where he was brought to Patel Agiary where he served as manager for 50 years.

Although his memory fails, he still re-



Rustomji: exemplary efforts

calls his young days when one dozen eggs were available for six annas, 100 Bombay ducks for one rupee and 12 big pomfrets for two! Rustomji is particularly fond of mangoes. His wife Shirinbanu still calls him "my handsome prince" and the couple have one daughter and one son.

For his dedicated services to the community this fine old priest should be felicitated and given proper recognition so that he feels his efforts are worthwhile.

ZEND ZEND

Crossed a century

Even at the ripe old age of 100, Fredoon Khurshedji Gazdar was mobile and could even make his own cup of tea. He never



Fredoon Gazdar (center) with grand children Aban (left), Rohinton (standing) and Cyrus

is blessed with three grandchildren — Cyrus, Rohinton and Aban. The couple celebrated their golden anniversary in 1975 and diamond anniversary in 1985 — both in Canada. They had 65 years of a happy married life.

In his younger days, he played cricket and acted in Parsi plays and until his demise on January 13, 1997 reminisced about those good old days.

Ms DHUN SAM GAZDAR
Canada

Esteem other faiths

Ours is a Catholic institute that prepares candidates aspiring to become Catholic priests. Divya Daan, Salesian Institute of Philosophy is affiliated to the faculty of philosophy of the

Salesian Pontifical University, Rome (UPS) by a decree of the Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, dated February 6, 1982. As of March 21, 1996, permission has also been obtained from the faculty of philosophy of the same University to begin, on an experimental basis, a two-year course leading to a MPh (master in philosophy) degree.

The institute offers a two-year course leading to a bachelor's degree in philosophy (BPh). It also offers a two-year course leading to a MPh with specialization in education and social communications.

continued on page 56

forgot to have his beer at lunch-time and was very fond of chocolates. His recipe for a long life — "A beer a day keeps the doctor away."

Fredoon was born in India in Gandevi (near Billimora), Gujarat State, on November 24, 1896. He lost his parents at the tender age of 10 and was raised by his paternal uncle in Baroda who was a physician to the late Sayajirao Gaekwad, the Prince of Baroda.

His first job was with the firm of Cawasji Dinshaw and Company at Aden, during the First World War. On completion of his contract, he sailed to Mombasa, Kenya (East Africa) in search of better prospects, in the year 1920.

In 1930 he left Kenya for India and after a couple of years migrated to Kampala, Uganda (East Africa) to work with the Greek firm of Ralli Brothers, as a buyer of cotton bales for export. He stayed with the firm till his retirement in 1960.

As a result of the political upheaval in Uganda in 1972, he and his wife Jerbanoo (née Mehta) left for India and later settled in Canada with their sons. They had four sons, of whom the two surviving are Khurshed and Sam. Fredoon

Khan (center) at the Divya Daan Institute with Bro John Gonsalves (left) and Fr Fernandes



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Events and Personalities

Uplifting pallbearers

Full-time practising khandhias and nassessalars, as also others who work full-time at the different doongerwadis in India have been promised financial support — in cash and kind — to the tune of Rs 1,000 per family per month by the World Zoroastrian Organisation (WZO) Trust, states managing trustee Dinshaw Tamboly. This is just a "modest beginning (to) a long-term project which envisages releasing these poor human beings from the shackles of poverty and disdain by providing support and motivation, as well as by providing assistance in the development of inherent skills, and gradually moving towards instilling a pride in their vocation," he adds.

Ostracized by the community "due to the very nature of their morbid duties and our mental aberration of conceiving such human beings as being secondary," these individuals and their progeny face severe limitations because of their peripheral status, points out the press release.

To identify beneficiaries who would

qualify under this scheme, office bearers of punchayets and anjumans in India have been urged to furnish details to The WZO Trust to enable them to plan out the support modalities.

Towards the social uplift of this deprived class of Zoroastrians, The WZO Trust has already received a financial commitment from a generous donor. Additionally, any individuals or institutions wishing to support this project are requested to send their monetary contributions (eligible for tax exemption) in favor of "The WZO Trust" to Tamboly at 1215, P. Jeejeebhoy Towers, Dalal Street, Fort, Bombay 400001.

Mhow's guiding spirit

"You can build the future only on the shoulders of the past, not by destroying the past." These were among the last words addressed by Ms Homai Illava to the members of the Mhow Parsi Zoroastrian Anjuman who had gathered to felicitate her for serving as president of the Anjuman for 17 years until ill health compelled her

to retire in 1996. Five weeks after the felicitation function on December 15, 1996 when Zoroastrians from Mhow, Indore and Dewas had gathered to greet her, Illava succumbed to renal failure in Bombay.

In addition to the several garlands she received was the citation framed in silver which commended 83-year-old Illava for her "easy accessibility, the love you have extended to, and the wisdom with which you have led, our local community; the building up of our Anjuman funds culminating in the inauguration of the new building of our old Adarian Saheb on March 21, 1996, not to mention the multitude of steps taken under your guidance for bettering the lot of our community..."

As trustee of the B. K. Illava Public Charity Trust and the Khan Bahadur Behramshaw Illava Charities she is believed to have helped innumerable individuals and institutions. She was also considered the guiding spirit in establishing the R. C. Jall Law College in Mhow. The Shiavax Nargolwala Award for social and community service instituted by the Fed-



Illava (right) being garlanded by the youngest Mhow resident Zal Cawasji. Left: Behram Masani presenting the framed photograph to Illava



Reaching for the Sky



Two landmarks in Bombay – the Commerce Centre of the World Trade Centre Complex and the new Reserve Bank Building.

Both built by Shapoorji Pallonji of course!



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eration of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India was presented to her in 1990.

In recognition of her contribution to the cause of women's literacy, the Tagore Literacy Award was conferred on her by the President of India in 1992, mentions the citation recalling the inspiration she had gained from Tagore that prompted her to pursue social work beginning 1932. She taught at the Parsi Zoroastrian Montessori and Primary School, Mhow in an honorary capacity; was founder member and president of the Asha Kala Kendra for the education and vocational training of women; was founder member of Mahila Sangh and ran its offshoot, the Pratap Bal Mandir, as a teaching institution for children; was nominated member of the Project Implementation Committee, Indore by the state government in which capacity she helped start adult education classes, balwadis and mahila mandals in villages around Mhow. The Bhartiya Gramin Mahila Sangh, the Mahila Pradhan Bachat Yojna and the Indian Red Cross Society were the other associations with which she was actively involved, according to the citation.

"A pillar of strength"

"Be a good professional, carry out (your) duties in an able, honest manner, be con-



Aga: respected architect

Photo: Homyar Mistry, Homz Prints

tent with the fees asked for and received from clients and shun illegal gratification from contractors. Always bear in mind that if money is lost it can be regained but if reputation is lost it can never be regained." This message came from 80-year-old ar-

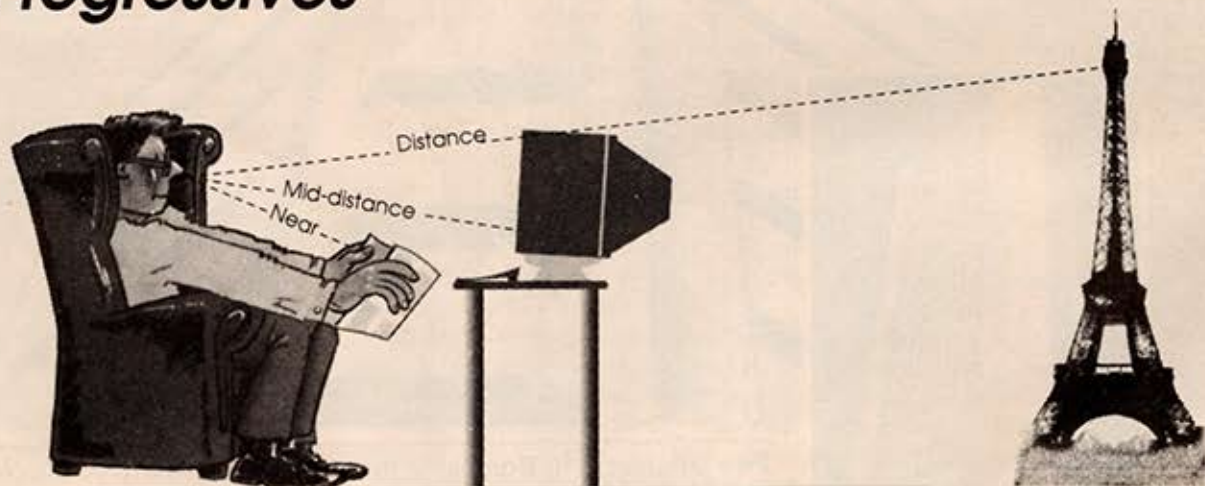
chitect Jamshed Burjor Aga who voiced his views in the *Journal of the Indian Institute of Architects*, November 1996 issue, wherein he has been featured as the cover story for being "a pillar of strength and respect for the architect..." as notes editor Harshad Bhatia.

In his 60 years of practice, Aga has been involved in the designing and construction of buildings in Bombay, Pune, Sholapur, Kolhapur, Goa, old Indian states as well as Iran... The Fasli Agiary and Shivaji Bhuvan in Bombay were among the several monuments constructed under the supervision of Messrs Shapoorjee N. Chandabhoj and Company where Aga is proprietor and fourth linear descendant to continue the family firm which will complete 130 years in 1998.

While the *Journal* commends Aga for his wit, wisdom and worth, the former president of the Indian Institute of Architects humorously attributed his success to work, wine and women!

Though loath to be an armchair critic, he could not help but remark that buildings constructed in the city in the last 25 years necessitate heavy repairs while those over 70 years old are still going strong. This he attributes to the change in work conditions in the pre and post Independence periods. In the pre-Independence years, authorities

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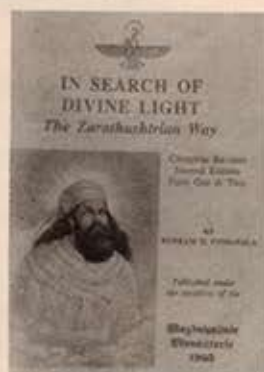
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with character and caliber were well conversant with their duties and respected time commitments, labor and materials were readily available, and landlords were eager to seek tenants, pointed out Aga. After the Partition, shortage of materials, plus adulteration and corruption have resulted in a deterioration of standards. Known for his high standards, Aga confessed, "I want to be remembered on this earth as an architect who lived respected and died regretted."

Also featured in this issue of the *Journal* is a report on Aga's alma mater, the Sir J. J. School of Art, for the starting of which in 1857 Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy had donated a sum of Rs 1,00,000 barely two years before his demise. As per the old records, architecture and music were to be the major fields of study to be promoted by this institute. But in its present avatar as "an art teaching center representative of Bombay and the greatest in Asia" it consists of three departments — architecture, fine arts and commercial arts, according to the report. Following its affiliation under the University of Bombay in 1952-53, Sir J. J. College of Architecture is now an entity apart from the Sir J. J. College of Art thereby constituting two memorials in honor of Jejeebhoy.

Rare religious zeal

After more than five decades of service Ervad Faramroze Firoz Mirza retired as panthaky of the Mirza Daremeher at Jamnagar and chose to settle in his hometown Udvada. His ties with that agiary and the populace there could not be severed so easily though for even at the age of 80 plus when the Jamnagar anjuman faced a decline in numbers and the consequent difficulty in maintaining the fire-temple he was summoned to resolve their dilemma. He presided over the meeting where it was resolved to form a combined association of Jamnagar, Porbunder and Mithapur Zoroastrians and was even appointed one of the trustees, according to a write-up sent by his brother Rustom Mirza following Faramroze's demise at the age of 90 on March 9, 1996.

Among the many contributions Faramroze had rendered during his stay in Jamnagar were during the period 1952-55 when depleting trust funds necessitated that he bear the salary of the assistant mobed as also the costs of kathi and sandalwood from his own pocket. Although he had no academic qualifications he was able to impress religious leaders and scholars of sister communities, states the write-up. He had served as president and com-



Mirza: lasting ties with Jamnagar

mittee member of the Shri Dayaram Free Reading Room and Library and as committee member of the Shri Gulab Cooverba Infant Welfare Association in Jamnagar. In Udvada he

was committee member of the Dastur Kaiyoji Mirza Memorial Hall and Library, and on the Athornan Anjuman 'Fehrest' (Genealogy) Committee when he had an occasion to compile the family tree of Udvada's Sanjana sect of mobeds. He also played an active role in managing the affairs of the Udvada Anjuman Committee.

Trained as a yozdathregar under the guidance of his uncle Dastur Kaiyoji Dastur Peshotanji Mirza, Faramroze took a keen interest in Parsi history and published articles on this subject in *Jam-e-Jamshed* and *Hindi Grafik*. The books he authored included biographies of Dastur Kaiyoji Mirza, Ervad Tehmulji Mirza,

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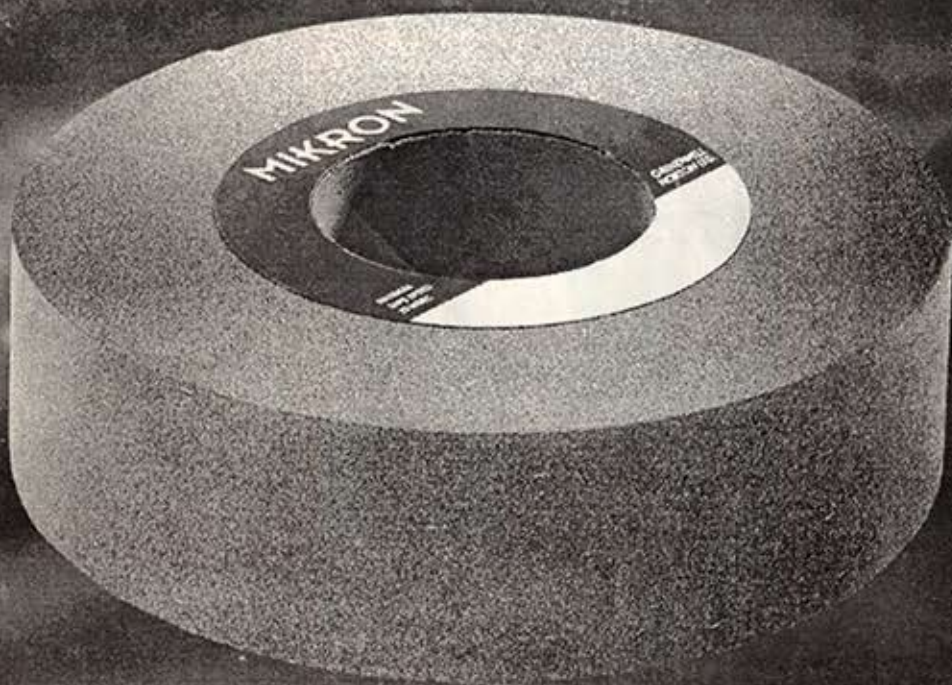
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Dewan Saheb Meherwanji P. Daruwalla and on the Iranshah where he had officiated as a boiwalla in his old age. A publishing firm, Mirza Khushro and Company, and the Prakash Printing Press had also been started by him in his early years. He is among the few Parsis who enjoyed the distinction of presenting a paper at the Gujarati Sahitya Parishad, adds the write-up.

Re-telling our robust past

Just as Ervad (Dr) Ramiyar P. Karanjia, the author of the book, *The Peshdadian Dynasty*, praises Firdausi Toosi for composing such a brilliant Persian ballad, *The Shah Nameh*, kudos to Karanjia for a timely re-telling in English of our robust past. The *Shah Nameh* is a work of devotion and Karanjia has done well to tell us how even with the God-given gift of writing poetry, Firdausi had to struggle with many adversities before he realized his talent and became as immortal as the great Iranian kings he immortalized in verse. Of course, much of the charm of Firdausi's inspired ballad composed in flowery Persian is lost in simple English prose, as acknowledges Karanjia in the introduction.

The first 22 pages of this 108-page book are dedicated to Firdausi and rightly so. The rest of the book is a tale of valor enacted in prehistoric times in and around what is today called Iran. A time when heroic men with the support of their courageous women fought tooth and nail to uphold truth, justice and honor. In the illustrated book under review, Karanjia takes us back in time to the first of the five Mazdayasni Zoroastrian dynasties of Iran, the Peshdadian dynasty. And briefly even before that to a time when humankind lived in complete harmony with its environment.

The story begins with King Kayomars laying the foundation of civilization and the good Mazdayasni religion. And as is to be expected, when good is being established, evil is not far behind. After the tragedy of losing his son Siyamak in a war against the Devayasnians who were opposed to the King's progressive plans, Kayomars is a broken man, but not for long. Before his death, Kayomars grooms his grandson Hoshang who in time ascends the throne and continues with the good work started by his predecessor. In due course the mantle of kingship passes on to his son Tehmurasp who succeeds in subjugating the Devayasnians and counteracts the calamity of famine by his wise counsel to his people to share their property and food.

The next king to occupy the throne of ancient Iran was Jamshed whose dazzling Golden Age remains in the collective consciousness of Zoroastrians worldwide and the annual festival of Jamshedi Navroz is celebrated with great joy on March 21 to mark the onset of spring. The winter of discontent in Jamshed's life was brought on by the folly of false pride and the story of his fall from grace is a sad one.

A dire saga of corruption and suffering follows when Zohak is appointed the next



Karanjia holding aloft his book

king. In his case it is greed that gets the better of him and his infamous appetite for human brains is one gory example of his heinous reign. Zohak is ultimately vanquished by the orphaned Faridun and his band of followers and it is said, remains tethered on Mount Demavand until the end of time. Faridun is next in line to receive the crown and rules wisely and well; but his sorrow comes from his discordant sons. It is only when Minocheher, Faridun's great-grandson ascends the throne that peace is restored for a while in war ravaged Iran with the help of his respected advisor Sam. As time moves on Sam's son Zal falls in love with the lovely Rodabeh who unfortunately is a descendant of Zohak. Family matters are finally resolved and the lovers marry; but there are other trials in store for Iran. Soon after Minocheher's bacchanal son Navdar ascends the throne, the kingdom crumbles and the great war between Iran and Turan begins. After a succession of wars bravely fought, the Peshdadian dynasty comes to an end with the short reign of King Kersasp and a nationwide search for a worthy king.

Non-Zarathushtrian readers may find the book interesting but Karanjia's efforts

will be amply rewarded if Zoroastrian youngsters who read the *Shah Nameh* browse through it with pride in their illustrious lineage and not just as a Persian tale. We are indeed fortunate to have an enthusiastic and learned priest in our midst who finds the time to share his knowledge. Keeping in mind the young reader, perhaps the use of simpler words (e.g. poetry instead of prosody, drunk instead of inebriated, changed instead of metamorphosed, puzzling instead of enigmatic) would have been more suitable. Also to trace at one glance the succession of these great kings, a 'dynastic tree' would have been more useful.

As we return from the Peshdadian past to the present time and wait for Karanjia's next book about the Kayanian dynasty, we would do well to reflect on the painful consequences of family conflicts and world wars.

The book, priced at Rs 80, is available from the Dadar and Andheri Madressas as also other Zoroastrian institutions.

Tina Mehta

Lessons from grandpa

Most grandparents love spinning a yarn for their grandchildren. And because grandparents know from long experience that the world is not as safe as they would wish it to be, they weave into their stories the wisdom of always being on guard.

While dedicating this book to his grandchildren, Noshir S. Pochkhanawala has taken his grandparental duty of story telling one step further by writing a beautifully illustrated book for the wider realm of children. *Zuzu and others* allows youngsters to wander freely and interact with animals and even inanimate objects in a world of harmony and friendship.

In the first of six stories a little boy called Naorick daydreams an adventure with Zuzu, the giraffe, who introduces him to forbidden friends of the woods. The two pals have a good time doing what children love doing best — exploring the world around them. The problem of Zuzu's long neck is resolved with childish good sense. And what's better than a ringside seat at a circus perched on the giraffe's neck? The two chums even travel to Dubai and England. Initially the giraffe was denied an entry permit for their trip to London. But instead of sulking Naorick comes up with an ingenious idea whereby they not only get their visa but also get to see the sights of London in style. After Zuzu's marriage, like all good stories, there is a surprise ending in store for the reader.



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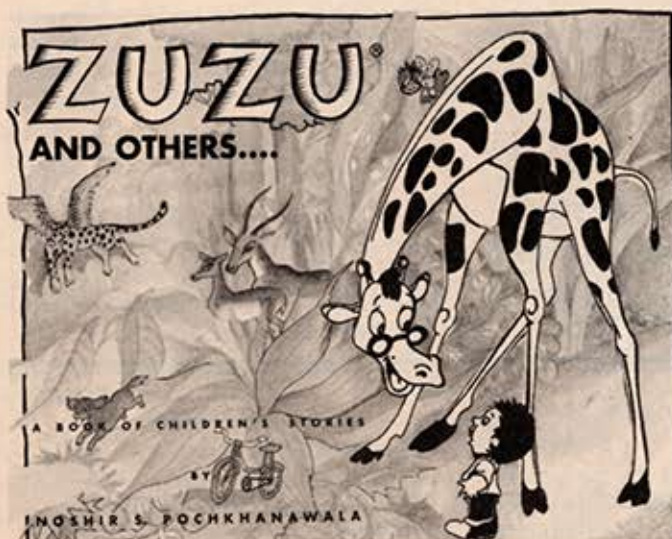
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In the second story Harni, the deer, through her loyalty to her mate humbles a king and his huntsmen and teaches them a thing or two about bravery and compassion. The moral of the story is that if a hunting we must go then we must be prepared to bear the consequences of our actions. In this story, a sage offers an antidote to senseless cruelty.

Feefee, the fly in the third story, learns the art of self defence from her anxious mother. She learns how to avoid the swish of a horse's tail and the swipe of a fly-swatter as her mother stands by — just in case. But Feefee is an ingenious little creature who with her winning ways and self-confidence brings out the best in a human being. At a circus she demonstrates that one doesn't have to be big to be a winner.

The fourth story narrates the attachment of a child to her talking cycle who hums the tune *Daisy, Daisy* and teaches her young owner to gain confidence in herself and how they surprise everyone by winning a coveted race.

For those children who also enjoy a spooky bedtime tale, the book ends with two stories with a supernatural theme — "Peter the Ghost" (alas, the title spoils the mystery) and his reason for appearing from out of the blue in a dogless village; and a short message from "Chicka on Wings" that God's gifts should not be misused.

Priced at Rs 175, *Zuzu and others* is available at all leading bookstores in Bombay.

T. M.

The chosen ones of God

"They believed in the incessant cosmic struggle or conflict between the powers of good and evil that would continue up to the final consummation... The community fur-

triumph of the powers of light." This narration by Sam N. Doctor applies not to the Zoroastrian community but to the Essenes, a sect of pious Jews who considered themselves the chosen ones of God, had their own separate monasteries with a complete library of Biblical manuscripts and observed a set of rituals that was indicative of Persian influence. They flourished from around the second century BC to the second century AD, it is reported.

Knowledge of their life-style came to light with the accidental discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls in 1947. Hundreds of these manuscripts or Scrolls, and thousands more in fragments, written on decaying leather in Hebrew and Aramaic were found preserved in copper and clay jars in the Qumran caves near the Dead Sea in Palestine. The finding of these texts necessitated "a revaluation of Christian dogmas and the reconstruction of early Christian history as influenced by the Persian and other (Gnostic) creeds," adds Doctor.



Doctor: studying the Dead Sea Scrolls, parchments of which were found in the Qumran caves (right)

Photograph: Gustasp Irani



Pochkhanawala with the frontispiece of his book for children

ther believed that...a certain 'teacher of righteousness' (would bring) about the final

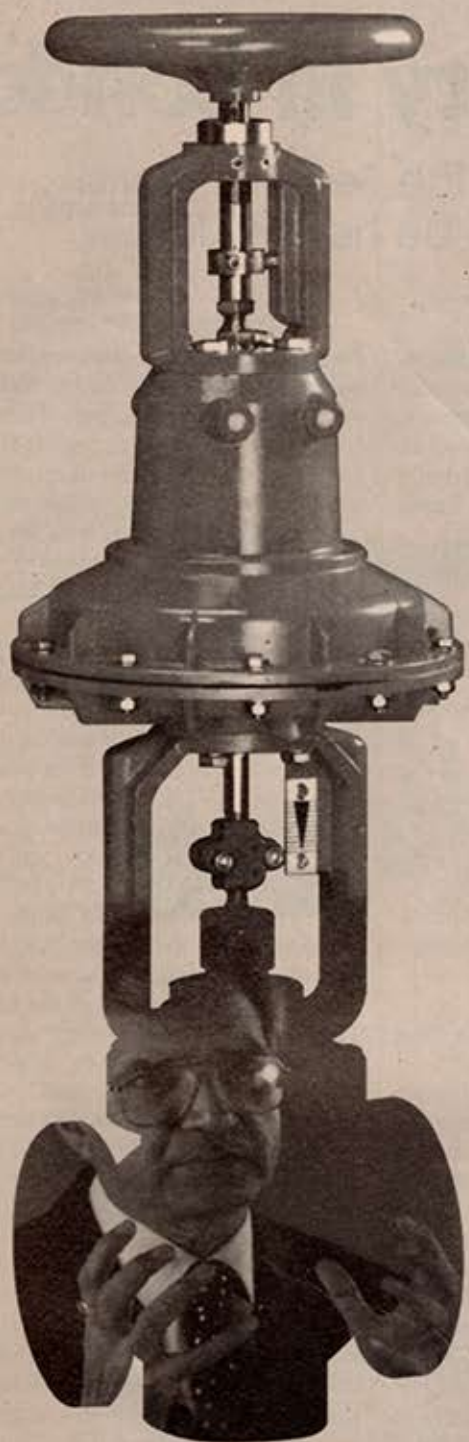
Intrigued by these findings, Doctor, a teacher at the M. F. Cama Athorhan Institute in Andheri and a scholar of comparative Oriental religions and languages, decided to research this subject further. In the course of his studies he found that the Essenes worshipped the sun (which is considered to be an influence of Zoroastrianism or Mithraism) and also believed in angels. Yet another parallel practice was that of ritual washing, the purificatory rites with water, as described in the *Manual of Discipline*, one of the books from the Scrolls. "They also had stringent rules of purity, rarely married, never engaged in trade, and despised all forms of pleasure and luxury. They spent their time in toil, prayer, study, and reading and interpreting the sacred scriptures," it was mentioned in *New Knowledge* (volume 5, number 2) published in 1966. Therein it is also related that "The Essenes shared all the necessities of life...They ate in community, prayed congregationally, pooled their possessions. The penal code was hard..."

Through *The Wars of the Sons of Light and the Sons of Darkness*, yet another book from the Scrolls, it is learnt that the Essenes believed that they were the last witness to the cosmic struggle and that the end of time was at hand. Doctor concludes by quoting Rev Dr Charles Potter's words in *The last years of Jesus revealed*: "So Zoroaster's dualism of light versus darkness, as sort of a visible symbol of dramatization of the conflict between good and evil, was seized upon by the Essenes, especially by their teacher of righteousness, as an excellent metaphor...and so it may be that Jesus went a little further towards personifying the spirit of truth than his Essene teachers had."

Compiled by Parinaz Gandhi



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Youths pitch for unity in London

Preparations are in full swing for the Second World Zoroastrian Youth Congress to be held in July

Arnavaz S. Mama

Participants from North America, India, Australia, Iran and Pakistan as well as local Zoroastrians have registered for the Second World Zoroastrian Youth Congress to be held in London, July 4-11, 1997, informs the newsletter (dated January 19, 1997) of the Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe (ZTFE) under whose auspices the Congress will be held. For now, registration is limited to those in the 18-40 age-group.

The first four days and three nights of the Congress will be conducted at the five-star Sheraton Skyline Hotel where the delegates will be accommodated on twin-sharing basis. Thereafter the venue will shift to evening sessions at Zoroastrian House followed by Parsi/Irani dinner. During these last four days overseas participants will enjoy the accommodation/hospitality of host families. The morning hours have been kept free to take in the sights and sounds of London with optional outings/events to be organized at nominal cost, as per an update from the Young Zoroastrian Congress Committee UK which is organizing the event.

Apart from lectures, discussion groups, workshops, panel sessions, etc the program includes an inaugural jashan and welcome reception party (probably a buffet dinner as per *Parsiana's* chat with former ZTFE librarian Malcolm Deboo in the course of his visit to Bombay in December 1996) on the 4th, followed the next night by a gala world youth ball with a live band in attendance and variety entertainment on 6th evening. A 'closing party' is scheduled for July 11.

To make the Congress "exciting, informative and progressive" and to initiate

contacts and friendships which could bloom in the 21st century, the organizers have been inviting participants to prepare presentations which could include a video or slide show, the composition or recital of a musical piece or performance of a dance



Spenta, Shiraz, Gustav and Dinaz at the Youth Seminar in Bombay

sequence or short play — anything "that expresses your Zoroastrianism!"

The Congress will come into its own after the formal post-breakfast inauguration on Saturday, July 5. Two plenary plus a wrap-up session are expected to be held following the inaugural with breaks for tea and lunch. Multistream sessions with smaller, more involved groups may be held concurrently. A late start on Sunday morning is being worked into the program to enable the youth to recover from the late night gala ball, says Deboo. There may be a debate on the cards and vada dasturs from Iran and India are being invited to answer questions from the audience, he adds.

Shiraz Sethna, Dinaz Sethna, Gustav Sethna and Spenta Amalsad were among the group of UK youths who had attended the Tenth All-India Zoroastrian Youth Seminar in Bombay, November 9-11, 1996. Being part of the youth Congress Committee they were here to invite Indian Zoroastrian youths to attend. They had informed

Parsiana that the Congress cost was being estimated at £85,000 and about 300 persons were expected to participate. Those registered by March 21 got an early bird entry at £150 per head (£110 for those who do not require overnight hotel accommodation).

This registration fee entailed a 50 percent subsidy, they added.

Determined to override the factionalism that has thwarted the UK Zoroastrians for over a decade, the youths had noted that colleagues from the Harrow and South London

associations as well as the WZO (World Zoroastrian Organisation) were cooperating towards the success of the Congress. They had also noted that they were "trying to get people from all over" to participate actively and "trying very hard" to see that there would be no censorship of papers.

Raising funds for the Congress has been a major preoccupation of young Zoroastrians in the UK. As per the ZTFE's newsletter of October 15, 1996 Dolly Contractor volunteered to lose 70 lbs in the nine months up to July '97 inviting sponsors to bet pound for pound or better still, £10 or £100 for every 10 lbs of weight loss! A chart at Zoroastrian House will record her progress, promised the newsletter.

Entrepreneurship, ecology, the rights of Zoroastrian women, our roots, contemporary societies and how to cut the red tape between them, are the issues engaging thoughtful Zoroastrian youths in the UK, says Deboo. He hoped Perin Fitter of Kenya, a Global 500 awardee of the UNEP (United Nations Environment Programme) at the Earth Summit in Rio in 1992, could be among those addressing Zoroastrians in

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the UK. Involved in Kenya's Environment Conservation Education Programme for the last 25 years, Fitter's work has focussed on soil conservation and the projection of the versatile neem tree as a source of pesticide, fertilizer, medicine and for birth control, as per ZTFE's newsletter of October 15, 1996.

"How to contribute to world affairs?" is Deboo's query for a Zoroastrian population which he estimates at between 7,000 and 7,500 in Europe (including London and the surrounding counties). He is hopeful that for the first time a question on religion will be incorporated in the next UK census due in 2001. He says he has "successfully lobbied the statistical committee" along with representatives of other communities that "the question of religion is relevant. But the final say is with the House of Commons." In the meanwhile Deboo is appreciative of the cooperation of British scholars like John Hinnells who has tried to put Zoroastrians and Zoroastrianism on

the academic map in the UK and of the British Museum curator John Curtis who has kept well stocked Oxus/Achaemenian treasures on display at the Iranian and Syrian galleries.

Despite his attempts to provide an academic base to his coreligionists through a well-stocked library at Zoroastrian House, Deboo himself was the focus of an unhappy vituperative episode at the ZTFE's last AGM on November 10, 1996, according to reports reaching *Parsiana*. It has been alleged that Deboo's claim of over £ 5,000 since 1994 on the ZTFE for the purchase of books for the reference library and the Zarathushtrian Education Team (ZET) bookstall was not accepted by the ZTFE managing committee. When this claim was not shown as a potential liability in the annual accounts for the year 1995-96, the accounts and the report were rejected by the general body. The appointment of Robson Rhodes as auditors for the coming

year was similarly challenged. It was said to be the first time such an incident had occurred in the ZTFE's 135-year-old history. This resulted in the vice president and honorary treasurer Viraf Gandhi submitting his resignation after an undignified bout of mudslinging and name-calling at the AGM, as note letters to *Parsiana* from Noshirwan Cowasjee and Furhok Tangree. Later, managing committee member Sanaya Bhote also resigned with effect from November 19, 1996, as per the ZTFE newsletter.

The fracas marked the culmination of a long and rocky road that began with Deboo's speech at the ZTFE AGM of 1994. In a letter dated November 19, 1995 addressed to the members of the ZTFE, a "deeply hurt and disappointed" Deboo recapitulated the points he had made earlier.

Left to right (in the three rows): Zoroastrian House library; the setayeshgah — prayer room; Dalal; Deboo; Zoroastrian House caretaker Brigitte McCallig and foundation plaque; a panel in the managing committee room; another view of the prayer room; the dining area



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He wrote that he had:
 • requested the managing committee members to be more communicative among themselves as also with the general body;
 • intimated his decision to stop doing voluntary work in the field of religious education (he had already resigned as honorary librarian after five years on the job);
 • that he had done so because he had received no active support from the managing committee "either in human resources or finance to maintain the library and information services" and that the managing committee had even stopped him from raising funds for the library from the general members and no books were purchased.

Deboo had further informed the membership that as long as Zarathushtian religious education is categorized as voluntary work, the community would never produce properly qualified teachers. He therefore urged the ZTFE to take the lead in sponsoring professional religious teachers from among its youth. With this aim Deboo proposed that a librarian cum information officer be appointed by the association on an annual stipend of £ 10,000 and, on being informed that ZTFE finances could not accept such a demand, suggested that an endowment fund of £100,000 be created.

At that juncture, as noted Deboo's recap, ZTFE trustee Noshir Avari offered £ 1,000 towards the proposed annual stipend (offer withdrawn since then) and requested other members to contribute likewise.

Deboo complains that "instead of printing a true and complete record," the minutes of the AGM stated "Mr Malcolm Deboo put before the members a scheme whereby a person would be given £ 10,000 per annum to study Zoroastrian history and religion with a view to impart the knowledge to the next generation. He himself was willing to take up the project if financial assistance was forthcoming. Some members immediately came forward to help and asked other members to do so. After various other views on the matter it was decided to take the matter further after the AGM." Apart from "one formal meeting in June 1995, no other serious approaches were made," wrote Deboo.

In his open letter Deboo had noted, "I have been a life member of our Association since I was 21 and I am deeply committed to the democratic principles enshrined in our constitution which were incorporated in 1909 by none other than Sir Mancherjee Merwanjee Bhowanagree himself." He ascribed the managing committee's cold

shoulder to his comments being "seen as criticism... In addition, the depth of my understanding of mainstream Zarathushti tradition based on textual sources is an obstacle to certain members of the managing committee. An example of this is the pushing forward of the promotion of a cultic version of Zoroastrianism under the disguise of orthodoxy and tradition." In his letter Deboo had urged the general body "not to pass the AGM minutes on the basis that they are not a true representation." The ZTFE members took a year to react, doing just that on November 10, 1996.

In the upshot, of the four managing committee members due for retirement and reelection, two opted out (viz Zal Sethna and Freni Writer) and a new slate of six candidates sought election/reelection to the managing committee — Dorab Mistry, Perses Sethna, Rusi Dalal, Dinyar Cooper, Silloo Jasavala and Dr Tehmtan Sepai, the first four being declared elected. Rusi Dalal was reelected president, unopposed.

The ZTFE newsletter's (January 19, 1997) report on the November '96 AGM does not reflect these occurrences. Under the subhead 'Annual Report and Audited Accounts' it merely notes, "When the ann-

continued on page 51



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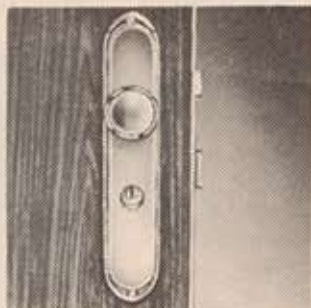
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Federation's nod for world council

The Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India has voted 12 to one in favor of a World Council of Zoroastrian Federations

Arnavaz S. Mama

After vehement debate, the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India accepted the need to form the World Council of Zoroastrian Federations (WCZF). The move was strongly opposed by members of the World Zoroastrian Organisation (WZO) at the Federation's executive council meet at Bombay's Muncherji Khareghat Hall on December 14 and 15, 1996. If the sixth draft of the WCZF constitution is endorsed by its four founding members — India, Iran, North America and Europe — by July 1997 Zoroastrian anjumans could have an international apex a year after a variety of speakers at the Sixth World Zoroastrian Congress (WZC) in Tehran emphasized the need for such a body.

The announcement of a new WZO scheme to ameliorate the lot of khandias sparked a debate on whether such an ostracized profession should not be eliminated altogether.

A swift and effective communication network with Zoroastrians round the world with a page on the Internet was emphasized by Delhi Parsi Anjuman president and Federation vice president Lt Gen Adi Sethna. It would enable instant communication with any part of the world at the cost of a local telephone call. A gift of US \$ 7,500 from North America is available for the purpose.

Reliable information on the community, starting with a headcount, but also including socioeconomic data has continued to be an evasive goal.

An initial subcommittee discussing the establishment of a Zoroastrian fund to source venture capital, first mooted in

1994, is yet to decide whether the entity should be a corporate body or trust, informed Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP)



Tamboly (left) and R. Rivetna

chief executive Behram Laskari. There is no easy answer under the law as on the one hand trusts cannot do business and on the other are prevented from investing in a corporate body.

Another development with a more intimate impact on Indian Zoroastrians was the acknowledgement by the council of the need to assimilate the youth into its discussions. "Don't let them sit at the back. This space is psychologically very hard to breach," urged Madras Parsi Zarhosti Anjuman president and Federation vice president Nariman Mogrelia. Accordingly, with the assent of Federation president and BPP chairman Jamshed Guzder on the second day of the meet accommodation was provided for them close to the main table instead of at a distance, along the wall, as per their original observer status. Federation honorary secretary Keki Gandhi has requested the Federation of Zoroastrian Youth Associations' (FOZYA) secretary Parvez Irani to send him a list of vital

topics for the youth to enable him to incorporate it into the Federation's agenda under 'youth affairs' before the next meeting.

This meet had been hosted by Bombay's Iranian Zoroastrian Anjuman (IZA). There were several well-known North American Zoroastrians who were then visiting Bombay and had been invited to attend, New York's Prof Kaikhosrov Irani, Chicago's Rohinton Rivetna and Washington DC's Adi Davar among them. Their presence occasioned a standing invitation from Gandhi to Zarhostis based abroad to attend any Federation meeting that

may be in session during their visit to India. Rivetna, founder president of the Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America (FEZANA) who has since retired, responded with a corresponding invitation to Indian Zoroastrians to attend FEZANA meets while in North America. And Marzban Austin of Toronto, impressed with the two-day deliberations noted, "People abroad think the Punchayet is dead! I will have to go back and tell them..."

The Poona Parsi Punchayet (PPP) has offered to host the next Federation meeting on June 14 and 15, 1997.

WCZF

The need for an organization to represent Zoroastrians with international clout has been felt and debated since 1960. As the BPP, then the premier organization, dragged its feet, the WZO was launched in London in 1980 in the aftermath of Iran's Islamic Revolution when many outstanding Zoroastrians fled the country and needed succor. Hence the WZO was formed

as an association of individuals which thereafter has proved a hurdle to its recognition as a representative institution.

In its present avatar, the WCZF is the brainchild of Rivetna. He is also involved with a number of interfaith initiatives like the United Religions Organization conceived on the lines of the United Nations and had successfully projected the Zoroastrian presence at the World Parliament of Religions in 1993.

The WCZF is conceived as an apex world body. Unlike the WZO where each individual and each anjuman has one vote (irrespective of the number of individuals residing within the anjuman's ambit), the WCZF would only combine national and regional federations or associations of anjumans. A single anjuman/association may be admitted if it is the only anjuman/association in a recognized self governing political region. According to Rivetna its objectives include representing Zoroastrian interests at international fora; liaising with governments regarding Zoroastrian welfare, preservation of Zoroastrian monuments, archeological sites and defunct anjuman assets; fostering a common identity and cohesiveness in the diaspora through understanding and consensus; coordinating the programing of world congresses and their follow-up; promoting international business and professional associations, etc.

The WCZF's terms of reference as also the WZO's objections as provided by solicitor Dadi Engineer, BPP trustee and president of WZO India, had been circulated by Gandhi to the Federation's member anjumans. Some anjumans had already mailed their responses to Gandhi. Several delegates presented their own personal responses at this meet.

In his presentation Rivetna underscored the need of dialogue based on mutual respect and trust, a conscious and objective thrust towards Frashokereti or the renewal of the world as envisaged in the *Gathas*: "a transformation towards good people with developed spirituality." Referring to the mutual interdependence between Parsis and Iranis, Rivetna observed, "Can we do without our Iranian roots?"



L to R (1st row): Guzder and Gandhi; (2nd row) Mogrelia, Sethna and Engineer; (3rd row) Laskari, Taleyarkhan and Shroff; (4th row) R. Anklesaria and Prof Irani



Could Iranians have survived without Parsis?" When Maneckji Hataria went to their aid, there were said to be only 5,000 Zoroastrians left in Iran, he noted. By the second or third generation of settlement in North America, Rivetna expects that Parsis and Iranian Zoroastrians will merge into a single community.

According to Rivetna the WCZF will be so organized that no single member can predominate. The votes of the members (India and Iran, seven each; North America three, Europe two, remaining countries one) could be split to allow for democratic representation at the grassroots. Also, voting would be by mail so that individual constituents could be polled. There would be no proxy votes.

No sooner had Rivetna's rather philosophical address come to an end, than the WZO mounted its challenge. "Let us know whether it was your personal initiative or of FEZANA. Be categorical," shot Dinshaw Tamboly, WZO Trust Funds managing trustee in India who was elected to the BPP board last October. When Rivetna began softly, "It can't be one member..." Tamboly crackled, "Voicing your own opinion — right?... In what way was the vision not defined in the WZO?" and accused Rivetna of "creating diversity, disunity."

It seemed to be the WZO's strategy to show up Rivetna as out of step with FEZANA and in search of a new organization to dominate. "You are one of the founding fathers of FEZANA. You are addressing the Federation in India. Others should also have been invited. When FEZANA approved (the idea of WCZF, it) should be supported by FEZANA in writing. (You are addressing a meeting) of (this) council on whose behalf?" demanded Engineer. Engineer and other WZO sympathizers like Mani Clubwalla of Madras, Aspi Irani of IZA, Homi Bodhanwalla of Jamshedpur tried to buy time. "We are still at the stage of divergence, not in a position to take a decision. The WZO is already a fact of life... Appoint a committee with all views..." suggested Engineer.

Mogrelia, BPP trustee Rustom Tirandaz, senior politician Homi Taleyarkhan tried to defuse the hostility as a tense Rivetna responded to the outpourings: "(There is) no intent to compete with the WZO. Hope the (World) Council will support and enhance the WZO... There exists no mechanism to communicate with the Indian Federation... When there is no commitment

things don't happen. (This is) a solemnization in the form of an organization..."

"The dialogue is only between the WZO and Rohinton Rivetna. We are here to see whether his idea is workable... This body should decide on what Rohinton Rivetna's idea brings, support it for its merits," urged Mogrelia. Tirandaz noted, "(I) didn't know that the conflict between the Americans and the WZO is so nasty," adding that "the interests of the community override my personal opinions... The 350-year-old BPP has to be strengthened. Let Dadi (Engineer) and Dinshaw (Tamboly) subordinate WZO interest to the BPP's." (The BPP, along with the Federation, has repeatedly rejected WZO invitations to join it. The equal voting rights for individuals and anjuman under the WZO charter has been the stumbling block, because 100 individual members from Bombay would together command 100 votes while an august body like the BPP would have only one vote were it to become a WZO member. And though the WZO has verbally assured the two bodies of its intention to amend its constitution, no action has been forthcoming despite the matter being repeatedly discussed since 1985. The BPP has now decided to support the WCZF by a majority of five to two, the two dissenters being Engineer and Tamboly.)

Suggesting acceptance of the WCZF Taleyarkhan doused the troubled waters with oil: "There is sincerity on both sides. We can't afford to be divided... Healthy approaches are always welcome. They lead to healthy interaction. Committees only push things under the rug... Decide today that we get over this once and for all. The WZO, BPP and Rohinton Rivetna should... decide areas of work."

Engineer responded with "... coordinate an idea: how to serve the community without an additional organization." To this, Dara Rivetna of Chicago, who had accompanied his brother Rohinton, countered, "...If the WZO could change (its) constitution, a lot of issues can be resolved easily and quickly."

"Talking as a Parsi Zoroastrian," Bodhanwalla asked, "How (was) the United Nations (Organization) formed? How are the countries that fought against each other now speaking to each other? In the name of Ahura Mazda, please do so too!"

Prof Irani who claimed not to represent anybody ["not ZAGNY (Zoroastrian Association of Greater New York, of which he was former president), not WZO"] asked, "Is this going to be a council of Zoroastrians or of Parsi Zoroastrians? This part

From top: Bodhanwalla, Clubwalla, Aspi, Irani and Katpitia



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must be clear," he added, citing a recent meeting with 50 to 60 Iranian Kurds in Europe who said they were not raised as Zoroastrians but wanted the sudreh and kusti. "Would the Parsis of India object?" they had asked him. Irani said he told them that "Parsis in India could only tell you whether or not they'll admit you to their institutions. Whether you can be Zoroastrian or not, is only between you and Ahura Mazda."

"If Iranians are your brothers, consider us as your cousins," they had told him. Irani also spoke of a musicologist, Alexander Bard, who is "writing an opera on Zarathushtra, is convinced he is Zoroastrian and is determined to have his navjote." This was in the aftermath of a talk on Zoroastrianism he had been requested to deliver while he was at Gothenberg, Sweden, on a professional basis. Irani now enquired, "Who will be the members of the associations (that form) Rohinton Rivetna's Council? (What about) the neo-Zoroastrians? Will we be prepared to accept them? One must be clear what it is that makes one a Zoroastrian."

"Let's dialogue. Don't shut people out," cautioned Guloo Austin of Toronto, adding "When FEZANA was formed there was a lot of controversy, a lot of opposition. Now we are proud, hold our heads high."

After alluding to the Federation's "good work" and the WZO's successful project at reviving the rural Zoroastrians of Gujarat, Mogrelia asked the gathered delegates to "examine the track records of the Federation and the WZO to act as a world body... What are the causes that motivated this concept? And why did he not think the WZO capable? Rohinton Rivetna must reply."

"It is a natural thing for two federations to dialogue in formal matters. We do it informally... in an ad hoc manner (but that implies) no commitment, no responsibility," reiterated Rivetna. He added that as the WZO felt it had the jurisdiction, he had tried to achieve the aims of the WCZF through the WZO in England but it didn't get anywhere because "the WZO's commitment (is) to individuals. (The WZO) would be sued; their hands are tied unless they float another organization. (We can) make some provisions that the WZO can continue with its work." Engineer did not contest Rivetna's analysis of the WZO position. "Rohinton Rivetna's presentation has made a great impression. (We'll) discuss with Rohinton starting tomorrow," he said. Objected Tirandaz, "If it's a world body, shouldn't some of us also be involved? It's not two sword fighters duelling. (You) can't keep sweeping things under the rug."

Sethna noted that the DPA had discussed whether the apex body was required, what its structure should be and where it would be located. He reminded the gathering that Zoroastrianism was not confined to India and Iran. People in the Central Asian Republics had registered their desire to restore links with the faith. "Unless the apex body can guide it, (this desire) will assume a different shape," said Sethna. He emphasized the need for an internet link to speed communication and upheld the Federation's own structure as a good example, having survived the turbulence of the early days. Referring to his and Gandhi's discussion with the Zoroastrian member of the Iranian parliament Parviz Ravani, Sethna reminded the Federation that Iran too claims a large population, organizational capabilities in the aftermath of the Sixth WZC and computer-literate youths. "The WZO has a substantial part to play provided its constitution allows it. Set a time limit to changing the WZO constitution by December 1997... Avoid the disease of committees."

According to the list read out by Gandhi, the IZA, Agra, Allahabad, Baroda, Borivli, Calicut, Delhi, Jhansi, Madras, Mhow, Secunderabad/Hyderabad had written letters agreeing to the formation of the World Council of Federations. Ahmedabad was the only one against. The BPP trustees registered their assent at the meeting with a majority of five to

From top (L to R): Rustomji and Mehta; Tirandaz and Kavarana; Dara and Eruch Irani; Dandiwalla and Marker

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two. Gandhi noted that Poona, Bhavnagar, Jamshedpur and Calcutta had not replied. "We have opinion in favor of the World Council. The next step is to put forward a detailed constitution."

"There are more than 68 members of the Federation," objected Delhi's Dadi Mistry who is vice president of the WZO in India. "Twelve anjumans had registered in favor of the WCZF and one against. Those who wanted to respond have responded, the rest have abstained," reiterated Gandhi. Though the Federation had 65 members in all, "on an average 14 to 15 anjumans participate as they are deeply involved and most of them have voted. Furthermore, the votes are from locations in which 90 percent of the Zoroastrians reside in India. Thus, it is a fully representative vote. No door was closed, no decision is being taken unilaterally," asserted Gandhi.

"Pass a resolution that this executive council has come to the conclusion that it is in favor of an apex body of Federations," suggested Sethna. Gandhi registered the vote, keeping "the door open for comments and suggestions" on the detailed draft constitution when circulated.

After referring to the wrangling between the BPP trustees (the two WZO dissenters objected that the BPP vote was not decided at a formal meeting) Engineer noted that it would be "premature to say that the WZO constitution will be altered" and was challenged by Tirandaz: "Why is the WZO wearing a cap that is not meant for it?... The WZO has individual members. It functions like a well-oiled, well-ordered company..." Mogrelia declared that "WZO London will be a stumbling block" and later defended his statement as "just being realistic." Mistry turned to Rohinton Rivetna: "If what we say won't be accepted by London, what you say may not be accepted by FEZANA." He was told that the FEZANA response was due to come in that day.

[FEZANA members voted overwhelmingly in favor of the Council as per a telephone message to Gandhi the following day (December 16, 1996). At a closed door informal meeting hosted by Engineer at the Punchayet the same afternoon Taleyarkhan, Guzder, Tirandaz, Tamboly, Clubwalla, Bodhanwalla, Mistry, Prof Irani, Aspi Irani, Dara, Dinsoo and Rohinton Rivetna, Homai Modi and Gandhi tried, without success, to reach an amicable understanding. The meet crystallized the majority decision to move ahead with the WCZF].

Youth

Two hours of debating time had been reserved for youth affairs on the Federation's agenda. An additional two hours for the open forum were also largely devoted to the youth. Initially, the debate focussed on the recently concluded Tenth All India Zoroastrian Youth Seminar (TAIZYS) held for the first time in Bombay. Organized by the BPP's Youth Club under the aegis of FOZYA, 300 youths had reg-

"There is sincerity on both sides. We can't afford to be divided... Healthy approaches are always welcome."

istered for the four-day meet. Sports and games activities as well as the talent and personality contests had been well patronized. Not so the seminar sessions where attendance veered around 15 to 20 percent of the delegates on the campus — active participants being fewer. Registering his disappointment Khurshed Pastakia of the Borivli and Suburban Zoroastrian Association felt that the topics selected for debates, presentation, etc "were repeated often and lacked imagination." He suggested that youth associations be consulted for new ideas before finalizing the subjects for discussion. He also noted that participants who had come prepared with certain subjects were put off when they found those topics cancelled. FOZYA president Porus Karanjawalla and Parvez Irani explained that topics on which only two or three delegates wished to speak had had to be cancelled.

The staleness of topics was cited in answer to Karanjawalla's complaint about Delhi youth not attending the annual meeting. "The topics now being dealt with have been covered by Delhi years ago," noted Sethna. He urged FOZYA to record and disseminate what is discussed and prevent the incipient boredom by "concentrating on facts rather than feelings." Tirandaz suggested that small workshops would be more productive as the prospect of speaking to a large gathering is forbidding for the young person who has a fertile mind but is tongue-tied. "Ten to 12 young boys and girls can pursue their

goals and interests... (It would lead to) a flowering of personality if small groups discuss." He also suggested that prospective participants be polled on their subjects of interest before the program is finalized.

The TAIZYS had been financed to the tune of Rs 10 lakhs by the WZO Trust in India. Tamboly wanted "youths anywhere in the country to not hesitate to contact us." However, according to Parvez Irani, "The moment word got out that the WZO had sponsored us, we didn't get donations from elsewhere..."

Asked a surprised Tamboly, "You needed 10 lakhs and we gave it. Why did you need more?" When Parvez Irani explained that "people who had promised did not give," Tamboly responded, mock seriously, "The offer stands withdrawn!" Parvez Irani clarified that some funds were raised through the help of Mogrelia and BPP trustee Silloo Kavarana. The youth delegates were also charged a small entrance fee on the basis of a questionnaire on the subject circulated by former FOZYA president Jehangir Bisney of Secunderabad.

It was left to Gandhi however to explain that the annual youth camp was the only opportunity to collect money for FOZYA projects on youth welfare and not only for the seminar in question.

Registering the need for the youth to be involved in anjuman/punchayet decisions concerning them, Bombay youth Fabian Panthaky suggested that "at least achievers like [counsellor and BPP's Holiday Programme for Youth (HPY) coordinator] Diana Marfatia and (surgeon) Dr Rushad Udwadia be consulted." He also requested that a small club house be allocated where youths can meet, read, discuss. "The BPP's Youth Club is restricted to ex-HPY members. What about those who couldn't/didn't attend HPY?" Bombay youth Shiraz Khambatta reminded the BPP trustees that Gamadia Colony has a recreation center — a flat — which is not really used and could be productively utilized for the youths.

Estimating the Zoroastrian youth population (below 40 years) in Bombay at 15,000-20,000, Gandhi noted that some baugs have a youth wing and suggested that the colonies could open their facilities to youngsters in the neighborhood.

Having been youth members aggressively involved in community activity before they were inducted on to the boards of their respective punchayets, Karanjawalla and Poona Parsi Panchayat (PPP) secretary

continued on page 42

"A difference of approach"

The intellectual leadership provided by the community in the West is far superior to the one in India

Aspi Moddie

Khusro F. Rustamji has opened an important window in "A difference of approach" (*Parsiana*, October 1996), when he reflected on the greater "cohesion, unity and drive" in North America to where he saw "the leadership of the community passing." That has been my impression too over many years, which I gave expression to in a community meeting presided over by the chairperson of the Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America (FEZANA), Dr (Ms) Dolly Dastoor in Washington in 1995; and in an earlier forecast in an article "Global Zoroastrians, 2030 AD: Rivers of Remembering and Forgetting" (*The Bombay Samachar*).

In this article, I had referred to the future of the three "universes" of India, Iran and the western countries. I saw this third universe growing in numbers from 15,000 to 40,000 by 2030; with "new opportunities bringing new vigor with growing numbers, more wealth..." I visualized the Indian "universe" shrunk from 1,14,000 to about 35,000 in 2030: "...shrunk too in competitive capabilities, and in self-esteem; no longer the makers of the 'City of Gold' (Bombay), lingering like stray straws in a tempestuous host society of over a billion bustling ungovernable people." I hope I am wrong in the latter.

Is it not necessary, almost compelling, for the two "universes" of India and Iran to look through that window now re-opened by Khusro Rustamji and notice the differences? I believe that the "differences" are really "worlds apart" because of fundamental differences in history, social environment, ethos and spirit. New migrating communities face challenges of survival, identity, and of the spirit. Old communities living in old social environments for centuries tend to take life for granted without challenge and response, the two crucial factors identified by the historian Arnold Toynbee.

Perhaps the fundamental qualitative difference is that the North American community, despite a few pockets, is largely all-inclusive, more open to the influences of other societies. In India they are markedly more exclusive, largely due to the historical factors of the last two centuries. Apart from imbibing India's *chalta hai* (laissez-faire) philosophy and being touched by caste exclusiveness they are more sectarian, more divisive, less prone to change. Change, not for change's sake, but for a Vohumanic reconciliation of Gathic teachings and traditional customs with meaningful contemporary needs.

The leadership in North America is more dynamic, and comes from all age-groups, not least the youth, and from more women. FEZANA produced a lady president in less than a decade, which the Indian Federation has not done in nearly three decades. In India, youth — despite a few scattered congresses — has largely taken a back seat. One finds far fewer women playing a role in the Indian Federation and in Indian anjumans.

Whilst the whole of India with large areas of backwardness and poverty has confidently adopted adult franchise, and made a reasonable go of it, the Parsi community in Bombay still has a limited electorate going back to the days of its Venetian oligarchy of "motta seths," one and a half centuries ago. No one has raised the very important question in Bombay, as to how the 'raj' of the oligarchy, say till 1950, compared with that of the new professional class leadership since then. The issue has both objective (performance) aspects, and subjective aspects. One has to guard against the latter in any fair appraisal. The oligarchy governed in better, more self-esteeming days. The professional class has taken over in days of less affluence, and more democratic competition. One

does not know whether the wealth of 10 or 20 top professionals would be the same as that of one earlier 'sethi.' Further, the same spirit of philanthropy may not be visible.

On the face of it, FEZANA scores over the Indian Federation in two ways. The FEZANA world is served by a distinctly higher level of intellectual and scholarly leadership, Zoroastrian and non-Zoroastrian. The FEZANA organizational achievements seem to be more satisfying to the North American community than those of the Indian Federation to the Indian community. Here, the community sadly needs a small band of objective social analysts to stir mind and conscience to rouse the people from apathy.

Lastly, one of the biggest failures of Bombay and Tehran over the last 30 years is that they have held six World Zoroastrian Congresses. Up to the Fifth in 1990, about 150 recommendations were made to the hosts. None were followed up. This was primarily an organizational failure — the lack of an inter-Congress, inter-regional body for intermediate follow-up between Congresses without getting into constitutional hassles with world bodies. In fact, it was suggested in 1990 by me and accepted, only to be scuttled later. This is a major lesson for FEZANA at the Seventh World Congress in 2000. Let us hope that lesson will be learnt for the wider benefit of global Zoroastrians.

A management consultant, Aspi Moddie is a former IAS officer who early in his career opted for the private sector. His voice was evident at the Fourth and Fifth World Zoroastrian Congresses in Bombay. His book, *Zarathushtra's "Frasho-Kereti": Renewal in Our Time* was published in 1996.



"We are here to de

Cusrow Baug's Nusserwanji Hirji Karani Agiary celebrates its atash

The agiary stands at the far end of a serene garden, framed perfectly within the stately archway that forms the gate of Cusrow Baug, an oasis of calm in the heart of a crowded, cacophonous city. On this occasion, the fire-temple twinkled in the twilight as the myriad little lights draped over its frontage glowed in celebration of the 150th anniversary of its sacred fire.

The two-day sesquicentennial celebrations of the Seth Nusserwanji Hirji Karani Agiary fire (consecrated in 1847 at a dare-meher in Null Bazaar and later moved to Cusrow Baug) began on the morning of February 7, 1997 with a well-attended

Havan gah machi. This was followed by a jashan with High Priests Firoze Kotwal, Kaikhusroo JamaspAsa and Hormazdyar Mirza participating along with Dastur Hormazdiar Dastur from Poona, Ervad Yazdi Aibara (the panthaky of the Karani Agiary) and other priests. The early evening witnessed a second jashan on behalf of the Baug's residents.

The official inauguration of the celebrations took place later when, from a dais especially erected high up on the steps of the Agiary, the chief postmaster general of Maharashtra and Goa, R. Narasimhan released a special postal cover to mark the

occasion. "Seth Nusserwanji Hirji Karani," he told the gathering, "worked not only for the Parsis but for the city of Bombay. It was the philosophy of Jeremy Bentham that the basic function of human life was to give the 'greatest happiness to the greatest number' irrespective of caste, creed or community. Seth Nusserwanji lived up to the expectations of Bentham's philosophy. The department of posts has released the cover to perpetuate his memory."

Jamshed Guzder, the chairman of the Agiary Trust who is also the chairman of the BPP (Bombay Parsi Punchayet) released the commemorative souvenir. "We

Top left: Guzder holding aloft the souvenir; others on the dais Philly Karani, Thanawalla, Hansotia and Alu Karani
Right: Narasimhan releasing the special postal cover as Hansotia and Karani applaud.
Bottom left: Presenting Maj. General Karani's portrait. Jashan held on the occasion



fy extinction"

's 150th anniversary

Hilla P. Guzder

are not alone," he said, "the spirit of Nusserwanji is with us, the spirits of Ness, Cusrow and Neville Wadia are with us." He exhorted the tenants of Cusrow Baug not to forget the kindness that the Wadia family has shown to them. Whereas Sir Ness and Sir Cusrow were instrumental in the construction of the colony and its agiary, Neville "gave service, *ghaneej kalji batlavi* (took great care)," stated Guzder. He also lauded the services of the priests who had tended the fire throughout its 150 years.

Nusli Wadia, chairman of Bombay Dyeing and Manufacturing Company Limited and other allied companies who was to have been the chief guest, sent his apologies at being unable to attend due to an urgent meeting in New Delhi that day. In his absence, Hirjee Thanawalla, member,

managing committee, N. N. and R. N. Wadia Trusts, was the chief guest. Homi Ranina, who is a trustee of the Agiary, was also unable to attend due to pressing engagements in Delhi.

Bomi Hansotia, the Agiary's managing trustee, observed that the Karani Agiary has rekindled and strengthened the faith not only of the residents of the Baug and its surrounding areas but of the community as a whole. "I have so often heard people say that Cusrow Baug is a beautiful place to stay. That is our good fortune, but our sense of gratitude and actions must be such that everybody will proclaim that beautiful people stay in this beautiful colony." Hansotia stated that the celebrations would continue beyond two days with many more projects in hand, including an interna-

tional essay competition on "Zoroastrianism — a living religion." Hansotia sought more active participation from the community's youth, saying, "While everyone is privileged enough to celebrate a few religious occasions, few can claim to be part of an event the likes of which we are

*Top left: Illuminated agiary
Right: Hansotia garlanding Aibara
Bottom left: Peer, Karanjia and Dadachanji at the question-answer session
Right: Resident Advisory Committee sitting (from left) Daboo, Dastur, Hansotia, Vajifdar, Gamadia.
Standing: Ratan Nallasetth, Jal Tata, Aibara, Dhondy and Unwalla
Above: Commemorative coin*



witnessing today (the atash's 150th anniversary). We are under the splendid environment and aura of the atash padshah; let us also endeavor to rekindle and absorb the divine spark within us and revitalize our eternal faith in it."

In a speech brimming with emotion, Dr Philly Karani said it was his privilege to represent the Karani family. "Little did my great, great grandfather realize when he consecrated this Agiary that it would grow to its present stature. We Zoroastrians may not have the power of government, nor the might of arms, nor the money of great corporations. We do have the integrity, the

faith and the enthusiasm of talented men and women to give the best of themselves for the betterment of not only our community but of our entire country. It is tempting to question what this tiny community of Zoroastrians can do in a country of 900 million people. The urge is great to simply turn away and prove correct the observation that the only thing necessary for evil to triumph is for good men to do nothing."

Karani said he was heartened to see a renewed interest in our religion not only in Bombay and Poona (where he resides) but globally as well, particularly among younger Zoroastrians. The Agiary, he de-

clared, plays a major role in bringing people together as it gives them "that sense of belonging and we realize that in life belonging has far greater value than belongings." Karani paid a tribute to "the finest man I have ever known — my father, the late Major General Noshir Karani who lived Zoroastrianism and cared as much about means as about ends. He lived respected and died regretted." Major General Karani was a trustee of the Agiary for many years till his death in September 1996.

(Dr Zareen Karani Araoz informed *Parsiana* on the telephone from Boston, USA where she resides, that her father was one of the founding trustees of the Kaikhushru Pallonji Katrak Dar-e-Meher at Delhi and was actively involved with the affairs of the agiary, the Parsi Anjuman and the dharamshala during his posting there in the 1960s. Major General Karani had served as Dean of the Medical Faculty of Poona University and also as Director of Medical Research in the armed forces, she informed *Parsiana* with pride.)

A portrait of the Major General embroidered by his wife Alu when she was in her early 80s (she is now 86) was presented by her to Aibara to be placed in the fire-temple hall "so that his life and his message may serve as a beacon for generations to come," said Philly Karani. He congratulated Aibara and his family on the "efficient functioning and immaculate maintenance" of the Agiary and thanked the Wadia trustees for all their support and "for giving us this prestigious location" (the land on which the Agiary stands was given by the Wadia trust free of cost).

Aibara, who took over as the Agiary's panthaky on the death of his father Nadarsha in 1989, appealed to the community to do as much as possible to keep the religion alive. "Atash ni seva karo (serve the fire)," he said. "We are born not just to eat, drink and be merry but to think and do what is right in keeping with Dadar Hormuzd's teachings." Citing his own example, he narrated how after his commerce graduation he had worked in a foreign bank, yet one evening while sitting with his father on the terrace, he (Yazdi) told him he had decided he wanted to work with him in the

Previous trustees -- top row, from left: Jejeebhoy, Mody, Naval Tata. Bottom row: Homi Phirozeshah Karani, Burjor Phirozeshah Karani, Noshir Hirjibhoy Karani

Below: Lord and Lady Brabourne at the Agiary before its consecration



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Agiary. "An athornan's son should become a navar and if necessary make sacrifices to look after the holy fire because if there are priests, there is fire, if there is fire there is the community and if there is the community then the religion will survive." Aibara narrated how his father used to help people, including non-Parsis, with their difficulties. "Sitting on the bench at the rear of the Agiary, he would talk to sufferers, telling them to pray the relevant scriptures from their own religion. He could even pick out the correct line from, for example, the Bible which would help the supplicant with his particular problem," stated Aibara.

Hoshang Doongaji, who was at one time a Cusrow Baug resident, observed that he had been visiting the Agiary for 20 years and its *shakti* (power) had helped him overcome many personal difficulties. He lauded the upsurge of devotion among young people who flock to the Agiary, particularly on *salgrehs*. "If we nourish and sustain this devotion, no power on earth can destroy us," he proclaimed amidst applause.

To mark the sesquicentennial of the fire, commemorative silver coins had been especially struck, showing the Agiary on one side and an atash on the other. Flowers and coins were presented to a long list of individuals in appreciation of their work for the Agiary and the Baug — Rajesh Trivedi who provided the *mandaps*, tables and chairs free of charge, Ratan and Neville Nallaseth for free printing of the souvenir, Rusi Dhondy and Khorshed Daboo for free publicity in the *Jam-e-Jamshed*, Nazneen and Khurshed Vajifdar for complimentary photos and video, Rusi Davar for free photography, Farrokh Hyderabadwalla, architect, for honorary services to the Agiary, Dadi Mistry for civil work at concessional rates, Pilloo Unwalla, Dr Dinyar Gamadia, Ratoo Dastur, Mani Vajifdar and a host of others for their help in various ways. Long-time resident of the Baug and ex-trustee of the BPP Dr Mehroo Bengalee, who was seated in the audience, was also honored with a floral tribute and memento, as was sitting Punchayet trustee Minoo Shroff.

In her vote of thanks, Ratoo Dastur, member of the Resident Advisory Committee, thanked Guzder, the Karani family, Hansotia and his wife Gool "who have been working for 20 hours of the day" assisted by their children Armin and Viraf, and all others who helped to make the celebrations a success. She termed the release of the special postal cover "a feather in our cap" and expressed her appreciation

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150th ANNIVERSARY OF
SETH NUSSEERWANJI HIRJI KARANI
ATASH PADSHAH 1847 - 1997

10



for the donations made to the Agiary Trust. Among the major donors are Guzder and Wadia (Rs 1,00,000 each); Nani Palkhivala and Ranina (Rs 75,000 each); the WZO (World Zoroastrian Organisation) through Dinshaw Tamboly (Rs 50,000); the BPP (Rs 25,000); the Cusrow Baug United Sports and Welfare League (Rs 15,000); Meherbai Hansotia and family (Rs 14,000); Jimmy Shroff, Bomi and Soli Irani (Rs 10,000 each) and other donors.

The first day's celebrations concluded with "Your Zoroastrian Roots" — a slide show on ancient Iran presented free of cost by Khojeste Mistree of Zoroastrian Studies. On a cold, blustery evening unusual for the month of February in Bombay, on the darkened lawns outside Sir Cusrow Wadia Pavilion, the solitary splendor of Cyrus the Great's tomb at Pasargadae, the

Old Agiary at Null Bazaar
Inset: Special postal cover

ruins of Takht-e-Jamshed, the Pirs, "the flying fire" Adar Farnbag, and the silence of the snow on Mount Demavand came to Cusrow Baug. "May the ancient Iranian fires bless your Baug," said Mistree as the last of his 60 slides, out of the 2,500 he said were in his collection, faded away into the night.

The celebrations continued the next evening with a "Brains Trust Panel" consisting of Ervads Rooyintan Peer (who chaired the session), Aspandiar Dadachanji and Ramiyar Karanjia answering questions from the floor. The queries ranged from the importance of the sudreh-kusti, the *boi* ceremony, the status of women in Zoroastrianism in ancient and modern times

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to the question of 'miracles' in Zoroastrianism and why one should not bow to the sea or the well at night, etc. The priests' concise answers, untrammelled by lofty theosophy, earned them well deserved rounds of applause from the predominantly elderly audience. "Atash is our lifeline to Ahura Mazda," said Karanjia, "we have to feed the fire with physical food (sandalwood) and spiritual food (prayer). People evolve spiritually with prayers so 'miracles' may be nothing more than the power of prayer." To a suggestion from a member of the audience, Roshan Balsara, that the Agiary hold humbandagi every Sunday morning, Karanjia remarked that to most people religion is not a priority on Sunday mornings — rest and TV is! Humbandagi can be held at a convenient time by consensus between the Agiary's panthaky and the laity.

Striking a note of warning, Guzder informed the community that in 1951 the population of Parsis in India was approximately 1,15,000 in a total population of 30 crores. By 1991, numbers had reduced to about 76,000 in a country of 90 crores. By 2025, he said, we will be only about 22,000 among 120 crores of people in India and will be designated not as a community but as a tribe! "We must do everything possible to increase our population," he stated, exhorting young couples to produce a third child and not stop after just one or two! "We (older people) will not be here, it is your children who will celebrate the 200th anniversary of the Cusrow Baug atash," he said.

It was the entertainment program that followed which generated much enthusiasm among the youngsters — pretty little girls dolled in their frilly dresses gyrated to the medley of tunes, presented by Silloo Shapurjee and Raju Varma and his orchestra. The songs, dances and mimicry continued well past the stipulated time until the call "jamva chalo ji (dinner is served)" drew the crowd to the long tables laid out in neat rows on the lawns, bringing to an end the two-day celebration.

The early years

An account of the fire's enthronement 150 years ago is to be found in a booklet published in Gujarati at the time of its centenary. The write-up states that the fire was first consecrated on March 16, 1847 (*mah Sheherevar, roj Behram, YZ 1216*) at a dar-e-meher in Null Bazaar's Nizam Street where a substantial population of Parsis resided in the Kandawalla and Bharucha mohallas. Its founder, Seth

Nusserwanji Hirji Karani (also called Hodi dalal or Hodiwalla) was a prosperous merchant whose ships sailed between the ports of Surat and Bombay carrying troops and goods. None of Nusserwanji's children had survived beyond the age of 20, nor was he blessed with a son. He vowed that if a son were born to him he would build a dar-e-meher in fulfillment of that wish. Son Phirozeshah was born thereafter and Nusserwanji built the agiary as promised, in memory of his daughters Bhikaiji and Avanbai.

The *Parsi Prakash* in its report of March 16, 1847 stated that the inauguration function was attended by a large and eminent gathering. Seth Nusserwanji was honored with the presentation of numerous shawls by such akabars of the community as Seth Bamanji Hormusji Wadia, Seth Jeejeebhai Dadabhai, etc. The *Bombay Samachar* also reported on the event stating that in the Bahar Kote (outside Fort) Kandawalla mohalla, from 7 a.m. on March 16 a large number of Zarthostis had assembled to watch the *takhtnashin* (enthronement of the fire). Nusserwanji gave the participating mobeds between one to five rupees. *Parsi Dharam Sthalo* reported that Nusserwanji gave Rs 351 to the Dharam Fund, Rs 351 for tandarosti prayers, Rs 301 to the Panchayat's handicapped people's fund, Rs 25 to the Bahar Kote Mukhtad Fund and Rs 25 to the Navsari ghambars!

Shortly after the inauguration Nusserwanji was dead, Phirozeshah but a child of two. The trustees whom Nusserwanji had appointed in his lifetime managed the Agiary for 19 years till Phirozeshah reached the age of 21. The Agiary fund at that time was small and it was Phirozeshah who worked and looked after the fire-temple from his own resources for 58 long years, with occasional financial assistance from his sister Soonabai, wife of Sorabji Kavasji Powvala, according to the booklet. When Phirozeshah died, the *Nibhav* (maintenance) Fund was Rs 7,500, invested in 3.5 percent government securities. At his uthamna, his sons whom he had inducted as trustees donated Rs 6,000, bringing the Fund to Rs 13,500. Even this was insufficient, so the trustees had three shops built in the compound, raising a revenue of Rs 60 per month, states the booklet.

The communal riots of the subsequent years led to a gradual shifting of the Parsi population from the Null Bazaar area and the fire was later shifted to Sodawaterwala Agiary on Marine Lines. The trustees then appealed to the R. N. Wadia trustees, Sir Ness and Sir Cusrow, for a plot of land to

build an agiary. The Wadias gave an area of 1,400 square yards without cost on a 999-year lease on a nominal rent of one rupee per year in the center of Cusrow Baug and also donated Rs 20,000 towards the construction of the Agiary, which was built at a cost of Rs 75,000, says the booklet.

The *Jam-e-Jamshed* of February 19, 1935 reported on an event which generated great enthusiasm — a visit by the governor Lord Brabourne and Lady Brabourne to the new Agiary just before its consecration. Though the Baug's residents had been advised to remain indoors, a large crowd had gathered and as the governor's motorcade turned into the gate at 5.30 p.m. on February 18, 1935 he was given a rousing welcome, with people even "craning their necks out of the windows to have a look," the paper reported. Lord Brabourne was received at the agiary steps by Sir Ness Wadia, his son Neville, Sir Jamshetji Jejeebhoy, Mancherji Khareghat, Homi Mody (later knighted) and others. The governor was introduced to the representatives of the honorary architects, Gregson, Batley and King who had designed the Agiary in the ancient Persian/Syrian/Babylonian style and to the civil contractor, Pallonji Plumber, the paper stated. The entourage proceeded into the Agiary where the newly appointed panthaky Ervad Jal Bajan explained the prayers and rituals, including the *boi* ceremony and seeing the look of puzzlement on the governor's face even demonstrated the changing of the *gah* by the ringing of the bell! Brabourne asked numerous questions, the paper related, and was amazed when told that the fire would be kept burning perennially!

The *Jamé* report also glowingly described the new Agiary — the dome, the glazed tiles, the chandeliers in the hall where hung a huge portrait of Zarathushtra by Shiavax Chavda, the two Niniveh *godhas* (winged bulls like those at the entrance of the palaces in the ancient city of Niniveh) on either side of the entrance which, the paper said, were carved out of a solid block of stone by Italian craftsmen specially invited to do the job which was reported to have cost Rs 3,000!

The inauguration of the Agiary on Saturday, February 23, 1935 was also a "big event," attended by crowds of people despite it being "an office, races and big cricket match day!" Devout Zarthostis gathered outside Sodawaterwala Agiary the previous night, says the centenary booklet, to watch the *pavitra kriya* (holy ritual) of the shifting of the fire. Deputy police

commissioner Khanbahadur Kavasji Petigara had deployed a large contingent of "sergeants and sepoys" for crowd control and assistance! After the Ushahin *gah boi*, the atash was reverentially placed in a small afargani and carried by two mobeds surrounded by a cordon of priests carrying the *talwar* (sword), *bhala* (spear), *barchi*, (dagger), etc. Under Bajan's *sardari hethal* (leadership) the entourage walked from Marine Lines to Colaba followed by a crowd of behdins.

At Cusrow Baug, a throng of women and children waited in the moonlight with *dharmik laagni* (religious fervor). The fire was ceremoniously installed in the *takht*, fed by mounds of sandalwood offered through the night by the devotees. A jashan ceremony was held next morning in the jam-packed hall built in memory of Seth Hormusji Jehangirji Guzder by Bai Goolbai Jehangir Guzder who contributed Rs 18,000 for it and another Rs 2,000 for the construction of the well. Bajan was showered with praise and honored with the presentation of over 22 shawls — from the two high priests of Udvada, the priests from Poona and Ahmednagar and from associations

like the Zarhosti Jashan Committee, Byculla Zoroastrian Association, the residents of Rustom, Jer and Nowroz Baugs and even the Byculla municipal school!

Bajan's ancestors had served as the panthakies of Byculla's Mevawalla Agiary. He himself was known for his scholarship, having given religious lectures not only in Bombay, but in Poona, Deolali, Nasik, Ahmednagar, Bulsar and other towns as well. He was also a delegate of the Parsi Chief Matrimonial Court and attended the High Court wearing his white pugree, thus enhancing the honor of all athornans, states the booklet. Bajan served as the Agiary's panthaky for 44 years. He was succeeded by Nadarsha Aibara.

The Agiary today is managed by trustees Guzder, Hansotia, Philly Karani, his son Darius, and Ranina. To the thousands of Zoroastrians who visit it, stated Guzder and Hansotia in their joint appeal before the celebrations began, the Agiary has been through the years a place for "emotional unburdening, silent dialogue and answered prayers... (a) glowing pillar of our faith, a reminder that we are here to defy extinction."

Journal of the United Religions Initiative

United Religions is a publication of the United Religions Initiative based in San Francisco.

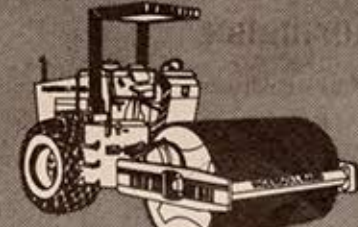
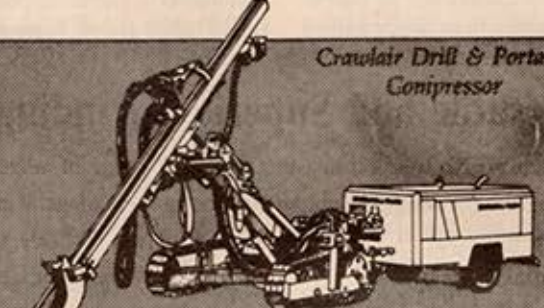
The journal's publishers note, "There is a growing community of people worldwide who believe that the religions of the world can come together in some permanent way to make peace among themselves and to work together for the common good."

Those who share these views will find the journal of interest.

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Warrior in cyberspace

Computer cop Neville Bulsara's mission is to identify and kill viruses

Gustasp Irani

What would you like to do if you were stranded on a deserted island with time on your hands? Neville Bulsara, founder partner of N&N Systems and Software that specializes in developing and marketing anti-virus programs, would probably plumb for grappling with the Whale Virus. "It is called the Whale Virus because it is literally a whale of a virus! It's so large and so complicated that it will take you two weeks to figure out how it works and another two weeks to recover," says Bulsara. Another favorite of the lean bachelor-programmer is the DR2. "This one is small but fascinating in the way it goes around infecting files."

Talking to Bulsara you immediately sense that he loves these computer viruses, not because of their destructive capabilities but because of the sheer brilliance inherent in their concept and execution. It's his job to seek them out, figure out how they feed on their host program and destroy them with anti-virus software.

According to Bulsara, it's a satisfying and rewarding task, for not only does it allow him to make a good living as the technical partner — along with his father Homi Bulsara and Nadir Karanjia — of one of the country's leading anti-virus companies, but he is the only Indian member of the exclusive European Institute of Computer Anti-Virus Research, a club which has 30 members worldwide. The club's brain-storming sessions take place behind closed doors once or twice a year. "We put a 'closed for cleaning' sign outside the door and scare the wits out of each other with nightmares of what virus writers will think of next." When not attending these sessions or working on the technical aspect of his business, he is cruising the globe on cyber space. And somewhere in these vast information system networks lurk new viruses waiting to be detected and destroyed by Bulsara.

It was way back in 1988 when Bulsara

stumbled upon his first virus — known as the Brain Virus — when it infected the computer system of Apple Industries (now Aptech) where he was working as an instructor at the time. Being the only pro-



Bulsara: "It's a cat and mouse game."

grammer around when the virus struck, he was assigned the task of figuring out what had gone wrong. Not only did he find and neutralize the virus, "incidentally the first one to hit the country," but he also found his calling in life. "I always knew I would be working with computers, but now I knew the shape and direction my career would take," says Bulsara.

Once on his way, there was no stopping him. He has over the years fought many a bruising battle with these dreaded technological monsters and will probably keep at the task well into the future. "We find about 100 to 200 new viruses every month," says Bulsara. But before we begin to despair he reassures us that of the many around — "there are over 11,000 known viruses at present" — only 30 or 40 are in the 'wild' or in the systems of computer users.

The main ways a system can get corrupted, according to Bulsara, are through the exchange of floppies ("you not only are copying files but viruses") and pirated programs ("you never know what viruses lurk in the computer that the program was taken from"). Downloading or copying files from the worldwide Internet network is another hazard.

The best way of protecting your system is to install an up-to-date anti-virus program and keep all files on a back-up floppy. "This way, should your system get infected, all you need to do is clean it up and reload it with your back-up files," says Bulsara.

Of course, there are different kinds of viruses, some harmless and others deadly. Some like the famous Michael Angelo Virus, strike and let you know straight away of their presence in your system. Others work silently, wreaking havoc without being detected. "We call these the 'slow destructors' and they are deadly because by the time you spot them it can be too late. You are probably copying corrupted files in your back-up system," says Bulsara.

Computer viruses can be compared to biological viruses. "There are some viruses where the symptoms are apparent, like high fever, cold and coughs. Once you recognize these signs you can go to the doctor and be treated. It is the same with some computer viruses where the manifestations are apparent: like letters falling off the screen. It can be quite frightening but the fact is that you know you have a problem and can get it sorted out. Then there are others that lurk around for a while with no external symptoms, like the HIV virus, for instance, which hibernates for a long while and when it does finally strike it can be lethal," Bulsara explains.

There are other similarities between biological and computer viruses. "Like a

biological virus, a computer virus cannot exist on its own but needs to be part of a host program. Like a biological virus, the computer virus grows by infecting other hosts or programs. A computer virus, like its biological counterpart, kills itself if it kills its host. That is if a person dies, the virus dies with him. So also if a program is erased, the virus too is erased," Bulsara explains.

The one difference, however, is that computer viruses are all manmade and most are written by kids who lack avenues to channel their brilliance. According to Bulsara, most of them stop as they grow up and begin to realize the damage they are doing, as well as have less time on their hands. The problem is that a new generation of whiz-kids step in to fill the vacuum.

East European countries, particularly Bulgaria, are the origin of many viruses. "Here it is a result of the system where brilliant programmers have to work on outdated computers while their party bosses play games on the latest equipment," says Bulsara. According to him, virus writers, like the anti-virus group, have their own societies, virus exchange bulletin boards and underground groups.

"It's a cat and mouse game. We set up decoys who infiltrate their groups to find out what they are planning next. It's a little like playing cops and robbers," says Bulsara. And chess too, for according to him they are trying to out-guess each other; not just the next move, but many moves down the line. "In a way we are playing a game and both sides enjoy the challenge. The problem is that the playing field is someone else's computer. Neither side is winning but the losers are the end users," Bulsara admits.

And this is where the fun stops. Anti-virus programmers carry on their shoulders a responsibility and commitment not unlike what doctors owe the society they

work in. "Like the medical profession we are professionals who make a living — and a good one too — by attending to and solving the misfortune and ailments of our patients or clients," says Bulsara of the chiselled face.

Anti-virus programmers, however, have to hone their skills in a world where almost

"In a way we are playing a game and both sides enjoy the challenge"

every day there is a new virus to deal with. "I did a one-year diploma course at the National Computing Centre in the UK but otherwise I am largely a self-taught man," says Bulsara who opted out of Kishenchand Chellaram (KC) College (he did his schooling at Christ Church, Bombay) after completing his first year Bachelor of Science (FYBSc) at the age of 18, because he was not getting much out of the education system.

It was a hard choice to make, but Bulsara was greatly influenced by his parents Homi and Siloo who had impressed upon him — an only child — the importance of doing what he thought was right no matter what the consequences. "In that sense, we are practising Zoroastrians. Not because we wear a sudreh and kusti, but because we try to follow the teaching of our Prophet: 'good thoughts, good words, good deeds,'" Bulsara observes.

Having cut loose from formal education, Bulsara quickly taught himself the intricacies of Assembly Language programming before going to the UK to attend

the diploma course. His career choice was not really surprising for Bulsara's father is a leading computer consultant to many multinational companies, banks and financial institutions in the country.

In 1987, Bulsara joined Apple Industries as an instructor. Then one eventful day, Bulsara found himself grappling with the Brain Virus and a whole new career opened for him as one of the pioneers in the anti-virus movement in the country. The following year he conducted the first ever seminar on computer viruses for the Micro-computer Users' Club; and was also called upon to assist the government's Department of Electronics in their virus investigations. In 1991 he founded the Quantum Systems Software to commercially market his anti-virus tool-kit. Rechristened RedAlert, he shut it down in 1995 and set up N&N Systems and Software in the same year.

Commenting on the Parsis, Bulsara thinks that there is no need for alarm. Though there may be a few viruses, it is a well programmed community. Indeed, the thirty-plus specialist feels that elders who indulge in youth bashing should reassess their premises; for according to him young Parsis, male and female, are a hardworking and enterprising lot who are giving a good account of themselves in a far more competitive environment than the generations before them.

What particularly appeals to Bulsara is the community's ability to laugh at itself. However, it is a program that is prone to get infected when members of the community take themselves too seriously and start spouting poison. "You read some of the letters in the Parsi Press and you start wondering. On the one hand, these people claim to be defenders of the faith. On the other, the stuff they write is totally inconsistent with the tenets of our religion which teaches good thoughts, good words, good deeds," says Bulsara. And then with true Zoroastrian charity, he adds: "I guess we all are guilty of this some time or the other, especially when something is very dear to us or when we feel very strongly about an issue."

An anti-virus program for Parsis, according to Bulsara, cannot be conceived by any one individual but must be worked out by the community as a whole. Meanwhile, Bulsara has other pressing matters to attend to. He never knows when the next call he takes may be a desperately frantic client informing him: "Mara computer ma virus goosi gayu (a virus has slipped into my computer). Please help."



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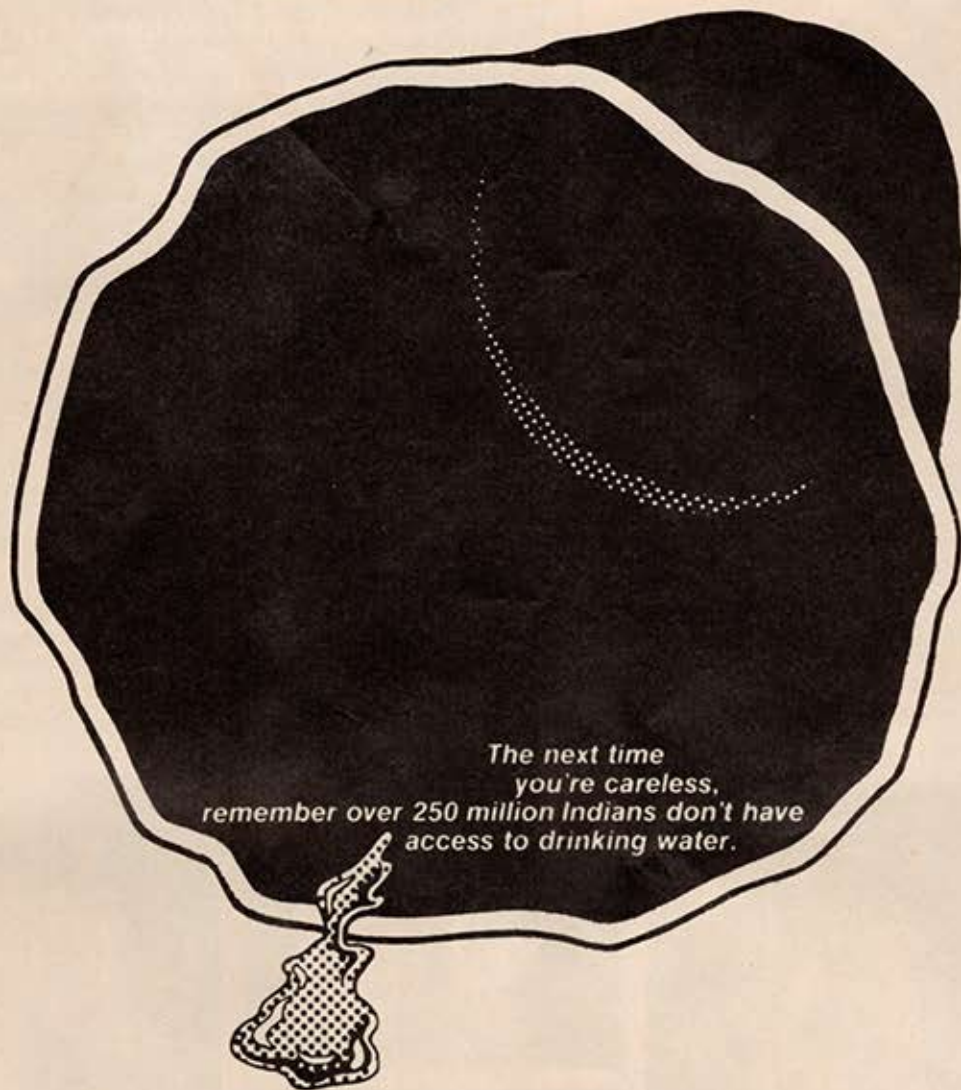
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A showcase for art

Pheroza Godrej's Cymroza Art Gallery completes 25 years

Hilla P. Guzder

"I like to live with art all around me, to see it all the time," says Pheroza Godrej, founder and co-director of the Cymroza Art Gallery at Warden Road in Bombay. And see it she does. Her office at Godrej Bhavan (she is married to Godrej and Boyce managing director Jamshyd), unostentatious in decor, is embellished by the presence of numerous paintings and objects of art.

"The pictures I like need not necessarily be 'pretty pictures,'" she remarks in her soft-spoken yet decisive manner. She points to the wall behind her chair where hangs *Despair* by B. Prabha, painted as part of the 'Famine' series, showing a sorrowing woman with her face covered by her hand — a stark reminder of the jarring realities of life. *Farmers (First Supper)* by Subash Awchat, *A Game — the Flying Krishna* by

Manjit Bawa and Görg's *Game with the Mask* cover other wall areas. On the floor awaiting cataloguing are works by K. K. Hebbar, Jamini Roy and Shiavax Chavda. A bronze creation by Adi Davierwalla adorns a side table. "I have a small collection of paintings, a good collection of lithographs, engravings and etchings of contemporary Indian art," says Godrej modestly.

Cymroza commenced its 25th anniversary celebrations in October 1996 with a special 'Silver Jubilee Exhibition' featuring around 20 of the 'big names' in the art world who had exhibited their work at this Gallery (in individual or group shows) in their earlier days — Jehangir Sabavala, Laxman Shrestha, Akbar Padamsee, Paritosh Sen, Manu Parekh, S. G. Vasudev and others. "We at Cymroza invite artists

to exhibit with us because we believe in their work," declares Godrej. Through the years, the Gallery has featured artists who practise the traditional idiom of oil painting, as well as water colorists, graphic artists, sculptors, ceramists, photographers and experimenters in mixed media. Two more exhibitions are on the anvil as part of the silver jubilee celebrations. Twenty artists will be featured in June '97, followed by a "Tribute to women artists" slated for August. "Women artists are my partiality," she confides. "The art section of the Gallery is quite distinct from the craft section which is given out for commercial use and where exhibitions in pottery, weaving, stained glass, woodwork, metalware and even garments are held on a regular basis," explains Godrej.

Cymroza, she says, was founded in 1971 and so named by putting together the 'Cy' from her brother Cyrus Shroff's name, 'm' from her mother Mitha, 'roz' from

Sabavala lights the lamp to inaugurate the Silver Jubilee Exhibition Godrej in her office at Godrej Bhavan



With Jehangir Nicholson and her mother Mitha Shroff

A view of the Gallery



father Phiroze, the last 'a' being taken from her own name. Mitha is actively involved with the Gallery, being a co-director, and also runs the Miniland school, established in 1966, which today has about 100 students up to the first standard. Phiroze, now retired, had his own business dealing with real estate, stevedoring and road construction. Cyrus, an MBA in computer technology, is with Tata Consultancy Services, she explains.

Tracing the history of the Gallery, she recalls that in 1971 "there was no gallery willing to exhibit younger artists." She herself loved to paint and was encouraged by her mother. But she could not find a gallery to exhibit her paintings "as there were heavy demands on Jehangir Art Gallery even 30 years ago." Praising the foresight and magnanimity of Sir Cowasji Jehangir, second baronet, who dedicated this Gallery to his late son Jehangir, Godrej says she has "no words to describe the service that the Jehangir Art Gallery renders to the artist community." Soli Batliwala, who was at that time the honorary secretary of the Jehangir Art Gallery, "commended my work yet he could not offer 'the Jehangir' for an exhibition," she observes. Batliwala inaugurated her first exhibition of paintings — at the Chetna Art Gallery nearby. "If a private gallery had sponsored my work, I would have continued to paint and not considered opening a gallery," she reveals.

Her proposal to start a gallery of her own at Warden Road met with much negativity. "A gallery outside Kala Ghoda area? You will never get the public to come all the way there," was the general response, she laughingly narrates. Over the years however, Godrej believes she has received "tremendous support" from the public. It has been the policy of the Gallery to take risks and promote unknown artists, she says. Cymroza's first anniversary in 1972 was celebrated with the works of younger painters like Chandra Doshi and Shakuntala Kulkarni and over the past two and a half decades K. H. Ara, Hebbur, Sabavala, Pilloo Pochkhanavala, Davierwalla, B. Vithal and scores more have exhibited their creations here. Even Pablo Bartholomew's photos have been displayed when he was unknown, she recalls, and Bartholomew "has gone on to become a 'big name,' with a wide range of photography including art photography and photo essays for well-known environmental journals." The Gallery, she points out, does not act merely as a momentary showcase for art but keeps in constant touch with artists

and art centers like Shantiniketan, the School of Art of the Baroda University, etc. "We carry in our collection the works of artists who are established and prolific and we also keep the work of those who take a long time over canvases or casting. In any calendar year we present artists whose work has never been exhibited and we may feature the same artist again once every two or three years. The normal duration of an exhibition is three weeks," she enlightens.

Godrej recalls that up to 1978, Cymroza also held mini concerts. The Gallery walls have resounded to the songs of Sharon Prabhakar and Ronnie Desai, the poetry of Jimmy Avasia and the rhythm of Zakir Husain's tabla in concert with Brij Narain and Shamim Ahmed! "Our one criterion was that the performer had to present an original composition or something with a cause," she remembers. The concerts were well patronized and would be followed by lively discussions and heated debates! "My father provided us with a 16 mm projector and in conjunction with the National Film Archives at Poona, a festival of silent films was held as well as a Charlie Chaplin festival. Meaningful films like the *Ascent of Man* and *Civilisation* were screened in many parts in collaboration with the British Council and we have even helped the IIT (Indian Institute of Technology, Powai) establish their annual festival, Mood Indigo," she notes with satisfaction.

The Gallery's recent successes include three graphic print exhibitions held with XAL Praxis, a foundation funded by Ajay Lakhanpal and co-founded by him with Padamsee, Dr Udayan Patel and herself, which aims to "bring out the best in Indian print making (in limited editions of 20)," conveys Godrej. Last year's mini print exhibition held in collaboration with the British Council, featured over 250 mini prints, with the exhibition touring Calcutta, Delhi and Chandigarh as well. Cymroza is also a participant in the Festival of Indian Contemporary Painting, curated by Neville Tuli, scheduled to run through March/April '97 simultaneously at the National Gallery of Modern Art at the C. J. Hall and the galleries of the British Council, Max Mueller Bhavan, Prithvi, Pundole and Chemould. Each gallery will exhibit various facets of modern art, the focus at Cymroza being 'Landscape as Inspiration' and 'Color as Discipline.'

Her commitment to Cymroza notwithstanding, Godrej fills her life with a variety of other activities. She already has three publications tucked firmly under her belt.

She has co-authored and co-edited, along with Pauline Rohatgi, *Scenic Splendours: India through the Printed Image; India — A Pageant of Prints and Under the Indian Sun — British Landscape Artists*.

Presently she is working, along with Rohatgi and Feroza Panthaky-Mistree, on what she terms "a labor of love" — a book on Zoroastrianism and the Parsis. It will consist of approximately 26 chapters with the last chapter, "Glimpses of Parsi Portraiture — 1800-1900" being penned by Godrej herself. A galaxy of Zoroastrian scholars and other experts in their fields of study have contributed original unpublished articles for the book. She rattles off some of their names in quick succession — Professors John Hinnells, Mary Boyce and Richard Frye, Farhang Mehr, Frantz Grenet of the Laboratoires d'Archeologie, Paris, Boris Marshak of the State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, Shaul Shaked of the Hebrew University, Jerusalem, Dr Shapur Shahbazi, Dr Alan Williams and Dr Jamsheed Choksy from abroad and from India Drs Firoze Kotwal, Kaikhusroo JamaspAsa and Hormuzdiar Mirza, Nivedita Mehta and Prof S. S. Dange of the department of Sanskrit, Bombay University, among others. The project, says Godrej, has faced many difficulties but "Prof Frye (formerly of Harvard) prodded us along, with strong support from Mary Boyce." The book is awaiting a publisher "who will accept everything with no compromises," she asserts. "We are slightly off schedule, yet not one of the contributors has said they would like to withdraw their article and publish it elsewhere. I feel very humbled with this trust."

Godrej has been the honorary secretary of the Museum Society of Bombay for the past 21 years. She is also the joint honorary secretary, Indian Heritage Society, Bombay Chapter. The organization of the annual Banganga Festival, the Urban Heritage Awards, the Parasika Awards (for professional architects or students of architecture, she enlightens) and the Admiral Jal Cursetjee Memorial Lecture are some of the ongoing programs of the Society.

Godrej says she would also like to offer her time "one afternoon every week even for a whole year" to guide people around the new National Gallery of Modern Art at the C. J. Hall. She describes the Gallery as "a wonderful project which should be whole-heartedly supported." Special interest tours, school children's groups should be encouraged to visit the Gallery, she recommends.

Recalling her own youth, Godrej laugh-

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ingly narrates how after her schooling she had "wanted to do theater" but her parents had dragged her "kicking and screaming" to Sophia College to meet Sister Gool Dhalla who convinced her that she had to have a degree. "I have never regretted it. Those were the most wonderful years of my life," she recollects. She astounded her parents later on by "volunteering to go in for MA" which she did in 1974 followed by BEd in 1975. Wedding bells rang in 1978 when she married her schoolmate Jamshyd and became a part of one of India's most respected industrialist families.

The encouragement of art and artists is also part and parcel of Godrej corporate philosophy, observes Pheroza. "Jamshyd is interested in contemporary and traditional Indian art," she explains, "and he has recently made a commitment for the revival (including the manufacturing and marketing) of one dying tribal craft by especially employing an MBA who will live in the villages and handle the project in line with modern management techniques."

"Jamshyd and I complement each other because of our diversity," notes Pheroza, "his interests being more focussed on his work which is engineering related; my input is the more artistic one. He is also

very knowledgeable about Western classical music and listens to it daily. We come together in social concerns — for education, family welfare, etc, be it in the home, factory or outside world." Digressing a little, she jests that as his big pastime is sailing and "I didn't want to become a 'sailing widow,' I became his crew mate and galley help!"

When daughter Raika and son Navroze were young, Pheroza remembers, "I used to take them everywhere. I gave them an overdose of art galleries, concerts, etc till I realized I had to back off and give them space to breathe!" Raika, now 17 and studying in USA, is "a very giving child," says Godrej. "She has leadership qualities, but with compassion. She wants to do things for others." Navroze, now 14 and schooling in Bombay, is focussed on studies but finds time to swim, play squash and take part in activities like elocution, debating, etc (Godrej herself is a past chairperson and member of the English Speaking Union of the Commonwealth, Bombay Branch).

"I like being surrounded by color," says Godrej. "I like light and I love nature. And spicy food! I'm blessed with the life I have, am very grateful for this and don't take anything for granted."

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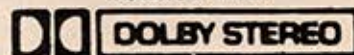
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FEDERATION'S NOD TO... continued from page 26

Eruch Irani felt that the youths were lacking in commitment, in initiative. Mogrelia recounted his attempt to set up a regional get-together for the south zone in Ooty which fizzled out for lack of cooperation from that anjuman.

HPY's Teenaz Bamji noted that in contrast to the few youths who are really dedicated, there are so many out there who don't know what's happening. "Can there be one organization for them all?" she asked and urged the elders to organize sessions where they could learn, for example, how to be groomed for a good job. Gandhi assured her that the BPP would oblige by finding the right faculty for the purpose if she could get 30-40 youths together. "But then the youth should attend," he cautioned.

Mogrelia urged the council "to make place (for the youths around the table)... Without constructive items to discuss, they become backbenchers... Within two or three meetings we will find their presence, their contributions increasing." He also suggested that clubs in Cusrow Baug and other colonies be invited to attend Federation meetings to "regenerate interest."

Gandhi who had requested FOZYA to activate youth associations said he had been told that "youth are not willing to come to Federation meetings. Last time they said there were only ego hassles." He now advised Parvez Irani to send him the youths' agenda a month ahead of Federation meetings and also to circulate the Federation agenda to the youths so that they can come prepared. Parvez Irani pointed out however that many of the youth associations of Bombay's residential colonies did not respond to FOZYA invitations.

Marzban Austin suggested the periodic hosting of youths from other areas. He also recommended that they do voluntary work with hospitals, the aged, etc and promised, "you will find that you've learnt more than

*Left to right (top):
Bharucha, Pastakia,
Perzid Daruvala, P.
Irani, Ardeshtir Bakh-
tiary, Batlivala, Karan-
jawalla, Dick, Debara,
Marfatia, Bamji, Shir-
zad Khory, Pansy
Mehta, Mahrukh No-
ble; (below) Marzban
Giara, Ustad and K.
Shroff*

infighting." BPP's project adviser Rustom Anklesaria reminded the gathering that while the BPP did not turn away anybody from the HPY, human resource limitation prevents the program from being held oftener: "Diana can't do it more than once a year. Now it's up to you," he told HPY alumni, "to take over the burden totally from Diana. You are our hands and feet. You are our messengers."

"We don't require to be in the lime-light" noted Panthaky, fearing that Mogrelia's suggestion of putting the youth up front would lead to them being misunderstood. He said the youths would be content if one focal youth member from each delegation could sit in at the executive council discussions along with senior delegates. In response to the criticism that youths don't have initiative, Panthaky noted that "the general feeling (is) that the BPP is unapproachable" and urged the Punchayet to initiate classes and workshops for HSC (Higher Secondary Certificate) and degree students on the lines of HPY. While Tamboly asked for specific instances of BPP unapproachability, Guzder acknowledged the BPP's deficient public relations and invited the youths to seek the trustees' permission and sit in with them at their meetings with community members to understand the problems and workings of the Punchayet.

Sports enthusiast Aspi Ustad informed the gathering that at the All Parsi Annual Athletic, Aquatic and Cycling Meet, which has been an ongoing event for the past 16 years, there were "less youths and more



old people" in 1996. Instead of concentrating on housing he suggested that the BPP support self-motivated youth and guide the rest. "Sports are being neglected. There is no apex body to control sports in the community... (There are) no projects/guidelines for the youth to follow." Families discourage them from paying it sufficient attention, he added. Ustad drew the attention of the community to Delna Bhumgara who was to represent India in the Asia-Pacific junior swimming championship (under 13 years) and pleaded for cash encouragement to promote the team spirit by sponsoring relays: "Bring youth together to fight together."

Anklesaria acknowledged the HPY participants' desire "to involve more and more youth of the community." Stating that the HPY alumni clean agaries, organize blood collection drives, collect over one lakh rupees and know the BPP administration well, he now invited the others to come to the administration at any time. "Don't paint the administration in a darker shade (than it deserves)," he pleaded.

Davar informed the assembled delegates of a recent interactive seminar between the youth and senior members of the North American Zoroastrian community which had been hosted by the Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Washington Incorporated (ZAMWI). Suggesting that "it shouldn't be just a flash in the pan of Washington," Davar told the youths, "Don't be afraid of who they (the trustees) are and what they say. Dialogue in a constructive,



positive manner."

IZA secretary Sohrab Elavia, according to whom the definition of youth should not exceed 25 years, noted, "A man at 40 is already settled. His requirements will be no different than (those of) older men." Elavia

urged the Panchayet to "provide jobs rather than houses, make the extra effort to see that those who seek work, get it."

Acknowledging the WZO's assistance to "4,000 Parsis in rural Gujarat," Tale-yarkhan informed the gathering of government support for agro industries with loans available at four percent which could provide "scope for Parsis to move into rural industries."

Defunct anjumans

The Khergam anjuman with a dharamshala, land and agiary in good condition has but three families left — two in Bombay and one in Khergam, informed Surat's Sorab Katpitia who coordinates the Federation's defunct anjumans subcommittee. Parvez Khergamwalla, an electronics consultant now settled in Bangalore, informed the Federation that it is "impossible for one Parsi family to maintain all the property." He had reason to believe encroachers were taking over the property whose condition was deteriorating. The fire-temple is in the bazar area and the dokhma has 10 acres of land around it but, stated Khergamwalla, "we have hardly money to survive." They would like to hand over charge of the property to the Federation.

At Disa the wife of a deceased trustee had allegedly made a bogus sale deed which reportedly has been deemed void but the matter is under litigation, informed Katpitia. At Cambay negotiations were proceeding for the disposal of some of the land though the dokhma property, where a Muslim has claimed tenancy, is yet to be sorted out. At Tarapore there is "vast open

land but the Palghar mamlatdar is not cooperating," Katpitia detailed the problems at Tarapore where the entire project is under litigation. That the charity commissioner is based in Thane, the income tax officer in Pune and the mamlatdar in Palghar further complicates a time-consuming judicial process, he noted.

Parvez Irani who had been instructed to seek information regarding the Tarapore property informed the Federation that the mamlatdar and talati were "refusing to divulge information, even the names of the trustees. We need a letter from you," he told Gandhi. A prototype letter is to be drafted for this and other similar cases. Gandhi was of the opinion that the Federation should take physical possession of the Tarapore property even though the cost of a fence was estimated at Rs 60,000-70,000 because it would take two years to get the charity commissioner's endorsement.

Gandhi referred to the Khandwa property where Mhow's Behram Masani and Ratlam's Tehmtan Anklesaria had filed a case. The original complainant is now allegedly "refusing to give evidence." With an offer of Rs 20,000 to settle from the opposing party, Gp Capt Dhanjishaw Marker of Mhow was "now raising the point: do we want to compromise?" noted Gandhi. The terms of the compromise were to be informed by Marker after his return to Mhow.

The Sholapur Zoroastrians wanted a boundary wall around the aramgah. Tale-yarkhan informed that he had been instrumental in getting the collector there "to place some funds at the disposal of the Sholapur Anjuman."

The 8,000 sq yd property of the Bhavnagar Parsi Club is currently valued at Rs 10 crores, according to Minochaheer Bharucha of Bhavnagar. As per the original trust deed, if the Club could not be maintained, the property was to be sold and the proceeds given to BPP for educational purposes. "Another school of thought is that (the money) should be used for any

other purpose of the anjuman" (which now numbers 38 individuals, as per Bharucha), noted Gandhi who related that the property was accordingly sold to a developer (for Rs 1.4 crores). When the first builder could not deliver, it was sold to a second builder for Rs 1.75 crores. The first builder has now gone to court, related Gandhi. "With vested right the BPP should intervene," advised Gandhi. He later informed the delegates that all papers regarding court proceedings, builders, etc will be forwarded by Bhavnagar's Jal Irani who was present at this Federation meeting. During discussions over lunch Jal Irani invited Gandhi and Katpitia to go to Bhavnagar to meet the anjuman members and their advocates and examine the records, announced Gandhi.

Dr M. H. Panthaki, a pathologist from Illav, noted that there were less than 20 families left there with one or two individuals per family. Though the fire-temple has been reduced to a dadgah they are trying to maintain 18-day muktads, he said. "(There is) a lot of land. If you don't take up cudgels for us, we'll lose it to non-Parsi encroachers."

Percy Shroff of Panchgani spoke of 10 acres there "in the grip of a non-Parsi politician. It can't be tackled individually... as individuals we are not interested" and offered to provide the relevant papers if the PPP would take on the case before it became time-barred. And Merwan Irani of Bombay who had single-handedly intervened to prevent the sale of the vast Parsi sanatorium grounds at the seaside resort of Tithal for a song to a Jain trust, now enquired, "Will the BPP take up the Tithal cudgels?" Panthaki, Shroff and Merwan Irani were requested to meet BPP chief executive Behram Laskari on Monday with all papers and details so that the matters could be referred to the Federation's solicitors.

At the last Federation meet in June, FOZYA representatives like Karanjawalla, Parvez Irani, Eruch Irani, had been drafted

Karanjwalla now enquired whether the vigilance committee existed and whether it was a part of the defunct anjumans subcommittee: "We don't know when the meetings are held." Responded Gandhi, "If you work under Katpitia and under his advice, you will be the subcommittee's eyes and ears." Countered Eruch Irani, "If the report doesn't come to us? We cannot work without information — which property, which matter...?"

"The sky is open... wherever it is... You are an expert in this field," replied Gandhi. He further referred Eruch to a copy of Rustom Anklesaria's letter to Mistry and Sethna regarding the Uran dokhma property which reportedly has been taken over by the Indian Navy without compensation.

Khandhias

"We have evolved, unwittingly, a class of people as children of a lesser god," Tamboly prefaced his announcement of the WZO scheme to ameliorate the lot of the khandhias and nassessalars. He urged the gathered anjumans to inform him of khandhias within their jurisdiction to enable him to reach them with financial and other support as required, as per the instructions of an anonymous donor.

Gandhi suggested that volunteer nasse-

ssalars be encouraged to break the social ostracism that has shrouded the pallbearers. "Give money to abolish the system

"Is this going to be a council of Zoroastrians or of Parsi Zoroastrians? This part must be clear"

rather than modifying it," recommended Bodhanwalla.

There are 14 khandhias at Bombay's doongerwadi whose average age is 60 years, according to Guzder who suggested the institution of an electric trolley there to make the burden easier.

Bodhanwalla and Sethna were both of the opinion that the greatest respect to the dead is to carry them on one's shoulder. IZA's Aspi Irani reminded them, "To go inside the dokhma in a big city needs a strong stomach." His opinion was endorsed by PPP president Dara Irani who believes that "Bombay, Pune have to have full-time khandhias," though there too volunteers are being encouraged: one nassessalar in

Pune is an engineer but is also learning his father's job.

In the small anjumans, however, it is the community which undertakes the dressing and final resting of the body. In Jamshedpur, Delhi, Madras, Jhansi, Allahabad, etc where there are aramgahs, it is accepted as a part of necessary community activity as their representatives described it. Jhansi Anjuman president Ronnie Dick referred to it as "ordinary work... old and young, we do it ourselves." Allahabad's Capt Homi Dandiwalla noted that there was no compulsion for a bath after the funeral in winter. (Allahabad has an aramgah, not a dokhma.) "We wash our hands in carbolic soap before entering our homes," he noted.

Bamji urged the creation of "social awareness about what khandhias are doing and what we'll have to do if they are not there... change attitudes." Khambatta voiced the orthodox view of "death (being) the work of evil. If you're carrying a dead body, you have to undertake all kinds of ablutions..." which prompted Prof Irani to state the theology as per the *Gathas* where "death is considered as the natural separation of the soul from the body." According to him "all that should be maintained is proper hygiene and proper dis-

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posal of the remains. Death has been highly dramatised." He advocated the use of an electronic trolley that would carry the body to the dokhma and place it accurately on the predetermined place to "avoid a profession that we have degraded." Former BPP chairman Dr Aspi Golwalla thought otherwise. Referring to his entry into a Bombay dokhma over 20 years ago, he recalled that a lady had asked him, "'*Nahn lidhu ké? Tumé sick pari jaso* (Have you taken a consecrated bath? If not you will be ill).' My friend and I fell ill," informed the doctor!

Tamboly's scheme was endorsed by Rustom Anklesaria and Dara Irani. The number of nassessalars in Bombay had fallen from 25 to the present 14 and though the BPP has tried recruitment drives "people are not willing," said Anklesaria. He enumerated their current emoluments as a pay of Rs 3,000 per month (tips extra), free housing and a life insurance of Rs 25,000. "Tamboly's scheme is worthwhile. He's not saying have the system forever, but to help them while they are there," explained Anklesaria.

Census

A socioeconomic survey of the community world-wide, had been a resolution of

the Fifth WZC in 1990. Even within India it remains an elusive goal. Opinions about it range from head counts to exhaustive surveys.

"It is the duty of every anjuman to carry out a socioeconomic survey of Parsis in

"Examine the track records of the Federation and the WZO to act as a world body ..."

their area," noted Gandhi, suggesting that BPP youth club members residing outside the colonies compile figures of those not living in the baus. According to Tirandaz the BPP's "very, very exhaustive census form" was under print and once delivered to the community, the census work would be completed in six months as an Iranian Zoroastrian has donated US \$ 7,500 (approximately Rs 2,80,500) to provide the necessary infrastructure. "If you rely on the Parsi community to reply to these requests, you will cut a sorry figure," warned Gandhi. DPA's Farokh Rustomji admitted that it had taken them six years to compile a directory in Delhi. Stating that

DPA attempts to update its survey of 1988 have been resisted, Sethna recorded "a peculiar sense of inadequacy" in the community which leads individuals to query "Why should I give my income/number of dependents/why I don't procreate..." Tirandaz was unperturbed: "Dadar Parsi Colony has a 100 percent (accurate) directory." Pune's Sarosh Palkhiwala complained that the Pune youth had been stopped after they had collected 500 names "because you said (Delhi demographer) Ava Khullar's form will come!" Gandhi responded placatingly that the current BPP exercise was "a head count. Socioeconomic survey forms take years to materialize."

The need for a detailed survey was endorsed by Elavia: "The census should get the entire position of individuals and families to determine how the community is faring." He suggested that the information should include the nationality of the present and previous generations, the number of persons migrating into and out of India, marriage status, etc. "There is more dead stock than livestock in Zoroastrian houses," he concluded ascerbically.

Will the census figures enumerate Parsis or Zoroastrians, asked Bodhanwalla, noting, "In Iran there will be no Parsis, only

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Zoroastrians." He also felt that the status of non-Zoroastrian spouses should be clarified.

Udvada

The Save Udvada Committee has now been registered as the Save Udvada Trust (with 80G exemption) to which the Baroda anjuman has donated two lakh rupees, informed Taleyarkhan. Guzder pledged a further Rs 50,000 from the BPP in the course of the meet. With Rs 4.5 lakhs in the kitty and cooperation from the Gujarat government and the Pune-based Central Power and Research Station, Taleyarkhan said the project was ready to begin.

Mogrelia announced to the gathering that Bombay resident Keki Shroff is willing to donate Rs 45,000 to each of 45 anjumans he would nominate. The money is meant to be a contribution to the kathi fund of their agiaries and will be siphoned through the Federation. The house gave the shy Shroff, who was content to let the others speak for him, a standing ovation. A sum of Rs 45,000 was received the next morning, according to Mogrelia.

Internet

In an effort to facilitate faster and more economical communication, the Federation is examining the possibility of being linked to the Internet and having an E-mail number. Rustomji broached the DPA's idea to link Indian and foreign Zoroastrian anjumans on Internet. Offering a total project of two to four lakh rupees which would include hardware like a computer, modem and power, what would be needed is a "dedicated person ... to receive and disseminate information. The cost of its use to students (to access information from universities and encyclopaedias) would be Rs 500 per annum," noted Rustomji. Moreover, E-mail communication to anywhere in the world would be available at the price of a local telephone call.

Individual anjumans

Allahabad's population figure is reduced to 27 with the transfer of some army personnel to Secunderabad, informed Dandiwalla. Their paramobed who took mentally and physically ill, had to be sent to Bombay's B. D. Petit Parsee General Hospital. Dandiwalla alleged that the man's children apparently took no interest in his welfare, proved difficult to contact.

At Agra one death and the outward shift of two members has left 16 Zoroastrians there. The income from the rented space of the

dharamshala was adequate to their needs, noted Hoshang Debara. His complaint was the barely six percent occupancy of the dharamshala's nine rooms provided for the community with all facilities.

The Ahmedabad punchayet sought Taleyarkhan's intervention to arrange for the Gujarat Express from there to stop at Udvada to enable easier pilgrimage to Udvada for Ahmedabadi Zoroastrians.

Borivli was concentrating on religious studies with the aid of the BPP's Zarathushti Brothers' Fund, noted Pastakia. The three lecturers so far were Ramiyar Karanjia, Nadir Modi and Khojeste Mistree. They were now organizing children's camps in two age-groups to enable them to experience various religious activities.

While Jhansi youths regularly attend all meets in neighboring anjumans as per Dick, Calcutta's youth representative Nauzer Batlivala noted that despite the large number of Zoroastrian organizations there the frequency of functions as well as attendance left much to be desired. The most popular event is the Calcutta Parsi Amateur Dramatic Club's annual Gujarati *natak* with one free show for the community and one public show for other Gujarati-speaking Calcuttans.

At Jamshedpur, the 245 Zoroastrians enjoy adult franchise, pay Rs 10 as annual membership fee, have a well-paid mobed and assistant mobed, "take part in almost every activity in town and chair many a committee," informed Bodhanwalla. A cosmopolitan school run by Zarthushtis provides additional income.

The Madras anjuman is on the lookout for an assistant priest to aid their panthaky, Ervad Kaikhushroo Laskari, who is doing "a wonderful job," as per Clubwalla. Their chasniwalla died and the whole family chose to leave Madras. According to Clubwalla the anjuman is willing to provide Rs 5,000 plus free accommodation to an assistant mobed, (the panthaky receives Rs 7,000 plus an additional Rs 4,000 while he works alone) plus Rs 1,000 (which Mogrelia was prepared to double) to a part-time chasniwalla who was free to pursue his education or a job. But Katpitia doubted if anybody would be forthcoming despite unemployment in Gujarat because "the present generation is against certain types of occupation."

The Top Ten

**"Lives of great men
all remind us..."**

Who were the greats? Who are the greats? Zoroastrians talk proudly of the community's achievements in the past and present. Names are mentioned randomly but collectively no international list has been compiled of the most outstanding Parsis or Zoroastrians. *Parsiana* opens its columns to suggestions from readers as to who they consider to be the 10 most outstanding Zoroastrians globally in the 19th and 20th centuries (10 in each century). The nominees could be from any field of endeavor, from politics to poetry and science to soldiering. The purpose of the exercise is to create a greater awareness of the community's past and present achievements and to put these in perspective.

Readers should send in their suggestions stating the full name of the individual, his or her field of endeavor, the reason why they feel the person is deserving of this classification and the century for which they are being nominated.

The reason for choosing the two centuries together is to allow for the overlapping of many significant lives. The reader can decide in which century he or she wishes to identify the individual's contribution. Personages should be nominated according to the century in which they made their major contribution to humanity.

Send your entries to The Editor, *Parsiana* (Greats), GPO Box 892, Bombay 400001.

At Dahanu, the anjuman has a scheme for building flats on anjuman property. The English medium cosmopolitan school they have established there has now reached the standard ninth level, informed Parvez Irani, its cofounder with Banoogoshab Irani.

Mhow has accommodated 10 Zoroastrian families from outside. Their adarian and dokhma facilities are availed of by Ajmer, Ratlam, etc, exulted Marker. Having been the first (and so far, only) anjuman to have coopted the Federation on its board of trustees, Mhow has since received enquiries from a number of small anjumans regarding the modalities, informed Marker. Gandhi informed the gathering that all the anjumans who sought the information had been sent copies of the Mhow Scheme resolution and agreement.

Those attending the Federation meeting were: Hoshang Debara from Agra; Porus Karanjawalla from Ahmedabad; Capt Homi and Shireen Dandiwalla from Allahabad; Ruby Balsara from Baroda; Minochaheer Bharucha and Jal Irani from Bhavnagar; Jamshed Guzder, Minoo Shroff, Silloo Kavarana, Dinshaw Mehta, Dadi Engineer, Rustom Tirandaz, Dinshaw Tamboly, Rustom Anklesaria, Behram Laskari, Gool Tata, Sheroo Master, Adil Crawford, Gool Kias and Diana Marfatia from Bombay; Noshir Paghdwalla, Khurshed Pastakia, Yezdi Motiwala and Marzban Mehta from Borivli; Nauzer Batlivala from Calcutta; Lt Gen Adi Sethna, Dadi Mistry, Farokh Rustomji and Keki Gandhi from Delhi; Dr M. H. Panthaki from Illav; Aspi Irani, Parvez Irani and Mehrwan Irani, Rustom Kushesh, P. Zend, N. Kekhushru Irani and S. N. Elavia from the Iranian Zoroastrian Anjuman; Homi Bodhanwalla from Jamshedpur; Ronnie Dick from Jhansi; Khushro Daruwala, Parvez and Kersi Khergamwalla and Havovii Kerawala from Khergam; Nariman Mogrelia and Mani Clubwalla from Madras; Gp Capt Dhanjishaw Marker from Mhow; Khushnoor Govadia from Nagpur; Dara Irani, Eruch Irani, Boman Irani, Farokh Irani and Firdous Kayani from Pune; Homi Palsetia and Dinshaw Patel from Saronda and Sorab Katpitia from Surat. Dr Aspi Golwalla, Homi Tale-yarkhan, Homai Modi, Bazun Dittia, Prof Kaikhosrov Irani, Rohinton Rivetna, Adi Davar, Dinsoo and Dara Rivetna, Guloo and Marzban Austin were the special invitees. The Press was represented by *The Bombay Samachar* and *Parsiana*.

With
best wishes
from

**Farah
&
Tanya**

MATRIMONIAL

Sincere Parsi lady, 43 years, graduate and without encumbrances seeks alliance from tall, sincere, well-educated, well disposed and modern Parsi gentlemen, 45-50 years. Must be willing to settle overseas. Please reply with photograph (returnable) to:

The Advertiser
Parsiana, Matrimonial (Jan/5-97)*
GPO Box 892, Bombay 400001

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

MATRIMONIAL

Alliance invited for graduate daughter, 26 years, 5'7", from well-cultured Parsi boys, earning a good salary and having decent accommodation. Correspond with details and photograph (returnable) to:

The Advertiser
Parsiana, Matrimonial (Jan/6-97)*
GPO Box 892, Bombay 400001

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

Do you have a G6PD enzyme deficiency?

The G6PD enzyme deficiency, common among the Parsis, makes them highly susceptible to certain drugs.* The deficiency may cause jaundice in the newborn and severe hemolytic crisis (destruction of red blood cells) in adults. Ask your family doctor to arrange for a blood test to detect whether you have G6PD enzyme deficiency. If you happen to be a G6PD-D patient, it is essential that you carry your card at all times so that in any emergency you would receive appropriate treatment.

*Analgesics: Acetanilid, Acetylsalicylic acid, Aspirin, Acetophenetidin (Phenacetin), Antipyrine, Pyramidone.

Sulfonamides and Sulfones: Sulfanilamide, Sulfapyridine, N2 Acetylsulfanilamide, Sulfacetamide, Sulfisoxazole (Gantrisin), Thiazolsulfone, Salicylazosulfapyridine (Azulfadine), Sulfoxone, Sulfamethoxypyridine (Kynex).

Antimalarials: Primaquine, Pamaquine, Pentaquine, Quinacrine (Atabrine).

Nonsulfonamide antibacterial agents: Furazolidone, Nitrofurantoin (Furadantin), Chloramphenicol, Para-aminosalicylic acid.

Miscellaneous: Naphthalene, Vitamin K (Water soluble analogues), Prodenecid, Trinitrotoluene, Methylene blue, Dimercaprol (BAL), Phenylhydrazine, Quinine and Quinidine, Sulpha containing compounds including Septran, DDS and Daraprim; Nitrofurantoin, Nalidixic acid including all derivatives of this group, Antistine, Diphenylhydramine, Pronestyl, Nitrites; Large doses of Chloroquine, Chloramycetin, Vit. C and Vit. K.

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APPOINTED VALUERS BY THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

A guide for the generous giver

Shirin K. Bharucha

Management of Philanthropic Organisations by Noshir Dadrawala. Published in 1996 and distributed by the Centre for Advancement of Philanthropy, Mistry Mansion, 107 M. G. Road, Bombay 400023. Pp: 291. Price: Rs 200.

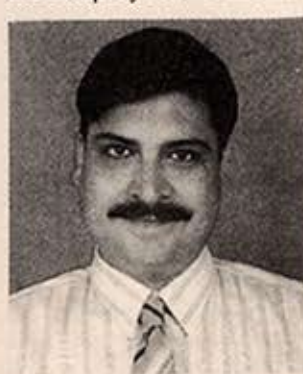
When Noshir H. Dadrawala wrote his *Handbook on Administration of Trusts* some years ago, I felt that there was clearly a need to expand the ambit of his discussion to make the question of setting up trusts approachable, and to clear much of the fog that surrounds this topic. Many who have charitable causes at heart — not just to give monies and forget about the whole thing, but to see their particular concern through — are daunted by officialdom, paperwork and the fear of governmental crackdowns. This then is the 'complete' book on charities, the user-friendly approach to their creation and management.

To begin at the beginning: What is a charitable purpose? How can that philanthropic urge be best guided to fruition? How should the objectives of the trust be couched? We have all too many funds rusting from disuse because in the years past their objectives were narrowly cast and have today become dated and no longer relevant to the needs of the modern world. Changing objectives even by the cy pres doctrine is still a complicated and time consuming procedure. You will find an answer to these puzzles in Dadrawala's book.

Wrote Alexander Pope: "In faith and hope the world will disagree./But all mankind's concern is charity." He may be right at that, but how can this concern of mankind be translated into reality? The law of the land relating to charities is incredibly complex, to say the least. In fact, it is a veritable minefield. It was an eye-opener to see from Dadrawala's book just how many different statutes touch on the subject of trusts — that is, apart from the myriad rules, regulations and returns, which are prescribed and required by the

office of the Charity Commissioner.

To reach out to a broader base of people and causes in need, the corporate world has taken a value-based lead. There is new awakening to the need to address a company's social responsibilities. In the past, this took the shape of a concern for the employees, shareholders and the



Dadrawala: a helping hand

company's extended family. But now, public spirited companies are actively involved in the betterment of the community in which they are located, and of the country at large. Sponsorships of a variety of shows and programs and myriad other events for the disadvantaged among us are well entrenched in the corporate culture. Dadrawala takes notice of this welcome spirit of philanthropy.

There are several duties and responsibilities — both moral and legal — cast on a trustee and he has been given wide powers to carry this out. However, with the best of intents, he may still trip up, or be confused as to what he can do or can't. Investments, donations from abroad, donations to corpus, and to revenue, buying and selling property, fielding the requirements of the laws, getting and keeping tax exempt status and, in particular, those unbelievably involved tax laws; all these nagging doubts and questions have been addressed by Dadrawala in this book. Many of the points have been aptly illustrated by the law as enunciated by the courts. Knowing Dadrawala, should one have further questions or difficulties, I am sure, he and the Centre for Advancement of Philanthro-

py would be glad to lend a helping hand.

When setting up a charitable trust, a large preponderance of persons address the conventional areas of charity, such as relief of poverty, medical relief, education, etc. While these, no doubt, are areas where there is a great need and too much cannot be done, perhaps other areas can also be looked at which would also qualify in law as charitable purposes. These could address environmental concerns, empowerment of women, freedom from social evils or, with concrete megapolises becoming realities, to the qualitative improvement in the lives of hard-pressed city dwellers. Coupled with this the trustees should, I think, avoid what the giant in this world, Jamsetji Tata, called 'patchwork philanthropy' — giving a bit here and a bit elsewhere, making no dent on the problem. To give very little for the large needs and requirements of the many, does little good to any one. And it is no justification, to my mind, to say that this is how it was done in a specific year. Precedents should guide and instruct us, not chain us. Rather, the trustees should address and tailor their philanthropy to today's meaningful needs, particularly in the context of what inflation has made of the rupee.

From Dadrawala's personal trials has grown the institution of the Centre for Advancement of Philanthropy and the valuable books on philanthropy he has written. It is particularly inspiring when one can turn adversity around so as to benefit society at large. It is given to few to be able to do this.

If the law in the book can be updated at reasonable time intervals, this is the Bible a settlor and trustee can work and live by. Discard the rest of the books you may have on the subject! Let me end with a quotation, coincidentally, from the *Bible* which appears to me to be the credo of the Centre for Advancement of Philanthropy: "And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity."

Resurrecting Khabardar

Hormazdyar S. Dalal

Kavi Khabardar-na Gadya Lekho researched and compiled by Dr Dharmendra M. Master (Madhuram). Published in 1996 by Kavi A. F. Khabardar Janma Shatabdi Prakashan and Madras Parsi Zarthosti Anjuman, c/o Zoro Garments Private Ltd, Industrial Estate, Madras 600058. Pp: 350. Price: Rs 120.

Dr Dharmendra Master's love for the prose and poetical works of Kavi Khabardar has remained constant since the time he worked on his thesis, *The Creative Work of Ardeshtar Framji Khabardar* for his PhD. Part one of the thesis entitled *A. F. Khabardar-ni Kavita, Ek Adhyayan* was published in 1981. Since then, for the past 16 years, Master has been busy researching and publishing those poems, essays, speeches, etc of Khabardar which remained unpublished in book form during the poet's life time.

In 1990, with the fond cooperation of the poet's granddaughter Manek K. Khabardar, Master brought out three of Khabardar's poetical works in English: *The Rest House of the Spirit*, *Migrating Bird*, and *Leaf and Flower*. This was followed by *Manuraj*, a play in Gujarati. Again, in 1992, with financial assistance from the Bombay Parsi Punchayet, he brought to light *Kavi Khabardar-na Patro*, letters of the poet. In 1994, *Chayanika*, Khabardar's *prati kavya* (parodies) were published. And now we have a collection of 17 articles and speeches in *Kavi Khabardar-na Gadya Lekho*.

The work is divided into eight sections: literature, language (*bhasha*), journalism, biography and autobiography, research, astronomy, society (*samaj*) and nature (*prakruti*) — the various topics on which the poet had spoken or written between the years 1924 and 1949. The two articles (14 and 16) included in the book under review were first published in the Divali issue of *Navchetan* in 1961, and in the *Kavi Khabardar Smarak Granth* in 1962, respectively.

Khabardar was twice honored by the literary world of Gujarat. The first time was in 1924 when he was elected chairman of the literature section of the Seventh Gujarati Literary Convention held at Bhavnagar, Saurashtra. Again in 1941 he had the honor of being elected president of the 14th Gujarati Sahitya Parishad held at Andheri, Bombay. His addresses on both the occasions, included in this volume, are literary pieces of very high merit. They are scholarly and profound, fruit of the poet's vast reading and deep thinking.



Khabardar: erudite but humble

Khabardar may not command a place among the top ranking prose writers of Gujarat, but his style of writing and speaking is endearing. Simple, forthright, and full of homely imageries, it flows for pages like a fresh running brook.

From a very young age, Khabardar had consciously devoted himself to Gujarati literature. He firmly believed in speaking and writing correct but simple Gujarati. He did not favor Sanskritized or pedantic Gujarati, but always insisted on grammatically correct use of the language. He often pleaded with his coreligionists to learn *shudh* or chaste Gujarati, the language of their adopted motherland. In two addresses, *Gujarati Bhasha ane Parsio* and *Parsi Gujarati Bhasha* the poet very emphatically stressed this point of view.

Khabardar took to Gujarati literature as a poet at the early age of 16. Circumstances did not permit him even to pass his matriculate. Yet his knowledge of English language and literature, of philosophy, religion, psychology and science was phenomenal. He earnestly studied astrology and astronomy. He was equally conversant with old Gujarati literature, and his knowledge of Sanskrit literature, including the *Vedas* was commendable. In 1918, he was awarded the Sahitya Bhushan by the Kashi Sanskrit Vidyapeeth.

Khabardar's guru in Gujarati literature was Dady Taraporevala, poet and editor of the monthly *Moja Majah*. Later he was

also influenced by Dalpatram and Narmad. *Moja Majah* was very popular in the poet's young days. In 1897 the magazine had announced a competition for the writing of a hundred *dohras* (couplets) in Gujarati. As a young boy Khabardar entered the competition and won the first prize. Since then, the boy and the editor were good friends, and the relationship lasted till the death of Taraporevala.

In 1934, Khabardar paid his tribute to his guru by writing a very studied introduction to the second edition of Taraporevala's book of poems, *Dady Satshai*.

Earlier, Khabardar's first collection of poems *Vilasika* (1905) was reviewed by the guru in *Moja Majah*. In all, 16 volumes of Khabardar's poems had appeared before he died in 1953. The last one was entitled *Kirtanika*, of which *Darshanika*, an elegy running into several hundred verses, is the most popular. It was written on the death of his daughter Tehmina in 1929. He also wrote and published in 1918 and 1950 two collections of poems in English *The Silken Tassel* and *Zarathushtra — the First Prophet of the World*.

The last 20 years of the poet's life were full of worries and anxieties. Ill health and financial problems persistently plagued him. He left Madras and settled in Bombay in 1938, and devoted himself fully to an indepth study of the Zoroastrian religion and religious works like the *Gathas*. At the age of 57, he studied *Zend Avesta* and Pahlavi and came out with *New Light on the Gathas of Holy Zarathushtra* in 1951.

In spite of his failing health, he did not allow his reading or writing to suffer. He continued to read widely and expressed his views very clearly. He always had his motherland at heart and never tired of singing songs of *garvi* Gujarat.

Khabardar was erudite, yet humble. Not once, in the course of about 350 pages of the book under review, does he sound like a pedant. Effortlessly he carries his readers or audience with him to share in his vast store of knowledge, whether it be of subjects like astronomy or the *Vedas*, the *Ramayana* or the *Mahabharata*. His articles, *Dharmakriya-na-Mool* and *Teer Yasht-no Abhyas* are a fine example of his lucid prose.

Indeed, Master has done praiseworthy service to all lovers of Gujarati literature and deserves the sincere thanks of the Parsi community for compiling Kavi Khabardar's speeches and articles.

ZOROASTRIANS ABROAD

continued from page 20

ual report and audited accounts were proposed to be adopted, some members required certain changes to be incorporated in the accounts. Members by a majority vote did not adopt the report and audited accounts with a desire to have entries of accounts amended and the accounts represented for adoption at a re-convened meeting. Similarly, at a later stage, the appointment of Robson Rhodes as auditors for the forthcoming year was also deferred by members."

According to letters from ZTFE member and critic Tangree, there were other issues which were not reflected in the minutes. In his letter of November 29, 1996 to the ZTFE president, Tangree has enquired about the status of two proposals: one from committee member Sheriar Mehani to alter the constitution to "allow a limited time for the presidency;" the second from Deboo that "managing committee meetings be opened to members to attend as observers, (so as to) improve liaison, communication and rapport." Tangree himself had had an unpleasant brush with committee member Filly Maravala when he had sought to taperecord the events at the AGM.

According to *Parsiana* sources, Dorab Mistry stated in his election speech that "the Malcolm Deboo affair would be (his) top priority." As the new treasurer he is said to have solved the imbroglio and Deboo is believed to have received his money some time in February '97. When the adjourned AGM was reconvened on January 12, the auditors Hacker Young were unanimously accepted by the general body, notes the ZTFE newsletter. The same rejected set of audited accounts had to be passed, however, as according to the ZTFE's explanatory statement of December 17, 1996 accounts once approved and signed cannot be lawfully changed unless the charity applies for court permission or if the accounts are found not to be in accordance with the Companies Act. Hence the managing committee lay a draft of the accounting entries for 1996-97 before the reconvened AGM.

The present committee comprises president Rusi Dalal, vice president and house secretary Farrokh Byramjee, treasurer Dorab Mistry, secretary and young Zoroastrians coordinator Rushna Master, social secretary Faroukh Sorab, liaison officer Perses Sethna and members at large Burjor Mistry, Filly Maravala, Shehriar Mehani and Dinyar Cooper. Ervad Rustom Bhed-

war has been coopted on the managing committee after a decade — he was a member in 1986 when dissension first erupted in the ZTFE.

In the meantime a permanent shed has been erected in the back garden of Zoroastrian House to store kathi wood for the setayashgeh (a non-consecrated area which houses the traditional fire alter), informs the newsletter. The latent desire to establish an agiary in London seems to have been jolted awake by an Interfaith Network annual report which includes a survey of buildings designed for worship in the UK. The report states, "no buildings specifically designed for worship are listed for Zoroastrians," though 130 Buddhist, 130 Hindu, three Jain, 650 Muslim and 180 Sikh religious buildings, in addition to the 44,731 Christian churches and 520 Jewish synagogues feature on the registrar general's list. The ZTFE newsletter notes its response: "Is it not time that, if we boast to be the oldest ethnic minority community in the UK, we must have a purpose built place of worship?" Fund collection goes on. According to their financial statement, the New Premises Fund as on March 31, '96 stood at £ 1,66,722.

The newsletter notes the need to give Zoroastrian House a face-lift for the Congress. A plan has been forwarded by technocrat and former house secretary Godrej Bhungara and an appeal is out for volunteers to clean, sand, paint, varnish, vacuum the place, shampoo carpets, wash curtains and cook for volunteers. Donations sought in kind include a variety of paints, varnish, detergents, cleaning cloths, sandpaper, light fittings, door and window knobs, etc — and cash. Paint brushes, ladders, mops, gloves, old bedsheets (to cover floor and furniture) are sought on loan. Also music tapes and a cassette player to soothe volunteers!

Toronto based Zoroastrian novelist Rohinton Mistry who won the Commonwealth Writers Prize for 1996 for *A Fine Balance* — the second time that he has won the £ 10,000 award, the first being for *Such A Long Journey* — was scheduled for a private audience with the Queen at Buckingham Palace, as per the October newsletter.

ZTFE's 72-year-old trustee Bailey Irani was accorded a special mention and presented a handwritten certificate of commendation by the director of the Cystic Fibrosis Trust for scaling Ben Nevis, Scotland's highest peak. The climb atop

the 4,408 foot mountain had been organized by the Trust, informs the newsletter.

A star in the constellation of Cassiopeia, also known as The Queen, was named after the late Freddie (Balsara) Mercury on September 5, 1996. The date marked the sensational singer's 50th birthday. Coincidentally, the name of Mercury's band was Queen. On the basis of a report in *The Times* the newsletter adds that the naming has been approved by the London branch of the International Star Registry.

Arta Keyanian was married to Rustom Mehrabani "with Iranian Zarthushti custom and ritual" by Ervad Rustom Bhedwar in Manchester, notes the newsletter. But Bhedwar first had to learn the Iranian style of nuptials with the help of video cassettes of three Iranian weddings — one performed in Iran and two in California — on the special request of the bride. Shahrokh Shahrokh and other Iranian Zarthushtis helped Bhedwar study the ceremony to the delight of the young couple.

The UK community can happily add two lawyers and two doctors among their ranks, as notes the January newsletter. Two young Zoroastrians of London have qualified as barristers, completing their course from the Inns of Court School of Law and their Dinner Term at Greys Inn. Prior to her LLB degree Mahtab Cooper had worked in a well-known bank while Sheriar Patel had been involved with computers at the bachelor of arts level.

Hector Fanibanda of Newcastle-upon-Tyne has passed his final MBBS examination and received the Dr Sohrabji H. Kutar Award for successful medical students.

Mondana Irani of Staines, Middlesex, is pursuing her medical studies at St George's Hospital Medical School where she completed her recent course with distinction. Attaining academic distinction of such caliber makes Irani eligible for awards and scholarship for further studies in medicine at the University of London, notes the newsletter.

And if enterprise is the most sought after quality in the community today, 10-year-old Jennifer Batliwala displayed it in ample measure when, according to the ZTFE newsletter, she wrote to Queen Elizabeth II for information on Buckingham Palace — her chosen subject for a school project. The information supplied from the Palace resulted in her project being acclaimed by the school as one of the best received.

MILESTONES

The age of Zoroastrian brides (as listed in this issue) ranged between 21 and 46 years, the arithmetic mean (the total number of individual ages divided by the total number of brides) being 26 years. The corresponding figures for the grooms were 25 and 47, averaging at 31 years.

Ninety-one Zoroastrians were interred in the Towers of Silence as versus 15 births in the community (as per the data available from four hospitals in Bombay) in January 1997. Among the 24 deaths attributed to heart disease, 12 Zoroastrians were 80 years and above. Lung disease and pneumonia took a toll of 14 lives and cancer of eight. Five victims each fell prey to kidney failure, diabetes and hypertension and four each to septicemia and old age and general debility. The other diseases the patients succumbed to were brain disease (three) and bronchial congestion, asthma and nervous disorder (two each). Urinary tract infection, bronchitis, a road accident, multi organ failure, dehydration, Parkinson's disease, Hodgkin's lymphoma (a chronic, progressive disease of unknown origin, characterized by inflammatory enlargement of the lymph nodes, spleen and often liver and kidneys), uremia, haematemesis (vomiting of blood), tuberculosis, atherosclerosis (deposition of fatty substances in the arteries), multiple inju-

ries with pneumothorax (air or gas in the pleural cavity) and gastrointestinal bleed were the isolated cases registered in January. A 100-year-old male breathed his last. The age range fluctuated from 18 to 101 years. The Zoroastrian life expectancy at birth, in Bombay in January, was 76 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 boy to *Veera and Marazban Dalal* on January 1, 1997
A girl to *Roxane and Behram Khodaiji*; January 7
A boy to *Rukhshana and Darayush Batiwalla*; January 8
A girl to *Persis and Sam Cooper*; January 9
A boy to *Hufriah and Jal Mehta*; January 9
A boy to *Dilshad and Kerman Marfatia*; January 11
A boy to *Sharmin and Khushroo Moudawalla*; January 11
A boy to *Anaita and Hemanth Hegde*; January 12
A girl to *Nelly and Barjoo Dhei*; January 16
A girl to *Mahrook and Firoz*

Jamshedji; January 16
A boy, *Urvan*, to *Dilnaaz and Pervaz Zaiwala*, brother to *Zian*; January 18
A boy, *Karl*, to *Navaz and Nowzer Dudhmal*, brother to *Hufriya*; January 21
A boy to *Khurshid and Jamshed Darukhanawalla*; January 22
A boy to *Kamal and Sam Katgara*; January 22
A girl to *Kerbanoo and Rayomand Hira*; January 26

MARRIED

Rukshad Noshir Mistry and Kurush Keki Pardiwalla; January 3
Pouruchisty Naval Sukheshvala and Adil Homi Gazdar; January 5

Shanaz Aspandiar Kuneshti and Rumi Hoshang Mirza; January 5
Asheish Jimmy Daruwalla and Jehangir Dhun Surti; January 5
Nina Jimi Jesia and Neville Marzban Dumasia; January 6
Rukhshana Fali Satta and Behram Jamshed Panthaky; January 6
Farnaz Manek Madon of Hyderabad and Viraf Khrushed Hathiram; January 8
Khurshid Fali Vajifdar and Rohinton Khurshed Dastur; January 10
Zenobia Rustomji Chaiwalla and Bomi Rusi Shroff; January 10
Shahzeen Jehangir Sachinvala of California and Sarosh Rusi Siganporia; January 10
Zinnia Soli Chinoy and Hormuz Phiroze Aderianwalla; January 11
Nilufer Adi Italia of Bangalore and Nauzer Hoshang Kharas; January 12
Yenisha Adi Irani and Firdosh Homi Gagrati; January 13
Diana Burjor Minbatiwala and Neville Nani Desai of Poona; January 16
Sanobar Sorabji Patel and Kersasp Adi Patva of Thane; January 16
Jasmine Nariman Lam and Kaikushru Noshir Wadia; January 17
Mahnaaz Behram Rostami (Jafarabadi) and Behram Rashid Zandbaf; January 17
Ruby Baji Patel and Rayomand Phiroze Bhathena; January 18
Binaifer Aspi Chhayela and Yezdi Sam Diventri; January 18
Faraaz Kerfegur Doctor and Percy Rohinton Balsara; January 19
Viloo Nariman Navroji and Jango Keki Damania; January 19
Anahita Minoo Patel and Khurshed Burjor Mirza; January 19
Bakhtawar Ratanshaw Kapadia and Mehernosh Ardeshir Talati; January 19
Armin Keki Tampal and Zubin Soli Daroona; January 20
Anahita Dinyar Rustamji and Taimur Behram Badhniwalla; January 21
Firuzee Hoshang Mistry and Jehangir Homi Kalvachvala; January 23

Bhikhoo Navroji Kadodwala and Cyrus Fali Nava; January 23
Shekoofa Rustom Kushesh and Cyrus Sarosh Aryana of Kalyan; January 24
Shanaz Godrej Joshi and Noshir Naval Gobhai; January 26

DIED

Edul Bejonji Antia (65), residing at 584, Jillabai Wadia Bldg, Lady Jehangir Rd, Matunga, 400019; January 1
Bapsy Homi Balsara (63), 216, Sethna Bldg, Princess St, 400002; January 1
Perin Ardeshir Irani (72), Room no 4, New Khan Bldg, Zoroastrian Clny, Chikalwadi; 400007; January 1
Freny Minoo Khasusa (70), B/14, Elava Bldg, Mori Rd, Mahim, 400016; January 1
Jamshedji Fardoonji Parbhoo (81), 617/B, Cooper Bldg, Girgaum Rd, 400002; January 1
Jalu Minoo Patel (73), The Cliff, Raghavji Rd, Cumballa Hill, 400026; January 1
Sorabji Bomansha Cooper (74), G/2, Munsiff Bldg, Captain Clny, Tardeo, 400034; January 2
Banoobai Pirojshah Mistry (84), 22-A/C, Wassiamull Bldg, Grant Rd, 400007; January 2
Fali Byramji Bharucha (82), B, Empire Ter, N. Petit St, Lamington Rd, 400007; January 3
Firoz Ardeshir Bhot (82), Petit Bldg No 1, Balaram St, Grant Rd, 400007; January 3
Mani Framroze Birdy (58), 585, Khan Bldg, Chira Bazar, 400002; January 3
Freny Minocher Daruwalla (86), 11, Godrej Bldg, Contractor Baug, Mori Rd, Mahim, 400016; January 3
Fali Jimmy Engineer (45), 675, Amy Villa, Rd no 14, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; January 4
Khurshed Erach Lalkaka (89), Dharamjyot, 43, Pali Mala Rd, Bandra, 400050; January 4
Aloo Khurshed Boomla (83), C/o N. S. Jehangir, Darbhanga Mans, 12/A, Carmichael Rd, 400026; January 5
Homi Erach Kotwal (72), 18/B, Il-Palazzo, Little Gibbs Rd, 400006; January 5
Goolu Manchershah Nariman

(64), Sethna Bldg, Wadia St, Tardeo Rd, 400034; January 5
Daravus Behram Surty (18), 4/35, A. H. Wadia Bldg, G. D. Ambedkar Marg, (Parel Tank Rd), 400033; January 5
Dosi Cursetjee Vakeel (98), 13/14, Sheesh Mhl, De Monte Park Rd, Bandra, 400050; January 5
Hilla Sorab Wadia (92), Capri, Manav Mandir Rd, 400006; January 5
Adi Sheriarji Elavia (77), N/6, S. B. Bharucha Bldg, S. V. Rd, Andheri, 400058; January 6
Freny Bomanshaw Madon (101), Eddie Hse, Peddar Rd, 400026; January 6
Jimmy Hormusji Unvala (75), 785, Readymoney Hse, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; January 6
Daravus Feroz Marker (46), 7/A, Usha Sadan, Colaba Post Office, 400005; January 7
Dhunmai Savaksha Homavazir (79), 103, Nirmala Apts, J. P. Rd, Andheri (W), 400058; January 8
Vicky Eruchshaw Reporter (69), 32, Chitrakoot, Altamount Rd, 400026; January 8
Bhikho Khurshedjee Wadia (68), 22, Wadia Bldg, Marzban Clny, Dr Nair Rd, 400011; January 8
Eruch Dorabji Cooper (60), L/17, New Ava Bldg, Opp Bus Depot, Malesar, Navsari, 396445; January 9
Jal Pestonji Bapasola (100), 2, Breach Candy Hse, 68, Bhulabhai Desai Rd, 400026; January 10
Khorshed Dara Dhondy (63), 8, Jairaj Peerbhoy Bldg, 28, Forjett St, 400036; January 10
Dhun Dinshawji Calagopi (78), 598/A, Wadia Bldg, J. S. S. Rd, 400002; January 11
Soonoo Dara Jamshedji (82), Cama Bldg, Kashinath St, Tardeo, 400034; January 11
Kety Edalji Pardiwala (92), Jehangir Mans, 75, Hughes Rd, 400007; January 11
Avabai Jehangirji Ukaji (86), 11/D1, Multistoreyed Bldg, S. V. Rd, Andheri (W), 400058; January 11
Nargish Manekji Havewala (71), S/2, Dalal Est, Bombay Central, 400008; January 12
Tehmina Kaikushroo Panthaky (83), B/1, Tata Co-op Hsg Soc, Elphinstone Rd, Parel, 400012;

January 12
Najamai Nariman Sakhidas (88), A, Sanjana Bldg, Forjett Hill, Tardeo, 400036; January 12
Jehangir Boman Irani (82), 2/5, Himalaya Bldg, Worli Sea Face Rd, 400018; January 13
Burjor Ardeshtir Minocherhomji (76), 805, Bakhtawar, Opp Colaba P. O., 400005; January 14
Perin Aspiandiar Irani (83), Piroja Mans, Opp Grant Rd Parcel Off, Grant Rd, 400007; January 15
Ferdoon Dhunjshaw Patel (45), R/3, Kavarana Bldg, Sant Gadge Maharaj Rd, Dadar, 400014; January 15
Gover Burgor Irani (83), Saravali, Dahanu, Dist Thane, 401601; January 16
Perin Pirojshaw Patel (79), T/11, Cusrow Bldg, S. B. Rd, 400039; January 16
Gool Dhunjshaw Shroff (79), G/6, Shapur Bldg, V. P. Rd, 400004; January 16
Shirinbai Nariman Todiwalla (86), Sheridon Hse, Opp August Kranti Maidan, Gowalia Tank Rd, 400036; January 16
Tehmina Pestonji Bharucha (81), 10, Churchgate Mans, A Rd, Churchgate, 400020; January 17
Tehmina Rustomji Mobedji (90), Flat no 9, 815, Engineer Bldg, Jame Jamshed Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; January 17
Ratty Framroze Thanawalla (80), 9, Adityalaya, Lady Jehangir Rd, Hindu Clny, Dadar, 400014; January 17
Coomi Ardeshtir Billimoria (80), Manish Kavery Co-op Hsg Soc, Four Bglws, Andheri (W), 400053; January 18
Behram Jehangir Chinoy (91), 623, Marker Mans, Lady Jehangir Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; January 18
Shirin Rustom Irani (77), Warden Hall, 89/B, Hill Rd, Bandra, 400050; January 18
Nariman Maneckshaw Patel (86), Dadyseth Hse, 102, Dadyseth Agiary Lane, 400002; January 18
Shera Nariman Polishwalla (80), Victoria Bldg, S. A. Brelvi Rd, Fort, 400001; January 18
Aloo Sorabji Daruwalla (90), Hozdar Hse, 24, Nawab Tank Rd, Mazgaon, 400010; January 19
Burjor Furdoonji Mithaiwala

(73), 14, Costa Rica, 15, Sunder Lane, Orlem, Malad (W), 400064; January 19
Shirinbai Keki Sanjana (88), Sethna Hse, Mora Bunder, Uran, Dist Raigad, 400702; January 19
Parvez Minocher Aibara (40), Native Dispensary Bldg, Chandanwadi, Chira Bazar, 400002; January 21
Sam Jamshedji Desai (79), A/2, 17, New Khareghat Clny, Babulnath Rd, 400007; January 21
Hilla Jal Daruwala (83), 21, El Cid, 13, B. G. Kher Marg, Malabar Hill, 400006; January 21
Rustom Khurshedji Sanjana (86), 8, Roshan Mans, 664, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; January 21
Ratan Jivanji Tavarai (80), Dotiwala Est, Sant Savta Cross Lane no 2, Byculia, 400027; January 21
Minoo Maneckji Dalal (87), N/1, Cuffe Castle, Cuffe Parade, 400005; January 22
Naja Burjorji Fanibanda (98), 6, Nowroji Mans, 31, Wodehouse Rd, 400001; January 22
Homi Cawasji Ghandhy (83), Gool Mans, Balaram St, Grant Rd, 400007; January 22
Homai Byramshaw Illava (83), C/o R. P. Jehangir, 261, Jupiter, 41, Cuffe Parade, 400005; January 22
Dina Dhunjisha Italia (80), Marker Hse, 5th Khetwadi Lane, 400004; January 22
Kaikhushru Mehrwan Irani (Farshed) (82), 314, Kaiser Bldg, Dr C. H. St, Chandanwadi Cross Lane, Marine Lines, 400002; January 23
Daulat Burjorji Mehta (83), 4/A, New Dubash Bldg, Gamadia Clny, Tardeo, 400007; January 23
Naja Framji Dolicooca (86), K/2, Cusrow Bldg, S. B. Rd, 400039; January 24
Ave Dadi Mulla (84), Rushila, 17, Carmichael Rd, 400026; January 24
Eruch Jamshedji Bamboat (77), Venus Bldg, Ali Premji Marg, 400007; January 25
Freny Noshir Bharucha (48), Santoshi Niwas, 43, Trinity St, Dhobitalao, 400002; January 25
Keki Sorabji Bharucha (86), C/34, Anand Darshan, 13, Peddar Rd, 400026; January 25
Homai Erach Bhiwandiwalla

(83), F. Cama Bldg, Zoroastrian Clny, Chikalwadi, Next to Bhatia Hospital, 400007; January 25
Pesi Manchershia Coachman (77), Umrigar Bldg, Zoroastrian Blocks, Chikalwadi, Tardeo, 400007; January 25
Aloo Ardeshtir Oonwala (78), Stardust No 6, Rajan Rd, Off Carter Rd, Bandra, 400050; January 25
Mani Boman Patel (76), 3, Daruwala Bldg, 3rd Marine St, Dhobitalao, 400002; January 25
Aloo Kaikhushroo Rabady (84), Flat no 8, 145, Daruwala Bldg, Alibhai Premji Marg, 400007; January 25
Adi Dhunjshaw Elavia (78), 654, Firdoshi Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; January 26
Nergish Dali Framna (68), 384/A, Kapadia Mans, Grant Rd, 400007; January 26
Framroz Sawaksha Bailiff (85), 22, West Minister Soc, Duncan Causeway Rd, Sion, 400022; January 28
Bachoo Eric Patel (47), B/22, Godrej Bldg, Off Nepean Sea Rd, 400026; January 28
Adi Nariman Patel (71), D/2, Jer Bldg, Dr Ambedkar Rd, Byculia, 400027; January 29
Piroja Ardeshtir Bajan (88), 2, Hormuz Bldg, Dadaji Konddeo Marg, 400027; January 30
Navroji Shapurji Buharivala (86), 806, Manju Mhl, Pali Hill, Bandra (W), 400050; January 30
Manijeh Framroz Daruwalla (73), 110, Everest Bldg, J. P. Rd, Versova, Andheri (W), 400061; January 30
Rati Dosabhai Variava (75), 3, Baria Bldg, Gamadia Clny, Tardeo, 400007; January 30
Ardeshtir Khurshedji Banker (65), 51, Karelwadi, Thakurdwar Rd, 400002; January 31
Dara Burzor Joshi (75), Kismet, 4th Pasta Lane, Colaba, 400005; January 31
Behram Ardeshtir Mulla (61), Hill View, 23, N. S. Patkar Marg, 400007; January 31

CALCUTTA

BORN

A boy, Kurush, to Khushnuma and Jimmy Medhora; January 21

DIED

Mehru Mistry of Hyderabad, daughter of Sheroo and Homi and sister of Pervez and Aban

Hirji; January 4
Phiroze Dosabhooy Framroze, husband of Hilla and brother of late Soli and Jimmy; January 9
Shapurji Sorabjee Wadia, husband of Mehroo and father of Noshir and Daisy Sukhia; January 21

DELHI

DIED
Roshni Deshpande (74), wife of Ramesh and mother of Chirag and late Deepan; January 31

MADRAS

MARRIED
Feroza Madan, daughter of Suber and Jamshed, and *Cushrow Jassawala* of Bangalore, son of late Gool and Jal; January 5

NAVSARI

DIED
Putlami Nadirshah Master (85), 7/5, Amardeep Soc, Maneklal Rd, 396445; January 12
Soonabai Ardeshir Patrawalla, Aji St, Malesar, 396445; January 15
Jimmy Nasarwanji Santeke (82), Parsi Infirmary, Rustamwadi, 396445; January 17
Homi Pirojshah Bucha (70), 8, Avan Baug, 396445; January 27
Minoo Rustomji Motorwalla (49), S/15, Avan Baug, 396445; January 27

POONA

DIED
Sehra Bomansha Choksey (85), St John Home, 808, Gurwarpath, 411002; January 1
Tehmuraz Burjorji Unwalla (80), Unwalla Bldg, Padamjee Comp, Bhavanipeth, 411002; January 5
Viloo Eduljee (Navsariwalla) (60), T. Asha, Guru Nanak Ngr, 411001; January 6
Meherji Jamshedji Dhanjishah (67), Liberty II Bldg, 8, Koregaon Park, 411001; January 11
Hilla Jehanbux Pocha (79), Bldg no 3, New Sujata Co-op Hsg Soc, Bund Garden Rd, 411001; January 12
Manekshaw Pestonji Divecha (92), A/3, Hermes Apts, 389, Bhavanipeth, 411002; January 13
Khurshedji Edulji Vajifdar (95), F/10, Pudamji Palace, Bhavanipeth, 411002; January 16

FIGURES AT A GLANCE*									
	Bombay			India			World		
	This issue	1996	1997	This issue	1996	1997	This issue	1996	1997
BORN									
Boys	10	97	10	1	8	1	2	29	1
Girls	5	118	5	—	4	—	4	35	1
MARRIED									
Parsi	29	193	29	1	6	1	1	16	—
INTERCOMMUNAL									
Males married out	—	25	—	—	3	—	—	2	—
Females married out	—	20	—	—	2	—	—	7	—
DIED									
CONSIGNED									
Males	38	457	38	9	98	9	6	61	4
Females	53	502	53	13	89	13	3	44	—
CREMATED									
Males	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Females	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

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.

SURAT

DIED
Allamai Pirojsha Dastoor (75), Machlipith, 395003; January 8
Khorshad Homi Lahewala (68), Choki St, Nanpura, 395001; January 17
Dolatbanoo Darabshaw Wadia (81), Rani Talav, Main Rd, 395003; January 19
Comi Minocher Bhesania (60) of Olpad, sister of Polly J. Sethna; January 24
Alamai Kharshadi Chinoy (92), Nariman Home and Infirmary, Shahpore, 395003; January 26
Pilamai Bejonji Wadia (Haadva) (78), Damri House, Nanpura, 395001; January 30

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CANADA

London
 BORN
 A girl, *Zarine*, to *Shermaz* and *Jamshed Minwalla*, sister to *Aramaiti*; January 1

Ontario

DIED
Fareedoon Guzdar, father of *Khurshed*, Sam and *Dhun*; January 13

Toronto

DIED
Homi Eruch Kotwal, husband

of *Tehmi* and father of *Eruch* and *Arnaz*; January 5

Vancouver

MARRIED
Monick Bahrami, daughter of *Katie* and *Khodadad*, and *Jamshid Amanat*, son of *Shirin* and *Ardeshir*; December 29, 1996

Victoria

BORN
 A boy, *Burzin*, to *Havovi* and *Noshir Irani*; January 20, 1997

IRAN

Tehran

DIED
Dolat Shahriar Avijeh, mother of *Pary Kianianfard*; December 19, 1996
Dinar Marzban Avijeh, father of *Pary Kianianfard*; December 24

PAKISTAN

Multan

DIED
Naju (Nelly) Leivers, sister of *Jehangir*, *Soonie Bahadur Patell* and *Homi*; November 17

UK

London

BORN
 A boy, *Xerxes*, to *Roxanne* and *Pourous Panthakee*; September 28

DIED

Khurshed Naoroji Wadia (76), husband of *Roshan* and father of *Darius*; December 15

USA

Charlotte, North Carolina

BORN
 A girl, *Nina*, to *Khursheed* and *Farrokh Wankadiya*; December 24

Chicago

BORN
 Twins (girls), *Zasha Anahita* and *Alicia Trista*, to *Sujata* and *Xerxes Gazder*; October 9

New Jersey

DIED
Kavas Framroze Fitter (71), husband of *Fren* and father of *Paul*, *Tehmi*, *Tara*, *Daraius* *Christopher* and *Bryan*; January 24, 1997

New Orleans

DIED
Firoze Bomanshah Sidhwa (75), husband of *Jeroo* and father of *Fali* and *Farhad*; January 22

Washington

DIED
Katie Pastakia (45), wife of *Behram* and mother of *Meher*; December 14, 1996

Compiled by Roxana A. Driver

The maker of the Maharaja

Parinaz Gandhi

Died: Sorab (Bobby) Kaikashroo Kooka, 83, former commercial director of Air-India known to have created the legendary Maharaja, the endearing mascot for the airline, on July 3, 1996 at Bombay's Breach Candy Hospital following Parkinson's disease.

"I've lost my voice," wept the sorrowful Maharaja announcing Kooka's demise on the prominent hoarding at Bombay's Kemps Corner, the site being associated as Kooka's show window where his Maharaja spilt the latest gag. As notes the tribute in the *Afternoon on Sunday*, July 7, 1996, "Seniors in Air-India even today recall how Kooka's Maharaja in the initial days ruffled many feathers, embassies and officials of the Indian government," requiring chairman J. R. D. Tata to remind him to "go easy on the hoardings." As related by senior director of Tata Sons, S. A. Sabavala, "The relationship JRD had with a senior executive was wonderful. Of course, his creations did get JRD and himself into trouble with the authorities... He handled the media extremely well. I thought of him as R. K. Laxman (brilliant Indian cartoonist) of the skies."

Despite the reprimands he earned, "Bobby was Bobby and there was nothing or nobody who could contain his mischief, wit and timely attacks," mentions *The Afternoon* write-up. When Air-India was set to launch its first boeing in Bombay in end 1960, England's Queen Elizabeth II was expecting. How did Kooka choose to break the news? By presenting a pregnant Maharaja serenely enquiring, "Can you keep a secret?" The company's annual calendars too, a rare mix of art and humor, were believed to be the result of Kooka's ingenuity.

Kooka did not mind being referred to as "Bobby — the midwife," by his friends on Willingdon Club's golf course. He did however express his displeasure when his offspring, the Maharaja, was referred to as the "corporate image," insisting "it's too pompous. Let's just say he is our emblem."

Kooka's summation as recalled by *The Afternoon*, noted, "Our little fellow does lend himself to situations. He may be royal but his blood isn't blue, he's a man of many parts, lover-boy, vendor of naughty postcards and even pregnant. There have been times when his pulse beat has caused us

concern, ministers and dignitaries of lesser import have denounced him as a relic of the feudal system, but he (the Maharaja who represents the traveller) is our bread and butter."

While having an irrepressible, puckish humor, Kooka was "also a creator, an



Kooka with his endearing mascot

Photo courtesy: The Afternoon Despatch and Courier

organizer, a team leader, a tough negotiator, the publicity genius and incorruptible public servant whose dedication to Air-India was so largely responsible for the worldwide prestige and success of Air-India then," acknowledged Air-India managing director Brijesh Kumar at a condolence meeting convened in Kooka's honor on July 8, 1996.

"We were proud to be Indians and preferred travelling by Air-India (then)," reminisced industrialist Sohrab Godrej, adding, "No airline gave such personal service as Air-India."

Kooka's booklet *Foolishly Yours*, whilst providing entertainment to passengers, depicted the airline's ability to take a jibe at itself. It did also, however, offend the sensibilities of some of the bureaucrats, it is reported.

Known to be a no-nonsense man, Kooka was believed to be a perfectionist who was respected, feared, admired and loved in his 34 years of service, first with the aviation department of Tata Sons, and later with Air-India, and Air-India Charters, a subsidiary organization where he was chairman.

The rapport shared by Kooka and JRD can be evinced from the farewell speech delivered by JRD on the occasion of Kooka's retirement. Recalling their first meeting he mentioned: "On the fateful day in May, Mr Kooka appeared in my office and having pointed out the deficiencies in Tata organization, explained how badly needed he was in Tatas to put them right. I asked him what his qualifications were, and found that he had his degree from an obscure university, somewhere in England, called Oxford (Kooka's schooling was at St Peter's, York, after which he studied modern history at Brasenose College, Oxford). Having tried in vain about every six months for 34 years to fire Kooka, and government having kindly obliged by invoking a ridiculous superannuation rule, I feel strangely lost in no longer having him around — I mean around my neck — for he has been of tremendous help to me. All I had to do to be sure that I made the right decision was to act contrary to his advice!"

Rangoon born Kooka had after his education in England come to Bombay to join his father's film exhibiting business, states

a write-up in *Blitz*, July 13, 1996. His flair for creativity soon beckoned him to join the Tatas. The first recipient of the Indian Society of Advertisers' gold medal in 1960, Kooka had been selected the Advertising Man of the Year for "his original, outstanding and solid contribution to advertising in India..." In fact after his disassociation from Air-India he continued to involve himself with advertising, particularly Hindustan Thompson Associates Limited, and served as chairman of IMPEC (Indian Motion Picture Export Corporation which was later merged with the Film Finance Corporation to form the National Film Development Corporation), states his niece Gita Mistry.

Though substantially involved with the media, Kooka was not drawn to the TV and in fact never had one at his residence, reveals another niece Naira Ahmadullah. He preferred to keep himself well informed with current affairs through his readings, surrounded himself with interesting artefacts like glass paintings and folk bronzes which were not necessarily pricey, and enjoyed the companionship of his pet dogs, she adds. Kooka who had not married "was able to better relate with his two nieces and nephew as adults, rather than as children," was Ahmadullah's observation. While golf continued to be his favorite game, he was known for his boxing during his undergraduate days. Kooka was fond of shikar, not the comfortable arm-chair type pastime but the rugged type which left him with a few scars, and paradoxically was also active with the World Wide Fund for Nature. His interest and awareness of the need for conservation probably stemmed from his earlier shikar days, believes the family.

Though known to face criticism fairly well, Kooka could not stand pomposity, said his nephew Saleem Ahmadullah. Many were the Parsi friends who would invite him to parties because he could keep guests laughing. And yet he was not insular in his views and opinions concerning the community. This is probably because his formative years were not spent in a typically Parsi milieu, believes Saleem who preferred to describe his uncle as "a small man (who) stood very tall."

Kooka, who chose to be cremated, is survived by his sister Deena Ahmadullah.



READERS' FORUM

continued from page 4

The Divya Daan library has 20,000 volumes on philosophy, psychology, education, sociology, religion, literature and Salesiana. The library also receives 84 periodicals and magazines, most of which are philosophical. Most of the periodicals and magazines are in English, while some are in French, German and Italian. The Institute publishes a biannual journal, *Divyadaan: Journal of Philosophy and Education*.

Every year the Institute offers a special course conducted on "Religions of India" for the BPh students. The main objective of this course is to make our students familiar with other faiths so that they may learn and widen their horizons to appreciate the good that is present in each faith. It is an occasion for our students to esteem other faiths and to have proper knowledge of them so that we can learn to live together as brothers and sisters in love and unity. This is an urgent need in India today.

In the past Mr Bejon N. Desai, the former principal of Boys' Town Public School and presently its secretary, most willingly accepted our invitation to give our students a lecture on Zoroastrianism. This year he made arrangements to get Mr Roni K. Khan, a scholar on Zoroastrianism. The lecture on the philosophical aspects of the Zoroastrian faith was very good and very much appreciated by our students. We take this opportunity to thank Mr Roni Khan and Mr Bejon Desai.

FR ALBANO FERNANDES, SDB
Principal, Divya Daan, Nasik

Bank openings for Parsis

Parsis were the pioneers in banking and insurance. But now, due to nationalization of banks and insurance companies, employment in banks and insurance companies is closed to Parsis. Today you will not find any new Parsi staff in any bank or insurance firm.

May I suggest that the Bombay Parsi Punchayet send a delegation of a couple of trustees to Delhi to meet the authorities concerned and request for a reservation of five percent for the community? If the government gives us two to three percent reservation it will be a great blessing to the Parsi community.

Please remember, by giving charity to a person you are making him a beggar, but by giving employment you make the person self-supporting. BURJOR NAVROJI VAKIL

Edited by Parinaz Gandhi

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