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 Unsigned letters or those without an address will not be published.

"Identity in jeopardy"

Having been asked by *Parsiana* to submit a 2,000-word review of John Hinnells' *Zoroastrians in Britain*, I unwittingly complied. To be sure, I did not realistically anticipate the reproduction of all the pearls of wisdom in it. My original review, highlighting some salient features of the good Professor's book, concentrated on aspects which have directly affected our UK communities' well-being: the factual reasons for the absence of harmony and the resultant disunity. Your own recent coverage of the fracas and fiascos endemic here bears out my point. In my review of this substantial and expensive volume I had utilized the author's own statements, some balanced, some tendentious.

I now find an unacceptably garbled version of that offering printed by you ("Identity in jeopardy," Books, *Parsiana*, February-March 1997) and, to add insult to injury, I see another reviewer's services were enlisted for ostensibly the same pur-

pose. It becomes a question of etiquette, and had I had the courtesy of being informed of this intention on your part, I would have unhesitatingly withdrawn my entire review as I do not believe in submitting sycophantic twaddle.

In the event I read a savagely butchered parody which makes little sense to me, and, I am sure, would make even less to an intelligent readership. I see, for instance, a particularly nonsensical insertion, supposedly from my pen, "On occasion we meet a slew of percentages that deal with the larger question of the achievements of ethnic Indians in the UK vis-à-vis the host community." I have emphatically not written any such gobbledygook — what on earth does it mean, and, pray tell, what is a slew?

The impressions I had conveyed were with respect to the UK Parsis' view of themselves, their self-projection before the majority population, and above all Hinnells' own view of this situation — a situation which is gradually worsening, no thanks to the mindlessly irresponsible spokesmen at Zoo House. (In view of your own publishing of the facts of loutish behavior by the impudent hijackers there, it should no longer be appropriate to print Zoroastrian House, there now being little Zoroastrian about it.)

Because of the absurdities you have printed under my name, I would like to completely dissociate myself from the authorship of that travesty of a published review.

A small point which you may like to consider for future publications: whatever the collective feeling at editorial level on spelling conventions, it is a disservice to any author to directly quote him/her differently from the actual published form of his/her work. Here I have in mind your tampering with Hinnells' use of colour twice in the closing quote of the review. However much *Parsiana* would like to go mid-Atlantic in this matter, it is most unlikely that Professor Hinnells could stoop to color.

If it happens that any serious-minded reader is, after this protest, interested in knowing the real and full contents of my original review, would he/she please feel

free to write to me for a copy (27 Cleveland Road, Barnes, London SW13 0AA)?

FARROKH VAJIFDAR
London, UK

The Editor replies

Parsiana regrets the offence caused.

All reviews and articles submitted to *Parsiana* are edited, oftentimes substantially. And in the process of editing, spellings too are invariably amended so that we have consistency throughout the magazine. The spellings and meanings of the words we use in English can be found in *Webster's Dictionary*. *Parsiana* follows the American spellings as the words comprise fewer alphabets thereby conserving paper and ink.

"Surfing surnames"

Many congratulations to Burjor Daboo on his compiling of an extremely comprehensive list of Parsi surnames ("Surfing surnames," *Parsiana*, February-March 1997).

I (like several other readers) just had to skim the list to check that most of my family surnames did appear in the list. And they did! Both Rao and Canteenwala featured as did more distant family surnames—Coachbuilder and even Hathikhana-wala.

Around the late 19th century, several Parsis who left the west coast of India to settle further inland took on surnames like Dinshaw, Ardeshir, Framjee, Sohrabjee, etc. These "name-surnames" do not find a mention in the list... but then surprisingly, neither does the surname of my childhood French language teacher... Bobbinmaker.

Finally, whilst I know of the Soda-waterwala family, I wonder if your readers can inform us if there actually is a Soda-waterbottleopenerwala (this surname appears in the list) family? Could it merely exist for the benefit of the late Adi Marzban's *naataks* (plays)?

I must commiserate with the male members of the Chor, Dik, Ghati, Moos, Screwala and of course Gookhadoo families... but then the famous bard (no relation of the Shakespearewallahs) did write, "What's in a name? That which we call a rose... by any other name would smell as sweet" (*Romeo and Juliet*).

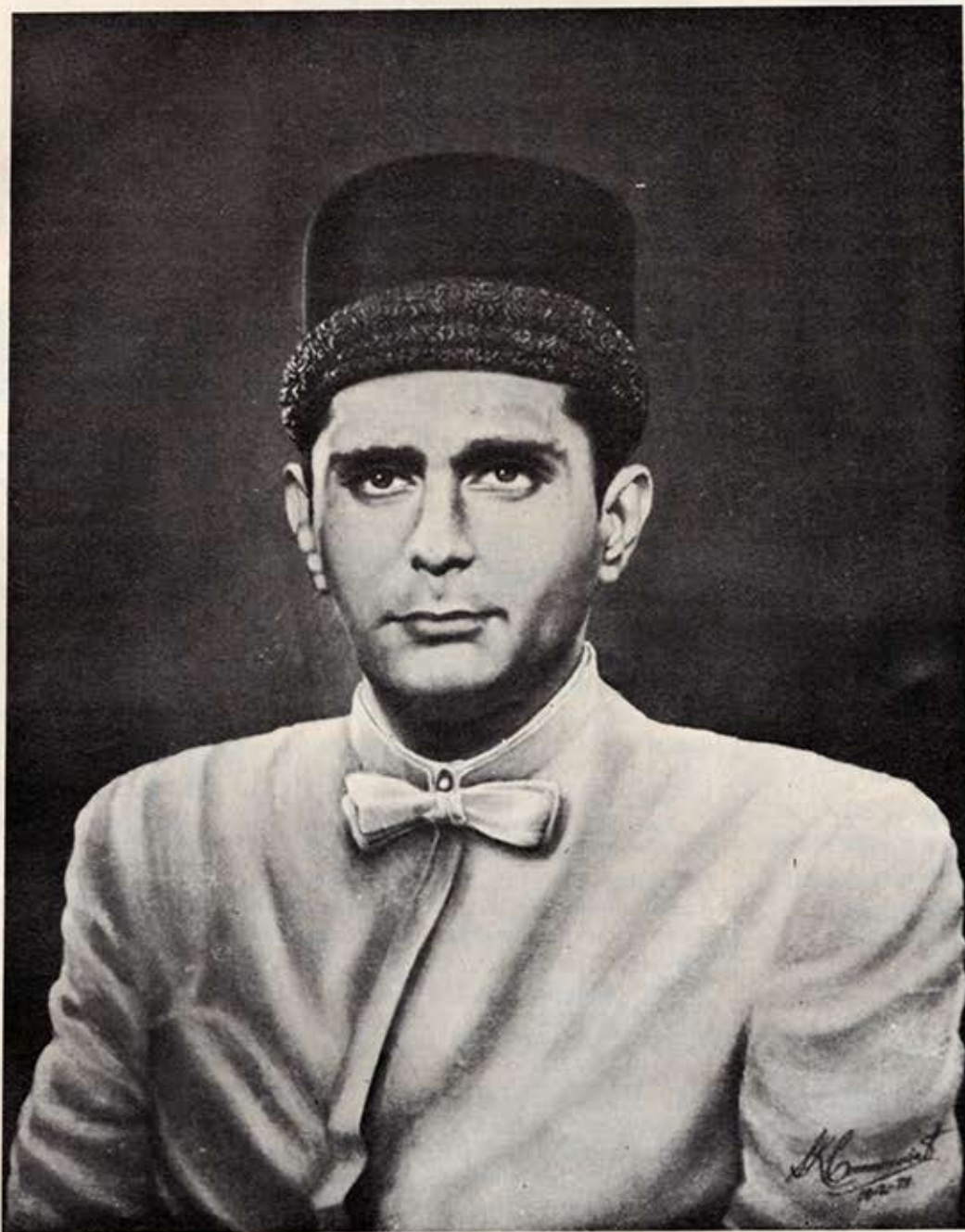
But alas, a little Birdie tells me that the Gookhadooos disagree!

DAVID S. CANTEENWALA
London, UK



Vajifdar: regret the review

This is with reference to the article "Surfing



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surnames" (*Parsiana*, February-March 1997).

The community owes a deep debt of gratitude to Ms Goolcher D. Coyaji and Mr Burjor M. Daboo for the stupendous task they have undertaken. May I add my bit by mentioning three surnames which were not there in the list? They are Falapalan, Panty and Papa. There could be many other surnames too which could not have been listed because they are extinct. We look forward to your readers supplementing the list by writing to you so that we come to know of "dead" surnames amongst Parsis.

I would like to congratulate Ms Goolcher D. Coyaji and Mr Burjor M. Daboo for their efforts. To them it was a labor of love.

SAM M. BILLIMORIA

The list of Zoroastrian surnames carried in *Parsiana* (February-March 1997) is of much interest.

I, myself, have compiled a list of about 600 surnames out of which about 125 surnames do not appear in your list. I give them for what they are worth.

Afagh, Anjeerwadi (another variation is Anjeerwala), Aryamehr, Asa, Asavaid, Bachana, Backon, Bahmani, Bakerry, Bambawala, Bangalorewalla, Barafwalla, Baralakh, Bastani, Bennet, Bhooori, Bhumia, Bobbinmaker, Borkhadiwalla, Bozana, Brandywalla, Bunsu, Burge, Burmawalla, Burniwalla, Butki, Calagopi, Chakkar, Chamdawalla, Chhappania, Chhatrwalla, Chobdar, Chowdhary, Dankewalla, Darjeelingwalla, Dattar, Dehradioonwalla, Dervish, Desana, Deshmukh, Devkwalla, Dewan, Dharampurwalla, Dohadwalla, Ellavia, Elchi, Farsiwalla, Fisher, Gambhir, Ganjia, Gardin, Godavra, Godhrawalla, Golibarwalla, Gorakhpurwalla, Guineawalla, Gumasta, Hazari, Hodiwalla, Hubliwalla, Jambusarwalla, Kaifer, Kalaigar, Kalalia, Kalfati, Kayani, Khairabadi, Khapoliwalla, Khatarawalla, Khosravi, Kohina, Lafa, Liloowalla, Lodhanwalla, Macca, Malach, Malaiwalla, Mansukh, Maskati, Matcheswalla, Mochi, Mojia, Mombassawala, Mooghat, Moorawala, Morenas, Moriabadi, Mowdawala, Mumbrawalla, Mumpala, Mydear, Naksatkhan, Nalladaru, Nallaseth, Nanjivora, Nasrabadi, Panchmahalwalla, Parelwalla, Patch, Penti, Pochee, Qazi, Rabbani, Raimalwalla, Revetna, Rumwalla, Sasani, Shukrekhduda, Sibina, Sotori, Stationmaster, Surbhanwalla, Tankariwalla, Tarachand, Tester, Thookchat, Vanoriwalla, Vapiwalla, Vasania, Vesawala, Vyara, Waghaiwalla, Waglacoper, Zaikar, Zorabian.

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"The sacred sojourn"

Although "The sacred sojourn" by Rustam Sidhwa (*Parsiana*, February-March 1997) is relevant to some extent, it must be remembered that the deceased author lived in Pakistan and must, therefore, have been able to frequent the Iranshah only once in many years. While for many of us going to Udvada is routine, for him the pilgrimage must have been a very major and important event in his spiritual life.

Due to these contextual differences, I do not agree with him on the following counts:

- It is perfectly possible for a devotee to establish a direct rapport with Ahura Mazda at Udvada without "the medium of a din dastur." The rapport is established within one's mind and heart, nowhere outside.
- Before going to Udvada it would be quite ridiculous to "meet all one's family and friends and seek their forgiveness." If I went to my cousin (Khushnuma)'s Bandra flat, knocked and started begging her forgiveness, she'd probably get the fright of her life and think I had gone off my rocker!
- In Zoroastrianism, ours is a one-to-one relationship with God. While humbundagi has its place, to suggest that the presiding dastur should lead the congregation inside the Iranshah in group prayer five times a day through the whole lot of *farajyat*

Pilgrims at the Iranshah

bundagi is really asking for the unnecessary.

• The suggestion that we should "forget our desire for food" when visiting Udvada is nothing short of a penance which our religion prohibits. Self-denial has no place in our teachings so far as I know. I, for one, see nothing wrong or irreligious in devouring "fried *bois*, milk puffs and *nirao*" (or something a touch stronger) at dear old Globe or Paradise.

KHURSHED PASTAKIA



I would also like to inform corporate readers of your magazine that we offer special rates to companies whose executives may be travelling to London on a regular basis.

KHORSHED D. BHOTE

London, UK

"London accommodation"

Regarding my advertisement, "London accommodation," (*Parsiana*, February-March 1997) I wish to draw your readers' attention to a printing error in the rates for children. It should read "£8 per day for one child and £15 per day for two children."

Reservation of seats

Upon assuming office in the national Commission for Minorities as a representative of the Parsi Zoroastrian community, I took the liberty of contacting all the Parsi anjumans and punchayets all over India to

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ascertain various problems and issues facing them. One of the important problems facing young Parsi boys and girls, especially from Bombay and Gujarat is the question of admission into engineering, medical and other colleges.

As conveyed to me by:

•Mr D. N. Billimoria, honorary secretary of the Bangalore Parsee Zoroastrian Anjuman, 15, Queen's Road, Bangalore, two seats in engineering courses and one seat in the medical course are reserved for Parsis in the State of Karnataka. However, this is subject to the applicant having completed the last seven academic years in the State of Karnataka.

•Mr Darius Marshall, the managing trustee of the Calicut Parsi Anjuman (Kerala State), has informed me that one seat is reserved for a degree course in the St Joseph's College at Devagiri, Calicut for any Parsi boy or girl.

I hope parents will kindly take note of this information so that they can plan the future of their children well in time.

I also hope this information will motivate the Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP) which is the premier Parsi punchayet of India and also perhaps the richest Parsi trust in India to draw inspiration and try to

do something for obtaining reservation of seats in engineering and medical colleges for boys and girls of the Parsi community. Nearly 80 percent of the community in India, especially the educated youngsters, reside in or around Bombay.

I would also like to draw the attention of the trustees of the BPP that according to my information some years ago two seats were reserved for Parsis in the Grant Medical College (affiliated to the Sir J. J. Hospital) as a mark of respect to the illustrious son of the Parsi community, Sir Jamsetji Jejeebhoy, who had established this grand Hospital. I hope the trustees of the BPP will take up this issue with the Maharashtra government to try and revive these two nominated seats in the medical faculty for Parsis.

MARAZBAN J. A. PATRAWALA



Patrawala: need to save seats

Revive assets

For some years now, I have been talking to some people who matter regarding the profitable use of the large non-performing

assets within the community.

The lament is that not much can be done because of the original trust deeds created by the donors/benefactors. Also, some of the trustees are not prepared to flex their knees and re-orientate the use of the "gold mines" they control.

I was told that several years back, the House of Godrej was prepared to give a handsome fee for hoardings at Parel (Bombay). But owing to some wrangle, it did not materialize.

Instead of debating about stupid and moribund subjects, our elders need to have an Assets Revival Plan (ARP) at the apex level of the Parsi Punchayet, Bombay. It should catalog the community's assets across the country. The proceeds from such a revival should go to sustain:

- our hospitals;
- our educational institutions;
- our orphanages;
- more scholarships to deserving students (particularly those who are unable to get a first class grade);
- establish a Parsi-run college (there is none today and it's urgently needed);
- sustain community publications viz *Parsiana* and *Jamé*;
- prevent the old seeking alms at agiaries.



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These are not the only causes, but some of the important ones, besides housing.

If any input is required from me, I am ready.

B. T. DASTUR

Global umbrella

This is with reference to the various articles and opinions expressed through the Press against the formation of the World Council of Zoroastrian Federations (WCZF). Probably the objections have been raised through the mistaken belief that the creation of the WCZF will subjugate the sovereignty of member associations and anjumans and also that of The World Zoroastrian Organisation (WZO).

I have the greatest respect and admiration for the WZO which has grown over the years after viewing their wonderful work in the fields of social, economic, cultural and educational uplift of Zoroastrians worldwide. In fact, the office bearers should be officially congratulated and nominated for various prizes instituted worldwide for individuals and organizations engaged in the social uplift of the economically weaker sections of society. However in this world you need a representative organization to bring this to the notice of the organizers of these prizes. I am also proud to be a humble

member of this Organisation since its inception in India.

It is also possible that the mistaken belief that the WCZF will override the importance of the WZO stems from the fact that the name of this new world body does not imply the nature and intent of its object. Perhaps its objects would better be represented with a name such as WCZFZAA (World Council of Zoroastrian Federations of Zoroastrian Associations and Anjumans). This name indicates the very nature and intent of it being a world apex body of Zoroastrian federations. And it is intended to be largely political in nature, meant to represent Zoroastrians through a democratically elected apex body to the various countries where its members reside and also when required to serve as liaison between various organizations and bodies of the United Nations.

The members of WZO need have no fear that the WZO will lose its special identity. When the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India was formed, no Zoroastrian organization or anjuman represented therein lost its individual identity. It is true the Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP) did fear that it would lose its traditional apex body status, but a properly

negotiated settlement as regards representation in the Federation saw the BPP rise in status vis-à-vis other smaller anjumans and has made the Federation of India a truly representative body of all Indian Zoroastrians.

It is therefore essential that WCZF and the WZO work together on one apex organization to achieve a common goal: of uplifting the socioeconomic and political identity of Zoroastrians worldwide, the WCZF through political representation and the WZO through their welfare activities. The onus of negotiating a workable arrangement between these two bodies must lie with the WCZF. I do not believe the WZO could amend its constitution to encompass the objects of the WCZF. This in fact would definitely dilute its basic object i.e. welfare.

It is a logical conclusion that like-minded individuals form an association; that like-minded associations form a national federation; and that like-minded national federations form a world council. The Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India, the Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America, the Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe, the Zoroastrian Association of Hong Kong, Canton and Macau have provided Zoroas-

Freny, Neville & Tanaz Godiwalla

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trians residing in their areas a national stature. It is now desirable that Zoroastrians worldwide get a world status through an apex umbrella organization. The WCZF is intended to be such an organization, and Zoroastrians worldwide would definitely benefit from an interlinking network of communication.

B. S. NAGARWALLA
Ahmednagar

London land site

The newsletter of April 22, 1997 of the Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe, London (ZTFE), states that the "bid for a land-site" for a 4.5-acre plot at the Ridgeway, West Harrow, has been unsuccessful. A pity indeed!

However, the "steering committee" fails to reveal/clarify the following pertinent aspects of great interest to the ZTFE members at large:

- The precise offer in pounds sterling made by the committee for the said plot of land.
- The nature of the information, in full, claimed to have been submitted to the council.
- The precise quantum of the offer made by the highest bidder.
- Since about 1994 up to the end of 1996 there has been a reported slump in the

housing market/land sales in Britain resulting in substantial downturn in the price of property/land. What meaningful action, if any, on a warrantably accelerated basis was instituted to profit from this status?

The well-written booklet: *The Unimpeded March of the Zoroastrian Spirit*, ascribed £1,000,000 for purchase of land and landscaping to provide for car parking facilities (Phase 1 of the project). The committee had at that time expressed the feeling that because of the uncertainty of land prices, Phase 1 of the program was most important and should be achieved within the next six to eight months. Despite this alert, a bid was submitted only recently. The reason for this recalcitrance is clearly befogging.

In the ZTFE circular pertaining to the open forum on July 30, 1995, a target of £500,000 to acquire a plot of land of about two to three acres (Phase 1 of the project) has been stated. However, the basis for apparently halving the unexplained initial outlay of £1,000,000 claimed to be earlier allocated for the purchase of landsite remains a mystery.

When this scheme was first mooted, in the early 1980s, by some forward-thinking members of the then managing committee



Zoroastrian House in London

of the ZTFE, a vast parcel of ground with a playing field, car parking space, etc was found available in/around Wembley, London (a location readily accessible to the majority of members) at a cost of £250,000 only. The managing committee lost out to

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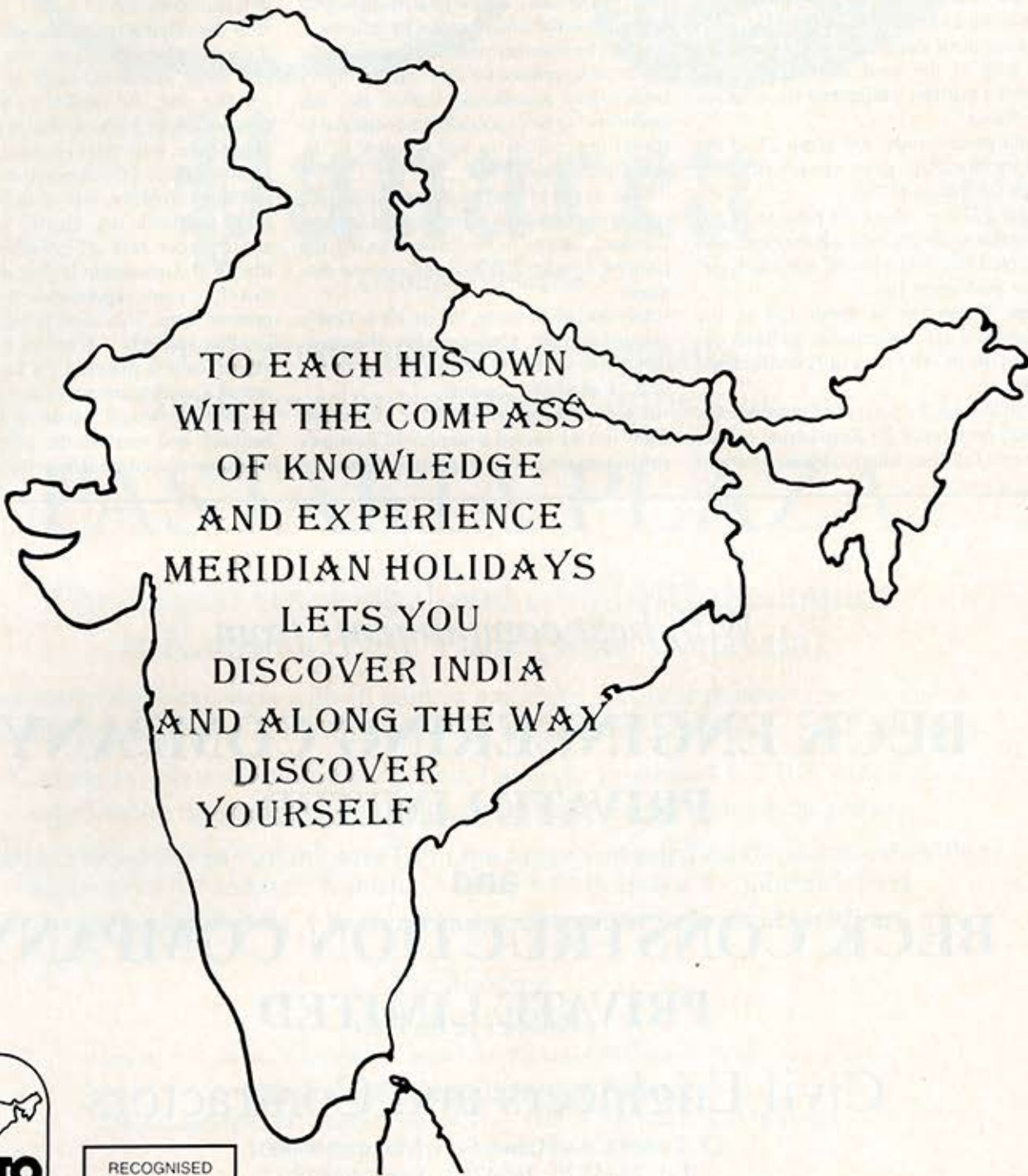
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the Armenian community collaring the deal by their meaningful promptitude of commendable action.

It is interesting to note that at long last, after a lapse of some three years, the committee has seen wisdom to try and obtain a consensus of the Zoroastrians concerned. Just about 25 percent (i.e. 352 out of a total of nearly 1,400) are claimed to have responded to the "feedback questionnaire" sent out to members. An analysis of these is believed to have revealed:

- 58 percent of those who responded, i.e. 204 only of the total membership, expressed a primary preference for a "place of worship."

- Seven percent only, i.e. some 25 of the total membership, gave top priority to a bungli (chapel of rest).

- About 172 (i.e. about 49 percent of the respondents) are claimed to have expressed only tepid preference for an "atash dadgah" with a permanent fire.

- Some 38 percent or about 134 of the respondents are understood to have expressed top priority for a fully consecrated agiary.

- About 204 i.e. 58 percent of respondents, showed preference for Zoroastrian priests to be on a full-time salaried basis for which

the ZTFE claims to hold funds approaching £150,000.

- It may be surprising that library, sports facilities and accommodation have not merited any interest from the respondents.

It is significant that only about one percent i.e. just four persons were respondents from the London area who would probably be more prone to using the Zoroastrian House premises. Since 21 percent (i.e. 74 persons) of the total respondents live outside the London area, by inference, it could be that their use of the said facilities would perforce be very limited/highly intermittent considering traffic, etc, impediments to be expectedly encountered in travelling which is not known to be everyone's cup-of-tea.

The usage of the present premises (Zoroastrian House, 88 Compayne Gardens, London), seems to be favored as the top priority by the ZTFE members. As noticed:

- Only during Navroze, Pateti, New Year's eve and perhaps, Christmas eve, the attendance has tended to be marginally in excess of available capacity.

- In the existing premises the "Satayash Gah" has witnessed a number of devotees (by no means over-capacity) primarily

during Navroze and Pateti only. For the rest of the year it is virtually empty and on limited occasions only a handful of visitors have been in evidence, all comfortably located in the accommodation presently available. However, if it be considered politic to enlarge this to comply with the wishes made known for an "atash dadgah"/permanent place of worship, the adjacent room could be easily annexed at comparatively lower cost.

- For the celebration of special events with the customary frivolities, one of the several large municipal halls or equal with parking, bar, etc facilities can be hired/reserved in the London area at very affordable prices, with the exercise of sufficient forethought and the appropriate cost easily recouped from the sale of tickets, etc.

- The feedback has clearly revealed an almost utter lack of predilection for a library at Zoroastrian House which would therefore seem superfluous to retain in its present form. This is particularly so since London abounds in libraries that can provide excellent material for the study/pursuit of Zoroastrianism for anyone wishing to do so. It would therefore seem apt to earmark and convert the present library room as accommodation for a full-time

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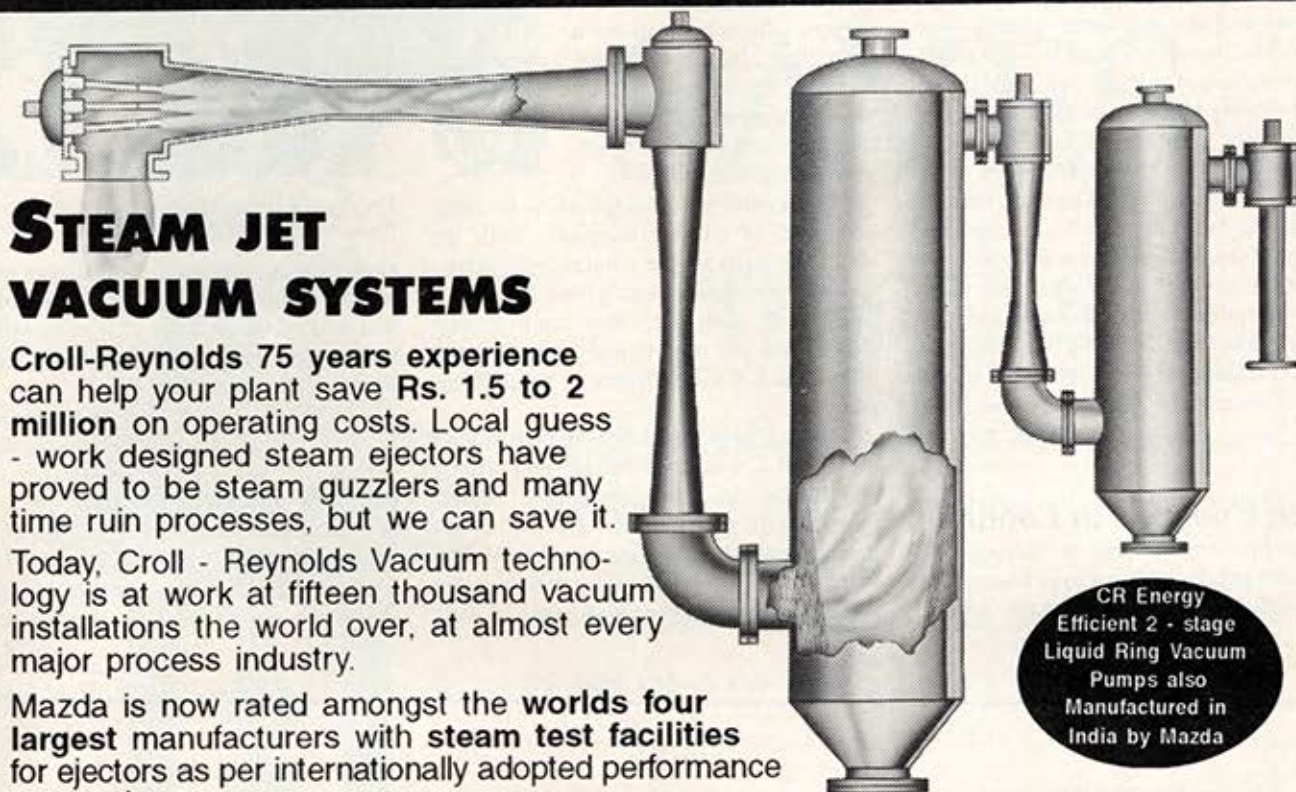
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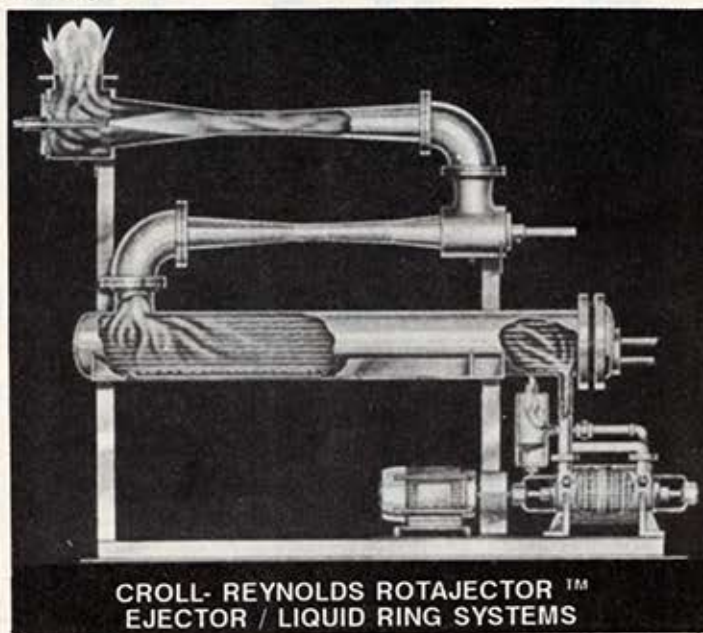
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priest, preferably one well-versed in Zoroastrianism like that of our high priests on the Indian subcontinent.

The foregoing balanced and realistic evaluations unequivocally affirm that with the suggested apt modifications the need for "new premises" at an exorbitant cost could well nigh turn out to be a white elephant and do not seem overtly warranted. The important/main issue of provision for a place of worship for Zoroastrians can be readily incorporated in the existing premises for a substantially smaller outlay. One certainly does not need a table-spoon to stir tea in a cup! The main requirement of the day is to project a true and real image of Zoroastrians/Zoroastrianism. The exhaustive savings in the available funds could be readily directed to focus and meet the paramount needs of the hour like providing meaningful help to many of the needy Zoroastrians and the community at large.

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

Youth Congress in London

Due to my involvement in various religious and peace organizations I have a lot of opportunities to attend many confer-

ences arranged by professionals and amateurs in different parts of the world.

But I can quite confidently say that the Zoroastrian Youth Congress held in London has been one of the most inclusive and well-run congresses I have been to for a long time. Inclusive in the sense of the inclusion of all physical, mental and spiritual aspects to meet the needs of young Zoroastrians.

The organizers attended to every detail and need of all the delegates, from the Vada Dasturjis to the youngest delegate.

The atmosphere was grand and alive. They dealt with the usual controversial issues and yet maintained harmony and unity which is the hallmark of a true Zoroastrian.

I wish I knew of a better way of saying how well it was done rather than simply "well done" or "congratulations." Moreover, I must recognize and give full credit to teachers such as Jal Amroliia, Tina Mehta, Khojeste Mistree and many others (even though I may not agree with some of their



Delegates at the Youth Congress
Photo: Arnavaz S. Mama

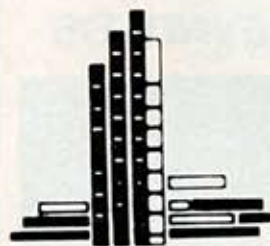
suggestions on Zoroastrianism) for inspiring our youth and giving them the solidity and education over the past years which I believe was instrumental in the Congress being what it was. Just great!

JEHANGIR SAROSH
United Kingdom

BUZY raising funds

We take pleasure in informing you that the Baroda United Zoroastrian Youth (BUZY) has formed a working committee with the guidance and help of the Federation of

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Zoroastrian Youth Associations (FOZYA) and the Baroda Parsi Panchayat and has taken up the task of hosting the XIth All India Zoroastrian Youth Seminar at Baroda from November 2-4, 1997.

We at Baroda expect around 250 delegates from all over India to participate in the Seminar which will mainly focus on entrepreneurship, social work and community welfare. Only those in the age-group of 16 to 40 years will be allowed to participate in the discussions. Nevertheless others are most welcome to participate as observers.

To meet the monetary demands of a high budget financial exercise like this, we will be bringing out a souvenir hoping to tap goodwill and the Zoroastrian philanthropic spirit. These funds are crucial for a fledgling youth organization like ours. We not only hope to cover our expenditure for the forthcoming Seminar but also save something as a 'fund' for future projects and activities.

Cheques in favor of XIth All India Zoroastrian Youth Seminar (payable at Baroda) may be sent to the chief coordinator, Cyrus Cooper, 43, Sampatrao Colony, R. C. Dutt Road, Baroda 390005.

F. G. WADIA
Baroda

Uplifting rural girls

At the Seth Nanabhai Bejonji Choksi Home for rural Parsi Zoroastrian girls at Navsari we have at present 23 children plus three staff members. For the last 32 years we have been looking after the education and uplift of the underprivileged Zoroastrian girls residing in the remote villages of Gujarat and also the villages around the city of Navsari.

Besides boarding and lodging we also have to cater to their medical and nutritional needs. Additionally, they are given training in kusti weaving, tailoring, cooking and other relevant chores. Free education is imparted to the children, thanks to the trustees of Sir J. J. High School at Navsari.

Children are admitted from the age of five and several of our girls have graduated, become self sufficient and are supporting themselves with dignity. Our girls also participate in sports, singing and religious activities, winning laurels for themselves.

With the rising cost of living and the meagre funds at our disposal it is becoming impossible for us to maintain the educational standard whilst providing nour-

ishing food, clothing, etc to these underprivileged children. The monthly expenditure ranges between Rs 18,000 to Rs 20,000.

We hence earnestly appeal to all philanthropic individuals to extend their helping hand towards this noble cause. Kindly send your donations by crossed cheques to N. B. Choksi Charities, C/o Ms Dinaz Hormazdiar Choksi, 2, Marine Chambers, New Marine Lines, Bombay 400020, Tel: (res) 2016921, 2014285.

DINAZ H. CHOKSI
Co-trustee

Honor Sorab Modi

Born in Bombay, Sorab Modi grew up in Nawab of Rampur State, where, with his father and elder brother, he started his career. He moved from place to place staging dramas.

His very first film made in 1935 was *Khoon Ka Khoon* followed in 1936 by *Sayed Havas*. Gaining success, he established Minerva Movietone and Minerva Studio from where he produced memorable pictures like *Pukar*, *Mirza Ghalib*, *Jailor* and *Sikander*.

His last picture made in 1953 was *Jhansi Ki Rani*. It was India's first technicolor film made at a then colossal sum of about

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Rs 80 lakhs. Unfortunately, it bombed at the box office, ruining Sorab physically and financially.

Sorab Modi had a commanding personality. Hearing him delivering dialogues in Urdu, either on the stage or on the screen, was a sheer delight and a treat.

1997 is the birth centenary of Sorab Modi. Unfortunately, not the Muslims who are lovers of Urdu, the language Sorab put on a high pedestal, nor members of his own community, nor the film industry, of which Sorab Modi was a part and parcel, have so far honored him in a befitting way.

I suggest :

- Let the central government issue a special commemorative postal stamp in his birth centenary year.
- Let there be a public meeting in memory of Sorab.
- Let those who had acted in Sorab Modi's films or had helped in making them organize a festival titled "Festival of Minerva Movietone films" or "Retrospective of Sorab Modi's films" and screen his films



Modi: delivering Urdu dialogues

for public exhibition.

Thus can we honor a great Parsi artiste. Suggestions from *Parsiana* readers are welcome.

BHIKHAI M. ADENWALLA

Most ancient yet timely

Zoroastrianism is a religion of happiness and laughter, expecting its followers to eat, drink, make love, create wealth and always be merry. However, it enjoins that all the above must be enjoyed on the three pillars of good thoughts, good words and good deeds, bound together with a band which stipulates that happiness comes only to those who give happiness to others.

This is the only religion that I know of that has no rituals, no dogmas, penance or fasting. Any rituals that the Parsis in India observe are those borrowed from the country which gave them shelter. In this, Zoroastrians have wrongly been dubbed as "fire worshippers," when all that the Prophet wanted was to keep the fire in one's heart eternally burning. Their veneration of the earthly fire in their prayers is only to remind them of the fire within.

Lastly, the Zoroastrian faith is a reli-

gion only of the living, by the living and for the living. It believes that religion was made to serve man, that man was not created to serve religion which therefore must bend to accommodate the social needs of man. As such, there is no need for man to sacrifice his worldly interests to serve his religion, so long as he serves his fellow men. It is for this reason that this most ancient of all religions never gets out of date.

Brig N. B. GRANT (Retd)

Pune

Whither, *Parsiana*?

Living as I do in Ontario, Canada, I get my seamail copy of *Parsiana* some six months late. I still enjoy reading the news and views, both humorous and erudite on several issues pertaining to our community. At this rate, our issues will soon outnumber our population.

I feel I would be remiss if I did not express my admiration and high esteem for the superior penmanship of your managing editor, Arnavaz S. Mama. Her prolific writing skills enhance the calibre of your magazine.

DINA H. AUSTIN

Ontario, Canada

Edited by Parinaz M. Gandhi

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Events and Personalities

Significant ceremonies

The availability of well water, pomegranate and date trees, sandalwood, consecrated utensils, a goat which could supply milk, accommodation for the priests and finance for the venture were ensured. What proved the most difficult was the arrangement for a Parsi driven Tata Sumo to bring the priests and their *alat* (religious requisites) by road from Bombay to Hyderabad to perform the higher liturgical ceremonies. Finally the Zoroastrians of the twin cities who were excited about witnessing the *ijashne* and *vendidad* ceremonies, managed to arrange for such a vehicle with Percy Baria driving Ervad Aspandiar Dadachandji, Ervad Adil Bhesania and Ervad Marespand Dadachandji from Bombay, notes a report sent by the Zoroastrian Stree Mandal (ZSM) of Secunderabad-Hyderabad.

For the local Zoroastrian residents who considered themselves fortunate to observe for the first time in their lives such a "deeply moving experience...it was worth the effort to see how complex the ceremonies were and what spiritual strength was required to sit through eight hours of reciting the prayers, sitting in a particular man-

ner on the *inthora*." Impressed with the *ijashne* ceremony performed in the *Havan gah* on December 2, 1996, over 75 Zoroastrians, several of them youngsters, returned after midnight to the Bai Maneckbai N. Chinoy Agiary to witness the *vendidad* ceremony which began in the early hours of December 3 when coincidentally a *bandh* was declared in the city, states the report. In the hall outside, Khojeste Mistree of Zoroastrian Studies was seen answering the queries raised by the youngsters who were keen to imbibe more, knowing that the *vendidad* ceremony was being performed at the Chinoy Agiary after a span of nearly four decades.

The memorable event culminated with the performance of a *jashan* by the three visiting priests together with the four priests of the Chinoy Agiary. The priests were felicitated on behalf of the Agiary Trust by its secretary Pestonji Baria, and on behalf of ZSM by its president Pinky Katrak. One garland was earmarked for Mistree who was instrumental in arranging this program. His talk at a ZSM convened seminar in February 1996, when he referred to the purity in Zoroastrianism and the significance of the high rituals, inspired the local

populace to ready themselves for the performance of such rituals in their area. Just the day prior to the commencement of the ceremonies, the ZSM had organized a lecture-cum-demonstration of these ceremonies by Mistree and A. Dadachandji. In fact, Mistree had also prepared explanatory notes on these two ceremonies which constituted a part of the circular sent to nearly 400 families settled in the twin cities, intimating them regarding the program of ceremonies and seeking financial support. The response was so overwhelming that not only were they able to cover the costs of Rs 52,000 but also set aside the balance for the religious education of their Zoroastrian children, writes Gool Plumber, convener of their religious education program.

Besides the inputs from Mistree and the visiting priests, the cooperation of their local priests and Pestonji Baria should also be acknowledged, mentions the report. They laid a brick tunnel-like *pavi* surrounding the well and leading to the back door entrance; the sand *pavi* for the *khajuri*

Jashan in progress at Hyderabad's Bai Maneckbai N. Chinoy Agiary (left)



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and pomegranate trees; screened the well from three sides; organized accommodation for the visiting priests... To ensure that the state border check-posts at Maharashtra, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh would allow the Tata Sumo to pass without inspecting it, which was necessary so that the sacred *alat* would not be seen or touched, permission had to be sought from the central and state excise and prohibition commissioners, the transport commissioner and the acting deputy commissioner of police. "Those of us who were present in the Hyderabad Agiary on November 30 to welcome the team were visibly moved to see the Tata Sumo (arrive)...safely," mention the organizers who were keen to witness these higher liturgical ceremonies performed in their area, having been explained by A. Dadachandji that they bring "unseen blessings to our community."

Acceptance for the aged

The sesquicentennial celebrations of the Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy Dharamshala were observed with the release of a special cover and cancellation by the postal department on May 11, 1997. Presently there are 88 inmates of different faiths residing in the three-storey building at Nagpada with spacious airy rooms and sprawling verandahs, according to an article in *Bombay First*, June 18, 1997. Besides shelter, the residents are also assured of free food and clothing, and provided the services of a physiotherapist, a psychiatrist and social worker to administer to their other needs.

Only the aged who are destitutes, with no source of income and not suffering from any contagious disease, are admitted here. "Many who come here have a sad tale to narrate," mentions Dharamshala chairman Vispi Dastur. Abandoned by their loved ones or employers, they find acceptance and a sense of belonging in this home. To make them feel useful, they are assigned

chores like cooking, watering plants, painting doors, to "assure them of their self worth." Stringing beads for a nearby local industry also keeps them busy while earning them a little pocket money. Their handwritten in-house magazine, *Jeevan Sandhya*, is another preoccupation for them.

"Here we encourage a secular atmosphere," stressed Dastur reporting that they install a Lord Ganesh statue every year and also celebrate the Parsi New Year, Diwali and Christmas with equal gusto.

Started in 1847 with a munificent contribution of Rs 1,45,000 from the first baronet, the first free cosmopolitan home for the destitute aged in Asia was inaugurated by Sir George Russel Clarke, the then governor of Bombay in the presence of a distinguished gathering of European and Indian citizens, mentions Dastur. The facility which started in a beautiful bungalow is for the last 23 years being extended from the three-storeyed structure built in 1974.

Benefit matches

The Grand Lady of Indian Cricket, as 40-year-old Diana Eduljee is known, set another record to her name when for the first time in the country a benefit match was held for a woman cricketer on April 12, 1997 at Bombay's Brabourne Stadium. The match, awarded by the Women's Cricket Association of India, and which was to be telecast live on Doordarshan channels was expected to earn Eduljee Rs 10 lakhs, as noted different newspaper reports.

In the double wicket tournament in which eight teams constituting the nation's best players participated, the trophy was won by the Indian Railways, her employers. Incidentally, it is Eduljee who is said to have guided the Indian Railways team to 11 national championship triumphs of the 12 held so far.

Besides claiming over 100 test wickets which is a world record, Eduljee is reportedly the first Indian woman to take the first test catch and the first test wicket. Since her debut in the first nationals in 1974,



Cricket stalwarts (from left): Dhodiwalla, Eduljee and Reporter

the left arm spin bowler was also a member of the first national side that toured abroad and captained the Indian team in the first World Cup match. Her feats have been recognized with the Shiv Chhatrapati Award, the Arjuna Award and the Gaurav Puraskar. Even then, on the eve of her retirement from international cricket after a record stretch of 22 years, she declared in April this year, "Nothing has changed," in the last 25 years "and the women's cricketing infrastructure remains the same."

Yet another benefit match in honor of former test umpires Piloo Reporter and Dara Dotiwalla, promoted by the Bulsar District Cricket Association was scheduled for June 1, 1997 at Valsad's Sardar Patel Stadium. The star studded teams were to include many national players, including Eduljee. Leading the Elf Lubricants India Invitation XI was Sachin Tendulkar, while Mohammad Azharuddin was to be the skipper of the Bank of Baroda Invitation XI.

The honorary secretary of the match committee Dara Pochkhanawalla said that they had chosen Valsad as the venue hoping that the presence of international cricketers on these grounds would attract crowds. While not the entire game, the highlights were to be telecast on TV, according to a write-up in the *Jam-e-Jamshed* of May 11, 1997. Pochkhanawalla hoped that each of the umpires would get a purse of at least six lakh rupees. Fifty-eight-year-old Reporter has umpired in 14 test matches, 24 one-day internationals; 63-year-old Dotiwalla in six tests and nine one-day events, mentions an article in *Mid-Day*, May 20, 1997. To Reporter goes the credit of being included in the first ever pair of neutral umpires in test cricket history during the

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1986 series between Pakistan and West Indies. He is said to be the only Indian umpire to have officiated in World Cup matches held outside Asia. Mentions an article in *Mid-Day*, June 1, 1997, "Reporter has managed admirably over the years to combine enough good Parsi earthenness and Maharashtrian aplomb to tackle the wrath of cricket's superstars. Imran Khan at his wildest, a snorting Viv Richards and a threatening Malcolm Marshall have confronted Reporter's slight frame and have had to back off before his basilisk gaze."

According to the chief minister of Maharashtra and president of the Mumbai Cricket Association Manohar Joshi who was the patron-in-chief of the Benefit Match Committee, "Few umpires in the world have given back to the game and these are two of them who still continue to serve even after their retirement from top class cricket by conducting umpiring coaching classes and acting as examiners for the Mumbai Cricket Association."

The three outstanding cricket personalities, Eduljee, Reporter and Dotiwalla were accorded a special felicitation by the World Zoroastrian Organisation on May 11, 1997 at the Ripon Club when each of

them was presented a cheque of Rs 10,000, states a write-up in the *Jam-e-Jamshed* of May 18.

Family planning activist

"They are powerful. They don't order planes and battleships to war but they are in positions to prevent wars from happening at all...they are part of a global network of activists and decision-makers...their influence is felt all over the world." So notes the introduction to the top 100 people, listed by the New York published *The Earth Times* in its issue of July 1-15, 1997.

Featuring within this "guide to where the power lies," is Avabai Wadia who has been described as "the founder of the family planning movement; she's the grand dame of The Establishment." This guide claims to provide a peep into "the world of the insiders in the spheres of environment and sustainable development."

As president of the Family Planning Association of India (FPAI), a non-political and non-profit making organization consisting of volunteer members and staff, Wadia oversees its operations at its headquarters in Bombay and 38 branches, four area projects and 30 integrated rural projects. According to a pamphlet brought

out by the FPAI, they carry out extensive programs of information, education and motivation; render clinical and non-clinical services for family planning and maternal and child health; train personnel and undertake research.



Wadia: family welfare concern.

Wadia has also served as past president and patron of the International Planned Parenthood Federation which is considered the

world's leading voluntary family planning organization. During her tenure as president from 1983-89, she had received on behalf of the Federation the UN Population Award, the Third World Prize and a Health-for-All Medal from the World Health Organization, notes a write-up issued by the FPAI's publications department.

Police portfolio

In the course of his 37-year innings with the police force, Assistant Commissioner of Police Sam D. Patel with his consider-



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able experience in traffic management must have piloted or escorted innumerable VVIPs like the Prime Ministers of India, the Prime Minister of Zambia, the President of Congo, the Prince of Japan. However, a recent occasion when his expertise benefitted the Bombayites was the Michael Jackson show at the Andheri Sports Stadium on October 30, 1996. Barely six months before his retirement Patel was entrusted with the responsibility of planning the traffic arrangements in and around the Stadium such that the estimated crowd of 60,000, many of whom were dignitaries and eminent personalities, could witness the program. There was not a single untoward incident, nor a traffic jam, claims Patel.

He is also credited with having established the Airport taxi service scheme at the Sahar International Airport to curb the menace of taxi drivers who were fleecing tourists. Patel however had to face eight riots and 11 strikes before the scheme could be successfully implemented. The new traffic Scheme at the Dahisar checkpoint to permit free movement of vehicles on the Western Express Highway has also been due to his efforts, writes Patel.

A particularly hazardous assignment

for Patel was during the Shiv Sena riots at Bhiwandi in 1969 after just seven years of experience in the police force as a subinspector. Despite being wounded he put up a brave front, he recalls.



Patel: traffic innovations

After the communal riots in Jogeshwari in 1992-93, Patel was called upon to establish the Megh wadi Police Station, a daunting job, and entrusted with special powers whereby he could arrest as many as 250 antisocial elements and sentence them to rigorous imprisonment if necessary. His efforts to promote Hindu-Muslim unity through the 18 programs organized by him have been lauded in the Press.

Patel's detective work has also earned encomiums. Apprehending offenders for forging passports, smuggling foreign currency or overstaying in India were routine tasks when he was with the Special Branch

of the Criminal Investigation Department, handling foreigners and external security. Nabbing one Iranian national who had robbed Citibank of 4.5 lakh Qatari rials, and one Jordanian national who was posing as Al Yamani, the world famous petroleum king of Saudi Arabia, were among the important cases dealt by Patel, he reports.

His training in fuel checking, bombs and explosives, computer training at the National Crime Record Bureau, National Informatic Centre, and the Yashwantrao Chavan Academy of Development Administration have stood Patel in good stead. Besides winning the President's Police Medal for meritorious service, Patel was bestowed with the DGP's insignia, has earned 225 good entries, cash rewards of Rs 28,878, 65 commendatory notes and 80 appreciation letters from dignitaries and foreign offices including a certificate from Interpol.

The seniormost among Zoroastrians in the police force at the time of his retirement, Patel says there are only seven members of the community now remaining as inadequate knowledge of Marathi proves a problem for those seeking to join the state police department. Recommending those interested to join the national police branch,

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Patel states that promotions there are quicker. Besides his social work activities that Patel is presently involved in, rendering assistance to those in distress, he has also been made a member of the Road Safety Advisory Committee by the Traffic Police, he mentions.

Motivated murder?

First was seen an announcement in the newspaper declaring Piloo Rustam Antia missing since the afternoon of July 2, 1997. Within four days came another news report that her mutilated body was found by a State Transport bus driver in a ditch at Safale, in Palghar district. According to police sources, she was admitted to a local hospital and then shifted to the Bhagwati Hospital in Borivli where she was declared dead. The postmortem report showed the 73-year-old Antia died of hemorrhage and a fractured skull, states a news item in *The Times of India* of August 2, 1997.

Subsequently the police arrested the deceased's son Marzban, her son-in-law Roomie Umrigar, estate agent Homi Patrawala and owner of Fairdeal Garage in Colaba, Zen Hasan Mohammed Masani for plotting her murder. Press reports also stated that a property deal (concerning her

estate in Matheran) gone sour could have resulted in the killing.

Of the four accused who were remanded to police custody, Patrawala, as mentioned in the newspapers, has a criminal record which necessitated his reporting to the police station every day as a condition for being granted bail. Earlier in 1989 he had allegedly assaulted a Kamal Panthaki at her Warden Road residence but was nabbed at the scene of the crime, according to newspaper reports.

Antia, Umrigar, Masani and Patrawala have been granted bail by the Bombay High Court. Antia's advocate argued there was no tangible evidence against his client showing any nexus between him and the alleged offence, reported *The Times of India* (October 8, 1997). The report also noted that Umrigar's lawyer submitted that his client was nowhere near the scene of the crime on the date of the incident.

The *Bombay Samachar* of 26th October stated that Patrawala's lawyer argued during the bail application that his client was an estate consultant and that his only interest was earning his brokerage for the sale of the Matheran property. He claimed his client had been falsely implicated in the murder.

The curtain came down

On the stage she was known for her histrionic talents. On the dance floor she was reputed for being the teacher of well-known names like Shiamak Daver, Javed Jaffrey, Karishma Kapoor and Aamir Khan. To those emotionally or mentally disturbed, she was known to be a fine counsellor, a wonderful listener. Farida Peddar Sethna's death on April 18, 1997 of adrenal cancer when she was in her early 40s led to many of her associates reminiscing in the Press, recalling her varied virtues and virtuosity.

According to director Rahul Da Cunha, "She was the best female actress of English theatre..." Acting since she was 16 in plays such as *The Elephant Man*, *Godspell*, *The Idiot*, *Night's Mother*, *A Flea In Her Ear*, her most well-known performance though was her role of a mute girl in *Children Of A Lesser God*, notes an article in *The Indian Express* of April 19. She was to play the hostage in Ruki Dadachanji's *Acts of Faith* which was to open in May 1997. Describing her as "very concerned and thoughtful," Dadachanji added, "She was a great lady, a spiritual fighter, strongly opinionated..."

Director Pearl Padamsee who had seen

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Peddar addressing the audience after a drama competition.

Peddar blossom since her performance in *Princes*, referred to the actress as "highly gifted, brilliantly creative, patient, observant, committed..." According to Alyque Padamsee, when he was looking for someone to play a female Ceasar last year, "Farida was the first person (to) come to my mind. I could think of no one better. Not only did she have the charisma, but she had the courage as well."

"Blessed with an exquisite bone structure and a coloring which attracted foreign modelling agencies in the '70s when black still wasn't beautiful, Farida did some modelling for the renowned House of Krizia in Milan, ads for Max Factor, a few ramp shows. She even attended the Lucie-

Clayton finishing school in London," writes Cyrus Merchant in *The Afternoon Despatch and Courier* of April 19. Eventually, her father's displeasure with her modelling career persuaded her to follow another vocation. After a stint in Australia, teaching the blind, she returned to the stage as an actress. She later went to the Alvin Ailey School in New York to learn jazz ballet and thereafter started her own dance class, notes the *Afternoon* write-up.

In addition to the glamor world, Peddar's sensitivity beckoned her to study at the Tata Institute of Social Sciences (after her schooling at the Cathedral and John Connon, and graduation from St Xavier's College) which she viewed as an "eye and heart opener," working with prostitutes, slum dwellers, the physically and mentally handicapped. Happy with the variety life had to offer her, Peddar had told friends last year, "It's been a very interesting life, a very full life."

The Irish Meherbai

She dressed like a Parsi lady of those elegant times in the late 19th century. Among her circle of friends and the *natak* fraternity she was known as Meherbai. Actually, this Gujarati-speaking actress who performed lead roles in Parsi farces was Mary Fenton, daughter of an Irish officer in the British army stationed at Delhi, reveals a write-up by Virasp Mehta in the July 1997 issue of *What's On*, the newsletter of the Karachi Zarhosti Banu Mandal.

She is particularly remembered for her role of Shirin, a spoilt high-flown socialite in the play *Najo-Shirin*, and *Bholi Gooli* in a tragic drama of the same name. Her stage presence and ability to sing brought added charm to her performances. She is even known to have played a hilarious role in a

Hindi farce.

Besides these Indian languages, she could also speak Urdu like "any Delhiwalla." In fact her interest in *nataks* had originated since then, watching Urdu *nataks* being performed by Parsi *Natak Mandlis*. It was at one such *natak* that she met a young Parsi actor Kavasji Palonji Khatav who was working for Jehangir Khambatta. Befriended by Khatav, Mary came to Bombay and involved herself in the Parsi theater, drifting from one *natak* company to the other. The final curtain rolled down for Fenton when she was 42 years old, dying poor and helpless in a city hospital, states Mehta.



Fenton: in farces

Lessons in Life

Watch your thoughts; do not compare yourself with others; nobody belongs to you and you belong to nobody; do not judge; live from moment to moment; introduce

Politicians and eminent figures of Bombay gathered on June 12, 1997 to witness the inauguration of the Rusi Mehta Chowk at the hands of the Mumbai Congress Pradesh Committee president Murli Deora, when the mayor Vishakhia Raut was the chief guest. The junction of Pathe Bapurao Marg, Balaram Street, Alibhai Premji Marg and R. S. Nimkar Marg will now be known as the Rusi Mehta Chowk to commemorate the memory of the late municipal corporator Rusi Mehta who was assassinated 10 years ago by antisocial elements opposed to his crusade against bootleggers and pimps in the area, notes a write-up in the Jam-e-Jamshed of June 15, 1997.



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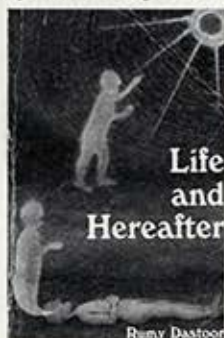
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change in yourself... These are some of the "Divine Seeds of Wisdom" that author Rumi Rustom Dastoor seeks to plant in the reader's mind through his 108-page book *Life and Hereafter*.

"This book...tells you how to live here and hereafter," declares Dr Leo Rebello in his foreword. "Like a good travel agent he prepares your itinerary for the sojourn in 'foreign lands' and books you on a plane for a turbulence-free journey and smooth landing into a 'bliss world,'" he adds.

Life need not be a struggle. As asserts the author, "the game of life is played by the Almighty who knows best how the game should be played. The problem of the game in the human kingdom arises when each piece — human being — tries to be overwise and starts moving on its own independently on the grand chessboard of life unmindful of this Intelligent Player. That is precisely why we humans make a mess of everything, including our lives as also that of others."

Once the laws of nature are understood and experienced, surrender to the Law becomes an effortless process thereby enabling the soul of an individual to make rapid spiritual progress, says Dastoor. In the series of lives that each of us has to undergo we face varied experiences that



have to be learnt and assimilated. Death of the physical body and death of the astral self should therefore not be viewed as separation or severance but merely a change of consciousness, an exit "from one room to another or the changing from one outfit to another," opines the author to eliminate fear of this dreaded passage.

Since sorrow, attachment, pride can breed elements of discontent, Dastoor has dwelt on them before reminding the reader that he is but a spark of divinity, one of the creations of the creator which has ultimately to lose its identity and merge into the sea of universality.

"Religion has been taken over by the priests and they have used it for their own needs," believes Dastoor pointing out that God was imprisoned in temples "only for the sake of convenience to man." The omnipresence, omniscience and omnipotence of God has been reiterated by each of the prophets, states Dastoor who believes that conversion is futile. Summarizing the evolution of different religious faiths and the message of the messiah, the author delineates the path through which He can be reached. When referring to the tenets of Islam, he says, "In the month of 'Ramadan' or Ramazan followers of this sect are supposed to go on a fast for the entire month just as the Zoroastrians do the same during their month of Boman." Surely this would confuse a layman for the penance known in Islam is alien to Zoroastrianism.

Devoting one chapter to prayer and another to contemplative meditation, Dastoor defines true prayer as "one whereby one is fully cognizant of His presence in



Managing director of Industrial Boilers Limited Rumi Engineer (left) receiving at the hands of union finance minister P. Chidambaram a special citation instituted by the Bombay Chamber of Commerce and Industry on June 19, 1997. The company's "significant achievements during the year 1996-97...propagating conservation of energy and preservation of the environment in the interests of industry and society," were recognized, as per the citation.

every thing and being..."

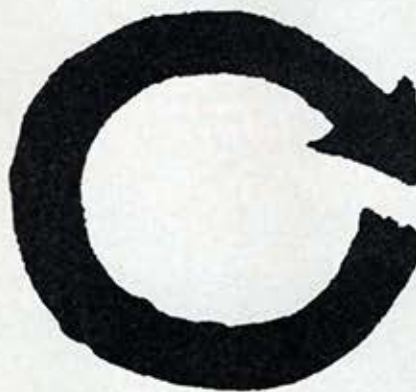
There are typographical errors in *Life and Hereafter* published by All India (Press) Letter Writers Association (28/552 Samata Nagar, Kandivli East, Bombay 400101). But as states Rebello, "This is Rumi Dastoor's maiden book. Consequently in spite of my editing, there may be some flaws. But do not look out for them; look for pearls hidden therein. This book will either show you a detour, make you take a U-turn, chart a totally new path or guide you along if you are on the right road. Follow this road map and begin a new spiritual journey."

Compiled by Parinaz M. Gandhi

For the fifth year, Capt Homi Dandiwalla (seated on the chair), president of the Allahabad Parsi Zoroastrian Anjuman, recited Zoroastrian prayers on Jawaharlal Nehru's death anniversary. He was among the six priests of different faiths invited to participate in the prayer meeting on May 27, 1997 on the lawns of Anand Bhawan.



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SOAS' commitment to Zoroastrianism

London University's School of Oriental and African Studies announces an anonymous donation for study of Zoroastrianism

Arnavaz S. Mama

London University's famed School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) has received a substantial financial commitment towards the study of Zoroastrianism. The donor chooses to remain anonymous, announced Sir Tim Lankester, director of the School, at a special, small, invitees-only gathering in a corner room of the institution's Brunei Gallery building on July 8, 1997.

Timed midway during the Second World Zoroastrian Youth Congress, the array of academics that evening was bolstered by Dasturs (Drs) Kaikhosroo JamaspAsa and Firoze Kotwal and Bombay's Zoroastrian Studies (ZS) founder Khojeste Mistree, the latter two being alumni of the School. What lent special luster to the occasion was the presence of Prof Mary Boyce, the institution within the institution whose name has been synonymous with research on Zoroastrianism over several decades.

Hailing the Congress as "an opportunity for us to meet the Zoroastrian community," Lankester referred to "Zarathushtra's profound influence on the religions of the world." He then traced the "distinguished

lineage of study" — notably Sir Harold Bailey, W. B. Hennings and Boyce followed by Profs A. V. H. Bivar, Sims Williams, Philip Kreyenbroek and John Hinnells — which made the School an "ideal place for study of Zoroastrianism in Europe," adding, "If we secure an endow-

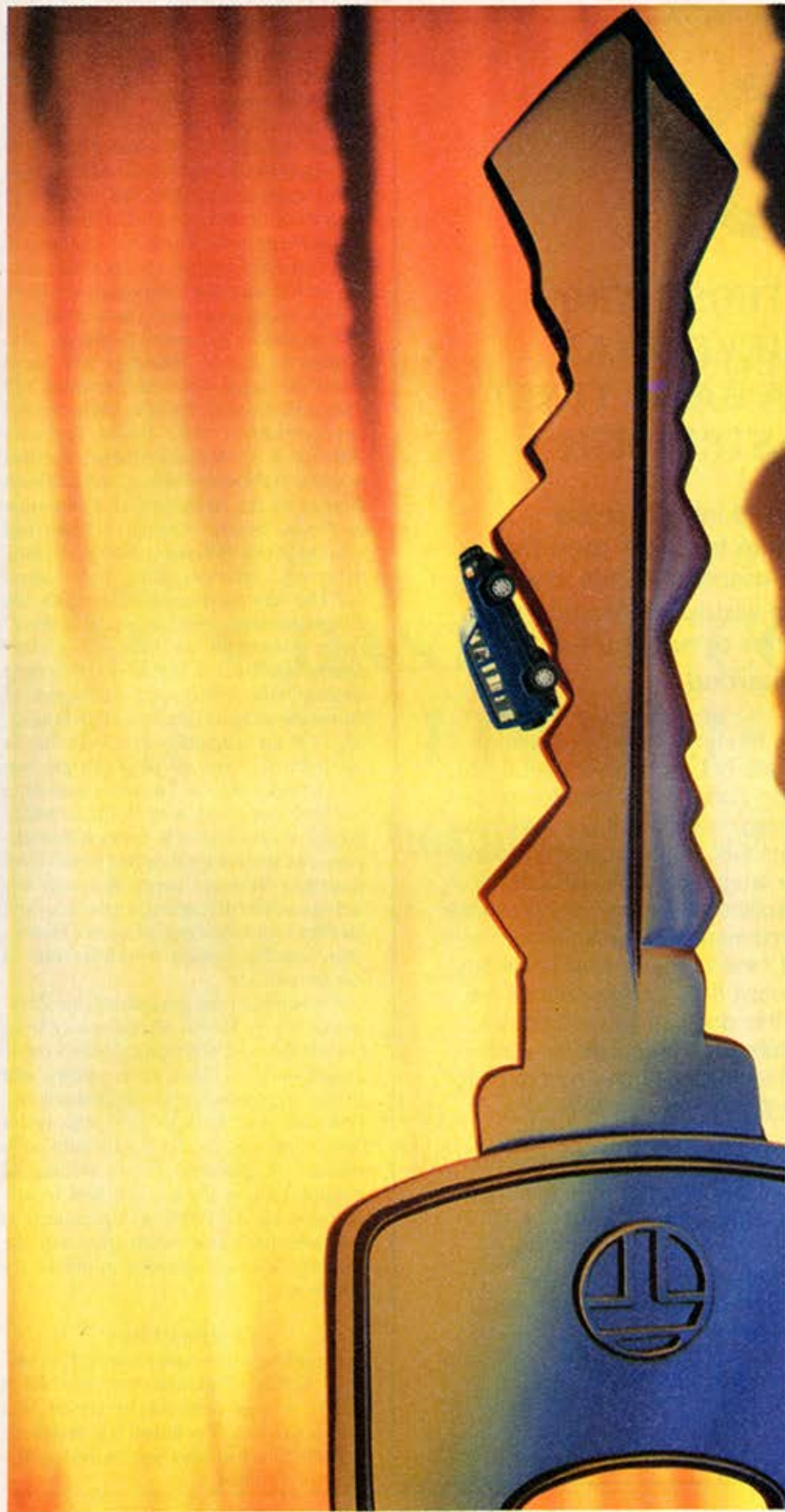
ment for a post here, research, teaching and scholarship in Zoroastrian studies (would be ensured) forever."

Registering "the delight of all of us at this new development," JamaspAsa said there was "no better place" for continued involvement with ancient Iranian studies



Left to right (1st row): Boyce, Godrej Sidhwa, Zal Sethna, Farokh Byramji, Dr Roshan Dalal, Boyce, Rusy Dalal and Mistree; (2nd row) Dinshaw Tamboly, Shahrokh Shahrokh; JamaspAsa, Dalal, Kotwal, Lankester and Boyce; (3rd row) Jenny Rose, Sims Williams, Malcolm Deboo; Bivar; Pheroza Godrej and Marazban Patrawala





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Subtle changes towards these ends are already taking place and we are doing our utmost to make sure that these steps are carried on.

We do however need the active support of our well-wishers to help us move towards equality in the true Zoroastrian tradition.

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than SOAS with its "rich tradition of world renowned scholarship," and hoped that the project "will run into the next millennium for a long time to come."

Boyce, her voice frail with age but precise nonetheless, "(looked) back on all the years between the School and branches of the community." Her first lecture had been Parsi funded; it had also fired in her a "need to go out to Yazd," she reminisced. The first Parsi student she recalled meeting was Dastur (Dr) Hormazdyar Mirza, "then a young ervad doing his doctorate in Iranian philology" under Hennings. According to Boyce, Hennings had learnt about the rituals from Mirza which had illumined the texts for him. Other alumni she mentioned were Ervad Peshotan Anklesaria, Kotwal and Mistree. She had taught in Tehran and Shiraz, and had been director of the Achaemenian Foundation in Persia. Several Islamic Iranians had come to SOAS with state funding, she said, but never a full-time Zoroastrian student.

"The very ancientness of the faith, the different countries and languages involved" create problems in the study of Zoroastrianism, said Boyce. There has to be deep interest in the student, deep willingness of the teachers to pass on accumulated knowledge for the continuity of scholarship in the field, for "not all of it can get into books," noted Boyce. To some extent there has been continuity with Williams teaching Avesta and Hinnells, comparative religion. (At some stage they had been SOAS students.) Now she hoped that with this welcome offer of funding, a new focus and identity could emerge leading to a lectureship, "one day perhaps" a professorship, in Zoroastrianism.

On behalf of the community, the Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe (ZTFE) president Rusy Dalal thanked SOAS for its commitment to Zoroastrian studies and Boyce who he said has "influenced two generations of scholars" and thus had a "direct impact on the community as a whole." A memento — an etching of Zarathushtra on glass — readied for the occasion by the ZTFE was presented to Boyce by her former student Kotwal. She called it "a lovely reminder of this lovely occasion."

CORRECTION

In the article "Come to a decision" (Zoroastrian Abroad, *Parsiana*, February-March 1997) it was mistakenly stated that Shehernaz Joshi Verahrami had been born in Delhi. She had been born in Indore. The error is regretted.

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Arnavaz S. Mama

Faron Sutaria made his millions trading on London's real estate market

Estate agency baron Faron Sutaria had always known that "a job would earn me a living and a good job would earn me a very good living but it would never make me rich... There are very few rich employees... I wanted to make a fortune."

And so, at the age of 23, "to my parents' considerable horror," and against the advice of well-meaning people, he threw up a "very highly paid job for someone of my age... to see for myself what I could do."

Effusing an aura of tensile strength, the dapper 40-plus millionaire recalled the rugged road to creating a niche for himself in an environment that, on initial impact at the age of 13 had been so daunting, he would have willingly taken the first flight back to India.

To the Pathankot born boy with his "very Indian upbringing... very Indian clothes, very Indian accent," the initial reaction to Britain was "one of brutal shock." It is one thing to emigrate as an adult or a very small child, he reflects, quite another to do so at the age of 13 — "a difficult age in the extreme." His initial goal was peer acceptance. "The insecurity breaks you or drives you. It drove me rather than the opposite."

His sparse build making him seem even taller than he is, the swarthy, aquiline face crowned with a sprinkling of salt, Sutaria was an easy host at his West Ealing residence where he invited *Parsiana* to breakfast on August 5, 1997. The twin fire places, paintings and prints, the beige and off-white decor, old furniture, wood and brass chests attest to Faron and his wife Kamal's penchant for muted elegance. Their shaggy little dog Taro, missing his friend Karl, their 10-year-old son who was away with his mother in India, flounced by our side as the interview proceeded to the accompaniment of breakfast. A colorful garden framed the Sutarias' well-appointed kitchen and breakfast table.

The estate agency business that Sutaria created in the teeth of well-meaning advice, now considered one of the largest



Sutaria: "Success breeds from inner conviction" Photo: Arnavaz S. Mama

such enterprises in London, has grown to 10 offices in the metropolis, and is serviced by 80 employees. The company and its colorful magazines (produced under subcontract but under taut Sutaria supervision) mailed to 250,000 homes in the capital each month, as he notes, aim to pair top quality properties with top quality buyers/tenants. Homes on sale range from around £100,000 to £700,000 while weekly rents quoted in the magazine in Kensington and Chelsea go up and up from £185 to £650.

Sutaria had been vocationally guided to choose between the fields of law and sales. Law he dismissed as academically too long drawn out. He recalls "one peculiar thing:" he had once been told he was destined to go into mortgaging at the age of 31! Quitting college midway because he

failed to see its relevance to his own future, he embarked on a sales career with "the hardest form for selling anyone can ever do." Selling life insurance, he knocked on doors 12 hours a day. "Ninety-nine times the door would be slammed in your face and yet people used to buy." Sutaria says he did it very very successfully and it increased his contacts with a variety of people even as insurance work led him into mortgaging. Though initially reluctant "to leave a job I could succeed in," Sutaria "knew even when I was doing it, that I couldn't do it all my life." Then he decided to quit. At worst, he expected, if things came "crashing round his ears," he could go back to his old job.

An aunt loaned him a few hundred pounds ("we never had much money") with which he purchased his first flat (in Bayswater, he recalls) and sold it at a sizeable profit three months later, with which he bought a larger flat. These repeating cycles led to the founding of the estate agency — "quite by chance."

He describes the estate agency business in England as "one of the most formal and tough businesses," adding that as an immigrant, "I was like a novelty." Pursuing it with single minded devotion for 19 years took Sutaria to the top of the field.

And then, about a year back, Hanbro Countrywide, "effectively the largest agent in Europe with 750 offices in the UK (and) not a single one in London until six months ago, made him an offer he could not resist — many million pounds plus continued chairmanship of the company's board. For one year the latter is mandatory. Thereafter Sutaria has the option to terminate or continue. Hanbro, the merchant bank, has a major stake in the agency.

Having thus achieved his aim with singleminded devotion, Sutaria could afford to tell the youths gathered at the Second World Zoroastrian Youth Con-

gress in London, "To have a meaningful faith in the future of our community I submit that you must first have faith in yourself. To improve and develop your own ability or to strive for and attain excellence in whatever you do should not be an optional extra. You owe it to yourself to get the best out of yourself... You can go and get anything you want. The only thing about which you need to make up your mind is what do you want, how much you want it and are you prepared to pay the price of achieving it."

Remarking that "our community needs people that create wealth," Sutaria added, "More than that it needs people who make their mark in whatever form of industry they choose to pursue." Comparing excellence of accomplishment between the arch entrepreneur Jamsetji Tata and angel of mercy Mother Teresa, Sutaria noted "success breeds from an inner conviction of your own ambition and inner sense of self worth. Therefore, irrespective of whether you wish to be wealthy, or caring or both, you must first be able to define what your ambitions are and where your talents lie."

The crusty British accent must have been a painful acquisition for the Pathankot lad. He now told his coreligionists, "You need to believe in yourself. When times get

difficult — for no ambitious path will be trouble free — your self belief is the only thing that will sustain you. It will drive you, encourage you and remind you that your ambition is not merely a fantasy but that

"The insecurity breaks you or drives you. It drove me..."

you can and will attain it. Unless you are extremely fortunate there will be around you the well meaning critic or the person who with the benefit of hindsight will always tell you how you could have done something differently or better. My advice is ignore them. Your ambition as defined by you is too important to be hampered by anyone else."

He spoke of commitment: "You will need to make a commitment to your ambition. To use an expression: You cannot nearly be pregnant. Either you are or you are not. In the same way you cannot be nearly committed. Nothing worthwhile is ever achieved with ease or without personal sacrifice. When you make the commitment, with it will automatically come a strength of purpose, a boldness and all

kinds of unforeseen opportunities...

"All manner of questions will plague you," he cautioned. "Am I good enough? What if it doesn't work out? are inevitably but two. But never forget that fortune does favor the brave. It took me 20 years to achieve the first of my many ambitions. Those 20 years, despite the fact that they were fraught with difficulty, were the most invigorating years that any man could wish for... that moment when you know that despite the odds, in your sphere of work you won the gold."

And he challenged the youths: "Your theme for this Congress is 'Faith in the future.' I urge you to have that faith by first having faith in yourself. For only by empowering yourself will you effectively empower your community."

Describing himself as "compulsive" in his behavior, Sutaria says he stayed away from any other interests hitherto to maintain some family life along with his work. Now he has promised Kamal (nee Vakil) a year's sabbatical. She has begun doing her MBA (initially she worked in the company with Faron). He says he is passionately fond of all types of music and intends to learn to play the piano. "Maybe, next time we meet I'll play you the *Moonlight Sonata*..."

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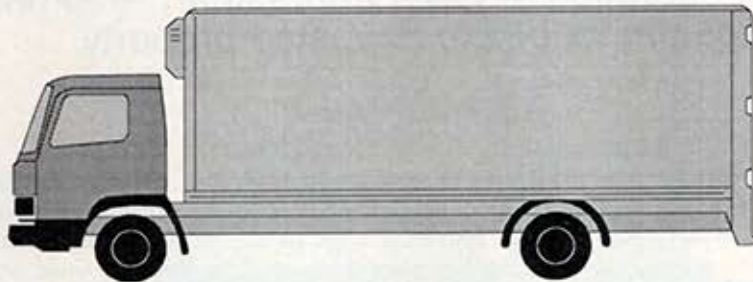
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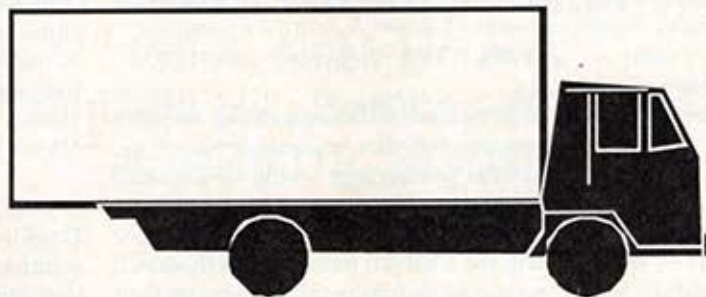
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Federation aid to Jabalpur

The Jabalpur Parsi Anjuman received pledges of financial support from the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India to restore its quake devastated property

Arnavaz S. Mama

Ten anjumans and the World Zoroastrian Organisation (WZO) together pledged Rs 2,25,000 for the repair of the quake damaged Jabalpur Dharamshala at the executive council meet of the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India in the Pudumji Hall of Pune's Anjuman Agiary on June 14 and 15, 1997. The spontaneous aid was in answer to the Jabalpur Parsi Anjuman's appeal.

The birth of triplets to a young couple in Indore was a source of joy for a community facing rapid demographic decline. The Bombay Parsi Punchayet's (BPP) third child scheme has been extended to provide the family with triplets Rs 3,000 per month as maintenance allowance.

The Federation's awards for excellence were distributed on the evening of June 14 and the awardees invited to attend the Federation meet the following day. The remarks of some of the winners in professional and educational fields led to one more revaluation of the community's stand on reservation in educational institutions founded by Parsis.

Describing the community as a "nice captive group," Tata Memorial Hospital director Dr Ketayun Dinshaw suggested that the Punchayet can provide the leadership to the many Parsi medical professionals to evolve a study of the genetic factors and lifestyles which predispose it to diabetes, cancer, blood pressure, etc.

The controversy regarding the establishment of the World Council of Zoroastrian Federations (WCZF) continued with Dadi Mistry and Mani Clubwalla of WZO challenging the minutes unsuccessfully and Dinshaw Tamboly seeking more time for WZO to amend its constitution.

A procedural question regarding the right of attendees to seek copies of the

executive council's taped proceedings was settled in favor of the Federation secretary Keki Gandhi providing clarifications to

officeholders in their respective appointments. However, the offices of the joint honorary secretary and joint honorary treasurer are currently open with the retirement of Eruch Desai from the BPP board and desire to resign on the part of Peshotan Nargolwala respectively. Some delegates have urged that younger members be coopted on the executive council.

The two-day conference was inaugurated by Pune's mayor Vandana Chavan lighting an afargan of fragrant sandalwood. She welcomed delegates to her beautiful city when premonsoon showers had dimmed the heat and restored the springiness and iridescence of the foliage even as she thanked BPP chairman and Federation president Jamshed Guzder for his gallant welcome. Guest speaker, Cyrus Sataravala, an attitudinal engineer, told the assembled delegates to hold fast to their dreams because history's greatest achievers were those who dared to dream the impossible dream. "How willing are we to make the dream come true?... The giant redwood was once a little seed..." But laughed maverick BPP trustee Rustom Tirandaz, "My dream may be your nightmare!"

Bomi Heerjee, president of the Indore anjuman, has accepted the responsibility of hosting the next meeting of the executive council on January 31 and February 1, 1998 in Indore in conjunction with the Mhow and Ratlam anjumans.

WCZF vs WZO

Despite a spirited defence of the WZO's position as a world body, the last Federation meet in Bombay in December 1996 had assented to the formation of the WCZF. WZO vice president in India Mistry now challenged the minutes of that meeting as "not factually recorded." He contended



Dara Irani, Eruch Irani and Guzder with Vandana Chavan lighting the symbolic fire and a view of the main protagonists

the president of the requesting member anjuman, but that no transcripts of the recorded proceedings would be provided to anybody.

With substantial funds remaining unused, the Bharuch punchayet is frustrated by stymied cy prës petitions. Also on their anvil: how long must *baaj-rojgar* (after-death ceremonies) bequests be honored?

The annual general meeting on the morning of June 15 confirmed the main



L to R (1st row): Guzder, Gandhi and Sethna; (2nd row) Taleyarkhan, Shroff, Bisney, Karanjawalla and P. Irani; (3rd row) Mogrelia, Patrawala, Dittia and Tamboly; (4th row) Dinshaw Mehta and Kavarana





that the WZO position had not been sufficiently enunciated and that the Federation's assent to the WCZF was not a fait accompli. He was prepared to pay for a copy of the verbatim tapes to shore up his allegation. He was supported by Clubwala of Madras, a WZO member who said that the "WZO had not been represented" at the discussion following the Federation meeting, that the "other body was invited and WZO was not invited." [For details of the WZO position as espoused by its president and vice president in India, Dadi Engineer and Mistry respectively and managing director of WZO Trust Funds (India) Tamboly, see "Federation's nod to world council," *Parsiana*, January 1997.] She simultaneously noted that the WZO had been given time until December 1997 to change its constitution. She said she had not received a copy of all papers (Gandhi had circulated copies of a WCZF draft constitution plus WZO president Shahpur Captain's objection to the formation of the WCZF along with the suggestions of the Borivli Anjuman to all Federation members). The delegates from Pune, Calcutta, Bhavnagar and Jamshedpur had made a similar complaint at the December meet in Bombay which had been recorded in the minutes. Based on that, Jamshedpur's Eruch Surti said he had the impression that no decision had been taken at the Bombay

Clockwise from top left: Tirandaz, Rustomji, Clubwala, D. Mistry, Ginwalla, Masani, Cama and Marshall

meet. Gandhi said he had sent duplicates of the abovementioned papers to these anjumans.

Surti circulated a letter dated June 6, 1997 signed by Jamshedpur Parsee Association (JPA) chairman Homi Bodhanwalla stating that the "JPA strongly feels that for the sake of Zoroastrian unity worldwide we should have only one body which would bring under one umbrella the entire Zoroastrian community spread all over the world." Referring to the oft cited imbalance in the WZO constitution which gives an anjuman like the BPP and an individual one vote each, the Jamshedpur note states, "Mr Captain has given an assurance in writing that this would be modified suitably... If WZO fails to modify this particular clause within an agreed time frame, then we would be justified in joining the world council as proposed by Mr Rivetna."

Gandhi went "on record as stating that the minutes are a faithful record of what happened." As for the availability of transcripts he voiced his strong opposition but offered "that if the President of any Anjuman had any objection to the minutes as recorded, he would meet him and clarify

it across the table." He was supported in his stand by Delhi Parsi Anjuman (DPA) president and Federation vice president Lt Gen Adi Sethna (retd) and DPA's Brig Adi Sahukar (retd), and by Guzder who expressed himself "totally against it. I don't want 800 tapes floating around India."

Another issue dealing with the WCZF was the circulation of succeeding drafts of its constitution which Gandhi proposed to restrict to those anjumans which had voted in its favor. Heerjee however questioned the logic of such a move, asking, "(Would you) ostracize them and keep them apart? Prevent them from making comments on the draft constitution? It would create a split..." Guzder ruled that any member wanting to see it will be sent copies and BPP trustee Minoo Shroff advised that even those who have voted against the Council should get a chance to see the constitution. Gandhi reasoned that "the constitution will be forwarded only to those who have voted in favor because it is only those people who are interested. Those anjumans who have abstained want to remain neutral. Those who have said no are not interested in what the constitution is, because their decision is not subject to the constitution, so those anjumans who would write and say that we will consider after we have seen the constitution we will certainly send it. To send it to all the



L to R (top to bottom); Heerjee, Roshan and Minoo Engineer, Dittia, Dandiwalla, Eruch and Silloo Surti, Sohrab Dahmubad and Pastakia, Batliwalla and Bala

member anjumans would be a waste of money. As it is a lot of money and time have been spent on circulating the dossier." Guzder endorsed his statement, "Those who want it or those who are anxious to see it would be sent copies," and Heerjee was satisfied.

Individual anjumans

The Mhow anjuman remains the only one to have drafted the Federation as a custodian trustee on its board with co-opted member and Federation treasurer Rustom Anklesaria as its representative. Capt Homi Dandiwalla, president of the Allahabad anjuman, has been keen to similarly induct a Federation representative there, noting that 80 percent of the Zoroastrian population of Allahabad is over 60 years and with many aged people, the population could decrease drastically. However he had failed to impress his colleagues who voted against the Federation being invited as custodian trustee. Gandhi offered to meet the Allahabad Zoroastrians and explain to them that under the proposed scheme the Fed-

eration would have a say in the management of affairs and properties of the anjuman only after the Zoroastrian population in Allahabad would be reduced to 15 or less. Until then the anjuman's right to dispose off its immovable properties was also sacrosanct provided 3/4 of its members favored the proposal. Problems in Allahabad concerned encroachment by unsocial elements outside the aramgah and lack of a paramoged for the Gandhi dar-e-meher.

Agra's Daulat Debara recounted the anjuman's happy break because of the heavily publicized Yanni music program in the environs of the Taj which drew people from India and abroad to Agra. "Our dharamshala was full for four days!"

she declared. Two rooms and toilets had been spruced up for the occasion at a cost of Rs 40,000. Some visitors from Surat had shown them ways of increasing the returns from the dharamshala. However, the specific suggestion of opening it to non-Parsi users was voted down by the anjuman, she said.

Gandhi enquired if there were statutory provisions in the anjumans' constitutions for annual budgets to be approved by the general body, but hardly any anjuman reported such a proviso. In Allahabad it was mandatory to give a clear seven days' notice of the AGM with books of accounts open to scrutiny. In Ahmedabad there was yearly budgeting and earmarked funds, noted its representative and FOZYA (Fed-

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Daviewalla, Dr Meh-
er Master-Moos and
the College Partici-
pants in the Library
Hall.



The Sanjan River-
side with the Barot
Hills.

Clockwise from top left: Sheroo Master and Adil Crawford, Anklesaria, Laskari, Edulji, D. Debara, Sahukar, Dick and Dinshi Patel



eration of Zoroastrian Youth Associations) president Porus Karanjawalla. Flats built by the punchayet are due for allocation by the end of 1997, he said and acknowledged that every facility was extended to the Ahmedabad Youth League when it hosted the Pune youths for an intercity meet earlier in the year.

Baroda's Boman Cama noted that its 285 families account for a population of 1,000 Zoroastrians. Two community dinners on Jamshedi Navroze and Khordadsal bring them together. All children securing over 60 percent marks (63 last year) received merit awards. Owners/occupiers of the property adjoining the dokhma land have obtained a stay order from the court restraining the punchayet from constructing a pavilion and boundary wall on the dokhma land, he informed the council.

Bharuch's depleting population is struggling with problems of excess funds. The monies are earmarked for objects which have lapsed like the maternity hospital which has not been functioning for more than 20 years and where the annual interest accrues at over Rs 75,000, as per Sarosh Ginwalla. Their *cy près* petition seeking to rechannel the funds for education has been lying in the Gujarat High Court for the past four years. "Judges come and go," he noted and asked, "Can the Federation or (veteran politician) Mr (Homi) Taleyarkhan

help?"

Other funds in their possession concern lakhs of rupees in *baaj-rojgar* funds for after death ceremonies where not only the original donors but their descendants are dead. "Who do we ask?" he queried. Critics are quick to cast aspersions of "*Paisa khaai jaavoch/khotté rasté vaaproch* (money is lining the wrong pockets)," said Ginwalla who noted that he and Dara Mahudawalla are a part of Bharuch's hung punchayet.

"How long do we continue prayers for those whose descendant are no longer alive"

Politician Marazban Patrawala, the Zoroastrian member on the National Minorities Commission confirmed that the trustees would lay themselves open to charges of criminal misappropriation of funds if they used the money for other purposes without a *cy près* order from the court. "There is no remedy except patience and endeavor. From the Commission I can send directives or summons to the charity commissioner. But the courts are outside

my jurisdiction," declared Patrawala.

Ginwalla's problem: "How long do we continue prayers for those whose descendants are no longer alive?" was placed by Patrawala in the court of the high priests but Gandhi declared it to be a legal problem: "The Bharuch punchayet accepted money from the settlor to say prayers for the dead... When interest on the funds is not enough to say prayers every year, you say them once in five years or 10 years."

F. N. Unwalla of Bhavnagar declared that their body was a trust and not an anjuman and that there was no budgeting practice, no accounts and no AGM among its barely 30 members.

The Borivli and Suburban Zoroastrian Association has been promoting interaction among Zoroastrians in the suburbs with a moonlit cruise, a picnic in Uran, Dae mah jashan, etc. Khurshed Pastakia's account was particularly appreciative of Dadar Madressa principal Ervad Ramiyar Karanjia's explanation on Ava Yazad, appropriately on the Uran beach. "Such activity is the need of the hour because old and young need to understand the religion," noted Pastakia.

Calcutta has been holding regular ghambars from the Olpadwala Memorial Fund, informed Cyrus Debara. Its veteran Olympian, Jehanbux Kapadia, 90, is ready to attend the next Veteran Olympics in

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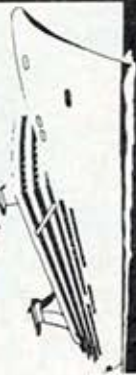


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L to R: Dinshaw, K. Mistry, Thirty Patel, Gool Vakharia and (below) Mugat

Durban, South Africa for which he needs financial assistance, informed Sethna. Airfare plus seven days' stay and mediclaim together amount to Rs 84,000 of which the WZO has given Rs 25,000, he added. DPA's Farrokh Rustomji suggested that the Federation request Freni Ginwalla, the speaker of the South African parliament, to use her good offices while Mistry suggested a request to the South African High Commission to waive his visa fees.

"One needs to give back to the community what has been received"

Calicut's population has been hiked by 40 percent thanks to the arrival of a Zoroastrian naval officer's family from Delhi, said Darius Marshall. The figure has now gone from seven to 10!

In Madras, anjuman properties have been repaired and a 10 percent hike in rents every three years has been well accepted, noted its president and Federation vice president Nariman Mogrelia. He was happy to report that some tenants had voluntarily increased their rents by 200 percent. Those truly needy have been exempted from the hikes. He

Cyrus Satara-vala (left) and Grant



was registering a change of attitudes on the part of the tenants who, like their counterparts in Bom-bay, had for 60-70 years resisted any increase in rent. Mogrelia said that they asked the tenants what rents they are comfortable with. "You need to find some people in the bays who accept the idea that one needs to give back to the community what has been received. Then leave them to propagate the idea. It is very necessary that the philosophy is propagated," he advised the BPP officials.

The Madras anjuman had offered to contribute a total of Rs 10,000 to enable a youth representative from Madras to attend the Second World Zoroastrian Youth Congress in London, said Mogrelia. He also noted that the term "chasniwala" had been phased out in Madras and had been replaced by "general assistant," the post carrying a salary of Rs 2,000 per month plus free lodging, electricity and water.

The DPA has a proper annual accounting system but so far there is no budget approval by the general body. The executive board prepares the budget and the general body approves the expenses, in-



formed Sethna. Normally two ladies are nominated to the board.

Indore is a scene of fraternity, camaraderie with four women plus a youth representative on its eight-member

committee, as noted Heerjee. Projects include an improvement in the dokhma land where the WZO is providing support and attempts are on to rehabilitate the dharamshala. Their population received a boost with five births including the triplets mentioned earlier. The mother of the triplets — two boys and a girl — is a youthful 22-year-old BCom student. The father

earns Rs 3,700 and pays Rs 1,700 in rent (very reasonable rent in Indore, Heerjee assured his startled colleagues on the executive council). The Indore Parsis have rallied round them with support.

Guzder agreed to pay Rs 3,000 per month from the BPP and urged the Federation to encourage more Parsis to produce triplets, quadruplets, etc. "What about the other anjumans? If they have created history we should support them." Sahukar pointed out that in five years inflation would considerably reduce the BPP's aid in real terms and suggested that the father be inducted into a better-paying vocation. But the suggestion was lost in general banter concerning who was responsible for the triplets: mother or father?

The recent earthquake in Jabalpur had badly damaged the dharamshala, informed Kerman Batliwalla. The estimate for repairs ranged between Rs 1,20,000 and Rs 1,50,000. To BPP's earlier offer of one lakh rupees (contingent on certain information sought from Jabalpur) the DPA, Calicut and Mhow added Rs 5,001 each, Bharuch Rs 5,000, Madras, Indore, Saron-da, Jamshedpur and Shirin Dandiwalla Rs 1,001 each. Tamboly pledged an additional one lakh rupees from the WZO. Eight tons of clothes and mattresses had been forwarded by the Red Cross includ-

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ing clothes received from abroad for Latur which were too warm for that region, to the quake affected residents of Jabalpur, informed Taleyarkhan.

Silloo Surti from Jamshedpur spoke of less than 200 Zoroastrians in Jamshedpur though the directory lists 650 because "working members and college level children (have) all gone out (of Jamshedpur)." Currently TELCO's divisional manager in charge of community services, Surti said, "When I retire there will not be a single Parsi (senior) executive left (in TELCO, Jamshedpur)." The preprimary school run by the JPA supports a number of activities including the maintenance of the agiary garden and other community spaces. The Stree Mandal's Gavashni Club has "more prizes than children to receive them," and takes part in the activities of the other communities. Their newsletter is irregular because no editorial contributions are coming in.

Concerned that no young Parsi engineers are coming to Jamshedpur she told the gathered delegates to spread the word to young engineers they know: life in Jamshedpur is good. Also, if young social service trainees want to apprentice with TISCO, TELCO, etc they will have Parsi homes to live in. A bright spark is young Yazneen Rana who has gone into the archery nationals. The father works in TISCO and would appreciate support for Yazneen's training, noted Surti, and added, "If any Parsi organization would like to sponsor Yazneen and may like to use her for their advertising purpose, the help would be welcome."

The 100 strong Mhow anjuman's rules require the general body to approve the budget, informed its secretary Behram Masani. Having reconstructed their agiary the anjuman now plans to have a new dharamshala. According to the law in Madhya Pradesh, charity trusts there are exempt from the Rent Control Act. "Our problem is that we do not want to force tenants out. We

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prefer to leave (the anjuman property) in the hands of Parsi tenants because (as it is) houses are locked up," noted Masani. [In Bombay, where the government has the discretionary power to waive the provisions of the act in the case of registered charities, former chief minister S. B. Chavan had refused the BPP's request on the grounds of not discriminating between communities, former BPP chief executive Rustom Anklesaria informed the gathering.]

In Nagpur where Zoroastrians today number approximately 700 (half the original number when the Empress Mills were in swing), seven buildings have been constructed to accommodate 67 tenants, informed Keki Bala.

The Secunderabad delegate Lt Col Gev Edulji disagreed with an earlier suggestion that the anjumans nominate a lady on their board, in keeping with the reservation for women in parliament. "Our ladies stand for election and do better than men. We don't need our ladies to be propped up," he said.

The Poona Parsee Panchayat (PPP) distributes Rs 80,000 worth of foodgrains among the poor despite the fact that the anaaj fund has a corpus of Rs 1,74,596 and nets only Rs 17,000 in interest, informed its secretary and Federation vice president Eruch Irani. The balance amount is drawn from the general corpus and the same applies for their outgoings on medical relief (corpus Rs 2,22,354) and education (corpus Rs 3,95,754). They have determinedly fenced 68 acres of the Panchayat's open land against trespassing. Bureaucratic and financial problems have to be faced before they can proceed with their housing project. The objects of the PPP do not include housing and clearance is awaited from the charity commissioner as also new plans for the demarcation of plots from the Pune Municipal Corporation. Their request for seed money to construct residential accommodation has been turned down by the Hong Kong Zoroastrian association.

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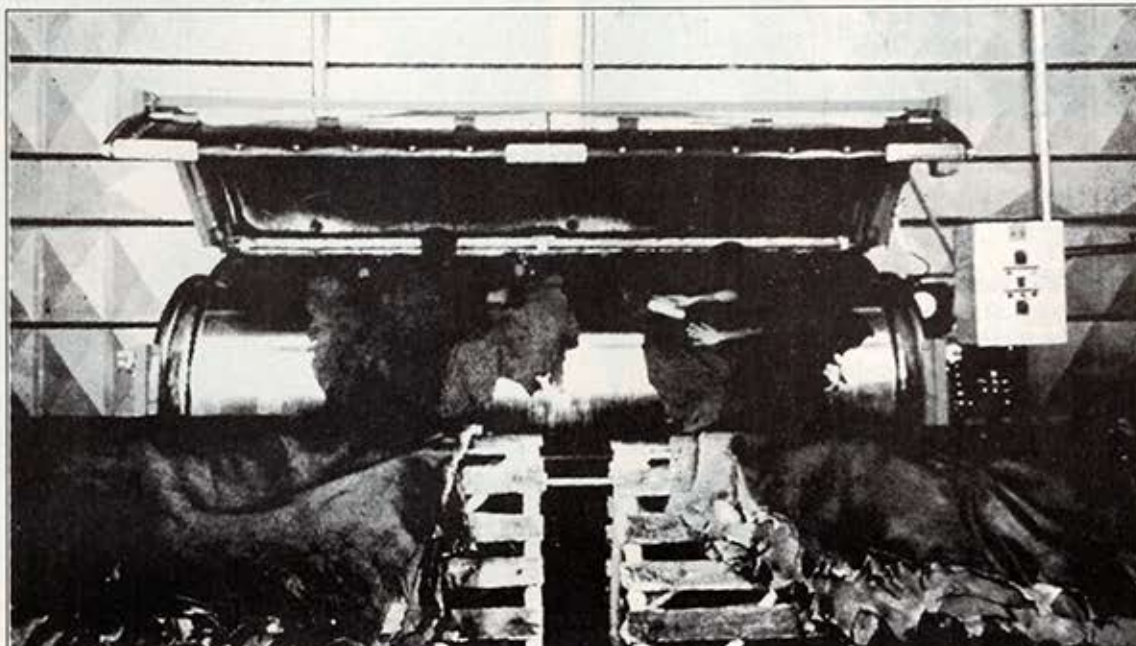
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The Poona Parsi Panchayat property at Lullanagar after the fencing and greening; its caretakers (at right)

"We have land and expertise but no money," said Irani suggesting that the BPP ensure a share in the project by providing financial input. PPP president Dara Irani gave his cotrustees all the credit for the smooth working of the body over the past two-and-a-half years: "The cooperation is just fantastic. Decisions are taken unanimously; there is no fighting, no quarrelling." Shroff complimented him on his leadership: "It takes two to tango."

BPP and housing

With "not a square yard of FSI (floor space index)" and about 1,800 on the waiting list for housing, Guzder informed the council that the BPP had acquired 1.5 acres of land in Vasai and applied for permission to build. A five-acre plot earlier acquired was



"You are breaking the spine of the community by providing cheap or subsidized rent"

declared as part of the industrial belt and had to be given up. The BPP has also decided to buy land at Khargar in New Bombay. Guzder spoke of a crop of 500-600 new flats in the next four to five years. Estimating an overall natural decrease in the population by 500 in that time Guzder hoped to "be able to accommodate and settle young people."

The fixing of rents in the new properties is a source of concern. Taleyarkhan urged the BPP to "think of the economically weaker sections, provide one or two-room

accommodation." But Guzder declared that his peons are paying Rs 900 as rent in zopadpattis. Describing the scenario as a "greying situation as in Europe and Japan," Shroff noted, "When you don't charge user charges you get into dole situations (where) people with Mercedes cars don't want to pay parking charges." Depending on the land tax and maintenance charges at Vasai, Shroff advocated selective subsidies. He related an experience with a Zoroastrian man earning Rs 48,000 per month who tried to stake a claim to the BPP's third child subsidy and "walked out in a huff when told that the scheme is not for the likes of you." Shroff urged the Panchayat to evolve a cross subsidy scheme that would impel prosperous residents who do not move out of Panchayat properties to contribute to BPP funds. Guzder recounted his experience as trustee of the Zoroastrian Rehthan Fund where two rooms plus kitchen flats have been tenanted on a rent of Rs 13 by people who now own cars. The rent, Guzder said, was recently raised to Rs 17 and the tenants quibble about a service charge. After great persuasion they have now agreed to bear 50 percent of the cost of repairs, he added.

Secunderabad's Jehangir Bisney asked if any study had been done whether housing has helped the community. "Even

though you've been providing housing for so many years, the population is falling... Housing is perceived as a right. What about duties?... Look at the macro-level. Will it help the community in the long term?" Tamboly explained the burgeoning demand in terms of joint families splitting into nuclear families with "duplicate applications from the same family."

Shroff disagreed with Guzder's oft repeated projection of 22,000 Parsis by the year 2020: "Even in the worst case scenario, I expect 50,000 plus Parsis. Let's not take too despondent a view." Sethna pointed out the Quetta experience where Parsi colonies are lying vacant or are occupied by non-Parsis. He also noted that hostels built for Zoroastrian boys and girls in Iran by Peshotan Marker are lying empty.

Speaking from 15 years' experience as the BPP's chief executive, Anklesaria reminded the delegates of the Panchayat-commissioned professional detailed study of the effect of housing on fertility which had established that "housing has nothing to do with fertility. It is a question of attitudes on production of children. The study had established that people with three, four or five rooms don't produce more than 1.5 children. "Really speaking you are breaking the spine of the community by providing cheap or subsidized rent,"

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said Anklesaria. Relating the BPP's unsuccessful efforts at seeking the cooperation of other trusts with land/funds for housing, Anklesaria wondered, "Are we making the Parsi community too dependent on charity institutions?" He commended the Ahmedabad punchayet's scheme for gradual pay back of the funds invested in construction of community housing. According to Anklesaria, "The real thing is to give the best of education and help them on their feet by setting up shops, etc... No brave man or woman says, 'Tamé flat nahi aapyo té humaroo engagement tooti gayu' (Our engagement broke up because you did not give us a flat). Make it clear that we'll help those who help themselves. Otherwise the trust will not be able to survive."

Reservations

Award winning orthodontist Keki Mistry unknowingly revived the reservation debate when he wondered why there were currently only two or three Parsi students in dentistry at Bombay University. When told the frustrated students were losing out after scoring marks in the 90s, he opined that community stalwarts "should prevail on the country's leaders to give some leeway for Parsis."

Patrawala emphatically endorsed his stand, noting that most Parsis were mentally living in the era of the 1950s. "Parsis then didn't have to deal with 50 percent reservation for SCs and STs (scheduled castes and scheduled tribes)... Today other communities are in the same fast track with us... The days of *bap karni* (dependence on elders) are over. Stand on your own feet — *aap karni* (self-reliance), otherwise you'll be passed over," he declared.

Noting that there can be "no Parsis or Iranis without Zoroastrianism," Patrawala rued the lack of religious leadership and urged the BPP to promote a council of high priests. On the social level also, due to the lack of data on the community's numbers, its age, sex, education and professional profile "everybody is talking in the air." He upbraided the elders for making no effort to establish a place or authority where Parsi births can be recorded and urged the Punchayet to employ educated unemployed youths to create a census.

It was Patrawala's stand that Sir Shapoorji Billimoria was in favor of accepting a reserved seat for Parsis but that Sir Homi Modi decided against the idea on the grounds that Parsis don't need reservation when others don't have reservation. "The youths are not operating within the same



Clockwise from top left: N. Palkhiwala, a youth delegate, Burzin Khan, Cyrus Debara, Sahavir Bharucha and Perzid Daruwalla

parameters of life as their parents did... Parsi girls and boys with 94 percent marks are outclassed because of a lack (of community support)."

Quoting a Supreme Court ruling that an educational organization run by a minority community has the right to keep 50 percent of the seats for itself, Patrawala urged the Punchayet to "make an effort to restore at least two" of the five reserved seats for Parsis in Bombay's Grant Medical College which "lapsed or were given away." Noting that Anglo-Indians, a smaller community than the Parsis, have two seats in the Lok Sabha, two in the Uttar Pradesh Legislative Assembly and one each in Maharashtra, Karnataka and Bengal while there was not a single Parsi in any legislature in India today, Patrawala claimed that the Minorities Commission had agreed in principle to recommend one seat for Parsis in the Lok Sabha and one in each of the Maharashtra and Gujarat legislatures. "If you have no forum to voice your grievances, you are shouting in the air," he

reminded the delegates. He saluted those Parsi ladies who successfully lobbied to restore two seats in engineering for Parsis in the Miraj Sangli College and suggested that Parsi families plan ahead in order to avail of the two seats in medicine and one for engineering reserved for Parsis who have studied for seven years in Karnataka. "Unless you speak up, nothing will happen. If the child doesn't cry, even the mother will not give milk!"

Another Patrawala suggestion in the educational field was that Parsi trusts could donate to new colleges for computers/engineering/medicine/dentistry which need funds for land or equipment and block two seats for the next 20 years. Rich Parsis abroad could give similar donations and avail of the five percent quota for NRI (Non Resident Indian) seats.

Earlier Jhansi's Ronnie Dick who claimed to be the fifth generation of his family working for the Indian Railways, had urged Taleyarkhan and Patrawala to seek reservation for Parsi boys and girls in government service. Patrawala noted that there is a move that there should be 25 percent minority representatives, including Zoroastrians, on government selection committees. He now asked the Federation

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to endorse the move by passing a resolution and sending it to the Minorities Commission. He also felt that Parsis should lobby for an observer status at the United Nations (UN) as the Bahais, Tibetans, etc already have. This suggestion was shot down by Taleyarkhan who was convinced that any move for direct representation at the UN will mar the Parsis' standing as an integral part of India. Guzder accepted most of Patrawala's earlier suggestions including contributions to new colleges.

A new aspect of the educational problem was raised by Prof Hoshang Mugat of Pune: "Our children in Poona are not getting admitted to Std XI and XII (Junior College)... Then where is the question of engineering and medicine?" He felt the need to prop youngsters against the extreme competition. "We have so many institutions with Parsi names which have not insisted on Parsi management. Ask them for only one percent seats for Parsis... Till last year there were seven to eight seats in the Wadia College of Management. Now there are no management seats. We have got schools. Push them up at least to Std XII," Mugat suggested, expressing satisfaction with the performance of all the students whom he had helped secure college admission. "Please, please give edu-

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cation much more priority than housing."

Eruch Irani noted that the Neville Wadia Management Institute was donated and founded in the last five years. "The family is there, the trust is alive. Request them to keep some seats."

Patrawala suggested that the BPP put advertisements in the Press seeking information on Parsi-founded institutions. "Then we can find out if there were Parsi seats..."

In the context of medical education retired Maj Gen D. B. Doctor informed the gathering that a minimum 60 percent is required for admission to the Armed Forces Medical College though oral and written admission tests are also taken. Today there is only one Parsi doctor on its administration. Of course, the candidate must be willing to join the armed forces.

A disenchanted Brig Noshir Grant, who had organized training for Parsi youths wishing to join the armed forces in response to a BPP/Federation request some years ago, had found no takers for the facility. "You can have any amount of reservations. It's not a case of taking horses to water. We have no horses!"

Heerjee who had served as secretary of the Minorities Commission for three-and-a-half years was not ready to accept that the community's spirit today was so different from what it had been at the time of Indian independence. "Competition is meant to draw the best out of all of us... Homi Daji of Madhya Pradesh had won his elections (to the Lok Sabha) on sheer pace and popularity. If we try to find short cuts others will be ready to pull us down."

Reacting to "pleading letters from parents of frustrated children," Gandhi asked the delegates to "kindly put your personal pride and opinion in your pocket and ask youths about their opinion." Agreeing that Parsi children need a break at the crucial level, Gandhi spoke from experience that "behind our backs" political authorities consult eminent Zoroastrians who tend not to support the call for reservation. He urged Patrawala to convert such people to the changed scenario, mobilize public opinion before making an application to the government.

But Bisney was sceptical about "tackling community issues piecemeal." According to him a master plan projected over the next several years was required and for that the quantum of the population,

its quality, educational levels, aims, etc had to be ascertained on a priority basis.

"Start with a directory of the community as a whole not only the association members — as a database. Ask the delegates to bring their directories, put them



Triple celebration: Adil and Thrity Dosabhoj with Hormuzd, Freyan and Arban

on a computer. Then the answers will come," suggested Sethna. "We Parsis are chary of answering questions because we think of problems, not solutions."

Defunct anjumans

In the absence of Sorab Katpitia the update on defunct anjumans was scanty. Rustomji and DPA youth trustee Adil Nargolwalla had been to check up on the Hathras and Aligarh aramgahs which are under the protection of the DPA. Rustomji reported on the trip they found "so useful and educative." The Aligarh cemetery is looked after by the Christians whose cemetery is adjacent to that of the Parsis. They look after the Zoroastrian graves, a common chowkidar maintains vigilance. In Hathras a Muslim family is looking after the aramgah without seeking monetary support from anywhere. There is no encroachment and the boundary wall is intact. "(We are) quite sure that no Parsi cemetery would provide such facility to another commu-

nity," said Rustomji about the Aligarh Christians, adding that the DPA will decide on what to do in Hathras.

As far as the Srinagar aramgah is concerned, Sethna said he was aware that the 200-year-old, two-acre property in the cantonment area was safe from encroachment.

The question of Zoroastrian land in Uran acquired by the Indian Navy was once again revived by Mistry who is of the opinion that alternative land would be forthcoming from the government if the matter is correctly pursued. Masani opined that under the Land Acquisition Act the land acquisition officer determines the compensation which is subject to appeal to the high court within a time frame but there is no provision for getting alternate land. The matter has been sporadically discussed by the Federation. Anklesaria clarified that BPP officers seeking facts had noted that the Bhiwandiwalla Trust to whom the land belonged had no record of having given the land. The matter was about to be dropped when Sahukar suggested that the Southern Command headquarters in Pune may be holding the records if the land was given on a 99-year lease.

He undertook to instruct the PPP president on how to acquire this information from Southern Command.

The vigilance committee constituted by the Federation in June 1996 to aid Katpitia registered its inability to help because they state Katpitia chooses to work alone. Eruch Irani, Karanjawalla and Pervez Irani noted that Katpitia would be saved unnecessary trips if he would allow them to function at the local level and summon him when required. But Gandhi noted, "Certain people like to do things their own way... If new cases come up and the others want to handle them on their own steam, they are welcome to do so. The vigilance committee was not formed to exercise vigilance on Katpitia but to bring new cases to the Federation's notice with specific information." Gandhi reminded the council that three people had come with stories at its Bombay meet in December. But they did not meet BPP chief executive Behram Laskari the following day, as advised. He now offered Pervez Irani to undertake the project relating to the Tarapur land on his own, but there was no confirmation from Pervez or the vigilance committee.

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AGM

Sethna, Bodhanwala and Mogrelia continue as Federation vice presidents for the north, east and south zones, Surat Parsi Punchayet president Dr Sam Bhacca and Eruch Irani as vice presidents for West Zones A and B. The co-opted members Rustomji, Clubwalla, Anklesaria and Eruch Surti also continue unchanged. Co-opted member and Federation joint honorary treasurer Peshotan Nargolwala had sought to resign due to ill health and increasing age. When Gandhi proposed that Nargolwala be asked to continue out of sentiment, some members felt that a youth in this position would be better able to serve the body. Some confusion followed whether a youth meant a FOZYA appointee or a council/anjuman nominee. Essentially, co-opted members are community members who are involved in working for its welfare and could be residents of the areas they represent, but not necessarily so. After much quibbling over the nomenclature (youth/younger person/young committed member/young committed worker) it was decided that the matter will be rediscussed at the next executive council meeting and "whatever resolution is passed, will be approved."

The other election dealt with the appointment of a joint honorary secretary, a position held by former BPP trustee and chairman Eruch Desai until his retirement. Gandhi informed the delegates about the Iranian Zoroastrian Anjuman's complaint that it has no seat on the executive council and its request that Pervez Irani be appointed joint honorary secretary in Desai's place.

Mogrelia was in favor of finding "younger people to help Keki and Rustom who have been pulling the burden alone." But Gandhi was of the opinion that the position was a BPP prerogative and should remain that way.

Youths

The next all India Zoroastrian Youth Seminar is slated for Baroda, November 2 to 4, 1997. It will be held under the joint banner of FOZYA and the Baroda United Zoroastrian Youth League as noted its representative Hutoxi Ankleshwaria. The League is normally involved in organizing social and cultural events, games and dinner, blood donation, camps and fund raising drives.

"Are you educating the youths on the development programs and problems of India?" asked Taleyarkhan, urging increased awareness. "Know more about the country to which you belong (so that) you can answer when asked abroad," he urged. Although the subject is not on the agenda so far, Ankleshwaria agreed to "work in this direction."

Gandhi supported Ankleshwaria's request for donations beyond the one lakh rupees promised annually by Guzder, noting that promises for the FOZYA programs should not only cover the expenses of the seminar but generate funds for FOZYA's projects.

Calcutta's small Parsi community shrinks with each family's migration to other parts of India or abroad, noted Cyrus Debara. Their youths had been completely out of FOZYA activities until one youth partook of the ninth seminar organized by the Surat Youth League. Thereafter their representation increased to six in Bombay.

Ahmedabad Youth League's Burzin Daruvala spoke of volleyball and cricket, housie and dance as normal activities along with the traditional jashans. They hosted 38 Pune youths, December 20-26, 1996 in an intercity meet that had roused tremendous enthusiasm. Of the 100 plus youths from India attending the Second World Zoroastrian Congress in London, July 4-11, 1997 as Pervez Irani mentioned, 20 are said to be from Ahmedabad.

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Pune's annual summer sports camp had been held May 1-31 with karate, aerobics, drawing, painting, dancing and stitching classes included, as informed Nawaz Palkhiwala of the Poona Youth League. When they hosted the Ahmedabad contingent in a return meet they had included visits to Khadakvasla and the Poonavala Stud Farms. They had been actively involved in repair and maintenance work at Doongerwadi and were complimented by PPP president Dara Irani for their cooperation in the hosting of the Federation meeting.

Of Indore's total 150 Zoroastrians, 35 are youths. The Indore Youth League formed in 1994 is trying to revive activities like ghambars, plays and games on Khordadsal and Jamshedi Navroze.

Bisney recalled the Secunderabad Youth Fest held in 1990 which was well attended. The Secunderabad Youth is now planning a literary youth meet, Kaleidoscope, over the sankrant weekend, January 8-11, 1998. More than 10 literary and art disciplines will be embraced including human resource development, advertising, stock exchange games, debates, essays, painting, quiz, dancing and singing. Determined that the emphasis will be on quality participation, not quantity, del-

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egates will be obliged to participate in at least one discussion. Mere spectators will not be allowed, said Bisney.

The Baroda seminar will qualify for Guzder's standing donation of one lakh rupees, said Gandhi. But the industrialist was not as welcoming when Bisney sought his aid for Kaleidoscope. It was subsequently learnt that Guzder has given Rs 35,000 in advertisements and an assurance that one lakh rupees will follow.

Awards

A Federation award in memory of the late Ardeshir Katrak, the feisty stalwart of Bombay's Small Causes Court is in the pipeline. Proposed by Kaiser-E-Hind with whom Katrak's professional association had spanned over 20 years, it is meant to honor the man who never charged fees to widows, priests or people from his hometown Gandevi. Hence the first criterion for the award, as spelt out by the donor would be legal aid for the community. Lawyers with proven commitment to fundamental rights, constitutional law and general excellence in the legal field would also be considered, in that order.

In response to Taleyarkhan's proposal for an award for lady entrepreneurs for small scale industries, Gandhi said there

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has been "no bio data, no nominations" for the two original awards for entrepreneurs since 1992.

"We find so many Parsis with excellent performances but they don't get a chance because they are not nominated," said Bisney. As a case in point he referred to Aban Satarawalla, principal of a school in Jodhpur which produced six SSC top-pers.

Gandhi confirmed that as no nominations are coming in and addresses are difficult to come by, awards in certain categories have missed several years.

Miscellanea

Taleyarkhan declared that the Gujarat government will begin constructing a 300-foot long breakwater 40 meters out in the sea in the third week of October. The Save Udwada Committee has contributed four lakh rupees toward the 40-45 lakh rupee project to halt the ingress of the sea in that area. The amount includes Rs 1,00,000 from the BPP and Rs 2,27,000 from the Baroda Parsi Punchayet.

Solicitor Berjis Desai has forwarded a draft for the methodology to be employed in the establishment of a Federation fund for venture capital, informed Gandhi. Guzder was particular that all angles are well covered: "The tax authorities shouldn't feel we are doing business or they will cancel our charity status."

Under the WZO's self-employment scheme 200 Zoroastrians have received interest free financial support since August 1995, informed Tamboly. Amounts vary between 2.5 and 3 lakh rupees and have to be returned in 45 equal interest free instalments. Most allottees have gone into trade. One lady from Rustom Baug is exporting lilies. There is not a single defaulter, said Tamboly and invited upcountry anjumans to recommend potential entrepreneurs.

Sethna informed the delegates that Australian Zoroastrians were looking for business partners in India, preferably among the community. Consultancy in health care, insurance, home care, agro industries, food processing, mining were some of the fields indicated. Interested parties were requested to fax Sethna or Gandhi in Delhi (6864609 and 6448322 respectively).

Dastur (Dr) Kaikhusroo JamaspAsa will conduct the 150th anniversary jashan of

the Pestonji Mehrji Agiary in Hyderabad, informed special invitee Bazun Dittia. Anniversary celebrations of Dadabhai Naoroji, a ghambar and navjote of poor children were also programmed for the celebrations, August 6-10, 1997.

A big name in his time Mehrji had borne the cost of minting 40 lakh rupees worth of coins on behalf of the Nizam who never paid up, alleged Dittia. Mehrji's appeal against the Nizam went to the Privy Council but he lost the case on a technical ground and was much reduced in financial status, Dittia added. The trustees of the Agiary are planning to produce replicas of the coin on the sesquicentennial of the agiary that he built in his heyday. Instilling an awareness of Zoroastrian identity among the host population is one reason behind the exercise, according to Dittia.

**Hostels built
for Zoroastrian
boys and girls
in Iran by
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are lying empty**

Those attending the Federation meeting were: Dolat Debara from Agra; Sahavir Bharucha, Perzid Daruwala and Porus Karanjawalla from Ahmedabad; Capt Homi and Shireen Dandiwalla from Allahabad; Sarosh and Pilloo Ginwalla and

Dara and Shirin Mahudawalla from Bharuch; F. N. Unwalla from Bhavnagar; Jamshed Guzder, Minoo Shroff, Silloo Kavarana, Dinshaw Mehta, Rustom Tirandaz, Dinshaw Tamboly, Behram Laskari, Rustom Anklesaria, Sheroo Master, Adil Crawford and Gool Kias from Bombay; Khurshed Pastakia from the Borivli and Suburban Zoroastrian Association; Cyrus Debara from Calcutta; Darius Marshall from Calicut; Lt Gen (Retd) Adi Sethna, Brig (Retd) Adi Sahukar, Dadi Mistry, Farrokh Rustomji and Keki Gandhi from Delhi; Dr (Ms) M. H. Panthak from Ilav; Bomi Heerjee, Freny and Phiroz Madan, Shiraz Daruwala, Neville Wankadia, Minoo and Roshan Engineer, Jehangir Daruwala and Noshir Mobedji from Indore; Pervez Irani and Sohrab Dahmubad from the Iranian Zoroastrian Anjuman; Kerman Batliwalla from Jabalpur; Eruch and Silloo Surti from Jamshedpur; Ronnie and Gulnaz Dick from Jhansi; Nariman Mogrelia and Mani Clubwala from Madras; Behram and Dolly Masani from Mhow; Keki Bala from Nagpur; Dara Irani, Shiraz Anklesaria, Eruch Irani, Boman Irani, Farokh Irani,

continued on page 130

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But a passage

Instead of mourning, remember
the dead with love and prayers

Hormazdyar S. Dalal

"Death be not proud," said the English poet John Donne. The challenging tone of the line has stuck in my mind to this day. It has taught me an important lesson in life: not to be afraid of death.

Many poems on death have been written by British and European poets, and by the poets of our own country. They teach us, one, to respect death or, for that matter, to respect the dead. And two, that all human beings are equal before death, the 'great leveller,' which does not differentiate between the rich and the poor.

But what is death? Why is it considered so monstrous? It is but a transition from one place to another or, if you like, the end of one chapter of life. Is the separation of sons and daughters from fathers and mothers or brothers and sisters etc, so impossible to accept after all? If we think rationally of death, it is not so dreadful. It is rather selfish and self-indulgent of us to wallow in our personal feelings. And once control over the self is lost, there is no end to the matter.

The Zarathusti view on the subject is notable, and noble. It teaches the followers of this old religion to take death calmly, to avoid mourning, emotionalism, but to pray for the good of the dead, for their peaceful progress in the world beyond. To pray for the dear departed souls is extremely important, because prayers help them to march happily and peacefully towards the new abode, the 'abode of the creator.' Not only that, but in turn the happily departed souls look after their dear ones on this earth very lovingly, and guide and protect them in their difficulties.

To this end we have in our *Avesta* the prayers Patet Pashemani, Satumno Kardo and the Fravardin Yasht, to be recited in memory of the dead. Again, the baj, afringan and farokshi are strongly recommended to be recited with special offerings on solemn occasions like death anni-

versaries, etc. Offerings prepared with love, too, play a very important part. Simple offerings like fruit, milk and flowers are enough. At the most one or two favorite courses with rice or chapati could be added. Such offerings are appreciated, and the departed souls invariably visit the place where the prayer is said, mainly the home, to accept them and bless the family.

In brief, long spells of sorrow and mourning do in no way help those who have had to bid farewell to this imperfect world. Instead, they fully appreciate being remembered with love and prayers for their happiness and peace.

The book *Dukhi-Ne-Dilaso* by Noshir Daboo, with an additional chapter in English entitled *Bliss Beyond* is written from this angle, to advise the readers to be calm and patient at the time of death in the family, and to be helpful to their dear departed ones on their journey to the house of God. But, sadly, the author has failed to do his homework systematically. He has not done justice to this serious subject, but devoted 44 pages in Gujarati to the opinions and questions of various writers taken from different sources. Of these, only about 27 pages (pp 16 to 43) are devoted to questions and answers related to the central theme, death. The end result is therefore disappointing.

While reading Daboo's book, this writer remembered *Messages From And Knowledge About the Spirit World*, a book published in 1989 in English by an erudite mobed saheb. And there are nearly 30 books in English on death or life after death by thinkers and scientists. Among them, *Raymond or Life After Death*, and *Raymond Revised* by Sir Oliver Lodge are widely read. Shri Pragji Dossa, the popular Gujarati columnist has also written and published a thought-provoking book, *Mot Upar Manan*, on this eternal theme. It is available from publishers of Gujarati books.

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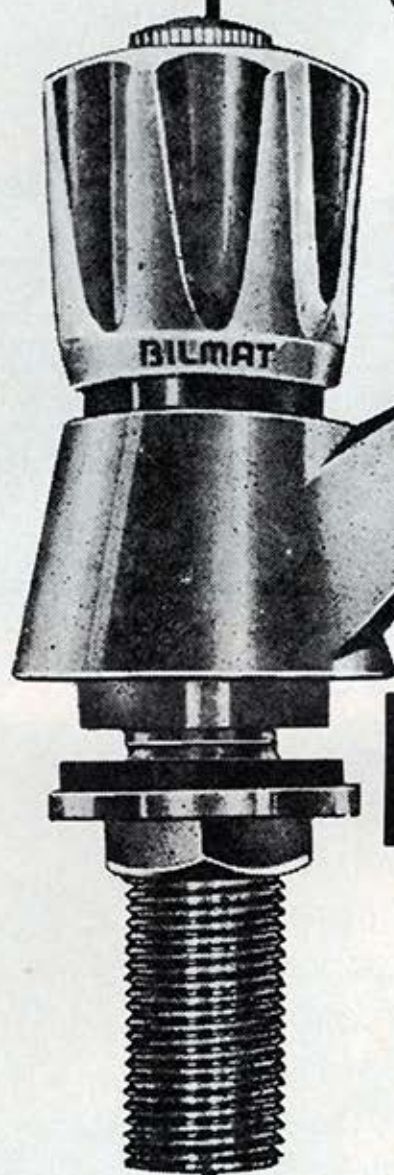
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Noshir H. Dadrawala

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Every year over a hundred individuals and institutions seek the assistance of the Centre on issues ranging from registration formalities and seeking tax exemptions to more complex issues like correct interpretation of certain legal clauses, documentation work for filing papers before various government authorities, judicious investment of funds and effective administration. The Centre essentially serves as a resource and service organization providing free advice and assistance to a wide range of philanthropic institutions, including grant-making foundations, voluntary agencies, advocacy groups and developmental agencies in areas of charity law, taxation, resource mobilization, human resource development and effective management. Not just small voluntary organizations but even large bodies like the Sir Ratan Tata Trust, N. M. Wadia Charities, Jamsetji Tata Trust, Pirojsha Godrej Foundation and Child Relief and You (CRY) have often availed of our various services.

As on March 31, 1997, the Centre had 28 patron members, 79 institutional members and 94 associate members with a corpus fund that stood at Rs 2,030,501. "More members would not just mean more revenue for the Centre. It would also mean a greater sense of belonging to a central organization which can serve more effectively as a representative body of philanthropic organizations in the country," noted chairman R. M. Lala in his annual report

for the year 1995-96. "The Centre has a definite social vision and views itself as a small but effective source of leadership in the philanthropic sector," he added.

Director of Sir Dorabji Tata Trust, Lala has been a founder member of the Centre along with other respected individuals like H. T. Parekh, chairman emeritus of Housing Development Finance Corporation Limited, D. M. Forbes, director, Forbes Marshall Group and R. R. Chari, retired commissioner of income-tax. "Having successfully completed our first decade, what form will our Centre take during the next 10 years?"



Left column: Parekh (top) and Forbes. Right column (from top): Lala, Chari and Dadrawala



Should we redefine our structure, our mission, change our priorities?" enquired Lala.

On the threshold of our second decade the Centre has launched a new division to promote 'Corporate Community Involvement.' With liberalization have come several corporations which are looking at putting money into community projects, and therefore, the need to direct their efforts to build meaningful partnerships with the development sector. The government is simultaneously stressing the need for industry to help build the country's social infrastructure by donating one percent of its profits. Given this scenario, the need to address corporate philanthropy in an organized, systematic and result-oriented manner is the need of the hour and one that comes within the Centre's purview of work.

The Centre's new division is conceived as an information and database agency that can serve as a uniquely effective intermediary between corporations and the development sector. In this role, it would perform the crucial task of matching corporate resources with development and advise corporates on their options while investing in the development sector.

Five years ago the Centre launched the Bombay Community Public Trust on the lines of community foundations and chests in the USA and other South Asian countries. This Trust is today one of the premier, multifaceted, professionally managed fund-raising and grant-making foundations supporting a wide spectrum of development causes in the city to improve the quality of life for the citizens of Bombay.

The Centre also undertakes research and critical appraisal of public policies affecting philanthropy and serves as a clearing house of information in the field. Whenever required, it also advocates the cause of the philanthropic sector before government, public bodies and the media. Through seminars, conferences and workshops the Centre assists organizations work with a better understanding of the law.

Philanthropy, the Centre's bi-monthly journal, doesn't merely give facts and figures. It also attempts to analyze and comment. The focus is essentially on humanizing and sim-



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plifying philanthropy. The Centre believes that good management and proper understanding of legalities involved is the key to success in the philanthropic sector. Issue after issue, the journal, edited by Noshir H. Dadrawala, covers various topics, news and views and, although researched in depth, articles are economically written, in plain language that everyone can understand. The journal is widely circulated not just among those directly connected with grant-making foundations and voluntary organizations but also those in the corporate sector and professionals like chartered accountants and lawyers.

Between 1991 and 1993 the Centre had

**"The most important
thing in any
relationship is not
what you get, but
what you give"**

also published three books, viz *Hand Book on Administration of Trusts*, *The Art of Fund Raising* and *Investment Opportunities for Charitable Organisations*. All three books were sold out within one year of publication. A comprehensive 300-page hardbound volume titled *Management of Philanthropic Organisations* which covers the historical development of philanthropy, the main statutes affecting charities in India and management principles in the administration of such organizations is presently available at the Centre at Rs 200 per copy. A couple of other publications are also in the process of being published.

The internal strength of the Centre stems from what we would like to call the four Fs — focussed articulation, flexibility, friendly attitude and the fun approach. Eleanor Roosevelt believed, "The most important thing in any relationship is not what you get, but what you give." And this has been the bedrock of our philosophy at the Centre. Whether a friend or a stranger, whether a member or a non-member, whosoever approaches us with a problem or an issue, we extend our assistance — readily, happily, gratis.

The author Noshir H. Dadrawala is the executive secretary of the Centre for Advancement of Philanthropy. Besides editing the Centre's journal, *Philanthropy*, he has also authored books like *Hand Book on Administration of Trusts*, *The Art of Fund Raising*, *Investment Opportunities for Charitable Organisations* and *Management of Philanthropic Organisations*.

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Iranian influence — 2

Zoroastrians extend their sway**Coins and architecture in India bear testimony of Persian influence**

Dr Mani Kamerkar

"Contact between India and Iran goes back to prehistoric times... The Hindus stand in close kinship with the Iranians with regard to tradition, religious beliefs, ritual observances, customs and manners. These early ties are reflected in the similarities of the languages of India and Iran... Avesta and its commentaries help us in the proper comprehension of the early religious and linguistic history of India." This summation came from Dr Mani Kamerkar in a paper presented by her at a conference of the Indian History and Culture Society. Titled "Zoroastrian Iranians and their influence on Indian religion and culture," edited excerpts from this paper are being carried over three instalments of Parsiana.

In the first episode we learnt of the common ideals propounded in the Vedas and the Gathas, and how, once differences arose, similar sounding terms

came to connote opposite meanings. After outlining the main tenets of Zoroastrianism, Dr Kamerkar concluded that "the path of Iran was that of karmayoga... attainment through service of humanity."

That the Mauryan palaces were built as per the style of architecture in Persepolis, that India contributed a third of the revenues of Darius' empire, that coins of the Sasanian type bearing inscriptions in Nagari and Pahlavi have been found in the north-west of India is conveyed in this second instalment.

Other than India, Zoroastrian influences were evident on Mithraism and the Roman empire, as will be reported in the final instalment. The doctrine of the four ages of the world that is evident in the Judeo-Christian view of historical time is believed to have originated in Iranian mythology.

The Iranians had come to India and lived there from the Vedic times downwards as affirmed by several scholars. The excavations at the historic site of Patliputra under the supervision of Dr D. B. Spooner led him to what he calls "the Zoroastrian period of Indian history."

The theory that the Zoroastrians had extended their sway as far as the Gangetic valley and ruled at Patliputra as imperial rulers came as a surprise to the scholarly world. Mauryan emperors, as far as historical examination finds, were not Zoroastrians. The Iranians, it is possible, had come to India to fight for Chandragupta, the founder of the Mauryan dynasty, and lived in India as subject races. Some of these served as chiefs and petty rajas in the

Mauryan times, and they probably had a hand in the erection of the Mauryan palaces which were built after the style of the Persepolitan halls.

There are good reasons for believing that the regal pomp of the Mauryan court was to some extent copied from Iran, and that the Mauryas employed Iranians as soldiers, architects, masons and in other capacities. The stone architecture on a large scale, sculpture, and the erection of monuments with inscriptions were due to Iran's influence under the Mauryas. It is also not improbable that Zoroastrian doctrine, tradition and ritual had some share in the formation of Mahayana Buddhism.

Similarly, references to Iran in early Sanskrit literature including the *Vedas* help

in bringing out the close connections. The Hindu writers used the word *Parasika* for the Parsis and *Pahlavas* for the Parthians or Iranians generally.

It is seen from the *Mudra Rakshasha* that the Parsis helped Chandragupta in his invasion of Northern India.

In *Manu Smriti*, written in about the second century BC, we come across the names of the foreign tribes inhabiting northern India, among whom we find the Yavanas, Sakas, Pahlavas, etc. They are also mentioned in the *Raghu Vansha* of Kalidas in about 550 AD and in the *Katha Sarit Sagar*, written by Samdeva in the 12th century AD. In addition various inscriptions going back to 430 BC assert the existence of Iranians in India at Taxila and in 150 AD at Gorinar, and at a later period at Karla caves and Nasik, thus spanning India from the north to the western part of Maharashtra starting even before the immigration of the Parsis from Iran in the eighth century AD when the first of this group landed at Sanjan.

The Iranian connection continued with the Indo-Parthian kings and the Kushans, and later a close relationship developed between the Sasanian Persians and India.

Obviously political and military alliances also brought about close religious ties witnessed by the inscriptions on the Kushana coins of Meher (sun), Muo (moon), Oado (Vat, wind) and other such nature manifestations of Zoroastrianism. Also we find syncretic connection between Zoroastrianism and Buddhism.

Traditions of ancient Persian kings and generals having come to India are found in Firdusi's *Shah Namah*, Abou Fazal's *Ain-i-Akbari* and Kasim Mohammad Faresta's *History*. Firdusi also gives the story of Asfandiar, the son of Gushtasp, who came to India and persuaded the Indian Emperor to adopt fire-worship and accept the Zoroastrian religion. Many more references from the *Shah Namah* might be given to show the connection of the ancient Iranians with India (Elliot's *History*, V, pg 568, Kutur's *Shahname* VI, pp 86-87).

According to Faresta, there existed good relations between the Indian King Krishna and the Iranian Emperor Tehemurasp. In support of the statements of Faresta, Dr J. J. Modi and Prof James Darmesteter give the tradition about the fort of Jamrud in the Khyber Pass, namely that the said fort was



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Various inscriptions going back to 430 BC assert the existence of Iranians in India

connected with the name of King Jamshid of the Peshdadian dynasty.

The period of the Achaemenians was the glorious age in the annals of the history of Iran, and they extended their dominions to the borders of India. Gandhara and India were included among the 20 satrapies under Darius, and their extent comprised the course of the Indus from Kalabagh to the sea, including the whole of Sind, and perhaps included a considerable portion of the Punjab, east of the Indus, and probably reached as far as the Beas. The Iranian dominion in India continued to the end of the Achaemenian sway in 330 BC.

It is said that India contributed a third of the revenues of Darius' empire, 360 talents of gold dust equalling over a million pounds sterling. Darius sent a naval expedition under his general Scylax to explore the Sindhu. Indian regiments fought under generals in the Graeco-Persian wars during the reigns of Xerxes and Darius III. Achaemenian contact had its effect on India in several ways. The Mauryas and their administration were greatly influenced by Iranian ideas as would appear from a number of Iranian words used there, as also from the adoption of the Aramaean and Kharosthi scripts, and from the court etiquette and manners. The general use of stone, under the Mauryas, for columns and statues in place of wood, ivory or clay, was due to Graeco-Persian influence. As rightly observed by the learned critic Chanda, "All Ashoka's monuments, whether monolithic columns, rock inscriptions, or sculptures, bear witness to a happy adaptation of Achaemenid models." The lions of Sarnath display the combination of the vigor and dignity of Assyro-Iranian tradition with genuinely indigenous elements. Specimens of the Achaemenian style are to be found in the Sunga period also.

The "fire-worshippers" of Upper India, some perhaps local converts but others foreigners, seem up to Timur's (1398 AD) conquest to have been an important body. In the middle of the 10th century, Al Istakhiri noticed that parts of Hind and Sindh belonged to the (Parsis) Gabres and other parts to Kafirs and idolators.

In 1079 AD, Ibrahim the Ghaznvide attacked a colony of the Parsis who had long been settled at Dehra, perhaps Dehra Dun. In 1184 AD, Parsis were settled at Uchha, probably Uch in Punjab. They would seem to have been in communication with the Cambay Parsis. In 1323 AD, there was in Cambay a copy of the *Vendidad* that was brought from Yazd to Uch in 1184 AD.

At the time of Timur's invasion (1398 AD) among the captives, there were Magians as well as Hindus, and the people of Tughlikhpur are described as believers in the principle of good and evil, and are said to have acknowledged Yazdan and Ahriman. About a hundred years later (1504 AD) Badauni mentions that the Emperor Sikandar destroyed fire altars and in Abul Fazl's time (1590 AD) Gabre is mentioned as a dialect of the Kabul country. The Gabres of Rohilkhand, the Magyas of Malwa and the Maghs of Tughlikhpur may, in Prof John Dowson's opinion, be the relics of the old Upper India Parsi Zoroastrians. He held that the infidels of Tughlikhpur were Manichian Christians. But the fuller information that has since become available shows that they were Parsis.

About the beginning of the Christian era the Kanerkis, the Indian scythian rulers of the Punjab, from the fire altar on their

continued on page 89

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The Federation salutes...

Fifteen Zoroastrians received the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India awards for excellence

Arnavaz S. Mama

The Pudumji Hall of Pune's Anjuman Ajiary was a-hum with expectation as Federation delegates and Pune residents gathered on June 14, 1997 to felicitate 15 outstanding Zoroastrians. Their achievement of excellence in various fields in 1994-95 was acknowledged by a grateful community with the formal presentation of a shield, a citation, a purse of Rs 1,000 and a rose.

The trophies are financed from interest on initial donations of Rs 10,000 on the institution of each award and cover professional competence; the performing and fine arts; study of Zoroastrian history, culture and scriptures; academic performance; education, research, science and technology; social and community service; military competence; and adventure. Community stalwarts like Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP) chairman Jamshed Guzder, Delhi Parsi Anjuman (DPA) president Lt Gen Adi Sethna, BPP trustees Minoo Shroff, Silloo Kavarana and Dinshaw Tamboly, and former and current members of the national Minorities Commission Homi Taleyarkhan and Marazban Patrawala gave away the prizes. Poona

Parsee Panchayat (PPP) secretary Eruch Irani called out the winners and Nawaz Palkhiwala read the citations.

Professor and head of the department of orthodontics at the Government Dental College, Bombay, Dr Keki Mistry received the Nargis Adi Gandhi Memorial Award for professional competence for 1994. During his 40-year career Mistry has been India's chief delegate to World Dental Congresses, as notes the citation. It credits Mistry with persuading the World Health Organization to declare 1994 the Year of Oral Health. The Asian Pacific Appreciation Award, the Hind Gaurav Award, the Bharat Udyog Award and the Vikas Rattna Award were also conferred on him that year.

High profile gynecologist Rustom Soonawalla who presided over the Federation of Obstetric and Gynaecological Societies of India in 1994 was presented the G. K. Panthaki Award for professional competence for 1994. Internationally recognized for his original work in intra uterine contraception (IUC) — he designed the Soonawalla IUD in 1963 — Soonawalla was conferred the Von Graffenberg Medal

for original work in IUC by the University of Kiel in West Germany. Soonawalla's long association with family planning has included training programs for doctors from India and abroad in safe techniques of vasectomy, MTP (medical termination of pregnancy), female sterilization and tubal reconstructive surgery, as notes the citation.

President of the International Society for Radiation Oncology, Dr Ketayun Dinshaw is director of the Tata Memorial Hospital — the first lady to be appointed to head the country's premier cancer institution. Dinshaw was awarded the Nargis Adi Gandhi Memorial Award for professional competence in 1995 when she was elected president of the Association of Radiation Oncologists of India and vice president of the international body she now heads. Dinshaw has been advisor and consultant to the WHO and the IAEA (International Atomic Energy Agency) on the application of radiotherapy in developing countries and belongs to the editorial boards of international journals in the fields of radiology and oncology, notes the citation. She is a much sought resource person in the



Awardees tête-à-tête: Dinshaw, Keki and Tehmi Grant, K. Mistry; Soonawalla and Dhalla at the awards ceremony







Left to right: Federation awardees (top row) Dinshaw with Patrawala, Vakharia, Chinoy and Patel with Kavarana; (middle row) A. Mistry, Soonawalla, K. Mistry, Karanjia and Dhalla; (bottom row) Marfatia, Cawasji with Sethna, and Bharucha with Palkhiwala, Taleyarkhan and D. Irani

design and establishment of departments for the radiological treatment of cancer patients by various medical institutions in India.

There are two Federation awards for education, research, science and technology endowed by the Mazda Education Foundation and Gharda Chemicals. Hence four achievers were honored for the two-year period.

Dr Niloufer Chinoy's 30 years of teach-

ing and guiding research students at the Maharaja Sayaji Rao University of Baroda and the Gujarat University in Ahmedabad was recognized with the 1994 Mazda Award. Currently director of the Gujarat University's School of Sciences and professor and head of its department of zoology, Chinoy's contributions have been in the field of reproductive physiology, toxicology and endocrinology of mammals. Her research work has been incorporated in international monographs. She has also authored and edited many reference and educational books, as notes the citation. Chinoy had been a senior visiting scientist at the Rutgers Medical School on the Fulbright Hays Exchange Program in 1973-74. The American Biographical Institute's Outstanding Leadership Award for 1985, the Academy of Environmental Biology's Archana Gold Medal and the Hari Om Ashram Award for outstanding research papers in 1991-92 and 1992-93 are other awards she has received.

The Mazda Education Foundation's 1995 Award endorsed Carey Marfatia's exceptional contribution to global environmental protection which had earned him the Stratospheric Ozone Protection Award from the United States Environmental Protection Agency that year. Marfatia has been actively involved in UN programs propagating the use of alternative fuels like compressed natural gas and propane to save the earth's ozone layer. Marfatia is also researching with Canadian collaboration on the use of catalytic converters on static and mobile, diesel and petrol driven, engines. Committed to the proposition that "this globe is not inherited by us from our ancestors, it is loaned to us by our children," Marfatia and his companies are engaged in introducing eco-friendly, pollution-free fuels and planned to ensure the distribution of propane from three dispensing stations in the capital for the fuelling of 50 scooters on India's 50th Independence Day.

Gul Vakharia, recognized as an outstanding teacher, chief paper setter and examiner for higher level English on the Gujarat Secondary School Certificate Board for 11 years received the Gharda Chemicals Award for 1994. Her text books for standards eight and nine are still in vogue. The first non-Jesuit principal of Baroda's Rosary High School, Vakharia was presented a gold medal for outstanding service in the field of education by Pope Paul VI. The Rosary School's new computer center bears her name and the Vadodara Parsi Panchayet organized a

special function in December 1994 to honor her 55 years of dedication, notes the citation. "Deeply moved and touched" by the Federation's award, Vakharia noted, "In honoring me (you) have honored the humble school teacher."

The Gharda Award for 1995 was presented to Dr Thrity Patel who heads the postgraduate teaching department of law at Nagpur University. The author of *Personal Liberty Under the Constitution of India*, Patel had completed her LLM at Nagpur and received the PhD from Poona. A member of the Nagpur University Senate, she also functions as member of the subject examination committee for LLB and LLM examinations and of the High Court Bar Association of Nagpur. Patel was the recipient of the 20th Century Achievement Award of the American Biographical Institute in 1995.

Dr Aban Mistry who has regaled audiences with vocal, sitar and tabla recitals since the age of 17, is the first ever lady solo tabla player as recognized by the *Limca Book of Records 1994*. Groomed by Pandit Keki Jijina and tabla stalwart Ustad Amir Hussain Khan, her style reflects the creative aspects of four *gharanas*. Her research volume *Tabla Aur Pakhwaj Ke Gharane Avem Paramparaye*, which became a reference book since its publication in 1984, earned her the doctorate degree Sangeet Acharya from the Akhil Bhartiya Gandharva Vidyalaya, Bombay. A visiting professor, examiner and PhD guide at several universities, Mistry was awarded the title Tabla Samrat by the Pracheen Kala Kendra, Chandigarh. The Federation endorsed Mistry's achievements by conferring on her the Jamshed and Shirin Guzder Award for the performing and fine arts for 1994.

Light and innocent Gujarati comedies are the forte of Surat-based Yazdi Karanjia. Along with the late C. C. Mehta, Karanjia has written 200 radio plays which have been broadcast from Ahmedabad, Baroda and Bombay. *Jara Hasai to Hasiye* is a television serial featuring the Yazdi Karanjia Group which has been broadcast from Bombay and Ahmedabad. Performing mainly for charitable purposes, Karanjia's group has been instrumental in collecting substantial amounts for such causes as the Leprosy Hospital, School for the Blind, Remand Home for Women, etc. The Gujarat government bestowed on Karanjia the coveted Gujarat Gaurav Award in 1994. The Federation recognized Karanjia's dedication with the Manijeh and Noshirwan Cama Memorial Award for





excellence in the sphere of the performing and fine arts for 1994.

For having represented the Parsi community in the fields of religion, peace, ecology and interreligious dialogue at more than 20 international conferences, Dr Homi Dhalla was conferred the Bombay Parsi Punchayet Award for 1994. The Award has been instituted to recognize excellence in the study of Zoroastrian history, culture and scriptures. Dhalla had represented the Federation at the Second Parliament of World Religions in Chicago in 1993. He was appointed chairman of the Zoroastrian Forum, presented three papers and was interviewed by NBC Television on Zoroastrianism and Parsis in India, notes the citation. Dhalla's is a recognized and appreciated presence on the international interfaith circuit since he was invited to be a member of the World Conference on Religion and Peace in Melbourne 1989. His papers on Zoroastrian religion, history, culture and scriptures have been widely published.

Commander Aspi Cawasji, commanding officer of *INS Karanj* led his submarine *INS Shishumar* in Springdex '95 and completed 1,000 dived hours in a record of 80 days, records the citation. Entrusted with the task to prove the most advanced indigenous state of the art submarine sensors, Cawasji's exceptional devotion to duty was recognized by the award of Nao Sena Medal on Republic Day 1996. Earlier when commanding the *INS Shishumar* during the Indo-US Naval Exercise, the timely discovery of a major cavity in the pressure hull avoided the flooding and sinking of the submarine. It was Cawasji's novel idea not to undock a submarine sitting on the chocks with its ballast tanks open but to flood the docks to allow a ship to undock and another to dock above it. The successful exercise saved considerable time and expense to the nation, commends the citation. Cawasji's achievements in the military field have been recognized by the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans

The Poona Punchayet also presented awards to 16 outstanding local Zoroastrians

of India by the conferment of the Col Adi Tarapore Memorial Award for 1995.

The longest serving woman cricketer and all rounder, Diana Edulji, who has captained the Indian women's team between '78-'93, was awarded the Jiji D. Irani Memorial Award for sport for 1994. Edulji has represented India in three World Cups and has captained the Indian Railways and the Institutional Zone since 1985, leading them to victory in national championships, notes the citation. A world record holder for taking maximum wickets in test matches in women's cricket, Edulji was awarded the Shiv Chhatrapati Award in 1978, the Arjuna Award in 1983 and the Maharashtra Government Gaurav Puraskar Award in 1990.

Three outstanding students were selected for community recognition by the Federation's awards committee. Sahavir Bharucha who secured the highest marks in mechanical engineering at Gujarat University's Bachelor of Engineering examination in 1994 received the Dhunjishaw Gheyara Memorial Award for that

year. Sahavir has already been awarded the Gujarat University's Champakben Yagnic and Yatin Dilip Derasari Medals. A student of Ahmedabad's L. D. College of Engineering, Bharucha had stood first in the first four semesters and second in the fifth. During school Bharucha had won prizes in athletics.

Shayan Irani was awarded a certificate of merit by the Maharashtra State Board of Secondary and Higher Secondary Education for securing 12th rank in the non-vocational batch in the HSC examination of 1994. He scored 100 percent in chemistry, 99 percent in maths and statistics, 98 percent in physics and 95 percent in botany and zoology. Thereafter Irani completed his first MBBS examination and stood first in anatomy, physiology and biochemistry in Dr Shiwalkar's general proficiency scholarship examination for first year MBBS students. In school, Irani's academic excellence had proceeded hand in hand with extracurricular activities like cricket, elocution, dramatics and social service activities. For his academic excellence Irani was conferred the Godrej Karai Memorial Award for 1994.

The Dhunjishaw Gheyara Memorial Award for 1995 was presented to Behram Panthaki who completed his Government

Left to right: Pune awardees (top row) Kayani and Dastoor with Tamboly, Grant with D. Irani and D. Anklesaria with Shroff; (middle row) Moogat with Guzder, M. Anklesaria, K. Irani and N. Irani; (bottom row) D. Mistry, Mehta, Jagus and Pudumjee

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Diploma Examination in Architecture with a first class first in May 1995. This diploma from the Government of Maharashtra Board of Technical Examinations is equivalent to a bachelor of architecture degree from any Indian university for pursuing post graduation courses in India or abroad, informs the citation. Panthaki had been awarded a merit certificate by the Rachana Sansad Academy of Architecture for his outstanding performance in the final year and for all-round performance through the five-year course.

Panthaki received high rating from the principal and faculty members of the Academy of Architecture for exceptional leadership qualities, a questioning and researching attitude and a comprehensive and precise methodology, states the citation. Instrumental in the successful organization of USA/UNESCO's XIII International Seminar on Affordable Spaces for Education for All, Panthaki has collected several certificates and awards for academic and extracurricular activities.

After the Federation awards had been distributed, PPP president Dara Irani acknowledged the services and achievements of 19 outstanding Zoroastrians of Pune: physician Dr Keki Grant, gynecologist Dr Banoo Coyaji and surgeon Dr P. K. Bharucha for providing free treatment to Parsi patients and helping the Panchayat with community service; industrialist Noshir Irani for constructing the fence that has been recently put in place to conserve community property at Lullanagar; Prof Hoshang Mugat, the last Parsi on the staff of Wadia College and a respected academician who has been instrumental in securing seats in engineering and



other faculties for Zoroastrian students; Noshir Jagus who supplies the furnishings and equipment required for all community functions at his own expense, including the transportation costs; Dorab Mistry who has worked as head nasse-salar for the PPP for 25 years and never made any demands; Nusli Pudumjee who is constructing a dharamshala in the heart of Pune and has been involved with Mugat in helping Parsi students; advocate Kershasp Irani

who pioneered the challenging of misappropriated community properties; Rohinton Mehta who has always helped in the renovation of the agiaries; Dinshaw Anklesaria who has provided free transport at all junctures; Red Cross president and Padma Shri Dr Jal Mehta; Cyrus and Zavareh Poonavala who have built parks and roads in Pune at their own cost; "Poona's Florence Nightingale" Nargish Kayani; yoga instructor Colly Dastoor; Pesi Anklesaria whose buses are provided free for funeral services; Adarbad Hozdar and Mehr Anklesaria whose water tankers service the doongerwadi... Dara Irani's appreciative words indicated that in Pune, as in every community pocket, individuals have added lustre to the Zoroastrian name.

The premonsoon showers made for cool, comfortable weather but threw the awards night arrangements off kilter. Originally billed for the J. J. Agiary, the changed venue created some delay but after the ceremony was over and pretty girls had serenaded the gathering, community style, glasses clinked in congratulations and bonhomie prevailed as Pune Zoroastrians, Federation awardees and delegates enjoyed Dorabjee's sumptuous spread.



Above:
Trophies
on display

From left:
Palkhiwala,
Dara Irani
and Erach
Irani at the
awards
function

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ZOROASTRIANS EXTEND...

continued from page 88

coins, seem to have adopted the religion of Zoroaster.

Closer relations between India and Iran date from the revival of Iranian power under the Sasanian kings (226-650 AD). In the fifth century the visit of the Iranian prince Behram Gor (436 AD), probably to ask for help in his struggle with the White Huns, his marriage with a Hindu princess, and according to Hindu accounts, his founding the dynasty of the Gardhabin kings, was a fresh bond of intimacy. In later times both Naoshirvan the Just (531-579 AD) and his grandson Parvez (591-628 AD) were united by treaties and by the interchange of rich presents with the rulers of India and Sind. In connection with these treaties it is interesting to note that Naoshirvan's embassy to Pulikesi II, the ruler of Badami in the southern Maratha country, is believed to be the subject of one of the Ajanta Cave paintings, and another of the pictures is supposed to be copied from a portrait of Parvez and the beautiful Shirin.

According to one account, early in the seventh century a large body of Iranians landed in western India, and from one of

their leaders, whom Wilford believed to have been a son of Khusrū Parvez, the family of Udepur is supposed to have sprung. Wilford held that the Konkanasth Brahmins were of the same stock. But though their origin is doubtful, the Kon-

India contributed a third of the revenues of Darius' empire

kanasthas are probably older settlers than the Parsis. Besides, by treaties, western India and Iran were at this time very closely connected by trade. Kosmas Indikopleustes (545 AD) found the Iranians among the chief traders in the Indian Ocean and his statement that the Kalyan Christians had an Iranian bishop points to close relations between Thana and the Persian Gulf.

About 260 BC we find independent Greek kingdoms established in Bactria and on the north-western frontier of India, and the same period saw the revival of Iranian power under the Parthian dynasty of the Arsacid (c.256 BC). The rulers of this house gradually revived the aggressive policy of the Achaemenids, and under

the vigorous rule of Mithradates I (171 to 138 BC) and Mithradates II, the Great (123 to 88 BC), the Iranian power was again extended to the Indus, and even to the east of that river as far as the Jhelum. This close contact between the Parthian monarchy and the Indian borderland is proved by the long line of princes of Parthian origin (Maues, Vonones, Azes, Gondophernes, etc) who held power in the Punjab and adjoining parts during this period, no doubt as feudatories of the Great "King" who held his court at Ctesiphon.

After a sway extending over nearly five centuries (256 BC to 226 AD) the powerful Parthian dynasty of the Arsacid was supplanted by the third and last of the historical dynasties of ancient Iran, the Sasanians. Ardashir (Ariakhsir) established the great Sasanian house in Ctesiphon (226 AD).

Though the third century AD is a period of great confusion and darkness in Indian history, the renewal of Iranian influence in India is proved by numismatic evidence.

Some valuable information about the relations of Iran with eastern lands at this period is given by Prof Ernst Herzfeld in his work on the great inscription discovered by him at Paikuli in Kurdistan on the

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Wife: Aloo

Son: Feroze

Daughters: Persis & Hutoxi

Sisters: Bhikhoo & Arnavaz

Sons-in-Law: Naozer & Ruzbeh

Daughter-in-Law: Persis

Grand Children: Zarin, Jasmine, Kashmir, Ferzin, Avan, Rushad



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high road leading from Media to Ctesiphon. It is a bilingual epigraph, in Pahlavi and Pazand, dated between the years 293 and 296 AD in the early Sasanian period. The inscription was engraved by the order of the Emperor Narses and it includes the names of

The Kalyan Christians had an Iranian bishop

a large number of provinces and subject states, including some in India, whose rulers came to pay him homage on his accession.

There is also another feature of the Sasanian administrative system which is important in the present discussion. We find several princes of the royal blood in Iran being appointed imperial viceregents under the title of Gurganshah, Sakanshah, Kushanshah, Kermanshah, etc indicative of the regions and the tribes over which their authority extended. Thus, the Kushanshah was overlord of the Kushan princes of Bactria, of the Kabul valley and Punjab, whose coinage shows distinctly Iranian characteristics. The Sakanshah's authority extended over all the Saka princes from the old Achaemenian satrapy of Drangiana, called Sakastan (Sistan), eastwards into India where the western satraps held sway over Rajputana, Malwa and Saurashtra, including large parts of the Bombay Presidency. The Gurganshah was in charge of Gurjistan (the modern Georgia) and adjoining territories. We also learn from the coinage of Khusru Parvez (590-628 AD) that gold and silver coins of this Emperor were struck at Multan in the years 21 and 37 respectively of his reign, depicting on the obverse the bust of Khusru II and on the reverse that of the solar deity Aditya. It is well-known that sun-worship was at this period in vogue in Multan where a temple was built in honor of Surya or Aditya. Coins of the Sasanian type bearing inscriptions in Nagari and Pahlavi have been found in the north-west of India.

To be concluded in the September issue.

A historian interested in Parsi history, Dr Mani Kamerkar is vice president of the Asiatic Society of Bombay. She was former director, College Development Council of the SNDT



Women's University in Bombay. She has also served as principal of the Nanavati College.



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Together, to the 21st century

The Second World Zoroastrian Youth Congress has demonstrated that goodwill can bridge the ideological divide

Text and photographs by Arnavaz S. Mama

"Success means different things to different people. I believe it can best be defined as the attainment of something that you consider to be worthwhile and something that you very much want to achieve," real estate millionaire Faron Sutaria, guest of honor at the Second World Zoroastrian Youth Congress (WZYC), told the assembled youths.

By that — and other — yardsticks the Congress in London (July 4-11, 1997) was a thumping success. Nearly 500 individuals participated in the eight-day deliberations on "Faith in the future: Zoroastrian identity into the next millennium" — the longest that any Zoroastrian congress has been organized. The participants came from all over the world, speaking in a variety of accents, representing a gamut of opinions. The first four days of the deliberations were conducted in residence at the five-star Sheraton Skyline Hotel near Heathrow airport. Thereafter the delegates fanned out to their host families, seeing London by day [some outings being planned by the organizers, among them a trip to the British Museum where the room of Iranian antiquities was specifically open on the request of the Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe (ZTFE)], meeting at Zoroastrian House for early dinner and subsequent workshops. Though the numbers diminished in the latter half of the Congress week, there was substantial attendance despite the attractions of the city. Even at the Sheraton Skyline, though there were reports of delegates patronizing the bar into the wee hours, the working sessions in the morning witnessed a very satisfactory turnout.

Organized by the Young Zoroastrian Congress Committee under the aegis of the ZTFE, the Congress established not only that the youths (defined as the 16-36 age-group) were perfectly capable of organizing such mega events with a little guidance from the more experienced, but were

emerging as a sane and stabilizing force in the strife-ridden community in London. On a worldwide basis what the Congress established was that given goodwill and tolerance the Zoroastrians could be con-



Pennant designed by Roshan Rivetna of FEZANA — on loan to the Congress

sidered a single community and that it was okay to pursue two or more models of religious worship.

This was a particularly gratifying development coming as it did after a head-on collision between the panel of priests — Dasturs (Drs) Kaikhusroo JamaspAsa and Firoze Kotwal, Ervads (Drs) Ramiyar Karanjia and Rooyintan Peer, and Ervad Yazdi Aibara all representing the Indian Zoroastrian religious establishment — and the votaries of Gathic "freedom of choice" from North America like Ervad Mazda Antia from Chicago and Dr Mehran Sepheri of California. At the end of the heated sparring on the acceptance of children of mixed marriages, session chairperson Darius Karkaria asked the assembled gath-

ering to say one *Ashem Vohu*, then "go out and talk to each other." The next day, to avert "the schism opening up," in the words of Congress master of ceremonies Dinyar Cooper, and to answer "the criticism that the priests' panel was one sided," the Congress committee fielded Zoroastrian Studies founder Khojeste Mistree to respond to questions from the floor in a damage control exercise. The articulate Mistree had won the respect of the London youths when he helped them understand and weather the conflict between rival groups that beset the ZTFE in the 1980s, according to Cooper. Mistree now urged the youths at the international forum to begin to think in terms of a "two-model, one community setup."

Two books were launched at the Congress. *A Basic Textbook of the Zarthoshti Religion* by Ervad Faribourz Shahzadi of the Iranian Mobed Council of North America was described by its presenter, Anahita Parsi, as a simple text comprising monotheistic doctrine, ethics and religious symbolism, the scriptures, prayers, the calendar, festivals, customs and history.

The other book to be launched on the occasion was a biography of Dadabhai Naoroji by Omar Ralph of London's Race Relations Council who had been actively involved in the centenary celebration of Naoroji's election to the British Parliament.

A number of books and publications from all over the world — old titles and new — on Zoroastrians and Zoroastrianism were on display and sale at the Congress venue. Also on sale were a number of artefacts including mugs, T-shirts, key chains and silver medallions commemorating the Congress. The proceeds of the sales were intended to defray part of the £10,000 deficit of the Congress which the sponsor, ZTFE, has underwritten.

The second edition of the *World Zoroastrian Youth Directory* published on the occasion contains the details of 1,063 young

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L to R (first row): Zaheer Kasad, a delegate, Natasha Dalal, Kerman Jasavala, Mehrengise Cooper, Zubin Sethna Photo: Zaheer Kasad ; Mehran Sepheri and Jasavala; Omar Ralph, Rushna Master Photo: Noshir Dadrawala, Trity Pourbahrami, Farishta Dinshaw, Bapsy Dastur; (second row): Yazdi Irani Photo: Z. Kasad , Khursheed Khurody, Malcolm Printer, Navaz Bustani, Betty Marchant, Rustom Manecksha, Farmeen Sorab, Mazda Antia, Anahita Parsi, Dinyar Cooper; (third row): Perses Sethna and Navaz Suratia (both standing) conducting the university quiz Photo: Z. Kasad; the youths running the bar – one source of Congress funds; some of the organizers relaxing by the Sheraton swimming pool Photo: Z. Kasad; (fourth row): dance team from Washington and scenes from Son of a Preacher Man Photos: Z. Kasad





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L to R (first row): Rusy Dalal, Khojeste Mistree (Photo: Z. Kasad), Kamal and Faron Sutaria, Parviz Ravani; (second row): Shahrokh Shahrokh, Mehraban Zartosh-

ty, Simin Shahrokh; Tahamtan and Gordanfrid Aresh with Noshir Dadrawala; Rashna Writer; (third row): Peter Clarke, Sam Kerr, Vesta Curtis, Porus Karan-

jawalla, Arif Ali; (fourth row): Shahriar, Laal and Shahin Bekhradnia, Noshir Avari, Burjor Mistry and Coomi Avari; Paridokht Zartoshty with Taronish Jasavala



L to R (first row): The mobeds led by Firoze Kotwal and Zal Sethna; Jamasp-Asa; Yazdi Aibara and Rustom Bhedwar (ext right); (second row): Tina Mehta

and Jenny Rose; Lyla Mehta; Godrej Sidhwa and Ramiyar Karanjia (both standing); (third row): Farokh and Vera Parekh, Cyrus Lohraspi, second

generation mobeds in London; (fourth row): Roshan and Cawas Sethna, Jehangir Sarosh, willing help in the ZTFE kitchen

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Zoroastrians from 15 countries including Australia, Canada, Hong Kong, India, Iran, Malaysia, Oman, Pakistan, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, UAE, UK and USA. The first edition had been published in 1993 after the First World Zoroastrian Youth Congress at Los Angeles. The current edition priced at five pounds runs into 166 pages of data plus nearly 20 pages of advertising. A program souvenir published on the occasion was also priced at five pounds. Messages from Prince Charles, Professors John Hinnells and Mary Boyce, and Meher Amalsad, chairperson of the first WZYC, were read to the gathering.

A source of general dissatisfaction was that Iranian delegates had been unable to attend the Congress, UK visas being denied to them. Thus Parviz Ravani, the Zoroastrian representative in the Iranian Majlis, was the only one to be present from that country. He publicly registered his displeasure with the organizers and the ZTFE, implying that sufficient effort had not been made to overcome the bureaucratic hurdle. ZTFE president Rusy Dalal however conveyed "sadness" at the "Iranian brothers not being able to join us for reasons of political control" and, at the valedictory function, Canada based Iranian philanthropist Mehraban Zartoshty made it a point to discount "rumors (that it was) due to misunderstanding that our Iranian youths could not attend the Congress. I assure you every effort was made. Nothing more could be done."

A grand ball when dinner was served in style (all other meals were buffet) and a talent contest, won hands down by baritone Dinyar Vania of Syracuse, NY with a stirring rendition of *Santa Lucia*, were evening attractions. A bilingual (Gujarati-English) comedy, *Son of a Preacher Man*, scripted by Natasha Dalal and Mehrengise Cooper, two members of the organizing team, was a welcome relief from the heated arguments of the day. It also laid bare how the community's materialistic yearnings militate against its own cherished desire for early marriage of the children and increased progeny. Unfortunately there were many in the audience unfamiliar with Gujarati, notably Iranian Zoroastrians from US and Canada, who had to be satisfied with an apology from the playwrights.

When the program got underway on the evening of July 4 at the Sheraton's Interna-

tional Suite, the inaugural *divo* was lit by London's own young mobed Farhad Sethna. The audience, including ZTFE trustees and managing committee members, representatives from the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India, the Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America (FEZANA), the Bombay Parsi Punchayet, the Indian Minorities Commission and the Iranian Anjuman,



Congress artefacts on sale

stood in reverential silence, heads covered as per the exhortation in the program ("All stand, topis and scarves on please"). Before he led the humbandagi and invoked obedience, peace, generosity, reverence and truth upon the gathering, Dastur JamaspAsa noted his happiness "to share thoughts and participate in the Congress, though I for one do not consider myself as belonging to the group for whom (this gathering) was intended."

Second WZYC president Kerman Jasa-
vala, the young systems analyst who led

**"Use the opportunity
of the Congress to
learn, socialize,
make new friends,
be torchbearers of
Zoroastrianism in
the next millennium"**

the team of 45 organizers, remarked in his welcome address how work on the Congress had taken over all their lives in the past few months: "Jobs, education, have taken a back seat." He was particularly enthusiastic that they had embraced new technology wherever possible, in keeping

with Zarathushtra's scientific faith. The information highway, the Internet, was responsible in attracting many of the participants. The London Zoroastrians have thought of putting up dating agencies on the Internet and there is a site where you can order sudrehs/kustis, said Jasavala.

The enthusiastic Dalal, during whose tenure as ZTFE president Zoroastrians have acquired official state recognition from

Buckingham Palace, being regularly invited to represent the community at the Commonwealth and other state functions, said, "because of the involvement of the youth our activities have multiplied." He was referring to the religious classes and pilgrimage trips to Iran and India. He now exhorted them "to use the opportunity of the Congress to learn, socialize, make new friends, be torchbearers of Zoroastrianism in the next millennium." What may be equally gratifying is that three members of the Youth

Congress Committee – Rushna Master, Perses Sethna and Dinyar Cooper – are also members of the ZTFE managing committee. Dalal also spoke of a forthcoming announcement from the London University's School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) regarding its commitment to Zoroastrian studies (see "SOAS' commitment to Zoroastrianism," pg 36). "One practical drawback," according to Dalal was that "We couldn't invite you to a place of your own... A new Zoroastrian House, with a place of worship, will be with Ahura Mazda's blessings," he promised, adding "It is the only route to our historical progression..."

"This event has brought together many young Zoroastrians from across the world. If its purpose is to bind us together – to inspire an atmosphere of aspiration for individual excellence and to focus your mind on just how much can be achieved, then its organizers will have made a wonderful contribution to tomorrow's Zoroastrian world," noted Sutaria, a self-made millionaire in his early forties. Having made his mark in the real estate business which has been a predominantly white preserve, the spry, vibrant Sutaria told the youths, "there is no reason why the world should not be your oyster. You can go and get anything you want."

After the ceremonial, the three full-day discussions began each day with a 10-minute briefing for speakers and chairper-

sons followed by a 10-minute slot for humbandagi. Questions on identity, survival and gender issues preoccupied the gathering.

Updates from Australia, Canada, India, Iran, Pakistan, the UK and the US were presented by Navroz Sethna, Trity Pourbahrani, Porus Karanjawalla, Ravani, Farishta Dinshaw, Farheen Sorab and Firroze Irani respectively. An irate Ravani noted that Iran has more than 30,000 youths eligible to attend the Congress but were unable to do so. He felt that representation at world congresses should be proportional. "I warn you that such actions will lead to the populations going their separate ways... Last year at the World Zoroastrian Congress in Tehran anybody who wanted to take part from anywhere in the world was (enabled) to attend," he said. He had originally "intended as protest to be silent... However the unity of Zoroastrians is of foremost importance to me and the youths participating here are innocent."

In the first keynote address Dr Rashna Writer, political analyst and research fellow at SOAS presented the history of Zoroastrianism. Disclaiming any expertise in Zoroastrian theology, Writer sought to provide an overview of three Zoroastrian empires that spanned over a millennium and noted, "our (current) problems (of identity) stem from the fact that we've forgotten our history."

Consultant surgeon (to the University of New South Wales College Hospitals) Dr Sam Kerr recalled how Zarathushtra addressed humanity directly and pointedly in an era of change and noted that a persuasive evolution comprising education, progressive adjustment and reformation in stages, was needed too in our changing world: "Change is all-pervasive. Only at the end of time will there be cessation of change on earth... Religious thought too is subject to cyclical growth and decay." The "harmonizing of the inner spirit with intellect" was Kerr's prescription for a happier community.

ZTFE's honorary librarian Malcolm Deboo ceded his 30-minute slot on July 5 for a presentation on "Zoroastrians in Britain" to JamaspAsa whose 30-minute talk on "Zoroastrian Identity" had been programmed for July 9 at Zoroastrian House where space constraints would preclude a comprehensive gathering of the youths. Observing that the current Zoroastrian calendar has not reached its second millennium yet, JamaspAsa said, "It's a good time to take stock nonetheless." Recalling explicit, clearly expounded religious and

church obligations in Sasanian times, he asked, "Was this strait-jacketed Zoroastrian identity responsible for the downfall of the Zoroastrian state? Is it what fanned the Zoroastrian propensity to rebel?"



Books on Zoroastrianism – old, new and reprinted – from all over the world

Be that as it may, the choice before Zoroastrians was to convert or be killed and they became fugitives in their fatherland with legitimate means of livelihood denied to them, he noted.

JamaspAsa recalled that it was a 100 years later that a band of migrants went to India's hospitable shores, adding, "You too are now Zoroastrian migrants to various

Ravani noted that Iran has more than 30,000 youths eligible to attend the Congress but were unable to do so

parts of the world." The *Kisseh-e Sanjan* was written 600 years after the event. Its authenticity is debatable, admitted the priest. Though the Parsis' dress, language and religious observances were circumscribed by the injunctions of the host raja, it was the insular nature of Hinduism and Islam that ensured that the Zoroastrian culture could not completely enter these religions and thus Zoroastrians maintained their own

identity, stated JamaspAsa.

"What has survived of the Zoroastrian faith bears little resemblance to what Zarathushtra actually preached but the tradition has been completely and carefully preserved. A priest's vocation was his life. It was hereditary and it maintained a solid foundation of tradition and practice," said the dastur. Tracing the West's interest in Zoroastrianism to the revival of ancient Greek and Roman literature which led to an interest in the outstanding philosopher, Zarathushtra, JamaspAsa said that the opening up of Zoroastrian scriptures to Europeans had a direct impact on Zoroastrianism: "The caliber of the Zoroastrian priesthood came under a cloud..."

"Years of privation had bred reticence among Zoroastrian scholar priests. Their offers of explanation were dismissed as ignorance... Here were elaborate rituals, pantheons of divinities, counterparts of demons... The Zoroastrian religion experienced a singular disaster as 19th century European scholarship tried to remodel the living faith into their premeditated notions." In the meantime the Parsis adopted the English language and dress but they were unable to defend their faith against the well versed missionaries and "the downward slide to obscurity began for the Zoroastrian priesthood" as it stood accused of creating rituals that it had preserved.

JamaspAsa described the 20th century scene as one of a dwindling, aging population in India and an increasingly global diaspora with a melting pot culture and asked, "How do you preserve your identity?"

"It has been suggested that Zoroastrianism has provided its best features to Christianity and Islam and has no further role to play. Also, that it is science that is providing the answers to nature's mysteries.

"Most of us yearn for a simple religion which is easy to follow. There is no time for complicated controversies. Zoroastrians are looking in many different places like the *Vedas*, theosophy, etc. They are flocking to dubious saints and seers and various cult followings. Some Zoroastrians will believe in everything!

"As apathy pervades the spirit, all earlier privations will pale into insignificance in comparison to the blow we are dealing ourselves," warned JamaspAsa. "There is turmoil and confusion with many different helmsmen. People are clutching at faith and hope. We are looking for a divine savior, hoping someone else will come to clear up the mess we've made. Both Jews and Zoroastrians are waiting for a messiah."

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"History has repeated itself and we have survived these repetitions. Let us temper our predictions with a knowledge of the past," advised the dastur.

"There are two mutual antagonists – good and evil. This world is a wonderful place to be in. Zoroastrianism advocates no asceticism or reclusion. It is a part of life and living. Marry and procreate. Happiness and joy are attributes of Ahura Mazda as are knowledge and wisdom.

"There are Zoroastrian scholars in every sphere of learning except Zoroastrianism! There is much that we Zoroastrians have to be thankful to foreign scholars for. But take their pronouncements in the light of their own times and attitudes," counseled the priest.

"Let us endeavor to reach the Kingdom of Truth: place a guard on our words, thoughts and deeds; practise humility and benevolence. For the problem is that (man's) brain has outgrown man's heart."

Jamaspa's outspoken analysis of Zoroastrian history and current angst won him a standing ovation from the assembled youths.

Dr Vesta Curtis, the Iran born curator in the British Museum's department of coins and medals, spoke on the art of ancient Iran, providing a historical perspective on objects exhibited at the Museum's Iranian Gallery. Curtis recounted the source of some of the inputs into the building of Pasargadae and Persepolis: timber from Lebanon and India, gold from Sardis, lapis lazuli from Sogdiana, while the stonecutters were Ionians and Sardinians.

Curtis' talk was one of three parallel sessions in different suites of the hotel. Simultaneously Mistree presented a slide show and discussion on Iran and Kotwal demonstrated and explained the ijashne ceremony showing how "the priests who solemnize the liturgy seek to increase all that is wise and good and bountiful in both the visible and invisible worlds."

Solicitor Bapsy Dastur from Bombay examined what, why, when and how the Zarathushtrian paradigm is relevant to modern times. Peer distinguished between an individual's personal concept of his religion and that of the community's: "The community is an institution. It has its own rules. Some sort of order is necessary," he maintained.

A panel discussion on 21st century survival was preceded by Yazdi Irani's personal perspective on matrimony. A staff translator at the Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation with a penchant for music and comedy, Irani presented his

view of the Zoroastrian dating game. "People want to keep Zoroastrianism so pure, but at what risk? (We used to be) so proud to say that we had no dogma except good thoughts, good words, good deeds. Is it becoming so strict that we may have hardly any room to breathe? I wouldn't like to think I'd have to marry out of my religion... (I'm) not really in favor of intermarriage or conversion. But what are the

"There is no reason why the world should not be your oyster. You can go and get anything you want"

alternatives available?"

In the ensuing discussion the youths spoke of the embarrassment of arranged meetings, of the limitations of choice between marrying a Zoroastrian and not marrying at all. On the other hand, it is not always possible for single Zoroastrians to meet each other. While one pondered the difficulties of adjustment which would be compounded in an intermarriage by differences of background and culture, another felt that a common religion is not a sufficient guarantee of a common background. Though there is an awareness of the need to marry, one of the speakers referred to the "desperation (that) is not a part of other communities and works to our detriment," while another thought that there was not enough pressure to get married and that young Zoroastrians tended to be too comfortable in their single status to take on the onus of marriage and were likened to "dinosaurs in the Ice Age."

One pleaded for an extension of the religion to permit intermarriage since he had "seen a few Zoroastrian marriages which were horrible." Another noted, "If you understand the core of the religion you can keep it alive." A third speculated on a "baby boom" with a "strong onus on married couples to produce more than two offspring."

UK born Vera Parekh who grew up with total dependence on God in a white social environment in Surrey except for fellow-Indians in college said she felt a sense of belonging and pride at the names of Zoroastrian roads and buildings she saw in Bombay. Her Bombay born and bred husband Farokh had the blind faith of one who had seen his parents and grandparents pray

every day and felt no need to question religion. "Things changed when I met Vera. She asked questions I could not satisfy," said Farokh who then started reading translations. The ensuing education, he said, changed their ignorance to pride, turned them both into stronger Zoroastrians and better human beings; a knowledge of Zoroastrian history strengthened their sense of identity; with knowledge, customs and traditions became relevant.

Now, as young parents the Parekhs are aware that they will need more than the I-told-you-so approach to make their offspring comfortable with the strange ceremony of the navjote which causes children of seven or eight to feel isolated from their peers at a time of life when they most want to be like their friends. "Each new generation wants to know more... If we want the children to maintain the same level of faith, we must pass on some knowledge."

According to Mistree, the historical model demonstrates that Greeks, Romans and other peoples with whom the Persians came into contact or held sway during the heyday of empire, were not included into the fold of tribal entity and that Zoroastrianism was restricted to ethnic Iranians. He urged the youths to "move away from the paradigm of good thoughts, good words, good deeds per se to find the Zoroastrian system." Zoroastrianism is a celebration of life, he noted. "Cosmic dualism does not mean the worship of two gods but (the awareness) of two forces, the good alone being worthy of worship," he said, describing evil as parasitic: "(It) comes chronologically after the good." Calling for a combination of head and heart, Mistree recommended the practice of rituals with an understanding of the theology behind them: when we unwind the kusti to the recitation of *Kemna Mazda*, we are asking for help to preserve the world against the demonic powers, in *Ahuramazda Khodai* we vow to reject evil doers and whip the kusti to smite evil; by utterance of *manashni, gavashni, kunashni* we are seeking direction from the spirit world to our own. "The knot is a ritual covenant with Ahura Mazda," Mistree explained the symbolism of the kusti.

Quoting Prof Arnold Toynbee's three components that have enabled Judaism to survive: a separate ethnic identity on the basis of ritual and law; not merging with the host majority; and a strong economic power base, Mistree noted "survival depends on excellence since survival requires a financial base." If we lack eco-

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conomic strength our identity will be weak and diluted, he warned. And "if racial identity is lost, religious identity will disappear... When you have committed yourself to action... make yourself the leader of those in need of monetary, psychological, spiritual help. Remove any form of poverty..."

Depicting life in the rapidly changing technological world of North America (NA) where "we work 10, 12, 15 hours a day," Sepheri described the changed lifestyle. "In Iran time was spent with relatives, going to agiaries..." but in NA there is less than 10 percent of time for such activities. "Out marriages are about 50 percent; the biggest party of the year for youths is Halloween; the Parsi and Iranian

Anjumans in New York and California had been engaged in legal battle regarding the darbe meher. Zoroastrian youths in NA are inside the blender. We need to understand and prepare for (change)." He listed "measured change, qualified tolerance, selective use of technology, balancing of faith and freedom, the sorting out of other influences" among the future challenges that the community must face.

Karanjia's message was conservative in the extreme. Preaching "genetic and spiritual exclusivity" the youthful principal of the Dadar Athornan Madressa accepted that "circumstances were favorable for inter-communal marriages," but urged the youths "to be strong, not to succumb... Disallow

members of other communities into Zoroastrian places of worship and religious places," he added, noting acerbically that to liberals "'equal' meant marrying anyone and 'brotherhood' meant inviting everyone to Zoroastrian rituals!"

A strong feminist lobby led by Lyla Mehta and Khurshed Khurody sought the right to officiate as priests. The first question put to the priests' panel was "Why can't menstruating women attend agiaries and why can't women be priests?" Jamasp-Asa's reaction was that "teenagers are trying to pull our legs, trying to be priestesses! They may not even be able to recite the kusti prayers correctly!" Noting that even a high priest can't enter the sanctum sanctorum without going through the nine-day bareshnum purification, JamaspAsa described the strenuous life of a boiwalla and challenged, "Are girls willing to do this? Any takers?"

But the women persisted: "We are asking whether religiously it's the right thing to do and if not, why not?" Karanjia responded by noting that a priest is also a teacher and scholar and performs smaller and higher rituals. It is only the high rituals that require rigorous ritual purity which "women, not because of impurity but because of biology, can't perform." The other activities were open to them. Kotwal supported Karanjia's differentiation, noting that "the priests are talking of inner, pav mahal, ceremonies. Outer ceremonies any Zoroastrian can perform." Explaining that 'pav mahal' meant 'within the building,' Kotwal noted that priests capable of performing these had spent years in seminaries. "Such priests are a paucity. You want to perform this? (It's) absurd and ridiculous!"

After a few innocuous questions regarding categories of priests, etc, somebody asked, "Why can't mobeds come to a united decision on conversion and intermarriage?" and mercury in the air-conditioned hall began to rise. "There were six rats and they were all brothers," responded Kotwal. "One lost his tail and thought his brothers shouldn't have tails! We cannot afford intermarriage. There are mobeds and mobeds. We do not perform the navjote of a child of a Parsi father (and a non Parsi mother). In 1919 (the mobeds) resolved unanimously that they are against mixed marriages and against conversion. Can you call a juggler a mobed? We want priests who preserve our ancient heritage. If you want to convert (someone) out of self-interest, you can do so in your own home. No one will stop you... (Such) navjotes and

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marriages are null and void... We have the licence to do what is right according to our religion and our first and foremost duty is to preserve the religion and the community at all costs."

The upset liberal lobby faulted the organizers: there is a "real absence of balanced arguments. There are two sides to this debate. Both sides are not represented. You are not letting the other side speak." In the general confusion it was not possible to ascertain who was voicing the protest. But the liberals pointed out that conversion implies change from one religion into another, while the dasturs were talking about the children of mixed marriages. Are there any specific religious injunctions against them in the *Gathas*? they asked. And, in terms of the Daver-Beaman judgement of 1908 which accepted the progeny of Parsi men and non-Parsi women, they said such children had the right to be considered Parsis and demanded an apology from the priests on their behalf.

This led JamaspAsa to specify that Justice Daver had included in his definition of Parsis the children of Parsi fathers after they had been duly initiated into the faith and declared, "If I do not admit the child (into the fold as a Zoroastrian, by performing his/her navjote) no one can take me to court."

When it was pointed out that such navjotes do take place, Karanjia noted, "If things have happened surreptitiously, you can't take that (as a precedent)."

Someone from the audience responded, "By denying reality, by not accepting that there are mixed marriages, you are making the community less. It is hurting the child. But is it the child's fault?"

Mehta branded such inward looking exclusivity as "bigotry" and spoke of "a trend where people are going to question patriarchal assumptions... People will form their own club. It's a sociological phenomenon. We have fossilized views of science and cultural practice."

The question of adoption of a child of unknown parentage was struck down by Kotwal with a counter question: "How can it be considered Zoroastrian?" When the querist persisted, "What is the scriptural basis for this decision that there cannot be conversion or adoption?" Karanjia noted wearily, "You've missed the point throughout the day." So the wag turned his question around. In terms of the scriptures, he wanted to know, "What do we have that we are allowed to be a part of this wonderful religion?" And Karanjia referred to Mistree's earlier talk wherein he had noted that Greeks and Romans, even when subjugated by the Persians, were not incorporated in the Zoroastrian fold. Indeed, Mistree was the most quoted source at this Congress.

When Sepheri pointed out that Iran's Council of Mobeds has approved of the navjote of a child whose one parent is Zoroastrian, Kotwal noted that this was a "recent development in Iran. We have our tradition. We have our rules." When further baited, "Fifty years hence if the Zoroastrian religion is about to die out what (will be) your advice?" an irate Kotwal declared that nothing would make the clergy renege on the traditions it had so assiduously preserved. In a counter argument Iranian mobeds were challenged to convert/admit others to the Zoroastrian faith within their geographic boundaries. At which point the vehemently orthodox Gordarfid Aresh demanded that Sepheri apologize to the high priests.

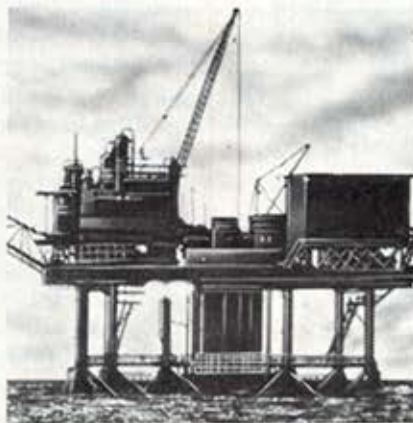
It seemed that the debate had reached its normal crescendo. And then a well-enunciated young voice pierced the pandemonium from the very rear of the long hall: "I really feel proud to be a Zoroastrian priest." Ervad Mazda Antia of Chicago recounted that he had performed the navjote of a seven-year-old son of a



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Parsi father that morning. "It was a great day for me... Behman knew the prayers and the translation due to the work of his mother and his grandmother. To me *this* is the Zoroastrian religion. These people want to believe in the path of Asha... You might say I'm ruining the religion, that I'm going to hell... It's not about identity... This is the religion of righteousness of deeds..."

Argued Karanjia, "History has taught us that such things lead to the extinction of the race... Pockets (of Zoroastrian settlement) in China and Punjab were lost... We love our community and religion much more than an individual."

With each side of the ideological divide skeptical of the other's Zoroastrian bonafides, the Sheraton Skyline's International Suite was a babble of voices. Session chairman Darius Karkaria recommended to the gathering to "say one *Ashem* and go out and talk to each other."

Responding to the "criticism that the priests' panel was one-sided," perturbed at the prospect of "a schism opening up," Dinyar Cooper introduced a question-answer session with Mistree to "see if we can overcome it." Drawing two partly overlapping circles—one representing the anjuman/community, the other, the youths/individuals — Cooper suggested that increased knowledge might help the common area to increase. "This conference is really about giving young people lots of information and different points of view," he declared and recounted how Mistree had helped the London youths come to terms with the ZTFE-WZO (World Zoroastrian Organisation) split in the 1980s (ostensibly over the question of whether non-Zoroastrian spouses could continue to attend religious ceremonies).

Questioned about the importance of pronunciation, Mistree compared Zoroastrian prayers to the opera — follow the meter of prayers to acquire the mystical experience. "Is it the same afterlife for everybody?" Mistree refused to speculate on what happens to the others but explained the muktad in reference to the principle of resurrection. "At the metaphysical level I don't believe God punishes since He would be using the facilities of the god of evil." But he believed that Zoroastrian souls "retain their individuality, don't become one with God." When Sepheri questioned him on "whether Ahura Mazda is all powerful or not," Mistree referred to the *Shikand Gumuk Vizar*, the medieval text which postulates the dualistic argument against monotheistic Christianity. Mistree described Ahura Mazda as

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omniscient and present everywhere, as wisdom which is inherently perfect, good. Evil on the other hand is "imbalanced, destructive. Does God permit the imbalance to exist? Is He responsible for such imbalance? Is He (then) worthy of worship? If God is good, evil (comes) from outside Mazda. It is an intellectual dilemma. The Islamic position is that God is transcendent. He knows best. Just accept it. Reincarnation too is a statement of faith."

Responding to the most vexing question of all - Why is Zoroastrianism confined to the Aryan race? - Mistree reiterated that through 1,100 years of Imperial Iran there were no conversions to Zoroastrianism. "Please don't think I'm speaking on behalf of God... We have killed to develop power, (but) we have never killed in the name of religion."

Responding to the youths' criticism of the priests' pronouncements, Mistree asked, "What will the Pope say about birth control, divorce? Our priests will say what is the accepted position of the community... The community runs on a vision of what is good for the majority of people... Different parts of the world require different inputs." He suggested that social scientists prepare a referendum for a new model maintaining in the discussion a philosophical level of principles. "Build a new model first. If it works, bingo! But don't destroy what has been built over centuries." He cautioned that the new model has not been successful, historically. "Now put your money where your mouth is," he challenged.

The individual versus community conflict was also brought to the fore when Carl Kalapesi of Australia commented, "There is only one God and how we access that God is personal. Some need rituals, others don't. To condemn people who connect with God from (within) is religion gone astray."

Mistree defined religion as a system of beliefs and practices. First you "belong to the overall precept. Then you internalize it, make your own religion. (That's) your privilege. But if you profess to be Zoroastrian and want membership of the community and the religion then a certain format qualifies you to be part of the Zoroastrian brotherhood. The community can't be run on individual lines. That's what we are experiencing."

Other questions raised to Mistree included one on the Zoroastrian view on homosexuality. "It is considered a worse sin than murder," said Mistree emphasizing

the Zoroastrian thrust on creation. He noted however that about 20 percent of his work in Bombay deals with the counseling of Parsi gays. "At the religious level there is only one answer. But psychological understanding, tolerance, are important..."

Ritual purity, priestesses and the calendar issues were also raised. Mistree explained the resistance to the proposed calendar change in terms of daily prayers: "There are specific days with specific prayers. There's nothing for the one-fourth day. The spring new year is right in prin-

**"I'm not really in
favor of intermarriage
or conversion.
But what are
the alternatives
available?"**

ciple but in India there are no seasons and therefore no need for a seasonal calendar." Mistree described K. R. Cama's advocacy of the Fasli calendar as a "political change (putting) the seasons as more important than individual prayers." He also pointed to a 10-year difference between the Fasli and the Shehenshahi/Kadmi calendars. The latter two count the years from Yazdegird III's ascension to the Sasanian throne while the Fasli, said Mistree, "starts with the flight of Mohammed from Mecca to Medina. How can you follow a calendar whose genesis is in another religion?"

"Will everyone here be ready to take a DNA test to prove their Aryan descent?" With cloning a possibility, another asked, "Whose soul will go with whom?" Someone else compared the orthodox Zoroastrian position to that of the Jews who consider themselves an elected people, terming the entire concept as "highly racist and incompatible with equality and freedom of choice." Unfazed, Mistree referred to a German girl who had come to Bombay to study Parsi physiognomy. "We went so far as to give her people who didn't look Parsi." She then went to Khorasan measuring nails, eye sockets, etc and came to the conclusion that "Parsis have maintained an identifiable physiognomy." He urged the youths to "move away from the emotive concept of purity of blood."

"Saddened that you think my position racist," Mistree noted, "This is the paradigm of history," and suggested that the youths "recognize how we can improve in a win-win situation... create a new system instead of being parasitical and riding pig-

gyback on the old one." Unlike the Indian priests, Mistree, his evangelism mellowed by time, was able to articulate the orthodox message in terms which the youths accepted and understood. And even among those who did not, levels of rancor and resentment were perceptibly lower.

A number of demonstrations and workshops were held concurrently, both at the Sheraton Skyline and at Zoroastrian House, notably Ervad Rustom Bhedwar's demonstration of Zoroastrian wedding rituals, and with Ervad Godrej Sidhwa, the performance and explanation of the boi ceremony; Mehta's "Beyond the hen-pecked male sissy and autonomous dominating 'bawi'" where the packed youths enthusiastically "unpacked notions of gender in the community;" the "Power of One" workshop conducted by Pourbahrami, Meher-nosh Mody and Arianne Teherani of NA, the World Youth Zoroastrian Education Project with Jehangir Sarosh and Writer as facilitators; and Tina Mehta's Zarathushtrian perspective on the environment. A university level quiz found teams of 10 competing in noisy camaraderie under quizmasters Navaz Suratia and Perses Sethna.

On the last evening of the event, July 11, there was dinner followed by the "70's Disco," when the youths took much time and trouble to rig out in apparel reminiscent of the 1970s.

The valedictory function was held after dinner the previous night. "Standing in front of this crowd I do feel older than yesterday," said Rusy Dalal and was greeted with a spontaneous singing of *Happy Birthday*. "The real work for you begins now," he told the youth. "What (it is that) you do in your daily life will propel us into an identifiable community (in the coming millennium)." Dalal acknowledged the work of a dozen subcommittees and of help, guidance and financial assistance from abroad. He now used the occasion and the presence of Mehraban and Paridokht Zartoshty to thank them once again for their largesse to the London community. Apart from financial support for the construction of the extension to Zoroastrian House in 1983 where this function was being held, and their frequent donations to ZTFE activities and to this Congress, Zartoshty's moral support has helped the London association weather many a political storm. His presence was also regarded as a bonus as the Vancouver-based philanthropist had only recently recovered from a serious illness. The Congress was his first such trip thereafter and he was obviously pleased to have

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made it. The man who, with his brother Faridoon, has maintained the Yazd Atash Bahram for the past several decades, apart from charities worldwide, said, "What we have done is negligible and we have done it purely for the love of our community... We congratulate everyone for having such a grand congress, (with) 400 youths under one roof, especially Rusy Dalal and Kerman Jasavala and his executive committee." Noting that "We need unity, peace and harmony among ourselves," Zartoshty advised the youths to "follow in the footsteps of your forefathers with integrity and charity... use common sense and go towards progress."

At a subsequent press conference Jasavala noted that deciding on "the theme of the Congress took ages. We wanted to reinvigorate peoples' feeling of identity." He informed that over 100 delegates had come in response to invitations sent to various associations and anjumanas and published in the Press; 70 to 80 delegates came via the Internet. Shiraz Daruvala, Malcolm Deboo and others who had attended the First World Zoroastrian Youth Congress had put in London's bid to hold the next congress, said Jasavala, adding that "Rusy (Dalal) gave a great deal of

support. In the UK we feel that projects bring people together, help to bury differences."

Acknowledging the help from the previous Congress committee, Rushna Master noted that there were two aspects from the feedback to the first Congress that shaped the second. "People felt that four days were not enough because of jet lag, etc. (Also) that when they stay together they feel much better." Hence the eight-day program, the first four at a venue where people could stay under the same roof.

The original planning was for 300 delegates. When more people asked to join, the committee had to book rooms for 100 more in another hotel in the Heathrow vicinity with bus transport to and fro. The increased demand upset their budgeting, propelling the estimated cost of under £100,000 to £110,000, as informed Perses Sethna. "Close to 500 people may have participated," he estimated, including "60 people from the hall."

The fund-raising for the event had been a long-time preoccupation. "Rusy (Dalal) was heavily involved but remained in the background," said Perses Sethna. The youths accepted their tasks as a sort of

continued on page 192

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breaking an unstated code of the profession but it was a conscious decision I made once I graduated from IIT (Indian Institute of Technology) and started a company, Sethna Constructions Private Limited, with my dad (Soli Sethna). I have not yet broken this commitment and I don't regret it one bit," says the stocky 36-year-old Sethna. We feel the intensity of his commitment radiate strength in his face, particularly the eyes that gaze out from under a thick crown

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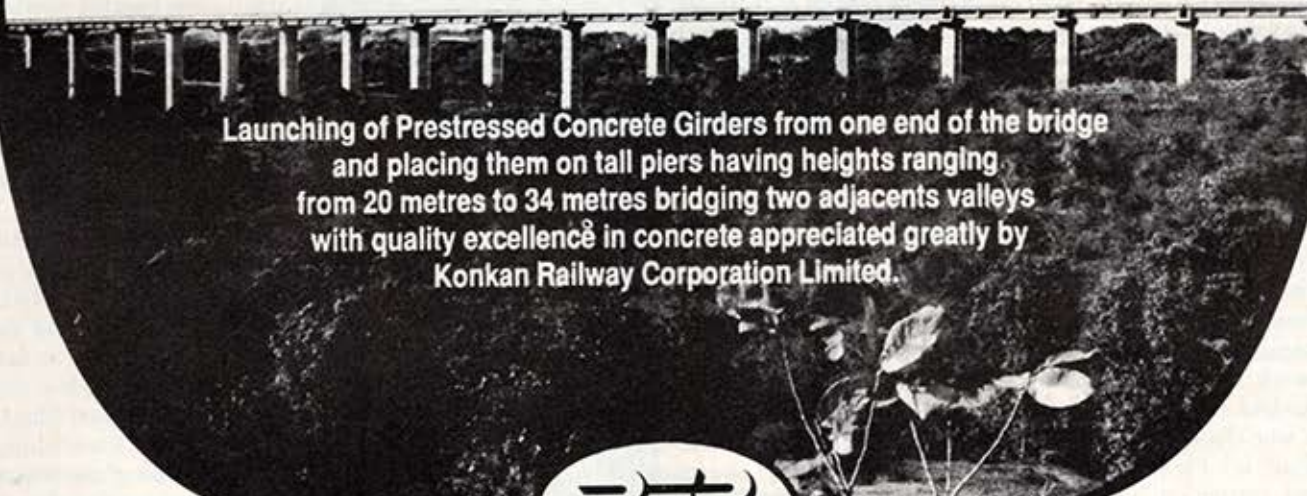
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of hair brushed back from his large forehead.

Sethna picks up an antique level gauge from the desk in his Colaba office whose walls are adorned with modern paintings and photographs of his buildings, and briefly examines the floating bubble. Sure it meant that he did lose out on some plum contracts and there is even one large industrial house that will not consider him after having worked with him once and finding him unbending on this point.

But then again, it helped him win other contracts. "It cuts two ways. Once you have established a reputation in the market, people you work with know you will not compromise on the materials and inputs of a project — which is something you will have to do if funds are diverted into other activities. They will even pay a premium to have you work for them," observes Sethna who employs a staff of 100 plus and whose annual turnover is in the region of Rs 20 crore.

Yes, Sethna has worked on a number of major projects, the principal ones being a hospital — the largest hospital building in India, a Rs 25 crore project — for the Muslim community in Hyderabad; the Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP) residential complex at Bharucha Baug at Andheri, as well as residential buildings for private developers in Bombay and Bangalore. Two ongoing projects are the Godrej Sky Gardens in Panvel, an American style condominium complex with fancy gardens and Godrej Bay View, a 16-storeyed residential building at Worli seaface. In addition, Sethna is a recognized property developer.

Sethna, however, is quick to point out that he is not the only exception in the civil engineering business and that there are a few other firms that do not toe the corruption norms of the profession. "Of course it was tough at first but you must realize that even corruption requires an effort and if someone knows that you are not going to reward his effort he would rather focus his energies somewhere else," says Sethna.

Yet, Sethna stops short when it comes to moralizing on the evils of corruption. According to him it is a product of the system and the fact that he has decided not to work within its framework does not make him any better or worse than someone who does. "I don't think people are corrupt. It's the laws and the system that breed corruption," says Sethna, adding that if he must comment on the matter then it would be that Parsis as a community are definitely less susceptible to corruption than other Indian communities.

"It's the way we Parsis are brought up.

Speaking for myself I can say that there were certain values that my father and mother (Soonie) instilled in me." And were these Zoroastrian values? Maybe. Sethna is hesitant though. Yes, he is from



With wife Huzan and children Kyrus and Shara

a dastur family though neither he nor his father did their navar ceremony. But he is not religious in the conventional sense of the word. He wears a sudreh "out of habit" but the kusti is optional. Yet, on the day when a particularly challenging building slab had to be cast, Sethna recalls instinctively going into an agiary and praying that the job went off well. "I guess you may say that I am religious," he observes, adding that he does not need to go nosing around to see if others follow our rituals or not.

Sethna believes that there were two major watersheds in his life. The first was when he, a Bombay born and bred lad, transferred from his school in the city to a boarding school — Rajkumar College in Rajkot. "This was when I really grew up. With no mom and dad around, I had to fend for myself and work out my own problems," says Sethna. The next stage in his coming of age was when he was admitted to the IIT. "Suddenly I found myself plummet from the top of the class to the bottom half. It made me realize that Mr Brilliant was Mr Average and if I had to make something of my life I would have to work hard for it."

Upon graduation in 1982, Sethna and his father, who only months earlier had left the

firm he had been working with for decades as a senior civil engineer, started a new company. Sethna Sr moved to Bangalore to look after that end of the business leaving his son to look after Bombay. Junior got his first job when a developer approached him to complete a building abandoned by an earlier contractor. His next assignment was a civil works contract at the Willingdon Club. In 1988 Sethna started work on the new residential blocks of Bharucha Baug for the BPP and that got him thinking on housing and the community.

"Listening to Parsis talk about the housing problem that the community is facing you would imagine all our other problems are linked with it. The truth about housing is that if you have a housing crisis it is your personal problem and not the community's problem. You have to resolve things on your own and not ask the community to solve it for you. It's that way with every other community. They move to a town where they can afford to buy a house or to the suburbs. But with the Parsis it's the Punchayet that is to blame and the Punchayet that must solve the problem," observes Sethna.

No, he is not talking from an ivory tower. Housing was an issue he too had to grapple with when he was ready to graduate from IIT. Since he could not afford a flat in Bombay, he had decided to settle down in Hyderabad. "And I would have done so. It was luck that dad decided to move to Bangalore and I got to stay on in Bombay at his place," says Sethna.

And he brushes off as absurd the suggestion that the decline in the numbers of Parsis is due to the housing shortage the community is facing. "Take a survey of families who have not faced what we love to call the housing problem, of families who have lived in large homes, and you will still find that they do not have more than two children at best. Small families have nothing to do with housing, it is a matter of attitude and that is a reality we will have to live with." Rustom and his wife Huzan — daughter of novelist, playwright and journalist Dina and the late Keki Mehta — who teaches at the J. B. Petit School have stopped at two children, their son Kyrus and daughter Shara.

Interestingly enough, it was while working on the Bharucha Baug residential complex that Sethna realized that the community faced a problem that he felt was of greater concern than housing — one of the average Parsi attitude to work. Young lads living in the colony would approach him for work and even while they were being

interviewed, they would interrupt and ask if they could get special benefits like coming late to work and leaving early. "They were living next door to the site and could not make it to work on time while my non-Parsi staff living in distant suburbs could make it. The problem with Parsis is that they want special treatment from a Parsi boss for no other reason than the fact that they belong to the same community. In other communities it works the other way around. The boss expects his fellow community staff to work harder because he has done them the favor of giving them a job," says Sethna.

"The problem with Parsis is that they want special treatment from a Parsi boss"

According to Sethna, the BPP needs to rethink its priorities. Rather than waste its resources and energies on building more houses, it should work on schemes and projects that would induce Parsis to help themselves rather than become dependent on the Panchayet for housing and on other Parsis for jobs. That does not mean that they cannot turn to other members of the community if they need help in work related or other problems. "A network of mutual help already exists in certain circles. If I, for instance, should run into a legal problem, I pick up the phone and call a lawyer friend who puts in a word in the right place and the crisis is solved. I would like to see this network include the entire community," says Sethna.

According to him he is already doing his little bit in this direction. Very often friends and acquaintances (and sometimes even strangers referred to him by friends) drop in on him to ask for advice and guidance in civil engineering matters that are of a personal nature. In such cases Sethna has willingly given them his time, expecting nothing more in return than the satisfaction of knowing that he was of some assistance to a friend or a fellow community member. "I would like more Parsis to offer their services to the community; and it is in this matter where the BPP can help by providing us with a platform and a forum, so that everyone in the community has access to it."

Meanwhile Sethna will get on with the task of giving shape to his dreams by building more concrete structures.

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Entrepreneur Jimmy Mistry brings exclusive Italian designs and accessories to furniture-manufacturing in India

Hilla P. Guzder

He blends the classic with the contemporary. Twenty-six-year-old entrepreneur Jimmy Mistry's Tecnica Office Systems Private Limited manufactures top-of-the-range, knockdown furniture in Italian designs for the discerning Indian customer with both money and taste.

The company's showroom, visits to which are by appointment only, is situated in a quaint cream-colored villa in a quiet bylane at Tardeo in Bombay. The range of designs for the living and bedroom furniture come from the best names in the business — Corsini, Fulgini Orilio and TSB of Italy, says Mistry. The showroom sparkles with the high-gloss veneers of wardrobes, beds, tables, chairs, cabinets and showcases lit from within, with bevelled crystal glass, delicate inlay work and luxurious 22-carat gold plated handles and knobs.

Mistry points out the special features of his furniture — drawers glide smoothly, an overhead rack in the wardrobe can be tilted down for easy accessibility, jewellery trays can be fitted into the wardrobes. The Salice hinges, Meroni locks, UV (ultraviolet) processed polyester coating, which gives a glossy, protective finish, combine 21st century technology with old world charm. State-of-the-art lighting accessories from Caimi Brevetti, the masters of indoor illumination, notes Mistry, provide a serene ambience. At Brevetti, every lamp comes with a concealed radiation plate and custom built dimmer, so you can enjoy the light without feeling the heat.

Peppering the interview with a couple of conversations on the phone in Italian, Mistry explains that he was the first in India to get exclusive distributorship of 21 Italian companies dealing in knockdown furniture and accessories for homes and offices.

"It wasn't an easy task convincing man-

agers at Olivetti, Caimi or Corsini," Mistry had told Ruchi Sawhney of *Inside Outside* in an interview last October. "I had to go and show them my face every month and convince them that I was very serious and determined about my project. Some companies agreed to let me distribute their finished products but for others I had to reach down and track their suppliers, contact them and then source the material from there." Looking back now, he feels the post-liberalization economic scenario has helped him, with more multinationals coming into the country.

Mistry believes in using screwdriver technology to advantage. What is known in trade parlance as "office systems concept" offers maximum adaptability to any space. Olivetti Synthesis, a global giant in office systems, has a range of designs to suit every client's requirements, asserts Mistry. The full height partitioning system for offices can be put together within an hour or removed without a trace. The partitions by Frezza do not have to be screwed on to the wall or ceiling as they are designed on the carjack model, which means that the panels support each other and rest on the floor. The imported fire-retardant panels can also be easily rearranged to suit changing needs and if you want to make your office soundproof, all you have to do is lift up the panels and add the buffer material, explains Mistry. A special feature is the user-friendly wire-management system which neatly accommodates in a built-in cavity all those irritating wires and cords one might otherwise trip over. A new PC (personal computer) or modem can be easily installed by opening the panel that runs the length of the table and fitting in the switch. And if your office is shifting premises, just dismantle and transport to the new location!

Mistry manufactures the furniture at a

factory in Nagpur, using Italian designs and imported hardware and fittings. Residential furniture prices can range in lakhs, he explains, but office furniture can be made to suit all pockets, including custom-built executive furniture with an exclusive wood and leather finish. Clients' orders can be ready within three months, he asserts, and assembled on site within a few hours.

Mistry believes that the turning point for Tecnica was the three-day solo exhibition of furniture held in November 1996 at the Hall of Vision at the Nehru Centre in Bombay. "We handled everything in-house, using about 100 volunteers and staff. Only the catering was by an outside contractor. We sent out almost 6,000 invitations to architects and other professionals in the field and received an overwhelming response. Representatives of various Italian companies graced the occasion as did Pramod Navalkar, minister for transport and cultural affairs and Rustom Tirandaz, corporator."

Tecnica's turnover today is Rs 16 crores, declares Mistry who counts leading architects and corporate houses among his clients, executing contracts not only in Bombay but in Bangalore, Calcutta, Madras, Ahmedabad and Poona as well. Future plans include developing overseas markets, he says. His design section, which aids clients with their needs, is fully computerized. "There is no drafting board, pen/pencil used for designing at all," he adds, noting that though he has no formal training in architecture or interior design, today he has qualified architects working under him. Projects on hand include the interior designing of Star TV's 40,000

Clockwise from top left: Tecnica showroom; Mistry in his office; versatile office furniture; dining room by Corsini; executive conference room



square foot office in Andheri, he observes.

Mistry points out that he has applied for ISO 9001 registration for his company and hopes to complete the formalities, which normally take a year, within a shorter time. He currently employs a work-force of 130 in Bombay and Nagpur.

"I want to make my company grow into a corporate," he declares. "I started my business from scratch, I knew no one in Bombay when I began in 1990 as I was born in Ahmedabad, did my schooling in Indore, Ahmedabad and Bombay and my DME (Diploma in Mechanical Engineering) from Nagpur." His first venture, he narrates, was a pest control firm which he ran for a year. With an interest in design, in mid-'91 he started taking up turnkey contracts for interiors, executing the projects for established architects. He then set up his own interior design company, Jimmy Mistry and Associates, undertaking work for hospitals, offices, commercial premises and residences. Tecnica was registered in April 1995. "Tecnica is an international name," he explains. "The Arabs, English, Americans, all use this name for their ventures. It took a lot of guts to start a furniture-making factory in

Nagpur using local skilled labor. But it's a question of aptitude and attitude, of taking the right decision at the right time. Your success depends on you, on how you

"I chose Italian furniture because Italy is the mother of all places for design, be it garments, cars, motorbikes or furniture"

represent yourself and your company. I chose Italian furniture because Italy is the mother of all places for design, be it garments, cars, motorbikes or furniture." Giving his parents, Rusi and Lily, a fair measure of credit for his success, he states, "I am fortunate that I have received parental encouragement at every stage. From my father (who retired as a general manager of Sarabhai Chemicals) I have inherited marketing and human relation skills.

My parents have never forced me into anything, they have merely given advice and left me to do things on my own. I have learnt things the hard way as initially everything was bought with great difficulty and paid for by instalments."

Mistry has always dared to be different. In a community where the average age of bridegrooms hovers around the 30s, he was just 21 when he married Delna Jamaji in 1993. Daughter Pearl arrived two years later. Pictures of his family adorn his office, while a silver diva lends a warm glow to a picture of Zarathushtra. Daily prayers consist of kusti prayers and 101 *naam*, he maintains, "and I don't skip on that, though I do not get time for lengthy prayers as I travel for 20-25 days in a month. My community has been very good to me, I am indebted to various well-placed Parsis for their help and support."

During his travels, he discloses, he has been greatly impressed by the progress made both in profession and business by Parsis settled abroad. Fired by their example, he feels, the community is sure to progress, in India and internationally. "By all means, our future is bright," he visualizes, "I am very positive about this."



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With his melodious voice and original compositions, Soli Kapadia is gaining popularity with audiences in India and abroad

Parinaz M. Gandhi

He insisted on a harmonium, convinced that he would be able to play this instrument just as he could the harmonica and the banjo without receiving any training. His parents were hoping that he would outgrow his adolescent obsession. Ultimately, Soli Kapadia's parents gifted him the much wanted harmonium as a reward for successfully completing his school leaving examination.

That was over a decade ago when Kapadia himself did not know he would take up music as a vocation. Today the 30-year-old singer from Surat has made Bombay his base, has nearly 500 performances to his credit and is considered an artiste of repute invited to perform in India and abroad. His solo album *Prem Etley Ke...* has gained wide popularity among Gujarati audiences and he anticipates the release of two new albums: *Mere Dil Ki Baat* with its Gujarati equivalent, *Mara Hriday Ni Vaat*; and another bhajan rendition, *Hari Varne* under the HMV (His Master's Voice) banner. The music composition for his songs is undertaken by Kapadia himself, his forte being off-beat melodies and tunes based on classical *raag*s. More than a composer, he was looking forward to a break as a playback singer which came in August 1997 with the Gujarati film *Moksha* where Gaurang Vyas is the music director. Additionally, he has auditioned for stalwarts like Laxmikant-Pyarelal, Nadeem-Shravan and Vishal Bhardwaj who are names to reckon with in the Hindi film music world.

Just a few days prior to the interview on July 28, 1997 Kapadia was in Europe, regaling audiences in London, Germany, Italy and Switzerland with his Hindi ghazals

and Gujarati songs. Enthusing about the reception he evoked during this, his maiden, tour of Europe, Kapadia felt "the response (there) was better than in India. A lot many autographs" were sought, he beams his smile. The expressions on the faces of his listeners, and the kind of numbers he is requested to render are the other

but that depends on the availability of a good singer. The program is usually very impromptu, there being time for only one or two rehearsals at the most. On innumerable occasions he has waived his fees to show his support for charitable causes — the blind, cancer patients, the Aurobindo Ashram in Pondicherry, the fund-raising efforts by the Lions, Rotary...

Whenever invited by the Parsi community, he has sung willingly. But such occasions have been rare: at a Pateti function in Surat; before delegates who had come to Ukai to attend the executive council meeting of the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India; at the Parsi Fiesta organized in Bombay. His offer to sing at the Second World Zoroastrian Youth Congress in London in July had been accepted, says Kapadia. But then,

for reasons unknown to him, he found that he did not feature in the program, shrugs the unassuming songster. "I am better known among the other communities than my own," he adds matter-of-factly.

Noticing that Parsis, and particularly the community in Bombay which is more modernized and westernized, are into western classical and pop music, Kapadia expresses his "dream to make Parsis learn to appreciate more Indian light classical music." If they can speak in Gujarati, why can't they appreciate music in Gujarati? And Hindi being the national language, they should also try and understand songs in Hindi, Kapadia shares his thoughts. A considerable amount of awareness for



Kapadia: programs are impromptu

parameters by which the feedback can be gauged, says Kapadia who finds that it is usually the second half of the program, following the intermission when he is in his element knowing that only those genuinely interested in his music have stayed behind. Invitations to perform in the near future also indicate an artiste's popularity, mentions Kapadia who will be touring Europe again this October on the invitation of a new set of organizers.

His entourage usually includes five or six artistes who give him musical accompaniment. Given a choice, he likes to include a female voice too in his concerts,



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Kapadia flanked by his parents and sister Jasmine

Kapadia's music performances were created through his interviews on BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation) radio and TV, reveals the singer. "Even today, radio is the best medium," believes Kapadia who is an approved All India Radio artiste whose songs are broadcast twice a day several times a week. "At home, the radio is on almost all the time; all the waking hours," he specifies and that is not because he looks forward to hearing his own voice! A singer should deliberately make time to listen to other well-known voices "which can charge your own battery," recommends Kapadia. Kapadia is no stranger to television too. Besides performing on Doordarshan, he has also featured on ET TV and Home TV, and lent his voice for serials like *Trikaal*, *Khel* and *Chhuta Chheda*.

His most memorable performance, according to his own rating, was the one at the Nehru Centre, one and a half years ago, when he was invited to sing Urdu ghazals at their three-day festival along with well-known figures like Hariharan, Jagjit Singh, Pankaj Udhas, Rajkumar Rizvi, Chandan Das, Rajendra and Neena Mehta. A two-hour slot was reserved for each of the artistes when Kapadia sang his own compositions.

His earliest memories of singing before an audience date to his formative years as a student at the T. and T. V. Sarvajani High School. When he was in the first standard, one of his teachers had overheard him chant Sanskrit slokas. From the

second standard, he was assigned the duty of singing slokas each morning over the school microphone, his voice relayed to every classroom.

Elementary training in vocal music had commenced when Kapadia was in Surat. Pandit Ganpatram, J. K. Patel and Robin De were among the first to influence his vocal chords. Ten years ago he started intensive training in classical music under veterans like Pandit Phiroze Dastoor and Pandit Ajay Pohankar of the Kirana gharana. To date, he continues with his training twice a week. Sometimes the ses-

sion can last for two hours, sometimes six hours, depending on the mood. Whose mood? The guru's, clarifies the dedicated pupil who says he would "like to be a student all my life." Presently he also trains under Taan Mohan Khan, a direct disciple of Bade Ghulam Ali of the Patiala gharana. Though Kapadia is convinced that "the Kirana gharana is more

my kind of style, it suits me," he believes, "If you imbibe different styles, you can better your own personal style."

Before music beckoned him, Kapadia had a lucrative job as export manager with Garden Vareli. Having graduated in science with distinction from the P. T. Sarvajani College of Science, South Gujarat University, Kapadia chose to make a career in synthetic textile chemistry, his line of specialization. Then one day he realized, "I'm not here for this (job)." Much to the chagrin of his parents, Dosabhai and Dhunmai, and some of the trustees of the Surat Parsi Panchayat who knew that he had availed of their academic

"As a child, I would hear certain songs on the radio and burst out crying"

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scholarship since he was an eighth grader, he announced a change in his vocational priorities.

His parents however were later able to empathize with his choice, knowing how moved he was by music since his infant days. Confides Kapadia, "As a child, I would hear certain songs on the radio and burst out crying" for no explicable reason. Among those songs was the qawwali in the film *Bobby*, he recalls. When he had to be put to bed too, certain lilting tunes from Mohamad Rafi were sure to satiate the little boy, realized his parents.

"There should be substantial encouragement from the community" for an artiste, advocates Kapadia. He was speaking not in the context of his own life where he is particularly grateful to his parents and friends who have supported him, but of other Parsi talents with whom he has been associated, like the poet Adi Mirza (Driver) whom he regards as "the rarest of poets (but one who is) hardly recognized."

He may be "proud to be a Parsi," a member of a "very nice, disciplined com-

munity." Even then, Kapadia believes "more in humanity than sticking to certain norms. Of course, religion is there. But humanity is the basic religion that everybody should follow." Zoroastrians should marry within the community, recommends the bachelor singer. He is in favor though of

accepting children of intercommunity marriages (irrespective of whether the mother or the father is a non-Parsi) within the fold on the rationale that the numbers are too few,

"there's no scope for discrimination."

Four years ago Kapadia turned a vegetarian on the simple logic that "I don't need to eat non-veg food." As a singer he has also a regimen set for himself: minimal late nights, avoid cold and spicy food, sleep for two hours before a performance so that the vocal chords are rested. Additionally, daily *riaz* (practice session) for at least two hours is a must with Kapadia, preferably in the morning, beginning 6.15 or at any other time, depending on his daily schedule. Notes the promising artiste, "When you sit for *riaz*, it's a kind of prayer to God... Music is a kind of meditation."

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A jewel in the Chenoy crown

Rather than accept judgeship, Nadirshah Chenoy preferred to continue his private practice and work for his community

Mithi Dinshaw

There are jewels in the Chenoy crown — a crown that shed its lustre on the Parsi Zoroastrian Anjuman of Secunderabad and Hyderabad during the 20th century and even earlier. Some of the Chenoy (also spelt Chinoy/Chenai) who had served the Nizams of Hyderabad achieved the position of nawabs because of their impeccable standards in professional and personal life. Others were accorded honor within and outside the community because of their humanitarian work. One such resplendent jewel was the late Nadirshah Bapooji Chenoy.

Born on June 21, 1882 into the Bapooji Edulji Chenoy family, Nadirshah was educated at the exclusive Madrasa-e-Aliya. Besides being a scholar of Persian literature and Zoroastrian history, he was a keen sportsman (an accomplished horseman, a good shot and cricketer), which in later years made him the first president of the Hyderabad State Cricket Board. He graduated in 1904 and after a law degree, joined M/s Nanu and Hormusjee, a flourishing firm of solicitors in Bombay and specialized in company law which remained his forte.

He returned to Hyderabad in 1906 and worked at his legal career for the next 50 years. "With his legal acumen and specialization in company law, Nadirshah was among the early pioneers of Hyderabad's industrial development... and served with distinction on the boards of 18 major industrial enterprises of Hyderabad State (see *Parsiana*, September 1970)."

Nadirshah was the co-founder of The Hyderabad Industrial Trust Fund together with Mir Liak Ali, and the then finance minister, Gulam Mohammed, who later became the President of Pakistan. He was also associated with the advisory board of the Central Bank of India, Secunderabad and the State Bank of Hyderabad, and was the life president and trustee of the Bansilal Charity Trust in Secunderabad. He was

twice offered a judgeship of the High Court by the late Sir Akbar Hyderi, the



Chenoy: a gentleman's gentleman

then Prime Minister of Hyderabad. But Nadirshah preferred to continue his private practice and work for the welfare of the local Zoroastrian community.

For almost 50 years, Nadirshah served the local Parsi Zoroastrian Anjuman of Secunderabad and Hyderabad as its trustee and legal adviser. He re-drafted the trust deed to make it viable with the rules of the Indian government, under the Constitution of India. The Seth Khanbahadur Edulji Sohrabji Chenoy Anjuman Dar-e-Meher which was endowed in memory of his grandfather was the main religious institution of this trust deed. Nadirshah "fulfilled the true teachings of Zoroaster," by confirming it as a religious trust which could not be disturbed in the changing world of politics. Nadirshah was also the chairman and trustee of various Chenoy trusts which he served diligently.

On June 19, 1969, Nadirshah passed

away, leaving behind sweet memories of a "great gentleman" who lived graciously and had won the lasting affection and respect of all colleagues and associates. At an emergency meeting of the Bar Association of Secunderabad, the members observed two minutes silence in memory of the departed soul and court work was suspended for an hour, an exceptional mark of respect. But the best words of tribute came from Nawab Ali Yavar Jung, the then Ambassador to Washington: "Besides being one of the leading luminaries in the legal world, he was a man of wide culture, knowledge and understanding. His kind are not found everywhere or in plenty."

Nadirshah's five decades of dedicated service to the community was steered by his vision to integrate the 1,200 Zoroastrians in the twin cities of Hyderabad and Secunderabad against outside forces. This is evident in the solemnity and dedication that governed his drafting of the trust deed of the Anjuman. Today the community and the generations that follow owe their collective security to the community's founding father, Nadirshah Bapooji Chenoy.

FEDERATION AID TO JABALPUR *continued from page 68*

Firdous Kayani, Kersi Daruwala, Sarosh and Nawaz Palkhiwala, Vaheesta Vankadia, Hormuz Sukhia, Prof Hoshang Mugat, Nilufer Wadia, Nazneen Aibara, Jamshed Frenchman, Darius Boocha, Kashmira Udachia and Neville Batliwalla from Poona; Jehangir Madhiwala, Dinshi Patel and Homi Palsetia from Saronda; Jehangir Bisney and Lt Col (retd) Gev Edulji from Secunderabad; Baman Cama, Shefali Wykes, Hutoxi Ankleshwaria and Kaizad Engineer from Vadodara and Homi and Homai Mehta from Zai Bordi. Homi Taleyarkhan, Marzban Patrawala and Bazun Dittia were the special invitees. The Press was represented by *Indian express* and *Parsiana*.



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Cama: "imaginative and honest in his work"

His attempts to control cocaine and opium smuggling in Bombay were not always successful

F. N. Cama

My father Khan Saheb Nasserwanji Khursethji Cama almost became a doctor. He was a medical student in his last year at the Grant Medical College in Bombay when the plague broke out. His class was asked to join the Plague Operation, at considerable personal risk, with the assurance that after the Operation those who served (there was a great dearth of medically trained personnel) could graduate with the class without giving the final exams. However, when the time came to get the final certificate the dean of the College broke his word. He insisted on the final exam for father who had volunteered for the Plague Operation. My father resigned and for some years worked for a small steamship company till he joined the Bombay Excise Department as an excise inspector.

He was assigned to control the cocaine and opium smuggling rampant in certain parts of Bombay in which many respectable businessmen were involved. The name of one of them was familiar to many Parsis since he made the *makhmal* topis they wore. Few were aware that he also dealt in drugs and that he was finally jailed through the efforts of my father. Here are some interesting cases from father's career which I learned from him firsthand while I lived with him in Bombay.

Once my father was informed that the upper floor of a house in Kamatipura was a center of the cocaine trade. The man responsible for the trade was a sharp fellow who on learning that father was out to trap him, set up a system to warn himself of my father's approach. At that time we did not live very far from Kamatipura and father

noticed that every time he stepped out of the house for his rounds, he heard a series of whistles. Realizing that this was indeed a warning system he told his orderlies to quietly trace its source in the next few days.

He soon learnt that the whistles led to the suspected house in Kamatipura, the ground floor of which was guarded by a huge Chinese fellow who blew the last whistle. Father then planned the raid. The whistler outside our home was nabbed before father stepped out of the house and the Chinese guard was surprised and arrested. With the warning system decommissioned it was easy for father and his men to rush up the stairs. They caught the dealer red-handed before he had time to destroy the cocaine which was usually done by dumping it in water, wherein it would instantly dissolve.

The gang of whistlers and the dealer were hauled before Magistrate Kharaj and after a proper trial sentenced to various jail terms. The Chinese guard promised to kill father on his release from jail. Sure enough a few years later as my father was making his rounds alone, he was attacked from the rear. Turning around he grabbed the Chinese fellow's hand which held an Edipolo Stick. A struggle ensued, which my father would have lost had he not been helped by the local *panwalla* who joined in the fray. In spite of being hit on the head by the stick the *panwalla* helped father hold the assailant down until more people came and subdued him. The Chinese was thrown back into jail and deported out of India at the end of his prison term.

Cocaine was smuggled into Bombay in those days by ship crews entering the port. In one case my father had just boarded a ship when a man came running up to the deck and threw a briefcase into the sea.

Father jumped in and held the briefcase above water until a rope was thrown down to him. The briefcase, full of cocaine, was offered in evidence.

Another case involved the *H. M. S. Benaras*, a British merchant ship whose captain was a suspected cocaine smuggler. On arrival at Bombay port my father had the ship cordoned off and he and his men boarded it. A thorough search of the ship's cabins, offices and the hold revealed nothing. Then father and another inspector along with the captain went down to the boiler room. While the two excise officers searched the room the captain and the fireman escaped and shut the steel doors on father and his co-worker. In the intense heat and darkness they could have died of suffocation, but fortunately their banging and shouts alerted their orderlies who freed them. This incident convinced father that the captain had something to hide. Recalling that an informant had once told him that a likely place for hiding contraband could be under the winches bolted to the deck, he asked that the winches be removed. The captain refused, saying the ship would lose its balance and list dangerously. Father called the chief mechanical engineer of the port to get the job done. Over the objections of the captain, the winches were unbolted and under one of them were the bags of cocaine. With this evidence the captain of *H. M. S. Benaras* was convicted and jailed. This case made its way to the papers and father's intelligent hard work at the risk of his life was applauded by the city.

Not so successful was another case involving a Chinese dealer in the Kamatipura area. A raid on his house netted a rice bag full of opium but the man escaped. An all-night search through the area resulted in



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disgruntled prostitutes and embarrassed clients, but no Chinese drug dealer. The next day father was informed that the man had joined the work force of the G.I.P. Railway Wagon-Works at Parel. The superintendent of excise told the story to the superintendent of the Wagon-Works who lined up his Chinese work force in front of father, but the drug dealer was not one of them... Two days later news came that the man was making his getaway by the Calcutta Mail to Calcutta, dressed in a *burkha*. A raid of the railway station, the waiting rooms and the Mail train netted a few indignant ladies in *burkha* but no drug dealer. The matter was finally dropped and father went on to more interesting cases.

Once a Gurkha officer in full uniform and medals was caught in a raid in the Kamatipura area eating *pan* laced with cocaine, the usual offering by prostitutes to their clients. He was brought before father and pleaded to be forgiven and let off. Father told him that even if he were his own son, he would have to be brought before the magistrate. The next day when he was due to appear in court, father explained the matter to the judge and recommended letting the officer go with a verbal warning. Father also managed to keep out the Press, so the officer could go back to

*Though authorized
to carry a handgun
he never did so
that he was never
tempted to shoot*

his regiment without his name being tarnished.

One day I accompanied father on his rounds to a place where Chinese workers were living in squalor, many men to a room. On that night the raid netted no cocaine or opium. Then he took me to a licensed opium den. In a small narrow room, wooden bunkers were set up in two tiers, with the opium smokers sleeping on their sides sucking from a bamboo tube almost an inch in diameter at the end of which was a three-inch round pot, on which rested a small spirit lamp. The authorized amount of opium was placed on a small hole in the lid of the pot by the manager of the opium den. When the opium started to melt the smokers would inhale the vapors. This was allowed by the government as it was recognized that the addicts would get their opium at all cost and risk to

themselves.

These are some of the cases that my father was involved in while I was in Bombay. One can probably get his record from the files of the Excise Department and *The Times of India* in Bombay. He was imaginative and honest in his work. He often risked his life and spent his own money on informers. He was against taking help from the police. Though authorized to carry a handgun he never did so that he was never tempted to shoot in anger and also to give no occasion to the police to accuse him of unnecessary use of force. Father put his knowledge of physics and chemistry from his days in medical college to good use in his work. He was granted the title of Khan Saheb by the government and for his outstanding work, three years of extension on the force before he retired. During his career the Bombay Excise Department was so successful in fighting the drug problem that a team from the League of Nations came to study their methods.

Towards the end of his career he inquired why he had never been promoted to superintendent. The answer was that he had seemed to enjoy the fieldwork so much that the thought had never occurred to his superiors that he would even consider an office job!



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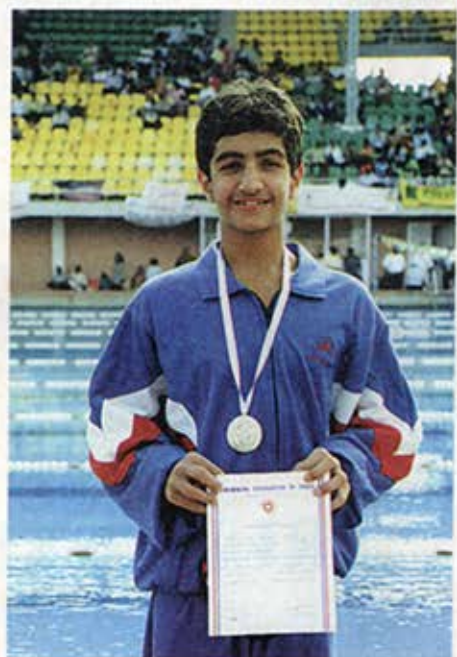
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Clockwise from top left: Delna Bhungara, Rehan Poncha, Riyad Palia, Zeba Wadia (in pool and at center with trophy), Aresh and Shazneen Daruwalla and Ruksheen Palia

Splashing success

Young Zoroastrian swimmers win medals at state, national and international meets

Hilla P. Guzder

The eldest is 14, the youngest seven. Bombay's promising young swimmers, Delna Bhumgara, Zeba Wadia, Rehan Poncha, Riyad and Ruksheen Palia and Aresh and Shazneen Daruwalla, have been making waves at club, state and national level swimming meets. On many a morning, when bleary-eyed Bombayites pick up their morning milk around 5 a.m., these children are already in the pool turning their arms for a practice session. School follows straight thereafter with a second training session in the evening. Life is a dedicated regimen of swimming, studies and sleep, yet they all enjoy it, they say, and wouldn't trade it for anything else.

The only one to have won an international medal so far is 11-year-old Rehan Poncha. His latest proud possessions are two bronze medals won in August '97 at the 11th Asia Pacific Age Group Swimming and Diving Championships organized by the Asian Amateur Swimming Federation at Kaohsiung in Chinese Taipei. Part of the approximately 40-member Indian squad (who won 16 medals, seven for swimming and nine for diving), Rehan says he "feels like a changed man after this meet." Adds his father Jehangir, "This was his first international exposure and he has suddenly 'grown-up!'"

After a 22-hour journey, made unexpectedly longer due to a delayed flight, Rehan had barely a day to recover before plunging into competition. "The temperature-controlled covered pool had a fully air-conditioned seating area," enlightens Jehangir, "and the competition was very stiff with 14 countries participating." Rehan bagged the bronze in the 200 m individual medley (boys under-11) with a timing of 2 min 43.73 sec and in the 50 m backstroke (35.50 sec) and was the only individual medallist from Maharashtra, says Jehangir. A donation of Rs 50,000 from the World Zoroastrian Organisation (WZO) through Dinshaw Tamboly helped ease the ex-

penses for the trip but the family is hoping for more sponsors as expenses for competitions are heavy. The 19-day training camp at the Talkatora swimming pool in Delhi preceding this trip was excellent, though very rigorous, observes Jehangir. "Training was from 5.30 to 8.30 every morning and 3 to 5.30 every afternoon and endurance workouts were tough," explains the father. Their stay at the Mengusi Dharamshala was comfortable, and Rehan's diet was strictly monitored. "Rehan makes out a list of all his favorite foods which he can eat only after competitions — bhel puri, Punjabi samosas, masala wafers, ice-cream, etc. He also loves pizzas and tomato sauce," informs his mother Shirin.

Rehan, born a premature baby in 1986, took to competitive swimming at the age of seven. So far he has won 43 gold medals, 79 silver and 39 bronze in competitions from inter-school and club to national level, in addition to the two international medals. In 1995, Rehan had represented Maharashtra at the nationals in Bhopal, winning a silver and two bronze medals in the under-nine category. At the fifth All Parsis Swimming Competition organized by the Federation of Zoroastrian Associations for Welfare and Culture (FOZAWAC), though he was only nine he swam 12 events in all the age-groups, winning six golds, five silvers and one bronze and was adjudged the overall men's champion at the meet. At the Jaipur nationals in '96, he secured a silver in the 50 m backstroke and a bronze in the 200 m individual medley.

He won six medals at the Greater Mumbai Amateur Aquatic Association (GMAAA) meet in May '97. At the Maharashtra State Junior and Sub-Junior Aquatic Championship at Kalwa (Thane) in June '97, he set up two new meet records in the 50 m butterfly (32.97 sec) and 50 m backstroke (35.21 sec), winning three more silvers and one bronze. At the 14th Sub-Junior National Aquatic Championships

in July this year at the sports city, Balewadi swimming pool complex near Pune, his spirited challenge in the 50 m butterfly (32.75 sec) for boys under-11 pushed his Maharashtra teammate Parikshit Shetty, who had returned the fastest time earlier, to second place. Rehan's second gold at the nationals was in the 50 m backstroke (35 sec) and in the 200 m individual medley (2 min 37.63 sec) he claimed the silver, bettering the existing record of 2 mins 42.56 sec. He annexed two more silvers in the 50 m and 100 m freestyle.

For Rehan who lives at Gamdevi, it's a long car ride three to four mornings every week at 5 a.m. to the Otters Club at Bandra where he trains under Sandeep Divgikar, "a world class coach who has brought Rehan up in three years," states Jehangir. After a two-hour session, his parents drive him on schooldays to St Mary's School (ICSC) at Mazgaon where he is a sixth standard student. Straight from school he returns to Bandra for a two-hour training session, reaching home at 8.30 p.m. after a gruelling 15-hour day. Homework has to be tackled in the car. St Mary's School awarded him the Best Sportsman Scholarship (under-12 category) for 1996 and a scholarship for excellence in studies and extra-curricular activities in Std V.

"Swimming is superb," gushes Rehan. He hates to miss practice and on the rare days he can't go to the pool, he piles up pillows on his bed, lies on them on his stomach and practices suspended over the bed, chuckles his mother. Rehan has set his sights high. His aunt from London brought him what he feels will be his lucky pen. "When I win my first Olympic medal, I'll sign my autograph with this pen," he aspires.

Fourteen-year-old Delna Bhumgara is the other swimmer who has participated in an international meet. Her first exposure to outside competition was at the Asia-Pacific swimming meet held in Pusan, Korea

in August last year. "It was a wonderful, never erasable experience," she enthuses. Attended by 752 swimmers from 22 countries including China, Japan, Kazakhstan and Australia, Delna secured a sixth place among the 36 competitors in her age group. The Indian contingent failed to bag a single gold or silver, securing just two bronze medals in the men's group, states Delna. "No fault of the Indian participants," she feels as the conditions at the training camp in Delhi preceding the meet were "appallingly filthy" and many caught a virus fever. The food was bad, she opines, and to make things worse their personal coaches were not allowed to train the swimmers.

In contrast, the food served at the Pusan Tourist Hotel (where all the participants were lodged) was excellent, she says, and included Korean delicacies like octopus legs, jelly fish, crabs, prawns, etc. The stadium decorated with flowers and lights, "looked like a fairyland" and the "huge breathtaking swimming pool" with its Omega touch pads displayed immediately the timing of the swimmer to the accurate fraction of a second. Marching in the opening ceremony wearing the country's jacket and with the Indian flag flying in front and "so many spectators cheering us enthusi-

astically was indeed a proud moment." Delna had secured a first place in the 50 m time-trial for the Asia-Pacific meet and earned for herself a berth in the Indian squad. "We were however asked to pay Rs 75,000 for the trip," says her father Noshir who takes her for her coaching classes from their Sleater Road residence to the YMCA (Young Men's Christian Association) pool at Proctor Road (Bombay Central) every day. Competitions sometimes follow each other in quick succession and raising the required finance can be difficult, he adds. On recommendation from FOZAWAC, Delna also received a sum of Rs 50,000 from the WZO, and other small amounts which helped to cover part of the expenses.

Ten months after the Pusan meet, Delna was again marching behind the Indian flag, this time at the 4th National Games held from May 31 to June 11, '97 in Bangalore. Contradicting reports in the Press that the meet was a badly organized one, Delna's mother Farida, who accompanied her daughter, observed that the swimming competitions were very well organized and that the opening ceremony was "fantastic." Though she did not win an individual medal, Delna stood fourth in the 100 m backstroke, her favorite event, clock-

ing 1 min 14.41 sec and swimming in the women's group with competitors older than herself. The Maharashtra team, with Delnaz and Zeba Wadia as two of the four swimmers, secured silver in the 4x100 m medley relay, with Delna doing the backstroke and Zeba the breast stroke.

In her very first swimming nationals in Jaipur in '96, Delna had emerged the winner in the 100 m backstroke in her group and the Maharashtra team struck gold in the 4x50 m medley relay. In February '96, she entered her first 5 km sea race from Sunk Rock to Gateway of India, standing 10th in the girls group with a timing of 41 min 52 sec, having had no prior practice of sea swimming at all. In May '96, she snuffed out competitors' challenge by claiming gold in the 100 m backstroke, clocking 1 min 18.18 sec in the GMAAA Sub-Junior Championship and setting up a new meet record. The same month she won silver with an improved timing of 1 min 17.58 sec at the Maharashtra State Championships in her group, and a gold in the 4x50 m medley relay.

At this year's GMAAA meet, she once again rewrote the record books in the 100 m and 200 m backstroke, while at the state level she stood first in the 100 m but took silver in the 200 m. Her pile of golds

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increased by one more in the 4x100 m medley relay. At the Balewadi nationals in July '97, she swam her fastest 100 m in 1 min 12.85 sec but missed out on the gold by a fraction. As part of the Maharashtra team, she won silver in the 4x100 m medley relay.

Delna entered competitive swimming by chance. "I was into athletics first," she explains, "and even participated in cross-country running, winning a state level cross country one km run at Goregaon when I was nine. I used to swim only for fun, but one day at the YMCA pool, coach Rakesh Tiwari spotted me and saw some potential." From then on, it's been steady progress in a relatively short period of time. A new interest for the ninth standard student of Girton High School is basketball at the newly provided court in school. "Delna is a bubbly, energetic person who loves going out with her friends or chit-chatting endlessly on the phone with them," says her mother. "Maths and Marathi are her least favored subjects, with history, geography and English standing higher on the list! She also loves to attend the religion classes conducted by Firoza Punthakey-Mistree of Zoroastrian Studies at the Girton School every Tuesday morning."

"I intend putting in my very best effort to improve my swimming performance to take part in forthcoming international swimming competitions, or God willing, even the Olympics in the year 2000 at Sydney," hopes Delna. "Till then it's studies, studies and studies which is more important in life than even sports."

Another promising swimmer who participated in the National Games at Bangalore this year as part of the Maharashtra squad is 13-year-old Zeba Wadia. She was one of only two swimmers from Maharashtra to win an individual medal, swimming in the women's group with older and more experienced competitors.

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Zeba bagged the bronze in the 200 m breast stroke with a time of 2 mins 56.62 sec and a silver in the 4x100 m medley relay as part of the state team. "The Bangalore Games were very well-organized and gave Zeba good exposure to the pressures of competition. The pool was fantastic and other facilities were good, though we did not stay in the village itself but at the Entee Dharamshala," remarks her mother Bakhtawar.

It was in February '95 that Zeba pluckily entered the Charni Road Chowpatty to Governor's bungalow and back sea race, winning a third place in the girls under-13 group, swimming for 1 hr 15 min 59 sec. She picked up gold in the sub-junior nationals at Jaipur in '96 in the 4x50 medley relay and lifted the Mayor's Trophy as individual champion (girls under-13) in December '96, also being runner-up individual champion in the women's group. On the same day at the sixth All-Parsis swimming meet organized by FOZAWAC, she was declared the best female swimmer with a total of 30 points.

This year has been a fruitful one for Zeba who trains at the Andheri Sports Complex pool under coach Prem Gajinkar. At the 12th IIT (Indian Institute of Technology) Open State Level Swimming Gala 1997 she ruled the pool in the 100 m breast stroke in the women's group with a new meet record of 1 min 23.53 seconds. At the GMAAA championships in May, she was runner-up individual champion (girls group II) totalling 54 points, with three gold, five silver and three bronze medals, bettering the meet records in the 50 m and 200 m freestyle and 200 m individual medley.

At the Maharashtra state championship at Kalwa, she swam strongly to win two gold (team relays), three silver and five bronze medals, bettering the meet record in three events. The Balewadi nationals saw her on the victory stand with a silver in

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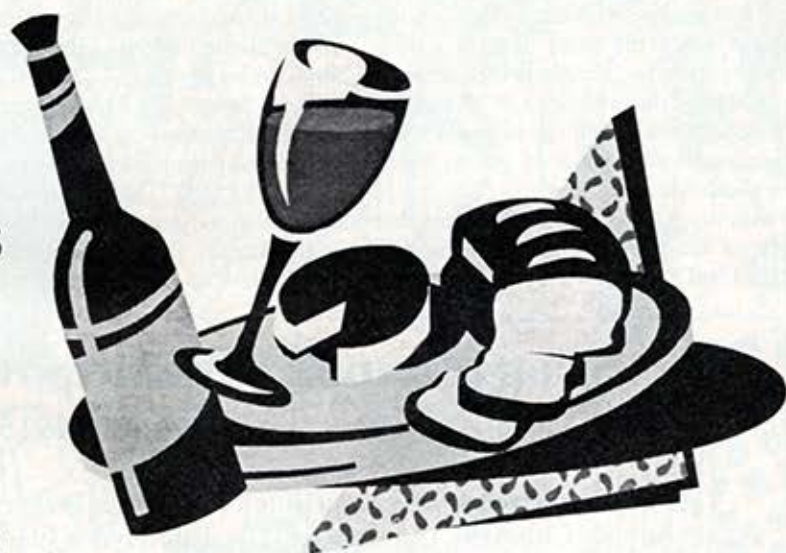
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the 100 m breast stroke (1 min 25.53 sec) and a bronze in the 200 m breast stroke (3 min 5.15 sec), both of which are her favorite events. "In the beginning I used to get very nervous but now I enjoy competitions," notes Zeba. "Crying won't get you anywhere if you lose a race, you have to try harder next time," is her philosophy to winning. "Zeba hates to be hassled at the start of an event by goading from anyone to give off her best. It just makes her lose her cool," laughs Bakhtawar.

A resident of Panthaky Baug in Andheri, Zeba comes from a sports minded family. Her father Homi was into body building and fitness, brother Zubin has played volleyball at the state level, representing Bombay city. A ninth standard student of St Joseph's Convent, Vile Parle, Wadia is fortunate that school gets over at 1.30 p.m. leaving her sufficient time for homework and snatches of cartoon-watching on TV. Piano lessons are scheduled for Monday evenings when the pool is closed. She hopes to appear for her Grade II pianoforte exams of the Trinity College of Music this year. Zeba remarks that she is proud to be a Zoroastrian and wants to get to know more about her religion.

Swimming to success over the past couple of years are the brother-sister duo of Riyad and Rukhsheen Palia. Riyad, aged

13, is cool and collected, his pulse rate is calm even on the starting blocks, observes his father Farhad, while Rukhsheen, 10 years old, is a little mischievous but extremely confident and hard working! In October '97 Riyad heads for the USA for a three-month training stint. "With their Olympic coaches and advanced techniques, Riyad can learn within three months in Los Angeles what might take him six months here," explains Farhad. Riyad and Rukhsheen train every morning at the Otters Club pool, not far from their Bandra residence, returning after school for a two-hour evening session under coach Sandeep Divgikar, who also trains Rehan.

Riyad's tally of medals for the current year are 34 gold, 31 silver and eight bronze and he has set up 15 new meet records. At the GMAAA meet in May '97, he sunk a nine-year-old record in the 200 m individual medley with his timing of 2 min 32.21 sec and set up two new records in the 100 m breast stroke (1 min 21.08 sec) and 50 m breast stroke (37.43 sec). Winning a total of 56 points, Riyad lifted the individual championship for boys under-13. He was runner-up champion at the 12th IIT Gala 1997. The GMAAA made him captain of their boys sub-junior (groups III, IV and V) team for the Maharashtra State Championship at Kalwa and in his group,

Riyad rewrote the record books in the 200 m individual medley (2 min 31.90 sec) and the 50 m breast stroke, claiming the overall distinction of being the runner-up champion in his group.

At the Balewadi nationals in July '97, Riyad found his moment of glory as part of the Maharashtra team who emerged overall champions with an impressive tally of 339 points against second-placed Karnataka's 186 points. Riyad was part of the foursome winning gold in the 4x50 m freestyle relay and silver in the 4x50 m medley relay. He also swam to silver in the 50 m and 100 m backstroke and 200 m individual medley, losing narrowly to Bengal's star swimmer Sudip Chatterjee. One more silver came his way in the 50 m breast stroke as the second-placed boy was later disqualified on grounds of overage after random testing.

With just one more year in school (St Andrews High School) before matriculation, Riyad believes in concentrating on studies as well for he hopes to go in for computer science. "He's a wizard on the computer, a complete computer freak," jokes his mother Niloufer. Relaxation involves surfing the Internet and taking guitar lessons on Sundays. "Riyad is pretty mature for his age," comments Farhad. "He controls his own diet and avoids oily

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foods, steaks are his favorite though he does not eat chicken or fish! He also takes defeat in his stride and does not get unnerved by it. It's a fantastic feeling for him to defeat boys who used to defeat him not so long ago." Adds Riyad, "Nothing is impossible if the mind wills it."

A fifth standard student of St Joseph's Convent, Bandra, Rukhsheen started swimming at the age of five at Otters Club with Sandeep Divgikar and was the youngest Zoroastrian swimmer to represent her city at the age of five at a state meet, states her bio data. In her first year of competitive swimming, she won 19 gold, 11 silver and four bronze medals and was awarded the Mehernosh N. Cama Memorial Award for 1993 by the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India in the sphere of sports. She annexed the individual championship at the IIT Swimming Gala 1993 (girls under-seven) and at the Cricket Club of India's 55th Annual Swimming Gala 1995 (girls under-nine) and was runner-up at the National Sports Club of India Open Swim Gala 1996 in the same category. In December of that year, she won all the three events in the girls under-10 group at the sixth All-Parsi swimming meet.

This year's tally includes 10 golds, 15 silvers and 10 bronzes, and the runner-up

individual championship (girls group IV) at the GMAAA meet in May. Unlike her brother who is shy and reserved by temperament, Rukhsheen is very forthright. "If you do not fight, you cannot expect to win," she says. She is a good mixer who has lots of friends, observes her father, adding that brother and sister get along famously with each other. "Rukhsheen works hard at swimming and studies, is very good at maths, though Hindi and Marathi do tend to become bugbears sometimes! She loves watching cartoons and Hindi movies on TV and is learning to play the guitar too like her brother. She wants to be an air-hostess like mum who has been with Air-India for 23 years." Though not religiously inclined, the children visit the agiary before competitions and on festival days. They have "a strong sense of community" and are proud to be Zoroastrians, asserts Farhad.

Two of Pervin and Firdosh Daruwalla's three children have taken to competitive swimming. Eleven-year-old Aresh started training at the age of six while seven-year-old Shazneen has already won three runner-up individual championships. Waiting in the wings is two-and-a-half-year-old Spenta who loves to watch her siblings in the pool. Explains their mother Pervin, "My father Framroze Pavri in his younger

days used to teach children to swim at Golvala Bath. When Aresh was small, he would accompany his grandfather to swimming meets as a spectator and soon took to competitive swimming himself." Aresh and Shazneen travel from their Dhobi Talao residence to the YMCA pool where they train with Rakesh Tiwari, who is also Delna's coach. "Practice is from six to eight every evening, except Sundays. During school vacations and before competitions, morning sessions are required," maintains Pervin. "Aresh is in a very tough group. He was very sensitive about defeat in the beginning but is now learning to take things in his stride. Shazneen is very determined and says 'I am going to come first.'"

Aresh's tally of trophies include runner-up individual champion at the Bombay School Sports Association's Inter-School aquatic meet in January 1995 in the under-nine category and runner-up in March of the same year at the Mayor's Cup, which is a state-level competition, says Pervin. Aresh represented Bombay in the Maharashtra State meet at Pune in '95 standing fourth. He swam in the 5 km open sea race from Sunk Rock to Gateway of India in February '96, emerging from the water with a timing of 43 minutes out of

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the stipulated time of 75 minutes.

This year Aresh won bronzes in the 50 m backstroke at the Otters Club meet in March for boys under-11 and in the butterfly at the Juhu Vile Parle Gymkhana Club meet. At the GMAAA meet in May, he stood third in the 50 m backstroke and qualified to represent Bombay in five events. He won the 50 m backstroke bronze in his group with a timing of 38.32 sec at the Maharashtra state meet. "He came within the qualifying time for the nationals," explains Pervin, "but only the first two are selected to represent the state at the nationals in each event."

A sixth standard student of Campion School, Aresh had claimed the championship trophy at his school meet in 1993 with three golds and two silvers, in 1994 with seven golds and in 1996 with seven golds and one bronze in an open event.

Shazneen studies in the second standard at the Convent of Jesus and Mary, Fort. She won the runner-up championship at the Otters Club meet this year with a gold in the 25 m breast stroke, silver in the butterfly and bronze in the backstroke. She was also runner-up champion at the Juhu Vile Parle Gymkhana Club gala. In the GMAAA selection for the state meet, Shazneen claimed 19 points, winning the

runner-up championship in girls group VI, bettering the meet records with three silvers in the 25 m breast stroke, freestyle and butterfly, and bronze in the 25 m backstroke. 'Recreation' from the tension of competition and the monotony of training may consist of a couple of jumps from the diving board or relay races for fun in the pool, laughs Pervin who handles her children's schooling, studies and swimming during husband Firdosh's long absences at sea as a ship's captain. "When he is in town, however, he more than makes up for it by taking charge of everything. This year, he prolonged his stay in Bombay from six months to eight months so that he could be with the children for the GMAAA meet and the Maharashtra state meet," relates Pervin.

Besides swimming, Aresh's interests include scouting as part of the 16th East Bombay Zoroastrian Scout Group which has its meetings on Sunday mornings. He secured gold in the Roman rings at his school gymnastics competition when he was in the fifth standard, enlightens Pervin, and wins at least one prize every year on the school annual day. Shazneen is a Bulbul with the 71st East Bombay Zoroastrian Guide Company which holds its meetings on Saturday afternoons. She also loves to

dance on stage during school entertainment programs, says mum, adding that both children are regular with their morning kusti and evening prayers with *Sarosh Baj*, etc, and Shazneen stresses on visits to the agiary particularly before a competition.

Aresh's approach towards his swimming is "leave behind the rest and think for the best." When asked by her parents what she would like to become in future, Shazneen is sure of herself. "It begins with an 's' and ends with an 'r,'" she replies. A singer? "No, a swimmer," she rejoins.

For all the children through their years of swimming, hidden behind the glory and glitter of medals and trophies, lie the tensions and frustrations of competition — the pulled muscles, the exhaustion, the rivalries and jealousies of competitors, the often poor facilities and whimsical attitudes of sports administrators. While refusing to be drawn into details, the children's parents admit that sports meets in the country are often mired in controversy, with competitors becoming the pawns in the games officials play.

The youngsters however continue to practice, keeping their heads above water, striving to narrow the gap between promise and performance, happy in the pride of their own hard-earned achievement.

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Feasting on favorites

Bhicoo J. Manekshaw

In the slow moving idyllic days gone by, most Parsis used to have doodh na puffs or kharia ni jelly (trotter jelly) for breakfast in winter.

DOODH NA PUFFS (serves 3 to 6 glasses)
Originally, the recipe was prepared at sundown, the ingredients placed in an earthenware pot, covered with a cloth and tied up. It was hung up with a string on a branch of a tree in the garden. Those were the days when every city home had a garden, unlike the concrete jungles of today. And those were also pre-refrigerator days. But now even if you are living in a flat without a garden, you can make this ambrosia in the refrigerator.

Full cream milk (2 ltrs)

Sugar (250 g, or more if desired)

Rose water (to taste)

Nutmeg (grated, for garnish)

Mix milk with sugar in a pan, place on low heat and stir till sugar has dissolved. Bring to boil three-four times. Cool, stirring all the time.

If you have a garden, pour the milk into

a ceramic pot, cover the mouth with a cloth, tie it down and hang the pot from the branch of a tree. Leave overnight. Next morning, remove pot from the tree. Mix the cream formed on top of the milk, stirring in one direction only. Add rose water and mix well.

If you have no garden, do not despair, the refrigerator, one of the best of modern inventions, comes to your aid. Instead of hanging the pot in the garden, place it in the refrigerator.

Pour half the milk in a cold bowl and churn or beat till foam rises to the top. Spoon foam into chilled glasses up to the top. Fill glasses till the froth is a little over the lip of the glasses. Sprinkle with nutmeg and serve immediately.

KHARIA NI JELLY (serves 6)

In one of the reviews of my book *Parsi Food and Customs*, a critic wondered why kharia ni jelly was put in the breakfast section. This is because, as I had mentioned in the paragraph just before the recipes section on breakfast, both the doodh

A lavish spread on the table to tempt even the calorie conscious

na puffs and kharia ni jelly were synonymous with breakfast in winter, when the milk was chilled all night (in the pre-refrigerator days) as was the trotter jelly.

Trotters are rather hearty and should be eaten in winter. The jelly is made the previous night and kept in a cool place to set overnight. It is always served in small juice glasses for breakfast, or at the most at eleven o'clock in the morning, but never as a dessert. Use trotters of the same size. Do not mix lamb's trotters with goat's trotters, as the cooling varies. If using lamb's trotters, use 12 instead of six.

Trotters of the front legs with skin (6 – cut into 2" pieces)

Rice flour (as required)

Limes (3 – cut in half)

Egg whites (3 – lightly beaten)

Egg shells (3 eggs – washed)

Cinnamon (2" piece)

Cloves (5)

Tea leaves (1-2 tsp)

Water (4 ltrs)

Sugar (to taste)

Brandy and lime juice (to taste)

Wash trotters well. Rub with rice flour and two limes to remove any smell. Wash again. Place trotters in a pan with four litres water and whole spices. Bring to boil. Lower heat, cover pan and simmer for 1-2 hours till trotters are soft and the bones separate from the flesh.

Strain stock into a pan. Slowly add egg whites, shells, one lime and sugar to taste. Simmer and allow to clear. Strain through two layers of muslin. Add tea leaves for color, brandy and lime juice to taste. Mix well and leave for a few minutes. Strain out tea leaves and pour into small glasses. Leave overnight to set. Serve for breakfast the next morning.

AKOORI

This Parsi egg dish was made famous throughout the Indian Air Force messes by Air Marshal Dhatighara — where it is still known as Dhatighara Bhoojia.

Every Parsi has his method of making akoori and thinks it the best way. And quite rightly so, as it all depends on one's taste.

Incidentally, may I know what this thing



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called 'scramblers' is that I read of in a 'healthy heart' cookbook? Use 100 g 'scramblers' with ¼ cup water... Is this a substitute for eggs? If so, please do not try to make akoori with 'scramblers.' In fact, those of you with food fads such as fatless, saltless, sugarless low calorie diets, don't bother to read the following recipe.

But I am really concerned. If an average person continues with a fatless, saltless, sugarless diet, the human race may well develop a disease which none will be able to diagnose or cure! Our bodies need fat, salt and sugar, all within limits. Here in India, it is known from times immemorial, that before stepping out on a hot summer's day if one drank fresh lime juice with a little sugar and salt, the strong sun would not affect one. The secret is, as my father who was a doctor always said, eat everything but within reason. And always get up from the table feeling that you could eat a little more.

MEVANI AKOORI (serves 8 to 10)

This recipe was given to me by Ms Cama of Bharuch, where we had fresh fried prawns, mevani akoori, hot ghau ni rotli and fruit — for a memorable breakfast!

Eggs (15, of free run chicken variety, well beaten)

Sultanas (25 g, washed and dried)

Almonds (blanched and sliced), cashew nuts and cheronji (charoli) (50 g — mixed together)

Ghee or butter (7 tbsp)

Ghee or butter (2 tbsp extra for frying nuts)

Salt (to taste)

Fry nuts and drain well. They must not be greasy. Mix remaining fat, eggs and salt and scramble. When half done, add sultanas and when just done add nuts. Serve immediately with hot rotlis.

Note: You may add chopped coriander leaves, 1-2 green seeded chillies, 1-2 chopped spring onions with a little of the green.

KHARU DODHI (savory bottle marrow — serves 6 to 8)

This vegetable is usually not made in our household as my husband says he had enough of it for nine years in his boarding school. But once when his cousin was our guest for dinner, he requested me to cook it for him as the hotel where he was staying belonged to a Parsi who seldom served vegetables. So I had to make it and even my husband had a little of it.

Marrow (1 kg — peeled and cubed in 1" pieces)

Onions (3 large — finely sliced)

Ginger paste (1 tbsp)

Garlic paste (1 tbsp)

Turmeric powder (½ tsp)

Chilli powder (1 tsp)

Cumin powder (2 tsp)

Salt (to taste)

Chop

Tomatoes (2)

Seeded green chillies (1-2)

Coriander leaves (1 tbsp)

Note: May also add 6 cloves, 2 one-inch pieces cinnamon and 4 black cardamoms.

Heat fat in a pan and fry onions till light brown. If using cloves, etc add now with the onions. Add ginger, garlic, turmeric, chilli and cumin and saute for 2-3 minutes. Add remaining ingredients and cook till slightly brown. Cover and cook on low heat. Add water in pan and on inverted lid and simmer till marrow is practically mashed. Serve with any meat dish or frill cutlets.

DAHI MA BHEEDA (okras cooked with curds — serves 6 to 8)

Okras (1 kg — young, small, tender)

Ginger paste (2 tbsp)

Garlic paste (2 tbsp)

Turmeric powder (1 tsp)

Chilli powder (2 tsp)

Curds (350 g — thick, beaten till smooth)

Salt (to taste)

Oil (4-6 tbsp)

Wash and dry okras completely. Remove heads, cut in half inch slices and sprinkle

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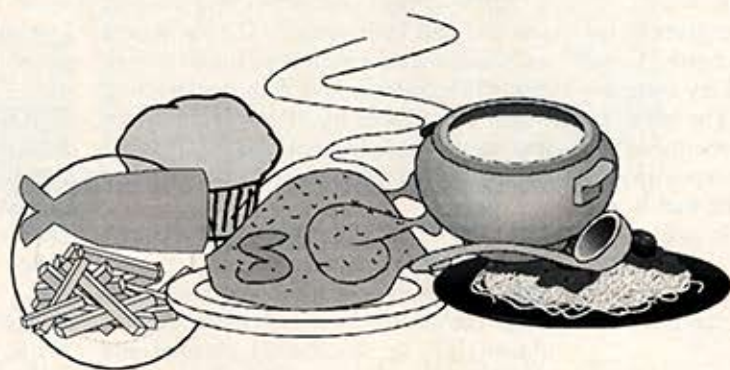


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with salt. Heat oil in a frying pan and fry till crisp, but green. Drain.

In the same pan add ginger, garlic and spices. Fry for 1-2 minutes, adding water if needed. Add curds and mix well. Lower heat and simmer for 1-2 minutes. Add salt and fried okras. Simmer further for 2-3 minutes.

Serve with rotlis or khichdi.

CUSTER NA CUTLETS (serves 8)

This is a prize winning recipe given to me by Parviz P. Dhanbura. Actually I was asked to be a judge at a cookery competition years ago in Bangalore. The other two judges and I all came to the conclusion that this was one of the best recipes in that particular section — unaware that it was by my friend Parviz who is one of the kindest persons I know.

Milk (600 ml full cream)

Eggs (10, I can feel all the 'scrambler' fans squirm!)

Breadcrumbs

Ghee or oil (for deep frying)

Grind together

Green chillies (6 — seeded)

Coriander leaves (3 tbsp)

Ginger (1" piece)

Garlic (6 cloves, small)

Cumin seeds (2 tsp)

Cook milk on low heat until quantity is

reduced by a quarter. Cool. Beat 5 eggs and add to milk with salt and half the ground spices. Mix well and spoon into a well greased square or rectangular baking dish so that it comes to a height of one inch.

Steam for 15-20 minutes by putting the dish in an idli steamer, or place in a dish with water reaching about 2" below custard dish and bake in a medium oven for 20-25 minutes.

Allow to cool completely and cut into one and half inch squares. Carefully coat each piece with remaining ground spices, dip in breadcrumbs and then in remaining beaten eggs. Deep fry till pale gold. Drain and serve. And sit back and receive the applause from your guests!

MAJA'S PRAWN OR FISH PATIA (serves 4 to 6)

This recipe was given to me by my niece Maja Daruwalla, an excellent cook.

Prawns ($\frac{1}{4}$ kg — shelled cleaned and deveined, or any other fish)

Onions (8 medium sized — grated)

Tomato ketchup (2-3 tbsp)

Lime (juice of one)

Vinegar (1 tbsp)

Sugar (to taste)

Salt (to taste)

Sesame seed oil or ghee (4 tbsp)

Grind together in a little Valsad vinegar

Garlic (6-8 cloves)

Goa red chillies (6-8 dry)

Cumin seeds (2 tsp)

Marinate prawns with salt and lime juice for half an hour. Heat oil in a pan and fry onions till brown. Add ground spices and fry well. Add prawns and saute till done. Add a little vinegar, salt, sugar and tomato ketchup. Serve hot with boiled rice and plain dal.

Note: I know it is unusual to use tomato ketchup in a patia but this is one of the best patias I have tasted.

DOODH MA GOSHT ATHVA MURGHI (serves 4 to 6)

Lamb (1 kg — cubed with bone) or chicken (1½ kg — jointed)

Onions (4 medium-sized — finely sliced)
Green chillies (4-5 — seeded and sliced or slit)

Ginger (2½" piece — ground)

Garlic (1 pod — ground)

(Here I must remind you that if living in Europe or America, the garlic is much larger than the Indian variety so use half a pod.)

Turmeric (1 tsp)

Cumin powder (2-3 tsp)

Cinnamon, cloves and cardamoms (1 tbsp — mixed whole)

Salt (to taste)



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Ghee or oil (4 tbsp)
Milk (500 ml full cream)
Almonds (50 g — blanch and sliced)
Heat fat or oil in a pan and fry onions till brown, with whole spices. Add ½ cup water and simmer till onions are mushy and water evaporated. Add ginger garlic paste, turmeric, cumin powder and salt and saute for 1-2 minutes. Add meat or chicken and chillies, saute till meat is brown. Lower heat and add 1 cup water.

Cover pan with an inverted lid, put some water on lid and simmer till meat or chicken is tender, and the gravy thick. Keep stirring occasionally, adding water to pan or on lid as required. This prevents meat from sticking to the base of the pan. This is the basic kharu gosht.

Add ½ litre full cream milk and cook till reduced to ¼. Add 50 g blanch and sliced almonds to meat or chicken. Mix well and serve with rotlis.

MUG NI DAR (serves 6 to 8)

Green beans or moong (1¼ cups, husked)
Turmeric powder (1 tsp)
Salt (to taste)
Chop for dal mixture
Tomatoes (2)
Green chillies (4 — seeded)
Coriander leaves (1 tbsp)
Vaghar (seasoning)

Cumin seeds (2 tbsp)
Garlic (1 pod — chopped)
Ghee or clarified butter (2 tbsp)
Wash dal and place in pan with water to cover by 1". Add chillies and turmeric and bring to boil. Skim and simmer till done. Mash or puree dal. Add remaining ingredients except seasoning and simmer for 10 minutes.

Heat ghee in a small frying pan and add seasoning ingredients. Fry and pour over dal just before serving.

Serve with rotlis or boiled rice.

POCHI OR MALIDAR KHICHDI (soft khichdi — serves 6 to 8)

Rice (2 cups)
Green beans or moong (husked), Egyptian lentils (masoor) or pigeon peas, arhar or toovar (¾ cup)
Onions (2 — sliced)
Turmeric powder (1 tsp)
Cinnamon (2" piece)
Cloves (6-8)
Cardamoms (6-8)
Salt (to taste)
Butter or ghee (3-4 tbsp)
Coconut milk (1 cup, extracted from ½ coconut) or full cream milk
Wash rice and dal. If pigeon peas are used, soak for half an hour or half boil. Place all ingredients except butter and milk in a pan.

Add water to come up to 1" above level of rice and dal. When half cooked, add coconut milk or milk. Add butter and cook till done.

This khichdi should be very soft. Delicious by itself, or may be served with a lime or mango pickle. Or with a patia if desired.

KARVAI (banana fritters — makes 5 to 6)

Banana pulp (2½ cups, ripe)
Cornflour (2 tbsp)
Almonds (5 tbsp — blanch and sliced)
Cashew nuts (3 tbsp — chopped)
Sultanas (6 tbsp)
Cardamom and nutmeg (½ tsp — powdered)
Castor sugar (to taste)
Poppy seeds (as needed)
Pinch of salt
Oil for deep frying
Mix cornflour, spices and banana pulp. Fry nuts lightly, drain and add to pulp. Add sultanas, salt and sugar to taste. Take a spoonful of mixture and form into a ball. Roll in poppy seeds to coat and deep fry. Fry one fritter first. If it breaks add a little more cornflour in the mixture. For easier frying, shape into flat round discs and shallow fry. Serve hot.

GOSHT NU ACHAR (lamb pickle)

Lamb or game (2 kg — washed, dried,

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deboned and cut into 2" pieces with fat removed)
Navsari vinegar ($\frac{3}{4}$ ltr)
Cinnamon (3 one-inch pieces)
Cloves (2 tbsp)
Cardamoms (10-12)
Sugar (to taste)
Salt (to taste)
Oil (400 ml)

Grind with a little vinegar to a thick paste

Ginger ($2\frac{1}{2}$ " piece)
Garlic (3 large pods)
Cumin seeds (1 tbsp)
Coriander seeds ($\frac{1}{2}$ cup)
Black peppercorns (10)
Chillies (10, dried)

Rub some salt into meat pieces, and fry in oil with whole spices till well browned and cooked. Add ground spices with a little sugar and salt. Fry for a minute or two, add vinegar and simmer gently till spices and meat are well amalgamated and cooked through.

Cool and bottle, keeping pickle covered with oil. Keep in a cool place. Allow to mature for about 15 days. It will keep for 6-12 months in a cool place.

BADAM PAKH

Milk (1 ltr)

Cream (125 g)
Almonds (1 kg – blanched)
Butter (350 g)
Rose water ($\frac{1}{2}$ ltr)
Nutmeg and cardamoms (2 tsp – crushed)
Sugar (4 cups)
Salt (a pinch)

Cook milk on low heat till reduced by half. Cool and add cream. Fry almonds lightly in butter till golden. Cool and mince coarsely with a little chilled rosewater. (This prevents oil from oozing out of almonds.)

Make a syrup with remaining rose water and sugar. Boil to a thread. Remove from fire, add almonds, milk and butter in which the almonds were fried. Mix well and cook on low heat till mixture reaches consistency of a thick batter. Add spices, mix well and pour into a serving dish, or store in a glass jar.

Note: This is a semi solid dish and can be kept for weeks in a refrigerator. It is given to women after childbirth to strengthen the back. But it can be eaten and enjoyed by all.

Bon Appetit !

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

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A measure of mysticism

Faribourz Nariman

Mysticism and Mystic Sects Among the Jews, the Mohammedans, and the Zoroastrians — a Comparative Study by Ervad Ratanshah R. Motafram. Published in 1996 by The K. R. Cama Oriental Institute, 136, Bombay Samachar Marg, Fort, Bombay 400023. Pp: 157 + xviii. Price: Not mentioned.

"What is Love? Thou shalt know when thou becomest Me" — Rumi.

"Pear seed grows up into pear tree, nut seed grows up into nut tree: God seed into God, to God" — Eckhart.

'Mysticism,' 'mystic' and 'mystical' are highly charged words in Parsi society. The heterodox bandy these words to create an impression of being God-fearing; and mendacious mystagogues use the same either to set up an aura of piety or to belittle scholars in general and philologists in particular. Therefore, one has to keep a wary eye whenever one comes across one or more of these words.

Briefly stated, mysticism is a way by which one can obtain freedom from the self for the Self. Etymologically, 'mystic' can be traced to the times of the schoolmen (medieval European theologians) for whom 'mystica' was an adjective qualifying the substantive 'theologia.' Thus, 'mystica theologia,' as distinguished from mere 'theologia,' was something which revealed deeper mystery and divulged certain secrets which were otherwise unknown. Much later, 'mystic' was used as a synonym, so to speak, of the Sanskrit yoga 'union,' by implication, 'unio mystica' or mystical union.

At different times, advanced souls in various countries gave expression to such a 'union.' There are records of christocentric experiences of Christian mystics. Also, certain Sufis speak about their union with the Beloved. Some mystics had to undergo trials and tribulations for giving expression to their experiences: Mansur al-Hallaj had to sacrifice his life and Meister Eckhart was excommunicated after death, though reclaimed by the church after some time. It is interesting to note that the Inquisition punished Eckhart for committing one hundred 'errors' — one of these is quoted above.

Mysticism is a complex subject and serious students of any religion can ill afford to overlook mystical aspects of the latter. However, the dilettantes, ever eager to foist their whims under cover of 'mystical interpretations,' cannot be permitted to exploit this fact. Equally deplorable are the attempts at demystification of mystical experiences by some psychoanalysts. Cu-

"If I made that which was not, why cannot I make again that which was?"

riously enough, some noted personalities, in the beginning of the present century, started working on the potentiality and range of drug-induced mysticism. The drugs considered in this context were alcohol, Indian hemp and Mescaline. Aldous Huxley's experiments with the last mentioned drug are well-known, though not many people are aware that Zaehner volunteered to subject himself to an experiment with Mescaline in 1955 in order to refute Huxley's contentions.

The doctrine of the two selves is enunciated by various traditions in different ways, though the end — subjugation of the lower by the higher — remains the same. And Ervad Ratanshah Motafram, a silent, dedicated worker in the field of Iranian studies, has kept this in mind while making clear some of the contours of mysticism and mystics in three traditions in the booklet under review.

The work is divided into 10 chapters. The first one (of 11 pages) deals with Judaic mysticism. The next five (running into 60 pages) are devoted to the Islamic tradition (including the Sufic), and the last four (containing 60 pages) deal with the Zoroastrian tradition. Of course, at different places, the author has given some glimpses of comparative viewpoints including those from the Greek and the Christian traditions.

Since bibliophiles from among *Par-*

siana readers may be specially interested to know the topics covered by the author as far as Zoroastrianism is concerned, a gist of the same is given. The seventh chapter deals with esoteric elements in Zoroastrianism. Here we find short notes on the influence of Zarathushtra's teachings on Greek philosophers, historical background, Hegel's views, mystic significance of five *gahs*, etc. The next chapter tells us about other elements of mysticism in Zoroastrianism with brief discussions on water, vegetation, the 'tree of all seeds,' Gaokerena tree, Mt Alburz, the 'three legged ass,' *khvarnah* (glory), animal sacrifice, esoteric elements in Zoroastrian rituals, etc. The author has attempted to unravel certain mystic formularies encountered in the scriptures. In the ninth chapter we find the Prophet portrayed as a mystic and this is followed by a discussion on spiritually advanced souls after him. Chapter 10 is devoted to Azar Kaiwan and his disciples like Farzaneh Behram, Mobeds Hoshyar and Sarosh, Khuda Jui, etc followed by a discussion on miraculous powers attributed to the saint and the literature produced by his school.

Generally speaking, throughout the work the author has steered a skillful course but, at times, one comes across the use of certain words and statements which can be seriously contested. For example, the author's use of 'orthodox' in a pejorative sense (pg 40) and the way in which he makes a distinction between Aryan and Semitic religions in connection with *creatio ex nihilo* (creation out of nothing, pp 40-41), obliquely giving the reader to understand that this is not a Zoroastrian postulate. Now, in *Greater Bundahishn* 34.4-6, we come across a dialogue between Ahura Mazda and Zarathushtra, the subject matter being *ristakhiz* (resurrection of the dead).

There the Prophet enquires as to how will a man's body, which has been blown away by the wind or dragged down by water, be resurrected. In reply, Ahura Mazda, after enumerating His creations like the terrestrial sky, earth, sun, moon and stars, corn, various kinds of plants and



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man, points out that "each one of these was more difficult for Me than the raising of the dead; behold, if I made that which was not, why cannot I make again that which was?" The rhetorical question clearly shows that the postulate in question is Zoroastrian.

The author declares (pp 22-23), "the orthodox teaching of predestination, propounded by Islam, represented God as a merciless tyrant..." Surely this is not the orthodox Islamic position. True, some occidental scholars have been inclined to translate *qismah* 'predestination,' but 'apportionment' would be a better rendering. The question of nuances apart, the Islamic tradition speaks, time and again, of Allah as *Ar-Rahman* (the clement) and *Ar-Rahim* (the merciful), although He has the quality of *Al-Muntaqim* (the avenger), He is also one who is *Al-Gaffar* (full of pardon). According to Sa'id ibn Mansur, "the first thing that the Pen wrote was: *Inna Rahmati sabaqat Ghadabi* (My mercy precedeth My wrath)."

Instead of using *dhikr* and rendering it 'recollection' (as on pp 32-33), the use of *dhikr 'Llah* (remembrance of God) would be better suited in terms of context as well as exposition.

Attention may be called to some oddities which just do not bear up, and blunt the overall effect:

- The inclusion of historical details of the Arabs of the seventh and ninth centuries (pg xv) in a booklet of this size.

- Spellings like Rumi and Mythraic instead of the conventional and apposite Rumi and Mithraic.

- The lack of diacritical marks, especially in the transcription of Arabic, Avesta, Pahlavi, Persian and Sanskrit words and mystical formularies.

- Havana*, a vessel (formerly of stone, but today metallic ones are used) in which *haoma* is pounded, is rendered 'chalice' instead of the usual 'mortar' which suits the purpose.

All in all, the work is more of a primer, meant to assist those unfamiliar with some recondite areas of theology. It is not a detailed exposition or an exhaustive account of mysticism or mystics in the three traditions.

At some places the author has taken pains to delineate the movement of certain ideas — this serves the instructional purpose fairly well. The K. R. Cama Oriental Institute may be congratulated for publishing this work as a token of appreciation of one who has a long-standing reputation as a scholar and a teacher in the M. F. Cama Athornan Institute, Andheri.



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Insights into Iran

Reshad Forbes

Iran — The Spiritual Motherland of Zoroastrians by Noshir H. Dadrawala. Published in 1997 by Jam-e-Jamshed, 7, Kumpta Street, Fort, Bombay 400038. Pp: iii + 102. Price: Not mentioned.

The author's introduction is robust and alive with a sense of adventure. He portrays himself as a fun-loving traveller infused with a child-like spirit — his experiences in Iran make one think of what Enid Blyton's Famous Five may have felt on discovering a treasure inside a grotto by a sparkling, moon-lit sea. He is both awed and inspired by the journeys he makes into "a land which cradled the world's first revealed religion (Zoroastrianism), reared benevolent kings who upheld and championed human rights before the term was coined and which threw up men of learning who were to influence the thought-process of thinking men all over the then-known world."

Then again there are startling descriptions of the landscape: "There is something magical about the whole country — the majestic mountains, the serene and mystical desert... not to mention the enchanting Caspian sea." Noshir Dadrawala attempts, often with some success, to bring alive what his eyes perceive.

The writing makes easy reading although it frequently verges on the pedantic. I could not help thinking of the

Author
Dadrawala
(above) and
Ardashir
Papakan's
palace in
Firuzabad
(alongside)



author as a gentle yet somewhat humorless teacher, at times taking himself all too seriously as he guides us through a ritual of travel rather than a journey illuminated by varied experiences.

That said, there is some interesting intertwining of Persian history and legend — a device which works well and is also informative in the otherwise rather pallid and repetitive detail of encountering holy places. With Parsis *joie de vivre* and piety are not mutually exclusive.

The author gives us Tehran, an "impressive picture postcard" with its background of snow-capped mountains; and Shiraz, "the poetical capital of the country," 80 km from which is the oldest historical site of the Achaemenid period, Pasargadae, or "land or home of Persians." About to be immersed in Zoroastrian history, we are informed of Cyrus the Great, founder, over 2,500 years ago, of the Achaemenian dynasty. His empire is believed to have been so vast that "it took two years to travel from one end of his kingdom to another on horseback."

The greatest Iranian monument, Persepolis (which today tragically stands in ruins), is scrupulously described. Built by Darius the Great whose empire, we are told, stretched from the River Danube to Sind, from the present-day Frontier Province and a part of the Punjab to Central Asia and the north-eastern territories of Africa, this imposing monument was later mercilessly destroyed by Alexander the Great (or 'the Accursed,' as he is known in Iran), who



invaded Iran in 331 BC. Dadrawala captures well how the vast palaces and halls of Persepolis appeared over 2,500 years ago, with their enormous ornamental gates, pillars and carvings representing one of the richest, most handsome eras of Zoroastrian history.

We are guided through Firuzabad, where the palace of Ardashir I was built in approximately the third century AD. The romantic description is compelling: "In the afternoon, before lunch, some of us did our *padyab-kusti* and offered more prayers by the river Buraza... The gurgling river flowing nearby, the sun overhead, almost bathing us with its purifying rays, the mountains providing the backdrop and Ardashir's palace standing majestically as a witness... Indeed this is how our ancestors must have looked up, through nature to nature's God..."

On to Bishapur, where the famed excavated temple of Anahita lies, discovered during the present century. Again: "Walking through the... impressive temple was like walking through the passage of history... there is so much to see, so much to know..."

Welcome to Yazd. A Zoroastrian stronghold, home to Yazdagird III, the last Sasanian monarch defeated by the Arab invaders in 652 AD. (This victory by the Arab armies eventually led to the ascendancy of Islam over Zoroastrianism.) Legend has it that the monarch's wife, daughters and their attendants were forced to flee in different directions into the wilderness, pursued by the unflinching Muslims. As luck would have it, before each was captured, the mountains and rocks 'opened' and swallowed up the hapless women. The spots where each was saved have become Zoroastrian shrines, and symbols of good triumphing over evil. A large number of pilgrims visit these places annually, even today.

The reader is entertained by many such absorbing accounts: myths which are more than merely interesting — they are the basis of, and the route to, so much of Zoroastrian history.

Dadrawala charmingly encourages fellow Zoroastrians to visit the holy land of Iran. His preoccupation with food and eating is amusing, while his narrative on Persia's greatest emperors, their achievements and conquests, is a part of the Zoroastrian heritage of which we cannot afford to be ignorant.

Iran — The Spiritual Motherland of Zoroastrians has been divided into two sections, having originally appeared in the



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Jam-e-Jamshed in a serialized form (June—July 1995, and December 1995—January 1996), covering two journeys the author made to Iran. Portions of the book which may have appeared to better effect in the weekly paper are unnecessarily repetitious in the book: part of the narrative surrounding Yazdagird III and his family's flight from the Arabs is retold as if the reader has not been made acquainted with the story earlier on! I do wish, therefore, that Dadrawala had spent a little more time on Iranian culture. This would have added a huge dimension to the writing: one which, though not entirely absent, is disappointingly fragile in this work.

The book certainly represents Iran, its landscapes and terrain as being remarkably beautiful. The author has thoughtfully added several interesting photographs and in that respect it absolutely makes one want to visit the various places described.

In the balance, then, Dadrawala's heartfelt attempt to draw the reader closer to Iran may not be seen to win the jackpot, but may prove to be a near-winner nonetheless.

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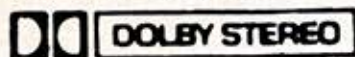
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Freny — Mari Ardhangini by Dr Ratan Marshall.
Published in 1997 by the author, Sarosh Yazad
Apartments, Bhavnagri Street, Vanki bordi, Surat,
395003. Pp: 79. Price: Not mentioned.

A young lady gynecologist arrived in Surat one fine morning in 1950 and took over as the chief medical officer and superintendent of the Parsi General Hospital. Her first reaction to the city had been negative. Driving through the streets from the station, she could not help asking herself, "What am I doing in Surat?" Such a backward city compared to Bombay. What kind of future do I hope for here?"

Dr Freny Hormusji Billimoria was a Bombayite with considerable experience at the city's hospitals: the K.E.M., the Wadia, the Cama and Alibless. She was a doctor of medicine (MD), from the University of Bombay, and assistant to the well established gynecologist Dr K. M. Masani.

The Parsi General Hospital of Surat had been functioning well under the able guidance of Dr Nusservanji Hormusji Dastur since its inception. But after three decades of dedicated service, Dr Dastur decided to retire. Times had changed and it was now necessary to have an experienced lady doctor in charge of the Hospital. Dr (Ms) Freny Billimoria seemed to be the right choice.

Apart from her initial personal reservations, Dr Billimoria had to face stiff opposition to her appointment from a small section of the community. But with her positive approach to her job, she took this in her stride. She was competent to handle the job and committed to it. She was humane, too, and dealt with her patients sympathetically and without discrimination.

It was not long before the residents of Surat recognized her worth. Her compassionate approach to the needy made her popular not only with her Parsi patients, but also with women of other communities. Her generosity made her take on additional responsibilities, and she willingly gave her honorary services to other institutions under the Surat Parsi Panchayat — like the Nariman Home and Infirmary. Other non-Parsi hospitals also considered it essential to avail of her services, which she gave freely.

For Dr Billimoria work always took precedence over monetary gains. Kindness per-

sonified, she invariably considered the financial status of her patients and even gave them monetary help for medicine, milk, etc for which she received their blessings.

Freny Billimoria might not have taken to Surat immediately, but it was here that she found a suitable life partner, Dr Ratan Marshall. April 26, 1957 was a very auspicious day in the life of Ratan Marshall, 40, and Freny Billimoria, 35. Unexpected circumstances had brought them together, and the marriage proved to be a very happy one.



Marshall: fond memories

In this sensitive word picture of his wife, Marshall has recalled an incident worth repeating here. On her wedding day an urgent maternity case demanded her attention and Dr Billimoria arrived from the hospital just in

time for the ashirvad ceremony. Her patients came first with her. She always spared the time to serve her community in a number of ways. She helped out with complicated socio-domestic problems which saved the lives of some misguided young girls. She came to be known and loved not only as the superintendent of the Hospital, but as 'Freny Auntie' and 'Frenymai.' She helped everyone who sought her advice and her wise counsel brought sunshine into their otherwise dark days. The Panchayat institutions looked after by her also flourished.

But, sadly, the medical career of such a ministering angel ended unexpectedly. The author has preferred to remain silent about his wife's illness. It will not be fair, therefore, to attempt to go deeper into it here. Dr Freny Marshall spent the last part of her life convalescing in Ahmedabad with her son Rustom, daughter-in-law and grandchildren. But Surat missed her a great deal. "When will our Frenymai return home?" was the question always on the lips of all who missed her human touch.

After a prolonged illness, she passed away in Ahmedabad on March 23, 1996. Surely her memory will live for years to come in the minds of scores of young and old people.

As the author has rightly said of his book, "It is not a biography of Freny." It can be described as a picture of Freny done in pastel by a sensitive husband who had the good fortune of spending nearly four decades with her.

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Pochkhanawala gets prolific

Homi J. Rogers

Mehta and Sitara (Pp: 131. Price: Rs 90); *Sounds of Thoughts* (Pp: 66. Price: Rs 80); *Six Short Stories* (Pp: 59. Price: Rs 80); *The Indian Food Processing Industry* (Pp: x + 77. Price: Rs 80); *Reflections on Globalisation and to Becoming a Developed Country* (Pp: 81. Price: Rs 80). Authored by Noshir Sorabji Pochkhanawala and published in 1996 by Enespee Publications, Aban House, Ropewalk Lane, Kala Ghoda, Bombay 400023.

Noshir Sorabji Pochkhanawala, an industrial consultant who wrote and published *Zuzu and Others* ("Lessons from grandpa," Events and Personalities, *Parsiana*, January 1997) has now added five more arrows to his quiver, all shot by him from his eponymously-named publishing company, Enespee Publications, within the space of barely three months. The titles include two works of non-fiction, two stories dealing with interracial and intercommunal marriages, an anthology of six short stories, a compilation of two fantasies, over a dozen poems and a sprinkling of 72 'original' quotations (though a few are borrowed).

The books are a crystallization of thoughts and experiences of Pochkhanawala, now 78, during his long and active life, and include some of his earlier outpourings. For example, the poems in *Sounds of Thoughts* have been written by him over the years, and include one penned when he was only 18. However, though it would have helped, Pochkhanawala has not dated his literary works in this set of books published by him in late 1996.

Of the three works of fiction, *Mehta* or *They Dare to Love*, published with the shorter novella, *Sitara*, may be of greater interest to Parsi readers than the other two titles. The story covers three generations of an Indian family sent abroad for studies and relates, through a chain of letters flitting back and forth in time to the confusion of the alert (and not-so-alert) reader, the heartbreaks caused by the marriages or unrequited romances of the protagonists.

Sitara (Destiny of Stars) follows in the same strand, with an added generation. It tells of the desire for union of two Parsi families in the first generation which does not materialize. The tale then traverses through communal unions between their descendants involving Christian, Hindu and Muslim partners, culminating — predictably — in the union of the third generation descendants of the original couple

(yes, Pochkhanawala does provide a family tree to help the confused reader) who, through a process of intercommunal marriages are both Parsis (can they be so called?). Both the stories in this 131-page book provide ample food for thought, and though ponderous in style, contain some fine nuggets of wisdom.

Slimmer in size, though equally thought-provoking is Pochkhanawala's anthology, *Sounds of Thoughts* which questions through its tales a couple of taken-for-granted concepts. The book, through an 'autofutuography' and the short story *Good*



Pochkhanawala: questions values

Heavens prods the reader to think about reincarnation, debate on whether there is a power called destiny, and enquire if the mind is of any use at all. 'Autofutuography,' incidentally, is a word coined by Pochkhanawala for a tale told by a person envisaging his future. "This is the first autofutuography to be written," exclaims Pochkhanawala in his introduction, revealing in a new style of narration.

The 19 poems appended at the end of the two stories are rather uneven in quality, and alternate within a narrow choice of theme: love and death. One can sense that the poems are born of personal experience, and as Pochkhanawala himself writes, "How can they ever know/The sadness of another's woe." Yet, like in the stories, Pochkhanawala springs an occasional surprise with couplets that stay with the reader long after he has completed the book.

The third title, *Six Short Stories* is disappointing. There is an art to writing a short story, and Pochkhanawala clearly has to learn it. The tales, mostly concerned with interpretations of the law, are straight narrations in a style that scarcely merits a mention.

Pochkhanawala's two non-fiction works find him on stronger ground, though the books are of limited appeal. The two titles are mainly a compilation of Pochkhanawala's writings over the past 40 years, and conclude that India has not achieved much either in the food processing industry or in its endeavor to become a developed

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country.

Pochkhanawala should know; he was the co-founder with (the late) Dinshaw C. Dastur of the erstwhile D & P Products Limited, the pioneering food-processing company in the country, which manufactured a line of products (including Parsi *murambo*) under the brand of 'Dipy's Foods.' *The Indian Food Processing Industry* is a reproduction of articles in papers, journals and lectures delivered by Pochkhanawala from 1956 onwards, and

The books are a crystallization of Pochkhanawala's thoughts and experiences

invite the interested reader to judge from the facts put forth by him at the time of writing whether there has been any significant change in the industry. *Reflections on Globalisation and to Becoming a Developed Country* is in a similar mold a compilation of articles authored by Pochkhanawala down the years on scientific management, leadership, exports, integrated marketing, suggestions on some Union Budgets, and ways of becoming a developed country through privatization, globalization, curbing black money, etc. Both these titles provide an interesting glimpse of the economic history of the country, irrespective of whether one agrees with Pochkhanawala's interpretations or not.

Though all the five books are neatly produced, they suffer from extremely poor proof-reading. Examples abound, and a few lead to unconscious humor as well. A quotation by Pochkhanawala says: "Every one needs a confident. At least one." Surely, the author meant confident. Again, in another title, a tale ends with the expression "hopping for." It leaves the reader hoping for greater attention. The books could have also done with the services of an editor, whose blue pencil would have made the texts crisper and more readable.

But though Pochkhanawala wields a pedantic and prosaic pen, breaking no fresh ground in style and syntax, his work deserves to be read for his sincerity in questioning societal values.



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MILESTONES

This issue of *Parsiana* presents data for the months of July and August 1997.

Also included here are intercommunity marriages registered both at the Old Customs House and at the MHADA office in Bandra (East) for the nine-month period of August 1996 to April 1997. Civil marriages between Zoroastrians have also been listed. However, names that could not be confirmed as Zoroastrian have been omitted from the list.

There were 44 intercommunity marriages plus eight civil marriages between Zoroastrians registered at the Old Customs House and 28 and one, respectively, at the MHADA office.

A scanning of the Chandanwadi crematorium registers revealed the names of 12 Zoroastrians cremated between July 1996 to August 1997.

The age of Zoroastrian brides — as listed in this issue — ranged between 19 and 39 years, the arithmetic mean (the total number of individual ages divided by the total number of brides) being 29 years. The corresponding figures for the grooms were 29 and 42 years, averaging at 33 years.

Compared to 30 babies born in Bombay in July and August, there

were 171 deaths. Heart disease remains the major killer, claiming 57 lives of whom 35 were 80 years and above. Twenty-one Zoroastrians succumbed to pneumonia and lung related diseases, while 18 fell prey to the killer disease, cancer. Hypertension and brain disease took a toll of eight lives each, old age and general debility, seven and liver disease, six. The other killers were septicemia and anemia (five each), asthma (four), bronchitis, head injury, kidney failure, diabetes and hepatic encephalopathy (three each) and haematemesis (vomiting of blood) and Parkinson's disease (two each). The 12 isolated cases registered for the two-month period were: respiratory infection, tuberculosis, dementia (being out of one's mind), asphyxia (suffocation) due to drowning, hypertrophy (increase in the size of tissues), hyperpyrexia (where the body temperature is above 105° F), ulcer, hydrocephalus (an excess of cerebrospinal fluid inside the skull), dehydration, gastro-intestinal bleeding, hemiplegia (paralysis of one side of the body) and arteriosclerosis (degenerative arterial change associated with advancing age). In the case of one death the coroner's report was still pending. The age range

fluctuated between 36 and 99 years. The Zoroastrian life expectancy at birth, in Bombay for the two-month period, was 78 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.

Chatterjee; October 3
Monica Kothawala and Cyrus Chinoy; October 18
Swati Patankar and Sorab Nariman Dalal; October 18
Diana Burjor Minbatiwala and Neville Nani Desai; October 22
Nila Dave and Zarir Langrana; October 22
Bindu Ram Sippy and Sharookh Rohinton Irani; October 25
Rukshana Dinshaw Bacha and Anil Rambhai Patel; November 4
Arwa Zain Karachiwala and Cyrus Keki Jasavala; November 16
Dhru T. Khareghat and Aditya Nath Wanchoo; November 18
Shirin R. Sasani and Manish M. Chaturvedi; November 21
Kavita Tarun Guha and Kaikhushroo Firoze Colaabavala; November 21
Shirin Hormusji Wadia and Sanjay Ramkrishna Inamdar; November 21
Jenobia Adi Doctor and Vivek Haridev Bhargava; November 22
Anita Pinto and Neville Kaikhushroo Mistry; November 22
Kashmira Naval Patel and Hatim Hamza Mithibariwala; November 22
Gulnar Adil Bodhanwala and Satish Parshuram Desai; November 23
Rubina Rehman and Farrokh Dadi Mistry; November 25
Preeti R. Menon and Homiyar F. Mistry; November 25
Tushna Masani and Naresh Srinivasan; November 25
Anahita Marazban Shapoorjee and Rajesh Arvind Varma; November 25
Evan Albert Menezes and Dinyar Savak Mistry; November 28
Sheetal Gangadhar Phaterpekar and Viraf Rustom Daruwalla; November 30
Dilshad M. Vachha and Rukhsad Tehmtan Shroff; December 1
Deepa Pratap Parekh and Rohinton Jehangir Variava; December 4
Preeti Bhatia and Jal S. Irani; December 6
Neelambika D. Kulkarni and Kerman K. Kasad; December 6
Zeba Aftab Merchant and Farhad Daresh Nanavaty; December 14

BANGALORE

DIED

Noshir Navroji Dastur (85) on June 12, 1997

BOMBAY

BORN

A girl to Naznin and Mehernosh Daruwalla; April 6
A boy to Firozi and Gev Italia; July 1
A girl, Binaifer, to Zarin and Yazdi Chinoy, sister to Meher; July 2
A boy to Senaz and Beree Damkewala; July 6
A boy to Farida and Mehernosh Billimoria; July 7
A girl, Vahishta, to Shiraz and Vispy Kapadia, sister to Fareena and Sanaya; July 7
A girl to Mahzarin and Rohinton Wadia; July 21
A boy to Hufrih and Behram Nagporwala; July 26
A girl, Aleeza, to Kerban and Mahernosh Humranwala; July 28
A girl to Dinaz and Merzy Patel;

July 28

A girl to Mahtab and Darayus Chhapkhanawala; August 1
A girl to Prochie and Adil Dorabjee; August 6
A boy, Merzaan, to Shiraaz and Yasdaan Fulwadiwala; August 6
A girl to Binaifer and Hoshang Nazir; August 6
A girl to Naheed and Rushed Divecha; August 8
A girl to Aban and Mehernosh Dhamodiwala; August 11
A boy to Persis and Surendra Sharma; August 14
A girl, Freeda, to Ferozi and Kersi Bhikhaji; August 15
A girl to Simen and Cyrus Oshidar; August 15
A girl to Firuzi and Nawzar Satarawala; August 15
A girl to Perizad and Phiroze Dalal; August 16
A girl to Goolshan and Kersi Makhania; August 16
A boy to Kerman and Sandeep Sen; August 18
A boy to Zinobia and Maneck Mody; August 21

A girl to Binaifer and Sharukh Mandroina; August 23
A boy to Pervin and Keki Surti; August 24
A girl to Meher and Mehernosh Contractor; August 25
A boy to Zarin and Burzin Irani; August 25
A boy to Hufrih and Karl Dadrevala; August 27
A boy to Farida and Bomi Gandhi; August 28
A boy to Maneck and Hemanshu Thakkar; August 29

MARRIED

Arnavaz Burjorji Tantra and Noshir Framroz Charna; August 2, 1996
Vinita Inderjit Anand and Jal Farrokh Bhagwagar; August 5
Benni D'Souza and Vispy Homi Bamboat; August 17
Binaifer Wadia and Shridhar Sethuram; September 15
Tanaz Minoo Master and Salim Shahbuddin Bhimani; September 24
Piroja S. Keshwala and Bhaskar

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 Amy Dushyant Shah and Farzad Sorabji Billimoria; January 2, 1997
 Bakhtavar Khushru Chhayela and Husheder Phiroze Dariwalla; January 2
 Neela Suresh Potkar and Firoze Minoo Engineer; January 2
 Tannaz Fareedoon Zandbuf and Murtaza Kasim Merchant; January 3
 Simone Tony Martin and Rohinton Zarir Musa; January 3
 Fiona Anslem D'Silva and Pervez Tehmuras Andhyarujina; January 4
 Villo Adi Karanjia and Dilawar Hasan Dalwani; January 4
 Jerroo Shapur Dalal and Pierre Ervell Menezes; January 5
 Shaheen M. Mistri and Santosh R. Kumar; January 11
 Siminda Madhukar Keni and Firdosh Soli Bhesania; January 13

Mani Ardeshir Vesuna and Farrokh Keki Siganporia; January 16
 Shireen Hoshang Desai and Saikat Chakravarty; January 17
 Tanya Adi Godrej and Arvind Darab Dubash; January 19
 Viloo Dara Buchia and Amar Sinhi; January 23
 Angelina Yvonne Correia and Ardeshir Framroze Billimoria; January 24
 Pearl Mehernosh Hodiwala and Anand Shrilaxman Mehta; January 25
 Fahmida Saifulla and Harshan Faramroze Wadia; January 29
 Rashna Cawas Marfatia and Tushar Prakash Mangalorelech; February 1
 Kristyl Pais and Adil Bhesania; February 1
 Shiraz Minoo Chemi and Glen Trevor D'Mello; February 4
 Sheena Homi Dastur and Pavan Buragohain; February 6
 Niloufer Dinyar Mehta and Rahul Subhash Joshi; February 6
 Priscilla Rosario Barco and Homiyar Farrokh Contractor; February 11
 Sherene Viccajee and Ashwin Pavan; February 11

Preeti Kumar and Hoshang Mehta; February 13
 Kainaz Hosi Bharucha and Rajat A. Cowasjee; February 14
 Sharmistha Ashok Banarjee and Bakhtiar Behram Irani; February 14
 Kamal Vijay Aggarwal and Ashish Adi Ragdiwala; February 14
 Tulika J. Chanana and Vistaspa D. Patel; February 20
 Kashmiri Baji Khambata and Joji Mathew; February 25
 Tanaz Eruch Marshall and Ashok V. Vemuri; February 28
 Yasmin I. Chichkar and Narayan G. S.; March 14
 Kaiiummy Rohinton Khadiwala and Francis Kersi Mistry; March 17
 Karion Jinhof and Neveille Bhangara; March 21
 Monica Chandras Bhagat and Karl Jehangir Patel; March 27
 Nooshin Azadi and Rostam Sabeti; March 27
 Anuradha A. Paranjpe and Dinshaw Todywala; March 31
 Nelly Dara Daver and Rafiq Yusuf Mohamad; April 3
 Kashmiri Batiwala and Robert Lobo; April 7

Nisha Ravindran and Yezdi S. Vesuna; April 10
 Charmaine Saldhana and Rohinton S. Pochkhanavala; April 18
 Chetna Navinchandra Parekh and Mehli Pheroze Mehta; April 19
 Farida Bashir Mulani and Ruzbe Rusi Mistry; April 21
 Dina Hajarilal Cachera and Cyrus Gustad Irani; April 25
 Delnaz Sam Toddywalla and Abdul Aziz Shaikh; April 30
 Pearl Jimmy Adajania and Darayas Dhanjishaw Mistry of Deolali; June 1
 Varnan Kersi Palkhiwalla and Nauzer Jehangir Balsara; August 22
 Seema Shahbheham Amooyan and Firdaus Jamshed Namirani of Australia; August 26

DIED
 Sorab (Bobby) Kaikhushroo Kooka (83), residing at Southlands, 177, Colaba Rd, 400005; July 3, 1996 (cremated)
 Minocher Pestanji (86), Char Bldg, Grant Rd, 400007; August 2 (cremated)
 Roda Keki Cooper (80), 16,

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Pilla Noshir Masani (55), 23, Gulmanor, 8, Strand Rd, Colaba, 400005; December 22 (cremated)
Noshir Dorab Forbes (75), 201, Shivala Khatau Rd, Off Cuffe Parade, 400005; February 15, 1997 (cremated)
Piloo Bahmansha Poonegar (80), High Peak Apts, S. V. Rd, Bandra (W), 400050; March 14 (cremated)
Dolat Tehmuras Elavia (82), 51, Panday Sanatorium, Wodehouse Rd, Colaba, 400005; March 22 (cremated)
Pheroza Nusserwanji Seervai (88), 3, Cozy Bldg, Gowalia Tank Rd, 400036; March 28 (cremated)
Adi Phiroze Pestonjamas (41), 112, El Cid, Malabar Hill, 400006; June 1 (cremated)
Jamshyd Savaksha Khargumvala (79), 103, Atur Ter, Cuffe Parade, 400005; June 27 (cremated)
Amy Sheryar Ookerjee (76), 121, Pushpak Apts, 31, Altamount Rd, 400026; June 27

(cremated)
Sorabji Jamsaji Gandevia (92), 695, Dr Dinshaw Master Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; July 1
Viloo Homi Dastur (84), 10, Nagin Mhl, Veer Nariman Rd, 400020; July 2
Piroja Ardeshir Ghadiali (86), E/20, Rustom Baug, Victoria Rd, Byculla, 400027; July 2
Khorshed Ratanshaw Mody (87), Petit Bldg no 2, Balaram St, Grant Rd, 400007; July 2
Gool Jamshedji Tata (65), 3/3, A. H. Wadia Baug, Parel Tank Rd, 400033; July 2
Gool Rustom Aga (87), 81, Dev Chaaya, Haji Ali, 400034; July 3
Piloo Rustom Antia (73), Sethna Bhabha Bldg, Banaji Atash Behram Compd, Charni Rd, 400004; July 3
Ratty Jehangir Jalnawalla (88), 583, Vipin Villa, Jame Jamshed Rd, Matunga, 400019; July 3
Jhangir Jamshedji Engineer (96), Jyoti Mhl, Naushir Bharucha Marg, 400007; July 4
Rustom Hormuz Irani (62), Ambawadi Bglw, Matarpakadi Cross Lane, Mazgaon, 400010; July 4

Piloo Cawas Lord (84), All Saints Home (Hostel), Dockyard Rd, Mazgaon, 400010; July 4
Shera Phiroze Rana (91), D-1, Palm Springs, 104, Cuffe Parade, 400005; July 4
Sheru Phiroze Vakharia (75), Sheru Hse, Gunbow St, 400001; July 4
Deena Ahmadullah (89), 12, Pankaj Mhl, Churchgate Recl, 400020; July 5 (cremated)
Behram Darasha Goregamwalla (67), Minerva Mans, Near Super Cinema, Grant Rd, 400007; July 5
Hormusji Jehangirji Randelia (87), Toddywalla Chawl, Lower Parel, 400013; July 5
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411014; July 8
Jamshed Sheriar Kermani (Irani) (79), Dina Bldg, Balaram St, Grant Rd, 400007; July 9
Sapal Framroz Printer (91), Maudstan, 194, D'Monte Park Rd, Bandra, 400050; July 9
Aspandiar Boman Irani (75), 11, Anil Bhavan, Parel T.T., 400012; July 10
Virbai (Vabiz) Kaikhushroo Irani (Kalamtari) (92), Ibrahim Mans, Jamshedji Petit St, 400007; July 10
Khorshed Pestonji Javat (70), 1, Battery Hse, B. Desai Rd, 400026; July 10
Piroja Minocher Karkaria (82), 764-D, Meherbai Wadia Bldg, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; July 10
Adi Ratanji Bavan (85), Dadiseth Atash Behram Compd, Dadiseth Agiary Lane, 400002; July 11
Bahadur Jehangir Bilimoria (65), Room no 13, Batata Chawl, Pathe Bapurao Marg, 400008; July 11
Khushroo Rustam Joshi (65), 762, Ahura, M. Joshi Rd, Parsi Clny, 400014; July 11
Pali Ardeshir Burjorji (65), 8/8, Jorawar Bhawan, 93, Queens Rd,

400020; July 12
Nargesh Jamshed Ghandhi (88), 43, Sneh Sadan, Opp Colaba P.O., 400005; July 12
Marzban Hirjibhoy Gorimar (77), Marine Mans, 1st Marine St, Marine Lines, 400002; July 12
Jal Ardeshir Patel (82), 44/A, Batliwalla Villa, Sleater Rd, 400007; July 12
Feroz Kaikhushroo Sethna (90), 2B/37, Tata Mills Co-op Hsg Soc, Elphinstone Rd, Parel, 400012; July 12
Dhun Minoo Talati (86), 11/9, Rustom Baug, Victoria Rd, Byculla, 400027; July 12
Tehmi Rustamji Wadia (68), Room no 11/A, 816, Mistry Bldg (Widows' Chawl), Jame Jamshed Rd, Parsi Clny Dadar, 400014; July 13
Limji Cooverji Bilimoria (94), 725, Khurshed Mhl, Dr D. Master Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; July 14
Sehroo Phiroze Billimoria (79), Sorab Manor, 6, Walton Rd, Apollo Recl, 400039; July 14
Pirojbai Rustumji Mulla (95), Nariman Bldg, M. Karve Rd, 400020; July 14
Katy Nari Tantra (70), 302,

Jane's Lodge, 39, Caesar Rd, Amboli, Andheri (W), 400058; July 14
Shahpoor Aspendiar Irani (63), 61/B, Heera Panna, Haji Ali, 400026; July 15
Mehera Sorabji Pavri (88), Heera Meher, 12/A, Wodehouse Rd, Colaba, 400005; July 15
Tehmina Bhikhsaji Billimoria (86), B. Satyabhama Nivas, Kashinath St, Tardeo, 400034; July 16
Zaver Dinshaw Oomrigar (86), Bharucha Bldg, 228, Nanubhai Desai Rd, Khetwadi 12th Lane, 400004; July 16
Khorshed Minocher Sethna (81), 3/22, A. H. Wadia Baug, Parel Tank Rd, 400033; July 16
Rutty Jal Daji (80), 601, Chandan Co-op Hsg Soc Ltd, Dadabhai Cross Rd no 3, Vile Parle (W), 400056; July 17
Shera Rustom Vasavevala (87), Gustad Mans, 224, J. Dadajee Rd, 400007; July 17
Dadi Pallonji Ichhaporia (76), 14, Khareghat Clny, Hughes Rd, 400007; July 18
Feroze Rustomji Khambatta (72), F. S. Parukh Dharamshalla, Hughes Rd, 400007; July 19
Manijeh Eruchsha Bharucha

(91), 1-A/30, Tata Mills Co-op Hsg Soc, Elphinstone Rd, Parel, 400012; July 20
Khorshed Minoo Bulsara (69), 607/B, Sohrab Hse, Khareghat Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; July 20
Burjor Bomanji Ichaporja (87), Shroff Hse, 42, Sleater Rd, 400007; July 20
Dhun Keki Jabbar (76), 33, Noor Mhl, Sir Ratan Tata Rd, Tardeo, 400034; July 20
Meheroo Rustomji Mobedjina (87), F. S. Parukh Dharamshalla, Hughes Rd, 400007; July 22
Pessy Burjorji Asha (81), Room no 11, Jassawalla Wadi, Opp Firoz Khan's Bglw, Juhu, 400049; July 23
Homi Sorabji Bharucha (83), Room no 2, Pandit Mans, Balaram St, Grant Rd, 400007; July 23
Jerbai Ratanshaw Dubash (91), 4/3, Sir Ratan Tata Bldg, S. V. Rd, Bandra, 400050; July 23
Jimmy Cawasji Patel (59), G/8, Nowroz Baug, Lalbaug, 400012; July 23
Sarah Navroji Cooper (94), 16, Banaji St, Fort, 400001; July 24
Jamshed Sorabji Dick (77), 618, Jami Lodge, Jame Jamshed Rd,

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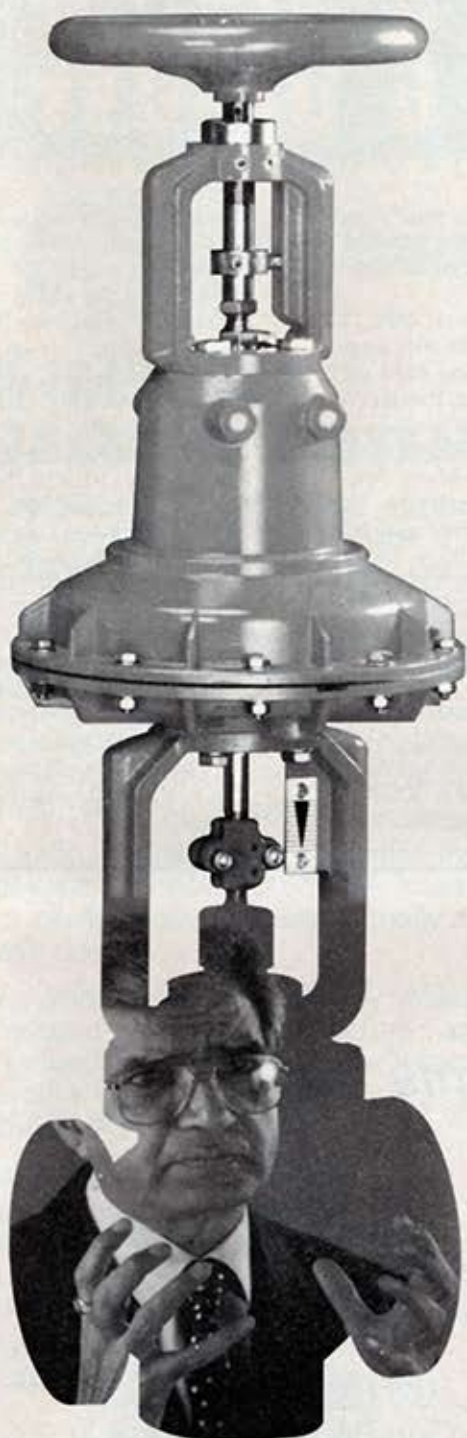
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Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014;
 July 24
Freny Dara Panthaki (60), 595,
 J.S.S. Rd, 400002; July 24
Khurshed Dinshawji Bahadurji
 (72), 32-B, Sterling Apts, 38,
 Pedder Rd, 400026; July 25
Phiroze Rustomji Billimoria
 (85), Sorab Manor, 6, Walton
 Rd, Apollo Recl, 400039;
 July 25
Sawak Jehangir Hataria (69),
 C/o Rati S. Batliboi, Hardinge
 Hse, Gowalia Tank, 400036;
 July 25
Adi Framroze Mistry (50),
 Virar (W), Dist Thana, 401303;
 July 25
Dhunjishaw Dossabhai Patel
 (88), 8/4, Shroff Bldg, Gamadia
 Clny, Tardeo, 400007; July 25
Gulbanu Jehangir Sukhia (97),
 Rambha, 66, Nepean Sea Rd,
 400006; July 25
Dossan Ardeshir Wadia (73),
 A/603, Nirman Palace, Pump
 Hse, Andheri (E), 400093;
 July 25
Nergesh Khurshed Dady (80),
 Monte Rosa, 141, E. Dadyseth
 Hill, A. K. Marg, 400036;
 July 26
Nariman Sorabji Dalal (61), 3,
 Jamasp Tata Block, 38th Rd,

Bandra (W), 400050; July 26
Erach Framroz Fouzdar (69), 7,
 Albless Bldg, Banaji Atash
 Behram Compd, 400002; July 26
Alamai Keki Gotla (75), C/o
 650, Karani Bldg, Firdausi Rd,
 Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014;
 July 26
Aloo Dorabji Poonji (72),
 Master Chmbs, Cinema Rd,
 400020; July 26
Coomi Kaikhushroo Hodiwalla
 (82), F. S. Parukh Dharamshalla,
 34, Hughes Rd, 400007; July 27
Motibai Aspandiar Irani (75),
 D-2/52, S. B. Bharucha Baug,
 S. V. Rd, Andheri (W), 400058;
 July 27
Homi Jehangirji Daruwalla (48),
 Room no 11, 347-U, United
 Chmbs, Charni Rd Jn, Grant Rd,
 400007; July 28
Daulat Pirojshaw Irani (75),
 205, Petit Widows' Chawl,
 Thakurdwar, 400004; July 29
Tehmina Nadirshaw Panthaki
 (77), 5/7, Old Khareghat Clny,
 Hughes Rd, 400007; July 29
Jerbai Minocher Zaveri (83), 22,
 Wadia St, Tardeo, 400034;
 July 30
Noshir Jalejar Daruwalla (66),
 Room no 15, Hormuz Baug
 Bldg, Kashinath Rd, Tardeo,

400034; July 31
Minoo Burjorji Mukadam (84),
 695, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014;
 July 31
Rustomji Cawas Antia (88), 4/A,
 Attar Apts, Manvel Pada Rd,
 Virar (E), 401303; August 1
Bana Fali Bilimoria (80), J-10,
 Cusrow Baug, S. B. Rd, 400039;
 August 1
Dhanjishaw Hormusji Chothia
 (72), 586, Pochee Hse, Chira
 Bazar, Kalbadevi, 400002;
 August 3
Jer Janshed Desai (95), 33,
 Marzban Rd, 400001; August 3
Goolbai Behramji Irani (90),
 59-C, Bazar Rd, Bandra (W),
 400050; August 3
Naju Rustomji Mehta (77), 51,
 Manish Ngr, Andheri (W),
 400058; August 3
Khurshed Rutton Bharucha (75),
 A/19, Rustom Baug, Victoria
 Rd, Byculla, 400027; August 4
Pervez Navroji Bhathena (46),
 X-106/5, Godrej Clny, Vikhroli
 (E), 400079; August 4
Gooloo Bapuji Bilimoria (88),
 Rati Villa, Motibai St, Tardeo,
 400007; August 4
Shirinbai Manekshaw Kharas
 (90), C/o Yazdi N. Kharas, A-2,
 Parag Co-op Hsg Soc, Rajaram

Tawade Marg, Dahisar (W),
 400068; August 4
Banoo Behramji Makihatana
 (83), 5-11, A. H. Wadia Baug,
 Parel Tank Rd, 400033;
 August 4
Khurshed Minocher Damania
 (75), 22-C, Sea Breeze Apts,
 Bullock Rd, Bandra, 400050;
 August 5
Jamshed Dorabji Engineer (92),
 12, Moonlight, 158, M. Karve
 Rd, 400020; August 5
Kekobad Sorabji Magra (75),
 11/31, Sion Mans, Sion (W),
 400022; August 5
Alamai Munchershaw Cama
 (92), 1/9, Patel Bldg, Gamadia
 Clny, Tardeo, 400007; August 6
Rohinton Ardeshir Cama (71),
 Hemdev Hse, 50, N. S. Patkar
 Marg, 400007; August 8
Ardeshir Kaikobad Dastoor (72),
 Dastoor St, Iranshah Rd,
 Udvarda, Dist Valsad, Gujarat,
 396180; August 8
Peshotan Munchersha
Olpadwalla (60), 4, Menuna
 Villa, Matarpakhady Lane,
 Mazgaon, 400010; August 8
Shirin Sorabji Daroowala (81),
 103, Zarina Co-op Service Soc
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 August 9

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Meherji Hormusji Pagdiwalla (93), G-1, S. B. Bharucha Baug, S. V. Rd, Andheri (W), 400058; August 9
Gool Savak Oonvala (80), 12, Soonaiji Mans, Gowalia Tank, 400036; August 10
Kersi Keki Bhathena (45), D-1/53, S. B. Bharucha Baug, S. V. Rd, Andheri (W), 400058; August 11
Nergish Homi Billimoria (81), 635, Munsif Bldg, M. Joshi Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; August 11
Fareedoon Darabshah Mehta (78), 38, Dubash Hse, Walchand Hirachand Marg, Fort, 400001; August 11
Rutton Kaikobad Kotwal (81), 522-C, Edenwala Rd, Matunga, 400019; August 12
Sheroo Sorabji Daruwala (76), 22/C, United Chmbs, M. Shaukatali Rd, 400007; August 13
Soli Ardeshtir Bhagwagar (63), F/2, Mody Bldg, Captain Clny, Haji Ali, Tardeo, 400034; August 14
Khurshed Hormusji Kapadia (78), Parkar Nivas, Ramshan J. Shalgaonkar Rd, 400005; August 14
Jal Jehangir Unwalla (96), Roda

Bldg, Nana Chowk, 400007; August 15
Maneck Edi Wadia (52), Mohamadhbhai Mans, 7, N. S. Patkar Marg, 400036; August 15
Dhruv Furrokh Doctor (92), 803-C, Dr B. Ambedkar Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; August 16
Pesi Dadabhai Hodiwalla (85), 2/A, Yusuf Mans, Khetwadi Back Rd, 400004; August 16
Kaiyos Tehmurasp Marfatia (62), 10/33, Shiv Sagar, Worli Hill Rd, 400018; August 16
Amy Rustomji Pardiwalla (67), 5/11, Tata Blocks, Tardeo, 400034; August 16
Merwan Sheriar Shellangi (59), Thorat Bldg, Katrap Rd, Badlapur (E), Dist Kulgaoon, Thane, 421503; August 16
Dinshaw Fakirjee Bhagat (69), 14/10, Panthaki Baug, Sir M. V. Road, Andheri (E), 400069; August 17
Roshan Dorabji Dadademery (80), 5/13, Khan Est, M. M. C. Rd, Mahim, 400016; August 17
Dinshaw Eruchshaw Driver (84), 146-B, Patel Bldg, N. M. Joshi Marg, Lower Parel, 400013; August 17

Dosabhai Pirojshaw Mirza (76), H/9, Nowroz Baug, Lalbaug, 400012; August 17
Bukhtawar Barjor Bhathena (82), B-41, Bina Apts, Sir M. V. Rd, Andheri (E), 400069; August 18
Cooverbai Navroji Bilikaka (Bharda) (89), C/o 21, Doctor Bldg, S. B. Bharucha Baug, Andheri (W), 400058; August 18
Shirinbai Khurshedji Doongaji (99), 72, Mistry Park, 77, Bhulabhai Desai Rd, 400036; August 18
Soly Darasha Sethna (78), 6/79, Jehangir Mans, Hughes Rd, 400007; August 18
Homi Jehangir Unwalla (61), 640/A, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; August 18
Firdosh Hoshang Irani (36), C/o Room no 15, Petit Widows' Chawl, 133, Mody St, Fort, 400001; August 19
Behram Rustom Ratestari (94), 17/51, Contractor Bldg, Byculla, 400027; August 19
Freny Padam Aga (92), 607-B, Sohrab Hse, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; August 20
Dhanjisha Navroji Bhathena (70), 6, Chaitanya, B. D. Rd, Wadala (E), 400037; August 20

Peshotan Manchershah Desai (92), Mino Meher, 22, Union Park, Khar (W), 400052; August 20
Freny Kaikee Kharas (70), B/3, Gowalia Tank Bldg, A. K. Marg, 400036; August 20
Nergesh Minocher Bhandari (75), 14, Bhandari Bldg, Wadia St, Tardeo, 400034; August 21
Homi M. Driver (75), 5/B, Bhabha Sanatorium, Bandstand, Bandra, 400050; August 22
Marzban Jamasp Gandhi (51), D/42, Cusrow Baug, S. B. Rd, 400039; August 22
Dara Rustomji Mistry (70), 406, Om Mangal Murthy, Sector 6, Airoli, New Bombay, 400708; August 22
Mehroo Manek Patel (73), Fakhri Manzil, Shankerseth Rd, Grant Rd (W), 400007; August 22
Hormasji Rustomji Katila (83), 1/J, M. K. Tarachand Bldg, Captain Clny, Tardeo, 400034; August 23
Aimiy N. Pandole (81), Silverene, 63, Worli Parade, Worli, 400018; August 23
Pestonji Ramjibhai Ravtewala (84), 760, Soban Bhavan, Jehangir Vimadlal Rd, Parsi



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Clny, Dadar, 400014; August 23
Noshirwan (Noshir) Bejonji Kasad (63), 63, K Bldg, Walchand Hirachand Marg, 400001; August 24
Ardeshtir Manekji Nazir (86), 5, Raza Complex, Custom Rd, Trombay, 400058; August 24
Koovar Cowasji Vajifdar (73), 49, Valentina, Naorji Gamadia Rd, 400026; August 24
Tehmina Kekobad Vakil (90), Albless Dispensary Bldg, Marzban Clny, Gilder Lane, Lamington Rd, 400008; August 24
Firoz Hormasji Cooper (80), A, Empire Ter, Lamington Cross Rd, 400007; August 25
Sheroo Eruch Guard (81), Gangadevi Bhavan, Uranwalla St, Grant Rd, 400007; August 25
Soona Sheriyar Tadwalla (79), Golwalla Bldg, 8th Khetwadi Lane, 400004; August 25
Gool Sorab Ardeshtir (78), 7, Colaba Chmbs, 117, Wodehouse Rd, 400005; August 26
Bapai Faridoon Bharucha (87), Homestead, 6, Kashibai Navrange Marg, 400007; August 26
Coomi Rattanshaw Chavda (73), Room no 9, Hongkongwalla Cooper Chawl, 9th lane, Back

Rd, Khetwadi, 400004; August 27
Nadirsha Nusserwanji Engineer (92), 10, Florencia, 299, Off Turner Rd, Bandra (W), 400050; August 27
Minoo Jamshedji Rabadi (80), 16/6, Rustom Baug, Victoria Rd, Byculla, 400027; August 27
Mehroo Tehmurasji Irani (78), 668, Desai Bldg, Katrak Rd, Wadala, 400031; August 28
Gool Noshir Madan (72), 46, Jamsaji Apt, 32, Sleater Rd, 400007; August 28
Faramroze Ratanji Patel (74), Room no 5, Najoo Mans, Nawab Tank Rd, 400010; August 28
Minu Cawasji Avari (78), 4/11, Tata Clny, Tardeo, 400034; August 29
Fram Dhunjishaw Gazdar (92), Gazdar Hse, 45, Bhulabhai Desai Rd, 400026; August 29
Jal Cawashaw Paymaster (89), 121, Brijkutir, Rungta Lane, Nepean Sea Rd, 400006; August 29
Perin Maneckshaw Dhanbhoora (83), Room no 44, 66/K, Soonaiji Mans, Gowalia Tank Rd, 400036; August 30
Deena Ardeshtir Kaka (90), 54,

Venus Apt, 40, Cuffe Parade, 400005; August 30
Minocher Jamshedji Patel (85), Room no 14, 17/B, Rustom Baug, Victoria Rd, Byculla, 400027; August 30
Gool Pesi Karkaria (74), 61, Amit, Murari Ghag Marg, Prabhadevi, 400025; August 31

CALCUTTA

DIED

Dara Framroze Modi, father of Khorshed Phiroze Modi; July 5
Sakar Munchershaw Bhesania, mother of Phiroze, Khorshed Boman Bhathena and Perin Pheroze Contractor; July 13
Jer Victor Viccajee, mother of Roshan Gazdar and Shernavaz Bhesania; August 15
Khorshed Homi Hiranek, mother of Shahrukh, Armaiti, Minoo, Khushrau, Meher and late Mani; August 28

DELHI

BORN

A girl, *Kashmira*, to *Veera* and *Cyrus Patel*; February 16

POONA

DIED

Ratan Pestonji Mody (76), 5, Dr

Coyaji Rd, 411001; June 30
Bhikhamai Maneckshaw Karkaria (86), 34, Universal Apts, East St, 411001; July 13
Nozar Hormazji Homji (85), 8, Mangaldas Rd, 411001; July 18
Faramroze Burjorji Damania (97), 4, Bhatnagar Gardens, 60/61, Sahyadri Park, Salunke Vihar, 411048; July 25

SURAT

DIED

Nariman Barjorji Dustur (71), Lal Gate, 395003; July 10
Jarbanoo Jamshedji Katpitia (82), Machlipith, 395003; July 13
Bakhtawar Kawsaji Mehta (48), Nanpura, 395001; July 16
Firoshjsha Kharshadi Mehta (93), Parsiwad, Rander, Dist Surat, 395005; July 17
Dinamai Kawsaji Laskari (75), Nanpura, 395001; July 30
Barjorji Bajanji Patalwala (69), Parsiwad, Siganpore; August 1
Dinamai Nasarwanji Ghadiyali (82), Rustompura, 395002; August 5
Barjor Maneckshaw Ankleshwari (62), Nariman Home and Infirmary, Shahpore, 395003; August 7
Dinshaji Kawsaji Bhathna (65),

CORRECTION

In "Two Zoroastrian sites" (Events and Personalities, *Parsiana*, April 1997), we have erred on the website address for Parsi Favorite Recipes. The correct address is: <http://www.ultranet.com/~kapadia/cooking.htm>
 The error is regretted.

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Bombay 400038

Zoroastrian Soc, Near Umra
Police Stn, 395003; August 8
Hormasji Dhanjisha Patvi (88),
Wanki Bordi, Sayedpura,
395003; August 13
Kaikhushroo Edalji Elavia (78),
Aganovad, Sayedpura, 395003;
August 18
Shavaksha Hormasji Siganporia
(75), Nanpura, 395001;
August 24
Dhanjisha Sorabji Baria (72),
Nanpura, 395001; August 26

AUSTRALIA

Adelaide

BORN

A boy, *Rushad*, to *Taina* and
Timmy Pavri, brother to *Priya*
and *Darien*; July 14

CANADA

Ontario

BORN

A boy, *Jonathan*, to *Lilly* and
Terry Creamer, brother to
Crystal; August 14

MARRIED

Riah Wadia, daughter of *Roshen*
and *Nani*, and *Shahrourkh*
Sidhwa, son of *Dinoo* and *Bejan*;
August 3

Montreal

MARRIED

Aurelio Useche and *Leena*
Lakdawala, son of *Roshan* and
Ness; June 28

Richmond, British Columbia

MARRIED

Vera Pfirsching, daughter of
Ruth and *Hans*, and *Cyrus*
Billimoria, son of *Francy* and
Dhun; August 16

Toronto

DIED

Ebrahim Dadabhai, husband of
Aloo and father of *Ferhana* and
Farhad; May 3
Amy Jal Dotiwalla, mother of
Rumi, *Pheroze* and *Zubin*;
July 17

OMAN

Muscat

BORN

A boy, *Varun*, to *Deenaz* and
Gautam Ahuja; March 2

PAKISTAN

Karachi

BORN

A girl, *Faranaz*, to *Meher* and
Maneck Solen; July 18

USA

Champaign, Illinois

BORN

A boy, *Rayomand*, to *Mr* and
Mrs Kaizad Irani; May 1

Chicago

BORN

A boy, *Danny*, to *Parveen* and
Marzban Ogra; October 1, 1996
A girl, *Shireen*, to *Homa* and
Bahman Abesteh; May 5, 1997
A boy, *Sherzad*, to *Bakhtawar*
and *Cyrus Press*, brother to
Carmin; May 28

Clinton, Iowa

BORN

Twins (boy and girl), *Cyrus*
Xerxes and *Avan Navaz*, to
Judith and *Xerxes Colah*;
May 6

Dallas

BORN

A boy, *Farsos*, to *Ruby*
and *Yazdi Bulsara*;
December 12, 1996

Florida

MARRIED

Jasmine Unwalla of *Boca Raton*,
Florida, daughter of *Nelly* and

Dorab, and *Rustom Deboo* of
Michigan; May 26, 1997

DIED

Manijeh Hoshang Nusserwanji
(84), mother of *Arnavaz* and
Nariman; May 20

Hainesville, Illinois

BORN

A girl, *Yazmin*, to *Delnaz* and
Eric Rustomji; January 30

Houston

BORN

A boy, *Zarir*, to *Zarin* and *Vispi*
Dumasia; May 31
A boy, *Kyle Mehernosh*, to
Vanessa and *David Jensen*;
August 24

MARRIED

Sharmeen Baria and *Percy*
Master of *Wichita*; April 19

DIED

Jehangir S. Cama, husband of
Roshan and father of *Cyrus*,
Karl, *Sharoan* and *Farish*;
May 16
Minoo Kaikhushroo Sethna,
husband of *Silloo* and father of
Pervez; July 12



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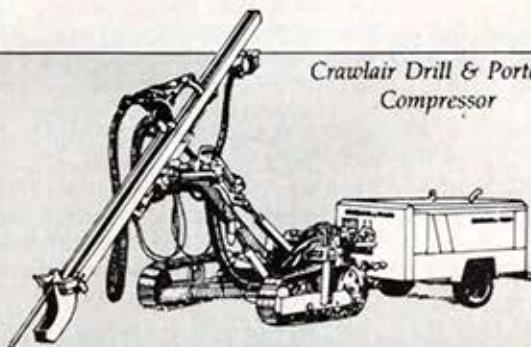
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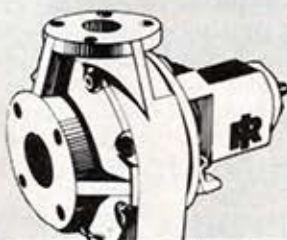
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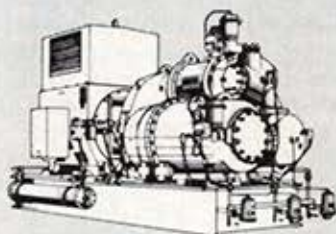
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King of Prussia, Philadelphia

DIED

Darius Minocher Dadachanji
(54), husband of Diana and
father of Minocher; May 3

Los Angeles

DIED

Soltan Shah Bahram
Sorooshyari, mother of
Kiomarzi; March 29

Mountain View, California

BORN

A girl, *Amy Serena*, to *Persis*
and *Sorab Vatcha*; June 9

New York

BORN

A girl, *Farah*, to *Nazneen*
and *Shahvir Vimalal*;
December 9, 1996

MARRIED

Behnaz Dholoo and *Sohrab*
Mistry of New Jersey;
January 11, 1997

DIED

Shirin Godrej Irani (85), sister
of *Peroja Kaikhosrov Irani*;
November 20, 1996
Camal Nentini, wife of *Firoz* and
mother of *Gev*, *Mahrukh* and
Armin; June 4, 1997

San Diego

DIED

Perin Jal Kapadia, mother of
Freny Romer, *Zenobia Irani* and
Rohinton; December 2, 1996

San Francisco

BORN

A girl, *Ariana Cheri*, to *Helga*
and *Hooman Sotoodeh*;
November 5
A boy to *Parinaz* and *Mehrdad*
Khosraviyani, brother to *Afsheen*;
February 14, 1997

DIED

Keki Captain, husband of
Goolcher and father of *Darius*;
May 9

Somerset, New Jersey

BORN

A boy, *Jamshed*, to *Ruzbeh* and
Keku Mistry, brother to *Sohrab*;
June 5

Walled Lake, Michigan

BORN

Twins (boy and girl), *Zal* and
Tarana, to *Parizad* and *Darius*
Joshi; June 6

Compiled by Roxana A. Driver

FIGURES AT A GLANCE *

	Bombay			India			World		
	This issue	1996	1997*	This issue	1996	1997	This issue	1996	1997
BIRTHS									
Boys	13	98	64	---	9	6	13	36	16
Girls	18	118	68	1	4	4	8	40	18
MARRIAGES									
Parsi	8	197	163	---	6	2	4	19	8
INTERCOMMUNAL									
Males married out	39	43	21	---	3	1	2	2	4
Females married out	33	34	19	---	2	---	---	7	1
DEATHS									
CONSIGNED									
Males	84	457	290	14	98	71	5	69	23
Females	87	502	327	8	89	62	6	50	22
CREMATED									
Males	5	2	3	---	---	---	---	---	---
Females	7	2	5	---	---	1	---	---	---

*Running totals for 1997 (January-July/August issues)

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.**Bombay: The Telling Figures**

Only the number of males married out of the community, 43, remains the same in 1996. Barring that, the scenario alters radically when comparing the marriage statistics for 1995 and 1996 compiled by *Parsiana*.

As against a total of 378 marriages (including intercommunal) in 1995, there were 274 nuptials in 1996, a decline of 104. Community marriages reduced by 87 from 284 in '95 to 197 in the following year. Marriages to a non-Zoroastrian spouse also declined from 94 to 77 (a reduction of 17).

Percentage wise however, intercommunity marriages registered an increase once again. It shows 28 percent (from 25 in 1995) if calculated as a ratio of intercommunity marriages to the total number of marriages (77:274) and 39 percent (from 33 in 1995) if calculated as a ration of intercommunity marriages to community marriages (77:197). The first time *Parsiana* had computed intercommunity marriage figures (for the period of October 1987 to September 1988) the percentages were 12 and 14 respectively. The 43 males who chose non-Parsi spouses accounted for 56 percent

of all intercommunity marriages with the 34 females who married out of the community constituting the balance 44 percent. In 1995 there had been more females (54 percent) as versus men (46 percent) who had contracted intercommunity marriages.

Births too registered a marginal decline of five over the 1995 count of 221. However, of the total 216 babies known to have been born in 1996, there were 118 girls (an increase of nine over last year's tally) and 98 boys (a decrease of 14). With our source of information mainly restricted to four hospitals in south Bombay, we presume that *Parsiana* accounts for around 50 percent of the births in the community in Bombay. Even then, it clearly indicates that the birth rate in the community is less than half the death rate. For the year 1996, the highest Life Expectancy at Birth (LEB) was in the month of October and the lowest in the months of January and April, the mean LEB working out to 75, bearing testimony to an aging, dwindling community.

At 963, the number of deaths in the community increased by 22

over the 1995 count of 941. Just as the number of births were higher among females, the number of deaths too were higher, births increasing by nine, deaths by 39. Among the males, the births registered a decrease of 14, and the deaths, a decline of 17. Of the total deaths, females accounted for 504 and males for 459. With the exception of four (two males and two females) who chose to be cremated, the rest were all consigned at the Towers of Silence. The Bombay Parsi Punchayet continues to send us data on those consigned at Doongerwadi but since we are able to access records only at the Chandanwadi crematorium, our listing of those cremated would not be exhaustive.

Listed below are the 1996 figures, pertaining to the community in Bombay, as collected by *Parsiana*:

Born: 216
Boys 98, Girls 118
Marriages: 274
Parsi 197, Intercommunal 77
Died: 963, Consigned: 959
Males 457, Females 502
Cremated: 4
Males 2, Females 2

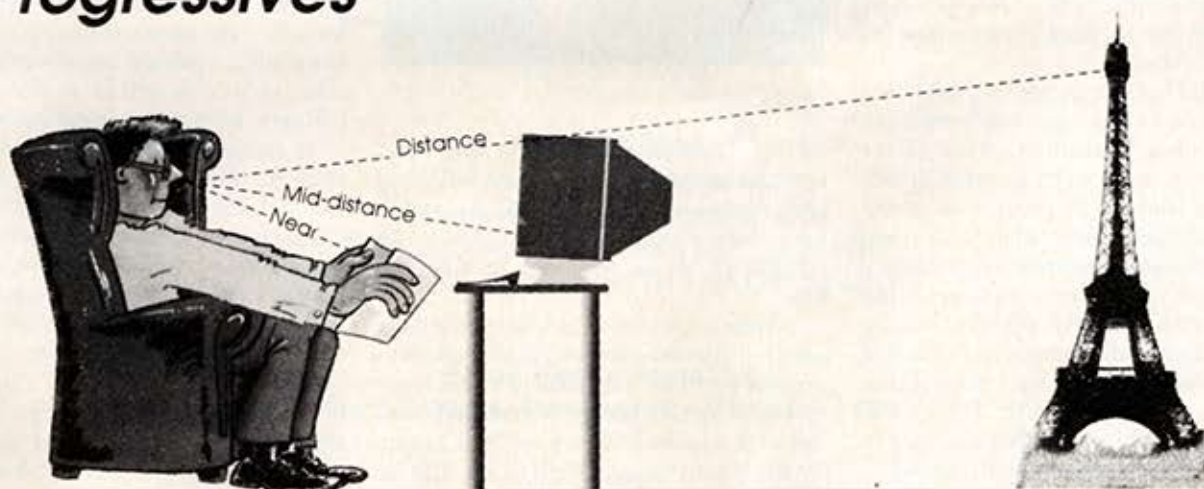
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Patel: Pakistan's Pride

Homi J. Rogers

Died: Justice Dorab Framroze Patel, 72, an outspoken and fearless human rights activist, on March 15, 1997, in Karachi. He had been suffering from leukemia for the past year or so.

Justice Patel was an eminent jurist who could have become the Chief Justice of the Pakistan Supreme Court had he compromised his integrity by taking the oath of allegiance to the military regime of General Zia-ul-Haq. At that time, he was the Acting Chief Justice of the Pakistan Supreme Court.

"Such men of integrity are disappearing fast from our part of the world," wrote R. M. Pal, editor of the *PUCIL* (People's Union for Civil Liberties) *Bulletin* in the issue of June 1997. This sentiment was also expressed by Aziz A. Munshi, a former attorney general of Pakistan, who in his condolence message had stated: "Such men are rare in any country, any age of history." Munshi, along with a number of notables, was present at Justice Patel's funeral which was performed in Karachi according to Zoroastrian rites.

Patel was born in Quetta in 1924 into a distinguished family, says his brother-in-law Roelinton Khambatta (his sister Rhodabe's husband). His paternal grandfather was Burjorji D. Patel, one of the founders of Quetta and a legend in his own lifetime. His father Framroze was a wealthy businessman who owned coal mines, flour mills and urban property, while his mother was from the equally famous and educated Khandalawala family, states Khambatta. Since she died at his birth, Dorab was brought up by his grandfather and aunt in Bombay, who saw him through his schooling (from St Xavier's), MA (from Wilson College) and LLB (from Bombay's Law College), narrates Khaled Ahmed in his tribute in the *Friday Times* (March 21-27, 1997). Later, he proceeded to the London School of Economics where the legendary Harold Laski was amongst his gurus. He was then called to the Bar at the Inner Temple, and practised in London thereafter for two years, before settling down in Karachi in the early '50s to the practice of law. His return to Pakistan, according to

Ahmed, was after experiencing in the UK "the color bar in a conservative legal profession."

"One of the first cases he handled was that of our shipping company," writes Ardeshtir Cowasjee in *Dawn*, (March 23,



Patel: "a man of integrity"

1997). Cowasjee's association with Patel spanned over 50 years. More shipping cases followed, reminisces Cowasjee in his tribute, "until he soon came to be recognized as an authority in shipping law."

At that stage of his life, Patel could have put civil law behind him and moved on to greener pastures, particularly as his mentor, the respected lawyer Wahiduddin, was inducted into the judiciary as Chief Justice by the West Pakistan High Court. But he "confined himself to a modest legal practice, mainly on the civil side in the High Court," because he "never felt the need or desire to earn much," states Sabihuddin Ahmed, a judge of the Sindh High Court who had worked with Patel. In 1966-67, Patel, then 42, was elevated to the bench of the then West Pakistan High Court, and appointed judge of the Sindh-Balochistan High Court. Ten years later in January 1976, he was appointed to the Supreme Court.

Just a year later in 1977 came the historic judgement that was to catapult Patel into the international arena, with recognition for his steadfastness and incorruptibility. In the momentous trial that led to the hanging of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto (incidentally, his colleague at the Bar), Patel delivered the minority judgement that the hanging of Bhutto was wrong, although he was personally opposed to Bhutto's style of governance. Because of Patel's dissenting judgement, the Chief Justice was forced to uphold the capital punishment meted out to Bhutto with his casting vote. "He was without any doubt a great jurist and a man of integrity," observed Bhutto's daughter Benazir, while expressing grief at Patel's demise, as quoted in *Dawn*.

Interestingly, the paths of Patel and Zulfikar had crossed many years earlier too when, as recalled by Ahmed, the two had almost become partners at the instance of Shahnawaz, Zulfikar's father, who "wanted Dorab to set up shop together with his son." The arrangement, though, didn't materialize. Ahmed mentions that Patel referred to this period as: "We weren't partners; we simply shared the premises."

A greater trial by fire, however, lay in store for the upright Patel in 1981 when General Zia promulgated the Provisional Constitutional Order (PCO) which subordinated the judiciary to military courts. Further, the PCO required judges to take a new oath, with the additional condition that if a judge refused to take the oath to uphold the abolition of the Constitution, he would cease to be a judge. Patel was amongst the 16 High Court judges who refused to toe the line. By doing so, he willingly renounced his prospect of heading the apex court for a seven-year term.

He thereby amply put into practice what he often said: "There is no choice between good and evil, right and wrong. When it is your duty to protest, those who remain silent are guilty."

In later years, according to a letter addressed by Mukund B. Kunte to the editor of *The Times of India* of April 21, 1997, Patel even turned down General

continued on page 192

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Peer's principles

Parinaz M. Gandhi

Died: Ervad (Dr) Peshotan Faramarz Peer, 72, a scholar priest known for his mastery of the *Gathas* and the *Shah Nameh*, on February 13, 1997 at Bombay's B. D. Petit Parsee General Hospital following cardiac arrest.

"Peshotan was a familiar figure at our Institute and we shall greatly miss his presence, his advice and above all his expertise on the *Shah Nameh*," wrote Homai Modi, trustee and joint honorary secretary of the K. R. Cama Oriental Institute (KRCOI), in her condolence letter to the family. Echoing these sentiments, the president of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP),

Jamshed Guzder, noted, "The Parsi community has lost one of its very valuable and knowledgeable authorities on the Farsi language and the *Shah Nameh*."

In fact at the Sixth World Zoroastrian Congress in Iran in 1996, Peer was the only delegate from India who was invited to present a paper in Persian. The impact that he made on his coreligionists in Iran can be inferred from the letter on the Internet by Dr Bahman Noruziaan that was accidentally accessed by Dr Kersey Antia of USA barely 12 days before Peer's death. States Noruziaan, "There was so much tranquility in his voice and attitude that you were...attracted to him!...You could feel the dedication that he has towards his faith...Many of his opinions and beliefs may seem strange to many of us. His mystic views towards our sacred literature, his strict anti-acceptance of others, not accepting mixed marriage... One of his advices to us, 'If you feel you cannot convince somebody, and if you feel he or she is doing wrong not listening to you, leave him or her alone! Do not cause hatred and anger! Never cause anger!'"

His firm adherence to his beliefs made him relinquish the panthakship of the Tata Agiary at Bandra after serving there for 18 years. Peer believed that after-death Zoroastrian ceremonies should not be per-

formed for the industrial doyen J. R. D. Tata, the son of a Zoroastrian father and non-Parsi mother. "I am proud to be suspended on my principles," his statement was recalled by Ervad (Dr) Ramiyar Karanjia, principal of the Dadar Athornan Madressa at the condolence meeting convened in Peer's memory



Peer: scholar priest

by the Rahnumae Mazdayasnan Sabha on March 5, 1997 at the KRCOI Library Hall when many of his friends, admirers and students paid their tributes.

"His death has removed from Zoroastrian society a religious and fearless scholar of repute," acknowledged S. N. Elavia, secretary and treasurer of the Iranian Zoroastrian Anjuman which had honored him with a plaque only last year.

"He was an orator par excellence, a prolific writer..." wrote Prof Merwan Pavri who was in college with Peer. Every Thursday, he used to deliver lectures on the *Gathas*. Shortly before his demise Peer had accomplished the task of translating the *Gathas* into English, a work which will soon be published. Additionally he also used to conduct classes in Persian and had been giving a series of lectures on the *Shah Nameh* since 1981 under the auspices of the Rahnumae Mazdayasnan Sabha.

His understanding of religion was influenced by the late Dastur Khurshed Dabu whom he considered his guru, having been in his contact for almost 50 years, recalls Peer's wife Rati. And although he had inclinations to be a vegetarian from a young age, it was only his marriage in 1950 to Rati Kanga, his cousin, who was already a vegetarian that made it possible for him to follow the diet of his choice, she mentions. He also believed in reincarnation and when *Parsianna* undertook a survey in 1988, he was one of only four Zoroastrian scholars from amongst the 29 who were sent a questionnaire, who declared that there is mention of reincarnation in Zoroastrianism. Like his guru, he

also had keen interest in theosophy and was a respected co-freemason who could explain "the teachings with esoteric meanings," as noted a condolence letter from his masonic lodge.

Describing him as "a priest par excellence who knew what he was praying," Ervad Rustom Turel mentioned at the condolence meeting that many other priests did not want to sit with him in prayers because he would take too long with the ceremonies, not permitting any *gapchas* (omission of stanzas). "He has not been given his due by the community," he added.

In the audio cassettes brought out by the BPP, it was Peer's sonorous voice which was chosen for the recording of prayers, stated Marzban Giara. Therein one can "feel the mood...the divine power" of his recitations, he recalled.

Always dressed in his priest's attire, his bushy white beard and slight limp distinguishing him in a crowd, Peer may never have taken up mobedi for a profession. Although made to give up his studies when he was barely 14 (he had studied at Bombay's Bharda and St Xavier's Schools, and Panchgani's Billimoria School) to continue his deceased father's profession, Peer's future was uncertain. A fall from a bicycle when he was 14 years old had severely injured his knee, making it impossible for him to sit cross legged for prayers. However the insistence of one behdin to see Peer perform his child's navjote, even arranging for a folding stool for the priest, spurred Peer on to continue with the priestly calling, accompanied by the stool whenever he went for prayers, reveals his wife. Thereafter he must have performed countless navjotes, sometimes for three generations of a family.

Peer's thirst for higher knowledge remained with him. He resumed his formal education which had been interrupted by completing his SSC (Secondary School Certificate) examination when he was 32 years of age. After a gap of eight years he chose to study for his BA and MA in Avesta Pahlavi from Bombay University. He completed his PhD in 1977, notes the Rahnumae Sabha condolence resolution. Peer studied Avesta and Pahlavi under the late Maneck Kanga and Dastur (Dr) Hormazdyar Mirza. He additionally had knowledge of Arabic languages, Urdu, Persian, Sanskrit, Hebrew, French and German.

"As much as he loved learning, he also enjoyed imparting that knowledge to others," states the resolution. He shared his religious knowledge with students of eight



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Zoroastrian founded schools, says his wife. He was also invited to Bangalore, Pune, Navsari and Surat to give lectures.

Besides serving as trustee of the Jashan Committee, Peer was president of the Parsi Vegetarian and Temperance Society for 25 years. Among the other institutions with which he was connected were the Youths' Own Union, the Jeejeebhoy Dadabhoy Agiary where he was panthaky for eight years, and the Iran League. From all his overseas trips, he most cherished his visits to Iran, being invited there on three occasions, and was even to lecture at a university there, discloses his wife.

Whilst adhering to old customs and advocating the need to conform to time-tested practices, Peer believed, as stated in an earlier interview with *Parsiana*, "Religion may go beyond reason, but it never should contradict reason."

The scholar priest is survived by his wife Rati, son Dr Rooyintan and daughters Hutoxshy, Tehmina, Havovi and Ketayun.

PATEL: PAKISTAN'S PRIDE

continued from page 188

Zia's gesture of appeasement offering to make him Pakistan's envoy to Paris. He could not possibly represent a government, Patel stated, with whose policies he had such fundamental differences.

After so stepping down, Patel busied himself in the active promotion of the cause of human rights and social welfare. He became a member of the Asian Human Rights Commission in 1984, and of the International Commission of Jurists in 1987. In the same year, in cooperation with an equally upright activist-lawyer, Asma Jehangir, he established the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP). This non-governmental organization he continued to serve and nurture right until his death, when he was its chairman-emeritus, a post he had held since 1993, when he spurned the suggestion of an amendment allowing him a third term as its president. The HRCP under his stewardship is credited with being instrumental in abolishing more private jails than had all Pakistan governments put together over a period of 50 years, according to Cowasjee in *Dawn*. The body also organized a string of seminars and international events, commencing from the very first year of its existence, with a regional seminar of SAARC countries on "Law and Development" in Lahore.

Patel was also invited to 'observe' elections in many countries, to speak at the United Nations, and to lead the Pakistan delegation to the UN Committee on Hu-

man Rights at Geneva. In a manner, this distinguished phase of Patel's life was a natural culmination for one who, as brother-in-law Khambatta recalls in *Parsi Sansar ané Lok Sevak* of March 22, 1997, considered it a "supreme moment" in his life to read the words inscribed at the Jefferson Memorial in Boston — "For I have sworn upon the altar of God, eternal hostility to any form of tyranny over the minds of man."

Ironically, the Zoroastrian community (or at least the voting constituent of the community) rejected Patel when he offered himself for service as a trustee of the Anjuman. "But," reminisces Khambatta in the above article, "he (Patel) did not sulk, nor did he feel vindictive. Through the various Nusserwanjee Trusts, he continued to work not only for the Parsis, but for all the people of Pakistan." In recognition of his services, the Government of Pakistan conferred the Hil-i-Imtiaz Award on Justice Patel in 1995.

"Thoroughly cosmopolitan in outlook," to quote Pal, Patel was equally committed to bridging the gap between Pakistan and India. He attended the first and second conventions of the Pakistan-India Peoples' Forum for Peace and Democracy held in Delhi and Lahore in 1994 and 1995 respectively, mentions Pal. Recalls Teesta Setalvad, editor of *Communalism Combat*, a monthly from Bombay: "Patel had not only been an active member of this forum, but a visible and vociferous presence at each meet." His failing health, however, prevented him from attending the third convention in Calcutta in December 1996, and "his presence was sorely missed," confirms Setalvad.

A prolific writer, Justice Patel willingly contributed to the *PUCL Bulletin* on a number of occasions, recalls Pal. He had also authored a book, *Testament of a Liberal*, which is now being published by the Oxford University Press in Karachi. Its royalties will be equally divided, as willed by Patel, between the HRCP and the Kidney Centre, whose board of management he headed.

Interestingly, Patel's steadfastness extended to his personal life as well: he was a confirmed bachelor. On at least two occasions, as recalled by Cowasjee, his friends tried to fix him up with a suitable girl, but failed. In 1954, recalls Cowasjee, Patel, "a young man who seldom spoke" lost the "perfect Parsi girl, a green-eyed beauty" because "apart from speaking and walking in a rather ponderous and slow manner," he took unduly long to muster up his courage to "pop the question." In later

years, another attempt at matchmaking failed, when despite providing Patel with the residence and office numbers of a suitable girl in London, Patel during his visit to the city kept ringing her residence in the daytime, and her office at night. "Obviously, his subconscious had been at work, resisting all attempts to transform his life," quips Cowasjee.

It is unfortunate that this wry-humored, exceedingly polite champion of human causes, was a marginalized citizen in his last days. Probably, the best tribute to Patel comes from Prof Anita Ghulam Ali who writes in *Dawn* of "his daily visits to people, some in pain, some lonely, some needing monetary help, (which) were routine. The left hand knew not where the right hand gave."

Patel is survived by his brother Jahansoz and sister Rhodabe Khambatta.

TOGETHER, TO THE 21ST CENTURY *continued from page 114*

training. A lot of footwork went into researching for an appropriate venue. Surprisingly the Sheraton Skyline provided the best financial terms as well as met the physical requirements, thanks to Master's influence with the hotel. "Part of the success was in holding the function with a bit of style," as noted Perses Sethna.

Malcolm Printer, a pharmaceutical development scientist, dealt with 90-95 host families. Newsletter appeals and word of mouth requests had netted a limited response initially. The aim was to find about 250 host family places. One aim was to find residences close to tube stations so that the youth could move about independently. Both hosts and guests had their preferences and they had to be matched. Most people hosted two youths, some only one and a few accommodated 10 or more. Then there were youths who had their relatives. And when they arrived, anxious parents had to be informed, Printer recounted a few highlights of the logistics of accommodating so many young visitors.

At the end of the day, with the success of the Congress the team was on a justifiable "high." According to Dinyar Cooper, "Mehran Sepheri has put it on the Internet as the event of the decade." Jasavala was able to tell the assembled gathering with a measure of satisfaction, "You've all shown the true Zoroastrian spirit. You've worked together and played together. When we started, we didn't know how you would react. (Now) we feel we can move forward to the next millennium as one whole group together."



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