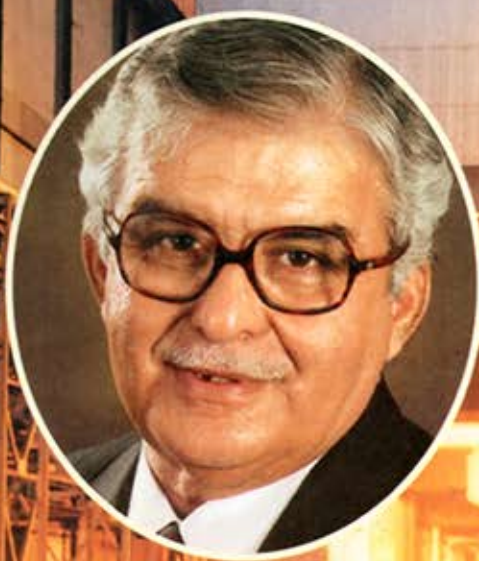


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Parsiana

December 1997
Volume 20 Number 5

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Parsiana is published by Jehangir R. Patel for Parsiana Publications Pvt Ltd at C/o H. L. Rochat, K. K. (Navsari) Chambers, ground floor, 39 A. K. Nayak Marg, Fort, Bombay 400001 and printed by him at Kaiser-E-Hind Pvt Ltd, 300 Perin Nariman Street, Bombay 400001. Color processing, Comart Lithographers; black and white processing, Tricolour. All rights reserved. ISSN: 0971-3786. Phone: 2078730, 2072624. Fax: 2074541. For editorial enquiries phone: 2078183. E-mail: parvo@giabm01.vsnl.net.in For subscription enquiries and payments: C/o Kaiser-E-Hind Pvt Ltd, 300 Perin Nariman St (Behind Reserve Bank of India), Bombay 400001. Phone: 2658619, 2665661. Fax: 2654585.

Annual inland subscription for one year (10 issues) Rs 250; for two years (20 issues) Rs 475; for three years (30 issues) Rs 700. Foreign subscription rates: Seamail for one year Rs 450/US \$ 14/UK £ 9; for two years Rs 850/US \$ 25/UK £ 15; for three years Rs 1,250/US \$ 36/UK £ 22 (please allow six months or more for delivery from the time of publication). Airmail for one year Rs 750/US \$ 23/UK £ 15 (for Pakistan, Indian Rs 525); for two years, Rs 1,400/US \$ 43/UK £ 27 (for Pakistan, Indian Rs 975); for three years Rs 2,100/US \$ 60/UK £ 37 (for Pakistan, Indian Rs 1,450). For Indian upcountry cheques add Rs 20 for bank charges; for US cheques add \$ 5; for UK cheques add £ 3. Cheques and drafts are to be drawn in favor of Parsiana and posted to GPO Box 892, Bombay 400001.



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 Unsigned letters or those without an address will not be published.

"Disturbing the sanctity?"

This has reference to Ms Gooloo R. Mehta's expression of disgust with regard to "Disturbing the sanctity (at Banaji Atash Behram)?" and managing trustee Mr Burjor Antia's response carried in Readers' Forum (*Parsiana*, September 1997).

Understandably, Mr Antia who is also a solicitor by profession has denied allegations regarding desecration of the Atash Behram.

In a letter dated February 7, 1997 addressed to the trustees of the Atash Behram, this writer and 42 other Zoroastrians had pointed out various instances of pollution and nuisance including "noise — loud, garish music; behavior — the shouts of inebriated men and women, the raucous shouts of caterer's men and the likely presence of women in menses in the close vicinity of the Atash Behram."

We had also pointed out instances of "non-Parsi men and women smoking cigarettes either in the Hall or outside, guests

placing beer glasses on the window-sills of the main Atash Behram building, the caterer's men in an inebriated state coming to fisticuffs and abuses late at night, right under the portico of the main Atash Behram building, guests carelessly throwing leftovers in the varasiji's enclosure and much more."

In response to our letter of February 7, 1997, the managing trustee had stated, "The trustees were aware of what is stated therein and have already taken and are always willing to take measures to maintain and preserve the sacredness of the institution."

Curiously, the managing trustee admits being "aware" of all the misdeeds and the goings-on mentioned in our letter of February 7, 1997 and yet in response to Ms Gooloo R. Mehta's letter, he denies the allegations and considers them "false" and "misleading."

The managing trustee explains that in the Atash Behram compound, "There are three separate buildings: one building houses the holy fire, where no serving of food takes place; there is another building about 20 feet away from the main building called "Gambhar Hall" which is being used to give facilities to Zoroastrians for performance of jashan/navjote and marriage ceremonies and thereafter serving of food in the Hall during the monsoon and in the open place on the ground floor during the other seasons."

The managing trustee is probably aware that the one-storied building situated about 20 feet away from the main building has most of the ground floor taken up by *pavis* and *gumbad* to house the holy fire during major repairs to the main building. In the early nineties itself, the ground floor was used to accommodate the holy Atash Behram fire, while the main building was being "renovated."

Long before that, we are given to understand it was the adarian saheb who used to be housed there. Subsequently, however, the adarian fire was moved to its present position, in the room behind the Atash Padshah and the ground floor of the adjacent building was utilized only when the main fire was to be shifted. The upper floor was, for years, used for purely religious functions, like jashans and lectures. Much earlier, we understand, it was occasionally used for Parsi weddings and navjotes. But because of the nuisance value (the food served, the leftovers, etc), this practice

was discontinued.

Since the nineties, however, things have changed radically. The upper storey of the building was renovated and for the first time, toilets were constructed at one end. Due to these toilet blocks, the holy Atash Behram fire can never be shifted to the adjacent building, during repairs to the main building. So much for vision and foresight!

The managing trustee, after providing the dictionary meaning of the word "desecrate" says, "Would the use of the Hall for marriages, navjotes and dinner amount to desecration of the holy fire housed in the adjoining building?" In response, we may state that seemingly hiring out the Hall for marriages, navjotes and dinner is harmless and may, perhaps, even be considered a "service" to the community. However, we know, and even the managing trustee is aware of what exactly happens during the evenings when these functions are held. According to *The Concise Oxford Dictionary* (1990) pg 315, one of the meanings of the word "desecrate" is "deprive (a church, a sacred object, etc) of sanctity." In the same *Dictionary*, one of the meanings of the word "sanctity" is "sacred obligations, feelings, etc." There is little doubt that the religious feelings of a number of devout Zoroastrians have been hurt as a result of the various pollutions and nuisances generated within the Atash Behram compound.

While we are not totally averse to the trustees giving the Hall on hire for navjotes and wedding ceremonies, what we would request the trustees to consider is restricting the ceremonies to the first floor only and issuing strict instructions to those booking the Hall to maintain the sanctity of this holy place.

The managing trustee also argues that there are several agiaries where the adjoining halls or ground next to the agiary are given for such functions and dinner. This is true, but remember these are all agiaries housing adarian fires. An Atash Behram is the highest of the three grades of consecrated fires requiring the highest laws of ritual and other purity. The managing trustee, who is also an ordained priest, would know this better than anyone else.

The managing trustee states, "*Deen Parast* has found fault with the trustees of the Banaji Atash Behram, when they are providing facilities at cheaper rates for performing navjote and marriage ceremonies followed by dinner. From the income



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The Top Ten

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

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

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

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

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

which we derive we are maintaining our priests and other workers (we wonder how they did that during the several decades when the Hall was not being given out on hire?) and we are giving them ex-gratia payment and other facilities."

The managing trustee waxes eloquent about "doing a service to the community" by "providing facilities at cheaper rates." However, in his letter of March 31, 1997 to us, he had categorically stated, "...if the income is compensated by any party with a guarantee, the trustees are willing to discontinue the use of the Hall except for religious purpose and no dinner will be served at the premises." Clearly, the motive of the trustees of the Atash Behram is commercial and mercenary.

We have regard for Mr Antia as an individual and recognize his general contribution to the community in various spheres. Our regard and esteem for him will be further enhanced if he and his colleagues will put an end to the perpetration of abject nuisance on the ground floor of the Hall and the compound of the Atash Behram.

NOSHIR H. DADRAWALA

General Editor, *Deen Parast*

"SOAS' commitment..."

I received the July-August number of *Parsiana* which is full of interest as usual. I think your coverage of the SOAS (School of Oriental and African Studies) reception ("SOAS' commitment to Zoroastrianism," *Parsiana*, July-August 1997) is vivid and good, but there are some mistakes in the summary of what I said which I should like corrected, since they may cause either mirth or indignation among Iranians.

It was not I, but Iranians who studied at SOAS who taught in Tehran and Shiraz universities, and one of them was director of the Achaemenid Foundation at Persepolis.

Also, I did not meet Dastur Mirza when he was a student at SOAS (he is a good deal older than I am); it was the original lecture-ship in Iranian studies that was partly Parsi funded; and the fine glass etching presented to me was of the fravashi figure, not of Zarathushtra.

May *Parsiana* continue to flourish, giving pleasure and interest over wide fields.

MARY BOYCE

London, UK

Arnavaz Mama replies

My apologies for the inadvertent mistakes.

"A measure of..."

With reference to the review ("A measure of mysticism," Books, *Parsiana*, July-

August 1997) of my book *Mysticism and Mystic Sects Among the Jews, the Mohammedans, and the Zoroastrians—a Comparative Study*, I, as the author of the said book, would like to clarify the following points raised by the reviewer, as the same are likely to give rise to some misunderstanding.

Has creation emerged from nothing (*creatio ex nihilo*) or from light? One of the theories of Zoroastrian cosmogony is that the creation has emerged from light, which can be substantiated by the following:

- The Creator owing to his nearest association with endless shining light, produced therefrom brilliance, out of which came forth sheen, which in turn gave rise to radiance, from which issued hot-moist (*garm-khvet*), the prime origin of material creation (*Pahlavi Denkart* ed. D.M. Madon pg 124).

- Ahura Mazda out of his own light first produced a form of creation in the shape of fire, bright and white (*Pahlavi Zand Akasih*, B. T. Anklesaria pg 15).

- Ahura Mazda produced creation, Amesha Spentas and the spirit of wisdom from his own light (*Pahlavi Dadastan-i-Menok-i-Khrat*, chapter VIII).

The Zoroastrian concept of creation from light is supported by modern scientific thought. The well-known French scientist Louis de Broglie observes in *Physics and Microphysics*, 1955 (chapter III, pg 69), "Giving free scope to our imagination we could suppose that at the beginning of time on the morrow of some divine 'Fiat Lux,' Light at first alone in the universe has little by little produced by progressive condensation the material universe."

The reviewer feels that inclusion of "historical details of the Arabs of the seventh and ninth centuries," is not relevant. Actually, only a short account of events leading to the origin of the mystic sects of the Ismailis and the Sufis is given, which cannot, in the true sense, be construed an aberration from the subject matter.

Further, instead of diacritical marks, Avesta, Pahlavi and Arabic words are transcribed in a way a layman can understand (long 'a' is transcribed 'aa').

The reviewer decries that the book is not an "exhaustive account of mysticism and mystics." The publication is meant to introduce to the readers the subject without having recourse to a long, rambling account of mysticism and mystics, which people today hardly find time to read. The main objective of the book is to dispel the general belief that mysticism is associated only with mystery-mongering and a de-

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ranged state of mind and to depict it in the light of modern trends of thought, and in this connection, views of some eminent scientists are quoted in the preface and the introduction. However, views of some eminent Sufi mystics are given too.

R. R. MOTAFRAM

"But a passage"

I sincerely thank Mr Hormazdyar Dalal for referring to my humble publication *Dukhi-Ne-Dilaso*, cum *Bliss Beyond*, in his article on death ("But a passage," *Parsiana*, July-August 1997). His remark regarding "the author not having done his homework systematically" indicates that he has not cared to look into the preface and *pustak parichay* (introduction to the book) where the objective and limitations of the second edition are stated.

I have received excellent reviews from learned scholars, institutions, dasturs, over and above Gujarati readers from the Parsi and other communities. The fact that this is the second edition of the book itself shows its value.

The answers on death given by the author are original and based on his own studies and not opinions of other authors as stated by Mr Dalal. A few references from others are not out of place on this subject. Besides, the questions on death, posed by the readers, cover a wide range of study.

NOSHIR DABOO

Ahmedabad

Milestones

I am a regular reader of *Parsiana* and I find certain articles very interesting. The very title of your magazine indicates that the magazine is about Parsis and the welfare of the Parsi community.

Since the magazine is only meant for Parsis why should there be a mention of intercaste marriages in your Milestones column, particularly in the July-August issue where about 80 marriages are mentioned of which 72 are intercaste marriages? It's an indirect encouragement to the young generation. I am a staunch believer in Zoroastrianism. I hope you will not publish such marriages in your future issues since the feelings of the community are being hurt.

ZENOBIASIDHWA

Udvada

The Editor replies

The intercommunity marriages reported by us are essentially those contracted under the Special Marriage Act whereby neither partner has to renounce the religion into which he/she is born. Such individuals

would therefore continue to be regarded as Zoroastrians despite their marriage to a non-Parsi. While there is no denying that intercommunity marriages are on the rise, the listing in our July-August issue was particularly lengthy as we had reported data from August 2, 1996 to August 27, 1997.

Parsiana's duty is to report the facts on intercommunity marriages so that everyone is aware of reality. In 1987 when we started the Milestones column, the intercommunity marriage rate was around 12 percent. Today it is around 24 percent, almost double. The point is not to suppress these statistics but to give them exposure so that the community can come to terms with the issue and decide how to counter or accept the situation. It is unlikely that someone reading the statistics is going to decide to marry out of the community.

The main reason for the high rate of intercommunity marriages is the lack of a sufficient number of compatible and available partners. Where the Parsi population is smaller, the number of intercommunity marriages tends to be higher. Anjumans such as Delhi and Jamshedpur, living in a cosmopolitan surrounding, have accepted this reality and admitted the children of Parsi women married to non-Parsis into the fire-temples. Several overseas Zoroastrian associations admit non-Zoroastrian spouses as members. In other places individuals may respond by hardening their stand and treat a person who has married out with indifference or silence or even contempt. Each anjuman has to come to terms with the changing trends and devise its own strategy.

Beware, trustees

Recently the Supreme Court gave an important decision regarding section 80G of the Income-tax (IT) Act, 1961 dealing with deduction in respect of donations to charitable and religious trusts. As many such trusts have been created by Parsis, I would like to point out: Donations to a trust established for a charitable purpose are eligible to deduction (equivalent to 50 percent of the amount donated) if the trust fulfils the conditions contained in section 80G of the IT Act, 1961, including the condition that it must be a non-communal charitable trust approved by the commissioner of income-tax. "Charitable purpose" does not include any purpose the whole or substantially the whole of which is of a religious nature.

Even if almost all objects of a trust are charitable, but one object is of a religious

nature, it has been held by the Supreme Court that such a trust is not a trust for a "charitable purpose." Hence donations made to it are not eligible to deduction under the said section. In other words, each and every object of the trust must be of a charitable nature.

This necessitates examination of the trust to ascertain whether any of its objects is of a religious nature. If so, such an object may be omitted from the trust deed so that other objects, being objects of a charitable nature, may remain within the purview of section 80G. A separate trust deed may, if desired, be executed in respect of objects of a religious nature.

Similar deduction is available in respect of donations for renovation or repair of a place of public worship of renown throughout any state or states if it is notified by the central government in the official gazette under section 80G(2)(b). Several Parsi fire-temples have been accordingly notified and donations made to them are eligible to deduction.

Trustees of charitable and religious trusts should examine the matter accordingly to avail of the tax benefit under section 80G.

RUSTOM S. GAE

New Delhi

"Punctual priest"

Thanks to my letter on the 85-year-old Ervad Jal Rustomji of Pune ("Punctual priest," Readers' Forum, *Parsiana*, January 1997), the Navsari Parsee Association made enquiries and then felicitated him and gave him a purse and a shawl.

Secondly, my letter for procuring the *Shah Nameh* on behalf of Mr Meraboon Zarthoshty of USA obtained two responses from two outstation Zoroastrians and the process of procuring is on.

I am now trying to compile a tape which will contain the popular Gujarati, Parsi songs of yesteryear so that people like me can also sing and hum them. I have already got a good collection of the original wordings and tunes but hope to find the tunes for certain songs like *Goola maari gol gol*. My thanks to the readers who have responded to my earlier request for the material.

It is a pity that in modern Parsi homes, Gujarati is no more spoken by the new generation. A language is imbibed at childhood from the nursery rhymes. Z. M. ZEND

Dress code for an agiary?

I had suggested to a Parsi friend from USA who was on a visit to India that he should take time to visit a particular agiary. He did so and among other things wrote to me:

"I liked the agiary but could not spend much time as I had to leave quickly. Well, it so happened that one morning at home at Tardeo after my bath, I had some time to spare, so I suddenly decided to walk down and pay a visit. I was wearing short pants and feeling lazy to change, I asked my cousin if it is OK to go to the agiary in short pants. She assured me that it was. So I bought some sukhad and went in. As soon as I walked in (to) the agiary the dasturji who was sitting at his desk got up and came quickly to me saying that I cannot come here in short pants! He was polite and said to please not to come in the future in shorts. He explained that some young women would come in shorts and they had to make this rule. I assured him that I will not do so soon as I was from the States. He said that I should quickly leave my sukhad on the side window and not go in front of the fire where others may see me! So I spent about 20 seconds inside and quietly left. I am writing this not to criticize the dasturji and the rules but to let you know my experience as you had asked. I do understand the rules. Now that I know, next time I will go properly attired and spend more time to look around."

This has been the experience of more than one person. While we Zoroastrians

must not change for the sake of changing, at the same time we must not also overlook that change is the law of life and that unless we change and adapt (without of course sacrificing or damaging our core beliefs and ideas) we will be harming ourselves.

The least that the trustees of an agiary or atash behram could do is to indicate (by a notice or board near its entrance) to the Parsi Zoroastrian public the dress code which is enjoined for that particular place of worship so that embarrassment of the type in question would be avoided.

I have known of some instances where young people so dealt with have been brownd off and just stopped going to the agiaries where otherwise on their own they were attracted to go. Isn't that a pity?

NADIR MODI

Aid the Agiary

The Banaji Limji Agiary at Banaji Street, Flora Fountain is the oldest Parsi agiary in Bombay. The original structure was built in the year 1709.

We, the trustees, have done our utmost to keep the premises in good condition. But age has taken its toll on the structure to such an extent that the repair cost has become prohibitive from the meager funds available with the trust.

We therefore appeal to the Parsi community at large and charitable trusts in particular to help us repair this Agiary building which has been declared as a national monument by the Government of India.

Donations by cheque may please be made in the name of "Banaji Limji Agiary" or cash donations may be deposited in a special box provided for the repair work in the Agiary premises.

D. K. BANAJI

Trustee, Seth Banaji Limji Agiary Trust
continued on page 52

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Events and Personalities

Promising politician

"This time he is unwilling to face bureaucratic whims or corporate fancies. His new mission: to start ahead of them in the public sweepstakes," declared an article in *The Economic Times* of November 26, 1997, announcing former Tata Steel and Air-India chief Russi Mody's decision to contest the next parliamentary elections from the Singhbhum (East) constituency in West Bengal which includes Jamshedpur, his stronghold. While the Congress, Bharatiya Janata Party as also the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (S) had reportedly offered to support his candidature, 80-year-old Mody, it seems was determined to contest as an independent.

"Mody *saab* would win hands down here. It is just a matter of time," said Umesh Singh of the National Students Union of India, one of the volunteers who organized Mody's 'Meet the People' program in July 1997. "Reacquaintance with the people was not all that necessary. For, even as he left the railway station, his car was stopped every 10 or 15 meters by people clamoring for an autograph," according to a write-up in *The Times of India* of July 25. "Almost everywhere he went for the next two days, he was given a rousing reception..."

In fact, his election campaign in Jamshedpur has already kicked off a controversy for he managed to give the slip to a security post at the sheet factory to hold parleys with TISCO (Tata Iron and Steel Company) workers and distribute *laddus*, stated an article in *The Economic Times* of December 2. In his discussions, Mody advocated that the management should be stopped from shutting down mills, and offered to take up labor related issues with

political support he hoped to acquire.

Such an unprecedented election campaign within the factory premises tantamounted to "breach of discipline and factory laws especially at a time when workers are trying to adhere to safety norms," according to the Tata Workers' Union and the Tata Mazdoor Union. As per *The Economic Times* report, TISCO charge-sheeted two of its security staffers who were caught napping when Mody's dark blue Tata Sumo and a white Maruti Gypsy zoomed into the sheet mill. Confessing to the offence, Mody, according to the news report, claimed sole responsibility for the act and offered to pay the fine.

To improve traffic congestion in Calcutta, to check pollution in vehicles, to maintain

old buildings, are the other issues of concern to Mody. "The reason for Calcutta's sorry state today is lack of definitive leadership, education, enterprise and discipline," pointed out Mody in an article in *The Economic Times* of November 25.

Since August last, Mody has also taken over as president of the Academy of Fine Arts in Calcutta, adds *The Economic Times* of November 25. Known for his stupendous collection of art and exquisite furniture, Mody had earlier served as trustee and committee member of this institute. As recalled in the article, only Rs 30,000 of his earnings repose in a bank account, the rest are invested in fine art.

To raise funds for the Academy, to draw the best talent in West Bengal and eastern India, to provide conducive facilities for young and poor artists to express their talent, to offer exhibition space are some of the priorities Mody has set for the Academy.



Mody: received a rousing reception

Photo: Spectravision

Better blood service

The Bombay Red Cross Blood Centre "has been standardized and upgraded to internationally approved standards thereby improving the quality of service," declared chairperson Dr Zarine Bharucha of the newly reopened wing which has started operating after almost two years. "With a new staff and support from technological companies, we hope to achieve a high level of functioning," she announced in an interview with *The Afternoon Despatch and Courier* of October 2, 1997.

The 55 blood banks in Bombay now have to be particularly alert to ensure that the HIV virus and Hepatitis C are not transmitted by blood donors to innocent patients. They make donors fill out a detailed questionnaire enquiring about recent illnesses. "Blood collection centers are not supposed to make any profit whatsoever. Authorities should also enforce certain standards and regulate blood banks in the city. There should be strict policing to curb the illegal blood collection centers," she advocated.

In America, the donor is legally responsible for the blood donated. In India, with the recent scare of contracting AIDS, the small pool of donors is shrinking, she observed. New measures though could change the attitude of donors, she hoped.

Cherish the child

Referring to genetics and child psychiatry, child development and developmental disorders of autism and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, Pune's Dr Roshen S. Master presented a masterly oration on "Research in child and adolescent psychiatry — a peep into its past, a forecast for its future" at the biennial conference of The Indian Association for Child and Adolescent Mental Health in Goa on November 21, 1997. Known for her pioneering work in this field, the Association's founder

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president also highlighted the research done on childhood depression, considered a rare occurrence a few years ago, and the physical and emotional trauma for children who are sexually abused.

Among the seniormost practising Zoroastrian psychiatrists in the world having worked with children for 43 years at child guidance clinics, Master "has spent her life teaching, writing, researching and educating the public about the preventive aspects of mental disease and retardation," notes a press release. When delivering the fraternity's prestigious Poona Psychiatrists' Association Oration Award, Master reiterated the need for research in child psychiatry so that her young colleagues are well-armed to face the 21st century with their mentally sick charges.

Since 1958 when she became the first lady fellow in psychiatry from the College of Physicians and Surgeons, Bombay, Master enjoys the distinction of being the only lady to date to have earned this honor, notes a write-up sent by her husband Sohrab.



Master: rehabilitate the retarded

In 1983, the government of Maharashtra appointed her the first professor emerita in psychiatry at Pune's B. J. Medical College. Nearly a decade prior to that she was invited to be among the signatories of the Founder Fellows of the Royal College of Psychiatry in London. She is also known for her pioneering work in the Kamayani Movement of starting schools and sheltered workshops for the mentally retarded and a college for training teachers for the mentally retarded.

Ever keen to remove the social stigma attached to mental disorders and mental retardation so that the afflicted persons can be rehabilitated in the mainstream of social life, Master has contributed articles in the media and broadcast over All India Radio and Doordarshan. Additionally she has contributed to scientific texts and journals and authored two books, mentions the write-up.

Spiritual storehouse

"We have lost the simple faith of our grandmothers; we don't really know where we stand or what we believe; and we helplessly watch our children drift into the powerful global seas of materialism sans spirit," observes the author Aspi D. Moddie in his introduction to the 27-page booklet, *Gathic Concepts: Explorations in our time*.

"In this heartless milieu, science and spirituality seem complimentary ways of exploring reality and self-awareness. In that spirit I try to explore the main concepts of the *Gathas* in our time, and go beyond simple, one-word abstract meanings, even though they sound lofty," he continues.

Starting with Ahura Mazda and ending with Kshathravairya, Moddie has devoted nearly three pages each to the different concepts he has analyzed. He introduces Ahura Mazda not only as one God, but the "spirit of truth," "the prime source of creation," who adopts the role of a teacher, friend, brother and father.

Kshathravairya is equated with "the good dominion" whether in this world or beyond, and is brought about by those whose actions are "in tune with the laws of truth and justice." Moddie then states, "For the small community of contemporary Zoroastrians, Kshathravairya is doubly difficult as we have to deal with many 'dominions,'" - the dominion of different states and countries, the dominion of internal organizations, local anjumans and regional federations, as also a World Zoroastrian Organisation (WZO). "We suffer from what Prof John Hinnells rightly described as 'apathy,' and we do not recognize it as an aspect of the ahrimanic force. Apathy



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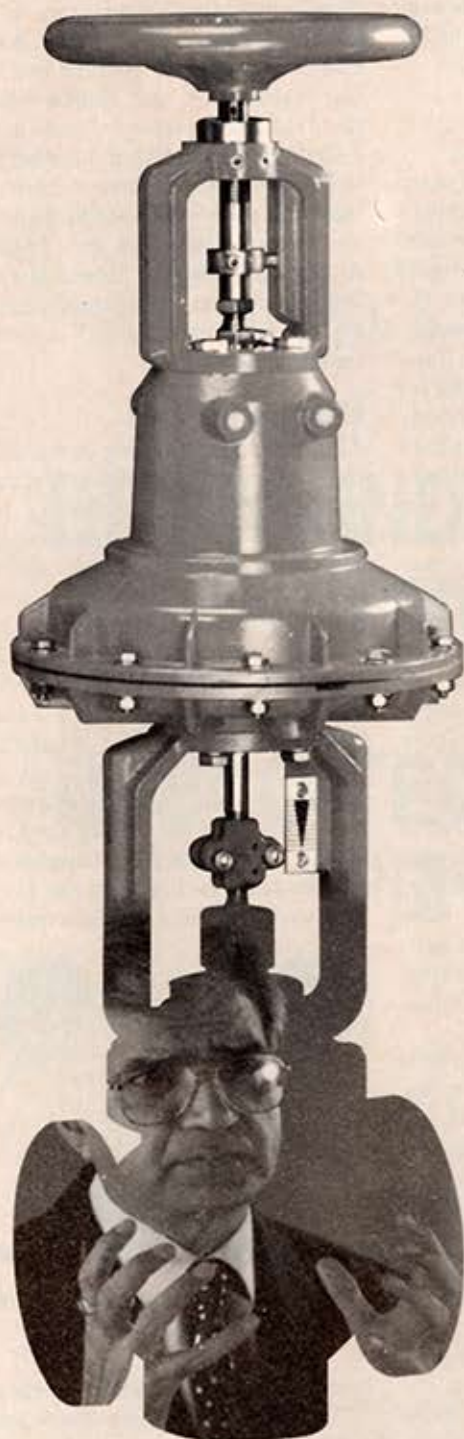
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and the good dominion can hardly go together, nor bring us to frasho-kereti, 'the great renovation,' yet another concept which Moddie scrutinizes.

Unlike the static concept of Genesis, a Creation once made in finality, with Adam bidden not to eat the fruit of knowledge; Zarathushtra conceives of an evolving, regenerating universe according to God's purpose and 'beneficent plan'; with man his *hamkar* or co-worker using his Vohuman or good mind, tending to His creation, thoughtfully carrying it forward to 'perfecting destiny.' The author then draws parallels between Zarathushtra's regenerating earth and universe in the doctrine of frasho-kereti and "the universe story" of Brian Swimme and Thomas Berry.

Certain concepts being intertwined, Moddie has linked them together in his study like Asha Vahishta and Spenta Armaity, Huveretat and Ameretat, Vohuman and Sraosha. Asha Vahishta has been defined as the highest truth and Spenta Armaity as the forces of good, right-mindedness or the holy attitude which propel towards Asha. Spenta is thus a guiding spirit which leads to truth. Huveretat is referred to as "perfecting integrity" and Ameretat as immortality. Moddie explains Vohuman as "the good or higher mind," saying "I link it with Sraosha or the concept of receiving a divine message; perhaps conscience in our daily lives might convey its meaning." Thereafter, this section continues to dwell on Vohuman, with no reference to Sraosha.

The reason for this may perhaps lie in "A Post-Script" where Moddie mentions, "If the central contemporary Gathic message — contemporary for all times and places — is the use of Vohuman, the higher mind, to make ethical, rational choices in all human situations, it may be interesting to see this issue in the context of similar choices in three classical cases. The first is that of Job in the *Bible*, the second of Arjuna in the *Gita*, and the third...that of Goethe's *Faust*." After elaborating on the conflict and trauma faced by each of these individuals Moddie concludes, "In the complexities of life, we are nearest to Arjuna, but without a God, Krishna to take our hard decisions. And the Mephistophelian devil in our lives lies in our egos, the source of our negative impulses, our resentments, our passions, our greed, our aggressions and then our self-lies, devoid of Vohumanic restraint, kindness, justice... we then lose out on life's four positive assets, health, love, welfare and creativity."

In this neat compilation, one would

have wished consistency in spelling in the key concepts, especially in the subheadings and in the text immediately following it. Funded by WZO, *Gathic Concepts* has been published by Moddie (Revills, 45 Cuffe Parade, Bombay 400005).

For the love of law and...

Philosophy, literature and law being noted constitutional expert Hormasji M. Seervai's "loves" until his demise in 1996, the family, aided by their friends, instituted gold medals and awards to perpetuate the legend's memory, notes a press release.



Seervai: in memory of the legend

The H. M. Seervai Gold Medal for the best essay on any topic in Indian constitutional and administrative law written by a law student from any recognized law college in India was conferred in August 1997 at the convocation of Bangalore's National Law School of India University. The chief justice of the Supreme Court of the Republic of South Africa Ismael Mahomed, who was the chief guest on the occasion, presented the award to Vikram Raghavan whose essay was adjudged the best from among the 20 entries received from Chennai, Patiala, Kottayam, Nagpur, Gauhati, Bangalore, Ernakulam, Pune, Calicut and Pondicherry.

Two students who had passed their MA with a first class from Bombay University were also fortunate to receive the H. M. Seervai Gold Medals at the convocation in December 1997: Kalpana Lade for securing the highest marks in western contemporary philosophy; and Patrick Coetho for his mastery in English literature.

The H. M. Seervai Career Training Award is to be awarded annually to women for the respected advocate firmly believed that "women, should have training for careers, because a woman who had (or could have) a job or self-employment could not be easily bullied." Bellurkur Uttaram who is training in Bombay for the making and fitting of orthopedic prostheses qualified for this award. The funding for this award was made possible thanks to a donation of one lakh rupees to the Women Graduates Union by Elizabeth Reuben (her father, the late Justice D. E. Reuben, was the former chief justice of the Patna High Court) whose family have been long standing friends of

the Seervais, states the write-up.

Seervai himself had won prestigious laurels including an honorary fellowship of the British Academy, the Living Legend of Law Award from the International Bar Association; the Padma Vibhushan, the Dadabhoy Naoroji Prize, it was recalled. He has prohibited further editions of his monumental, three-volume, *Constitutional Law of India* which is currently in its fourth edition. But his *Legend and Reality*, providing a historical record of India's partition is "fortunately not subject to any such prohibition," according to family sources.

One up his belt

After a month's training in martial arts in Canada in 1997 under Shihan Ron Yamanaka, Bombay's Sensei Jehangir Shroff was awarded the 5th dan black belt and appointed president and chief instructor of Yudansha Kobujitsu Karate Doh Federation (India), notes a press release.

Associated with martial arts for the past 19 years, Shroff has trained under veterans like Vispy Kapadia, Pervaz Mistry and Hoshi Batliwalla. He has trained and participated in tournaments not only in India, but also Japan, Bangkok, Philippines, Malaysia, Singapore and Hong Kong, as notes his bio data. Among the mementos earned by him are a medal from the Singapore-Taekwondo Federation and a trophy at the



Shroff (right) receiving 5th dan black belt award from Yamanaka

Malaysia-India friendly tournament.

This martial arts instructor who is also a science graduate designs beginner, intermediate and advanced karate sessions imparting knowledge on self-defence and self-discipline at the various classes he conducts at Don Bosco High School, St Joseph High School, Sir J. J. Primary School, Scholars High School and the Athornan Madressa.

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Nusserwanji Burjorji Kadwa
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Master-Moos (with head covered) receiving award from Makles at the Polish consulate

by the Polish Academy of Medicine (PAM) was for the first time presented to an Asian, Prof Meher Master-Moos, on December 19, 1997, as notes a press release. Founder president of Zoroastrian College, Mazdayasnie Monasterie, All India Shah Behram Baug Society for Scientific and Educational Research, Master-Moos joins the band of 16 awardees, including eight Nobel Prize winners to have reportedly received the Albert Schweitzer Gold Medal. The consul for Poland, Ireneusz Makles, also conferred on her the certificate confirming her honorary membership of PAM.

Yet another honor received by her was the Bhaskar Award at the Mystique India

systems and practices for the benefit of mankind," was presented to "50 eminent personalities...to commemorate 50 years of India's independence," notes the booklet published on the occasion.

Ancient cosmic wisdom and healing based on color therapy, aroma therapy, magnet therapy, pyramid therapy, sound/music/mantras therapy as also many other systems have been listed as "her holistic health courses" in the booklet introducing Master and the other awardees.

An author of over 15 books on law, religion and alternative medicine, her first book on dual nationality and the Constitution of India had been released by the

President of India, V. V. Giri at Rashtrapati Bhavan in 1970, states the write-up. A part-time professor at Bombay University's postgraduate law department for the last 25 years, she has been referred to "as an international jurist (who) has travelled extensively in many countries and attended many international conferences as a distinguished speaker."

SPOTLIGHT

The first lady food and beverage manager of The Taj Mahal Hotel, Shirin Batliwala will, effective March 1, 1998, be taking over as general manager of the Hotel. This appointment followed soon after she took over as area director of The President Hotel, Taj Residency, Nasik, Taj Residency, Aurangabad and Taj Residency, Indore. Starting as the food and beverage manager of The President Hotel, she was instrumental in establishing Trattoria, The Library Bar and Gulzar, acknowledges *Stopwatch* (September-November 1997), the newsletter launched by The President Hotel.



Compiled by Parinaz M. Gandhi

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Dalal's domain

Multifarious voluntary commitments earn Maneck Dalal an OBE

Dilnavaz E. Bhagwagar

A Parsi married to an Englishwoman, or an Indian settled in England is not uncommon. What sets apart Maneck Dalal, former vice-chairman of Tata Limited, London, is that he has been chairman, president or patron of innumerable academic, cultural, religious and business organizations. So intense has been his involvement and contribution to each — be it the Zoroastrian House in London, the British Council of Churches, the Royal Commonwealth Society for the Blind, the London Chamber of Commerce and Industry or the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan in London, to name just a few — that Queen Elizabeth II honored Dalal with the Order of the British Empire in 1997. The OBE is the equivalent of India's Padma Bhushan.

It was an event of great pride and pleasure for both Maneck and his wife Kathleen (Kay) to be so honored at Buckingham Palace in the 50th year of India's independence. "Only three people were allowed to accompany Maneck for the investiture," says Kay. "It was a tossup to decide which of our three daughters should be left out!"

Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Transport, the British Institute of Management and the Royal Society of Arts, Dalal comes from a family of lawyers and judges. His grandfather, Maneckji Nanavati was the first Indian to be called to the Bench. Following family tradition, Maneck studied English law at Trinity Hall, Cambridge and was called to the Bar in 1945.

But fate steered Dalal away from law and into establishing and nurturing India's national carrier, Air-India International. Dalal wanted to join Tatas but J. D. Choksi, senior director and legal advisor to Tata Sons suggested that he needed to study and be conversant with Indian law before he could be taken on. Keen to start working because he wanted to get married, Dalal offered to work in any capacity. Impressed with the young man, J. R. D. Tata (JRD) put him in charge of Air-India's New Delhi office.

And so, with love and youth on their side and the enthusiasm of those heady years, Kay and Maneck came to Delhi in 1947 when the Indian sub-continent was a seething cauldron of hate and suspicion and of families torn apart following the turbulence of Partition.



Dalal with wife Kay

"We lived from day to day, never knowing what the next would bring," recalls Maneck. "We were asked to fly Muslims out of Delhi, to the safety of Lahore. Our own household servants were Muslims but we managed to save their lives by smuggling them out. In retaliation, a message of dire warning was marked on our front door — a black cross with a dagger through it."

"In the middle of the night, we would get phone calls threatening our lives," shudders Kay, now a grandmother but who at that point of time was expecting her first

baby. "You have to have lived through those times, to appreciate the luxury of a peaceful night of sleep."

JRD was already busy with plans for starting an international airline. As soon as his proposal was accepted by the Government of India, he asked Dalal, who by then had more than proved his mettle, to set up the London office. "I found it very flattering, to be given charge of London," says Dalal.

"The winter of 1948, in war-ravaged London, was another testing time for us," recalls Kay. Trudging through slush and snow, coping with freezing cold and shortages of every kind, Maneck was determined to succeed. "Nobody had any experience," he remembers, "but we had a vision and we worked towards it. We literally started from scratch. A caravan at Heathrow, with oil heaters to warm us, was our first office." From those humble beginnings, Air-India International rose to become one of the finest airlines in the skies and Dalal who started as manager, reigned as Air-India's regional director in London from 1959 to 1977.

After retiring from Air-India International, Dalal was appointed managing director of Tata Limited, London (the designation altered to vice chairman in 1989) and group director of Tata Industries, a post he voluntarily relinquished in 1992. Additionally, he had served as adviser for tourism and civil aviation, and as chairman of the Foreign Airlines Association of UK.

Kay and Maneck had met in wartime England during the mid '40s, while he was at Cambridge. The University of London where Kay studied was evacuated to Cambridge during the war. The beautiful blue-eyed 18-year-old met the dapper young Dalal at a university social. They have been together ever since! "I strongly believe arranged marriages are the best," says Maneck, taking me aback for a moment. "Ours was arranged," he continues.



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The Dalals have a delightful sense of humor, mostly at their own expense. Talking of the adjustments and problems they had to overcome before they got married, Kay says, "We discussed everything under the sun but money, and that became our greatest problem in the first few years of our marriage. Maneck told me that his surname 'Dalal' meant 'broker.' But he didn't tell me we'd go broker and broker!"

"As India celebrates 50 years of freedom from the British, I celebrate 50 years of bondage to a Britisher," jokes Maneck. "But I wouldn't have it any other way."

It wasn't always smooth sailing. Kay's mother, steeped in the Church, was most upset about her daughter wanting to marry a non-Christian and that too, an Indian. She was convinced that all Indians had more than one wife and her lovely Kathleen would be part of a harem! Both the fathers were more supportive. They exchanged beautiful letters, expressing and overcoming their fears of mixed marriages. They only asked that the young couple wait for a year, to be sure of their feelings.

Looking back on their long married life, the Dalals agree that a difference in religion is not a major obstacle to wedded

happiness. What is important is mental compatibility, similar social backgrounds and family support.

Dalal, who to this day speaks a more *shudh* Gujarati than many an Indian Parsi and who has great pride in his Parsi lineage, is however unhappy about the atti-

**"You have to have lived
through those times,
to appreciate the
luxury of a peaceful
night of sleep"**

tude of the dichards in the community. "To my knowledge, nowhere in Zoroastrianism does it say, no one but a person born to it can be a (Zoroastrian). It is after all an approach to God — a way of life," he opines. "I believe that non-Parsi spouses should be allowed and encouraged to attend all our ceremonies." He feels that the more orthodox Parsis, be they in London, Montreal or Bombay, are only alienating non-Parsi spouses and the children of such marriages by their rigidity.

At a function at the Zoroastrian House in London, a respected member of the Parsi Punchayet of Bombay came to give a talk, at the end of which there was an informal question-answer session. As one of the non-Zoroastrian members of the audience, Kay asked: "My church is always open to you. Will the time ever come when I can pray by my husband's side, in his place of worship?" The speaker wagged his index finger under her nose and replied with a very emphatic, "No, no never," she relates.

The incident has not embittered the Dalals at all. They prefer to gently steer clear of religious controversy. "We think of people as people. Not as Hindus or Muslims, Parsis or Christians." Their three daughters, Tina, Suzy and Caroline follow no formal religion, believing simply in the goodness and humanity of man to man.

Though he has divested himself of corporate responsibility, Maneck and Kay retain their zest for life. Every winter they migrate to the warmer climes of India, nesting in the sights, smells and sounds of Bombay, meeting with old friends and making new ones. Winter over, they fly back to Tall Trees, their home in Hampton, England.



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Bonhomie in Baroda

A grand resurgence awaits the community, reiterated the speakers at the 11th All India Zoroastrian Youth Seminar

Sarosh Bana

That the Zoroastrian youth conferences have become avidly awaited annual affairs was starkly evident in Baroda which hosted the 11th All India Zoroastrian Youth Seminar from November 2 to 4, 1997. Indeed, by the encouraging turnouts that are now gracing these engagements, these seminars are fast becoming a Parsi mini version of the *kumbh mela*.

As many as 300 youngsters in their T-shirts, jeans and jaunty caps had turned up to participate in the three-day event, swarming the tree-lined grounds of the Behramji Seervai Parsi Dharamshala where it was held. Mostly in their teens and early 20s, they had come from as many as 20 different cities and towns all over India, the majority of them from Bombay, Pune and Ahmedabad, apart from the expectedly large segment from Baroda, of course.

Some of them were veterans of previous youth seminars, capable of working their way through the cluttered agenda of the three days with utter nonchalance. Some were more fresh faced, with an eager beaver look about them, waiting to devour every bit of information, every talk delivered from the podium.

The next three days proved beyond doubt how intelligent, articulate and talented most of them really were. The sort of brood that inspires confidence in the community's future. Probably many felt likewise, since a common refrain from most of those who took the mike was that all was not lost for the Parsis and a grand resurgence was in store... and inevitable.

Every year, the event is organized by the Zoroastrian youth of the host city under the overall patronage of the Federation of Zoroastrian Youth Associations of India (FOZYA). In Baroda, the hosts were

the Baroda United Zoroastrian Youth (BUZY, pronounced "busy" and not "boozy").

Undoubtedly it is a daunting task ranging from transport, accommodation, boarding, mementos and floral tributes for invitees and guest speakers to hostel lodg-



Unvalla releasing the souvenir, flanked by Parabia (left) and Cooper

ing for the young participants, meals and tea at the venue, generating funds through advertisements in the souvenir and arranging for the evening functions and group outings. As on previous occasions, this Seminar too began with a jashan ceremony a day earlier.

Welcoming the delegates, BUZY president Zaxis Parabia pointed out that the organizational activities had commenced some six months in advance by his extended team of volunteers who evidently had seen to the minutest details. In his inaugural address, he also expressed concern at the alarming decline in numbers of the community, predicting that Zoroastrians as an ethnic folk will become extinct "over the next two to three centuries" if immediate measures are not forthcoming.

He urged the participants to bear this in mind, suggesting this aspect as the theme of the Seminar. (There were some rather unprintable solutions proffered from the back rows.)

Nadirshah P. Unvalla, the high priest of the Bangalore fire-temple, was the special invitee and he lit the ceremonial oil lamp and released the souvenir at the inaugural session. In his remarks, he referred to the controversy in Calcutta between the orthodox and reformist Parsis, the latter disapproving disposal of the dead by the dokhmenashini sky burial system being followed at present, and preferring instead either cremation or conventional burial. "Dokhmenashini is the time-tested method the Parsis have practised over millennia and has a scientific and hygienic basis to it," Unvalla declared. "Those touting cremation must realize what might happen at times when there is no firewood or there are recurrent power failures."

FOZYA president Porus Karanjawalla traced his organization's history from its inception in 1991 and referred to the first of the youth seminars held in Delhi in 1987. Regretting the lack of representation from Delhi and Hyderabad at the Baroda event, he indicated that these seminars now cost as much as five lakh rupees and that Parsi youth nationwide should avail of this annual opportunity to get together and network amongst themselves. "Such interaction is vital for our youth, because it will help stave off the termite of intercaste marriage that is feasting away at our foundations," he maintained.

Shavak F. Patel, president of the Shree Parsi Panchayat, Vadodara, praised the hard work put in by BUZY and termed it the youth wing of the Panchayat. He said the Seminar's success will be "another



Top row (at the inaugural and valedictory functions) from left: Ankleshwaria, Karanjawalla, Modi, Unvalla, Parabia, Jal Patel, Cooper, Irani, and BUZY members with Vyarawala, Shavak Patel and Guzder. Center row (from left): Shavak Patel, Karanjawalla and Modi. Bottom row: the audience in attendance at a session, and an evening of dance. Photos: Sarosh Bana



milestone in the progress of our youth." The BUZY team consisted of Cyrus Cooper, the Seminar's chief coordinator, Parabia, Aadil Bavadam, Mehabin Bharucha, Hutoxi Ankleshwaria, Farhad Wadia, Adil Wadia, Kaizad Engineer, Parizad Mirzan and Urvakshi Katpitia.

In his talk, chief guest and eminent solicitor Nadir A. Modi remarked, "Whenever fellow Zoroastrians foregather, there is great electricity in the air; of *Parsipanu*; of joy in this togetherness." He urged the youth not to believe in the stars, but in themselves — "Your religion is the star." He added that he believed in palmistry insofar as "our future was in the palm of our hands." Recalling Winston Churchill's

quote of "seldom has so much been owed by so many to so few," he believed this could well be said of the Parsis also.

Citing the varied and stupendous accomplishments of the community over the years Modi observed, "We Parsis are genetically programmed for success; a Parsi failure is an anachronism — you just cannot fail if you do your best."

He pointed out that there might be many Parsis who were poor but who have raised happy, stable families. Narrating the famed anecdote of our earliest settlers in India dissolving sugar in a bowl brimming with milk, he stressed that the sugar symbolized the elements of vitality and sincerity that the community had imbued

its host country with since the time it had settled here.

According to Modi, Zoroastrians are epitomized by three 'e's and four 'i's, namely, enthusiasm, enterprise, endurance, industry, initiative, integrity and intelligence. He firmly rebutted any talk of reservations for the Parsi community in India, declaring, "We are not scheduled castes or tribes that we require such sops; we are an independent folk that has learnt to progress by the dint of its own efforts, honesty and dexterousness." According to him, "It is always good to get something for nothing, but how beneficial will this be for us in the long run?"

FOZYA general secretary Parvez Irani



Far left and center: Participants at the talent contest. Right: Delegate Cyrus Vaid shares his views. Below: Karanjia (left) and Patrawala. Photos: Sarosh Bana

delivered a vote of thanks that was followed by a slide show on Iran by World Zoroastrian Organisation (WZO), India committee member Diniar D. Mehta. Mehta also runs his own Dini Travels which takes tourists regularly to the country where Zoroastrianism has its roots. His slides showed that women in the Iranian countryside are not as hemmed in by the rigid code of conduct as they are in the cities, with his women travellers able to move around in their salwar kameez instead of the mandatory hijab. Besides with the recently-installed youthful and progressive President, Mohammed Ali Khatami, conservatism in that country was not that stifling as it had been in the past, he said.

The afternoon session had the delegates playing the Queen of Sheba after which there was a talent contest. Some of the delegates dazzled with their talent, moving and singing almost like professionals, and there were some humorous skits as well, as also one item of a guileless volunteer being tattooed (in colors) right down his back. The last item had some of the youngsters raising questions with the speaker the next morning whether it was true that bodies of Parsis sporting tattoos cannot be consigned to the Towers of Silence. The speaker acknowledged that though our scriptures do not specifically ordain that tattoo is taboo, he had been informed that the process "disturbs the body, mutilates the skin cells and can also cause cancer eventually."

That evening, after dinner — all the delicious meals for the event were handled by Cherag Caterers — there was dance at the Dharamshala's spacious hall. The rousing beat and the blinding lights set the

mood for the night and had the young — as also the not so young — working up a sweat on the dance floor.

With the morning sessions starting at 9 each day, preceded of course by breakfast at 8, most youngsters arrived bleary-eyed for the first talks of the day. They also disapproved of the organizers banging on the doors of the hostel where they were lodged and which was a good 15-minute walk from the venue. In their keenness to ensure that the scheduled speakers of the morning sessions were not accosted by empty chairs, the organizers had been more than enthusiastic in dragging the delegates out of their slumber. After some peace talks, it was agreed that the banging would stop and that future conferences would devise a more delegate-friendly timetable.

The morning of November 3 had Ervad (Dr) Ramiyar Karanjia, the young principal of the Dadar Athornan Boarding Madressa, speaking on the "Relevance of Zoroastrian Paradigm in Modern Times." He said Zoroastrianism teaches us to fortify ourselves against physical, mental, moral and spiritual evil because it helps us awaken our consciousness. "Unless we recognize what we are up against, it is

difficult to surmount it," he mentioned. "That is why the bedrock of our religion is progress, prosperity and perfection."

He pointed out that in our scriptures, anghra mainyu or ahriman epitomized the dark, decaying forces; but they were not some demons lording over some evil empire, but realities in our own mindset. According to him,

Zoroastrianism postulates that there is no individual salvation but a collective one. It is for this that we need to look to the progress of not only our own, but of all those around us, he explained.

Asked if he could prove that God exists, Karanjia replied: "The best of scientists have not been able to prove this; it is a question of faith. But the more you think of a higher, superior force above us, the more you will sense the need for one."

The afternoon session involved a spirited debate on the subject, "Attachment to Family and Overprotectiveness is Hampering the Growth of our Community Youth." The team of protagonists felt that these attributes were indeed stifling and marred individuality, while those against said they were the key to a stable family life.

The evening was set aside for a visit — in six coaches — to the Sayajirao Gardens and then the Ajwa and Nimeta gardens. A freak shower scuttled the proposed campfire at Nimeta, but the dinner was great and so also the fashion show put up by the group from Pune. This evening too terminated with the inevitable dance.

Former Maharashtra minister and presently member of the National Commission for Minorities, Marazban Patrawala, in his talk on November 4 on "Reservation of Parsis as a Minority Community," was categorical that reservation was indeed the need of the hour. "Every year, some 30 lakh boys and girls compete for seats in engineering, medical and other colleges," he remarked. "And I have seen Parsi students with 95 percent marks sidelined by scheduled caste and tribe candidates with 46-47 percent marks."

Though Patrawala realized that many

continued on page 40



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Knight in shining armor

Dr Jamshed J. Irani's contribution to promoting Indo-British trade earned him a knighthood from Queen Elizabeth II

Dilnavaz E. Bhagwagar

The honorary knighthood conferred on him by Queen Elizabeth II on October 14, 1997 "came as a pleasant but complete surprise," said Dr Jamshed Jiji Irani, managing director of The Tata Iron and Steel Company Limited (TISCO). "It was just the coincidence of being in the right place at the right time." The words were a reflection of the unpretentiousness of a man who has more honors and degrees attached to his name than you can hope to remember.

Irani explained that he was present at the first meeting between former prime ministers John Major and Narasimha Rao which aimed at vitalizing trade relations between the two countries. Major found the Indian wicket so good, he wanted Great Britain to go up in the batting order of business relations with India. And so an Indo British Partnership (IBP) for increased trade was formed. Irani, who was already president of the Confederation of Indian Industry, was named chairman of the Indian side of the IBP. Under his chairmanship, Indo-British trade grew from one billion pounds to three and a half billion in four years. It also helped Indian industry to access British technology. Irani looks upon his award as a recognition for all those in Indian industry who worked to improve commerce between India and Britain.

Did Irani have to kneel before the Queen and be tapped on the shoulders by a sword before arising as Sir James? It was nothing quite as dramatic, he laughed. It was a simple, dignified ceremony at the British



Irani with Mother Teresa at the inauguration of the leprosy hospital, Nirmal Hriday

High Commission in New Delhi — no photographers or TV coverage allowed — where the Queen signed a scroll and handed it to him and put a ribbon with the KBE around his neck, making him a Knight of the British Empire. He will not be addressed as 'Sir' but may add a KBE after his name.

"Like all good Parsis of that generation, my parents were great admirers of British royalty and would have been delighted to know that I actually shook hands with *apri Rani*," said Irani.

Irani was born in Nagpur on June 2, 1936 (incidentally, June 2 was also the date of Queen Elizabeth's coronation). He grew up in the Empress Mill quarters where his father worked. This mill was Jamsetji

Tata's first industrial venture. Maybe, Jamshed derived his name from the great man!

Graduating as a gold medalist from the Science College, Nagpur in 1958, the young man of 22 went on to the University of Sheffield in Great Britain from where he did his master's degree and doctorate in metallurgy.

Jamshed's father, the late Jiji Irani, was a positive and powerful influence on his son's formative years. Jamshed's sense of mission, his pursuit of excellence, his love for cricket were qualities ingrained in him by his father. As a young boy his father once told him, "Out of every 10 people born, nine have to work for the 10th. Prepare yourself to be the 10th."

Irani has done that and more. As managing director of TISCO, he administers an industrial empire of 68,000 employees with an annual turnover of Rs 6,400 crores. Since taking over the helm of affairs from Russi Mody in 1992, the turnover has doubled. The government's liberalization policy came as a boon and a bane. From a protected industry in a sellers' market, it was thrown open to the hazards of globalization and competition. On the plus side, it allowed Irani to bring into full play his technical expertise and experience in modernizing and expanding the steel plant, at a cost of Rs 9,000 crores.

TISCO has not been immune to the nationwide slowdown in industry in 1996-97. Irani, however, is very optimistic about



the steel industry in general and TISCO in particular. "In the past, we had a near monopoly but now we need to be increasingly aware of the needs of the customer. A change of product mix, with greater emphasis on speciality steels, will be the trend in the coming years," he opined.

TISCO has reached its expansion potential at Jamshedpur. Tatas have now set their sights on an integrated steel plant that will come up at Gopalpur-On-Sea in Orissa for which 2,700 acres of land have already been acquired. This project will produce 2.5 million tonnes of steel in the first phase, Sanjay Singh, head of corporate relations at TISCO, provided the details. "Steel plants of the future," said Irani, "will have to come up at port locations for

the economic import of raw materials and the export of finished goods."

When I asked him if politics and more specifically politicians were a major problem, he replied in the negative. "They may have their scams and scandals, but with us Laloo (Prasad Yadav, former Bihar chief minister) has always played fair. He has never made an unreasonable request. And we have never turned down a reasonable request." In times of natural calamity, in programs that protect the environment or promote the beautification of Bihar, in welfare activities like building a children's ward, help has been sought from TISCO and it has been given. Making an apt if unusual comparison, Irani said, "Even politicians know that in an Udipi restaurant you cannot get

tandoori chicken." Of course, the signboard has to be loud and clear!

Most brilliant young Parsis who go abroad to study generally stay back to

Top row (from left): Irani greeting J. R. D. Tata; being felicitated by Queen Elizabeth II; at the controls;

Photo: Palashranjan Bhaumick

Bottom row (from left): Irani with Ratan Tata and K. C. Mehra; delivering a speech at a felicitation by the Parsi community in Jamshedpur, seated are Eruch Surti, Homai Bodhanwalla, Khurshed Bhesania, Daisy Irani, Homi Bodhanwalla and Silloo Surti; with wife Daisy and children Niloufer, Zubin and Tanaaz



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Jamshed Irani – the wonder boy grows to be an achiever; (below) places a ring on Daisy's finger



work and make their future in the country of adoption. What made Irani return to India? "I always intended to come back," he said. "Since I had gone as a Tata scholar, the J. N. Tata Endowment kept track of my progress; and it was through them that J. R. D. (Tata) sent a message: 'If he returns to India, let him first knock on the doors of TISCO.'"

Which is what he did. Irani vividly recalled his first visit to Jamshedpur, some 30 years ago, when he was interviewed by Sir Jehangir Ghandy, Keki Kutar and Savak Nanavaty. It was also the day that John F. Kennedy was assassinated. Walking through the town that evening, pondering over his own future, Irani sat down on a culvert — not far from where he lives now. Watching the glow of the blast furnaces against a rapidly darkening sky, he made his decision: "I will join (this company) and one day I will make it to the top slot." A slogan in larger than life letters catches the eye as one enters the TISCO steel plant today: The will to work. The will to win.

Irani has immense pride in and innate loyalty to the name and prestige of the Tatas. "I have grown in the shadow of the House of Tatas," he said. "My father and before him my grandfather worked for Tatas. My earliest schooling was at the J. N. Tata School in Nagpur. Later, I went abroad as a Tata scholar. Now I have the privilege of working for Tatas." He is today also a director on the board of Tata



Sons Limited, Tata Industries Limited, The Tata Engineering and Locomotive Company Limited and Tata Exports.

The greatest inspiration of Irani's adult life was J.R.D. Tata. He reveres the memory of the man, who was "a second father to me."

With his wife Daisy and children Zubin, Niloufer and Tanaaz, Irani presents a picture-perfect family. Daisy is a delightful, down-to-earth, fun person. In a city dominated by the steel giant, she could easily let the importance of her position make her an unapproachable Lady D. Instead, she is a warm and helpful friend, a caring mother and a supportive wife. All this without losing her own identity. With energy and interest, Daisy heads dozens of TISCO's welfare activities. Her spontaneity and sincerity can

reach out to both friends and strangers. She has the ability to put everyone at ease.

"In so many ways, Jamshed and I are different," said Daisy. "I am unorganized and haphazard, Jamshed is meticulous to a T. I am easygoing and tolerant and can be a diplomat, when I need to. Jamshed does not suffer fools, will not tolerate incompetence and cannot make small talk." Perhaps these very differences make them a perfect match.

The one thing they are both emphatic about is maintaining family values and closeness. They make a conscious effort not to let Irani's busy schedule and important position come in the way of being a warm and loving family, which includes their parents, sisters and brothers.

Jamshed and Daisy take care not to let the children lose touch with ground realities. Tanaaz, their youngest child, studies in Bombay, lives in a student hostel, commutes by bus and local train and for holidays returns home to Jamshedpur on the *Gitanjali*.

Niloufer, the older of the two girls is a fiercely independent young lady, doing her management training from the Xavier Labor Relations Institute in Jamshedpur. She is firm about not wanting to go abroad for further studies, and not using her father's connections to further her academic or career opportunities.

Zubin, the eldest of the Irani children, seems set to follow illustrious footsteps. At present he is in Boston, USA, doing his MS in materials science. As a Tata scholar, of course.

Daisy talks of a very satisfying moment they had as parents, just before Zubin left for the USA. As every mother would, she was giving him advice on the merits of hard work, of being able to choose between right and wrong and of adhering to core values. Zubin just said, "Mom, you don't have to tell me about this. I have seen Dad and you live it."

Since the children have grown up and

**"Do what you say
and say what you
think." This has been his
guiding principle**

spread their own wings, Daisy travels everywhere with Jamshed. "Otherwise, I'd see very little of him," she laughed. She is also there to help him unwind and take care of social obligations for which Jamshed has little time and taste. He enjoys good food, good friends and a good game of cards. A combination of all three, make a perfect Sunday for him. The only other times of total relaxation are gazing at patterns of clouds in a blue sky when he is flying, or watching a quiet sunset in the cooling pond at the steel plant. In these brief moments of communication with nature, his spirit is rejuvenated.

The Parsi presence in TISCO and other Tata enterprises in Jamshedpur is minimal. The total strength of the community is about 500 persons of which a bare 25 are directly employed at TISCO. The reason for this is two-fold, according to Irani. For one, the Parsi population of India has

dispersed and declined. The second reason is that young people from Bombay are reluctant to come to Bihar. Which is a pity because Jamshedpur as a city and Tatas as an industrial house are unique in the amenities they provide their employees. Apart from medical and welfare benefits, the Parsis have their own beautiful agiary, aramgah, housing colony, hostel, hall and school that are managed by an efficient committee, headed at present by Behli Bodhanwalla.

While being immensely proud of their identity as Parsis, Jamshed and Daisy are professed "liberals" when it comes to touchy issues within the community, like intercommunal marriages, performing the navjote ceremony of children of such marriages, allowing non-Parsis to pay their last respects to the dead, etc.

But suppose, if one of their children decided to marry outside the community, how would they react? "There would be a stab of disappointment," admitted Jamshed, "but we would never object. Not if the person in question was a fine individual from a good family."

They are also agreed that to stem dwindling numbers, we must accept children of intercommunal marriages into the faith.



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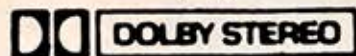
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We must also shed our "superior because we are Parsis" attitude and allow non-Parsis for the last rites of the dead and other such ceremonies. Jamshed's own mother passed away a few months ago and all their friends and colleagues were present at the funeral. "The Parsi community of Jamshedpur, both priest and laity, are progressive," said Daisy.

"The Parsi community
of Jamshedpur,
both priest and laity,
are progressive"

More than upholding dogma, Irani believes in perpetuating the fine basic qualities of Zoroastrianism. For him, the most important of these are truth and honesty. "Do what you say and say what you think." This has been his guiding principle.

The man's candor comes across as the most forceful facet of his character. Talking about him, Singh says, "In any discussion or meeting, be it with government, labor unions or board of directors, Dr Irani can say 'no' without fear or favor. Despite this, he has the ability to change the mood of people across the table, from extreme animosity to extreme amiability."

It is always hard to capture the essence of a man but S. Pandey, vice president of human resource management at TISCO, came pretty close to it when he quoted from a Sanskrit shloka: "A *sajjan* or good man is like a coconut — hard and rough on the exterior, but full of goodness inside. *Adurjan* is like a betel nut — smooth and slippery on the surface but hard as nails inside. Dr Irani has the qualities of a coconut."

Irani admits that life at the top can be lonely because once you are there, the buck stops with you. Way back in 1992 when he took over as managing director of TISCO in turbulent times, he set down a three-point credo for himself and he has tried to live and work by it: First of all, develop a clear, personal vision of what one wants to accomplish with one's life. Secondly, tell the truth about current realities. Never say things merely to be pleasant or say one thing and do another. Lastly, do the tough things no one else wants to do. It is so easy to say 'yes' but somebody has to stand up and say 'no.'

His code of conduct has served him well in his day and has led to the making of a knight. Sir Lancelot in shining armor may belong to another century, another age. But Dr Jamshed Irani, KBE, belongs to us now.

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Billimoria's reel image

With the launching of the Special Interest Publications Division, Hoshang Billimoria has helped Tata Donnelley venture into one more uncharted field

Gustasp Irani

"*Better Photography* is only the beginning, the first of many specialized magazines that we will be publishing. It ushers in a new era of special interest journalism and publications in India," says the managing director of Tata Donnelley Limited (formerly Tata Press) Hoshang S. Billimoria. The answer to why the Special Interest Publications Division of the company was launched with a photography magazine is simple enough, according to Billimoria who is on the editorial advisory board of the magazine: "Because I am a keen photographer myself."

And a very good one, we might add, for we soon discovered that many of the photographs (without credit lines) that wowed us in the early issues of the magazine were from his personal stock. "In future issues, we will use less of my photographs and more of contributors'," says Billimoria who uses a Nikon system and enjoys landscape photography (favorite location: the Arlberg Alpine area in Austria).

In June 1997 the company launched its Special Interest Publications Division with the first issue of *Better Photography*. There have been a few Indian photography magazines around, but none as committed to the art as this one. Indeed, if you have shied away from photography because it makes you feel hopelessly incompetent, or because you figured that you could not buy a good camera in India, *Better Photography* will change your point of view. Between its covers you will discover that photography is not the ogre you thought it to be; and that there is, in fact, a wide selection of world-class cameras available right here in the country at prices that won't burn a hole in your pocket — not a big one anyway.

True, the first few issues of *Better Photography* seem to be targeted at beginners, snap-shooters and amateurs, but seri-

ous amateurs and professionals will find it worthwhile to browse through its pages to see what is happening in the domestic market. They will also appreciate the fact that the photographs are printed on quality paper and the editors have given generous double-spread layouts to highlight their details.

The editorial content is a mix of basic tips, interviews with eminent photographers, equipment test reports, contests and trade news. The back of the magazine is devoted to an im-

pressive list of cameras available in India along with their main features and their prices in rupees.

In the first few issues, the magazine addressed itself to the basics of still and video photographs. The inaugural issue carried articles on the ABC of photography — apertures, shutter speeds, metering, etc. There was also a pictorial step by step demonstration of a simple task that has led to endless heartburn — that of loading and unloading a camera with film. The second issue followed up by detailing everything you wanted to know about video photography but did not know who to ask.

According to Billimoria, the response to the magazine has exceeded expectations. By the second issue itself, they had a subscriber base of 5,000 and a print order of 16,000, and are projecting a print order of 25,000 by the sixth issue. "Today, you can get almost any kind of equipment right here in India. With more Indians starting to travel abroad and within the country, photography is

becoming an increasingly popular hobby. What *Better Photography* has been able to do is identify a niche market and satisfy it," says Billimoria.

But photography is only one side of Billimoria's interests. He enjoys what he refers to as his "aquatic life (the fish swimming in the aquarium at his residence)," his tennis and is a 'spirited' Rotarian on the board of directors of the Rotary Club of Bombay. Indeed, Billimoria has served on the board of many companies, including Thomas Cook, Cable Corporation of India Limited and Tata Share Registry Limited, amongst others.

The key to Billimoria's many achievements, even in his youth, has been commitment. He stood first in St Xavier's High School, Bombay in his Secondary School Certificate examination. In the Inter Commerce examination in 1970 he secured a first rank, as well as a first class at the BCom exam of Bombay University topping the accounting and auditing discipline. In London, where he went to study accounting, he won the Deloitte Plender Prize at both the intermediate and final examinations of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of England and Wales.

Billimoria worked for five years in London with Whinney Murray and Company (now Ernst and Young), one of the largest firms of chartered accountants in the world, before returning to India in 1977 as a partner in S. B. Billimoria and Company. In 1988 he moved to Tata Sons Limited and two years later took over the reins of Tata Press.

Within a few years he succeeded in turning Tata Press from a loss-



Billimoria: keen photographer



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"Together, to the 21st century"

A reader's reaction to some of the happenings
at the Second World Zoroastrian Youth Congress

Aspi D. Moddie

These post-congress resonances are based on *Parsiana's* very readable account ("Together, to the 21st century," July-August, 1997).

The thesis of co-existence of "two or more models of Zoroastrianism" was hardly borne out by "a head-on collision" between the "Indian Zoroastrian religious establishment" (all priests), and "the votaries of Gathic freedom of choice" from North America. The outstanding representative of the former, Dastur (Dr) Kaikhushroo JamaspAsa deserved the standing applause. He brought more light, more history, more questioning, less hard dogma.

He began by saying it was a good time to take stock. [The elders have been taking stock with no significant success on controversial issues over six World Zoroastrian Congresses (WZCs).] Going back in history, JamaspAsa posed a fundamental question: "Was this straight-jacketed Zoroastrian identity (Sasanian) responsible for the downfall of the Zoroastrian state? Is it what fanned the Zoroastrian propensity to rebel?" A pity the learned Dastur did not attempt any answer. Nor did anyone else. It was dismissed as, "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."

Fortunately, contemporary Zoroastrians do not face those choices; they dispute endlessly from congress to congress on the same two or three issues. The choices today surely admit of more tolerance, more flexibility, more depth, more understanding in the contemporary milieu in different parts of the world. JamaspAsa himself referred to that new context of a dwindling, aging people in India, an increasing global diaspora to other cultures, leading to melting pots. Apathy prevails. Science is providing the answers to Nature's mys-

teries. A pity no links of spirit were seen between Zarathushtra's questing spirit in the Gathic hymn to Creation, and the questing of modern scientists for the nature of the universe.

JamaspAsa said Jews and Zoroastrians were waiting for a messiah. In six WZCs



Fund-raising Congress artefacts

Photo: Arnavaz S. Mama

this was not at all evident, nor in beliefs between Congresses. Besides, the waiting for a messiah seems hardly compatible with Y 30.2, in which Zarathushtra bids Zoroastrians to listen, think, act, and find their own Vohumanic salvation. Theoretically, it could be argued that both could go together, but one has hardly seen Zoroastrians as a messiah-obsessed people.

The guest of honor at the Second World Zoroastrian Youth Congress was a young Parsi millionaire, whose message was: "There is no reason why the world should not be your oyster. You can go and get anything you want." Not far from Khojeste Mistree's advice to pursue happiness and prosperity, not messiahs.

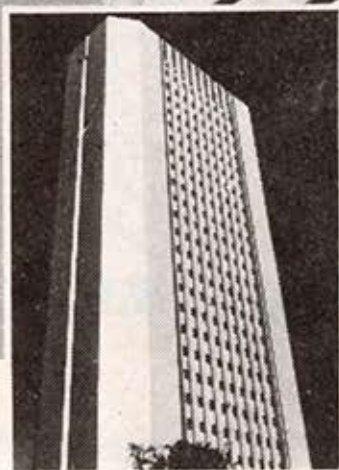
It was amazing to read in quotes the following from JamaspAsa: "What has survived of the Zoroastrian faith bears little resemblance to what Zarathushtra actually preached but the tradition has been completely and carefully preserved." Seems a contradiction in terms. A great

pity no one asked the good Dastur to elucidate where the resemblance differed from the preaching, and how come the tradition is OK? He concluded on an admirable note of humility: "The problem is that man's brain has outgrown man's heart." Right, though I would amend that to "Man's ego has outgrown his brain and heart." Man is a part of the ongoing evolutionary Creation, not apart from it. Do such gregarious congresses inflate egos, individual and collective?

This Congress was another attempt towards Zoroastrian identity. It was hardly helped by the hard line of Ervad (Dr) Ramiyar Karanjia (principal of the Dadar Athornan Madressa) preaching "genetic and spiritual exclusivity," though accepting that social circumstances "were favorable for intercommunity marriages." Mistree was asked if "everyone here is ready to take a DNA test to prove their Aryan descent." I suggest we first ascertain from leading genetic scientists if there are any such things as Aryan, Celtic or Sino DNA molecules. When it came to the demand of two ladies for women to officiate as priests, Karanjia and Dastur (Dr) Firoze Kotwal resisted without even the discretion of Pope John Paul in the Roman Church. Karanjia thought women were incapable of performing the priest's role "not because of impurity, but because of biology." He gave no biological reason for it. Plain obiter dicta. Kotwal was against conversion and inter-marriage for some abstruse reasons concerning rats' tails.

We read no reasonable responses by the priests to the reasonable questions of the youth; the embarrassment of arranged marriages in our time, the limitations of choice or no marriage at all, difficulties in meeting suitable persons, etc. Dogma seems to have no place for human consideration. When it was pointed out, in the context of Justice Davar's verdict, that

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some navjotes of children of mixed marriages were taking place "surreptitiously," Karanjia said if such things were happening "you can't take that (as a precedent)." The real issue is that they are performed not so surreptitiously in the Parsi families of *The Bold and the Beautiful* type, with no public dissent from even articulate mobeds!

And when Mehran Sepehri pointed out that Iran's Council of Mobeds had approved of navjotes of children with one Zoroastrian parent, "Iranian mobeds were challenged to convert/admit others to the Zoroastrian faith within their geographic boundaries." This was geographical exclusivity, on top of genetic exclusivity, and towards the very homeland of the Zoroastrian faith. Will we next carry exclusivity to particular towns, agiaries, and families of India? If so, what's the point of coming to such congresses, where bridges should be built (in this one to "reinvigorate people's feelings of identity," as noted Kerman Jasavala at the press conference)? As a modest Zoroastrian I find it hard to understand how rigid exclusivity and rigid dogma can be consistent with Zarathushtra's injunction in Y 30.2 to listen well with one's ears, apply Vohuman (the higher open, not the lower closed mind), and to take responsibility for one's own

decisions. To that extent, JamaspAsa is right about the divergence from Zarathushtra's teachings.

So it was refreshing to see Mistree called upon to play a bridging role, and urge youths to begin to think in terms of a "two-model, one community setup." Instead of "setup" (a word implying structures), I prefer mind-frames, those ruled primarily by Zarathushtra's injunction in Y 30.2, putting greater responsibility on individuals, priests and laymen. If both do not listen with the best ears, and use larger Vohumanic minds, we will perpetuate futile, superficial conflict, where a little knowledge has been a very dysfunctional thing.

Mistree's ethnic separateness "model" of Zoroastrians, Greeks and Romans is a bit too glib for the historian. Alexander himself married a Persian princess and encouraged his officers to do so. To the extent there was separateness — no societies merge in the mass, only at the margin — it was due largely to political conflicts as societies, not for ethnic reasons. It is rather like saying Shiaism has been the ethnic religion of Iran since the seventh century. I doubt if Shias or Iran would accept that. Most Indians did not convert to Christianity after the Western inva-

sions, and that was not for ethnic reasons. After 1857, the British encouraged Christian missions, but maintained their imperial separateness as rulers. Glib historicity and unfounded biology have made for incredible cocktails of untruths in such discussions.

It was good to read, "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." An interesting example was his attitude to homosexuals, whose sins were "worse than murder" with the Zoroastrian thrust on Creation. "At the religious level there is only one answer," he said, "but psychological understanding, tolerance are important." If a cardinal sin worse than murder could receive such humane, psychological understanding and tolerance, why not less sinful mixed marriages or the navjotes of innocent children of mixed marriages? May Mistree's humanness grow with time and tolerant reason for his future bridging role.

Most such congresses begin with desirable goals and then produce largely negative and nebulous results. One particularly bitter and babbling session in this Congress ended with a wise chairman concluding: "Say one *Ashem* and go out and talk to

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each other." Rather than repeat such congresses at periodic intervals, a time has come to take stock of their objectives, programs and results.

Perhaps the most outstanding lessons came not from erudition, but from two significant experiences. First, Vera Parekh "grew up with total dependence on God in a white social environment in Surrey." Her Bombay born and bred husband, Farokh "had the blind faith" of his parents and grandparents, and "felt no need to question religion." He said, "Things changed when I met Vera. She asked questions I could not satisfy." Those questions led to a better knowledge of Zoroastrian history, customs, traditions, becoming stronger Zoroastrians and better human beings. So questioning is better than apathy or blind, unquestioning faith and rigid ranting. Can future congresses raise more relevant specific questions, rather than time-worn topics?

The second important lesson, which received only passing mention, was from Jasavala: "In the UK we feel that projects bring people together, help to bury differences." Future congresses might review community projects objectively as factual case studies for future learning and cooperation. For example, the World Zoroastrian Organisation project for the poor Zoroastrians in Gujarat, or the Bombay Parsi Punchayet's housing and scholarship projects, or the responses to the post-1990 congress findings of long-term demographic decline. In short, can there be a better meeting of minds in the operational sphere, apart from the religious and social?

I am reminded of Salman Rushdie's rejoinder to a bitter and persistent literary critic, John le Carre: "Every time he opens his mouth, he digs himself a deeper hole. Keep digging, John, keep digging. Me, I'm going back to work." And before we dig ourselves into deeper biological holes, could we get some recognized socio-biological scientists to enlighten us on genes, heredity, race and behavior? That may save us from the pseudo-science of passionate exclusivists covering the nakedness of their sweeping assumptions with the wrong fig leaves! The same school tells us that in Zoroastrianism excess is sin. So why carry exclusivity to dogmatic excess?

Management consultant Aspi Moddie opted out of the Indian Administrative Service to make a career with the private sector. He has been actively involved in community affairs and has written several papers on management of community assets.

BILLIMORIA'S REEL IMAGE

continued from page 34

making company on the verge of becoming a sick unit, into an extremely profitable one. Indeed, the figures speak for themselves. The share prices have risen from Rs 35 in 1990 to Rs 450 in 1997 and the declared dividend for 1996-97 was 45 percent. Over this period the company floated two rights issues, rewarded its investors with a bonus of 1:2 and increased its market capitalization from Rs 60 million to Rs 2,000 million. Impressive by any standards.

Beyond the numbers, Billimoria was instrumental in negotiating the tie-up of Tata Press with R. R. Donnelley and Sons, the world's largest printing company which led to it being rechristened Tata Donnelley Limited. Billimoria's formula for success was simple enough: "We revamped our management team. We imported the latest machinery and printing knowhow. We came to represent the cutting edge of technology in India. We gave our clients a quality product and they came back to us for more."

In addition, Billimoria spearheaded the company into publishing with the launching of the *Tata Yellow Pages* directory. Although there were hiccups along the way, today Tata Donnelley is the largest publisher of *Yellow Pages* in India.

What would he do if he were asked to turn around the Parsi community? "Differences of opinion are understandable in any community, but when it comes to the Parsis, we are way too argumentative. Everyone has his opinion and everyone is right. If we spent less time inter-fighting and more time doing something constructive it would make a lot of difference," says Billimoria.

One of Billimoria's first suggestions is to encourage all young Parsis to get out of Bombay if they can. "I link the decline of the community in India with the decline of the city," he says. Bombay, according to him, has become overcrowded, over-congested and dirty, and as a result the quality of life in the city has deteriorated. "The average person in Bombay spends three to five hours commuting to and from work. When he gets home he is too tired to spend time with the family." Yes, Billimoria equates success with family values and he and his wife Benaifer hope to pass on those they inherited from their parents to their eight-year-old son Zerkis. He is not surprised that many Parsis have opted to settle abroad, depriving the Indian community of their talents. Billimoria is not suggesting that Parsis should endeavor to get out of the country. Even if they move to other Indian cities, they will immediately feel the difference...

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BONHOMIE IN BARODA

continued from page 22

Parsis were against reservation as they argued that they were not some tribal or caste group, trends were changing and sociological realities were staring us in the face. "We must discard our false social snobbery," he asserted. "We are not even a drop in the ocean in a country which has a population of 950 million and we are constrained to put in 50 percent more effort because of the prevailing 50 percent reservation for designated categories."

Patrawala explained that Parsis as a community have contributed phenomenally towards the well-being of their host country, India, where they have been settled for the past 1,200 years. "We have survived as a religious group all these years because of such distinctive traits as probity in public life, competence, the urge to excel and at the same time to live peaceably and in utmost harmony with others," he maintained. "But for the past five years now, there has not been a single Parsi IAS (Indian Administrative Service), IPS (Indian Police Service) or IFS (Indian Foreign Service) officer." He said this situation had not arisen because Parsis were less competent, but because "the reservation

policy was squeezing out a community of 50,000."

He announced that since his nomination to the Minorities Commission in November 1996, he had submitted a blueprint to it for the creation of a five percent quota for the minorities. The Commission recognizes five communities as minorities in India, namely, the Muslims, who constitute 14 percent of the population, the Buddhists with eight percent, Christians with seven percent, Sikhs with 2.6 percent and Parsis with 0.006 percent.

Later, there were group discussions on "Survival of our Community in the 21st Century" and "Participation of Youth in Community Organizations and Decision Making Systems." The first was moderated by journalist Noshir Dadrawala and the latter by Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP) trustee Rustom Tirandaz. Dadrawala mentioned that as he was an eternal optimist, he was confident of the community's survival. "We have never numbered in crores and even in 1881 we were officially estimated at a strength of 85,397," he stressed. "There are, however, those who are seized by the death wish that the Parsis as a community will be lost forever in the political and social wilderness and that

changing circumstances will dissolve our identity for all times to come."

In an impassioned address, one of the delegates, Hormazd Dastur, said he took offence at the word "survival." "Why survive? We Parsis must live — animals survive," he snorted.

In his observations, Tirandaz informed the youth that leadership came to those who chose to dare. "We Zoroastrians are born to be the crème de la crème and we must never dance to the dictates of others, but make our own decisions after assessing the situation accordingly," he counseled. He urged the youth to take a more direct approach to community issues: "If a joker like me can become a trustee of the Parsi Punchayet, anyone of you can."

The afternoon session, which the organizers said they had reserved for a task as vital as an "Open Forum" where the delegates were to air their views on this 11th Zoroastrian Youth Seminar and forward recommendations for the subsequent ones, vaporized rather curiously. The workers had arrived earlier than scheduled to pull down the shamiana which they did while the congregation was busy at lunch. Hence, an objective evaluation by the participants was not to be and in this regard, the 11th

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Youth Seminar fell short of building a link to the 12th one next year, the venue for which is yet to be decided. It is also essential for a well-attended event of this nature to distill some semblance of a focus from the three days' proceedings. This would help the participants chart out a jointly evolved statement crowned by a resolution addressing the most pertinent issues before the Parsi youth.

The fractured schedule then jumped to the valedictory function organized for the evening. It meandered into a marathon session, with all office-bearers and other invitees on the dais, and even those from the audience, having their say. Besides, it combined a prize distribution ceremony as well and most of those present that evening probably went home with a memento.

BPP chairman Jamshed Guzder was the chief guest at the evening's function, while Areez Khambatta, the chairman of Pioma Industries based in Ahmedabad, was the guest of honor. Khambatta exhorted the gathering to take pride in their Zoroastrian heritage and not shy away from projecting their Zoroastrian image even whilst pledging to be one with humanity, in India and the world over. "We are often decried as being communal and insular, but has that made us any less patriotic?" he asked. "Our country

has celebrated the incidence of 'unity in diversity' and Parsis have undoubtedly lent color to the social fabric of India."

Guzder lamented that excessive familial attachments were thwarting the progress of our community: "Parents are often pleading with their sons not to leave them even if they happen to have excellent prospects for furthering their careers elsewhere." He also expressed concern at the community's numerical decline, noting that while there were 1.15 lakh Parsis in 1951 when India's population was 300 million, there were only 76,000 Parsis registered in the '91 census when the country's population stood at 900 million. Within the next decade, India's population will soar to 1,200 million, while the Parsis will be decimated to 22,000, he estimated.

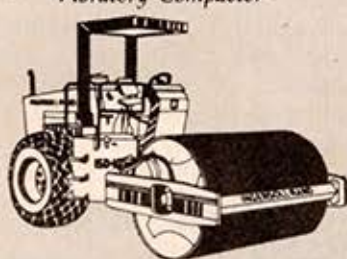
"It is because of these disturbing trends that the BPP has devised the scheme of rendering total financial support to the third child that is born in each Parsi family and up to the time it reaches the age of 18," Guzder stated. "In the past two years, we have had 40 women applying for this scheme." When the Baroda Parsi Panchayat pledged a cash award of Rs 1,000 and a dinner set to the first couple from the young delegates who gets married within a year, Guzder offered Rs 2,000 more.

Truly, never had so much been done by so many for so many. There were BUZY members like Cooper who indicated that most of the organization had been done by the local body itself.

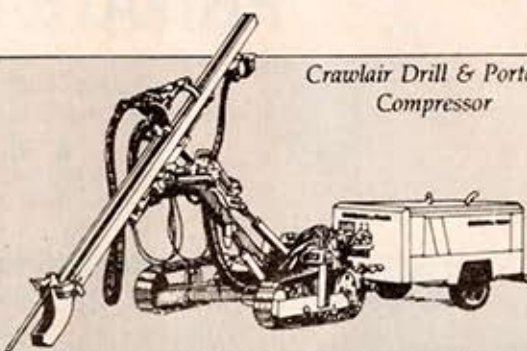
Karanjwalla had earlier proclaimed that "all future all India Zoroastrian youth seminars will be held by members after seeking the approval of FOZYA." Noting that FOZYA had planned on organizing all India tours from the 1998 calendar year, all Parsis were welcome to join, said Karanjwalla. He also thanked Modi for having so graciously offered his house in Udvada to those Zoroastrian organizations undertaking trips for Parsi pilgrims to the village and said FOZYA too would arrange such outings. According to him, FOZYA would also collaborate with the BPP project funded by the Zarthosty brothers in collaboration with the various athonan mandals in organizing lecture tours of high priests and scholars to various towns and cities in India.

And considering the fact that many a young participant felt that three days were far too short to build acquaintances as also to do any worthwhile sight-seeing in the host city, Karanjwalla promised that the all India youth seminars will be of longer duration from next year onwards.

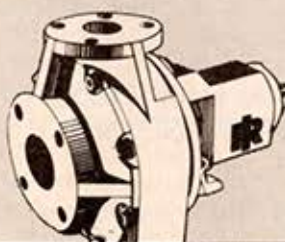
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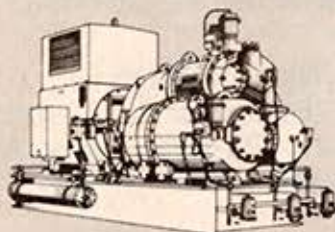
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Creating a scene

Over a hundred years ago, rival Parsi directors borrowed plots from Shakespeare and Parsi actors delivered their lines in Gujarati and Urdu

Parinaz M. Gandhi

There was only one copy of the script and so zealously was it guarded within the entire theater company that even the cast had to note down their respective lines. That was the time in the second half of the 19th century when stealing scripts, plays and actors by the rival Parsi theater companies in India was a common practice, reveals Javed Malick who teaches English at Delhi University and is currently researching "for a book on the early vernacular (mainly Urdu) adaptations of Shakespeare for the Parsi stage between 1870 and 1920."

Elaborating on this constant rivalry and fear, Malick mentions, "Reporters would go and hear plays again and again with a view to put together the script. Sometimes they would be detected and thrown out. When they were not able to take down the lines, they would interpolate. The same was the case during Shakespearean days."

While he is fascinated with every new revelation that comes his way, Malick is also frustrated with the dearth of knowledge and literature available on this subject. He has been visiting institutes, libraries, corresponding with editors and historians, hoping to chance upon this rare archival material in obscure personal collections (see "Publications and contacts sought"). He realizes that most of it must have been lost irretrievably, nevertheless he is making a systematic search to track this material for posterity for which he would "appreciate help from whomever, wherever." As he had specified in an earlier letter, "At the moment my main endeavor is to track down, collect and bibliographically compile the relevant texts and documents. Besides published and unpublished texts of the plays, I need production notes, brochures, song books, photographs, personal accounts, newspaper notices, etc in order to reconstruct the performance texts of major adaptations and to document their production histories and the

public responses that they evoked."

Barely able to conceal his initial excitement when he realized that *Soné ké mol ki Khurshid*, reportedly the first play done in Urdu by a Parsi theater company in 1870/71, was modelled on Shakespeare's *Cymbeline*, Malick discloses, "I felt like Christopher Columbus, a literary Colum-



Malick: tracking documents

bus. The parallel with the Shakespeare text was unmistakable — in characters, events and even in dialogues. It was not too much of an effort for me to discover this. It made me want to go to other old plays, including those in Gujarati." Surprisingly, the author's

preface to the play stated that the story was based on a Hindu *katha* (folklore) *Kamavanti* but he failed to acknowledge his debt to Shakespeare. The nature of his research has prompted the professor of English to now learn Gujarati, Hindi and Urdu as well.

Actually, prior to this Urdu adaptation, there was a Gujarati version, *Sona na mol ni Khurshid* written by Idalji Khorji who was assigned this task by a friend Dadabhai Sohrabji Patel (also known as Dadi Patel) when the latter took over the Victoria Natak Mandali as its director. Besides being a great lover of theater and Urdu, Patel was also a shrewd businessman who wanted to reach out to larger audiences, according to Malick. He had Khorji's text translated into Urdu by another Parsi friend and staged it with great success. The Urdu translation was prepared and published in Gujarati script. This remained a common practice in Parsi theater until 1914/15 be-

cause most of the Parsi actors and directors could not read the Arabic script. And invariably, it was the actors who were cast in both male and female roles as Parsi women then were not even allowed to go and see theater, reveals Malick.

Among the well-known theater companies were the Persian Natak Mandali, Victoria Natak Mandali, Utejak Natak Mandali, Zoroastrian Natak Mandali, Alfred Theatrical Company, Original Theatrical Company, New Alfred Company. With intense competition among them the companies constantly needed new plays, explains the researcher. What better than the intricate plots of Shakespeare to sustain audience interest? Around 30 Shakespearean plays were adapted and produced during this period, some of them several times each.

The main concern of Malick's project is "to investigate whether these adaptations, massively popular with undivided India's largely plebeian and non-anglicized audiences, were, as is commonly believed, a 'vulgarization' of the Bard's 'sublime' texts or, at least in effect, a counter-colonial project that liberated Shakespeare from the exclusive control of India's English knowing elite...Never before or after has Shakespeare been played to such large audiences...even in England after Elizabethan times."

Starved of entertainment, the audience it seems was particularly keen to witness the dramas. Malick relates a tale he has heard: Desperate to buy a theater ticket, a man bought flour worth one rupee on credit, then sold it to his neighbor for 50 paise to generate cash to purchase the ticket!

While we do not know which stage production so enthused this theater buff, we do know that *Hamlet*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Macbeth*, *King Lear* were all a source of amusement to the Indian audi-



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ence. Originally the Urdu translations were done by Parsi playwrights whose proficiency in Urdu was limited but "after 1885 or so the language improved because professional writers from (areas around) Uttar Pradesh who knew Urdu, Persian, even Arabic and Sanskrit were hired as resident playwrights of the companies." The first Urdu adaptation of Shakespeare to be produced on the Parsi stage seems to have been Karimuddin Murad Bareilvi's *Badshah Khudadad*. This however was actually a translation from an 1870 Gujarati adaptation of *Pericles, Prince of Tyre* called *Khusro na Khavind Khuda*.

Even the subsequent adaptations of Shakespeare were done by the Urdu writers, who had no or negligible knowledge of the English language, from summaries and outlines given to them by the Parsi directors. This meant that in fleshing out that outline those Urdu authors generously interpolated material from their own immediate culture, observes Malick whose own specialization for his PhD from the McGill University was Modern European Drama. His work, *Toward a Theatre of the Oppressed*, was published by the University of Michigan Press in 1995. He has contributed to various international theater jour-

"Reporters would go and hear plays again and again with a view to put together the script"

nals and served as a theater critic for several publications including the *Telegraph*, *The Economic Times* and *The Times of India*. He had once done a whole page on Parsi theater with substantial inputs from 96-year-old Master Fida Hussain who may be the only surviving actor from the golden age of Parsi theater. Since then Malick's interest in this subject has remained with him.

The current project will require two-three years of effort, he being midway through the first year. "I need research assistance," he specifies. "Graduate students who could do basic spade work" by combing libraries to ascertain availability of material would be particularly welcome.

Viewing this as "a unique cultural phenomenon, a significant part of India's

modern cultural history which has not received the serious critical attention it deserves," Malick maintains, "I see immense possibilities..."

Publications and contacts sought

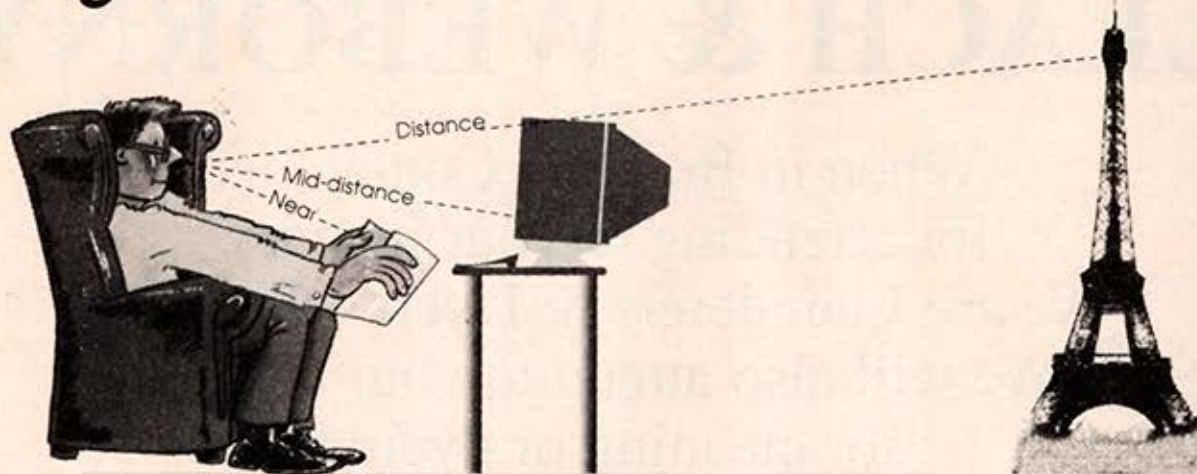
Some of the texts Javed Malick is trying to trace are: *Kamavanti*, the Hindu katha that Idalji Khorji drew upon for his play *Khurshid*; biography of Kaikhusro Kabraji by Sohrabji Kavasji Khambata.

The play texts which he is attempting to locate are: *Khusro na Khavind Khuda* in Gujarati probably by Dosabhai Framji Randhelia (1870); *Jawan Bakht* and *Rustom Sohrab* (two Urdu plays in Gujarati script) by Nasarwanji Meherwanji Aram; *Khudabaksh Kiranghela* and *Rustom Sohrab* (three Gujarati plays) by Khorji.

Information about the location of old files of periodicals like *The Bombay Samachar*, *Rast Goftar*, *Jam-e-Jamshed*, *Parsi Panch*, *Gujarati Review* (1860-1910) is also solicited and also information about the direct descendants of the authors, playwrights and the founders/owners of the theater companies of that period.

Malick can be reached at E-4, Staff Flats, Indraprastha College, Sharnath Marg, Delhi 110054. Tel: 2524893.

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The House of Godrej earns encomiums on 100 years of quality products and environmental concerns

Arnavaz S. Mama

Congratulating the Godrej family on "their tradition of withdrawing from the glare of publicity and taking pride in the products of their companies," governor of Maharashtra Dr P. C. Alexander recalled the words of Wole Soyinka, the Nobel laureate of Nigeria. Soyinka had said, "Real power is to touch power without power touching you." Alexander paraphrased it to "describe members of this celebrated family: Real wealth is to touch wealth without wealth touching you."

Alexander's remarks prefaced the ceremonial launching of the second volume of *Godrej: a hundred years 1897-1997* by Burjor Karanjia. (The first volume had been released by the Vice President of India K. R. Narayanan in Delhi in March '97.)

The first volume had dealt with the contribution of the first two generations of the family. The 374-page hard cover volume II, published by Penguin Books India and priced at Rs 395, brings the story to date. Narrating the role of the second generation wives and the third and fourth generation family stalwarts like Jamshyd, Adi, Nadir and Tanya, Karanjia recounts

the family's dedication to the environment. Their devotion to quality and the institution of professional managerial techniques to maintain and improve Godrej products has resulted in a process of decentralization which has helped them create "winning teams" and Karanjia has sketched profiles of many of Godrej's top managers.

Describing himself as "a great admirer of the Parsi community," the governor noted that the Godrej family had "inherited the Parsi tradition and culture in full measure...combining excellence with goodness...never deviating from the path of goodness and righteousness. Jamsetji Jejeebhoy, Pherozeshah Mehta, Jamsetji Tata, J. R. D. (Tata), Homi Bhabha (were) giants not merely in achievement but as men revered for their goodness."

Providing his own scholarly perspective into the growth of industry in India, Alexander described the five streams of Indian entrepreneurship. Those who had capital — then considered the most important resource ("banks would lend money to an applicant only if it was sure he didn't need bank money to run his business") —

went into jute, textile and cement production.

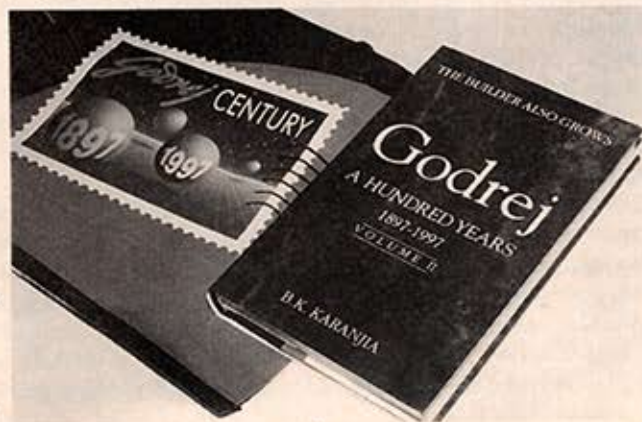
After independence the process was triggered by import substitution. Industries "came out of the pages of the Red Book (which dealt with import/export restrictions)," constituting the second stream. Those who came with background skills from Pakistan and went largely into glassware, sports goods, shoes, were the third category, according to Alexander. Those with the necessary background and education went in for new raw materials like chemicals and plastics. The fifth and most recent stream, like electronics, started with people with technical education.

"Ardeshir did not fit into any of these categories. (It was) not import substitution because locks were made elsewhere in India. He started an industry in the consumer sector, without capital resources, in a place rented at Rs 20 per month. It was his persistence and attention to quality (that) commanded the trust of consumers. Quality is the key to the success of this family's business. They've been maintaining the tradition for three generations."

With a humorous aside on recent advertising trends which Alexander said he had difficulty in following — the visuals seem to have no bearing on the product — he noted that the original advertising of Godrej soap was based on letters from Raja



Karanjia (above): "an enriching experience;" Volume II of the book presented by Alexander to Bombay University vice chancellor Dr Snehelata Deshmukh
Photos: P. P. Hirani



With
best wishes
from

Farah
&
Tanya

Gopalachary, Rabindranath Tagore, Annie Besant who praised the quality of the first soap made from vegetable oil. "The integrity of the people who wrote the letters could sell the entire production!"

The function was held at the Bombay University's Convocation Hall on December 11, 1997. The governor recalled that Sohrab had spoken to him about it in March, which underlined "the thoroughness with which he organizes anything... the meticulous detail." Alexander, who had been Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's secretary in the course of a long and many-splendored career in Indian Administrative Service, recalled that he was aware of only "two individuals who could walk in at five minutes' notice" to the PM. One was the famed ornithologist Salim Ali. The other was the chairman of the House of Godrej, Sohrab Godrej.

Sohrab Godrej was himself "particularly happy" to recall how "our forebears laid the foundation of self-reliance without which one can have no self-respect" and had initiated him and his brothers, the late Burjor and Naoroji, "into caring for the country." In their early youth the lesson was driven home by their father Pirojsha, a dedicated nationalist and Gandhian, who found them happy with a box of imported biscuits and promptly threw away the contents, explaining to the agitated boys that "good chappatis are just as good, but we'll make good biscuits too." An avowed ecologist, Sohrab was pained that "instead of vision," the government was "allowing things to drift" particularly in the ecological sphere. "The Indian Foreign Service is the best in the world but the Indian Forest Service is not up to the mark."

Acknowledging the handiwork of his brothers, "Burjor had helped to keep the soap business in the family; Naval was largely responsible for (the development of) Pirojshanagar," the Godrej garden township at Vikhroli, Sohrab noted, "If we want to do well in the future, we must be loyal to our ideals."

Vijay Krishna, managing director of Godrej-GE, Naoroji's son-in-law and master of ceremonies for the evening, noted that the management had been visiting branches all over the country, meeting traders, customers and employees.

Naoroji's son Jamshyd Godrej, managing director of Godrej and Boyce, informed

the gathering of some of the highlights of the centenary celebrations. The year had begun with the extended Godrej *parivar* (family) getting together at a stadium in Thane. Five lectures in memory of the five deceased members of the Godrej family — Ardeshir and Pirojsha, the founders, Burjor and Naoroji and their mother Soonabai — had been addressed by such national stalwarts as Madhu Dandavate, Dr M. S. Swaminathan, Dr Jayant Narlikar, Chief Justice A. M. Ahmadi and

Dr Manmohan Singh who spoke a few days later on January 16. Among the projects that have been undertaken during the year is the establishment of the Godrej archives at Pirojshanagar; of a management center in conjunction with the Confederation of Indian Industry; and a hospital planned by the Godrej Memorial Trust.

Other speakers at the Convocation Hall included David Davidar, chief executive officer of Penguin India, publishers of the book. According to him, "what sets Godrej apart is their unwavering commitment to customers and employees."

Quoting C. C. Coulton, author Karanjia referred to the three difficulties an author faces: finding a sensible subject, a sensible publisher and a sensible man to read the book. "Authors in India don't speak. They pray since they wait for royalties to fall from heaven," quipped Karanjia referring to the close-fistedness of Indian publishers. Karanjia said he was "given freedom to write (the book) provided I stick to the truth." He described it as "an enriching, humbling experience... This opportunity I consider as a gift bestowed on me — a bond that unites the giver and the receiver."

The Godrejs' motto for the year was "100 years into the future," and in his vote of thanks Adi Godrej, managing director of Godrej Soaps, dedicated the group to the 21st century. "We hope to serve our customers who have been the secret of our success, in a small way help India become a strong economic power in the 21st century."

In keeping with the Godrej emphasis on the greening of the city, the stone portals of the Hall had been effectively dramatized with a combination of green and flowering plants. After the main function was over, the hall-full of invitees were served high tea in the University garden.

**"Real wealth is
to touch wealth
without wealth
touching you"**

MILESTONES

The age of Zoroastrian brides (as listed in this issue) ranged between 18 and 41 years, the arithmetic mean (the total number of individual ages divided by the total number of brides) being 25 years. The corresponding figures for the grooms were 21 and 42 years, averaging at 29 years.

Compared to 77 Zoroastrians who were consigned to the Towers of Silence in Bombay in December there were 14 babies born. The major killer, heart disease, took a toll of 26 lives of whom five were above the age of 80. Fifteen patients fell prey to pneumonia and lung related diseases, seven to cancer and five to multi organ failure. The other killers were liver disease (three) and brain disease, septicemia and gastro-intestinal bleeding (two each). Among the isolated cases registered for the month of December were non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, lower respiratory infection, tuberculosis, quadriplegia (paralysis of all four limbs), arthritis, head injury, kidney failure, Alzheimer's disease, asthma, malaria, hypertension, dementia and cachexia (malnutrition). In the case of one death the coroner's report was still pending. Two stillborn babies were lost to the community as was a 34-year-old

youth. The highest age at death was 95 as compared to the lowest — 23. The Zoroastrian life expectancy at birth, in Bombay in December, was 71 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.

BANGALORE

DIED

Firoze Faramroze Siganporia (49), husband of Roshan and father of Tehmina and Behram on December 26, 1997

BARODA

DIED

Jalejar Munchersha Mehta (69), husband of Roshan and father of Hutoxi; December 20

BOMBAY

BORN

A boy, *Rohun*, to *Maniz* and *Ashok Bhimra*, brother to *Anisha*; November 25
A boy to *Tanveer* and *Zubin Balaporia*; December 1
A girl, *Freyana*, to *Arnavaz* and *Hormuz Bhaka*; December 2
A girl to *Viloo* and *Jango Damania*; December 2
A girl, *Friyan*, to *Shirin* and *Farokh Poonawalla*, sister to *Farzan*; December 2
A boy to *Nazneen* and *Murad*

Daruwalla; December 5

A boy to *Kaiser* and *Marzaban Khairabadi*; December 5

A boy to *Tina* and *Burzin Engineer*; December 6

A boy to *Aban* and *Darainus Shroff*; December 9

A boy to *Sherry* and *Vispy Bharucha*; December 10

A boy to *Mahnaz* and *Behram Zandbaf*; December 13

A girl to *Rukshana* and *Farokh Shokri*; December 17

A girl to *Bakhtavar* and *Mehernosh Talati*; December 18

A boy to *Dilshad* and *Hoshi Tavadia*; December 18

A girl to *Rashna* and *Navroze Billimoria*; December 19

A girl to *Rashna* and *Navroze Billimoria*; December 19

A girl to *Rashna* and *Navroze Billimoria*; December 19

A girl to *Rashna* and *Navroze Billimoria*; December 19

A girl to *Rashna* and *Navroze Billimoria*; December 19

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A girl to *Rashna* and *Navroze Billimoria*; December 19

A girl to *Rashna* and *Navroze Billimoria*; December 19

A girl to *Rashna* and *Navroze Billimoria*; December 19

Porus Soli Todiwalla;

November 24

Zenobia Nariman Wankadia and

Cyrus Jimmy Pooniwala;

November 25

Kashmira Phiroze Patel and

Burjis Rohinton Mistry;

November 28

Dinaz Firoze Elavia of *Bharuch*

and *Cawsi Kersi Bardoliwalla*;

December 1

Farnaz Hoshang Ichhaporia and

Daravus Ratan Merchant;

December 1

Zarine Cawas Adajania and

Cyrus Jehangir Irani;

December 2

Shernaz Phiroze Dordi and *Fredy*

Nari Nagwaswala; December 2

Hilla Naval Daruwalla and

Kurush Diniyar Amroliya;

December 4

Katy Dhanjisha Varachhawala

and *Hoshang Jamshed Mohta*;

December 4

Delnaz Minoo Daji and *Hanoz*

Behram Contractor; December 5

Khushnuma Dara Patel and

Farokh Gev Dubash;

December 6

Kashmira Eruch Wadia and

Cyrus Parvez Sarkari;

December 6

Anahita Sam Nallaseth and

Neville Phiroze Dhabhar;

December 7

Veera Bomi Panthaki and *Viraf*

Aspi Dholoo; December 9

Sanobar Sam Marfatia and

Sharukh Dadi Edibam;

December 9

Khushnuma Arnez Master and

Neville Percy Garda;

December 9

Monaz Rusi Cooper and *Kaizad*

Bahadur Tantra; December 9

Anahita Parvez Dordi and

Frazer Farokh Daruwalla;

December 11

Armin Firoz Patel and *Jamshed*

Peshotan Daruwalla;

December 11

Anahita Firoz Chawksi and

Cyrus Dinshaw Ghaswala;

December 11

Havovi Jamshed Kolah and

Ashtad Eruchsha Ichhaporia;

December 11

Toranj Nariosang Desai and

Khushroo Adi Pithawalla;

December 11

Kashmira Maneck Bhathena and

Kaizad Jamshid Manecksha;

December 12

Fareeda Jamshed Kanga and

Darius Behman Moos;

December 12

December 12

December 12

December 12

December 12

December 12

Jahan Gustad Dehmiri and

Mehrab Shavav Nargolwala;

December 12

Kashmira Phiroze Mehta of

Pune and *Urmez Phiroz*

Mugaseth; December 13

Tanaz Bomi Kaka and *Percy Jal*

Patel; December 13

Tenaz Jimmy Batiwalla and

Farrokh Hoshang Batiwalla;

December 14

Shiraz Maneck Sathvavwala and

Kersi Firoz Dastoor;

December 14

Ayesha Kearsasp Mistry and

Neville Soli Mody of *Pune*;

December 14

Ketayun Percy Ichhaporia and

Sarosh Keki Taraporewalla;

December 14

Homai Sam Irani and *Sharookh*

Khodaram Kocheck;

December 15

Symonne Shapur Godiwala and

Khushru Kaikhushru Daruwalla

of *Navsari*; December 16

Yasmin Pheroze Commissariat

and *Navzer Keki Sarkari*;

December 16

Nancy Barjor Cooper and *Burzin*

Jehangir Aga; December 18

Ketayun Darabshah Dadachanji

and *Shereaz Jehangir Irani*;

December 18

Nazneen Rustom Dupattawala

and *Firdaus Noshir Gandhi* of

Thane; December 20

Shernaaz Minoo Bilimoria and

Kerbad Rustomji Palkhivala;

December 20

Mahazarin Phiroz Jussawalla

and *Kerman Homi*

Canteenwalla; December 21

Phiroza Ardeshir Billimoria and

Aashish Soli Contractor;

December 21

Firza Keki Sopariwalla and

Burzin Rustomji Degamwala;

December 21

Razvin Shahjehan Irani and

Hemavand Behram Namdarian;

December 21

Khurshed Phiroze Ghandhi and

Yezdi Rustom Hormuzdi of

Mysore; December 22

Arzin Homi Daruwalla and *Sorab*

Minoo Italia; December 22

Kashmira Dinshaw Amroliya and

Hormuz Fali Pastakia of

Kamshet, Dist Pune;

December 22

Parizad Sam Katrak and *Zubin*

Jimmy Batiwalla; December 25

Gulnar Aspi Surveyor and

Shahrukh Ardeshir Irani of

December 25

December 25

December 25

December 25

December 25

Jamshedpur; December 26
Samara Puroshush Kerawalla and *Kywan Homi Kerawalla*; December 26
Nina Khushru Vesuna and *Adil Ferdoun Mistry*; December 26
Sanam Rusi Wadia and *Kaizad Pesi Wadia*; December 26
Persis Rusi Pagdiwala and *Zubin Phiroz Wadia*; December 26
Yasmin Aspi Surti and *Jimmy Khurshed Tangree* of Calcutta; December 27

DIED

Bejan Jehangir Ghista (71), residing at 302, Samudra Setu, B. Desai Rd, 400026; November 30
Khorshed Savakshaw Dungore (83), C/24, Jer Baug, Dr Ambedkar Rd, Byculia, 400027; December 1
Tehmina Nowroji Ustad (83), Room no 10, 273, Dr S. S. Rao Rd, Next to Parsi fire-temple, Lalbaug, 400012; December 2
Noshir Dinshajee Amalsadiwalla (70), A/1, Sneh Kunj, Behind Laxmi Narayan Temple, Eksar Rd, Borivli (W), 400092; December 3
Navaaz Dinshaw Karani (53), 67 H, Mirador, B. Desai Rd, 400026; December 3
Roda Munchershaw Mistry (80), Hira Cottage, Opp Cama Baug Farsan Shop, 400004; December 3
Navroji Dinshawji Writer (89), 623, Marker Mans, Lady Jehangir Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; December 3
Gool Darabshaw Shroff (82), Rutton Manor, Garden Rd, Apollo Recl, 400039; December 4
Rustom Ardeshtar Aibara (95), H-35, Cusrow Baug, S. B. Rd, 400039; December 5
Dara Phirojshaw Mistry (64), 22, Heera Meher, 110, Wodehouse Rd, 400005; December 5
Dhun Keki Patel (61), B-1, Kerawalla Bldg, Tata Clny, S. V. Rd, Bandra, 400050; December 5
Keki Nusserwanji Randeria (71), K-2, Family Hse, Jame Jamshed Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; December 5
Mani Shavakshaw Godiwalla (74), K-16, S. B. Bharucha Baug, S. V. Rd, Andheri (W), 400058; December 7
Dorabji Dinshawji Doctor (74),

J/7, S. B. Bharucha Baug, S. V. Rd, Andheri (W), 400058; December 8
Sorabji Shavaksha Lakdawala (79), 15, Safoorbai Manzil, Wadia St, Tardeo, 400034; December 8
Nariman Jalejar Madon (63), Parsi Agiary, Behram Baug, Jogeshwari (W), 400102; December 8
Rutty Adi Unwalla (67), 21 A, Cuffe Parade, 400005; December 8
Ratanshah Nusserwanji Umrigar (72), 51, Mistry Park, 77, B. Desai Road, 400036; December 9
Mani Sorab Darasha (95), Gul-Villa, 6, Laburnum Rd, New Gamdevi, 400007; December 10
Phiroz Dorabji Dastoor (75), C/303, Bhima Co-op Soc, Shantivan, Borivli (E), 400066; December 10
Baby of Hutokshi Zarir Confectioner (stillborn), 2, Harbor View, Mazgaon, 400010; December 11
Rushtom Dinshaw Irani (58), R-13, Dalal Est, Bhadkamkar Marg, Near Bombay Central Stn, 400008; December 11
Dinshaw Framroze Engineer (89), 6/8/C, Bhiwandiwalla Ter, Dhobitalao, 400002; December 12
Jalamai Jamshedji Patel (90), 403/A, Rizvi Palace, Hill Rd, Bandra, 400050; December 13
Najamai Manecksha Patel (86), 12, Hormuz Bldg, 33, Sleater Rd, 400007; December 13
Roshan Feroze Engineer (64), 723, Society Bldg, Dinshaw Master Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; December 14
Mehra Dinshaw Malegamvala (79), Shengre-La, 4, Carmichael Rd, 400026; December 14
Homi Maneckshaw Mistry (78), B10/703-B11/702, Silver Park, Mira Bhayander Rd, Dist Thane, 401104; December 14
Perviz Tehmurasp Panthaki (61), C/o Z. S. Govadia, 8/7, Tata Blocks, Tardeo Rd, 400034; December 14
Roshni Roorbay Wadiwalla (34), F-13, Navajbai Contractor Baug, Mori Rd, Mahim, 400016; December 14
Rusi Jamshedji Wadia (72), E-16, Jer Baug, Dr Ambedkar Rd, Byculia, 400027; December 15
Koomi Jamshedji Patel (75), C/o Hilla H. Dastoor, Dastoor Bglw,

Dastoorwadi, Naigam Cross Rd, 400014; December 16
Najamai Sorabji Bhathena (75), 9/C, Tapia Bldg, Jalbhai St, Charni Rd, 400004; December 17
Dali Naoraji Khadiwalla (72), 281, Sidhwa Bldg, Princess St, 400002; December 17
Homi Rustomji Shroff (63), Ebrahim Mans, Jamshedji Petit St, Grant Rd, 400007; December 17
Hormusji Jehangir Bam (84), Ashish, Tardeo, 400034; December 18
Keki Manchershaw Dastur (80), Navroze Apts, B. Desai Rd, 400026; December 18
Khorshed Nadershaw Patel (61), Room no 3, 20, Chhatrivala Bldg, Wadia St, Tardeo, 400034; December 19
Rustom Hormusji Patel (78), 2/2, Malegamwalla Bldg, Off M. M. C. Rd, Mahim, 400016; December 19
Dolly Pesi Sidhwa (69), I/6, Konark Puram, Kondhwa, Pune, 411048; December 19
Khodabux Tirandaz Sheryari (76), 7/B, Alipur Trust Bldg, 2nd Pasta Lane, Colaba, 400005; December 20
Shirin Bomansha Shroff (Pakka) (76), 17/D, Bhiwandiwalla Ter, Dhobitalao, 400002; December 20
Bomanshaw Dinshaw Vatchha (86), 22, Wadia Bldg, Marzban Clny, Dr A. Nair Rd, 400011; December 20
Goola Hoshang Cooper (59), Divanman, Vasai, 401202; December 21
Homai Piroj Daruvala (76), Master Bldg, Mori Rd, Mahim, 400016; December 21
Mani Keki Irani (Namver) (83), A-7, Jer Baug, Dr Ambedkar Rd, Byculia, 400027; December 21
Tehmi Pheroze Shroff (84), A-202, Ahura Co-op Hsg Soc, Lower Parel, 400012; December 21
Naval Bhimjibhoy Taraporewalla (75), 787, Bhagat Manor, Jame Jamshed Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; December 21
Naval Nariman Hoyvoy (68), Parsi Dairy Farm, 261/63, Princess St, 400002; December 22
Betsy Kaikhushru Fitter (66), 593, Umrigar Bldg, Girgaum Rd, 400002; December 23
Shirinjer Minocher Lawyer (23),

Vidhyachal, Mount Mary Rd, Bandra, 400050; December 23
Gool Khurshed MeherHomji (94), Lily Court, Churchgate, 400020; December 23
Peshotan Khurshedji Reporter (87), Merwan Mans, 59, Nepean Sea Rd, 400006; December 23
Keki Sorabji Tarapor (69), F. S. Parukh Dharamshalla, 34, Hughes Rd, 400007; December 23
Roshan Cawas Wadia (72), C-13, Spenta, Anand Mohini Soc, Saubhagya Ngr, Deolali, Nasik, 422401; December 24
Kawasha Jehangirji Bharucha (87), Nawab Manzil Bldg, 18, Wadia St, Tardeo, 400034; December 25
Soli Khurshedji Dhondy (74), Dhondy Ter, Khambatta Lane, Victoria Garden, Byculia, 400027; December 25
Khorshed Jamshedji Kavarana (75), Banaji Bldg, Forjett St Cross Lane, Gowalia Tank, 400036; December 25
Homi Shapurji Munshi (89), 3-1/A, S. B. Bharucha Baug, S. V. Rd, Andheri (W), 400058; December 25
Piloo Sorabji Mirza (73), Bldg no 1, Merwanji Cama Park, Andheri (W), 400058; December 26
Hilla Murzban Murzban (73), 21, School Bldg, Cusrow Baug, S. B. Rd, 400039; December 26
Kooma Fali Nagporewalla (79), 178, Kavarana Mans, Dr Ambedkar Rd, Dadar, 400014; December 26
Silloo Rustom Vasavevala (89), Jehangir Mans, Hughes Rd, 400007; December 26
Byram Sorab Tarapore (74), 102, Pearl Apts, Samarth Cross Rd no 3, Lokhandwala Complex, Andheri (W), 400053; December 27
Jerbai Framroz Wadia (80), Allbless Widows Chawl, Marzban Clny, Gilder Lane, 400008; December 27
Male baby of Daisy Adil Jesia (stillborn), 6-11, S. B. Bharucha Baug, S. V. Rd, Andheri (W), 400058; December 28
Naju Rattansha Mistry (83), 48-17/E, Rustom Baug, Victoria Rd, Byculia, 400027; December 28
Perin Eruch Rana (85), 808, Aimaye Manzil, Dr Ambedkar Rd, Dadar T.T., 400014; December 28
Naval Ardeshtar Batliwalla (79),

Room no 22, 530, Sanghvi
Sadan, J. Shankarsheth Rd,
400002; December 29

Rustom Dhunjishaw Captain
(74), 24, Gordon Rd, Chadwell
Heath, Essex, RM6 6DD, UK;
December 29

Minoo Aspandiyar Ghadially
(66), F-51, Cusrow Baug, S. B.
Rd, 400039; December 29

Hosrang Edalji Karai (62), E-8,
Shapur Baug, V. P. Rd, 400004;
December 29

Minoo Hormasji Patva (55), 9,
Parsi Punchayet Cottage,
Doongerwadi, 400036;
December 29

Mani Phirojsha Chenoy (84), 4,
Jehangir Mans, Anandilal Podar
Marg, 400020; December 30

Nariman Phiroze Choksi (81),
Jadhav Bhavan, August Kranti
Marg, 400036; December 30

Mehernosh Minocher Mehta
(49), 4, Petit Bldg, Mehehlla
Patel Agiary St, Grant Rd,
400007; December 30

Rosan Dara Poonawalla (54),
F/13, Evershine Apt 2, Versova
Rd, Andheri (W), 400053;
December 30

Dinyar Eruchshaw Katrak (51),
C-2, Cusrow Baug, S. B. Rd,
400039; December 31

CALCUTTA

MARRIED
Shelly Rustom Daroga and
Jimmy Kersi Subawalla;
December 28

INDORE

DIED
Khorshedbanoo Lovji Pavri (82),
mother of Sherry-Meher, Firoze,
Marzban, Farokh, Dara and late
Rati Rustomji Dangore;
December 19

JODHPUR

DIED
Dali Kaka (55), son of Goolamai
and Nasarwanji, husband of
Dolly and father of Zenobia
Kairus Wadia and Aspi;
December 13

MADRAS

DIED
Peshotan Tehmurasp Daji (86),
brother of Katy Firoze Bharucha;
December 7

NAVSARI

DIED
Dara Kaikhushroo Vandrevalla
(75), husband of Homai and
father of Keki, Malcolm, Pervin

Zarir Kotwal, Khurshid Cyrus
Achadwala and Rukhshana
Hormuzd Pithawala;
December 7

Homi Faramroze Kasad (70),
husband of Aloo and father of
Cyrus, Yasmin Adil Kapadia and
Gulshan Rohinton Kasad;
December 21

SECUNDERABAD

DIED
Nariman Framroze Poonegar
(89), father of Shirin Jehangir
Hormusji; December 5

SHOLAPUR

DIED
Sam Kaikhushroo Amaria (65),
husband of Zarine and father of
Zubin and Ariz; December 15

SURAT

DIED
Putlamai Faramji Patel (84),
Nariman Home and Infirmary,
Shahpore, 395003; December 7

Burjorji Navroji Kadva (64),
Village Siganpore, Dist Surat;
December 18

Homi Kaikhushroo Tadiwala
(67), Village Adajan, Dist Surat;
December 19

Nariman Rustomji Bhathena
(75), Village Bhatha, Dist Surat,
394510; December 25

Premature baby of Jamasp

FIGURES AT A GLANCE*

	Bombay		India		World	
	This issue	1997*	This issue	1997*	This issue	1997*
BIRTHS						
Boys	9	101	—	6	2	21
Girls	6	100	—	4	2	27
MARRIAGES						
Parsi	54	267	1	4	1	10
INTERCOMMUNAL						
Males married out	—	21	—	1	1	5
Females married out	—	19	—	—	—	1
DEATHS						
CONSIGNED						
Males	40	451	13	110	5	37
Females	38	472	3	97	2	29
CREMATED						
Males	—	3	—	—	—	—
Females	—	5	—	1	—	—

*Running totals for 1997 (January-December 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.

Nariman Patrawala, Shahpore,
395003; December 25

Manecksha Ardeshir Vania (82),
father of Maneckmai, Zal and
Rohinton; December 26

Dali Pastanji Tural (66),
Bibi-ni-wadi, Sayedpura,
395003; December 30

AUSTRALIA

Sydney
BORN
A girl, *Sneha*, to *Mahrugh* and
Raj Mundul, sister to Rohahn;
September 30

PAKISTAN

Karachi
BORN
A boy, *Mazda*, to *Meena* and
Pervez Bhesania; September 2

DIED
Perin R. Khursigara (92);
October 15

Maneck F. Bhadha (61); October 29

Maneck P. Chinoy (86);
November 2

Jerbai Unwalla (85); November 6

Hoshang Rustomji Sethna (74),
husband of Roshan and father of
Pervez and Darius; November 29

UK

London
DIED
Adul Mehta, son of Alamai and

Shapurji and brother of late
Hoshang, Arnavaz, Savak and
Eruch; December 23

USA

Atlanta, Georgia
DIED
Iraj Shahryary (67), husband of
Nahid and father of Abtin and
Ramin; October 23

Dallas

BORN
A girl, *Keya*, to *Shermaz* and
Hiten Varia, sister to Shan;
September 18

Downers Grove, Illinois

MARRIED
Laura Marshall and *Shahriar*
Mobed, son of Parvin and
Keikhosrow; November 15

Hinsdale, Illinois

MARRIED
Yasmin Naterwalla of Dubai and
Rustom Kevala of Potomac,
Maryland; September 28

Los Angeles

BORN
A boy, *Bijan Kaarlo*, to *Leena*
and *Bahram Varjavand*;
October 10

Compiled by Roxana A. Driver

'Generously charitable'

Parinaz M. Gandhi

Died: Beji Motabhoj Shroff, 77, well-known benefactor of Hong Kong, on September 24, 1997 at the Hong Kong Sanatorium following kidney failure.

"His untimely passing away has left a void in many lives: some will miss him for his financial support, many for his concern, advice and friendship, but all will miss him for the person he was — a caring, loving human being whose primary purpose and pleasure in life was to help others," noted a tribute by Jal S. Shroff, president of The Incorporated Trustees of the Zoroastrian Charity Funds of Hongkong, Canton and Macao.

Whether it was the B. D. Petit Parsee General Hospital in Bombay, the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian

Anjumans of India, the UNICEF - United Nations Children's Fund, the Ruttonjee Sanatorium in Hong Kong...innumerable were the causes Beji Shroff supported. "He gave generously to most of the registered charities in Hong Kong and to many charities in India and various other countries, mainly to Parsis but not excluding other nationalities," mentioned his brother Rusy.

Besides supporting "every appeal that he received" he would also pass on genuine appeals to the Hongkong Zoroastrian Association for their consideration and additional assistance. "The Association on its part often passed on to Beji deserving appeals... Not only did Beji help every case but made a point to follow up with regular letters enquiring if any further assistance was needed," recalls Jal Shroff, adding, "No doubt there were some that took advantage of his charitable nature but this did not deter him from his main aim in life which was to help the needy."

"I remember Beji as the most gentle of men, always so very gracious to everyone. I recall too the many times he visited the patients in Ruttonjee Sanatorium and how frequently we received a donation from

him for the running of the hospital," wrote Sister M. Gabriel O'Mahony, one of The Missionary Sisters of St Columban.

His largesse to UNICEF was acknowledged by Matthew Mo, senior operations manager, Hong Kong Committee for UNICEF: "We know that Mr Shroff had supported UNICEF for a long time and his contributions and kindness mean a healthier life and brighter future for the children and women worldwide. We are sure that the spirit of Mr Shroff's love and concern with the less fortunate children will last forever."



Shroff: ever supportive

The well-attended funeral prior to his burial in the Parsee Cemetery was a reflection of the esteem in which Beji was held by the local community.

As noted Veena Sikri, consul-general of India in Hong Kong, "Beji will be deeply missed in Hong Kong. His contribution will, I feel sure, be remembered and his memory cherished."

According to C. N. Subramanian, secretary general of The Indian Chamber of Commerce, Hong Kong, Beji Shroff "always looked so full of energy." *Business India* (June 30-July 13) mentions him among the approximately 180 Parsi residents remaining in that territory (which included Rusy, his sister-in-law Purviz and cousin Vera Ruttonjee-Desai) who were known for being "always immaculate, very pucca (thorough)..."

In the family enterprises — Ruttonjee Estates Continuation Limited (property owners) and H. Ruttonjee and Son Limited (wine and spirit merchants) — Beji had served as joint managing director and as related by Rusy who had worked with him for over 50 years, he was "a very kind, quiet, understanding and generously charitable person."

He was born in the International Settlement of Shanghai and came to Hong Kong with his parents at five years of age. His schooling was at St Joseph's College in Hong Kong after which he joined the University of Hong Kong but his graduation

was interrupted by World War II when Hong Kong was invaded and occupied by Japanese troops, reminisced Rusy.

The welfare of the young continued to remain close to his heart. His "generous donations every year, together with his encouraging notes, prompted us to do our best... for the young people of Hong Kong," acknowledged Justina Levng, director of The Boys' and Girls' Clubs Association of Hong Kong. His philanthropy continued even after his demise. Appreciating Shroff's decision to donate his eyes, Nicola Kwok, eye co-ordinator, Lions Eye Bank of Hong Kong stated in her condolence letter, "Mr Shroff's will to make a difference in someone's life is very much appreciated." She further added, "It takes many years to change the attitudes of the community (mainly traditional Chinese people) on eye donation from resistance to acceptance... Therefore we propose to use Mr Beji Shroff's story as a role-model to inspire others to give their pledge to eye donation."

Beji Shroff is survived by his brother Rusy.

READERS' FORUM

continued from page 7

The light is in the east

Today's generation blindly follows the West. The light is in the East, in the West there is darkness. And if there is any light in the West, it is only the reflected light from the East. I have done many miracles and made prophecies in the past. As per my predictions:

- The West is going to be destroyed and the East will come up since the third world war will be a nuclear war during this century.
- History is going to repeat itself.
- We came from the Middle East.
- At present we should migrate to UAE, Oman, Doha, Bahrain (but not Saudi Arabia). If Zoroastrians do not wish to migrate to the Middle East, they should shift their money to banks (local) in the Middle East.
- Of course we should migrate to Iran too. But Iran is not yet ready to receive us.
- Paper currency will have no value, hence one should invest in gold. Stocks and shares will have no value.
- We should not migrate to India as we will be kicked out.

FAROKH D. DEBOO

Edited by Parinaz M. Gandhi

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